

Stay Interviews and Teacher Retention in Private Schools

by

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Abstract

Teacher retention remains a critical challenge in private K-12 schools, where high attrition rates can disrupt student learning and institutional stability. This study examines the effectiveness of stay interviews as a proactive strategy for improving teacher retention by identifying and addressing workplace well-being factors. Grounded in Seligman's PERMA model of well-being, the research employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative survey data with qualitative interviews to gain a comprehensive understanding of teachers' experiences and perspectives.

The study was conducted at Presbyterian Christian School (PCS), where educators participated in a stay interview survey measuring workplace well-being and retention factors. The survey utilized a seven-point Likert scale and included open-ended questions to capture nuanced insights. In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers to explore key themes related to job satisfaction, work-life balance, organizational trust, and mental health support. Findings revealed that when stay interviews were followed through with meaningful action, they provided valuable improvements in workplace conditions, increased teacher engagement, and strengthened institutional trust. Teachers reported that effective stay interviews led to tangible changes in administrative support, resource allocation, and professional development opportunities.

By integrating qualitative and quantitative data, this study provides evidence that well-executed stay interviews can serve as a powerful retention tool in private K-12 schools. The research underscores the importance of aligning stay interviews with broader school initiatives, ensuring actionable follow-up, and fostering a culture of trust and psychological safety.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Teacher retention has emerged as a critical issue in the field of education, with profound implications for the stability of educational institutions, the continuity of instruction, and the overall quality of student achievement (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Currently, it is estimated that 8% of teachers are leaving the teaching profession every year, and this has raised concern about the stability of the teaching workforce especially in high-poverty schools where the turnover rate is estimated to be above 13% as suggested by Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017). This high teacher attrition interferes with the learning process, hampers attempts to increase student achievement, and contributes to inequities in education quality, especially in schools that enroll low-income and other disadvantaged students (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The teacher shortage has been worsened by the fact that the number of teachers leaving the profession significantly outweighs the number of individuals entering the profession (Sutcher et al., 2016). This imbalance not only puts pressure on the education system but also affects schools that enroll high-needs students, thus increasing the equity gap in access to education (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

In this regard, increasing attention is being paid to the importance of exploring the reasons for teacher turnover, with an emphasis on the concept of teacher engagement. Well-being refers to physical, mental, emotional, and social health and satisfaction (Anastasiou & Garametsi, 2021) and has emerged as a significant factor influencing teachers' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and their choice to either stay or exit the teaching profession. Prior studies have established that such organizational factors as principals' support, positive teacher interpersonal relationships, teacher decision-making involvement, reasonable workload, and professional development and recognition significantly influence teachers' well-being and retention decisions (Nguyen, Pham, Springer, & Crouch, 2019). On the other hand, poor

leadership practices, job demands, lack of decision-making authority, interpersonal conflicts, and lack of promotion opportunities have been found to cause burnout, fatigue, and attrition among teachers (Bickmore & Dowell, 2018).

Although previous studies have shed light on the difficulties public school teachers experience, there is a lack of knowledge about factors related to teacher attrition in private schools (Oke et al., 2016). Given that private schools are organizations that have their own specific management systems, decision-making processes, and resource management, there may be certain issues and prospects for teacher retention in them (Darling-Hammond, 2021). For example, factors including centralization of authority, inequitable salaries, few promotion avenues, and work-life conflict have been described as possible causes of teacher turnover in private schools (Bickmore & Dowell, 2018; Moore et al., 2018). However, there is a lack of research focused on private schools, which limits our ability to design accurate retention strategies for these institutions.

To these challenges, new ideas for researching and preventing teacher turnover are emerging. There is, however, one such strategy that has shown potential and that is the annual stay interviews. These are structured meetings between administrators and teachers which are meant to improve relations, identify factors that make teachers want to continue working at their workplace, and other issues that may lead to dissatisfaction and thus turnover (Martinez & McAbee, 2020; Moore et al., 2018). The process of the Stay Interview makes it organized for educational leaders to listen to what teachers want what they lack, and their concerns. The study done earlier indicates that the stay interviews can improve teacher retention by implying communication, showing concern to the teachers, and thus allowing the leaders to manage the discontent early enough (Martinez & McAbee, 2020; Moore et al., 2018).

Stay interviews can be beneficial; however, there is a shortage of rigorous, methodologically sound, and well-executed research about the application of stay interviews for enhancing teacher retention, particularly in private schools. Given the unique pressures on private school teachers and the importance of teacher retention, the existence of a potential for stay interviews in private schools should be examined. This study was designed to fill this gap by evaluating how annual stay interviews influence the number of teachers who remain at the school, exploring teachers' perceptions of the process, and analyzing retention in relation to the outcomes of the interviews.

The purpose of this mixed methods study is to examine how stay interviews may support teacher retention by exploring the relationship between stay interviews and organizational well-being in private K–12 schools. Given the limited research on teacher attrition and retention strategies within private school contexts, this study aims to address a critical gap by focusing on teachers' perceptions of organizational factors that influence their decision to stay, such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, professional development, communication, collaboration, sense of contribution, and pedagogical feedback. Guided by the PERMA framework of well-being, this study investigates how stay interviews are used to support teacher well-being and retention efforts. Specifically, it seeks to understand (1) how teachers perceive the role of stay interviews in supporting their overall well-being, (2) how key organizational well-being factors are experienced by teachers, and (3) what benefits and challenges are associated with the use of stay interviews in fostering a positive and sustainable school culture. The findings aim to inform educational leaders and policymakers in private school settings on effective, research-based strategies to improve teacher retention and strengthen school communities.

Background of the Study

Teacher turnover has become one of the biggest issues in the American education system, significantly impacting the stability, continuity, and quality of educational institutions throughout the country. Current data reveals that 8% teachers are leaving teachers' profession on an annual basis, though this figure rises to more than 13% in low-income schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). This practice not only interrupts the delivery of instruction but also significantly hinders students' learning outcomes, especially in schools that enroll disadvantaged and needy students (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The occurrence of this attrition is so wide and extensive; it has been evidenced to cause teacher shortage crisis, and the rate of leaving is much higher than the entry of new teachers in the teaching profession (Sutcher et al., 2016).

The implications of these differences are numerous. The impact is most profound in schools with enrolment of students of color and students with disabilities (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). In such institutions where stability and quality teaching are most important, the constant changing of teachers only serve to perpetuate a cycle of low performance, low commitment, and high turnover rates (Darling-Hammond, 2021). This cycle does not only affect overall student learning but also perpetuates the structures of inequity making it difficult for these schools to retain high-quality teachers (Sutcher et al., 2016).

Teacher turnover is a complicated issue, and many factors have been identified that directly influence a teacher's decision to remain with or leave an organization. These factors refer to a broad spectrum of aspects of the workplace environment such as leadership, organizational relationships, decision-making, workload, career development, and work-life Balance (Gimbert & Kapa, 2022; Kraft et al., 2016; Moore et al., 2018; Nguyen et al., 2019).

However, these factors do not work in isolation; they all play a role in shaping teachers' job satisfaction and commitment. For example, positive and constructive leadership has been positively associated with increased teacher morale and retention. Teachers who have a strong leader who gives direction, feedback, and support feel wanted in the school thus boosting their morale to work (Kraft et al., 2016). Likewise, supportive work relationships and organizational climate can help to offset the demands of the profession. When teachers have access to a network of colleagues with whom they can discuss their practice, seek professional support, and feel valued, they are likely to continue with their practice (Moore et al., 2018).

Another important factor is the structure of decision-making within schools. Schools that adopt policies that allow teachers to have a say in how their school runs have happier and more committed teachers. This independence also helps teachers to have a sense of responsibility for the job and the management of the school, which can increase their passion for teaching (Nguyen et al., 2019). On the other hand, centralized management and decision-making patterns that restrict the participation of teachers result in perceived powerlessness and apathy.

Workload and work-life balance are also important considerations. Teaching is an emotionally and intellectually challenging profession, and when workloads are overwhelming with too much paperwork and large, or inadequate planning time, teachers can get exhausted (Bickmore & Dowell, 2018). This is especially so with teachers in high-needs schools where, on top of teaching, they are likely to encounter other factors such as management of students' behavior or having to counsel students. When such pressures are not accompanied by support or plans on how to deal with them, teachers may consider leaving.

Professional development and growth opportunities complete these organizational factors. Teachers like any other professional want to be able to learn more, be challenged, and be

promoted in their area of expertise. Teachers who have access to authentic, continuous, and context-sensitive professional learning in their chosen fields of interest tend to stay longer in schools. On the other hand, schools that provide either low or unrelated professional development might lose their teachers to other development opportunities.

These organizational factors are now viewed through the Teacher Well-being framework, which is a concept that is broader than the concept of job satisfaction as it encompasses the physical, mental, emotional, and social health and satisfaction of teachers (Anastasiou & Garametsi, 2021). This broad perspective understands a teacher not only as a worker or an employee but as a human being whose health and well-being depend on his or her work and job satisfaction and stability.

Well-being is a broad construct that captures how the school environment and the teacher's personal and professional contexts intersect and affect the teachers' job satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intentions. It accepts that factors like workload stress, quality of relationship, or lack of decision-making are not confined to the teachers' working hours; they impact teachers' physical health, relationships, and life satisfaction outside work as well. On the other hand, personal stress or satisfaction may also affect job performance and commitment.

One of the most effective models for measuring well-being and increasing awareness of its key components is the PERMA model, developed by Martin Seligman, a pioneer in positive psychology (Gimbert & Kapa, 2022). This framework provides a structured approach to assessing well-being through five essential domains: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (Seligman, 2011). Positive Emotion encompasses feelings of joy, gratitude, and optimism, which contribute to overall job satisfaction and workplace morale. Engagement refers to the sense of absorption and flow individuals experience

when fully immersed in their work, often driven by challenging and meaningful tasks. Relationships highlight the importance of social connections and perceived organizational support, which foster a sense of belonging and collaboration. Meaning relates to personal significance and a sense of purpose, where individuals feel their work contributes to something greater than themselves. Finally, Accomplishment involves perceived competence and achievement, reinforcing motivation and a sense of progress in one's professional and personal life. The PERMA model serves as a valuable framework for understanding and improving workplace well-being. By fostering positive emotions, organizations can create environments where employees feel supported and motivated. Encouraging engagement through meaningful challenges enhances productivity and satisfaction. Strong relationships contribute to a collaborative and supportive culture, while emphasizing meaning helps employees find purpose in their roles. Finally, recognizing accomplishments reinforces a sense of competence and growth. When all five domains are cultivated, individuals experience greater well-being, leading to increased job satisfaction, commitment, and overall organizational success.

Paying attention to these domains will possibly enable educational leaders to foster environments that prevent burnout and turnover while promoting thriving and committed staff members (Wheeler et al., 2024). For instance, acknowledging and rewarding teacher achievements can increase positive feelings and feelings of achievement. Engagement, relationships, and meaning can be increased by offering the teachers the chance to work on meaningful projects together. Although much information has been gathered on these difficulties in the context of public schools, there are limitations in the literature regarding the loss of teachers in private schools (Bickmore & Dowell, 2018). Private schools currently enroll about 10% of total students in the United States and therefore have different system features that

influence their ability to attract and retain teachers.

Private schools are also characterized by more centralized decision-making processes where principals or heads of schools are autocratic and have considerable control over the policies of the schools. This can result in clearer vision and faster decision-making, but it may also reduce the teachers' freedom and voice, which are essential for employee satisfaction (Bickmore & Dowell, 2018). Private schools rely on tuition fees and donations, which makes them financially vulnerable and can place teachers' salaries and job security at risk. Several private school teachers have indicated that they receive lower salaries and fewer benefits than their counterparts in public schools, a disparity that can contribute to turnover—especially as teachers seek career advancement or begin to support growing families (Moore et al., 2018).

Other areas of concern in private schools include professional growth opportunities. These schools may not be able to afford in-house professional development or have limited numbers of staff for career advancements. Teachers who want to advance in their positions or assume leadership roles may benefit from seeking employment in larger public districts as suggested by Bickmore and Dowell (2018). Additionally, the tight-knit environment of most private schools, as beneficial as it may be in terms of cohesion, may cause a lot of overlap between professional and personal interactions. Teachers are expected to be coaches, counselors, and weekend babysitters and this may be stressful for many teachers.

However, private schools also have some retention benefits that are peculiar to them. Small classes, few students per group, and frequently active parents are beneficial for teachers as well. In addition, many private schools also provide more flexibility in curricular decisions so that teachers can incorporate their creative interests and even student preferences into their teaching (Moore et al., 2018). This family-like cohesion that is cultivated in private schools may

offer social support and a sense of place that inhibits turnover tendencies.

Due to the lack of more detailed research on private school environments, it is difficult to design research-based approaches to address issues of staff retention in private schools. While there are many studies regarding private schools, most of these compare private schools with public ones or concentrate only on certain categories such as Catholic schools, and therefore there is a lack of research that addresses the topic comprehensively.

In answer to these issues, new strategies for comprehending and combating teacher attrition are being developed. Annual stay interviews are one such promising strategy that can be adopted. Originally developed in the business world as a way to keep talented employees from leaving, stay interviews are systemic, formal, and conducted by administrators to engage teachers in conversation so that reasons for staying or leaving can be explored and problems solved before they lead to dissatisfaction and turnover (Martinez & McAbee, 2020; Moore et al., 2018).

While stay interviews are not the same as performance reviews or exit interviews, they are more proactive and oriented toward retention. Instead of waiting for teachers to resign and then find out why they want to leave, stay interviews and talk to teachers when they are still loyal to the school. This timing enables real-time interventions and individualized approaches to be made where necessary. Some of the common areas of discussion include satisfaction and fulfillment at the workplace, career aspirations, experiences and difficulties, and preferred support (Martinez & McAbee, 2020).

As a result, stay interviews may possibly allow educational leaders to hear the concerns, needs, and aspirations of the teachers and provide the necessary support in a non-evaluative manner. This individualized approach acknowledges the fact that factors that motivate retention may differ from one teacher to another depending on factors such as

experience, needs, or assignments. What will motivate a new teacher (such as mentorship, and classroom support) may not be the same as what will motivate a veteran teacher (such as leadership opportunities, and recognition).

Previous research indicates that stay interviews can be used to improve teacher retention in several ways. First, they encourage free-flowing communication between teachers and administrators, which means there are no barriers to receiving constructive criticism. Second, the act of conducting such interviews shows the teachers that they are appreciated and needed in the institution, thus increasing morale and productivity. Third, since stay interviews help leadership identify problems before the teachers become dissatisfied, it is easier for leadership to address their concerns promptly, whether it is by changing a teacher's schedule, providing resources, or resolving interpersonal conflicts (Moore et al., 2018).

Data collected from stay interviews can be combined and used to identify larger patterns that require changes. For instance, if several teachers express their concern regarding workload, the leaders may decide to reconsider planning time or the distribution of classes. If professional development arises as one of the retention strategies, the school may develop a teacher-directed PD program. Thus, stay interviews not only help individual teachers but can initiate organizational changes that can help retain teachers (Martinez & McAbee, 2020).

While stay interviews hold promise, existing research offers limited empirical support for their effectiveness in increasing teacher retention, especially in private schools. Existing literature remains dominated by qualitative research and theoretical articles that define the conceptual framework of stay interviews as a potentially useful intervention to increase teacher retention. There are a few case studies of the use of telehealth in business environments and a few early adopting school districts that have reported success with claims of increased

communication, higher teacher satisfaction, and in some instances, decreased turnover rates (Martinez & McAbee, 2020; Moore et al., 2018).

However, empirical research that directly assesses the effectiveness of stay interviews for retention rates, particularly in learners' context, is limited. Concerns exist regarding the frequency, format, and how the interviews should be subsequently managed. The applicability of past discoveries to private school settings, where other organizational characteristics could affect teacher turnover, remains uncertain. Stay interviews may be easier to conduct in private schools for example, because of their small size but the close-knit community may make teachers reluctant to voice their concerns.

This study should fill these gaps by assessing the effectiveness of annual stay interviews on the private K-12 school teachers' retention rates, analyzing teachers' views on the process, and determining factors that affect retention based on these interviews. This research therefore sought to offer information specific to private school teachers in order to capture the specifics of teaching in such institutions – from the multifaceted roles teachers take up, to the potential for curriculum flexibility.

The findings not only contributed to our theoretical understanding of teacher retention in private schools but also offered evidence-based, practical recommendations for educational leaders. By illuminating what makes teachers stay – be it supportive leadership, meaningful professional development, or a strong sense of community – this study can guide leaders in developing supportive organizational cultures, addressing retention drivers proactively, and ultimately fostering a more stable and effective teaching workforce.

At a time when teacher shortages undermine quality and equity in schooling, particularly for marginalized students, ensuring teacher retention is not only a structural

concern but also an issue of equity. This research adds to the ongoing efforts to build schools in which teachers can thrive and to discover more effective methods of engaging teachers in the critical work of educating today's youth.

Statement of the Problem

The research question of interest is the attrition rate of teachers in the United States especially in private K-12 schools and the absence of scientific research on retention strategies in these contexts. Teacher turnover which according to Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017), is estimated to occur at about 8% annually in the United States, and in schools with high poverty levels, is more than 13%, remains the biggest challenge to the stability and quality of education in the country. High teacher attrition disrupts learning, diminishes achievement, and exacerbates the inequalities in schooling quality, especially for students of color and low-income students (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

This problem remains prevalent and continues to increase the teacher shortage, as more teachers leave the field than enter it each year (Sutcher et al., 2016). This imbalance puts pressure on the educational system at all levels including individual classrooms that are forced to deal with mid-year teacher changes, and districts that are unable to sustain quality instruction. The consequences are even more devastating in high-poverty schools because constant teacher turnover fosters low academic achievement and disconnection, which only deepens the already existing achievement gap in education (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Although numerous studies have shed light on the complex issues that affect public school teachers, there is limited knowledge and research on the factors that contribute to teacher attrition in private schools (Bickmore & Dowell, 2018). Private schools serve roughly 10% of students in the United States and have potentially different organizational configurations,

leadership, and resource distribution compared to public schools which could impact teacher turnover. Some factors believed to contribute to teacher turnover in private schools include centralized leadership that restricts the freedom of action of the teachers, salaries that are lower than those of teachers in public schools, fewer opportunities for professional development due to small staff and finances, and work-family conflict due to the multiple roles that teachers have to undertake in these compact societies (Bickmore & Dowell, 2018; Moore et al., 2018).

However, private schools also have certain retention benefits which include limited class size, selective students, flexible curriculum, and strong community support which may include emotional support and feelings of belongingness (Moore et al., 2018). This lack of context-specific research limits our understanding of how these factors are related and how they impact retention so that effective, research-based retention strategies can be developed for private schools. Many of them compare private with public schools or highlight certain categories such as Catholic, while the general picture of private schools remains relatively unknown.

Teacher well-being has become an important perspective in the discourse on teacher retention. As a comprehensive construct encompassing physical, mental, emotional, and social health and satisfaction (Anastasiou & Garametsi, 2021), well-being provides a framework for analyzing how various characteristics of the school environment intersect with teachers' personal and professional experiences and shape their job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and decisions to remain in or leave the profession. Many studies have revealed that supportive and transformative leadership, positive relationships with colleagues, shared decision-making, work-related load, and professional development and recognition influence teachers' quality of life and intentions to continue teaching (Gimbert & Kapa, 2022; Kraft et al., 2016; Moore et al.,

2018; Nguyen et al., 2019).

However, the way these factors are realized and how they relate to retention in private school environments is not well understood. The dynamics of private schools may influence these relationships in different ways—for instance, through the opportunity to develop close connections in small communities and the pressure to meet parents’ expectations in tuition-based models. Consequently, private school leaders are forced to use research findings from public school systems which may be detrimental to the context of their institutions and ultimately develop ineffective or counterproductive retention strategies.

In response to these challenges, the use of annual stay interviews has been identified as an effective approach (Martinez & McAbee, 2020; Moore et al., 2018). Originally used in business to keep talented employees, stay interviews are formal, planned meetings between administrators and teachers where the primary goal is to talk through potential obstacles to retention and develop strategies to overcome them before dissatisfaction leads to turnover. The stay interviews allow educational leaders to hear teachers’ concerns, needs, and aspirations in a context that is non-evaluative and thus can provide an opportunity to address retention drivers that are different for each teacher depending on the career stage, personal situation, or teaching assignment.

Initial research indicates that stay interviews can help increase teacher retention by fostering communication and trust, proving to teachers that they are appreciated, and addressing discontent quickly. However, consolidated information gathered from such interviews is useful in making system changes that enhance general organizational development and staff retention (Martinez & McAbee, 2020; Moore et al., 2018). However, as with any intervention, there is a lack of robust, peer-reviewed, scientific evidence that supports their effectiveness in increasing

teacher retention, especially in private schools. Most of the research available to date is qualitative in nature or theoretical, with a lack of quantitative studies that assess the immediate outcomes of stay interviews on retention rates, especially in educational contexts.

This research problem is important because high teacher turnover rates in private schools may have repercussions. In addition to disrupting instruction and learning, high turnover can erode the foundation of professional learning communities that are essential for continued teacher learning and school improvement. Losing experienced teachers means that the new teachers will not be able to gain experience and knowledge from their senior colleagues. Recruitment, selection, and training expenses of new tutors become burdensome to the private schools' fiscal capital, reducing resources allocated to other aspects such as infrastructure and tutors' salaries – all of which are determinants of retention.

Private schools are considered to be more stable, and the effects of teacher turnover on their students should not be dismissed. Many private schools enroll children with learning disabilities or from low-income families on scholarships. These students, who may already be at risk of falling behind in school, would be most adversely affected by high rates of teacher attrition.

In addressing this research problem, this study sought to generate findings that would contribute to the stabilization of the teaching workforce in private schools, increase the quality of education, and ensure fairness. Knowing what keeps teachers in private schools – whether it is positive leadership, enriching professional learning, or a sense of belonging – could help leaders in proactively addressing retention factors. By evaluating the efficacy of stay interviews, this study sought to provide private school leaders with an evidence-based, actionable strategy for retaining their most valuable resource: dedicated, professional educators. In the context of the

current teacher shortage crisis that compromises the quality and equity of education across the country, such findings are not only intellectually valuable but also critically important to guaranteeing all children, including those in private schools, a stable and high-quality education experience.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed methods study is to examine how stay interviews may support teacher retention by exploring the relationship between stay interviews and organizational well-being in private K–12 schools. Given the limited research on teacher attrition and retention strategies within private school contexts, this study aims to address a critical gap by focusing on teachers' perceptions of organizational factors that influence their decision to stay, such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, professional development, communication, collaboration, sense of contribution, and pedagogical feedback. Guided by the framework of well-being, this study investigates how stay interviews are used to support teacher well-being and retention efforts. Specifically, it seeks to understand (1) how teachers perceive the role of stay interviews in supporting their overall well-being, (2) how key organizational well-being factors are experienced by teachers, and (3) what benefits and challenges are associated with the use of stay interviews in fostering a positive and sustainable school culture. The findings aim to inform educational leaders and policymakers in private school settings on effective, research-based strategies to improve teacher retention and strengthen school communities. The research aimed to provide evidence-based recommendations for independent educational leaders, empowering them to proactively address teacher retention and well-being in private school settings. By offering practical insights and actionable strategies, such as a stay interview survey and individual interviews, this study seeks to contribute to the creation of more supportive and

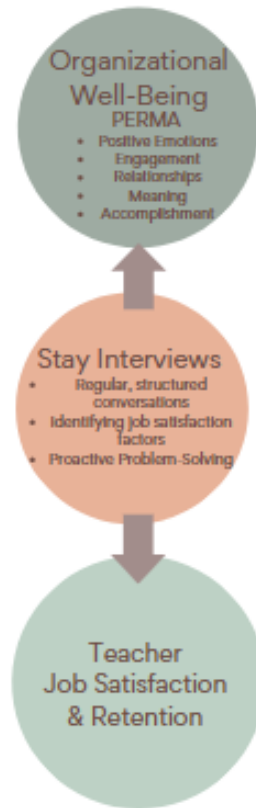
fulfilling work environments for educators, ultimately benefiting primary stakeholders such as teachers, school administrators and students.

Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

This conceptual framework explores the potential of stay interviews as a strategic tool to support teacher well-being and inform retention efforts within the K–12 private school context. The study employed a mixed methods approach, using quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with teachers and division heads from Presbyterian Christian School. The Stay Interview Instrument was developed using the PERMA framework as a guiding reference to shape questions related to well-being and job satisfaction. Although this study did not include retention data, stay interviews have the potential to create space for meaningful dialogue, allowing teachers to express their experiences, share accomplishments, and voice concerns. Conversations guided by elements of the PERMA model—particularly ‘Relationships,’ ‘Meaning,’ and ‘Accomplishment’—can help educators feel more connected and valued within their school communities. Stay interviews also provide school leaders with an opportunity to proactively engage with faculty, promoting a more supportive and responsive work environment. These practices can inform broader strategies for enhancing teacher well-being in private schools. For Heads of School and Human Resource Directors, this reinforces the value of prioritizing teacher-centered communication and regular feedback as key components of a healthy and positive school culture.

Figure 1

A Framework for Teacher Well-Being, Stay Interviews, and Job Satisfaction



Research Questions

To achieve the purpose of this study, the following research questions guided the inquiry:

1. As described by teachers, to what extent is overall well-being supported by the use of stay interviews?
2. Using identified organizational well-being factors, to what extent are teachers' perceptions of organizational well-being described
 - a. job satisfaction?
 - b. work-life balance?
 - c. professional development?
 - d. communication?
 - e. collaboration?
 - a. for contribution
 - g. pedagogical feedback?
3. As described by teachers, what were the identified benefits and hindrances of using stay interviews to describe the well-being of their school?

Research Design

The research project was developed to address the ongoing improvement needs of the school related to teacher retention and job satisfaction. During the process of updating the school's SIP (School Improvement Plan), teacher well-being emerged as a top priority for development. The primary goal of the Stay Interviews was to gather both quantitative and qualitative data on teacher job satisfaction, identify areas for growth, and support overall retention and engagement efforts.

The Head of School at PCS invited me to consult with him and his leadership team on

strategies to improve teacher well-being and promote staff retention. Together, we outlined the following objectives:

- To understand the factors that contributed to teacher job satisfaction and retention.
- To identify specific challenges and areas in need of improvement within the organization.
- To gather insights that could inform policies and practices aimed at fostering a supportive and engaging work environment for teachers.

The target population for the Stay Interviews included all teachers within the organization, spanning various departments and levels of tenure. After receiving approval from the Board of Trustees and the Head of School, I began designing the interview process. To demonstrate respect for participants and prioritize their well-being, I ensured the confidentiality of their responses and clearly communicated the study's purpose, objectives, procedures, time commitment, and their right to withdraw at any point. Once signed informed consent forms were collected, I distributed a digital survey for participants to complete at their convenience.

Data were collected through digital Stay Interviews conducted by an external consultant. The interview questions were designed to elicit thoughtful and candid responses from teachers. Follow-up interviews were scheduled at times convenient for the participants and conducted in a private setting to encourage open and honest dialogue.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were summarized using means and standard deviations, while qualitative interview responses were analyzed through thematic analysis. Key themes and patterns are identified, categorized, and interpreted to provide insights into teacher satisfaction and areas for improvement. The analysis focuses on both common and unique responses to ensure a comprehensive understanding of teacher experiences and then an action plan is formulated and shared with Board of Trustees and Heads of School.

Significance of the Study

The importance of this study is to increase the general conditions of work as well as job satisfaction of the teachers in the educational organization. Several advantages are offered by the study due to the subject matter through the qualitative data collected and analyzed via Stay

Interviews:

1. Improving Teacher Retention:

The cost and implications of having high turnover rates within the faculty include but are not limited to the following. This research seeks to examine the factors that influence teacher retention, in order to assist the organization to retain such teachers since they are beneficial to the institution. If the organization seeks to sustain a good workforce that will not be inclined to leave soon, then it has to address the causes of teacher turnover.

2. Enhancing Job Satisfaction:

It is important to know the factors that contribute to teacher job satisfaction in order to enhance their job satisfaction. From this research, the Stay Interviews can help the organization to identify measures to improve job satisfaction and therefore increase staff engagement of teachers.

3. Identifying Areas for Improvement:

The Stay Interviews also offer the teachers an opportunity to express their complaints and ideas on the improvement. Such responses from the frontline educators are very helpful in determining the aspects that require change in the organization. If these areas are managed, then it will result in the improvement of teachers and students work environment hence improving the delivery of services.

4. Supporting Professional Development:

Professional development is important to teachers for job fulfillment and promotion. This

way the organization is able to identify the various types of professional development that is most preferred by teachers so that the organization can try to meet these needs. This is not only a valuable step in the process of the teacher training but also contributes to the enhancement of the educational process for students.

5. Strengthening Communication and Collaboration:

Communication and cooperation are two critical aspects that are crucial in any institution of learning. As a result, the study defines how these elements are perceived by teachers at the moment and how they can be enhanced. Effective communication can improve the work atmosphere and increase the sense of people's unity and cooperation

6. Increasing Recognition and Appreciation:

Realization of one's worth in the workplace is an essential factor that drives employees. This paper aims to establish how the teachers of the organization feel appreciated and the information which can help the organization to improve recognition. Teacher recognition may help motivate the teachers to continue performing to the best of their abilities.

7. Informing Policy and Decision-Making:

The data collected through this study offers evidence-based insights that can inform the organization's policy and decision-making processes. By grounding decisions in the actual experiences and needs of teachers, the organization can implement more effective and impactful policies.

8. Promoting a Positive School Culture:

Positive school culture plays a crucial role in the improvement of the general health of the teachers and students. The results obtained from this study can assist the organization to enhance supportiveness, respect, and improvement. This, in turn, will enhance effective and

efficient delivery of instructional activities in teaching and learning.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Teacher retention has become a critical issue in education, with high attrition rates leading to teacher shortages across the United States. Nearly 8% of teachers leave the profession yearly, with rates climbing to over 13% in high-poverty schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). These high levels of turnover disrupt school stability and continuity in instruction, undermining student achievement and school performance (Holme et al., 2018; Kraft et al., 2016). Teacher attrition also contributes to shortages as departures outpace the supply of new teachers entering the field (Sutcher et al., 2016). These shortages disproportionately impact schools serving high-need student populations, increasing existing inequities in educational quality (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Given these detrimental impacts, understanding and addressing the root causes of teacher turnover has become a policy imperative. This literature review analyzes research on factors influencing teacher retention, explicitly focusing on teacher well-being and organizational policies and practices within private K-12 school contexts in the United States.

The literature encompasses a range of approaches, including quantitative analysis of large-scale datasets, surveys, in-depth qualitative studies, systematic reviews, and mixed methods designs. While varied in focus and methodology, common threads emerge around the importance of school leadership, workplace relationships, shared decision-making, reasonable work demands, and growth opportunities for fostering the well-being, satisfaction, and commitment required to retain teachers (Gimbert & Kapa, 2022; Kraft et al., 2016; Moore et al., 2018; Nguyen et al., 2019). The review highlights key contributions and limitations of this literature to identify productive avenues for future research and evidence-based policy and

practice. Teacher retention has significant implications for educational quality and equality. High turnover has detrimental effects on school culture, collegial relationships, institutional memory, and student outcomes (Holme et al., 2018; Kraft et al., 2016). Difficulty retaining teachers also fuels shortages, especially in high-poverty urban and rural schools that need help attracting and sustaining qualified instructors (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). These shortfalls disproportionately disrupt the education of students from historically marginalized groups, denying them access to stable and experienced teaching workforces (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Considering teachers' vital role in student learning and development, shifting staffing patterns at schools dismantle the fundamentals of education, which are required for academic achievement and work readiness. On the contrary, organizations that effectively retain committed and experienced teachers enjoy the advantages of instructional continuity, favorable climate, collaborative professional practice, and accumulated institutional knowledge (Holme et al., 2018; Kraft et al., 2016). Investing in considerate and proactive retention strategies focused on improving teacher well-being and voice dramatically benefits students, schools, and the teaching profession (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Cochran-Smith et al., 2018). This study aims to provide direction for such initiatives by combining fundamental research findings on factors influencing teacher drop-out and areas that merit further discussion.

The United States has experienced teacher shortages that are of great concern over the last decade, with the number of new teachers produced each year not rising enough to keep up with the increase of student enrollments as well as the high number of attritions (Sutcher et al., 2016). Supplies of every kind are particularly critical in certain academic areas such as math, science, special education, and foreign languages (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Shortages are likewise seen in schools with higher proportions of low-income, racial minority, and academically disadvantaged students (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Left unaddressed, these shortages threaten students' equitable access to effective instruction. Teacher attrition is a crucial contributor to these shortages (Sutcher et al., 2016). Nearly 8% of teachers leave the profession each year, including about two-thirds who resign for reasons other than retirement (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Turnover rates are 50% higher in Title I schools serving more economically disadvantaged populations than in more affluent schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Teacher turnover costs include financial burdens on districts, which spend an estimated \$20,000 on average per teacher who leaves (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). More importantly, turnover disrupts continuity, cohesion, and the development of expertise needed for school improvement and student success (Holme et al., 2018; Kraft et al., 2016). Private schools are open to challenges in retaining teachers as well. While public schools have been more extensively studied, emerging evidence suggests private schools may face heightened turnover risks due to differences in leadership structures, decision-making procedures, and compensation and benefits (Bickmore & Dowell, 2018; Moore, 2018; Oke et al., 2016).

Conceptually speaking, this review emerges from studies focusing on teaching as a complex intellectual pursuit requiring continuous learning and growth opportunities to achieve expertise. (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018) Unavailable such opportunities in environments will cause stagnation, leading to turnover (Torres, 2016). Likewise, the organizational management and policy settings provide the context for teachers' daily work experiences; they affect their level of job satisfaction, commitment, and work-related stress (Kraft et al., 2016). The impact of insufficient support systems and unreasonable work commitments from that angle is that it

makes teachers more likely to resign (Sutcher et al., 2016). At the same time, schools that provide voice, autonomy, collaboration, and growth, as well as these elements, reinforce professional identities, which result in positive well-being and persistence (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018). Using the conceptual understandings, the literature review clarifies how the contexts of policy and organization intersect with the developmental needs of teachers and which behaviors they adopt. This review utilizes a mixed methods approach to analyze findings from the research associated with teachers' retention. Statistical analyses can reveal the status of attrition patterns and how they influence predictive relationships at the national level (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Holmes et al., 2018).

Regression methods are designed to quantify associations between school-specific factors (e.g., leadership, atmosphere, and resources) and teacher turnover rates (Kraft et al., 2016). Value-added models with sophisticated adjustments consider confounding factors, making the claims more effective in the effects of organizational conditions on retention (Kraft et al., 2016). The details given by the qualitative and mixed-method studies give more comprehensive insights into how teachers evaluate and interpret the various organizational supports and difficulties. Interviews, focus groups, and ethnographic observations elicit subjective, contextually relevant stories about employees' reasons for leaving organizations. Torres (2016), case-based and inductive methods reveal the mechanisms and core of statistical relationships (Bickmore & Dowell, 2018). The present review integrates multiple schools of thought in order to offer a multifaceted perception of teacher retention.

This literature review examines research centered around three prominent themes shaping the understanding of teacher retention issues: organizational well-being, stay interviews, and attrition patterns within private schools. First, an extensive body of literature documents

associations between schools' organizational characteristics and teacher well-being, predicting turnover intentions and behaviors. Key aspects of schools' social contexts linked to well-being and retention include:

- Supportive, trust-building leadership approaches emphasizing collaboration and teacher autonomy (Anderson, 2019; Bickmore & Dowell, 2018; Torres, 2016)
- Positive professional relationships and collegial support (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018; Türker & Kahraman, 2021)
- Inclusive decision-making processes provide teacher voice (Anastasiou & Garametsi, 2021; Holme et al., 2018)
- Manageable workload (Prilleltensky et al., 2016; Sutchter et al., 2016)
- Access to resources and professional development opportunities (Gimbert & Kapa, 2022; Kraft et al., 2016)
- Work-life balance and flexibility (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Moore et al., 2018)
- Recognition, feedback, and growth opportunities (Gimbert & Kapa, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2019)

Schools cultivating these elements are characterized by greater trust, collaboration, collective responsibility, and support for teachers' individual and professional needs (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018). Teachers experience higher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, efficacy, engagement, and motivation in these contexts (Anastasiou & Garametsi, 2021; Troesch & Bauer, 2017; Türker & Kahraman, 2021; Wang & Degol, 2016). Positive well-being reinforces persistence in the profession. Conversely, dysfunctional leadership, unsupportive workplace relationships, overwhelming demands, and lack of autonomy are tied to burnout,

causing teachers to question their career fit and consider leaving (Bickmore & Dowell, 2018; Sutchter et al., 2016). Difficult work conditions erode teachers' health, motivation, and sense of efficacy, hindering retention (Prilleltensky et al., 2016; Ryan et al., 2017).

Another important area of analysis is the study of so-called stay interviews aiming to improve teacher retention. School administrators conduct what is referred to as the stay interview meeting they have with the teachers to understand more about why the teachers wish to stay with the school and to address the problem proactively (Moore et al., 2018). Based on the literature review, stay interviews can be used to retain teachers because they foster free communication, highlight the value of teachers, and give leadership a way to act swiftly in the face of dissatisfaction (Martinez & McAbee, 2020; Moore et al., 2018). It seems that the stay interviews can reveal the issues threatening teacher retention and lead to particular changes in working conditions since these interviews allow educators to share their concerns and receive listen carefully.

A third theme relates to research on teacher attrition issues focusing on private school contexts. There is more research on public schools, while less literature addresses organizational features that affect teacher retention and burnout in the private sector (Oke et al., 2016). Qualitative research indicates that private school teachers may have unique turnover risks due to the varied organizational structures not found in most public schools (Bickmore & Dowell, 2018; Moore, 2018). For example, school administrators from private schools tend to have an increased level of authority in decision-making, which can either aggravate or improve turnover depending on the leadership strategies implemented (Bickmore & Dowell, 2018).

This literature review is on teacher retention with a decade-based keyword search and classified the themes into organizational well-being, attrition patterns in private schools, and stay

interviews. The review covers a range of methodological approaches, including quantitative methods, such as the analysis of datasets and surveys, and qualitative methods, such as in-depth case studies, and mixed-method designs. A multidimensional perspective is contrasted, refreshing our understanding of the significance of school leadership, workplace relationships, teacher voice, acceptable workload, growth opportunities in sustaining teaching careers, proper job satisfaction, and teacher well-being; however, obstacles such as over-reliance on self-report data still need to be addressed. Still, it presents valuable information that can be used in research, policy, and practice to reduce teacher turnover.

Organizational Well-Being

One of the dominant themes in literature is the phenomenon that organizational contexts affect teacher well-being, ultimately resulting in teacher attrition. Well-being is a multifaceted concept that includes physical, mental, emotional, and social health and satisfaction (Anastasiou and Garametsi, 2021). Environments in which there is positive teacher well-being are featured supportive leadership approaches, collaborative relationships among teachers, teacher autonomy and voice in decision-making, manageable workloads, and a climate of trust and respect (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018; Troesch & Bauer, 2017; Wang & Degol, 2016). These organizational facets have been related to elevated teacher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, motivation, efficacy, and plans to remain in the profession. On the contrary, ineffective leadership, job overload, a decline of autonomy, bad workplace relationships, and the lack of growth opportunities destroy teacher well-being, thus raising the risks of burnout, exhaustion, and turnover (Bickmore & Dowell, 2018; Prilleltensky et al., 2016; Ryan et al., 2017; Sutchter et al., 2016). This research reveals how a school's structural and social context influence teachers' everyday experiences and feelings, thus affecting their health, morale, and

desires to stay committed to teaching.

Supportive School Leadership

Among leadership approaches that are most predictive of teacher well-being and retention is the one that is supportive and trust-building. This is consistent across many studies which have different methodologies. Equally, the quantitative research of Anderson (2019) that investigated North Carolina teachers demonstrated a significant relationship between perceived principals' support and teacher's job satisfaction and anticipated longevity in the profession. Teachers who felt backed up by their administrators could maintain positive views of their working conditions and also want to continue teaching for the long term. Some leadership practices that improve teacher well-being and turnover are mentoring and instructional resources, listening and addressing teachers' concerns, and delegating classroom decisions (Bickmore & Dowell, 2018; Martinez & McAbee, 2020). Supportive actions enhance the impression that instructors and students share the same objectives and demonstrate that teachers are essential participants in the educational process.

In the study [by Martinez and McAbee [2020] that summarizes research on the impact of administrative support interventions, the conclusion was that leadership styles aligning towards teacher voice, shared leadership, P.D. access, and autonomy indicated potential for enhancing teacher job satisfaction and retention rates. On the contrary, the results of the research point to the fact that the more authoritarian, top-down leadership models lead to a decrease in trust between administrators and teachers, which inevitably causes negative consequences like teacher stress and professional burnout. In her case study of teachers who leave "no excuses" charter schools, Torres (2016) found that principals' unilateral authority and lack of transparency regarding high-performance expectations contribute to the development of relational distrust,

perceptions of disrespect, and eventual teacher exit. From the research, it emerged that leaders who exert rigid control over classroom processes without providing teachers with input into decisions make teachers. Overall, school leadership approaches have been confirmed to be notably influential in what teachers go through daily and their well-being. Environments characterized by leadership that is available build trust and offers development opportunities while decentralizing leadership and decision-making are known to be associated with the health, satisfaction, commitment, and retention of the teachers (Anderson, 2019; Bickmore & Dowell, 2018; Martinez & McAbee, 2020).

Collaborative Climate and Peer Relationships

Considering leadership, relationships with peers also provide another important social dimension of schools, relevant to teachers' well-being and the wish to stay in the profession. For Ryan et al. (2017), an environment where positive and collaborative peer interactions are the main emphasis is associated with a community feeling, meaning, and support that improves the quality of work experiences. For instance, Türker and Kahraman (2021) applied national survey data to examine relationships between school climate, colleague ties, and job satisfaction in Turkish teachers. The results of their analyses were found to be a positive association between perceptions of professional peer supportive interactions and both teacher job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Similarly, Geiger and Pivovarova (2018) explored the connections between the climate in the schools, teacher and staff working conditions, and teachers' retention using data from school surveys and district records. They found that schools with more collaborative environments had significantly lower teacher exit rates, even after controlling for student demographic differences. Fostering opportunities for collaborative planning, peer observation, and team teaching facilitates collaborative problem-solving and collective

responsibility for outcomes. However, research also indicates that dysfunctional workplace relationships predicated on distrust, competition, or isolation erode teacher well-being. In their survey of 1866 U.S. teachers, Ryan et al. (2017) identified conflicts with administrators and colleagues as sources of frustration and emotional exhaustion associated with higher turnover intentions. Teachers without accessible mentors or close peers express lower job satisfaction and belonging (Martinez & McAbee, 2020). Building community through social events and establishing mentoring programs leads to the development of teacher support networks, which has been found to contribute to teacher retention (Moore et al., 2018). Summarily, the studies have shown that the school's social dynamics affect the well-being and continuity of teachers.

Supportive environments, mutual trust, respect, teamwork, and access to collegial support positively influence the teachers' commitment to and experiences with organizations. However, competitive environments make people lonely and hinder happiness. Studies have shown that intentional activities aimed at fostering community through collaborative programs are valuable.

Teacher Autonomy and Voice

Professional autonomy, another organizational factor relating to teacher well-being, will further be discussed as teachers have discretion over classroom processes and decision-making influence in their schools. Lack of autonomy was among the key factors linked to turnover intentions and teacher dissatisfaction in Nguyen et al.'s (2019) systematic review. In contrast, research shows that teachers' involvement in school policies and reform efforts makes them feel more satisfied with their jobs and that they intend to stay in the profession (Anastasiou & Garametsi, 2021; Holme et al., 2018). For instance, Anastasiou and Garametsi (2021) studied a sample of Greek secondary school teachers. They found out that the teachers who work in those schools where the democratic leadership approach is prevalent (involves teachers in decision-making) have higher levels of job satisfaction. Trust in the teachers' expertise is implied by

allowing them to take on the driver's seat in initiatives aimed at improving classroom practice. Subsequently, this feeling of capability and self-determination strengthens workplace motivation and organizational commitment.

Relatedly, using administrative data, Holme et al. (2018) linked schools with higher teacher influence over policy with lower teacher exit rates in the following year. Their analyses controlled for other organizational variables, isolating the specific contribution of teacher's voice to retention. Teachers want meaningful input into reforms, curricula, and resource allocation that shape their daily practice. Facilitating participatory decision-making structures sustains a teacher's sense of purpose and agency. However, traditional top-down leadership models concentrating authority solely with administrators undercut teacher autonomy and involvement in school improvement efforts. Lack of voice in reform implementation processes is tied to disempowerment and deprofessionalization, increasing risks of exhaustion and turnover (Torres, 2016). Environments that allow teachers to shape policies and initiatives related to their work appear critical for supporting well-being and long-term commitment to the profession.

Manageable Work Demands

A further organizational facet linked to teacher well-being is reasonably calibrated workplace demands and adequate support to meet expectations. Studies consistently tie overwhelming workloads and student behavior challenges to teacher stress, burnout, and turnover intentions (Prilleltensky et al., 2016; Sutchter et al., 2016). Heavy teaching and administrative demands coupled with insufficient resources erode instructors' ability to effectively perform their jobs, negatively impacting self-efficacy, emotional health, and desires to remain in teaching. For example, Prilleltensky et al. (2016) conceptually link high workload driven by elevated student needs and insufficient staffing to teacher stress and lowered instructor

self-efficacy. Teachers need help to meet ever-growing demands with inadequate support experience exhaustion and questioning of their competence. These sentiments increase the risks of attrition.

Similarly, Sutchter et al. (2016) attribute many assignments that cover multiple courses or student needs to the cause of teacher dissatisfaction in their policy review. Work structures that do not make the effective delivery of high-quality instruction possible cause the dysfunction of teacher efficacy. Conversely, teachers who are frustrated or torn between roles due to ambiguous or overwhelming expectations are more likely to consider other careers. On the other hand, research shows that reasonable class size, manageable teaching loads, and the students' needs all contribute to more excellent retention of teachers (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). Conditions that give teachers the feeling that they can manage the core instructional and relational responsibilities without burnout enable them to have continued motivation. Realizable demands facilitate teacher' beliefs that their schools have sufficient infrastructure to help them excel. In summary, overwhelming work expectations and insufficient resources to meet needs take a toll on teachers' emotional health and self-efficacy, increasing turnover risks (Prilleltensky et al. 2016; Sutchter et al. 2016). Structures ensuring adequate supports are in place to allow teachers to fulfill responsibilities without excessive strain facilitate instructor well-being and desires to continue teaching.

Work-Life Balance

Other structural characteristics of working conditions pivotal to teacher well-being and retention include workers achieving a reasonable balance between work and life. Schools featuring excessively long hours and tasks that trespass into one's private time lead to dissatisfaction and a greater predisposition to burnout among teachers (Carver-Thomas &

Darling-Hammond, 2017; Moore et al., 2018). The discrepancy between professional obligations and personal requirements spoils chances for revitalization, refreshing, and attending to family matters. Illustratively, in their nationwide policy analysis, Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) point to a long workday as one of the factors in teacher attrition. Teachers frequently work outside teaching responsibilities (e.g., on lesson planning, grading, and administrative tasks) and suffer role overload and work-family conflicts. Emotional exhaustion and the longing to quit the profession are associated with the effects of these strains. Moreover, Moore et al. (2018) draft that the obstacles to accomplishing work-life balance because of heavy extra jobs were the factors that led the old private school teachers to quit their jobs in Texas according to their qualitative research. The indicators often mentioned were school-related duties that made participants feel burnt out and dissatisfied.

The work imposed on teachers that reduced time for oneself was psychologically draining and eroded well-being. Instead, in such schools, schooling, instead of being a culture that denies instructors personal/professional balance, becomes one that prioritizes instructors' balance between professional and personal needs. Policies supporting the establishment and management of strategic boundaries and protected time-off choices communicate the organizational view that teachers' lives outside school matter. The culture of care is the main factor that impacts employees' emotional well-being and willingness to continue working for an organization (Troesch & Bauer, 2017). In conclusion, research underlines that those professional conditions hamper teachers from finding an equilibrium between school duties and personal needs and are linked to decreased well-being. Nevertheless, supportive policies providing work-life balance strengthen teachers' physical and mental completeness and self-care, leading to retaining teachers.

Growth and Recognition

The final organizational dimension related to teachers' well-being is staff career pathways and recognition within the school. Professional learning, leadership opportunities, or career progression are only possible if there are chances for them. The resulting skill development can stagnate, and dissatisfaction may follow (Gimbert & Kapa, 2022; Kraft et al., 2016). However, school cultures that allow and promote new learning experiences and appreciate teachers to the brim are related to increased job satisfaction and commitment. For example, Gimbert and Kapa (2022) used national survey data to undertake statistical modeling, revealing access to leadership roles as a significant predictor of mid-career teacher retention. There is always a chance to mentor peers formally or be a part of decision-making, which provides sufficient challenge and purpose for smooth professional growth. There is a tendency for those teachers who can widen their sphere of influence and practice their knowledge to show a high level of job satisfaction and have the intention to continue in that field.

Moreover, the authors of Kraft et al. (2016) also saw schools with more robust professional development support as linked with less voluntary turnover. The practitioner's skill growth increased through specific training to enhance their practice. The content P.D. entails the institution's commitment to continuously educating and improving faculty members to be effective in the classroom. Moreover, school cultures bring positive contributions and value to teachers emanating from respectful treatment or acknowledgments (Nguyen et al., 2019). Poor performance evaluation leads people to undervalue the significance and usefulness of their tasks. Maintaining well-being requires teachers to consistently reflect on how their actions positively influence their surroundings. In summary, research shows that professional learning, leadership,

and recognition opportunities lead to a continuous challenge, purpose, and perceived impact – keep the satisfaction and commitment that are needed to keep teachers (Gimbert & Kapa, 2022; Kraft et al., 2016; Nguyen et al., 2019). Teachers should not be overlooked or underappreciated in their work environments, as this will inevitably lead to stagnation and high turnover in the teaching profession.

Summarizing the findings, the organizational quality of schools is a broad theme identified in the literature as a significant factor contributing to teacher stress, which leads to intentions to leave and actual turnover. The numerous elements of the social and structural workplace context inform teachers' daily experiences, which determine their health, motivations, and job perceptions. Leadership types, collaborative relationships, decision-making accountability, manageable workloads, work-life balance, and opportunities for growth are salient stressors linked to teacher burnout, satisfaction, organizational commitment, and retention (Darling-Hammond, 2020). Studies using a range of methodologies across different settings have shown that the essentials of developing positive school climates that support teachers in meeting their professional, personal, and emotional needs for sustaining a fulfilling teaching career are essentially universal.

Teacher Attrition in Private Schools

Even though public K-12 schools have been vastly studied in retention research, the factors influencing attrition in private school contexts still need to be studied. Some literature offers early proof that the unique retention challenges private school teachers may face result from specific structural and policy differences from public schools. The dynamics of teacher persistence and burnout in the private education sector should be understood more and better to inform efficient context-specific retention strategies. This part summarizes the research

literature on the private K-12 school environment's teacher turnover trends and drivers within the last ten years. Centralized Leadership, Compensation and Benefits, Professional Development and Growth Opportunities, and Stress and Work-Life Balance are some central issues associated with staff turnover risk in the private sector. Although central in identifying private schools' differentiation, the literature is limited by the scarcity of retention data, relying on self-report measures, the restricted applicability of localized samples, and the general lack of adequate, evidence-based retention initiatives prescribed to private settings. The recommendations for future research to fill this gap are discussed.

Centralized Governance and Leadership

An outstanding issue that influences teachers' experiences in private schools is governance structure and leadership styles. In public education, distributed leadership models that involve teacher voice in collaborative decision-making are associated with more instructors' job satisfaction and retention intentions (Anastasiou & Garametsi, 2021; Holme et al., 2018). Nevertheless, principals or leadership teams usually exercise one-sided power in private schools (Bickmore & Dowell, 2018). We should also look at the qualitative studies by Bickmore and Dowell (2018) that showed that authoritarian leadership in charter schools negatively affected administrator-teacher trust and perceived respect, thus increasing teacher desires to leave. After the study, the scholars found that the lack of teachers' input in policies governing their daily practice undermined teachers' autonomy and competence, which are crucial for motivation and persistence.

Relevantly, Moore's (2018) qualitative research study of teacher attrition in Texas' private schools ascertained that being deprived of involvement in organizational decisions was the main reason for teacher turnover. Responders stated feeling voiceless about formulating policies, the

disciplining procedures, and the nature of instructional support, which resulted in insensitivity and disempowered them. (Anastasiou & Garametsi, 2021 Holme et al., 2018), classroom teaching professionals regard the participatory decision-making process as crucial for conveying professional value, promoting engagement, and encouraging retention. Nonetheless, in most private schools, this kind of leadership is centralized and closed so that the administrators are the only ones in control (Bickmore & Dowell, 2018; Moore, 2018). The risk of disempowering the instructors by not providing teacher participation in reforms and programs leading to classroom practices is high.

Although under the form of muted teacher-evaluated centralized authority, private education is seen to have structural norms. Research shows that leadership strategies still significantly influence the issue of turnover. Leaders of private schools who promote and build trust create a space that supports teachers' learning and development and listen to their concerns without judging them, as they trust their expertise. They also promote teacher autonomy where it is possible and let teachers understand together, with their leaders, what the objectives are as well as the importance of respecting the expertise that teachers possess (Bickmore & Dowell, 2018; These leadership behaviors shape how teachers perceive themselves, their colleagues and their work, advocate for themselves and are more likely to stay despite the structural context. On the other hand, leaders need to be more flexible. Having complete power that is not regulated, or lack of transparency regarding expectations results in damaged relationships and employee turnover. In the leadership of private schools, authority is more concentrated, yet administrative styles and approaches also determine whether teachers feel supported or discouraged in their professional practice. From the above, despite the lack of empirical data, private schools tend to have leadership and decision-making structures that give teachers less

voice and autonomy compared to typical public schools. The restrictions implied on the involvement of the instructors in the initiatives defining the classroom practice are the measures that may degrade the position of the instructors. Despite this, research shows that even in the centralized hierarchy, leaders still hold dispositions of supportiveness, collaboration, and trust-building that can minimize adverse retention outcomes through relationships. Despite the existing understanding of leadership approaches pertinent to the private education sector, more profound research in this domain is required.

Compensation and Benefits

Another structural factor potentially heightening attrition risks unique to private schools is compensation and benefits. Teacher salary emerges consistently in literature as a significant, albeit complex, predictor of retention intentions. While not generally the primary reason teachers exit the field, inadequate pay and high work demands limit many instructors' career sustainability (Torres, 2016). Private school teacher salaries are notably lower than their public counterparts. The National Center for Education Statistics indicates average starting salaries of \$36,580 in private schools versus \$41,163 in public schools, with gaps widening at career levels (Gimbert & Kapa, 2022). On average, public school teacher compensation exceeds that of private counterparts by over 25%, accounting for salaries and employer-sponsored benefits like healthcare, retirement savings plans, and tuition reimbursement (Gimbert & Kapa, 2022). For early career teachers financing living expenses and student loans, compensation disadvantages in private education may tip decisions to change settings or leave the classroom.

Moore's (2018) qualitative study of Texas private school turnover found inadequate pay was a primary driver of attrition, alongside a lack of P.D. support and voice in decision-making. Participants reported that insufficient wages failing to reflect long work hours strained emotional

health and relationships outside school by requiring second jobs or relocation from unsustainable financial situations. Similarly, Oke et al.'s (2016) literature review named low pay and benefits as a recurring private school-specific turnover contributor absent the union-negotiated compensation structures protecting many public instructors. While many private school teachers' express strong intrinsic motivations, research indicates external hygiene factors like fair pay matter for longer-term career continuation (Torres, 2016). Compensation constraints in private education compound other retention challenges from restrictive leadership approaches and developmental opportunities discussed next.

In conclusion, though comparative data is lacking, a review of national wage statistics and qualitative studies suggests that private school teachers' lower comparative salaries and benefits packages may uniquely and negatively influence their intentions to remain in the profession. Further quantifying these associations would clarify compensation's role in differentiating public and private teacher retention patterns.

Professional Development and Growth

Access to meaningful professional development and leadership growth opportunities also diverges between public and private education in ways that influence teacher turnover. Public schools with robust P.D. systems sustaining continuous instructional skill development and peer collaboration have significantly lower teacher exit rates (Kraft et al., 2016). However, qualitative evidence suggests that private schools' limited, stagnating P.D. offerings contribute to attrition risks (Moore, 2018). Without structures to hone practice, instructors lose a sense of purpose and growth vital for career persistence (Gimbert & Kapa, 2022). Leadership opportunities allowing teachers to formally mentor peers or shape initiatives reinforce value and challenge stemming turnover (Gimbert & Kapa, 2022). However, Moore (2018) found that Texas private school

teachers needed access to leadership roles or decision-making channels to apply expertise. When professional learning and advancement stagnate, classrooms become intellectually deadening and demotivating places for ambitious educators seeking improvement.

Public-school systems usually have incentives in terms of tuition reimbursement or sabbatical allowances that encourage teachers to take up advanced certifications to broaden their responsibilities and financial rewards over their careers. (Torres, 2016). The sacrifices of time and salary recognized early on in the prospect phase are sustained by the pathways since they provide long-term benefits for these commitments; however, the scant data indicates that a lack of built-in advancement incentives in private schools might particularly fuel turnover intentions in unstable early career stages as instructors navigate trajectories. The review of teacher preferences surveys conducted by Oke et al. (2016) indicates that the absence of a structure promotion pipeline is one factor that leads to the private school attrition risks facing institutions while also preventing them from achieving intended retention goals. The comparative research needs to be more varied. However, available papers agree that private education constraints on professional growth may be one of the factors compounding the other frustration sources creating burnout and voluntary resignations. These interpretations could be backed by more detailed data so that the pathway to developing contextualized professional development aimed at retaining ambitious instructors would become more apparent.

Stress and Work-Life Balance

Lastly, the qualitative evidence indicates that some particular work environments and climates in private schools may lead to more teacher stress and work-life imbalance, likely affecting teachers' turnover intentions. Public school literature suggests that reasonable workloads and student discipline levels mediate the relationship between teacher retention

burnout and self-efficacy (Prilleltensky et al., 2016; Kraft et al., 2016). On the other hand, heavy teaching assignments and extensive administrative and extracurricular requirements are the norm in many private school contracts (Torres, 2016). For Bickmore and Dowell (2018), teachers from charter schools viewed the overwhelming demands and the lack of work-life boundaries as disregard for their overall well-being, thus increasing their desire to seek sustainable positions. Also, Moore (2018) tied high teacher turnover among Texas private schools to a need for more personal time, a decision-making voice, and insufficient wages. Poor working conditions that do not allow teachers to meet their established standards erode perceptions of efficacy and competency, vital to motivation and health (Prilleltensky et al., 2016). The culture of overworking in private schools often results in burnout of passionate teachers.

Although the limited empirical data does not allow for conclusive comparisons, research suggests higher rates of student behavior and school discipline problems in private education, with teachers citing a lack of leadership support to meet higher demands as a job dissatisfier. The failure to manage chronic student disruption and conflict reduces teachers' emotional reserves more than conduct leads to punishment as the regular practice of "no excuses" in charter schools (Bickmore & Dowell, 2018). In the private context, student-teacher relationships may worsen more rapidly without the necessary support structures to accommodate heightened behavioral needs, leading to disengagement. In addition, family expectations standards for private school parent involvement models frequently require teachers to handle duties that include massive communication with parents, volunteer coordination, fundraising activities, and student mentoring (Torres, 2016). Being overworked due to unfulfilled responsibilities gradually depletes personal time and energy levels needed to carry out the teaching duties without experiencing burnout. Just like Sutchter et al. (2016) state, at public schools, private teachers get

frustrated, exhausted, and emotionally drained by unsustainable workplace demands, unsurprisingly questioning their persistence.

Comparative empirical research is limited regarding dissimilar employee retention outcomes; nevertheless, qualitative studies indicate that "normalized overwork" cultures aggravated by increased student needs typical of private school settings tend to deplete teachers' reserves over time more than do better-resourced public schools governed by a distributive leadership style, and thereby influence burnout risks (Bickmore & Dowell, 2018). Nevertheless, the term private education covers a wide range of phenomena, which is why the dynamics expressed differently by the institutional diversity and by the way these institutions approach staff well-being, working with reasonable conditions. In conclusion, Torres (2016) asserts that "the teacher turnover problem is complex and context-specific," being influenced by the combination of policies and leadership choices at organizational levels and teachers' developmental needs, which can promote or destroy career commitment; however, disentangling nuances in climate and related trends in retention between public and private areas of learning would provide critical information for context-specific implementation.

Stay Interview Survey

Research is growing around the possibility of stay interviews as organizational tools to enhance teacher retention. Stay interviews are meetings between school leaders and teachers purposely designed to understand the determinants of the teachers' retention of their positions (Moore et al., 2018). Despite its emerging nature, the initial studies have shown that the frequent stay interviews may boost teacher retention since it provides teachers with open communication channels, values teachers, and allows leadership to respond to dissatisfaction threats before they escalate into turnover (Martinez & McAbee, 2020; Moore et al., 2018). Though thorough studies

providing evidence on the effects of retention rates are limited, available qualitative studies present stay interviews as an essential source of feedback urging organizational transformation. In addition, research indicates a great deal of variance among districts and schools in how stay interviews are carried out. Thus, there is a need for a standard practice or a shared understanding of operation. The current body of research contributes to establishing and verifying the theory underlying stay interviews as a potentially beneficial technique for teacher retention, which deserves further exploration and elaboration.

Conceptual Origins

The stay interview idea stems from the literature on employee turnover studies in business. Turnover costs are costly to the bottom line; companies began to reach out to existing staff who are valued employees and gain their input as to why they remained in their current positions and what additional support they might need to continue. Moore et al. (2018). Lessons learned shape leadership decisions that aim to improve the conditions of work to uphold employee delight and trustworthiness. In response to the devastating effects of teacher turnover on school stability and student outcomes, educators have lately adapted this retention approach to education (Martinez & McAbee, 2020; Moore et al., 2018). Regular personnel interviews with teachers to seek out motivations to stay give actionable data that can help to strengthen existing support structures. Stay interviews mark a change of direction from exiting employee interviews conducted after the staff members leave to conversations with the ones staying. Conceptually, stay interviews resemble constructive behaviorist views, emphasizing that environmental conditions and individual perceptions shape behaviors such as turnover (Martinez & McAbee, 2020).

Schools socialize teachers to the conditions and rules of daily practice in the workplace

through policies, practices, climate, and relationships. These conditions and rules also motivate teachers to be committed or otherwise leave the system. Stay interviews are the source of the insights that clarify how the structures in place work to design system changes; however, emerging theories and research affirm the continuance of stay interviews as a diagnostic tool that authentically gives teachers a voice to inform best supportive leadership practices and work environment improvement, potentially leading to retention (Martinez and McAbee, 2020; Moore et al., 2018). More studies on teacher retention are required to be conducted in order to develop compound models.

Implementation Approaches

School systems use varied means of implementing stay interviews; the overall objectives of getting feedback from teachers on retention factors remain constant. Interviews can range from informal conversations to extremely structured schemes, annual processes, and monthly dialogues, as stated by Moore et al. (2018). Both the administrator and teacher leader are interviewers of the process. However, finding the best design and consistency parameters is an area that still needs to be studied. Most studies demonstrate that a non-family manager (Director of Human Resources) should interview to promote open sharing and eliminate evaluation concerns (Martinez & McAbee, 2020; Moore et al., 2018).

Confidentiality and explicitly avoiding discussion of retaliation during the process create trust. Allowing educators to submit online responses in advance may facilitate information and care. The research(s) advocate(s) the repeating stay interviews conducted on an annual basis to maintain open communication channels and detect emerging problems early (Martinez & McAbee, 2020; Moore et al., 2018). Although no definite standards are being set, Bi-Annual interview intervals ensure regular contact, which schools lack most often. Annually conducted

interviews cannot address the ongoing challenges in a timely way. For structure, research has shown that interviews should consist of broad, open-ended inquiries that will enable teachers to illustrate the reasons and the needs.

Even though uniform questions improve the process of extracting trends by analyzing the results, administrators can use the notes of teachers' responses to trace the teacher input to the improvement initiatives. Generally, literature calls for authentic stay interviews characterized by frequent informal conversations centered on only the elements that can influence continuity of professional, unconnected to performance assessment by leaders whom the workers trust and who have systems for collecting and linking feedback to action (Martinez & McAbee, 2020; Moore et al., 2018). The diversity of the current applications demonstrates that more detail is required in the development principles.

Benefits of Teacher Retention

The literature on the effects of stay interviews on teacher retention remains limited and inconsistent, but the existing studies suggest positive outcomes for teacher persistence and school improvement. First, interviews provide a space for a "stay factors" conversation, leading to their voicing, valuing, and actioning. In their study EMCSE 12 in Texas, Moore et al. (2018) discovered that teachers appreciated a safe space to express their frustrations and suggestions without judgment freely. The ability to submit anonymous opinions inhibited accumulated frustrations when not handled, which could trigger resignations. In addition, research shows that stay interviews contribute to the implementation of two-way communication, which needs to be improved in matters relating to the administration and teaching staff (Martinez & McAbee, 2020; Moore et al., 2018). While dialogue shows teachers as co-operators in reforming the system, it also

facilitates the leaders in getting the perspective from the lower ranks on the needed improvements. Improving school communication networks strengthens teachers' feelings of belonging, worth, and sense of commitment. Furthermore, researchers argue that stay interviews lower the state of affairs by which school administrators implement decision-making steps that are based on data gathered by teacher input and which aim to address problematic policies or practices that teachers reveal before they become a reason for them to leave (Martinez & McAbee, 2020; Moore et al., 2018).

Interviews are a source of information that helps leaders determine what issues in the company have the highest leverage in improving retention. Although these benefits are attractive (only a few scientific researchers prove them), there needs to be conclusive evidence that the stay interviews lead to a measurable reduction in teacher turnover. There is a need for mixed methods and longitudinal studies on a larger scale to quantify the effects on graduation rates and the processes involved. While the qualitative aspects highlight the potential values, the quantitative data is yet to be found. Despite this, initial studies suggest that stay interviews are worthy of attention for developing multiple-dimensional teacher retention plans.

Benefits Beyond Retention

Conducting regular stay interviews also has some auxiliary advantages in schools besides the fact that they may increase teacher retention rates. To begin with, shared leadership fosters distributed leadership by transforming teachers into co-leaders of the reform processes instead of their objects. This targeted empowerment and agency underpinning could result in positive effects on school climate and culture, over and above retention outcomes. Research indicates that stay interviews are a vehicle for

leadership development and building administrators' capacity to cultivate trust, actively listen, and align teacher feedback and actions (Moore et al., 2018). Routine practice develops connection and communication capacities transferable to other school processes. Leadership development in these competencies can be effective in the whole school.

Additionally, the interview processes generate data that can be applied to many types of organizational improvements apart from retention problems that comprise modification of instructional resources and P.D. offerings, changes in workplace policies and staffing patterns, and extra perks like lounge upgrading (Martinez & McAbee, 2020; Moore et al., 2018). The teacher insights pinpoint the lacking parts of school systems; however, investigations that show these potential side benefits still need to be completed. Early findings, however, show that stay interviews facilitate collaborative leadership and data-driven improvements that go beyond retaining teachers. The proposed secondary gains must be proven and explained.

Limitations and Considerations

Besides likely benefits, stay interviews are known to have limitations to account for. Initially, with anonymity, the instructors may feel confident in divulging their confidential problems concerning leadership or the workplace (Moore et al., 2018). Ensuring confidentiality is a must, but results aggregation might get in the way. Anonymous surveys could be used alongside interviews, but it then deprives room for interchangeable back-and-forth dialogue and explanations. Furthermore, temporary interviews cannot fix administrative problems if leadership or cultural issues are the root cause (Martínez & McAbee, 2020). Issues that emerge during the interview may need to

be addressed at a deeper level, and intervention may be needed beyond interviews. Seeing interviews as a magic bullet rather than a part of a holistic retention process could lead to unrealistic expectations. Research reveals that the interviews may not be credited when there is no evidence of any action based on teacher feedback (Moore et al., 2018). The teachers expect an observable change in the workplace due to their input. Not completing the loop reduces the process's reliability and benefits. This leads to a lower impact of interviews, as implementation is inconsistent (Martinez & McAbee, 2020). Lack of standardized protocols, sporadic incidents, and frequent administrator turnovers complicate maintaining desirable practices. Having stability and fidelity of implementation is still a problem.

In essence, although a helpful diagnostic retention tool, stay interviews have limitations that should be accounted for. Masking one's identity, establishing realistic expectations, visible response to teacher input, and standardization of procedures can maximize the potential benefits of retaining teachers through stay interviews. In other words, stay interviews have great potential as a system improvement method, which can also positively affect teacher retention. A stay interview is a two-way conversation through which teachers can confidentially share the organizational aspects that encourage retention. In this lens, leader responses to identified areas of need may strengthen support systems and climate to keep teachers satisfied and committed to their work. Many research gaps still exist in this area, such as varied implementation methods and a need for rigorous empirical studies evaluating the effect on retention. Wide-scale mixed methods research must be done to establish the relationships between stay interview characteristics, resultant organizational changes, and teacher attrition rates. Furthermore,

research that would enhance understanding of the optimal design, consistency parameters, evaluation protocols, and cost-effectiveness would develop stay interviews as a viable organizational intervention.

This review is of much value as it draws together various publications on teacher retention by identifying essential themes of organizational well-being, career conversations, and the reasons for teachers leaving private schools. Various methodological perspectives offer complementary information. Qualitative studies provide vivid descriptions of how leadership, team spirit, the work environment, and other organizational factors interact with teacher motivation and health and build up the teacher's decision to stay. Large-scale data utilize regression approaches, which highly increase predictive relationship internal consistency. Systematic reviews and meta-analyses can synthesize large-scale complexity. Together, they give us a multifarious knowledge base; however, we must recognize that those limitations can significantly reduce the literature's practical usability to support evidence-based reforms. What is most striking is that many experimental studies struggle to establish that a given initiative, such as stay interview programs, is efficacious regarding actual teacher retention in the long term.

Confounding variables may account for observed outcomes, making it difficult to isolate the true effect of a given intervention. For example, schools with naturally positive environments may attract and retain teachers regardless of any specific retention strategy, such as stay interviews. Establishing causality requires comparing the outcomes of implemented interventions against counterfactual scenarios—what would have happened in the absence of the intervention. Additionally, reliance on self-administered

surveys can introduce bias, particularly when the same individual provides data for both predictor and outcome variables, leading to common method variance. The absence of anonymity may also result in socially desirable responses rather than honest feedback.

Many existing studies rely solely on perceptual data, which limits the strength of their conclusions. Small, homogeneous samples further restrict the generalizability of findings. While national datasets offer the potential for broader inferences, they must also include qualitative dimensions to provide context and depth. A mixed methods design offers the advantage of both breadth and depth, enabling a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the factors influencing teacher retention.

Literature still needs to be more centered on the public schools with less consideration for the causes and remedies specific to the private institution settings; however, the circumstances could directly apply and generate different risks. Questions remain as to whether the fundamental differences in autonomy, decision-making, leadership styles, compensation policies, and development formats, which vary from public to private education, are the fundamental differences in retention pathways. It is essential to provide different experiences by separating them for specific reactions. Finally, besides the lack of substantial research on the cost-effective basis of programs, problems with balancing tight budgets and retention requirements exist. Furthering research into policies and implementation sciences would thus enhance the utility.

Comparative public/private research: analyzing organizational varieties in how leadership models, workplace policies/supports, career trajectories, etc., differently come into play with teachers' workplace experiences and retention outcomes between public and private schools will allow for a more efficient, tailored response that is specific and suited to local contexts, based on

empirically verified interventions. Isolation of significant differentiators is necessary. Cost-benefit analysis: ascertaining the costs associated with implementing, sustaining, and growing context-centric retention interventions alongside the savings created by reducing staff attrition would improve the actual utility of such interventions for cash-strapped districts. Proofing return on investment highlights the high return priorities for change management.

By taking a well-rounded and thoughtful approach—one that compares different strategies, looks at their impact from multiple angles, and considers long-term costs—research can help identify which practices truly support teachers in meaningful ways. This kind of work can show how focusing on teacher well-being throughout their careers can lead to better retention. Such a shift could inspire lasting change and encourage greater commitment and investment from students, schools, and the teaching profession as a whole.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study is a mixed method study designed to explore private school teacher through organizational well-being factors using stay interviews as the investigatory tool.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed methods study is to explore how stay interviews can support teacher retention by examining their relationship with organizational well-being in private K–12 schools. In light of the limited research available on teacher attrition and retention practices within private school settings, this study seeks to fill a critical gap by focusing on teachers' perceptions of organizational factors that influence their decision to remain, including job satisfaction, work-life balance, professional learning, communication, collaboration, sense of purpose, and instructional feedback. Anchored in a well-being framework, this research investigates the ways in which stay interviews contribute to supporting teacher well-being and overall retention initiatives. More specifically, it explores: (1) how teachers view the role of stay interviews in promoting their well-being, (2) how they experience key elements of organizational well-being, and (3) what perceived benefits and challenges exist when using stay interviews to help build a healthy and sustainable school environment. The study's findings aim to provide educational leaders and decision-makers in private schools with practical, research-informed

strategies to enhance teacher retention and strengthen their school communities.

The research aimed to provide evidence-based recommendations for independent educational leaders, empowering them to proactively address teacher retention and well-being in private school settings. By offering practical insights and actionable strategies, such as a stay interview survey and individual interviews, this study seeks to contribute to the creation of more supportive and fulfilling work environments for educators, ultimately benefiting primary stakeholders such as teachers, school administrators and students.

Research Questions

To achieve the purposes outlined above, this study was guided by the following research questions:

1. As described by teachers, to what extent is overall well-being supported by the use of stay interviews?
2. Using identified organizational well-being factors, to what extent are teachers' perceptions of organizational well-being described by
 - a. job satisfaction
 - b. work-life balance
 - c. professional development
 - d, communication
 - e. collaboration
 - f. appreciated for contributions
 - g. pedagogical feedback
3. As described by teachers, what were the identified benefits and hindrances of using stay interviews to describe the well-being of their school?

Role of the Researcher

My goal as a researcher was to collect data regarding the perceptions of the participants and to analyze the data with the distinct intention of finding themes, concepts, and processes by which they address retention and well-being. I did not want to taint their voices or the meaning of their responses in any way. As the lead researcher in this study, it was crucial for me to reflect on my own biases to maintain transparency and minimize their influence on the research process and outcomes. With ten years of experience as a public-school teacher and seven years as a teacher and administrator in a private K-12 school, I have gained a deep understanding of teacher retention issues and the unique challenges private schools face. To mitigate potential bias, I engaged in reflective practices, such as journaling and self-reflection, throughout the research process. These practices allowed me to recognize how my personal experiences and assumptions could influence the study, ensuring that the voices of the participants took priority Creswell & Miller, (2000)

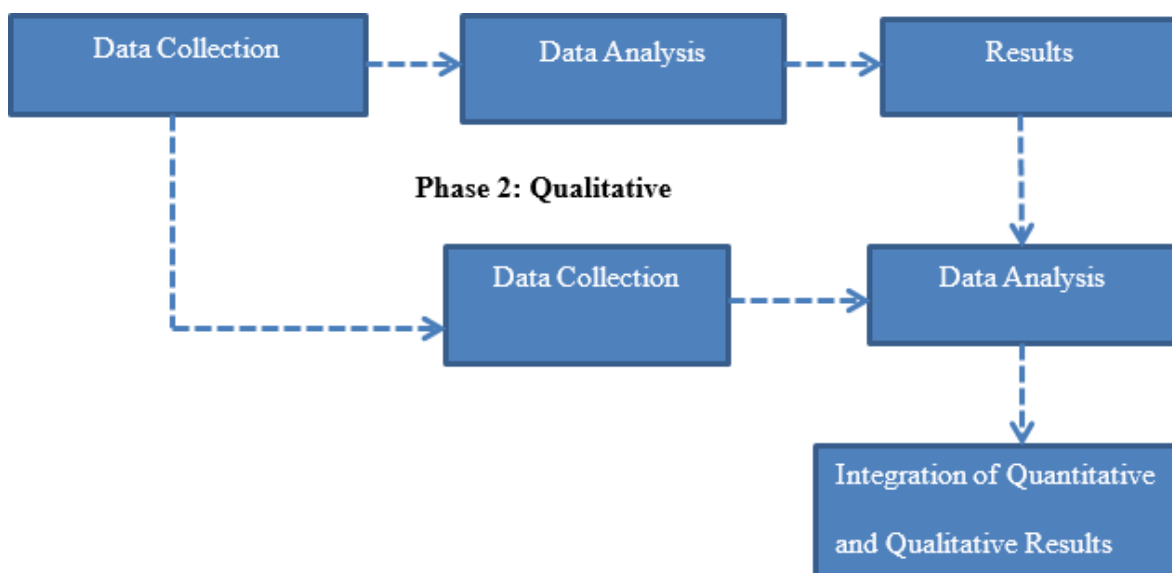
Research Design and Rationale

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed methods design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The research process unfolds in two distinct phases: first, the collection and analysis of quantitative data through the stay interview survey, followed by a qualitative phase that explores and expands upon the initial findings (Figure 1). The quantitative phase establishes the foundation of the study by offering a broad overview of the research problem. It employs standardized measures to assess organizational well-being among private K-12 school teachers. This initial phase provides valuable insights and helps identify key patterns, which are crucial for guiding further investigation (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

The quantitative findings are further enriched by the qualitative phase, which offers a deeper understanding of teachers' beliefs and practices. Specifically, this phase involved semi-structured interviews designed to gather detailed insights into how stay interviews can be used to explore teachers' perceptions of organizational well-being. These interviews aimed to provide a comprehensive and meaningful explanation of teacher perceptions, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the topic. Using both quantitative and qualitative approaches provided a more comprehensive understanding of how teachers perceive organizational well-being. It was suggested that stay interviews could be a valuable tool for assessing teacher retention and organizational health, especially in terms of teacher well-being and turnover intentions in private K-12 schools. This mixed-methods design effectively combined the breadth of quantitative data with the depth of qualitative analysis, offering a well-rounded approach to the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Figure 2

Phase 1; Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods Design (Quantitative)



Participants and Sampling

The target population for this study were teachers employed at Presbyterian Christian School in Hattiesburg Mississippi. The stay interview survey, aimed to sample at least fifty percent teachers from PCS. There were forty-two (42) teachers at PCS. Twenty-eight (28) completed surveys were collected in phase one of the study. Three surveys were rejected because of extensive missing data. Eleven (11) teachers chose not to participate in the online study. The researcher was able to obtain a sixty percent response rate for the Stay Interview Survey. This was described as a purposeful sample because only one school was identified for the study. The sample of twenty-eight (28) teachers represented Presbyterian Christian School at every grade level and specialty. Their years of service, experience, and position were diversified, thus giving a whole picture of the school's population.

- Age and Gender: Seventy percent of participants were female, with ages ranging from the mid-twenties to the mid-fifties.
- Years of Experience: Forty percent of the teachers had less than five years of teaching experience, while thirty percent had more than fifteen years. The remaining thirty percent had between five and fifteen years of experience.
- Grade Levels and Subjects: All grade levels were represented, as the school serves students from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade, including elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Instrument Design and Development

The researcher developed the Stay Interview Survey by drawing inspiration from a comprehensive review of literature on stay interviews and organizational well-being, particularly

through the lens of positive psychology. A key influence was Seligman’s PERMA Model (Seligman, 2011), which is widely recognized as a robust framework for measuring well-being. The PERMA Profiler (Butler & Kern, 2016) and the PERMA Workplace Profiler (Kern et al., 2015) have been extensively tested for reliability and validity in assessing general and workplace well-being. These established instruments helped guide the selection of survey components, ensuring the tool effectively captured the organizational well-being of teachers.

The stay interview survey was designed to measure teacher well-being using a 7-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). Each Likert-scale item corresponded to one of five well-being factors identified in the literature review. To provide deeper insights beyond numerical ratings, each Likert-scale question was followed by an open-ended response prompt, allowing participants to elaborate on their perceptions and experiences. In addition to well-being measures, the survey collected basic demographic data, including:

- Gender
- Years of teaching experience
- Grade level taught
- Any additional relevant professional background details

To ensure secure and ethical data collection, the survey was administered through Qualtrics, an online survey platform. All responses were securely stored in a Box folder, in full compliance with Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines. Anonymity was strictly maintained, allowing teachers to provide candid feedback without concerns about identification.

PERMA Framework and Corresponding Factors

The PERMA framework outlines five essential elements of well-being. Positive Emotion refers to experiencing joy, gratitude, and optimism in daily life—feelings that help build

resilience and enhance overall life satisfaction. Engagement is about being deeply involved in meaningful and absorbing activities; when individuals are in a state of flow, they feel energized and fully present. Relationships highlight the importance of strong, supportive, and positive connections with others, which foster belonging, reduce stress, and contribute significantly to emotional health. Meaning involves feeling that your work and life contribute to something greater than yourself, providing a sense of purpose and direction. Finally, Accomplishment is about setting and achieving goals, which builds confidence, encourages growth, and reinforces a sense of capability and success. Together, these five domains create a balanced and fulfilling foundation for personal and professional well-being.

PERMA Domains Explained

- **Positive Emotion (P):**

Positive Emotion refers to experiencing feelings such as joy, gratitude, hope, and contentment. These emotions contribute to overall life satisfaction and help individuals build resilience in the face of challenges. In the school setting, fostering positive emotions can enhance teacher morale and promote a more optimistic work environment.

- **Engagement (E):**

Engagement involves being fully absorbed in activities that are stimulating and meaningful. When teachers are engaged, they often experience a state of “flow” where time seems to pass quickly and they feel energized by their work. High levels of engagement are linked to greater creativity, focus, and job satisfaction.

- **Relationships (R):**

Relationships focus on developing strong, trusting, and supportive connections with others. For teachers, having positive relationships with colleagues, students, and

administrators can provide emotional support, reduce stress, and foster a greater sense of belonging within the school community. These connections are essential for a collaborative and healthy workplace.

- **Meaning (M):**

Meaning refers to having a sense of purpose and believing that one's work matters and contributes to something greater. Teachers often find meaning in helping students grow and succeed, which can deepen their commitment to the profession. A strong sense of meaning supports long-term motivation and job fulfillment.

- **Accomplishment (A):**

Accomplishment is the experience of setting goals, making progress, and feeling a sense of achievement. For educators, this might include successful lesson delivery, student progress, or professional development milestones. Celebrating accomplishments can boost confidence, reinforce professional identity, and encourage continued growth.

Table 1

Perma-Aligned Factors in the Stay Interview

| PERMA Domain | Factor | Description |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| P: Positive Emotion | Job Satisfaction | Measures employees' happiness in their role, exploring what they enjoy most and least. |
| P: Positive Emotion | Work-Life Balance | Assesses the ability to manage professional and personal lives, including flexibility and workload. |
| E: Engagement | Professional Development | Focuses on opportunities for skill growth, career progression, and support for achieving goals. |
| R: Relationships | Collaboration | Evaluates teamwork, support from colleagues, and the organization's cooperative culture. |
| R: Relationships | Communication | Measures transparency, clarity, and frequency of communication with managers and peers. |
| M: Meaning | Recognition | Examines whether employees feel valued and acknowledged for their contributions. |
| M: Meaning | Suggestions for Improvement | Provides open-ended responses for employees to suggest improvements in the work environment. |
| A: Accomplishment | Feedback | Explores how employees perceive constructive feedback and how it supports their growth and goals. |

Phase 1: Expert Panel Review

In Phase 1, the development of the Stay Interview Survey began with feedback from an expert panel composed of ten teachers with varying years of experience and subject area expertise. These educators represented a diverse range of teaching backgrounds, including lower school, middle school, and high school levels, and were selected from a private K–12 school similar in mission and structure to the one in which the main study was conducted. The purpose of involving this panel was to ensure that the survey questions were clearly worded, relevant to the private school teaching experience, and aligned with the study's focus on organizational well-being and teacher retention.

Panelists were asked to complete a draft version of the Stay Interview Survey and then provide both written and verbal feedback on each item. Specifically, they evaluated whether the items reflected meaningful aspects of teacher experience, addressed well-being constructs

effectively, and offered enough space for authentic responses. Some teachers noted that certain terms could be interpreted in different ways depending on school culture, prompting revisions for clarity. Others suggested additional prompts to encourage elaboration in open-ended sections. Their feedback also led to improved flow and structure, making the survey more intuitive and less time-consuming to complete.

This iterative review and revision process helped refine the survey so that it was contextually appropriate and user-friendly. By incorporating the voices of practicing teachers in the development phase, the survey became a more accurate and meaningful tool for exploring how stay interviews relate to perceptions of support, job satisfaction, and professional engagement. Ultimately, the expert panel's contributions were central to shaping a reliable and thoughtful instrument for use in the field.

Phase 2: Stay Interview Survey and Participant Interviews

In the qualitative phase of the study, participants were selected on a volunteer basis, with data collection continuing until saturation was reached. In qualitative research, saturation occurs when additional data collection no longer produces new insights or themes, indicating that a sufficient depth of understanding has been achieved.

The researcher conducted nine in-depth interviews with teachers. This sample size aligns with qualitative research standards, where 8 to 15 interviews are typically sufficient to reach thematic saturation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Thematic saturation ensures that no new themes emerge with additional interviews, confirming that the collected data comprehensively represents participant perspectives.

Data Collection Methods

This study employed both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to explore

the effects of stay interviews on teacher retention in private K-12 schools. The combination of these approaches provided a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing job satisfaction, workplace well-being, and retention intentions.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis focused on identifying themes and patterns from open-ended survey responses and follow-up interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Miles et al., 2014). An a priori coding method was used, with predefined categories based on existing literature and research questions.

These categories aligned with key themes, including:

- Workplace well-being
- Job satisfaction
- Teacher retention

This approach allowed for in-depth exploration of teachers' experiences, providing contextual insights that enriched the quantitative findings.

The A Priori Code Framework for Thematic Analysis is a structured approach where predefined themes or codes, based on existing literature or theoretical models, guide the analysis of qualitative data. This framework ensures that the analysis stays focused on key areas relevant to the research questions, such as teacher well-being, job satisfaction, and retention.

Key Points:

- **Predefined Codes:** The researcher sets categories based on prior knowledge and theoretical frameworks before analyzing the data.
- **Application:** Codes are applied to segments of data during analysis, grouping similar responses under broader themes.
- **Emergent Subthemes:** New themes can emerge from the data, adding depth and

flexibility to the analysis.

- **Organizing Data:** Coded data is organized into thematic clusters for easier identification of patterns.
- **Outcome:** The framework helps identify key insights, ensuring the findings are relevant and aligned with research questions, while also allowing for unexpected themes to surface.

This approach combines a focused, literature-based framework with flexibility for uncovering new insights, leading to a comprehensive understanding of the studied phenomena.

Qualitative Data Collection

- Semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 45 minutes were conducted via Zoom with volunteer participants from the Stay Interview Survey.
- Responses from open-ended survey questions provided an additional qualitative dataset, further contributing to thematic development.
- The qualitative findings helped clarify the underlying reasons behind teachers' career choices, job satisfaction levels, and retention concerns.

Table 2

A Priori Code Framework for Thematic Analysis

| A Priori Code | Description | Possible Emerging Subthemes |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Job Satisfaction | Teachers' perceptions of their overall contentment with their roles and responsibilities. | Enjoyable aspects, challenges, sense of fulfillment |
| Work-Life Balance | How teachers manage workload, stress, and personal life demands. | Burnout, flexibility, workload management |
| Leadership Support | The extent to which school leadership fosters a supportive work environment. | Administrative transparency, recognition, accessibility of leadership |
| Collaboration | The level of teamwork, cooperation, and peer support among teachers. | Collegial relationships, shared decision-making |
| Communication | Clarity, consistency, and effectiveness of school communication channels. | Frequency, transparency, teacher voice in decision-making |
| Appreciation for Contributions | Teachers' feelings of being valued and recognized for their efforts. | Formal recognition, informal appreciation, incentives |
| Professional Development | Opportunities for skill enhancement, career growth, and instructional support. | Mentorship, access to resources, relevance of PD |
| Pedagogical Feedback | The quality and frequency of feedback received on teaching practices. | Constructive feedback, evaluation process, mentorship |
| Retention Intentions | Factors influencing teachers' decisions to stay or leave their current positions. | Career stability, job security, desire for change |

Application in the Coding Process

1. Data Familiarization – Reviewing qualitative responses for initial insights.
2. Applying A Priori Codes – Categorizing responses based on predefined themes.
3. Refining Themes – Identifying patterns, refining codes, and adding subthemes where necessary.
4. Comparative Analysis – Examining differences between teachers intending to stay versus those considering leaving.
5. Interpretation and Reporting – Analyzing final themes in relation to research questions.

This framework ensures consistency in analysis while allowing for new insights to emerge, providing a comprehensive understanding of teacher retention and workplace well-being.

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis focused on organizing and summarizing teacher responses to the Stay Interview Survey in order to describe overall trends and perceptions. Descriptive statistics—such as means, standard deviations, and frequencies—were used to examine patterns related to job measure statistical relationships or predict outcomes, the goal was to provide a clear, data-informed picture of how teachers responded to different components of the stay interview and what areas of well-being were most relevant to their experiences. These descriptive insights helped guide the interpretation of the qualitative data and informed recommendations for practice.

Descriptive Statistics

- **Measures:** Means and standard deviations were calculated for numerical variables such as job satisfaction scores and workplace well-being factors.
- **Demographic Overview:** Frequencies and percentages summarized participant characteristics, including gender, years of experience, and grade levels taught.

The table titled *Research Questions and Corresponding Data Collection Methods* serves as a structured outline that connects each research question of the study with the specific data collection methods used to address it. This framework helps illustrate how both qualitative and quantitative data were utilized to answer the research questions and provides clarity on the approach taken in each phase of the study.

Here's an explanation of each component:

1. **Research Questions:** The table lists the main research questions driving the study. These questions are designed to explore various aspects of teacher retention, stay interviews,

and organizational well-being. Each research question is aligned with specific aspects of the study's focus.

2. Data Collection Methods: For each research question, the table identifies the methods used to gather the relevant data. These methods include:
 - Stay Interview Survey: The survey was used to measure teachers' perceptions of their well-being and the effectiveness of stay interviews in enhancing retention. The survey provided quantitative data on job satisfaction, workplace well-being, and retention factors.
 - Semi-Structured Interviews: In-depth, follow-up interviews with teachers were conducted to further explore their experiences with stay interviews and gather qualitative insights on the effectiveness of the process. This method allowed for the collection of rich, narrative data that provided deeper context to the survey findings.

Table 3

Research Questions and Corresponding Data Collection Methods

| Research Question | Method | Sources of Data | Data Analysis | Purpose |
|---|---------------|---|---|--|
| RQ-1: As described by teachers, to what extent is overall well-being supported by the use of stay interviews? | Mixed Methods | Semi-structured interviews | Descriptive statistics, Thematic analysis | Identify teacher perceptions and experiences with stay interviews. |
| RQ-2: Using identified organizational well-being factors, to what extent are teachers' perceptions of organizational well-being described in terms of: a. Job satisfaction b. Work-life balance c. Professional development d. Communication e. Collaboration f. Appreciation for contributions g. Pedagogical feedback? | Mixed Methods | Semi-structured interviews Quantitative and qualitative analysis of stay interview responses | Thematic analysis, Frequency analysis | Identify themes that describe current retention factors and potential interventions. |
| RQ-3: As described by teachers, what were the identified benefits and hindrances of using stay interviews to describe the well-being of their school? | Mixed Methods | Open-ended survey questions | Thematic analysis | Understand how stay interviews contribute to or challenge organizational well-being. |

Quantitative Validity and Reliability

The quantitative component of the study focused on ensuring the validity and reliability of measures used to assess the relationship between stay interview responses, job satisfaction, and retention intentions.

Validity was established by grounding the survey and interview questions in identified organizational well-being factors, which directly related to job satisfaction and retention. The survey instruments were designed based on a theoretical framework and an a priori coding system, ensuring content validity.

Descriptive statistical analyses, including means, standard deviations, and frequencies, were used to summarize teacher responses related to job satisfaction, well-being, and retention intentions. These summaries provided a general overview of trends in the data and offered insight into how teachers perceived the use of stay interviews.

Qualitative Trustworthiness

To address the credibility concern of the qualitative part of this study, member checking was the primary method used. To attend to the issues of credibility and member checking, participants were asked to review their transcripts, the themes developed for the study, and the overall conclusions reached. This process aided in ensuring the credibility of the findings of the analysis. Thus, to enhance the credibility of the study, peer debriefing was also included. An independent coder with experience in qualitative research assisted in the coding procedure and the identification of themes with the aim of avoiding biases and increasing objectivity. Consequently, the study offered a thick description involving the description of the research settings and the participants' experiences as a way of helping the readers to judge the transferability of the research findings to similar scenarios. Last but not the least, there was documentation of the research process to provide an audit trail. This was done from the time of data collection and analysis so that it can be clear and others can easily see how the conclusions were made. All these strategies enhanced the dependability and conformability of the study and therefore the trustworthiness of the study.

Ethical Considerations

It is therefore the intention of this study to ensure that ethical practices are observed to the highest level to protect the participants. In this regard, approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) will be sought before data collection to guarantee compliance with set ethical standards of research. One of the key principles of ethical research, informed consent, will be obtained from all participants. This process will entail explaining to the participants the reasons for the study, the possible risks and benefits, and their rights to decide on their participation in the study.

One of the most important considerations is the anonymity of participants. For this reason, measures shall be taken to ensure that participants' identity is not disclosed and the study remains secure throughout the research process. Every participant will be assigned a code name and any information that may lead to identification of the participants will be treated with a lot of concern. All the collected data will be stored in password-protected devices and servers and only the researcher will have access to it. Another ethical issue is self-determination, which in this case refers to the rights and freedom of the participants. Because of this, participants will be informed clearly that they are allowed to quit the study as much as they desire without being punished. Furthermore, the researcher will make his/her identity and any prejudice that he/she might hold clear at different stages of the study to enhance the ethicality of the study.

Limitations

It is important to note that this study has several limitations that are important to consider when interpreting the results of the study concerning teacher well-being and retention in private K-12 schools. The use of K-12 private schools may have limited the generalization of the findings to other sectors of education like the public sector and colleges. Another limitation of this study is self-selection bias because participants who decide to participate in the study may be different in terms of characteristics or experiences from those who decline to participate in the study.

The study design was cross-sectional; this means that data was collected at one point in time and therefore it is hard to establish causality and changes in well-being and retention across a given amount of time. Another weakness that is likely to affect the study is social desirable response bias whereby the respondents are likely to give socially acceptable responses rather

than the actual status in regard to the level of satisfaction and turnover intentions. Last but not the least, a level of research bias might be occasioned by the author's subjectivity in the analysis of the qualitative data collected from the field.

Summary

In this chapter, a mixed methods research design was employed to examine teacher perceptions of organizational well-being, with a particular focus on the effectiveness of stay interviews as a tool for teacher retention. A sequential explanatory design was selected to integrate both quantitative and qualitative approaches, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the research questions. The quantitative phase utilized descriptive statistics—including means and standard deviations—to provide an overview of teacher perceptions regarding organizational well-being. In the qualitative phase, teacher experiences and perspectives were explored in greater depth, offering insight into how stay interviews influence organizational well-being and retention efforts within their schools. By combining these approaches, this study aimed to identify the key factors that teachers perceive as critical to their school's overall organizational well-being, assess the potential benefits and limitations of stay interviews, and determine which organizational well-being factors measured in the stay interview best capture teacher perspectives.

Chapter 4: Findings and Results

This chapter presents the research findings, examining how annual stay interviews influence teacher retention in private K-12 schools, with a particular focus on Presbyterian Christian School.

1. As described by teachers, to what extent is overall well-being supported by the use of stay interview surveys?

2. Using identified organizational well-being factors, to what extent are teachers' perceptions of organizational well-being described

a. Job satisfaction?

b. Work-life balance?

c. Professional development?

d. Communication?

e. Collaboration?

f. Appreciated for contributions?

g. Pedagogical feedback?

3. As described by teachers, what were the identified benefits and hindrances of using stay interviews to describe the well-being of their school?

These questions drive the examination of quantitative and qualitative data collected through surveys, stay interviews, and follow-up interviews with teachers and school leaders. By integrating multiple data sources, the study highlights trends, identifies retention barriers, and evaluates the effectiveness of stay interviews as a proactive strategy for addressing teacher attrition in private K-12 settings.

Data Collection Overview

This research employed an integrated mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The primary components included:

Stay Interviews

Structured interviews conducted with twenty-six teachers to capture factors influencing teacher satisfaction, well-being, and retention. Each interview took approximately thirty minutes and was conducted in a private setting where confidentiality was assured (Guo et al., 2020).

Follow-Up Interviews

To gain a deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions of organizational well-being and the benefits and hindrances of stay interviews, semi-structured follow-up interviews were conducted with a subsample of nine participants. These interviews, lasting between 20 to 40 minutes, provided a more nuanced exploration of the themes identified in the Stay Interview Survey. By allowing participants to elaborate on their experiences and perspectives, the follow-up interviews facilitated a richer and more detailed analysis of how stay interviews influence teacher retention, job satisfaction, and overall well-being.

Interview Structure and Focus

The semi-structured format ensured that key topics were addressed while allowing participants the flexibility to introduce additional insights or concerns that may not have surfaced in the survey. Each interview began with broad, open-ended prompts to encourage teachers to share their experiences with stay interviews. Questions explored perceptions of the school's commitment to teacher well-being, the effectiveness of stay interviews in driving meaningful change, potential challenges in the process, and their influence on retention. Additional probing questions were used to encourage deeper reflection, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of key themes.

Data Analysis: Identifying Patterns

The data collected from these interviews was transcribed and coded using thematic analysis. Emerging patterns were grouped into broader categories that aligned with the study's research questions. Key themes included:

- Perceptions of Administrative Commitment – Many teachers expressed that stay interviews provided a structured opportunity to feel heard by leadership, reinforcing a sense of value and connection to the school; however, others noted that without visible follow-up actions, the process felt superficial.
- Influence on Teacher Retention – While some teachers felt stay interviews contributed to a proactive retention strategy, others indicated that inconsistent implementation weakened their effectiveness.
- Barriers to Honest Feedback – A recurring concern was the fear of repercussions. While anonymity was assured, some teachers remained hesitant to fully disclose their thoughts.
- Improvements in School Culture – Teachers who had seen tangible changes, such as wellness initiatives or policy adjustments, were more likely to view stay interviews positively.

Alongside qualitative insights, quantitative survey data was analyzed using statistical measures to determine relationships between well-being, job satisfaction, and retention factors. Patterns from the interviews were compared to survey responses, providing a comprehensive understanding of the role stay interviews play in shaping teacher experiences.

By integrating qualitative and quantitative analysis, this study provided a well-rounded perspective on the strengths and limitations of stay interviews in supporting organizational well-being and teacher retention.

Participant Demographics

The sample included twenty-six teachers from Presbyterian Christian School, from all the grades and disciplines:

- Gender: 70% female, 30% male
- Age Range: 25-66 years (mean age: 39.65, standard deviation: 10.30)
- Education Level: 15 with Bachelor's Degrees, 11 with Master's Degrees
- Experience: Ranging from 1 to 29 years, with 40% having less than 5 years of experience and 30% having over 15 years

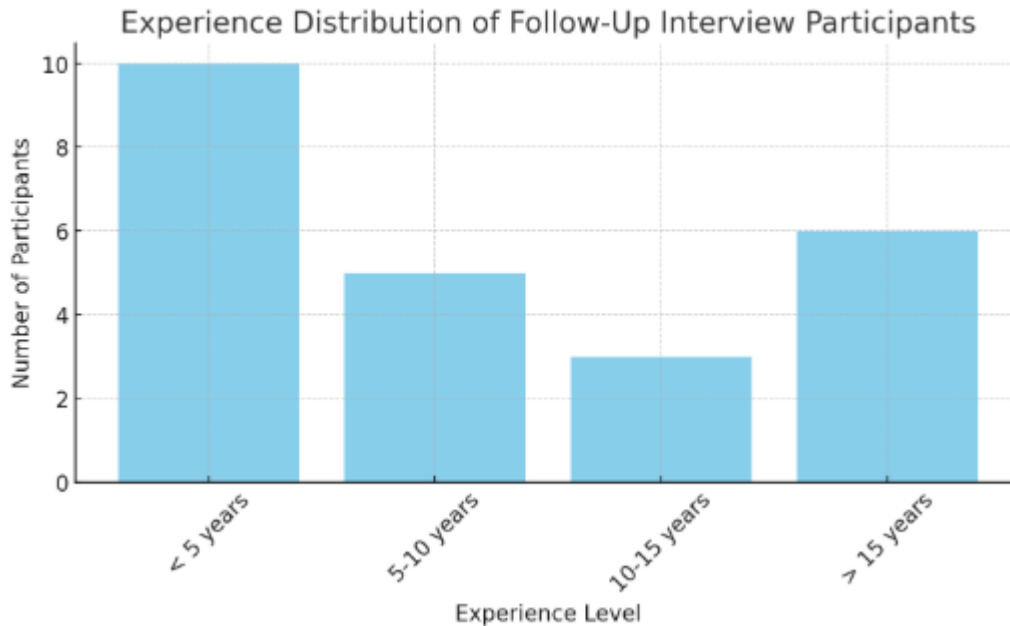
Table 4

Stay Interview Survey Participant Demographics

| Demographic | Value |
|----------------------|-------|
| Total Participants | 26 |
| Gender - Female | 70% |
| Gender - Male | 30% |
| Mean Age | 39.65 |
| Age Std. Dev. | 10.30 |
| Bachelor's Degrees | 15 |
| Master's Degrees | 11 |
| Experience <5 years | 40% |
| Experience >15 years | 30% |

Table 5

Follow Up Interview Experience Distribution



School Context

Presbyterian Christian School is a private school system offering education to the students of kindergarten to the twelfth grade, located in Hattiesburg, Mississippi and has an environment that is significantly small with small classes for learning and very active parents; however, it has been noted that the school has some weakness, such as problems associated with teacher retention, including stretched resources, centralized decision making and questions of work load.

Teacher turnover and morale have been challenges for school leadership in recent years, which is why they included the issue into the school improvement plan; thus, stay interviews were employed as a strategic measure. The leadership believes that it can harness the findings towards establishing a positive work environment, a caring organizational culture and low turnover.

Research Question 1: As described by teachers, to what extent is overall well-being supported by the use of stay interview surveys?

The stay interviews were useful in exposing various systemic and individual issues in the school. These structured conversations enabled teachers to freely share concerns, allowing the researchers and administrators to uncover root causes of dissatisfaction and potential attrition.

Teacher G shared, "*The stay interview surfaced systemic issues that the leadership may not have noticed otherwise.*" This response shows how the process exposes organizational challenges that would not be apparent through traditional channels, allowing for more targeted interventions. Several teachers reported that the interviews revealed persistent issues such as unclear workload distribution, lack of individualized professional development, and mental health strain.

For these interviews to be effective, however, action following the feedback was essential. As Teacher C emphasized, "*They're highly effective when followed by tangible action.*" Without implementation of follow-up measures, teachers often felt that the interviews were merely performative. Teacher D remarked, "*They provide a platform for concerns but feel repetitive without visible outcomes.*" Similarly, Teacher N reflected, "*We're asked the right questions, but I'm still waiting to see results.*" These sentiments highlight a key pitfall of stay interviews: failure to "close the loop." When feedback doesn't result in observable change, trust and engagement can erode.

Despite these concerns, when well-executed, stay interviews signaled a strong commitment to teacher well-being. Teacher F noted, "*For the first time in years, I felt like someone was actually listening.*" This points to the emotional relief and validation some educators experience simply by being asked to share their perspective in a formalized, one-on-

one setting.

Perceptions of Leadership Commitment

Stay interviews also functioned as an informal barometer for gauging leadership's responsiveness and commitment. When done with care, the process conveyed a willingness to invest in staff morale and retention. Teacher A said, *"It showed me that leadership was interested in my perspective, though mixed results in implementation."* While some questioned the follow-through, the act of conducting the interviews was still perceived as a step in the right direction.

Teacher I added, *"It made me feel more connected to the administration."* This quote reflects how the process can bridge relational gaps between leadership and faculty, laying the groundwork for stronger organizational cohesion. Teacher Q echoed this sentiment, stating, *"It broke down the wall—administration felt more human after that."*

That said, trust was conditional on the quality and sensitivity of the interaction. As Teacher H warned, *"Stay interviews require careful execution to build trust."* Poorly conducted interviews—those that felt rushed, impersonal, or dismissive—undermined the intent. Teacher L commented, *"It felt like they were checking a box, not truly trying to understand."* This supports Flores and Shuls' (2024) research that emphasizes authenticity and follow-through as critical components for building trust through stay interviews.

Changes Observed After Stay Interviews

Teachers also described noticeable changes following the stay interviews, which served as a tangible indicator of their impact. Teacher E shared, *"Introduction of mental health initiatives was a noticeable improvement."* This included greater access to counseling, wellness activities, and stress-reduction efforts, demonstrating that teacher feedback was valued and acted upon (Ismail & David, 2024).

Other participants mentioned improvements in communication, professional learning, and access to classroom resources. Teacher M observed, *"There was a shift in tone—more emails with updates, more check-ins. It felt different in a good way."* Teacher S added, *"They finally asked about our tech needs, and we got new devices two months later."* These practical changes underscored the interviews' potential to directly influence day-to-day working conditions, a core component of teacher well-being.

The use of stay interviews—when conducted thoughtfully and paired with meaningful follow-up—was seen as a powerful tool to support teacher well-being. They provided a structured opportunity for staff to voice concerns, built trust when leadership followed through, and in several cases led to real improvements in school culture and resources. However, their effectiveness ultimately depended on leadership's willingness to listen, respond, and act.

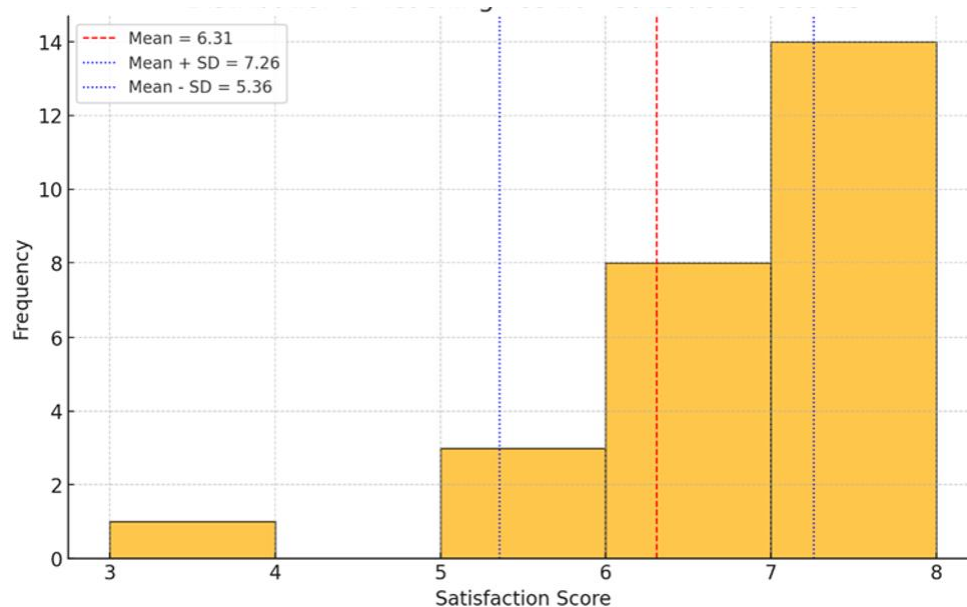
Research Question 2: Teachers' Perceptions of Organizational Well-being

Factor 1: Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction scores averaged 6.31 (on a 10-point scale) with a standard deviation of 0.95, indicating relatively consistent satisfaction levels among teachers. Most responses clustered around scores of 6 and 7, with a few outliers as low as 3, suggesting generally positive satisfaction with some areas of concern.

Figure 3

Distribution of Teaching Position Satisfaction Scores



Results show scores from 6 to 7 reflect fulfillment in certain dimensions: positive emotion, relationships, and meaning. Scores lower than this reflects areas of dissatisfaction, suggesting unmet needs in meaning or accomplishment. Stay interviews moderately improve workplace connection, but deeper dissatisfaction—especially for those teachers whose score is below 6—may require different kinds of support. Other factors considered to affect teacher retention involve leadership, workload, and professional development, targeted interventions of which should be provided (Wang et al., 2024). In open-ended responses, teachers frequently identified student growth and progress as the most rewarding aspect of their work. As one teacher noted, "Watching 6th graders fall in love with creative writing and figuring out who they want to be is the most rewarding task for me." Another shared, "Teaching elementary students how to code and seeing their self-esteem and self-confidence boost is very rewarding."

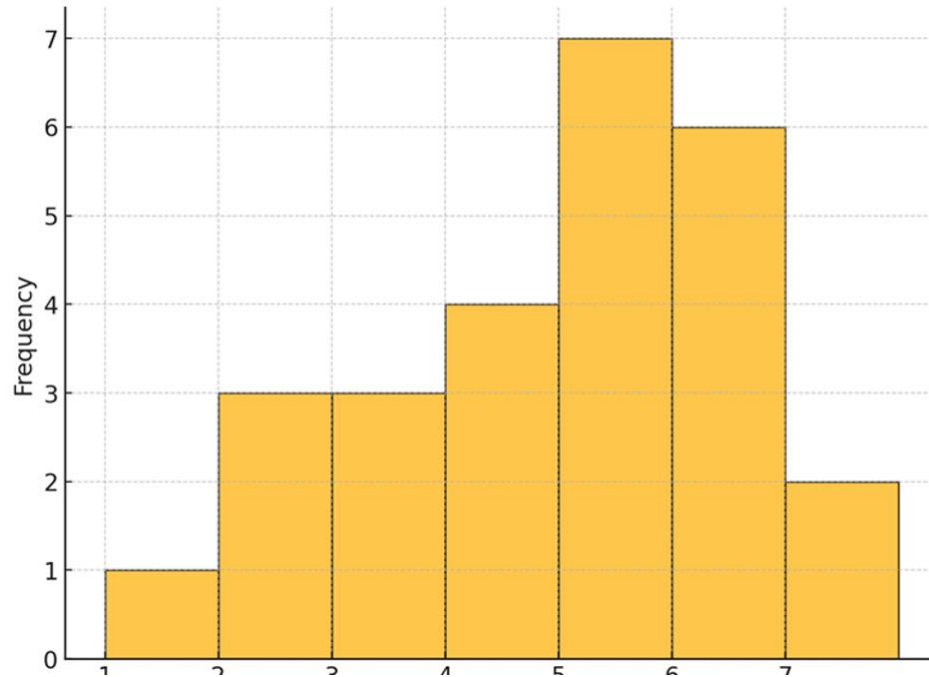
Challenges affecting job satisfaction included classroom management and balancing responsibilities. One teacher stated, "It is extremely difficult to enforce the rules when there are no consequences for the action." Time constraints and workload were also significant concerns.

Factor 2: Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance scores averaged 4.5 with a standard deviation of 1.6, indicating greater variation in experiences. Scores ranged from 1 to 7, clustering around 4-6, with some respondents rating their work-life balance as low as 1-2.

Figure 4

Work-Life Balance Scores Distribution



This relatively high standard deviation presumes greater variation in responses compared to the satisfaction data analyzed in Figure 3 above. The distribution is fairly dispersed, with scores ranging between 1 and 7, but with clear bunching in responses around 4, 5, and 6; however, low scores of 1 and 2 suggest that some participants are very dissatisfied. The wider spread of scores suggests that while some teachers experience work-life balance positively, others have big problems. This indicates a number of variations that will require tailored interventions to be able to help the individuals concerned (Vavasseur, 2024).

Teachers identified several adjustments that would better support work-life balance, primarily related to scheduling and planning periods. Teacher C emphasized that reducing course

preparations and increasing planning periods would "reduce the number of non-working hours spent working." Teacher H suggested additional planning periods for first-year teachers or those with new subjects.

Some teachers expressed satisfaction with their current arrangements, with Teacher I noting that extracurricular commitments were "things I enjoy doing and what I signed up for," and Teacher B emphasizing that long hours were self-imposed rather than administration-induced.

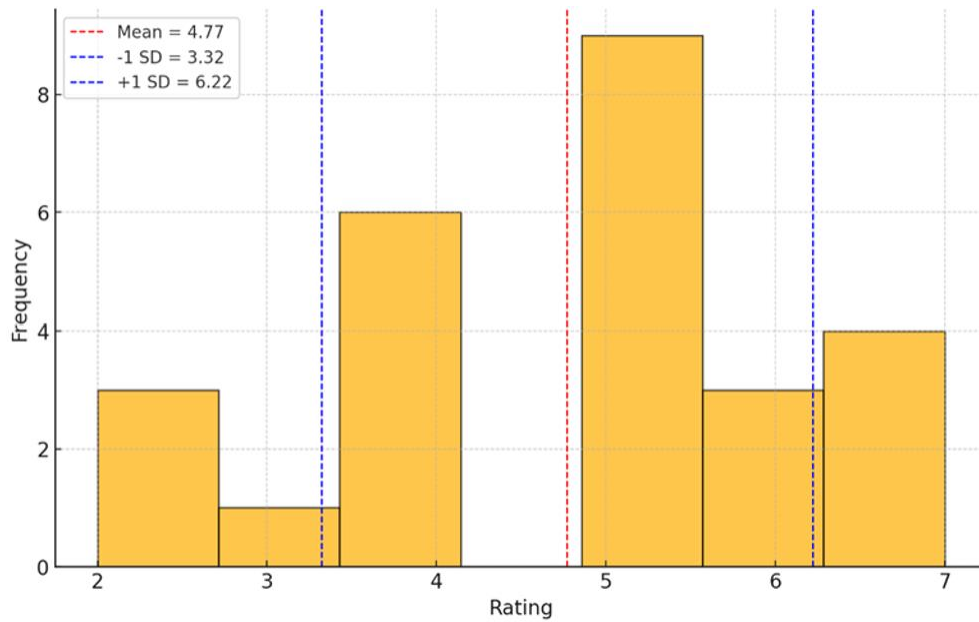
The response by Teacher H to have additional planning periods for first-year teachers or teachers with new subjects is corroborated by previous research which has found that focused support to new teachers leads to enhanced retention of the workforce. The most recurring factors that influence teacher retention revolve around workload minimization, effective support, and work-life balance (Vavasseur, 2024).

Factor 3: Professional Development

Professional development opportunities averaged 4.77 with a standard deviation of 1.45, indicating moderate satisfaction with development opportunities. Ratings ranged from 2 to 7, suggesting varied experiences accessing professional growth opportunities.

Figure 5

Distribution of PCS Professional Development Ratings



The determined standard deviation stands at 1.45, reflecting a noticeable spread in the respondents' satisfaction ratings and indicating that teachers' experiences with professional development varied significantly. The histogram of responses shows that most satisfaction ratings cluster around the mean, with scores ranging from a low of 2 to a high of 7. The majority of responses fell within one standard deviation of the mean, suggesting a general trend toward moderate satisfaction but also highlighting pockets of both high and low engagement (Vavasseur, 2024).

This dispersion is supported by qualitative data as teachers articulated a wide range of professional development needs. Teacher G mentioned, *“I would really benefit from vocational training and more practical seminars on ADHD and classroom management.”* Teacher M echoed this need, emphasizing, *“We need more resources on handling childhood anxiety, ADHD, and dyslexia—it’s in every classroom now.”* These responses point to an increased demand for specialized training related to student mental health and neurodevelopmental conditions.

A number of teachers also identified a gap in technology-related training. Teacher G shared, *“I’d love to get more computer training—sometimes I feel behind when using all the new platforms.”* Similarly, Teacher P noted, *“If we had small, consistent sessions on integrating tech into lessons, it would help so much more than a one-time workshop.”*

Subject-specific development was another recurring theme. Teacher H expressed interest in *“attending conferences with experts in linguistics—I’ve always wanted to go to something like the Mississippi Foreign Language Association meeting.”* Meanwhile, Teacher L emphasized affordability and access, stating, *“I wish we had opportunities to take free classes. I wanted to take a dyslexia course but just couldn’t afford it.”* These comments illustrate how financial barriers can limit access to valuable training opportunities.

Other teachers voiced the desire for more collaborative, peer-based learning opportunities. Teacher R noted, *“Some of the best PD I’ve had came from sitting down with another teacher and working through real classroom issues together.”* This reinforces the idea that practical, context-relevant training—not just formal sessions—can contribute significantly to teacher development.

Overall, the wide variance in responses both quantitatively and qualitatively reveals a shared desire for real, relevant, and accessible professional development tailored to both individual needs and broader school goals (Dreer, 2024). The data suggests that a one-size-fits-all approach is insufficient; instead, schools should consider offering differentiated options that reflect the diversity of experiences and expectations among faculty.

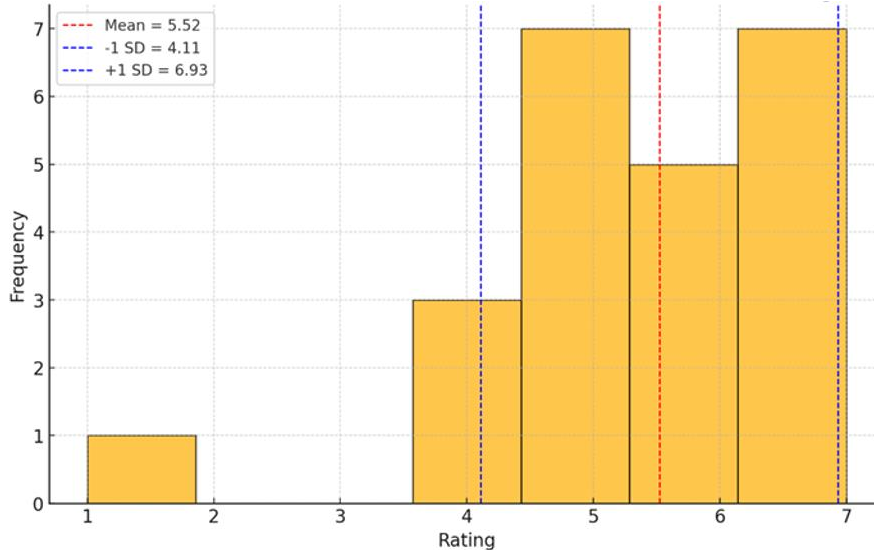
Factor 4: Communication with Administration

Communication with administration averaged 5.52 with a standard deviation of 1.41, indicating generally positive perceptions with moderate variability. Most ratings clustered

between 4 and 7, though some outliers rated communication as low as 1.

Figure 6

Distribution of PCS Communication with Administrators Ratings



The standard deviation of 1.41 supports the fact that there is moderate variability. The histogram shows that the points of measurement concentrate around the mean, ranging from 4 to 7, meaning the respondents have been mostly satisfied. A greater dissatisfaction to the question, represented by an outlier rating of 1, shows a subgroup of very dissatisfied respondents with the way communication is conducted. This could be because there is some inconsistency in the way communication is done, or the need for it differs among respondents (Dreer, 2024).

Teacher feedback on improving communication was mixed. Teacher C appreciated existing communication efforts but suggested a central forum like Microsoft Teams would better integrate staff efforts. Teacher E recommended a professional chat group for instant communication. Teachers K and L noted that parents were sometimes informed of school developments before teachers, creating challenges when fielding inquiries.

Teachers I and L reported no issues, citing the administration's open-door policy. In contrast, Teacher H described significant challenges, stating requests were either denied or

postponed, forcing rushed planning. Teacher O suggested clearly defined communication mechanisms, such as an administrative newsletter, to address current gaps.

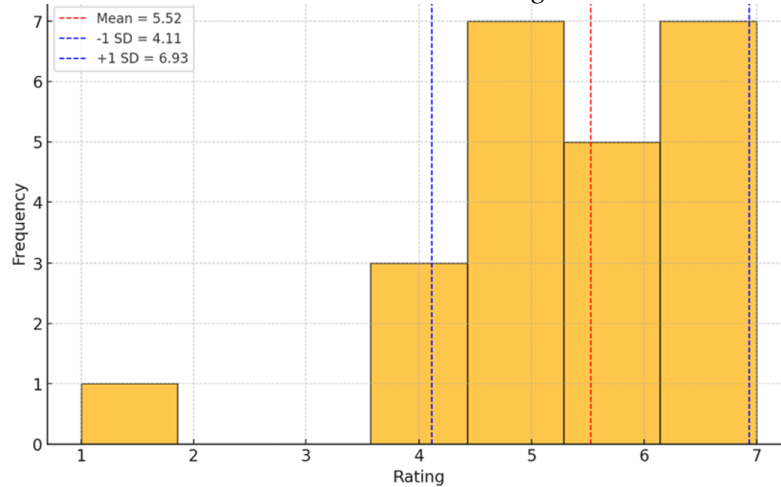
The findings are consistent with the focus of the Workplace on effective communication as a vital contributor to job satisfaction and commitment to an organization. Communication is core to workplace well-being and shapes perceptions of employee perceptions of support and relatedness (Dreer, 2024).

Factor 5: Collaboration

Collaboration within the school averaged 5.04 with a standard deviation of 1.74, indicating moderate satisfaction with significant variability in experiences. Most ratings fell between 4 and 7, though some responses were as low as 1-2.

Figure 7

Distribution of PCS Communication with Administrators Ratings



A standard deviation of 1.74 suggests significant variation, indicating diverse experiences among respondents. The histogram reveals that most ratings fall between 4 and 7, reflecting generally positive perceptions of collaboration. However, the presence of lower ratings, including 1 and 2, highlights dissatisfaction among some participants. This suggests differences in how collaboration is understood, influenced by team dynamics, communication habits, or

expectations. Addressing these disparities is essential to fostering a more consistent and inclusive collaborative environment.

Teachers offered various suggestions to improve collaboration. Some responses regarding communication between the administration and staff were mixed; improvements were mentioned, as well as practices where things worked well. Teacher C appreciated the efforts at communication, yet felt a more central forum, such as Microsoft Teams, would help to integrate the efforts between staff. Similarly, Teacher E wished for a professional chat group that would facilitate instant communication.

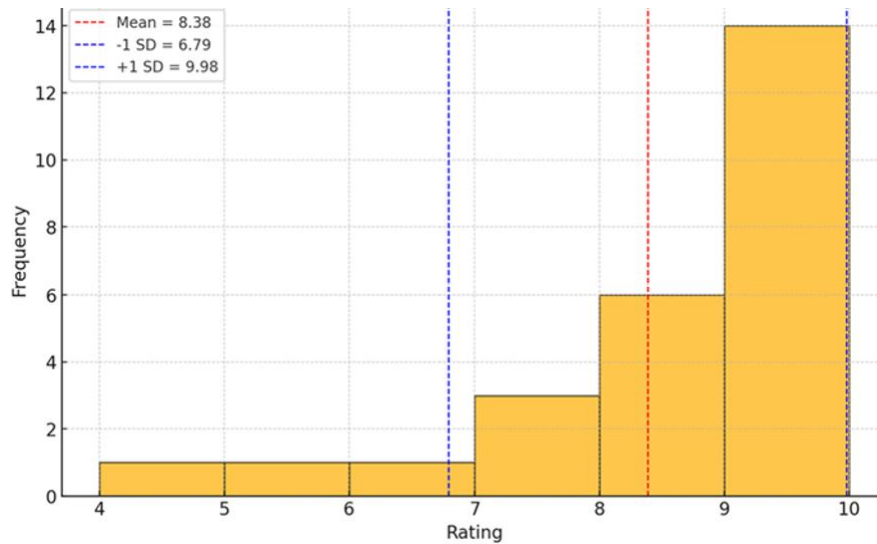
The results supported that positive relationships and teamwork are key factors in job satisfaction and well-being. Greater collaboration can help create a more supportive and caring work environment (Wagner, 2021). However, variation in responses suggests that while many teachers find collaboration beneficial, some may feel excluded or unsupported, leading to lower levels of involvement and satisfaction.

Factor 6: Appreciation for Contributions

The average rating for feeling appreciated was 8.38 with a standard deviation of 1.60, indicating generally high levels of perceived appreciation with moderate variability. Most responses clustered between 8 and 10, though some rated their feelings of appreciation as low as 4.

Figure 8

Distribution of Ratings on Feeling Appreciated by Coworkers



Teachers expressed various preferences for recognition and feeling valued. Teacher A said that words of affirmation mean a lot about them being valued. This shows that Teacher A feels more valued with words, an example of verbal recognition. Teacher E wants more feedback from the staff as to their abilities and what they bring into the classroom. This shows that without feedback about abilities, questions arise.

Teacher F showed her intrinsic motivational ability by developing her curriculum to save the school money. However, she identified her need to be supported about her professional development by way of attending conferences. Teacher O enjoyed some kind words and/or small tokens of appreciation, stating this is getting better. Teacher T reported how gestures like a 6% raise and being thanked verbally have improved morale and contributed to a better atmosphere in which to work (Hungo et al., 2024).

The results also align with previous research indicating that recognition and appreciation are essential to job satisfaction and well-being. Teachers A, O, and T specifically noted that verbal affirmation contributed to their positive emotional experiences. On the contrary, the need, as suggested by Teacher E, for receiving more specific feedback therefore means that recognition should serve constructive and substantive input to develop self-efficacy and commitment,

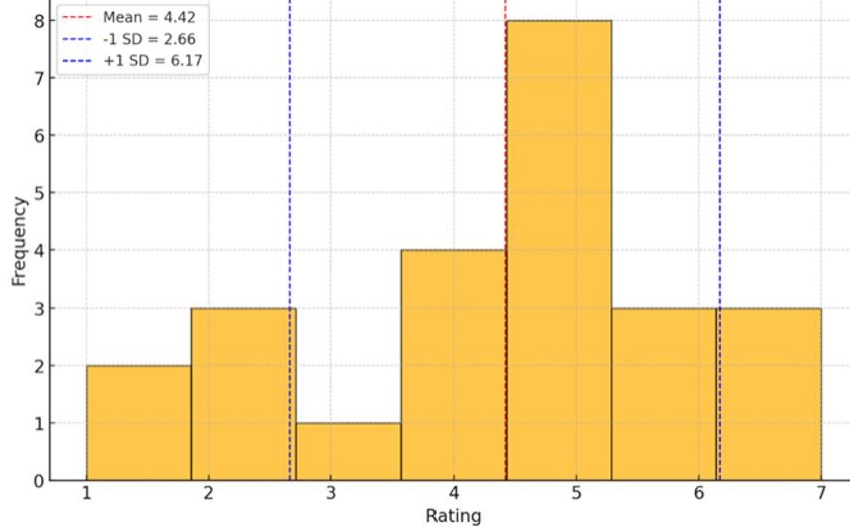
corroborated by research that suggests feedback for professional development (Hungo et al., 2024).

Factor 7: Pedagogical Feedback

Teachers' perceptions of pedagogical feedback averaged 4.42 with a standard deviation of 1.75, indicating moderate satisfaction with significant variability. Responses ranged from 1 to 7, suggesting inconsistent feedback experiences across the faculty.

Figure 9

Distribution of Ratings on Pedagogical Feedback from Administrators



A mean rating of 4.42 reflects that, on average, there is a moderately high level of perception about receiving pedagogical feedback from school administrators; it would, therefore, be an area of potential improvement. This large variability of responses reflects, among others, in the standard deviation of 1.75, reflecting individual teacher experiences and diverse levels of satisfaction. The histogram is rather flat around the mean, with responses ranging from 1, indicating very little, to 7, showing much feedback.

Teachers expressed consistent desires for practical, constructive feedback to improve teaching approaches. The teachers' responses regarding what they want to receive as feedback

were all identical. It is something that is practically and constructively useful in improving their teaching approach. For example, Teacher G wanted to have strengths and areas for growth evaluated since she wanted to polish her profession. Teacher L considered data-based feedback because she asked for knowledge of student performance measures to equip her for the next grade level.

Again, Teacher M expressed her desire to know what she does well. At the same time, she wanted a room for self-evaluation and dialogue with administrators as another avenue for feedback. Likewise, Teacher T responded that she wants evaluative feedback after classroom evaluations for purposes of making needed improvements. On the other hand, Teacher U ruminated on her previous experience, which was saturated by negative feedback, and implored for something different from this.

Results confirm the measured value of constructive feedback in enhancing job satisfaction and well-being. Positive feedback, according to teachers G, M, and O, supports engagement and accomplishment. Feedback reinforces teachers' professional accomplishments and leads to greater competency. Teacher L actively sought out feedback based on a valid dataset. The following table organizes the key factors influencing teacher well-being and their implications for retention. The Organizational Well-Being Factors chart provides a structured overview of the key elements that contribute to teachers' overall well-being within a school environment. Readers will gain insight into how various aspects—such as leadership support, work-life balance, resource access, and professional growth—impact teacher satisfaction and retention.

By examining these factors, the chart helps illustrate the connection between organizational practices and teacher well-being, reinforcing the role of stay interviews in

identifying strengths and areas for improvement. Additionally, it serves as a framework for understanding how schools can proactively support educators, fostering a more positive and sustainable work environment.

Table 6

Organizational Well-Being Factors

| Organizational Well-Being Factor | Definition | Survey Focus |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Job Satisfaction | The extent to which teachers feel content and fulfilled in their roles. | Questions regarding enjoyment, challenges, and overall satisfaction with teaching. |
| Work-Life Balance | The ability to effectively manage professional responsibilities while maintaining personal life. | Questions about workload, flexibility, and time management. |
| Professional Development | Opportunities for career growth, skill-building, and ongoing learning. | Questions about access to training, mentorship, and leadership development. |
| Communication | Clarity, transparency, and consistency in communication between teachers and leadership. | Questions about how information is shared, effectiveness of meetings, and feedback loops. |
| Collaboration | The level of teamwork, peer support, and shared decision-making within the school. | Questions on teamwork, shared responsibilities, and collegial support. |
| Appreciation for Contributions | Recognition and validation of teachers' efforts and achievements. | Questions about how often and in what ways staff feel valued. |
| Pedagogical Feedback | Constructive feedback provided to teachers to enhance instructional effectiveness. | Questions on the quality, frequency, and usefulness of feedback received. |

Research Question 3: As described by teachers, what were the identified benefits and hindrances of using stay interviews to describe the well-being of their school?

Benefits of Stay Interviews

Identification of Systemic Issues. Stay interviews proved to be an effective tool in uncovering both systemic and individual issues within the school. Teachers appreciated the structured nature of these discussions, which allowed concerns to surface that might not have otherwise been shared in informal conversations.

Teacher F highlighted this benefit by stating, *“There were things I hadn’t even realized were widespread concerns until I heard colleagues discussing them during stay interviews. It made me feel less alone in my struggles and helped us advocate for meaningful change together.”* Several teachers emphasized that stay interviews helped leadership recognize patterns rather than addressing complaints in isolation. Teacher A shared, *“In the past, I think admin saw some concerns as one-off complaints, but stay interviews showed them that multiple people were experiencing the same challenges.”*

Additionally, some teachers pointed out that the structured nature of the interviews allowed leadership to recognize emerging trends. Teacher D noted, *“We’ve always had ways to voice concerns, but this felt different. It was organized, thoughtful, and designed to actually collect meaningful data instead of just letting us vent.”* The effectiveness of stay interviews in identifying and addressing systemic issues, however, depended largely on follow-through. As Teacher C emphasized, *“Highly effective when followed by tangible action.”* This sentiment was echoed by Teacher I, who stated, *“It’s a great tool—but only if leadership actually listens and does something about the issues we bring up.”*

Overall, stay interviews allowed teachers to voice concerns in a way that highlighted school-wide patterns, leading to a deeper understanding of job satisfaction, retention, and workplace challenges. When used effectively, they provided leadership with critical insights to drive institutional improvements.

Increased Connection to Administration.

Teachers have consistently reported feeling more valued when school leadership takes the time to conduct stay interviews, which fosters stronger relationships between faculty and administration. These interviews act as a litmus test for teachers' perceptions of leadership commitment. When well-implemented, the process demonstrates to teachers that their contributions are both seen and valued, while also showing that the administration genuinely cares about their welfare. As Teacher I shared, *"It made me feel more connected to the administration."* This sentiment underscores the idea that stay interviews can help bridge the gap between teachers and school leaders, cultivating a more collaborative and trusting environment.

Other educators echoed this feeling of improved connection. Teacher B remarked, *"It was the first time I felt someone asked about how I was really doing, not just about my job performance."* This comment highlights how personal, intentional conversations can shift the perception of leadership from task-oriented to people-oriented. Teacher Q similarly noted, *"Even though not every concern has been fixed, just being asked made me feel like my experience mattered."* This reinforces that the act of asking—when done sincerely—can itself be a powerful tool for building trust and rapport.

Such connections can lead to increased organizational loyalty, where teachers are more inclined to align with and support institutional goals and priorities (Frahm & Cianca, 2021). Research supports this idea, with Tschannen-Moran (2014) stating, *"When teachers feel that their voices are heard and respected by leadership, trust is built, leading to higher levels of job satisfaction and engagement."* Teachers often experience a sense of isolation in their classrooms, but when administrators take the initiative to connect with them, it fosters a feeling of recognition and support. This acknowledgment strengthens teachers' commitment to their work

and can lead to higher retention rates.

When school leaders genuinely prioritize teacher well-being through intentional conversations, such as stay interviews, they create a positive and supportive environment that encourages loyalty. As a result, these interactions not only improve relationships between teachers and administrators but also deepen teachers' emotional investment in their roles, contributing to a more cohesive and effective school community.

Platform for Constructive Feedback. Stay interviews provided teachers with a structured and formalized way to share their feedback and suggest improvements, rather than relying on informal conversations or ad hoc complaints. Many teachers appreciated that this process encouraged more thoughtful, solution-oriented discussions and reinforced the idea that their input mattered. Teacher G explained, *“In a typical faculty meeting, you might mention a concern in passing, but it doesn’t always feel like the right time or place to push for change. The stay interview felt different—it was a space where leadership was asking for my honest feedback and seemed to genuinely want to hear it.”* Teachers also emphasized that the structured nature of stay interviews allowed them to communicate more constructively, as opposed to simply expressing frustrations. Teacher B noted, *“Because I knew there was a dedicated time to share my thoughts, I spent more time reflecting on what actually needed to change and how it could realistically be improved. That made the conversation more productive.”*

However, multiple teachers reiterated that constructive feedback was only valuable if it resulted in meaningful action. As Teacher C previously stated, *“Highly effective when followed by tangible action.”* Similarly, Teacher H warned, *“If nothing changes after we give our feedback, it just starts to feel like a box-checking exercise instead of a real effort to improve the*

school.” Some teachers also highlighted the importance of follow-up communication. Teacher F remarked, *“Even if every suggestion can’t be implemented, it helps when leadership acknowledges what we said and explains why certain things might take time or not be possible. That kind of transparency makes me feel heard.”*

Overall, stay interviews offered a structured and constructive forum for teachers to voice concerns and propose solutions. However, their effectiveness ultimately depended on how well leadership responded to the feedback, ensuring that teachers felt their input was not just collected, but also valued and acted upon.

Tangible Improvements in School Culture. When stay interview feedback was acted upon, teachers observed noticeable improvements in the school environment, reinforcing the value of their input. Many teachers expressed that seeing their concerns lead to actual change strengthened their trust in the process and in school leadership. Teacher E highlighted one such improvement, stating, *“Introduction of mental health initiatives was a noticeable improvement.”* This reflected the administration's commitment to supporting teachers’ well-being in an emotionally and mentally demanding profession. Expanding on this, Teacher F noted, *“We now have structured check-ins and access to wellness resources that didn’t exist before. It’s reassuring to know that leadership is not just listening but actually implementing changes that help us.”* Beyond mental health initiatives, teachers pointed to other concrete changes that brought about positive results. Teacher A shared, *“Class sizes were adjusted after repeated concerns in stay interviews. That change alone reduced stress levels and made a huge difference in our ability to teach effectively.”* Similarly, Teacher D commented, *“We brought up the need for more collaborative planning time, and now we have structured time built into our schedule. That small shift has made lesson planning so much more manageable.”* The process also fostered

a sense of empowerment among faculty. Teacher H reflected, *"For the first time, I felt like my voice actually contributed to real change. It's easy to feel unheard in a school setting, but seeing follow-through on our feedback has been encouraging."*

Teachers also stressed, however, that consistency in follow-through was crucial. Teacher C warned, *"The process works when it leads to action. If leadership stops implementing changes, stay interviews could lose their credibility."*

Overall, teachers recognized stay interviews as an effective tool for driving school improvements, provided that leadership remained committed to implementing feedback.

Preventative Approach to Retention. Teachers valued stay interviews as a proactive strategy for addressing concerns before they escalated to resignation decisions. Many expressed that knowing leadership was invested in their experiences and well-being increased their sense of commitment to the school. Teacher A noted, *"It showed me that leadership was interested in my perspective, though mixed results in implementation."* This sentiment was echoed by others who appreciated the effort but emphasized the importance of consistent follow-through. Teacher F added, *"The stay interviews made me feel like my concerns mattered before I ever got to the point of looking elsewhere. It was a relief to be heard early rather than in an exit interview when it's too late."*

Several teachers shared examples of how stay interviews had helped resolve frustrations before they led to burnout or resignation. Teacher H remarked, *"I was on the verge of leaving due to workload concerns, but after discussing it in a stay interview, adjustments were made that made my role more manageable. That kept me here."* Similarly, Teacher D stated, *"I had been considering leaving because I didn't see a clear path for professional growth. After my stay interview, I was given more leadership opportunities, which made me want to stay."* The process

also provided administrators with insight into hidden retention risks. Teacher G commented, *"Leadership assumed salary was my biggest concern, but through the stay interview, they learned it was actually the lack of professional development opportunities. After that conversation, they made efforts to provide more training, which changed my outlook."*

However, teachers also stressed that the success of stay interviews in preventing turnover depended on how effectively concerns were addressed. Teacher C warned, *"If we take the time to be honest in these interviews, but nothing changes, it almost makes things worse. It has to be more than just talk."* Ultimately, teachers recognized stay interviews as an important tool for retention, provided they were backed by meaningful action.

Hindrances of Stay Interviews

Inconsistent Follow-Through. One of the most commonly cited frustrations among teachers was the inconsistent implementation of feedback provided during stay interviews. While many appreciated the opportunity to voice concerns, the absence of visible action undermined confidence in the process. Teacher D expressed frustration, stating, *"They provide a platform for concerns but feel repetitive without visible outcomes."* This feeling of stagnation made some teachers question the purpose of participating. Teacher G echoed this sentiment, saying, *"I've been asked the same questions year after year, but I don't see any meaningful changes. At a certain point, it feels like checking a box rather than making improvements."* For some, the lack of follow-through diminished trust in leadership. Teacher H shared, *"I was hopeful the first time I did a stay interview, but after my suggestions were ignored multiple times, I stopped believing they actually cared about making changes."* Similarly, Teacher E added, *"It's frustrating when leadership asks for feedback but then does nothing with it. It makes me wonder if they truly want to improve things or just want to appear like they're listening."*

Another concern was that while administrators may have had good intentions, execution remained inconsistent. Teacher F pointed out, *"Some issues are addressed immediately, while others just disappear into a void. If leadership isn't transparent about what they can or can't do, it creates unnecessary disappointment."* Some teachers also felt that while stay interviews identified important problems, leadership did not communicate progress effectively. Teacher C explained, *"Even if changes are happening behind the scenes, we don't always know about them. A simple update on what's being worked on would make a huge difference."*

Overall, teachers agreed that stay interviews had potential, but without clear follow-through and visible improvements, engagement in the process would decline. Teacher I summed it up by stating, *"If nothing changes, why keep talking?"*

Time Constraints in Implementation. While stay interviews successfully identified key concerns, teachers frequently noted that the school lacked the time or resources to act on the feedback promptly. The delay between recognizing an issue and implementing a solution often created skepticism regarding the effectiveness of the process. Teacher G acknowledged the value of stay interviews in uncovering systemic challenges, stating, *"The stay interview surfaced systemic issues that the leadership may not have noticed otherwise."* However, they also expressed frustration that *"just knowing the problem isn't enough if there's no plan or urgency to address it."*

Several teachers echoed concerns about the slow pace of change. Teacher F remarked, *"I brought up the same concerns two years in a row, and while I was told they were being considered, I haven't seen any concrete steps toward a solution."* Similarly, Teacher C noted, *"Leadership listens, but by the time changes actually happen—if they happen at all—I've already adjusted to the problem or found ways to work around it."*

For some, the delays were understandable but still frustrating. Teacher A explained, *"I get that certain things take time, especially budget-related changes, but when there's no communication about progress, it feels like nothing is happening."* This sentiment was reinforced by Teacher H, who shared, *"There's a gap between identifying issues and taking action. If leadership at least acknowledged, 'Hey, we hear you, but this will take six months to implement,' it would help manage expectations."* Others felt that the lack of immediate implementation diminished the overall effectiveness of stay interviews. Teacher D observed, *"By the time they finally get around to addressing a problem, it might not even be relevant anymore. We need solutions that move at the pace of our needs, not years behind them."* Some teachers also pointed to resource constraints as a major roadblock. Teacher E stated, *"I understand that not everything can change overnight, but when we hear 'we don't have the budget for that' year after year, it starts to feel like an excuse rather than a reality."* Similarly, Teacher I emphasized, *"I don't expect miracles, but if we keep identifying the same problems and there's never any progress, why keep asking?"*

Ultimately, while teachers recognized that meaningful changes take time, they emphasized the importance of transparency and realistic timelines. As Teacher B put it, *"We don't expect everything to be fixed immediately, but we do expect to see some forward movement. Otherwise, the whole process feels performative."*

Varying Interview Quality. The execution quality of stay interviews varied, with some teachers reporting rushed sessions or interviewers who seemed disinterested.

Teacher H emphasized, "Stay interviews require careful execution to build trust." If not done well, for example, appearing rushed or not addressing sensitive topics—the interview itself can betray trust. It feels superficial or insincere to the teachers who are interviewed, which is

opposite the intent of the interviews (Flores & Shuls, 2024).

Fear of Repercussions. Despite the assurance of confidentiality, some teachers expressed concerns that providing honest feedback during stay interviews could lead to negative consequences for their careers or relationships with administration. This fear of potential repercussions led some teachers to self-censor, limiting the effectiveness of the interviews in uncovering critical issues within the school environment. Teacher F noted, *"I'm always worried that anything I say might come back to haunt me. Even if they promise confidentiality, you never know who might find out. It's hard to be fully honest when there's always that little voice in the back of your head saying, 'Will this impact my reputation?'"* Teacher D echoed similar concerns, stating, *"You can't be completely open if you're concerned about the long-term effects. Even though they tell you it's anonymous, there's still the fear that someone might know it was you who raised the concern."* This fear of being singled out for sharing negative feedback was a recurring theme among several teachers. Teacher G shared, *"I didn't feel comfortable bringing up some of the bigger issues during my interview. There were a few things I wanted to say, but I thought, 'What if this ends up being used against me later?' It's hard to ignore that fear."* Teacher I also commented on this anxiety, explaining, *"I held back some of my feedback because I worried it would affect my standing in the school. I'm not saying the administration would retaliate, but there's always that possibility, so you end up leaving things out."*

Some teachers also described how this fear of repercussions affected their willingness to be fully transparent, even if they initially intended to provide more candid feedback. Teacher E shared, *"I know stay interviews are meant to be a chance to speak freely, but I can't shake the feeling that any criticism will be seen as me being ungrateful or not a team player. It made me question how much I should say."* Teacher H reflected on this concern, adding, *"It's definitely*

something I struggle with. Even when I'm told that my feedback won't affect me, I can't help but think about how certain comments might be interpreted. It affects the trust needed to make the interview productive." Teacher C had a similar perspective, saying, *"It's hard to be fully open when you don't know if what you say will be used to judge you or your performance later. Even if the process is supposed to be confidential, I think it's natural to worry about the consequences."* This fear of retaliation or judgment highlights a significant limitation of stay interviews—without trust and assurance that feedback will not be used against teachers, the process can lose its effectiveness. Teachers who fear negative consequences are unlikely to provide full and honest input, which in turn undermines the goal of identifying and addressing key issues within the organization.

Additional Findings: Factors Influencing Teacher Well-being and Retention

Lack of Integration with Other School Initiatives. Teachers observed that stay interviews sometimes operated in isolation from other school improvement efforts, reducing their potential effectiveness. This disconnection created uncertainty about how feedback from stay interviews aligned with broader institutional goals. While Teacher E noted that "the introduction of mental health initiatives was a noticeable improvement," others expressed that stay interviews should be more intentionally linked to larger school initiatives to drive meaningful change.

Beyond integration concerns, several other factors emerged as influential in teacher well-being and retention. Teachers highlighted the importance of administrative support, with many emphasizing that feeling valued and heard by leadership significantly impacted their job satisfaction. Additionally, work-life balance played a crucial role, as excessive workloads and unrealistic expectations contributed to stress and burnout. Teachers also pointed to the availability of professional development opportunities, noting that ongoing learning and career

growth positively influenced their decision to stay.

Another recurring theme was the role of collegial relationships. Strong peer connections and collaborative work environments were seen as essential for teacher morale and engagement. Teachers who felt isolated or lacked support from colleagues were more likely to consider leaving. Finally, recognition and appreciation were identified as key motivators. Simple gestures, such as verbal acknowledgment and celebrating teacher achievements, reinforced a positive school culture and increased teachers' sense of belonging.

By addressing these interconnected factors—integrating stay interviews with school-wide initiatives, enhancing leadership support, promoting work-life balance, investing in professional development, fostering collegiality, and recognizing teachers' contributions—schools can create a more supportive and sustainable environment for educators.

Mental Health and Emotional Support. Mental health support was widely recognized as essential for teacher well-being, contributing to both job satisfaction and overall performance. Teachers expressed appreciation for initiatives that prioritized emotional support, such as counseling services, wellness programs, and open discussions about mental health. Teacher F emphasized, *"Mental health support means a lot for my well-being."* Similarly, Teacher A shared, *"Knowing that the school values our mental health makes me feel supported and motivated."* These statements highlight the importance of a school culture that actively promotes psychological well-being. Teachers also acknowledged the positive impact of stress management initiatives. Teacher D noted, *"Mindfulness sessions and mental health days have helped me recharge and stay focused in the classroom."* Additionally, strong administrative support played a key role, as Teacher H stated, *"Just having leadership check in on us and acknowledge the emotional challenges of teaching makes a huge difference."*

When schools fostered a culture of care, teachers reported feeling more engaged and committed to their roles. As Teacher C summarized, *"A school that cares about our mental health creates an environment where we can thrive, not just survive."*

Resource Access. Access to quality teaching resources significantly influenced teacher well-being, job satisfaction, and instructional effectiveness. Teachers frequently expressed frustration over inadequate materials, outdated technology, and financial burdens associated with purchasing their own supplies. Teacher G stated, *"Access to quality teaching resources affects my well-being the most."* Similarly, Teacher B shared, *"I've had to spend my own money on classroom materials more times than I can count. It's frustrating."* These concerns highlighted how insufficient resources increased teacher stress and workload. Technology limitations were also a recurring issue. Teacher F noted, *"We are encouraged to integrate technology, but our devices are outdated, and the internet is unreliable."* Additionally, disparities in resource distribution created frustration, as Teacher H observed, *"Some subjects seem to get more funding than others. It's discouraging."*

When leadership addressed these concerns, however, teachers felt valued. Teacher C remarked, *"When administration listens and provides what we need, it makes a huge difference."* Ensuring adequate resources not only reduced stress but also fostered a more positive and effective teaching environment.

Work-Life Balance. Work-life balance was consistently identified as a critical factor in teacher well-being, with many educators emphasizing its direct influence on job satisfaction and retention. The demanding nature of teaching, coupled with personal and social obligations, made it essential for schools to implement policies that promote a sustainable balance. Teacher H shared, *"Work-life balance is the most significant factor for well-being."* Similarly, Teacher F stated, *"Without boundaries between work and personal time, burnout becomes inevitable."* These statements highlight the need for structures that

support educators in maintaining their professional and personal lives. Teachers pointed to specific strategies that improved work-life balance, such as flexible scheduling, administrative support, and reasonable workload expectations. Teacher D noted, *"Having clear expectations and a manageable workload helps me feel more in control of my time."* Meanwhile, Teacher G emphasized, *"Policies that encourage time off and respect personal boundaries make a huge difference in preventing burnout."* Additionally, educators expressed appreciation for leadership that valued their time outside the classroom. Teacher C remarked, *"When administrators acknowledge that we have lives beyond school, it fosters a healthier and more motivated faculty."* This sentiment was echoed by Teacher E, who stated, *"Small adjustments, like limiting after-hours emails and respecting personal time, show that our well-being matters."* Ultimately, schools that actively supported work-life balance saw higher levels of teacher satisfaction and engagement. As Teacher A summarized, *"A school that respects our time helps us be better teachers and better people."*

Job Satisfaction Factors. The primary source of satisfaction for teachers was student success. Teacher B remarked, *"Student success is a major contributor to satisfaction; workload detracts from it."* Clearly, there is an intrinsic motivator for teachers when their effort reaps tangible results in their students' learning and development. On the other hand, an overload of workload will only diminish satisfaction and cause stress while reducing creative teaching time.

Professional development opportunities also significantly influenced satisfaction. Teacher E revealed, *"Professional development opportunities enhance satisfaction, unclear communication detracts."* The teachers value such opportunities brought to them in terms of the increase in skill set and options for career advancement. What irritates them and sometimes makes them feel unappreciated is if the leadership's communication seems arbitrary or fails to be consistently given.

Classroom autonomy was another key satisfaction factor. Teacher G outlined, *"Freedom*

to innovate in the classroom adds to satisfaction; administrative burdens detract." Those who are allowed some leeway to try new and different ways of teaching, and allow their personality to shine through, are far more enthusiastic and fulfilled by their work. On the other hand, the increasingly burdensome nature of administrative tasks, such as unnecessary paperwork and strict administrative systems (Flores & Shuls, 2024).

Retention Decisions. Job security and stability were primary retention factors. Teacher D stated, "*Stability and job security are key factors.*" This satisfies the need to make the teachers feel assured of their positions, specifically in an environment sensitive to funding and enrollments fluctuations, which significantly impact job security. A teacher with a secure position will be more focused in their work without any diversion due to financial and job insecurity.

Clear career progression opportunities also influenced retention decisions, with Teacher F citing "*a clear career progression path*" as a reason to stay. Progression pathway within the institution will make teachers more inclined to stay. Schools willing to invest in leadership development, coaching, and promotion guarantees staff that long-term investment will pay off.

Leadership opportunities emerged as another critical retention factor. Teacher H explained, "*Opportunities for leadership roles influence my decision to stay.*" Many teachers want more and seek responsibilities both in taking on department head roles and even administrative posts (Nguyen, 2024). Giving opportunities for such leadership development increases retention because professional aspirations are aligned with the goals of the institution.

Summary of Findings

The findings revealed that stay interviews serve as an effective tool for identifying factors influencing teacher well-being, job satisfaction, and retention in private K-12 schools. The

effectiveness of stay interviews hinges on follow-through actions that demonstrate leadership commitment to addressing teacher concerns.

Teachers' perceptions of organizational well-being varied across the seven identified factors, with highest satisfaction in areas of appreciation for contributions and lowest in work-life balance. The data revealed significant variability in experiences across factors, suggesting the need for more consistent and equitable approaches to supporting all faculty members.

Benefits of stay interviews included systemic issue identification, increased connection to administration, structured feedback opportunities, tangible improvements, and preventative retention approaches. Hindrances included inconsistent follow-through, implementation time constraints, varying interview quality, fear of repercussions, and lack of integration with other initiatives.

The findings provide a foundation for recommendations to enhance teacher retention through improved workplace conditions, supportive leadership practices, targeted professional development, and well-being initiatives that will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Summary of the Study

This chapter provides an interpretive analysis of the findings presented in Chapter 4, exploring the implications of stay interviews as a strategic intervention for enhancing teacher retention in private K-12 schools. The discussion is organized around the three research questions that guided this study:

1. As described by teachers, to what extent is overall well-being supported by the use of stay interviews?
2. Using identified organizational well-being factors, to what extent are teachers' perceptions

of organizational well-being described

- Job satisfaction?
 - Work-life balance?
 - Professional development?
 - Communication?
 - Collaboration?
 - Appreciated for contributions?
 - Pedagogical feedback?
3. As described by teachers, what were the identified benefits and hindrances of using stay interviews to describe the well-being of their school?

The chapter examines the role of stay interviews in supporting teacher well-being and retention, leadership's influence on teacher commitment, the impact of workplace conditions, the significance of professional development opportunities, and the importance of emotional and psychological well-being. The discussion concludes with practical recommendations for educational leaders to enhance teacher support systems.

Research Question 1: How Stay Interviews Support Teacher Well-being

This study examined how stay interviews enhance general teacher well-being, as well as the advantages and drawbacks of this technique. Findings revealed that stay interviews can positively impact teacher well-being when conducted effectively and accompanied by meaningful follow-up actions. They provided a systematic platform for teachers to express concerns, share ideas, and offer feedback, enabling leadership to better understand and address workplace factors that influence well-being. This aligns with Dreer (2024), who emphasized the value of systematic feedback mechanisms in identifying causes of workplace dissatisfaction.

Actions resulting from stay interviews, such as the implementation of mental health initiatives and adjustments to workloads, contributed to improved emotional support for teachers. These findings are supported by Ismail and David (2024), who noted the importance of administrative care in maintaining teacher well-being. Stay interviews also played a role in strengthening relationships between teachers and administrators, supporting Covell's (2020) assertion that positive teacher-administrator relationships are critical to teacher satisfaction and retention. Additionally, the study found that stay interviews facilitated targeted interventions in areas such as access to resources, professional development, and improvements to the work environment, consistent with Leal and Baniel's (2024) depiction of the complex factors affecting teacher well-being. However, when feedback from stay interviews did not lead to observable changes, their effectiveness in enhancing well-being was diminished. This finding aligns with Frahm and Cianca (2021), who stressed the importance of responsive leadership in building trust and promoting employee well-being.

The study highlighted that the quality of stay interview implementation directly impacted their effectiveness. Poorly conducted interviews led to diminished trust and disengagement, corroborating findings by Flores and Shuls (2024) that trust in leadership is essential for teacher well-being. Overall, the results indicate that while stay interviews have the potential to enhance teacher satisfaction and organizational health, their success largely depends on thoughtful implementation, consistent action, and leadership responsiveness (Covell, 2020).

Research Question 2: Teachers' Perceptions of Organizational Well-being Factors

This study examined teachers' perceptions across seven organizational well-being factors, revealing varying levels of satisfaction and providing insights for improving teacher retention strategies.

Job Satisfaction:

Teachers reported moderate job satisfaction, with student improvement and advancement identified as the most significant sources of fulfillment. This finding is consistent with previous research by Wang et al. (2024) and Hungo et al. (2024), who found that student success is a key contributor to teacher satisfaction. However, challenges such as classroom management difficulties, large workloads, and limited time negatively impacted teachers' experiences, reflecting the findings of Wang et al. (2024) regarding workload-related dissatisfaction.

Work-Life Balance:

Perceptions of work-life balance were moderate but showed high variability. While some teachers achieved a reasonable balance, others experienced considerable difficulties. This highlights the need for differentiated strategies to support work-life balance, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach (Vavasseur, 2024). Specific groups, such as newly qualified teachers and those undergoing subject changes, appeared to face greater challenges and may require targeted support.

Professional Development:

Teachers reported moderate satisfaction with professional development opportunities, emphasizing the need for a diverse range of training options tailored to varying needs, such as support for students with learning disabilities, technology integration, and subject-specific content knowledge (Dreer, 2024). Accessibility issues, including cost barriers, were also noted, suggesting that equitable access to professional development is crucial for enhancing teacher satisfaction and retention.

Communication with Administration:

Communication with administration was perceived as slightly positive but inconsistent.

Effective communication emerged as a critical element for teacher well-being, with concerns about timing and clarity of information sharing impacting teachers' ability to perform their roles effectively. These findings align with Dreer (2024), who emphasized the importance of clear, timely communication in promoting organizational well-being.

Collaboration:

Moderate satisfaction was reported regarding collaboration, but experiences varied widely. Some teachers benefited from strong collaborative practices, while others felt excluded. This inconsistency highlights the need for more equitable and intentional implementation of collaborative practices to ensure all faculty members benefit (Wagner et al., 2021). Suggested improvements included increasing information-sharing opportunities, meeting frequency, and intentional team-building efforts.

Appreciation for Contributions:

Teachers generally felt appreciated for their contributions, with higher ratings for this factor compared to others. However, variations in perceptions suggest that recognition must be personalized and multifaceted, including verbal acknowledgment, professional feedback, opportunities for growth, and material rewards (Hungo et al., 2024).

Pedagogical Feedback:

Satisfaction with pedagogical feedback was moderate, with teachers expressing a desire for more constructive, actionable feedback aimed at improving instructional practices rather than merely evaluating them. This aligns with research by Hungo et al. (2024), indicating that meaningful feedback connected to student outcomes supports teachers' professional growth.

Summary:

Collectively, the findings highlight the complex nature of organizational well-being and

underscore the need to address all seven factors to foster a supportive work environment. Particular attention is needed in areas such as work-life balance, collaboration, and pedagogical feedback, where inconsistencies were most evident. Ensuring equitable support across these dimensions is crucial for enhancing teacher satisfaction and promoting retention (Wagner et al., 2021).

Research Question 3: Benefits and Hindrances of Using Stay Interviews

The study identified key benefits and hindrances associated with the use of stay interviews in describing school well-being, offering insights into how this approach can be maximized for greater effectiveness.

Benefits of Stay Interviews:

One of the primary benefits was the identification of systemic issues within the organization. Stay interviews provided a structured opportunity for teachers to voice concerns related to workload, resource availability, and professional development needs. This process surfaced broader systemic patterns, enabling leadership to implement more comprehensive solutions, consistent with the findings of Frahm and Cianca (2021).

Another significant benefit was the strengthening of connections between teachers and administration. Teachers reported feeling a greater sense of affiliation with leadership, which contributed positively to their institutional commitment. Stay interviews also offered a formal platform for providing constructive feedback. When feedback was followed by visible action plans, teachers perceived the process as meaningful and impactful, supporting the structured feedback approach advocated by Frahm and Cianca (2021).

Stay interviews further contributed to tangible improvements in school culture. Feedback led to specific initiatives, such as mental health programs, reinforcing teachers' perceptions that

their voices were valued and that leadership was responsive to their needs. This aligns with Ismail and David's (2024) findings regarding the positive effects of responsive leadership actions on teacher satisfaction and commitment.

Additionally, the preventative nature of stay interviews was seen as a strategic advantage. Teachers appreciated being asked why they chose to remain rather than why they might leave, viewing the process as a proactive retention strategy. However, some inconsistencies in the implementation of resulting actions were noted, echoing the broader literature on the importance of consistent follow-through for proactive retention efforts (Flores & Shuls, 2024).

Hindrances of Stay Interviews:

Despite these benefits, several hindrances were identified. A major concern was inconsistent follow-through on the issues raised during stay interviews. Teachers expressed frustration when feedback was collected but not acted upon, which eroded trust in the process. This finding is consistent with Frahm and Cianca (2021), who emphasized the importance of responsive leadership in maintaining trust.

Time constraints also emerged as a barrier, as schools often lacked the resources or capacity to address concerns in a timely manner. Delays between identifying issues and implementing solutions weakened the perceived credibility of the process, similar to observations made by Ismail and David (2024).

The quality of the interviews varied considerably. Some teachers experienced highly professional and effective interviews, while others reported less positive interactions, suggesting that the skill of the interviewer significantly influenced the outcomes. This variability supports the findings of Flores and Shuls (2024), who noted that leadership quality directly affects trust and teacher commitment.

Additionally, fear of repercussions limited the openness of some participants, despite assurances of confidentiality. Concerns about psychological safety may have led some teachers to self-censor, thus reducing the completeness and authenticity of the feedback collected, as also noted by Frahm and Cianca (2021).

Finally, a lack of integration with broader school improvement initiatives was identified as a weakness. When stay interviews were not aligned with other organizational strategies, their effectiveness diminished. This highlights the need for stay interviews to be part of a holistic approach to school improvement rather than isolated interventions, as suggested by Ismail and David (2024).

Summary:

Overall, the findings underscored the potential of stay interviews to positively influence teacher retention when executed thoughtfully. However, addressing identified barriers—such as ensuring consistent follow-through, managing resource constraints, maintaining high interview quality, fostering psychological safety, and integrating stay interviews with broader initiatives—is critical for maximizing their effectiveness (Frahm & Cianca, 2021).

Significance

The relevance of the study can be examined along four major dimensions of educational administration and human resource management. To begin with, the study focuses on the research question that relates to the problem of teacher turnover, which remains a pressing problem in various educational systems across the globe. Thus, by providing a comprehensive analysis of stay interviews as one of the retention approaches, the study contributes practical and empirical knowledge to administrators and policymakers of schools.

The results of this study have provided a significant amount of insight into the different

factors that affect teacher's well-being. the study presents a discussion of the recommendations for the use of stay interviews, which can be useful for enhancing the organizational working conditions, communication, and supportive professional environment. The analysis of organizational well-being factors shows that teacher satisfaction can be explained by factors other than retention models.

Furthermore, the findings of the research have important implications for the professional development approach. It is evidenced by the fact that the study shows the variety of the teachers' needs and expectations points to the importance of targeted professional learning. These results suggest that, to retain such staff, more than professional needs must be met but also the staff's emotional and psychological needs.

The present study's methodological contribution is also significant to the field of research methodology in education. The mixed-methods design and the action research framework used in this study allow for the replication of the process in other institutions that are interested in enhancing the organizational practices. The iterative nature of the research, with its focus on continuous improvement, offers a dynamic approach to institutional development.

Limitations

Despite the findings of this study and the importance of stay interviews and teacher retention, there are a few limitations that need to be considered. First, the study was carried out in one private K-12 school and, therefore, the results cannot be generalized to other schools. This particular institution may not reflect the overall educational scenario due to the aspects of culture and resources of the organization and its demographic details.

However, there was a limitation in the sample size despite its selection and the study was conducted in only one institution. This limitation limits the generalizability of the quantitative

findings and decreases the statistical significance of the study. It is suggested that further research can be done with multi-site studies or with larger samples to increase generalizability.

The fact that survey and interview data are self-reported implies that there is likely response bias. Some might have been influenced to answer what they think is expected of them or may have been reluctant to give an honest account of their experiences, especially on some negative aspects of the organization. Despite efforts made by the researchers to reduce this bias by using only anonymous interviews and questionnaires, bias is always present in self-reported information.

A limitation of the study is in the temporal scope of the study area. The study method established a cross-sectional view of the teacher experiences and follow-up studies were not performed to a large extent. It was impossible to establish the long-term positive outcomes of stay interviews and the effectiveness of the interventions that were put in place within the given study period.

Moreover, the study mainly focused on the teacher perceptions, but the administrative leaders' views as well as the systematic students' performance monitoring were not considered. It can be further expanded if the study would involve multiple participants and relate retention measures to academic achievement indicators.

Finally, the researchers agree that there is a possibility of researcher bias in the analysis of the qualitative data. It is worth acknowledging that even with the use of a very stringent thematic coding framework and the application of reflexivity, interpretative elements involved in the research are somewhat subjective, which may occasionally penetrate into the researchers' theoretical biases.

Major Findings Related to Literature and Interpretations

The Role of Stay Interviews in Teacher Retention

The findings of this study revealed that stay interviews served as a critical mechanism for identifying both systemic and individual-level barriers to teacher satisfaction. Participants described how the interviews effectively surfaced workplace challenges related to workload distribution, leadership gaps, and resource limitations. However, the effectiveness of stay interviews was heavily dependent on the administration's ability to implement follow-through actions. When teachers observed that feedback from interviews led to tangible changes, their trust in leadership increased, as did their overall job satisfaction, aligning with findings by Casely-Hayford et al. (2022).

The results underscored that visible action following stay interviews was essential. Teachers who witnessed administrative responses to their feedback reported positive experiences, while those who perceived a lack of follow-up expressed frustration. This suggested that the ability of stay interviews to influence retention outcomes was contingent upon the administration's willingness and capacity to address identified concerns.

The structured nature of stay interviews distinguished them from less formal feedback methods. Teachers noted that stay interviews provided a systematic platform for surfacing issues that might otherwise have been overlooked in the busyness of daily school operations. This structured approach allowed leadership to identify and address latent problems, offering more comprehensive solutions compared to informal complaint mechanisms.

The findings also indicated that stay interviews could serve as a visible expression of leadership's commitment to teacher well-being. When conducted effectively, the process reinforced teachers' perceptions that their efforts were valued and that leadership was invested in their professional experiences, supporting conclusions drawn by Frahm and Cianca (2021).

However, inconsistent implementation occasionally weakened this positive perception, as some teachers reported mixed experiences in seeing their feedback lead to action.

Overall, these findings aligned with Dreer's (2024) assertion that feedback mechanisms are crucial for identifying sources of dissatisfaction and enabling corrective action. Importantly, the study extended this understanding by highlighting that the mere collection of feedback is insufficient. Without visible action and communication regarding subsequent steps, stay interviews risk becoming performative exercises that may ultimately erode, rather than strengthen, teacher trust and commitment.

Leadership's Influence on Teacher Well-Being and Commitment

Leadership emerged as both a facilitating factor and a potential barrier to teacher well-being and retention. The findings of this study indicated that teachers highly valued effective communication, transparency, and responsiveness from administrators. However, inconsistencies in communication and delays in response weakened trust in leadership for some participants, supporting findings by Hicks (2020).

Several teachers highlighted the potential of stay interviews to strengthen teacher-administrator relationships when properly executed. Stay interviews were seen as an opportunity to foster stronger organizational loyalty and a greater sense of connection with the administration. However, it was noted that the process needed to be handled carefully. Poorly conducted interviews, such as those that appeared rushed or failed to engage with sensitive topics, could erode trust, echoing concerns identified by Flores and Shuls (2024).

Follow-through on feedback was particularly crucial for leadership to build and sustain trust.

When leadership demonstrated genuine responsiveness to teachers' concerns, such as implementing mental health initiatives, teachers reported higher levels of satisfaction and

institutional commitment. These findings were consistent with Frahm and Cianca (2021), who found that responsive leadership strengthens organizational commitment and reduces turnover intentions.

The study also revealed the importance of communication quality and consistency. Teachers expressed dissatisfaction when information was not coherently communicated or when parents received updates before faculty members did. This created challenges when responding to parent inquiries and highlighted the importance of communication fairness. This finding aligned with Dreer's (2024) work on the significance of interactional justice as a critical factor influencing job satisfaction and organizational trust.

Additionally, teachers stressed the need for leadership to demonstrate strategic, long-term planning rather than relying solely on reactive approaches. It was noted that while leadership had made advances in the area of teacher retention, there was a shortage in strategic planning, indicating that proactive leadership strategies were necessary to prevent issues contributing to attrition. This finding supported Sellers' (2024) assertion that while responsive leadership is important, strategic foresight is essential for sustainable teacher retention.

The study highlighted variations in leadership competency across different domains of school functioning. Teachers emphasized the need for greater consistency in communication, decision-making, and resource management. Many teachers noted that while leadership was appreciated, there was a need for more decisiveness based on feedback, suggesting that friendly leadership must be coupled with timely and effective action. These results aligned with findings by Reed (2024), who emphasized that leadership decisions must enable and support positive teacher environments.

Workplace Conditions and Their Impact on Retention

The study revealed that workplace conditions are critical in determining teacher retention, with several factors identified as particularly relevant. Teachers emphasized the importance of a reasonable workload, quality classroom resources, and a proper classroom environment. Teachers working in older schools with outdated materials and equipment noted that the lack of updated resources, teaching aids, and technology hindered their ability to provide quality education. This finding aligns with research by Nguyen (2024), which highlights that teachers who have access to adequate resources tend to exhibit higher self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Another significant concern was the lack of personal attention in large classes. Overcrowding was seen as a major challenge, as it put pressure on teachers to manage student behavior while ensuring that each student received adequate attention. This aligns with findings from Schaack et al. (2022), which indicate that large class sizes contribute to increased stress, burnout, and frustration for teachers who struggle to support each student effectively.

Teachers also identified issues related to their physical workspace. A common concern was the absence of proper spaces for planning, assessing work, or collaborating with colleagues, which impacted their overall performance. This finding echoes Nguyen's (2024) argument that poor working environments can lead to teacher demoralization and job dissatisfaction. Workload was another significant factor. In more favorable conditions, teachers still reported that heavy workloads contributed to burnout and job dissatisfaction, which could prompt them to seek alternative employment. Schaack et al. (2022) found that workload balance is a crucial factor influencing teachers' decisions to stay or leave their positions.

The degree of professional autonomy was also highlighted, with teachers expressing a desire for more freedom to make instructional decisions and implement their own ideas and practices. This aligns with the work of Sellers (2024), which found that professional autonomy is

a key contributor to job satisfaction and retention.

Teachers also expressed concerns about the relationship between workplace conditions and administrative efficiency. Delays in responding to resource demands and other administrative matters were seen as negatively affecting job satisfaction. This supports Sellers' (2024) research on the importance of administrative practices in influencing teachers' decisions to remain at a school.

Together, these findings provide evidence that workplace conditions are multifaceted and significantly influence teacher retention. Schools aiming to improve retention must consider factors such as the availability of resources, class size, workspace quality, workload, professional autonomy, and administrative practices (Sellers, 2024). Future research should explore how these factors interact across different educational contexts and identify effective strategies for creating supportive environments that foster teacher persistence.

Professional Development as a Retention Strategy

The availability of better professional development opportunities emerged as a key factor influencing teacher satisfaction and retention. Teachers viewed credentials, professional development, and career progression as indicators that the institution was committed to investing in their professional growth, which positively influenced their perception of the school environment.

Quantitative analysis revealed a moderate level of satisfaction with the professional development opportunities available, with an average satisfaction score of $M = 4.77$, $SD = 1.45$. These variations suggest that faculty members may not have had equal access to appropriate professional development resources, a finding supported by Vavasseur (2024). This aligns with Zhang et al. (2023), who identified the fair provision of professional development as a key

predictor of teacher retention.

Participants' professional development needs were diverse, reflecting the varied demands teachers face in their classrooms. Several teachers expressed a need for training in areas such as ADHD, classroom management, childhood anxiety disorders, and dyslexia, which are becoming increasingly relevant in today's classrooms. This is consistent with Dreer's (2024) argument that focused professional development addressing specific classroom concerns can enhance job satisfaction and reduce turnover.

Technological training was also highlighted as a significant need. Teachers expressed a desire for more computer training and opportunities to integrate information technology into their lessons. This finding reflects the growing importance of technology in education and supports Zhang et al. (2023), which emphasizes the link between technology skills and teacher confidence.

Additional requests for specialized professional development, such as training in behavior management and subject-specific strategies, also emerged. Teachers indicated that such opportunities would enhance their confidence and job satisfaction. These results support Covell's (2020) argument that subject matter expertise and specialization are crucial factors in teacher retention.

Access to professional development was also identified as an issue. Some teachers noted that financial constraints prevented them from attending valuable programs, such as those related to dyslexia. This finding highlights the need for improved access to professional development opportunities, a concern raised by Covell (2020), who suggested that greater accessibility could positively influence teacher retention.

Findings further emphasized the importance of individualized professional learning.

Teachers expressed appreciation for specific events and opportunities tailored to their interests and needs, such as training on technology and curriculum development. This aligns with Dreer's (2024) argument that professional development should be customized based on the growth needs and interests of individual teachers to enhance job satisfaction and retention.

These findings suggest that a research-based approach to identifying and implementing relevant, accessible, and diverse professional development opportunities is critical for increasing teacher retention. Fostering ongoing professional development can raise organizational commitment and reduce turnover, as noted by Zhang et al. (2023).

Emotional and Psychological Well-Being

The study revealed high levels of job satisfaction, effective performance, and commitment among teachers, with most expressing positive emotions while at work. Additionally, changes in anxiety levels and perceptions of work-life balance indicated areas where more support could enhance teachers' quality of life.

Mental health support was a significant priority for teachers. Many teachers emphasized the importance of counseling services, stress management programs, and a caring school culture for their well-being. This finding aligns with Ismail and David (2024), who noted that teachers with access to mental health support perform better and experience greater job satisfaction. Teacher well-being was closely linked to the availability of quality teaching resources. Teachers indicated that having access to effective teaching aids, textbooks, and other essential resources directly contributed to their well-being. This supports Nguyen's (2024) assertion that a lack of resources contributes to increased stress and reduced well-being among teachers.

Work-life balance also emerged as a crucial factor for teacher well-being. Teachers acknowledged that managing the demands of both their professional and personal lives was

essential to avoiding stress and burnout. This finding is consistent with Ismail and David's (2024) research, which identified work-life balance as a key element affecting teacher well-being and retention.

Student success was identified as a source of job satisfaction. Teachers expressed that seeing their students succeed contributed significantly to their sense of fulfillment, although excessive workload was seen as diminishing this satisfaction. This aligns with Flores and Shuls (2024), who found that the opportunity to positively influence students' lives is a central factor in teacher satisfaction.

The study also highlighted the connection between job satisfaction and professional development. Teachers valued opportunities for professional growth and career advancement, while also noting that unclear communication from leadership negatively affected their satisfaction. This is in line with Hungo et al. (2024), who emphasized that professional growth opportunities are key contributors to job satisfaction.

Classroom autonomy was another significant factor influencing job satisfaction. Teachers expressed that more freedom to implement changes in the classroom increased their satisfaction, whereas excessive bureaucracy hindered their ability to exercise professional judgment. This supports the work of Flores and Shuls (2024), who found that teacher autonomy plays a major role in both job satisfaction and retention.

The study also highlighted the emotional variability of teachers, with some feeling fulfilled and others experiencing stress. This suggests that teacher well-being is influenced by a combination of individual factors and the broader school context, as noted by Wagner et al. (2021).

Taken together, these findings underscore the importance of addressing teachers'

emotional and psychological needs as part of retention efforts. Schools that prioritize teacher support, through policies and resources aimed at improving well-being, can enhance motivation, productivity, and retention, as highlighted by Ismail and David (2024).

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

The findings from this study offer a number of practical implications for educational leaders seeking to improve teacher retention and foster a culture of well-being within private K–12 schools. After analyzing the stay interview data, a clear set of recommendations was presented to the school administration, rooted in authentic teacher feedback. These insights pointed to several key areas in need of attention, including workload balance, professional development opportunities, emotional support, and communication practices. The overarching goal was to develop responsive and sustainable strategies that could create a more supportive school environment and help reduce teacher attrition.

One clear takeaway from the study is the potential benefit of institutionalizing stay interviews as a formal, recurring process. Teachers responded positively when these interviews were conducted with intention and sincerity. When implemented consistently and followed by tangible action, stay interviews can become a powerful tool for improving relationships between leadership and staff. They provide a structured space for open dialogue and offer school leaders timely insight into teacher concerns, needs, and goals. It is recommended that school leaders receive training in how to conduct these interviews in a way that prioritizes empathy, confidentiality, and follow-up. This process should not be treated as a one-time event, but rather as an integral part of a school's annual rhythm.

Improved communication emerged as another central recommendation. Teachers consistently expressed frustration with unclear or inconsistent communication from leadership,

especially around major decisions or changes. Establishing clear, reliable communication practices—such as regular leadership updates, open-door policies, or structured teacher forums—can help build trust and reduce misunderstandings. Teachers want to feel informed and involved, especially before key announcements are made to parents or external audiences. Transparency in communication helps faculty feel like valued members of the school community rather than just employees being informed after the fact.

Teacher well-being also includes access to mental and emotional health resources, and several participants noted a lack of formalized support in this area. To address this, schools should consider offering or expanding access to mental health services, including on-site counseling or virtual therapy partnerships. Teachers also suggested wellness initiatives such as mindfulness workshops, stress management sessions, and wellness days built into the school calendar. These efforts signal to staff that their emotional well-being is not only acknowledged but actively supported.

Another significant area highlighted by the data was professional development. Teachers expressed a desire for PD offerings that are timely, relevant, and tailored to their subject areas and student needs. Many shared that current PD opportunities felt either generic or inaccessible. To improve this, schools should consider surveying teachers about their PD needs each year and designing options accordingly. Providing a wider variety of formats—such as online courses, small-group sessions, or external conference attendance—can better meet the diverse learning needs of faculty. Time and budget constraints were also mentioned, so offering affordable or subsidized options will help increase participation.

In addition to skill-building and content learning, teachers voiced a strong desire for increased collegiality and connection. Many reported feeling isolated in their roles, especially

those who teach in specialized subject areas or smaller departments. Leadership should prioritize opportunities for team-building and collaboration, whether through interdisciplinary planning days, mentoring programs, or informal social gatherings. Fostering a sense of community among staff is essential for long-term job satisfaction and a positive school climate.

Perhaps most importantly, the study underscored the need for visible follow-through from leadership. Teachers repeatedly emphasized that collecting feedback without acting on it creates disillusionment. School leaders should create systems to report back to faculty on what changes are being made based on teacher input. This might take the form of a recurring “You Said, We Did” communication, highlighting specific concerns and corresponding actions. This practice not only increases transparency but also reinforces that leadership is genuinely listening and committed to improvement.

The study’s findings point to several key areas where school leaders can take meaningful steps to support teacher well-being and retention. By embedding stay interviews into regular practice, enhancing communication, investing in relevant professional development, and showing consistent follow-through, private schools can build stronger, more connected faculty communities. These steps don’t require massive structural overhauls—but they do require intentionality, responsiveness, and a commitment to listening deeply to what teachers are saying.

Implications for Research

Future research should examine how stay interviews might function differently across various educational contexts, particularly between private and public schools. Policy contingencies such as tenure protections, collective bargaining agreements, and state-mandated evaluation systems in public schools could influence both the implementation and effectiveness of stay interviews. In contrast, private schools may offer more flexibility but face different challenges, such as

financial constraints or enrollment pressures, which can shape teacher retention efforts. A deeper exploration of these contextual differences would provide a more nuanced understanding of how stay interviews contribute to teacher persistence in diverse settings. Additionally, longitudinal studies are recommended to assess the sustained outcomes of stay interviews over time and to identify policy structures that either enable or limit their effectiveness.

Professional Development Opportunities

The first goal of the Action Plan focused on improving and diversifying professional development opportunities. Stay interview data indicated that teachers had a moderate level of satisfaction regarding access to and quality of professional development ($M = 4.77$, $SD = 1.45$). To address this, the Action Plan recommended tailoring future professional development sessions based on a needs assessment survey, identifying key areas such as supporting students with learning disabilities, integrating technology in the classroom, and strengthening content knowledge.

Discussions also centered on creating a well-structured professional development calendar and fostering partnerships with local universities and organizations to expand training opportunities while managing costs effectively. Additionally, a mentorship program was proposed to connect experienced teachers with newer or less experienced educators, providing ongoing support and professional growth opportunities. This aligns with research emphasizing that professional development should be personalized to educators' needs to enhance job satisfaction and retention (Dreer, 2024).

Key targets for the Action Plan included increasing participation in professional development sessions, gathering positive feedback from attendees, and ultimately improving student performance—ensuring measurable outcomes that reflect the effectiveness of these

initiatives.

Enhancing Collaboration through Professional Learning Communities

The second goal of the Action Plan focused on the collaboration between teachers, as the stay interviews revealed moderate satisfaction level of the participants and significant variability in their collaborative experiences ($M = 5.04$, $SD = 1.74$). Introduced as two of the structured approaches which were to be adopted in the plan, the PLCs and the common formative assessments were presented. Some of the specific steps were to form the PLC groups by grade level or subject area, build capacity of teachers in PLC, determine the frequency of the PLC meetings, and to design common formative assessments for purpose of evaluation of students' progress for instructional purposes. There was also an emphasis on the regular evaluation and modification of the PLC to maximize its success. This is further affirmed by Wagner et al. (2021) who stated that relationship and teamwork improves job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Such standards were enhanced teacher cooperation, the incorporation of common formative assessments, and enhanced student performance, all of which offered measurable enhancements.

Supporting Educator Well-Being

The third objective of the Action Plan focused on addressing the mental health and anxiety concerns raised during the stay interviews. The plan outlined several strategies to promote mental health support, including offering mental health training, encouraging wellness activities, and ensuring that mental health resources are easily accessible to staff. It also proposed conducting periodic check-ins with employees, engaging school counselors, and forming partnerships for counseling services to enhance accessibility. This approach aligns with the findings of Ismail and David (2024), which indicated that teachers who receive mental health

support demonstrate improved performance and higher job satisfaction. To evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives, the plan includes measures such as raising awareness of mental health issues, monitoring engagement with support programs, and tracking reductions in anxiety and stress levels among staff.

Implementation and Evaluation Framework

To ensure that the Action Plan works as planned, there is a corresponding review committee that will be tasked to review the plan on a quarterly basis. This committee was required to collect the feedback of the staff and students so as to check on the impact of the initiatives so as to make the necessary adjustments or make new ones if the need arose. Such a systematic approach to evaluation is crucial for the action research methodology because it involves planning, action, observation, and reflection phases (Frahm & Cianca, 2021). In the following Action Plan, there is a clear and detailed response to each of the issues stated by the teachers in the first cycle of stay interviews, and the structure for the further evaluation of the situation is described. This is in tandem with Covell's (2020) postulation that teacher retention initiatives can only make the intended difference if the procedures are implemented systematically and their results are measurable.

Proactive Strategies for Educational Leaders

Based on these identified factors, educational leaders can implement several proactive strategies to enhance teacher retention:

Improved Workplace Conditions. Educational leaders should consider providing resources and facilities, such as updated classroom equipment, structures, and workload to support the work environment. Smaller classes actually help teachers to reduce stress levels and get more satisfaction with their job, while the optimization of administrative processes and

adequate amount of planning time is also beneficial. Such measures as the maintenance of buildings and availability of up to date teaching aids are other ways through which institutions support teachers' work. This recommendation was supported by the study conducted by Leal and Baniel (2024), where the authors noted that changes in specific aspects of working conditions boosts the teacher retention in private school.

Foster Transparent and Supportive Leadership. Leadership should consider how he or she is continually checking in with faculty in terms of feedback mechanisms and what has been done with the data from stay interviews. This will promote trust and show that the needs of the teachers are considered thereby boosting organizational commitment as stated by Zhang et al., (2023). More specifically, to enhance institutional commitment and retention, such career advancement and leadership can be developed more rigorously. The above recommendation is informed by a study by Zhang et al. (2023) where the authors stressed an importance of leadership practices in teacher retention strategies.

Prioritize Professional Development. Professional development should be geared towards fulfilling teacher needs and goals, such as additional training for handling students with learning difficulties, increased ICT skills, and improvements in content knowledge and pedagogy. Thus, obtaining access to workshops, conferences, and leadership training can help in enhancing skill and having a better chance of a career progression; meanwhile, removing the financial constraints can help in ensuring equal chances to the people in gaining access to the opportunities in question.

This recommendation is in line with Zhang et al.'s (2023) study which posited that targeted professional development has a strong impact on teacher retention when the development strategies align with the individual and institutional objectives.

Promote Work-Life Balance and Well-Being. Work-life balance can be promoted by flexible time arrangements, less paperwork, and supportive policies acknowledging that teachers have families. Additional facilities for mental health care and counseling, as well as mental health promotion and staff support programs, can also be helpful for teachers. Developing an organizational culture where people care for their achievements as well as their health is a clear signal of what is important in an institution.

This recommendation is supported by Dreer (2024) who pointed out that organizational support for work life balance is an effective way of encouraging teachers to stay. These findings and recommendations are also in concordance with existing literature on teacher retention. The use of stay interviews as a part of overall retention initiatives enables educational administrators to consider a range of factors influencing teachers' decisions to stay or leave their roles. This is one of the key areas where top management must remain actively involved in demonstrating commitment towards change implementation and adequate resourcing (Dreer, 2024).

Strengthen Emotional Support Resources. The study also highlighted the need for increased emotional support for teachers. There was a clear demand for emotional counseling resources for both elementary and high school students, underscoring the importance of offering counseling services at all educational levels. This aligns with research on the influence of positive psychological resources—particularly positive relationships and emotions—on teacher productivity and commitment (Hungo et al., 2024).

Educational leaders should consider hiring mental health counselors within the school setting to provide services to teachers or explore the option of teletherapy to help reduce stress, prevent burnout, and improve job satisfaction. Additionally, fostering a positive school climate is essential. One teacher noted the lack of “fellowship” and described it as “lonely” to be around

colleagues. To address this, initiatives like team formation, retreats, and peer mentoring could promote a sense of community and connection among staff.

Research also supports the effectiveness of collaborative cultures in boosting teacher morale and strengthening community ties (Ronfeldt et al., 2015). These approaches can help restore a sense of teamwork and shared purpose, benefiting both teachers and the overall school environment.

Enhance Professional Development Opportunities. The professional development needs of teachers were identified as being highly targeted, with a focus on addressing specific challenges faced in classroom practice. Many teachers expressed a desire for professional development that would help them improve their teaching practices, particularly in relation to meeting the needs of neurodivergent students. There was a clear emphasis on providing training that addresses the unique needs and concerns of these students to enhance instructional effectiveness.

Final Thoughts and Conclusions

The teachers were found to be retaining their jobs based on the conditions of work, which turned out to be the most influential factor. Teachers also noted that reasonable workload, proper classroom equipment, training, and school environment were of great necessity. Some of the specific difficulties were the large class size, the instability of the schedule, and the lack of regular planning time, which are the stressors increasing job dissatisfaction. The Working conditions are fundamental for the teachers have less turnover and burnout, and quality resources and facilities help teacher to deliver quality education (Leal & Baniel, 2024).

The participants noted that positive changes including better classroom environment and changes of the class schedule after conducting the stay interviews led to increased retention intentions. This is consistent with Leal and Baniel (2024)'s study that pointed out that physical

work environment and availability of resources are some of the key determinants of teacher retention.

Leadership was identified as a key factor that influenced the retention of teachers in the study. Leadership behaviors such as communication and feedback, which include timely response to feedback provided, were positively related to well-being. Lack of consistent communication and lack of follow-up of the feedback gathered from stay interviews led to decreased trust in leadership which in turn affected the retention intentions (Leal & Baniel, 2024). When teachers feel that their administrators are receptive and accessible, they are more likely to be committed to institutional goals and objectives as well as more likely to stay in their positions. This is in agreement with Leal and Baniel (2024) who posit that participatory leadership has a positive impact on teacher retention in today's learning institutions.

Several key conditions for staff retention were considered; one of them was the access to relevant, targeted and effective professional development opportunities. Teachers were motivated by development of skills, promotion, and leadership. Teachers who received professional development training stated higher levels of motivation and commitment to their roles as compared to those teachers who did not have access to professional development that had been tailored to their needs and specific context as per Zhang et al. (2023). This finding is consistent with Zhang et al. (2023) who noted that professional development is one of the most important retention policies for teachers, especially if the professional development meets the teachers' personal and organizational career objectives.

Faculty members remain very concerned about work-life balance at their workplaces, and this factor was mentioned by teachers as being of utmost importance in their decision to stay at their workplaces. Other sources of stress which were mentioned as potential causes of attrition

included high working hours, inadequate time for planning, and lack of support for outside commitments (Leal & Baniel, 2024). Specifically, mental health and flexibility regarding scheduling are examples of how the organization can promote teacher retention intentions. This is in agreement with the study conducted by Dreer (2024) where the author noted that, organizational support for work-life balance has a significant relationship with teachers' retention, especially in stressful school environments.

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Appendix A



IRB APPROVAL

December 17, 2024

Ellen Hahn, PhD
Haley Center 4036
Auburn Univ, AL 36849
3348444460
reamseh@auburn.edu

Dear Ellen Hahn:

On 12/17/2024, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

| Protocol Information | Submission Details |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Type of Review: | Initial Study |
| Title: | The Effectiveness of Stay Interviews on Teacher Retention in Private K-12 Schools |
| Investigator: | Ellen Hahn |
| IRB ID: | STUDY00000245 |
| Funding: | None |
| Grant Title: | N/A |
| Grant ID: | None |
| IND, IDE or HDE: | None |
| Documents Reviewed: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beth Leatherwood, Category: IRB Protocol; • Consent Letter V2.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Follow Up Interview Questions_.pdf, Category: Survey/Questionnaire; • Follow Up Plan.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • HRP-581 Information Letter-Interview UPDATED.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • HRP-581- Survey Information Letter UPDATED.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • PCS Consent (1).pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Stay Interview Recruitment Plan.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Stay Survey Questions_ (1).pdf, Category: Survey/Questionnaire; |

This letter serves as official notice that your protocol has received IRB approval.

Assurances:

This study does not require continuing review. However, investigators are required to meet all institutional requirements for conducting research with human subjects. By accepting this IRB approval and in conducting this protocol, you agree to follow the requirements listed in HRP-103 - INVESTIGATOR MANUAL.



AUBURN UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board

As a reminder:

- Modifications to this study must be approved by the IRB in advance of implementing changes to the research
- This study may be subject to post-approval monitoring and/or administrative check-in. As such, it is imperative that you follow the protocol as specified in the approved protocol documents
- Any reportable new information related to this study must be reported to the IRB within 5 business days in accordance with institutional reporting requirements
- Close this study once all research activities are complete

Consent Documents:

To document consent, use the consent documents that were approved and stamped by the IRB. Go to the Documents tab to download them.

Best wishes for success with your research!

IRB Administration
540 Devall Drive
Auburn, AL 36849
irbadmin@auburn.edu
(334) 844-5966



Date: Tuesday, April 1, 2025 11:31:07 AM

Print

Close

STUDY00000245

Basic Study Information

Basic Study Information

1. * Title of study:

The Effectiveness of Stay Interviews on Teacher Retention in Private K-12 Schools

2. * Short title:

Stay Interviews and Teacher Retention in Private Schools

3. * Brief description:

This study, titled "The Effectiveness of Stay Interviews on Teacher Retention in Private K-12 Schools: A Mixed Methods Study", aims to explore how stay interviews can be used as a strategy to improve teacher retention in private schools. Through a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, the study begins with a quantitative phase that surveys private K-12 teachers to measure well-being, job satisfaction, and retention factors using tools like the PERMA Workplace Profiler and Stay Interview Questionnaire. The second phase follows up with qualitative semi-structured interviews to gain deeper insights into the survey findings.

The study focuses on three key areas: organizational well-being, the use of stay interviews as a proactive retention tool, and teacher attrition specific to private schools.

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By integrating quantitative and qualitative data, this research will provide a comprehensive understanding of how stay interviews can influence retention decisions and overall teacher well-being in private school contexts.

The results will not only contribute to the academic literature on teacher retention but also provide practical, evidence-based strategies for private school administrators to improve working conditions and teacher satisfaction. Ultimately, the findings could have broader implications for addressing teacher shortages and enhancing the quality of education in private schools.

4. * What kind of study is this?

Single-site study

5. * Will an external IRB act as the IRB of record for this study?

Yes No

6. * Local principal investigator:

Ellen Hahn

7. * Attach the protocol:

| | Document | Category | Date Modified | Document History |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| View | Supporting Document V2.pdf(V2) | IRB Protocol | 12/16/2024 | History |
| View | Beth Leatherwood(V4) | IRB Protocol | 12/16/2024 | History |

8. Please indicate the proposed review category:

Expedited

https://endeavorirb.huronresearchsuite.com/IRB/app/portal/smartform/printProject/_IRBSubmission/F69D196C914211EF378F4B8B8F565000?packetIds=defaultPrintPacket

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9. Does this research include a purchase, or purchases, that involve technology hardware, software, or online services?

Yes No

10. * Does the study expose participants to radiation?

Yes No

11. Is IBC (Institutional Biosafety Committee) approval required for this study?

Yes No

12. Is IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee) approval required for this study?

Yes No

13. Does this study involve the Auburn University MRI Center?

Yes No

14. * Does this study involve vulnerable populations, or persons with disabilities or disadvantages?

Yes No

15. * Are you using Auburn University faculty, staff, or students in your research?

Yes No

Study Funding Sources

1. Identify each organization supplying funding for the study:

| Funding Source | Sponsor's Funding ID | Grants Office ID | Attachments |
|----------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------|
|----------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------|

There are no items to display

Local Study Team Members

1. Identify each additional person involved in the design, conduct, or reporting of the research:

| Name | Roles | Involved in Consent | E-mail | Phone |
|------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------|
| Beth Leatherwood | Co-investigator Data Analyst | yes | bzl0078@auburn.edu | |

2. External team member information:

| Name | Description |
|------|-------------|
|------|-------------|

There are no items to display

Study Scope

- 1. * Does the study specify the use of an approved drug or biologic, use an unapproved drug or biologic, or use a food or dietary supplement to diagnose, cure, treat, or mitigate a disease or condition?
 Yes No

- 2. * Does the study evaluate the safety or effectiveness of a device or use a humanitarian use device (HUD)?
 Yes No

- 3. * Will the study require a Certificate of Confidentiality (CoC) issued by the NIH?
 Yes No

- 4. * Is the study a clinical trial?
 Yes No





Local Research Locations

- 1. Identify research locations where research activities will be conducted or overseen by the local investigator:

| | Location | Contact | Phone | Email |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------------|
| View | Presbyterian Christian School | Jimmy Messer | 2514211687 | jmesser@pcsk12.org |

Local Site Documents

1. Consent forms: (include an HHS-approved sample consent document, if applicable)

| | Document | Category | Date Modified | Document History |
|------|--|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| View |  HRP-581- Survey Information Letter UPDATED.docx(V2) | Consent Form | 12/16/2024 | History |
| View |  HRP-581 Information Letter- Interview UPDATED.docx(V2) | Consent Form | 12/16/2024 | History |
| View |  PCS Consent (1).pdf(V1) | Consent Form | 11/5/2024 | History |
| View |  Consent Letter V2.pdf(V2) | Consent Form | 11/4/2024 | History |





2. Recruitment materials: (add all material to be seen or heard by subjects, including ads)

| | Document | Category | Date Modified | Document History |
|------|--|-----------------------|---------------|------------------|
| View |  Follow Up Plan.docx(V2) | Recruitment Materials | 11/5/2024 | History |
| View |  Stay Interview Recruitment Plan.docx(V2) | Recruitment Materials | 11/5/2024 | History |

3. Other attachments:

https://endeavorirb.huronresearchsuite.com/IRB/app/portal/smartform/printProject/_IRBSubmission/F69D196C914211EF378F4B88BF565000?packetIds=defaultPrintPacket

9/11

| | Document | Category | Date Modified | Document History |
|------|---|----------------------|---------------|------------------|
| View |  Stay Survey Questions_(1).pdf(V2) | Survey/Questionnaire | 11/25/2024 | History |
| View |  Follow Up Interview Questions_.pdf(V1) | Survey/Questionnaire | 11/25/2024 | History |
| View |  Requested Permission Modification for IRB_.pdf(V1) | Other | 11/25/2024 | History |
| View |  CITI Basic RCR Certificate.pdf(V1) | Training Document | 10/23/2024 | History |
| View |  citiCompletionCertificate_11677529_52171480.pdf(V1) | Training Document | 10/23/2024 | History |

Suggested attachments:

- Completed checklist of meeting Department of Energy requirements, if applicable
- Other site-related documents not attached on previous forms

Final Page

You have reached the end of the IRB submission form. Read the next steps carefully:

1. Click **Finish** to exit the form.
2. **Important!** To send the submission for review, click **Submit** on the next page.

You must click Submit in the left menu bar on the following page to submit your protocol. Your protocol is not submitted until the workflow indicates that it is in Pre-Review.