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Retaining Rural Educators: Characteristics of Teacher
Retention Practices of Rural School Districts

by

Joshua C. Phillips

April, 2015

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University in

partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

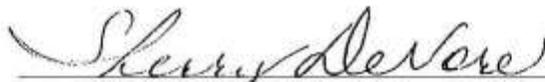
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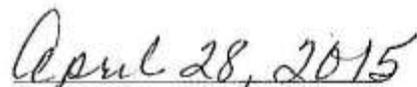
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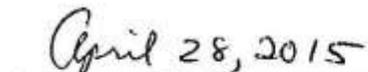
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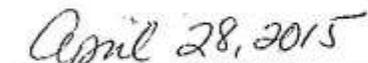

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Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the reasons high-quality rural veteran educators choose to remain in small, rural district settings and to identify common factors among small rural school districts that have high numbers of highly qualified veteran teachers. The study is relevant to school leaders and school boards within small rural communities seeking to develop policies and encourage strategies to keep high-quality educators from leaving districts. The motivation-hygiene theory of job satisfaction developed by Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1993), coupled with Rosenholtz's (1989) 10 essential components for working together were utilized throughout the study to evaluate the motivations of high-quality veteran rural educators. A self-administered survey and telephone interviews were utilized to gather data, which revealed high-quality veteran teachers choose to remain in the small, rural school setting due to intrinsic motivators. It was learned strong support from fellow educators and the community contributed to the desire of rural educators to remain employed within their districts. Data revealed educators were interested in autonomy within the classroom and support from administrators. Research indicated small, rural schools with high numbers of highly qualified veteran teachers have high levels of administrative support. These educators have a sense of belonging within their districts and high levels of job satisfaction. Opportunities for educators to collaborate are readily available and support is given through teacher evaluations. Additionally, these educators feel connections within their school communities, which enable them to better teach the district's students. Lastly, educators voiced school climate played a large role in their decisions to stay in the small, rural setting.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The key to a successful school is the retention of highly qualified, dedicated educators (Collins & Hansen, 2011). One of the major issues small, rural school districts face is the retention of such individuals (Farber, 2010). The purpose of this study was to identify factors that exist within the school that aid in the recruitment and retention of highly qualified, successful educators. Rural schools face a revolving door of educators who are hired, gain experience, and then leave the school for higher-paying teaching jobs in larger nearby districts (Darling & Ducommun, 2011). This study involved determination of what factors, if any, aid in the recruitment and retention of highly qualified, successful educators within the small rural school setting.

Within this chapter, the background of the study is outlined in detail, leading to the essential research involved within this study. The theoretical framework from which this study centers is introduced and discussed at length. The problem statement and research questions are outlined. Additionally, research relative to the successful completion of the study is cited, as it provides the framework for the importance of the study of the recruitment and retention of highly qualified, successful rural educators.

Background of the Study

Collins and Hansen (2011) asserted the key to success within any organization is “getting the right people on the bus” (p. 185). Each school year, educational administrators are confronted with the challenge of not just convincing the right people to join organizations, but ensuring the right people do not start leaving the organization in search of other opportunities (Collins & Hansen, 2011). The Alliance for Excellent Education (2014), found “Roughly half a million U.S. teachers either move or leave the

profession each year—attrition that costs the United States up to \$2.2 billion annually” (p. 27). Ingersoll and Merrill (2010), stated “Average turnover rates fluctuate from year-to-year, but overall they have increased since the 1990s by 28 percent” (p. 18). According to Graziano (2005), “The U.S. Department of Education confirms that teacher turnover is highest in public schools where half or more of the students receive free or reduced-price lunches” (p. 40).

One of the most challenging aspects of educator turnover is the expense of finding, hiring, and training high-quality teachers to fill positions. Barnes, Crowe, and Schaefer (2012) ascertained in suburban North Carolina the cost to replace teachers who left the district was just under \$10,000 per educator. Barnes et al. (2012) concluded, in a small rural district such as Jemez Valley, New Mexico, the cost per teacher who left was \$4,366; Milwaukee Public Schools spent an average replacement cost per position of \$15,325. In 2014, the Alliance for Excellent Education (AFEE) recognized high teacher turnover costs are not restricted to budgetary losses. The AFEE also asserted, “Studies suggest that the price tag for recruitment and replacement seriously underestimates the cumulative costs of eroding the caliber and stability of the teacher workforce” (AFEE, 2014, p. 3). For example, as Donaldson and Johnson (2011) concluded, “Routinely high levels of teacher turnover impede a school’s efforts to coordinate curriculum, to track and share important information about students as they move from grade to grade, and to maintain productive relationships with parents and the local community” (p. 3).

Ingersoll and Merrill (2010) estimated between 40% and 50% of new teachers leave the field before five years of service in the profession, and the attrition of first-year teachers has increased by about one-third in the past 20 years. Studies were conducted to

determine the amount of teacher turnover and to determine whether these teachers left the profession entirely or whether they transferred to other schools and districts (Goldring, Taie, & Riddles 2014; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). However, since attrition and mobility have the same end result, it did not matter to each school community “whether the teacher has simply moved to another school within the system, or whether he or she has left the system entirely—they still lose that teacher from their school” (Strunk & Robinson, 2006, p. 65).

Should the teaching field experience a massive amount of turnover as a result of a record number of retirements, the process of recruiting, hiring, and training new hires would become even more challenging (Clandinin & Schaefer, 2014). In 2013, The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) predicted 2,656,000 new teachers would be hired, leading one to conclude regardless of the number of retirees, increased enrollment would create new positions and increase opportunities for existing teachers to move between districts. As Perrachione, Petersen, and Rosser (2008) asserted, "Instead of spending precious dollars on replacement and hiring, these dollars could be better spent on keeping teachers in our schools" (p. 12). It is evident schools must become focused upon practices that have been proven to prompt qualified teachers not to leave their positions in the first place so as not expel resources replacing them.

Theoretical Framework

Herzberg et al. (1993) developed the motivation-hygiene theory of job satisfaction and deduced that employees who felt happy with their jobs “most frequently described factors related to their tasks, to events that indicated to them that they were successful in the performance of their work, and to the possibility of professional growth” (p.113).

Herzberg et al. (1993) described these intrinsic factors as “motivators” (p. 114) and indicated the factors led directly to job satisfaction. In the case of an educator, such a factor would likely be related to the actual act of teaching or working with children (Garmston & Zimmerman, 2013).

The second component of the theory consists of extrinsic “factors of hygiene” (Herzberg et al., 1993, p. 75). In the school setting, such factors are related to the type of environment in which a teacher is performing his or her job that can contribute to negative feelings and ultimately lead to job dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1993). Hygiene factors might include a teacher’s classroom, duties, salary, resources, and even stress (Herzberg et al., 1993). Herzberg et al. (1993) clarified, while the removal of these factors to the point the “job context can be characterized as optimal, we will not get dissatisfaction, but neither will we get much in the way of positive attitudes” (p. 114).

Since internal and external factors always contribute to unhappiness with a job, administrators who understand the implications of a given factor can work to eliminate the factor to help teachers cope with stressors and decrease job dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1993). Identifying the common intrinsic factors (which encourage student success and lead to increased job satisfaction) among quality veteran rural educators will help administrators encourage teachers to put these attributes into practice more often (Armstrong, 2010). These practices, when implemented, should aid rural school districts with the retention of highly qualified rural educators.

The unhappiness experienced by teachers as defined in the motivation-hygiene theory is related to Rosenholtz’s (1989) 10 essential components for working together. Coupled with motivation-hygiene theory, Rosenholtz’s (1989) 10 essentials provide a

concise picture of extrinsic motivators administrators can focus upon to decrease teacher dissatisfaction and promote satisfaction. According to Graziano (2014), many educators leave the field due to the lack of administrator support. Low salary was not at the top of the list (Graziano, 2014). By identifying and eliminating factors that lead to frustration and burnout, teachers can focus upon intrinsic motivational factors that lead to a higher degree of job satisfaction (Armstrong, 2010; Graziano, 2014). Rosenholtz (1989) identified 10 essential components of a collaborative and supportive work environment:

1. Carefully selected initial assignments, which avoid the placement of new teachers in the most difficult schools or with the most difficult situations
2. Opportunities to participate in decision-making, coupled with autonomy in many classroom choices
3. Clearly set administrative goals
4. Regular, clear feedback and specific suggestions for improvement
5. Encouragement from administrators and colleagues
6. A non-threatening environment which encourages questions
7. Opportunities for discussion with experienced colleagues
8. Encouragement to experiment and discuss the results with colleagues
9. Clearly set rules for student behavior
10. Opportunities to interact with parents (as cited in Malloy & Allen, 2007, p. 19)

When coupled with Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, districts can begin to identify best practices that will promote a positive culture for learning, while encouraging teacher retention (Murray & Zoul, 2015). For example, rural districts can take steps to increase

teacher salaries and eliminate an element of job dissatisfaction, while re-working the building schedule to establish common planning times for grade-level collaboration, as well as other opportunities for teachers to meet and confer (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker & Many, 2010; Rosenholtz, 1989).

In this study, the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational reasons that underlie the decisions of quality veteran rural educators to remain in rural school settings were explored (Armstrong, 2010). Through the identification of common extrinsic factors that lead to teacher dissatisfaction, the researcher attempted to isolate the components administrators may be able to change within their schools (Murray & Zoul, 2015). In a study conducted by Kukla-Acevedo (2009), it was determined hygiene plays a role in the decision of a teacher to leave a position:

Workplace conditions affected 1st year teachers' decisions to leave or move much more strongly than they did the general samples' decisions to leave or move. Specifically, behavioral climate played a significant role in novice teachers' decisions to leave. (p. 450)

It is essential to the future of education to identify why educators leave the profession and to put measures into place to prevent this from occurring.

Statement of the Problem

As schools strive to meet the rigorous standards created by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, it has become essential to have only the best teachers working with students, especially the students who are at risk for not meeting grade level norms by the time districts take high stakes tests each spring. According to Greenlee and Brown (2009):

School leaders face difficult contextual challenges as they work to ensure that all students achieve at levels mandated by NCLB requirements. In addition, principals must find teachers who are highly qualified, committed, and prepared for the challenges of today's classrooms. (p. 97)

Smaller rural school districts are at an even greater disadvantage when it comes to retaining such teachers due to the fact it is difficult to compete with larger districts that can support higher salaries and offer employees greater amenities (Greenlee & Brown, 2009).

Results from Greenlee and Brown's (2009) study indicated, "Financial incentives, working conditions, and principal behaviors all play an important role in recruiting and retaining teachers in challenging schools" (p. 107). Rural schools are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to each of these factors simply because they possess such limited resources to attract and maintain effective teachers (Kennedy, 2012).

Additionally, high teacher turn-over has negative impacts upon rural school budgets, student performance, and school climate (Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2013).

Therefore, it is even more important to be able to isolate successful commonalities among rural school districts that have high percentages of returning teachers coupled with high student achievement rates. The leadership within rural districts must simultaneously seek to create a higher degree of teacher satisfaction and quality in order to thwart teacher turnover, while promoting an increase in achievement of students (Murray & Zoul, 2015).

As successful teacher retention practices are explored, the concept of establishing a system of supporting teachers at the beginning of their careers emerges (Inman &

Marlow, 2013). This, of course, begins before teachers enter the profession and are enrolled in teacher preparation programs (Inman & Marlow, 2013). For example, Inman and Marlow (2013) concluded aspiring teachers need “ample opportunities to visit and interact with teachers and administrators in a variety of realistic school settings. Such visits would present occasions for gaining greater knowledge about the kind of support each school offers new teachers” (p. 612). Opportunities to compare and contrast the climates of various school communities would assist the pre-service teacher in making a determination of which district would suit his or her particular personality and needs (Inman & Marlow, 2013).

Andrews (2011) asserted an effective method of training pre-service teachers was to formally recognize outstanding teachers and systematically place pre-service teachers with them. Furthermore, "Student teachers will be well served when placed in their practicum experience with these recognized competent teachers" (Andrews, 2011, p. 68). Such a practice ensures high-quality teachers are praised and encouraged for the work (Day & Qing, 2013). At the same time, pre-service teachers learn best practices from individuals who have been identified as exemplars within the field (Andrews, 2011).

Mentoring new teachers has emerged as a strategy to reduce the amount of turnover among new teachers:

Administrators, principals, supervisors, and new teachers themselves are convinced that mentor teacher-consultants and an effective induction program influence the new teachers' decisions to stay in the profession and help them achieve optimum levels of success for themselves and their students. (Leimann, Murdock, & Waller, 2008, p. 31)

This strategy could prove to be effective in retaining highly qualified rural educators.

In addition to mentoring new teachers, Inman and Marlow (2013) asserted administrators can encourage new and experienced teachers alike by creating times within the school day for teachers to exchange ideas, collaborate on lesson plans, and work together to solve problems. Inman and Marlow (2013) also found most teachers do not feel they are treated as professionals in that “professionals are usually distinguished by the specialty knowledge and skills, the unique contributions they make, the freedom afforded them to make decisions based on their best professional judgment, and the opportunity to organize their time and direct their own work” (p. 611). Administrators recognizing this concern have sought to afford teachers more professional courtesy (Hall, Quinn, & Gollnick, 2013).

To this end, principals make efforts to recognize teacher accomplishments, while providing opportunities for teachers to provide input into an array of decisions (DuFour & Fullan, 2013). For example, teachers may be asked to assist in the development of schedules, duty rosters, curriculum decisions, and student incentive programs (DuFour et al., 2010; DuFour & Fullan, 2013). Administrators might also make accommodations to provide increased access for teachers to resources during the school day and after hours (Hall et al., 2013).

Perrachione et al. (2008) concluded teacher retention can be increased by taking steps to create a “positive school environment, adequate support, and small class sizes. Furthermore, other key issues such as low salaries, role overload, and student behavior must be vigorously pursued” (p. 12). Rural school districts may feel they can do little to affect salary schedules and classroom size and still retain quality teachers. Yet, when

considering the high cost of recruiting, hiring, and retaining teachers, districts may find increasing salaries and lowering class sizes are actually fiscally responsible approaches (Perrachione et al., 2008). As Boe, Cook, and Sunderland (2008) ascertained, “A high rate of annual teacher turnover has been an enduring aspect of the teaching profession and will almost certainly remain so in the foreseeable future without dramatic improvements in the organization, management, and funding of public schools” (p. 28).

Purpose of the Study

While all schools within the United States experience the challenges and difficulties caused by high teacher turnover, the effect is often more dramatized in the smaller, rural school setting (Perrachione et al., 2008). As Malloy and Allen (2007) asserted, “Rural districts experience difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified teachers” (p. 19). Therefore, this study was focused upon gaining insight relative to what motivates highly qualified rural educators to maintain their status in small, rural districts despite options that may afford greater salaries, access to more resources, or incentives to pursue advanced degrees in a larger suburban or urban setting.

These difficulties include overcoming misconceptions about the environment within rural classrooms and addressing the diminished capacity of districts to raise funds and therefore establish competitive salaries (Malloy & Allen, 2007). Additionally, a lack of understanding of methods to attract and recruit qualified individuals and their families to small rural communities is a contributing factor (Malloy & Allen, 2007). Furthermore, a lack of training for rural administrators to positively influence building climate to increase academic achievement, recruitment, and retention impacts successful recruitment and retention (Murray & Zoul, 2015). Small, rural school districts

experiencing high rates of teacher turnover and an inability to establish higher rates of high-quality veteran educators will directly benefit from this study.

Research questions. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the reasons high-quality rural veteran teachers choose to remain in a small rural school district setting?
2. What are the common factors among small rural school districts that have high numbers of highly qualified veteran teachers?

Significance of the Study

The study is significant to school leaders within small rural communities. It is of specific interest to administrators and school boards seeking to develop policies and encourage strategies to keep high-quality educators from leaving rural school districts. As Kober and Rentner (2011) concluded, "No type of school district—city, suburban, town, or rural—has been immune from declining budgets. The result is an erosion of some basic educational services. Teaching staff has been cut in about half of the nation's school districts" (p. 15). As a result, districts must work even harder to determine best practices for the retention of quality educators with fewer resources due to recent economic hardships.

Definitions of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

Accredited with distinction. Missouri school districts that have met at least 13 of the 14 standards relative to the state's accreditation process are Accredited with Distinction by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE) (2012).

Highly qualified teacher. The MODESE (2012) defined highly qualified as a teacher who has completed the following:

(1) Obtained full State certification as a teacher or passed the State teacher licensing examination and holds a license to teach in the State, and does not have certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis; (2) Holds a minimum of a bachelor's degree; and (3)

Demonstrated subject-matter competency in each of the academic subjects in which they teach, in a manner determined by the State and in compliance with Section 9101(23) of ESEA. (para. 1)

Small rural school district. Districts that “have a total average daily attendance (ADA) of less than 600 students, *or* serve only schools that are located in counties that have a population density of fewer than 10 persons per square mile” (U.S. Department of Education, 2012, p. 9) are defined as small rural school districts. At the time of this study, 271 Missouri school districts met the criterion of being small, rural schools (MODESE, 2010).

Veteran teacher. A veteran teacher is defined as an individual who has met the two-part test of (1) remaining in the teaching profession for at least 10 years and (2) remaining in a given school district for at least 10 years, thus eliminating the need for a district to assume the costs of hiring a replacement for the teacher's position.

Limitations

The scope of the study was limited to rural school districts that have achieved the MODESE Accredited with Distinction status at least three times in the history of the school district. This baseline is utilized to determine if district scores warrant the state's above average accreditation status. The purpose in establishing this baseline was to create a pool of small, rural school districts that have made appropriate gains in student achievement.

Summary

Recruiting, hiring, and training quality teachers is time consuming and costly. When the process must be routinely repeated due to high teacher turnover, it is counterproductive to the teaching and learning that should be occurring in the nation's classrooms. (AFEE 2014; Barnes et al., 2012; Boe et al., 2008). As Perrachione et al. (2008) concluded, schools must become focused upon proven methods and strategies to encourage quality teachers to maintain their positions for more than just a few years at a time.

In order to recruit and retain quality teachers, rural schools have worked to implement proven practices just as their urban and suburban counterparts have done (DuFour et al., 2010). Additionally, rural schools seeking to attract and retain teachers have had to emphasize positive aspects of being a rural school. For example, many rural educators enjoy smaller class sizes (Malloy & Allen, 2007). As Malloy and Allen (2007) found, "An ideal recruitment and retention strategy for rural schools would be to emphasize the benefits derived from genuine personal relationships and a high degree of involvement in the decision-making process" (p. 24). Rural schools, like all other schools, must also be prepared to find and retain high-quality principals. This is

paramount in the successful school as “leadership behavior and organizational structures that improve working conditions are elements that seem to have the most impact on teacher retention” (Greenlee & Brown, 2009, p. 107).

The researcher sought to determine what characteristics, if any, aided in the retention of high-quality rural educators in the small, rural school setting. The research questions were examined in detail, providing a broad picture of the factors that result in teacher retention in these schools. Furthermore, interviews with veteran educators within the small, rural school setting provided depth to the research in the attempt to garner a better picture of the factors that motivate exceptional leaders to remain in the small, rural school setting.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

An anonymous author once penned the phrase, “Things which matter most should never be at the mercy of those things which matter least.” In today’s climate of high educational accountability, schools must not forget the reason they exist—to educate children. Rural schools tasked with the responsibility of providing a high-quality education have found they must uphold the same standards as more affluent counterparts who have access to a wider array of resources (Gorlewski, Porfilio, & Gorlewski, 2012).

Despite the disadvantages, rural districts must recognize, “Human capital is important to districts and schools that have doubled student performance. It takes talent to accomplish lofty goals and implement . . . collaborative and powerful educational strategies” (Odden, 2009, p. 22). For this reason, rural districts should work tirelessly to find and retain quality educators to ensure students receive an optimal education. This should occur regardless of the perceived limits that exist within the current educational system.

The focus of this chapter is to review the existing body of literature relative to the practice of retaining quality educators. The chapter begins with the discussion of a theory and framework relevant to the study of teacher retention, Herzberg et al.’s motivation-hygiene theory (1993), and the 10 essential components for working together as professionals (Rosenholtz, 1989). The remainder of the chapter is focused upon the main components of retaining educators, which include administrative support, role overload, competitive salaries, available teaching resources, mentoring, and stress.

Motivation-Hygiene Theory

The concept of job satisfaction is readily understood by most individuals regardless of occupation (Armstrong, 2010; Oshagbemi, 2013). A teacher evaluating the educational work environment quickly realizes there are factors over which he or she has no control (Oshagbemi, 2013). In turn, each teacher also realizes there are elements of the profession of teaching, which are ultimately influenced by personal perspectives and desires and are therefore, exclusively controlled by him or herself (Oshagbemi, 2013). Herzberg et al.'s (1993) motivation-hygiene theory is built upon the premise that one's level of contentment with a given occupation is influenced by motivators relative to the actual performance of a job and hygienic factors or the conditions in the job environment.

The motivators are directly relative to job performance and "bring about...job satisfaction" (Herzberg et al., 1993, p. 114). These motivators or reasons for doing one's job ultimately lead to increased job satisfaction (Hall et al., 2013). Teachers typically refer to *a love of teaching* or *a love of children* as motivational reasons for entering the teaching profession (Hertzberg et al., 1993). Motivators are often the factors that prompt individuals to continue working in a field despite daunting hygienic factors that can lead to stress and burn out (Herzberg et al., 1993). For example, as Coggsall, Ott, Behrstock, and Lasagna (2010) found, "Teachers who can see that they are making a difference in their students' learning will stay in the profession longer" (p. 18).

Herzberg et al. (1993) described hygienic factors as elements that are part of the environment or situation in which one performs his or her work. These hygienic elements do not contribute to job satisfaction as only motivators can serve this function (Herzberg et al., 1993). Instead these extrinsic elements will only yield job

dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1993). Examples of hygienic factors in the teaching profession include administrative support (or a lack thereof), one's teaching salary, classroom size, and school climate (Herzberg et al., 1993). Teachers who perceive they are not being paid enough and feel the principal is not being supportive relative to discipline issues are likely to become frustrated (Andrews, 2011). If these same teachers are also burdened with high student-teacher ratios within the classroom and work in an environment where colleagues do not know one another, they are likely to become frustrated and lose sight of the motivators that prompted them to enter the teaching profession in the first place (Herzberg et al., 1993).

Ten Essential Components

Herzberg et al.'s motivation-hygiene theory (1993) and Rosenholtz's (1989) 10 essential components for working together provide a concise picture of factors that administrators can focus upon to decrease teacher dissatisfaction and promote satisfaction. By eliminating hygienic factors that lead to frustration and burnout, teachers can focus upon the motivational factors that lead to a higher degree of job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1993). Rosenholtz's 10 essential components, which foster a highly collaborative and supportive work environment, are as follows:

1. Carefully selected initial assignments, which avoid the placement of new teachers in the most difficult schools or with the most difficult situations
2. Opportunities to participate in decision-making, coupled with autonomy in many classroom choices
3. Clearly set administrative goals
4. Regular, clear feedback and specific suggestions for improvement

5. Encouragement from administrators and colleagues
6. A non-threatening environment which encourages questions
7. Opportunities for discussion with experienced colleagues
8. Encouragement to experiment and discuss the results with colleagues
9. Clearly set rules for student behavior
10. Opportunities to interact with parents (as cited in Malloy & Allen, 2007, p. 19)

These components provide a framework to alleviate stressors and promote a culture of collegiality (Rosenholtz, 1989). When coupled with the motivation-hygiene theory, districts can begin to identify best practices that will promote a positive culture for learning, while encouraging teacher retention. For example, rural districts could take steps to increase teacher salaries and eliminate an element of job dissatisfaction while re-working the building schedule to establish common planning times for grade-level collaboration, as well as other opportunities for teachers to meet and confer (DuFour et al., 2010).

Administrative Support

In a recent study, Kukla-Acevedo (2009) found, “Support from the principal, in terms of communicating expectations and maintaining order in the school, was a protective factor against teacher turnover among the full sample of teachers” (p. 450). School leaders recognizing the impact they can have upon negating teacher turn-over should work to determine best practices to encourage educators, while seeking to develop a culture of learning (Murray & Zoul, 2015). Joseph and Jackman (2014) asserted, "A lack of parental and administrative support were two major contextual factors influencing

male flight from the classroom" (p. 80). Supporting effectiveness means ensuring all teachers are surrounded by effective colleagues, given time to collaborate with these colleagues, offered constructive feedback on teaching, and provided other rich opportunities to learn to teach more effectively (DuFour & Fullan, 2013; Foord & Haar, 2012; Murray & Zohl, 2015).

Elfers, Plecki, and Knapp (2006) established a connection between administrative actions and teacher satisfaction that correlate with Herzberg et al.'s (1993) motivation-hygiene theory and Rosenholtz's (1989) 10 essential components. These researchers found:

The data signal that leaders can effect the school's working environment in ways that matter to teachers: Leader's actions and values effect, among others, the treatment of staff, the orderliness of the school environment, the focus on student learning, the organization of time, and interactions with parents. (Elfers et al., 2006, p. 122).

It is evident administrators play an integral role in teacher retention.

Another successful medium administrators utilize as a means of showing support for the teachers are meaningful recognition programs that are dignified and encouraging (Malloy & Allen, 2007). In a successful rural school setting, Malloy and Allen (2007) noted, "The supportive dimension was characterized by a comprehensive array of formal and informal means of recognition and the family-like atmosphere that abounds various teacher recognition strategies" (p. 23). Examples of this recognition included letters of commendation, awards, and public acknowledgements at faculty, school board, and parent meetings (Malloy & Allen, 2007). Recognition of this type is not difficult to

implement and illustrates to the teachers the administration cares about and values teacher contributions (Mallory & Allen, 2007).

Role Overload

Role overload is another hygiene factor that can lead to job dissatisfaction (Garmston & Von Frank, 2012). Lack of parental and administrative support are two major contextual factors influencing male flight from the classroom (Garmston & Von Frank, 2012). Garmston and Von Frank (2012) also asserted, “Excessive paperwork and other nonteaching duties” (p. 2) added to teacher role overload. Administrators must work to find creative solutions to assist teachers with the management of their non-teaching duties so as not to distract from the actual act of teaching, which tends to be a motivator and ultimately improves job satisfaction (Garmston & Von Frank, 2012; Perrachione et al., 2008). Martinez (2014) shared watching her district's low-performing test scores remain stagnant, despite programs and efforts to raise achievement, was the beginning of her burnout.

Farber (2010) also attributed educator overload to attrition. Excessive pressure regarding state-mandated testing leads to attrition (Farber, 2010). Educators are faced with a revolving door of new programs and best practice fads that place a focus on program implementation rather than student achievement (Farber, 2010).

Competitive Salaries

The pay of rural educators tends to lag behind that of suburban and urban counterparts, as well as jobs outside of the teaching profession (Martinez, 2014). The following comment, from a survey of 246 teachers of science, math, and English, illustrates the frustration of an educator relative to pay:

I work harder now for half the money that I used to earn, with more hassle, more paperwork, more workload than I did when I was in private industry, and it consumes my evenings, my weekends, and my supposed free time. (Barmby, 2006, p. 263)

Another teacher commented, “I think I am working 70 hour weeks. I could be earning a lot more in the city” (Barmby, 2006, p. 263). Kirby and Grissmer (1993) found, “For new teachers, particularly in certain subjects, increased salaries or salaries that are more competitive with outside opportunities would make a difference between entering and not entering teaching and between staying through the first few vulnerable years” (p. 35). Kirby and Grissmer (1993) also found when veteran teachers were challenged to identify “the single most important factor that would help in teacher retention, over half of the teachers mentioned higher salaries” (p. 37). Kirby and Grissmer (1993) concluded working conditions, professional development, and parental support were contributing factors, but not to the same degree as salary.

While larger non-rural districts tend to enjoy larger salaries, teachers in these districts often contend with a higher cost of living, which consumes a greater portion of salaries than those who work in rural areas (Elfers et al., 2006). The following example from Washington State illustrates this point:

More than three times as many teachers in eastern Washington (58%) noted cost of living as a strong reason to stay at their schools than teachers in the central Puget Sound region of Western Washington (21%). Only one third (33%) of teachers located in western Washington but outside of central Puget Sound indicate that cost of living is a strong reason to stay. (Elfers, et al., 2006, p. 118).

In places where the cost of living is low, districts need to utilize this fact as both recruitment and a retention technique. Because of a low cost of living, teachers' dollars in rural settings will go much further than the dollars of urban and suburban counterparts (Elfers et al., 2006). Therefore, districts able to find funding to make incremental adjustments over time to increase teacher salaries will not have to raise salaries to match that of larger, more affluent districts.

Mentoring

Mentoring has long been regarded as an ideal way to integrate a new teacher into an existing system and when properly implemented can be an effective practice to utilize as a means of combating teacher job dissatisfaction (Nash, 2010). For example:

Schools might reduce the organizational costs of turnover by offering more varied and extensive induction programs.... particularly for individuals beginning their first year of teaching; these should be retained and improved as needed. In addition, different kinds of induction programs should be designed and provided.... for those reentering teaching employment, moving from different schools, and switching teaching assignments. (Boe et al., 2008, p. 27).

Mentoring is a key building block to preventing teacher attrition.

The Alliance for Excellent Education o (AFEE) (2014) concluded in order to be successful, teacher mentor programs must be more than an occasional meeting between a new teacher and an experienced teacher. The AFEE (2014) advocated for "comprehensive induction" (p. 5):

A program that includes varying degrees of training, support, and assessment during a teacher's first years on the job, proves most effective. Comprehensive

induction combines high-quality mentoring with release time for both new teachers and mentor teachers to allow them time to usefully engage with one another; targeted and ongoing quality professional development; common planning time with other teachers in the school; and networking with teachers outside the school during at least the new teacher's first two years in the profession. The induction process culminates with an evaluation to identify a teacher's strengths and weaknesses, target future professional development, and determine if the individual should move forward in the profession. (AFEE, 2014, p. 5)

The AFEE (2014) further asserted comprehensive induction will "shorten the time it takes for new teachers to perform at the same level as an experienced teacher, which is, on average, from three to seven years without induction" (p. 6). Such a practice increases opportunities for teachers to focus upon the intrinsic aspects of their profession, greatly increasing job satisfaction and teacher retention while increasing student learning.

Available Teaching Resources

Kaufhold, Alvarez, and Arnold (2006) examined the frequency of burnout and attrition relative to special education teachers. Findings revealed a regular competition between special and regular education teachers for school supplies, materials, and resources (Kaufhold, et al., 2006). Kaufhold et al. (2006) determined such competition caused stress and contributed to the attrition of special education teachers. Kaufhold et al. (2006) concluded:

Thus, one valid and fairly simple solution to the high attrition rate of special education teachers would be to urge administrators to channel allotted funds to these teachers and to ensure that they have the necessary resources and

administrative support in order to perform their duties. While many of the problems and difficulties that confront special educators are more serious and complicated to solve, morale could be improved and frustration levels reduced with attention to this specific problem of resources. (p. 161)

Teacher support should be considered essential in every education setting.

Stress

Rieg, Paquette, and Chen (2007) determined helping teachers deal with stress is a vital component of any teacher retention program. Rieg et al. (2007) asserted, “Sustaining one’s physical, social, and emotional health is extremely significant in relieving and/or alleviating daily stressors” (p.225). While administrators cannot make teachers relax, take time for themselves, exercise, and eat healthily, building leaders, can promote stress thwarting practices through the creation of wellness programs and incentives within buildings.

Administrators can also encourage teachers to talk with colleagues about problems they are experiencing. Rieg et al. (2007) found, “The colleagues are experiencing the same situations and can relate to problems and concerns,” (p. 221) while providing insight, encouragement, and support. DuFour, DuFour, and Eaker (2008) also stated the establishment of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) within schools gives educators a sounding board when experiencing any type of strife in the educational setting through collaboration with colleagues. With the implementation of PLCs within the district, educators have a support group built into the educational setting (DuFour et al., 2008).

Malloy and Allen (2007) found the following stress management practices in their qualitative study of a highly successful rural school:

Formal support appears in the forms of faculty social gatherings, dress down day, sunshine fund, reduced assignments when teachers are in stressful situations, released time for personal emergencies...The family-like support was related to informal methods of support from principal and teachers such as personal phone calls in time of stress, regular visits to faculty who are ill, and personal favors related to faculty child care issues. (p. 23)

Such implementations within school buildings cost little and pay dividends in educator retention and satisfaction.

Research

For decades, individuals in the teaching profession have asked the same question: Why are good teachers leaving the profession? The answer to this question, if acted upon, could change the field of education. Martinez (2014) described burnout as being a compilation of many factors. Some of those factors include: stress, a large workload, changing expectations, lack of administrator support, and emotional drain (Martinez, 2014). Other successful educators have echoed the same sentiments (Farber, 2010). The question prompted Farber (2010) to dig deeper. The same issues have been discussed for decades (Farber, 2010). How, then, should educator attrition be thwarted, keeping excellent educators in the classroom?

According to Ravitch (2010), education as a whole is in self-defeat. Ravitch (2010) discussed two themes that emerged from studying the public education system. The first theme emerging was, "Skepticism about pedagogical fads, enthusiasm, and movements"

(p. 2). Also identified was the value in the creation and implementation of a rich curriculum (Ravitch, 2010). Ravitch (2010) also discussed the trap many education systems fall into by failing to prioritize a content-rich curriculum. Furthermore, many times curriculum development becomes a political endeavor, which detracts from the educational value and purpose it is meant to serve (Ravitch, 2010).

Esquith (2013), an educator, surmised that many teachers remain in the profession despite facing impossible odds. Esquith (2013) outlined personal circumstances which impact teaching. Esquith (2013) noted low pay and both lack of administrator and parental support as reasons for teacher attrition.

Student diversity is at its greatest in the education system. Educators are tasked with educating students who come from an array of cultural and economic backgrounds. Nieto (2013), stated, “Many teachers are unprepared for the demands of teaching, particularly teaching students of diverse backgrounds, in schools that are overlooked or under-resourced” (p. 18). Additionally, educators do not receive training necessary to handle a large array of student needs and backgrounds. Teacher attrition in schools with high levels of students with low socio-economic coupled with culturally diverse backgrounds is higher, especially in the small, rural school setting (Nieto, 2013).

One motivator for educators to remain in the profession is becoming passionate about education. According to Burgess (2012), passion for teaching has a direct correlation with classroom climate. When teachers are excited about what they are teaching and students are engaged and excited, more job satisfaction exists (Burgess, 2012). Additionally, educators who have lost that passion for teaching should revisit the reasons they began teaching to ignite that passion again (Burgess, 2012). Positive

classroom climate has a direct impact on building climate. Educators who experience higher levels of job satisfaction work in buildings in which teacher autonomy, mutual respect, and positive climate exist (Burgess, 2012).

These factors, when coupled together, form the bulk of issues that lead to teacher attrition. It is necessary for both teachers and administrators to recognize these factors in an effort to thwart educators from leaving the profession. Furthermore, with teacher attrition on the rise, administrators are tasked with identifying and implementing systems within buildings to retain highly qualified faculty and staff members. Administrators should consider the direct impact climate has on teacher retention (Burgess, 2012). Furthermore, a more comprehensive look into how to attain high levels of teacher satisfaction is warranted to ensure success of the small, rural school setting.

Summary

Herzberg et al.'s motivation-hygiene theory (1993) and Rosenholtz's (1989) 10 essential components for working together identify extrinsic motivational factors that can be utilized to promote a healthy work environment within a school building to increase overall teacher satisfaction. The body of literature relative to the retention of rural educators focuses upon various methods of supporting teachers (Rosenholtz, 1989). Recommendations include diminishing turnover through increased administrative support, working to ensure role overload does not occur, developing competitive salaries, increasing access to available teaching resources, establishing mentoring programs, and reducing teacher stress (Rosenholtz, 1989).

The following chapter outlines the research design. Reasoning for the type of research design is detailed. The problem and purpose of the study are described, while

promoting relevancy to the field of education today. Additionally, the research questions are revisited. Information relative to the full understanding of the research study is presented in detail.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The recruitment and retention of highly qualified, rural educators is essential to small school climate and success. This study was initiated to determine what factors, if any, aide in the recruitment and retention of excellent, highly qualified, rural educators. The process of recruitment and retention provides insight pertinent to the research topic.

In this chapter, the problem and purpose of the study are outlined. The research questions are stated and expounded upon. The research design is discussed in detail, while focusing on the foundational strengths of utilizing a qualitative approach to answer the research questions. Additionally, the instrumentation and data collection methods are outlined.

Problem and Purpose Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine what motivates high-quality veteran rural educators to remain faithful to a given school district and to discover common characteristics among high-performing rural schools with low teacher turnover. Recruiting, hiring, and training educators to fill frequent vacancies puts a financial burden upon small, rural schools (Graziano, 2014). This burden coupled with the negative impact of an inexperienced teacher upon student achievement makes the loss of high-quality veteran educators even more costly (Graziano, 2014). The identification of successful retention practices will amend the existing body of research and provide rural school districts with strategies and techniques to implement to reduce teacher turnover.

The research design for this study involved a mixed-methods approach to provide the greatest degree of accuracy and insight into what actually motivates educators to remain at a given district. Mixed-methods research design involves the use of data

acquired through qualitative and quantitative approaches throughout the research process.

Creswell and Clark (2011) defined this type of research as follows:

As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone. (p. 5)

Mixed-methods offer more in-depth information by utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the reasons high-quality rural veteran teachers choose to remain in a small rural school district setting?
2. What are the common factors among small rural school districts that have high numbers of highly qualified veteran teachers?

Research Design

Gaining insight into the motivations of individual educators to remain with a given district, coupled with determining the degree to which various environmental factors play in the decision-making processes in a broad spectrum of educators, necessitates the utilization of a sensitive and flexible research approach. Mixed-methods research has been gaining momentum over the last decade (Hesse-Biber, 2010). Mixed-methods tackle research questions that cannot be answered by quantitative data alone (Hesse-Biber, 2010).

Hesse-Biber (2010) attributed one aspect of this type of research, methods-triangulation, with providing a deeper understanding of the research by looking at it from all levels. For this reason, analysis of the highly personal decisions of an educator will be accomplished through the utilization of personal interviews. The degree to which various environmental factors play in the decision-making processes of educators will be assessed through a survey approach.

To this end, a concurrent triangulation design will be utilized through which “different methods are implemented in order to evaluate the same phenomenon toward increased validity” (Grammatikopoulos, Zachopoulou, Tsangaridou, Liukkonen, & Pickup, 2010, p .6). As indicated by Truscott et al. (2010), the use of “mixed methods allows researchers to both thoroughly understand educational activities in context and provide generalizable recommendations” (p. 318). As a result of this approach, practical suggestions are made available to rural administrators seeking to retain greater percentages of quality educators.

In the field of education, it is imperative to include educator perceptions to gauge deeper information in any research study. Utilizing interviews and survey questions with comments allows for deeper insight to be gained. Creswell (2013) stated mixed-methods research is "an intuitive way of doing research that is constantly being displayed through our everyday lives" (p. 1). When using a mixed-methods approach, breadth and corroboration is added to the body of research (Creswell, 2013).

Rigorous use of both quantitative and qualitative information is merged to present a rounded portrayal of the information gathered (Creswell, 2013). Creswell (2013) also

stated mixed-methods studies "provide an enhanced understanding of some phase of the research" (p. 10). This rounded approach brings reliability to the study.

In order to fully understand and explore the answers to the research questions, a mixed-methods approach was the only method that would allow for a full and complete answer. While seeking to determine what factors, if any, attribute to teacher retention within the small, rural education setting, the use of interview information retrieved from individuals who have remained in the small, rural setting is an essential component. This, when coupled with survey results, provided a broad picture with added depth to fully understand the implications for educators remaining in the small, rural setting.

Population and Sample

Participants were selected utilizing a non-random sample of 300 Missouri educators within rural schools. The Missouri Association of Rural Educators (MARE) was utilized to generate a list of rural school districts. From this list, a data-base was created to determine which of the rural schools met the criterion: Accredited with Distinction at least three times from 2007–2012. The purpose of this criterion was to select a pool of participants who are working in high-performing school districts, where the climate of the building is likely to be conducive to teacher retention. Once a list of districts was generated that met the aforementioned criterion, the building administrators were contacted via electronic mail as to the nature and scope of the study.

Each administrator was invited to allow qualifying teachers to participate in the study and asked to identify how many teachers existed within his or her building who have been present for 10 or more years (See Appendix A). Administrators were asked to consider which educators were high-quality teachers. Lastly, each administrator was

asked to forward a letter of informed consent (see Appendix B) which included an invitation to participate in an on-line survey (see Appendix C) to each qualifying educator.

While the researcher waited for the surveys to be returned, three veteran, high-quality teachers were selected to interview for the purposes of qualitative analysis. The interviewees were selected utilizing the MARE database beginning with the most recent recipients of the MARE Outstanding Rural Educators award. The researcher initially contacted the building administrators of each MARE award recipient through electronic mail and/or telephone to ask for permission to interview each teacher. Once permission was granted, the administrator contacted the high-quality rural veteran educator to obtain consent and to schedule a time to perform a tape-recorded telephone interview (see Appendix D).

Instrumentation

A self-administered web-based Likert-scale survey was developed (see Appendix C). In order to ensure the data could be standardized, the respondents were given closed-ended questions that included an “other category” should the respondent not find a representative choice amongst the given answers. Additionally, the survey included questions to collect categorical data, such as the respondents’ gender, age, years in education, highest degree obtained, subject or grade level taught, and the population of students in their school buildings. A link to the survey was forwarded through electronic mail to teachers by consenting administrators in districts that met the criterion of being rural (less than 600 students within a district) and high-quality (awarded the state’s Accredited with Distinction Award at least three times). The researcher compiled

descriptive statistics relative to the population, socio-economics, ethnicity, and academic performance of each responding district utilizing the MODESE website.

The quantitative results of the questionnaire were analyzed and compared to the qualitative results of five tape-recorded telephone interviews. The interviews were partially ethnographic in nature in that the data gleaned were compared to information collected in the surveys as well as information relative to a given school district's characteristics and performance as reported on the MODESE website.

Data Collection

This study was conducted in the spring of 2013 utilizing quantitative data collected from rural school districts throughout the state of Missouri through the utilization of a web-based survey. The MARE selects and recognizes an outstanding rural teacher in elementary, middle, and high school at its annual fall conference. The organization has presented the award since 1991 and publishes a list of award recipients on its website (MARE, 2010). The researcher utilized this list to select three veteran award recipients, from high performing rural schools to interview for qualitative analysis. Lastly, the MODESE website was utilized to obtain categorical information about responding school districts. The researcher received approval from the institutional review board prior to collecting any data (see Appendix E).

Data Analysis

Through the use of concurrent triangulation design, “the researcher collects and analyzes quantitative and qualitative data separately on the same phenomenon and then the different results are converged (by comparing and contrasting the different results) during the interpretation” (Creswell, 2013, p. 64). The survey information was compiled

and reported utilizing percentages, bar graphs, pie charts, and frequency polygons when making comparisons of the different schools surveyed. For the purposes of this study, the researcher sought to identify the frequency of factors that motivate high-quality veteran rural teachers to stay with a given district. The qualitative aspects of the data were interpreted through narrative descriptions focused upon comparing and contrasting all of the interviews. The data taken from each interview were compared to information collected from the surveys as well as each district's performance data as reported on the MODESE website.

Summary

The focus of this study was to determine which characteristics are common to high-performing rural school districts with high populations of quality veteran rural educators. Through the use of a self-administered questionnaire, quantitative data were gathered and compared to qualitative data gathered from telephone interviews. Participants included high-quality veteran rural educators drawn from school districts that have received Missouri's Distinction in Performance Award at least three times.

Through the use of electronic mail, the researcher contacted administrators in high-performing schools to identify high-performing veteran rural educators. Permission was obtained from administrators before an invitation to participate in an on-line survey was sent via electronic mail to faculty members who met the criterion stated. The analysis of data from the telephone interviews and online surveys is presented in the following chapter.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

The focus of this study was to learn what motivates high-quality veteran rural educators to not leave a given school district and seek employment elsewhere. Additionally, this research was instituted to determine common characteristics among high-performing rural schools with low teacher turnover. The process of recruiting, hiring, and training educators to fill frequent vacancies puts a financial burden upon small, rural schools (Martinez, 2014). This burden, coupled with the negative impact of an inexperienced teacher upon student achievement, makes the loss of high-quality veteran educators even more costly. The identification of successful retention practices will amend the existing body of research and provide rural school districts with strategies and techniques to implement to reduce teacher turnover (Inman & Marlow, 2013).

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the reasons high-quality rural veteran teachers choose to remain in small rural school district setting?
2. What are the common factors among small rural school districts that have high numbers of highly qualified veteran teachers?

This chapter is organized into different segments including a discussion of the participants within the study. An explanation of the demographics of the school districts of the five teachers selected for interviews is provided. Additionally, data analysis and a discussion of the conclusions that were drawn from the data are discussed.

Participants

The MODESE (2012) data portal was utilized to determine which districts were comprised of fewer than 600 students. Next, the MODESE (2012) Office of Data System

Management provided a comprehensive listing of the districts that had obtained the Distinction in Performance award at least four times between 2007 and 2012. The two lists were cross-referenced, and it was determined that 116 school districts met the criterion to be considered high-quality and rural.

The MODESE database was used to obtain the electronic mail addresses of the building principals within each qualifying school district. Each building administrator was sent an electronic mail that briefly explained the parameters of the study and invited him/her to forward a survey link and explanation to any teacher within the building who met the criterion of being a high-quality veteran rural educator. Three hundred emails were sent and 16 were returned as undeliverable.

The MODESE website was queried to obtain the phone numbers of each district for which an electronic mail was returned. Phone calls were placed to each district in order to obtain the correct electronic mail addresses of these administrators, and they were sent an invitation to participate. Lastly, after waiting two weeks, the researcher sent out a second email invitation to participate to the revised list of administrators. Of the 300 invitations sent, 50 respondents completed the survey.

Next, the researcher selected three high-quality veteran rural educators who were also recognized by the Missouri Association of Rural Educators (MARE) as Teacher of the Year. These individuals participated in telephone interviews. In order to be selected, each teacher had to also be employed by a district that had obtained MODESE's Distinction in Performance Award at least four times between 2007 and 2012.

Demographic Data Analysis

The purpose of the survey was to collect categorical data about the respondents' gender, age, marital status, years in education, highest degree obtained, subject or grade level taught, and the population of students in their school buildings. Of the 57 individuals who began the survey, 50 were fully completed. The analysis that follows includes the 50 individuals who finished the survey. The demographic data obtained from the survey were entered into an Excel spreadsheet to determine the mean and standard deviation. The data were initially analyzed by examining descriptive statistics and disaggregating the data in a table of means.

Two individuals (4%) listed their ages between 21 and 30. Fourteen (28%) were between 31 and 40, and 21 (42%) were between the ages of 41 and 50. Seven (14%) reported being between the ages of 51 and 60, and six (12%) were older than 61 years of age (see Table 1).

Table 1

Demographics of Teachers by Age Range

Age	Frequency	Percentage	Commulative Percentage
21-30	2	4%	4%
31-40	14	28%	32%
41-50	21	42%	74%
51-60	7	14%	88%
61 or more	6	12%	100%

Note. $N = 50$, $M = 50.2$, $SD = 10.7$

When responding to the prompt regarding gender, it was apparent males were in the minority. Of the rural veteran educators who responded, nine (18%) were men. Women comprised 41 (82%) members of the responding population (see Table 2).

Table 2

Demographics of Teachers by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Male	9	18%	18%
Female	41	82%	100%

Note. $N = 51$

Each respondent listed his or her highest degree obtained beginning with 15 (30.6%) earning a Bachelor's degree. Thirty (61.2%) earned a Master's, and four (8.2%) a Specialist degree. No one reported earning a doctorate, and one person skipped the question (see Table 3).

Table 3

Demographics of Teachers by Highest Degree

Degree	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Bachelor's	15	30.6	30.6
Master's	30	61.2	91.8
Specialist	4	8.2	100
Doctorate	0	0	

Note. $N = 49$, $M = 1.76$, $SD = .59$

Job titles of the teachers responding to the survey included 15 elementary teachers (grades K-6). Four taught only middle school (Math, science, and social studies). Six taught only high school subjects (FACS, foreign language, math, and science). Nine teachers taught subjects in both middle and high school (English, science, social studies, and business). Four Title 1 reading/math teachers, three librarians, five special educators, two counselors, one technology coach, and one superintendent (who also taught classes in a small district) were surveyed (see Table 4).

Table 4

Demographics of Teachers by Job Title

Job Title	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Elementary	15	30.0	30.0
Middle School Only	4	8.0	38.0
High School Only	6	12.0	50.0
Middle & High	9	18.0	68.0
Title I	4	8.0	76.0
SPED	5	10.0	86.0
Librarian	3	6.0	92.0
Counselor	2	4.0	96.0
Other	2	4.0	100.0

Note. $N = 50$

Two individuals did not report how many years they had served in the classroom. Of the 48 who reported the number of years served, 16 (33%) had been in the classroom between 11 and 15 years. Those teaching for 16-20 years numbered 13 or 27.1%. Eleven (22.9%) had served between 21 and 25 years while three (6.3%) had been teaching between 26 and 30 years. Five (10.4%) indicated they had been teaching for 31 or more years (see Table 5).

Table 5

Demographics of Teachers' Number of Years in Education

Years	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
11 - 15	16	33.3	33.3
16 - 20	13	27.1	60.4
21 - 25	11	22.9	83.3
26 - 30	3	6.3	89.6
30+	5	10.4	100

Note. $N = 48$, $M = 1.76$, $SD = .35$

Four teachers (8%) reported fewer than 100 students in their buildings. Twenty-two (44%) reported having between 101 and 200 students, and 20 (40%) stated they had between 201 and 300 students in their buildings. Three (6%) indicated they had between 301 and 400 students, and one (2%) stated there were between 400 and 500 students in the building (see Table 6).

Table 6

Demographics of Number of Students in Each Teacher's Building

Enrollment	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
0-100	4	8	8
101-200	22	44	52
201-300	20	40	92
301-400	3	6	98
401-500	1	2	100

Note. $N = 50$, $M = 250$, $SD = 288$

Survey Results

The next portion of the survey focused upon the degree to which teachers perceive Herzberg et al.'s motivation-hygiene theory (1993) and Rosenholtz's (1989) 10 essential components for working together existed within their buildings. Teachers were asked to indicate whether or not a given factor was present within their schools and then circle the number that accurately describe how its presence or absence has impacted their decision not to leave a school district. Each teacher could then choose from the following

responses: (1) very weak contributor, (2) weak contributor, (3) neutral contributor, (4) strong contributor, or (5) very strong contributor.

The survey included various essential components as well as intrinsic motivators. An analysis of the survey results revealed that the top motivating factor behind teachers' decisions to stay centered upon involvement in decision-making. For example, 94% of respondents indicated, "My district recognizes I am a professional and trusts me to modify and adjust instruction as I see fit," as a very strong or strong contributing factor (see Figure 1). Rosenholtz (1989) found, "Opportunities to participate in decision-making, coupled with autonomy in many classroom choices" to be an essential component for working together (p. 19).

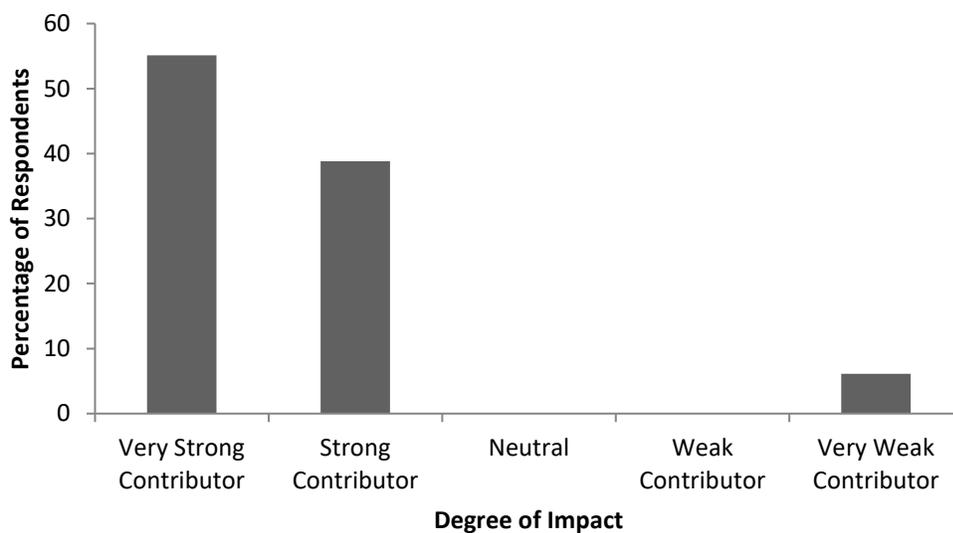


Figure 1. Survey response: My district recognizes that I am a professional and trusts me to modify and adjust instruction as I see fit.

Herzberg et al. (1993) described intrinsic factors as “motivators” (p. 114) and indicated that as such, these motivators led directly to job satisfaction. The second highest motivator influencing teacher decisions to stay was based upon collegial relationships. Deal and Peterson (2010) found, "In school cultures valuing collegiality and collaboration, there is a better climate for the social and professional exchange of ideas, the enhancement and spread of effective practices, and widespread professional problem solving" (p. 8). As Moolenaar (2012) concluded:

Recent research appears to support the notion that the pattern of teacher relationships shapes conditions needed to change teachers’ practice by providing learning opportunities, supporting processes of social selection and social influence, and nurturing an open and safe climate in which school-wide capacity for teacher development is advanced. (p. 28)

Eighty percent of the veteran rural educators responding to the survey stated, "Being well acquainted with colleagues and feeling like their school has a family-like atmosphere" was a very strong or strong contributor (see Figure 2).

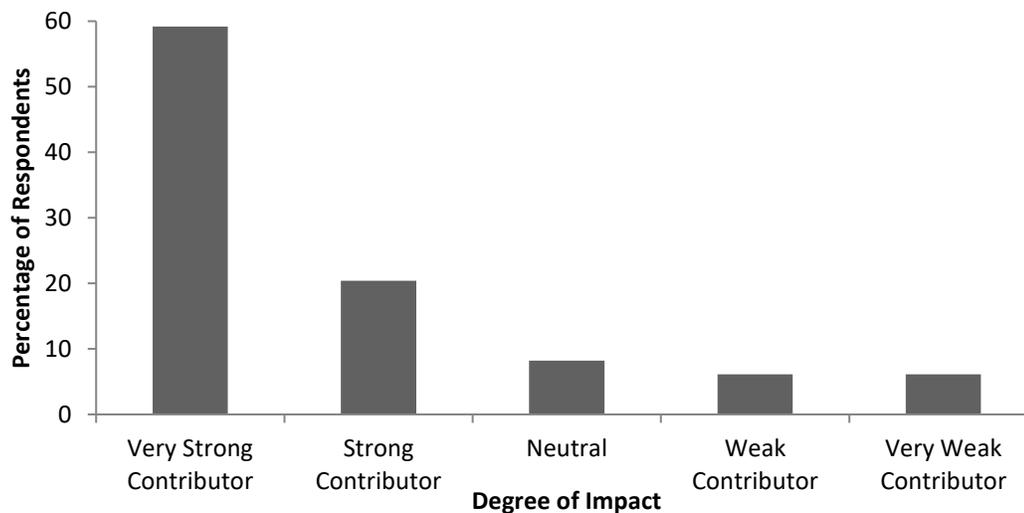


Figure 2. Survey response: I am well acquainted with my colleagues and feel that our school has a family-like atmosphere.

While motivators are often the factors that prompt individuals to continue working in a field, Herzberg et al. (1993) also described hygienic elements that are part of the environment or situation in which one performs his or her work. These hygienic elements do not contribute to job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1993). Instead these extrinsic factors, if not addressed, will only yield job dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1993). When presented with various hygienic factors, having board paid health insurance, was considered to be a very strong or strong contributing factor for 92% of the respondents (see Figure 3).

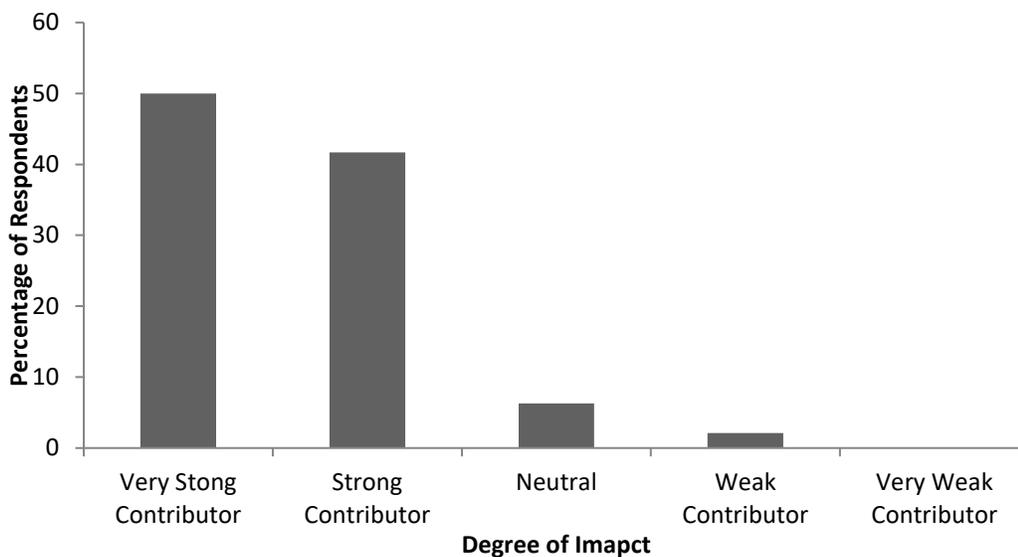


Figure 3. Survey response: My district provides board paid health insurance.

Tschannen-Moran (2014) concluded, "Principals and other school leaders need to earn the trust of the stakeholders in their school community if they are to be successful" (p. 8). Eighty-three percent of teachers indicated it was a very strong or strong contributor that the administration within their schools had established a sense of mutual trust among all members of the school community (see Figure 4).

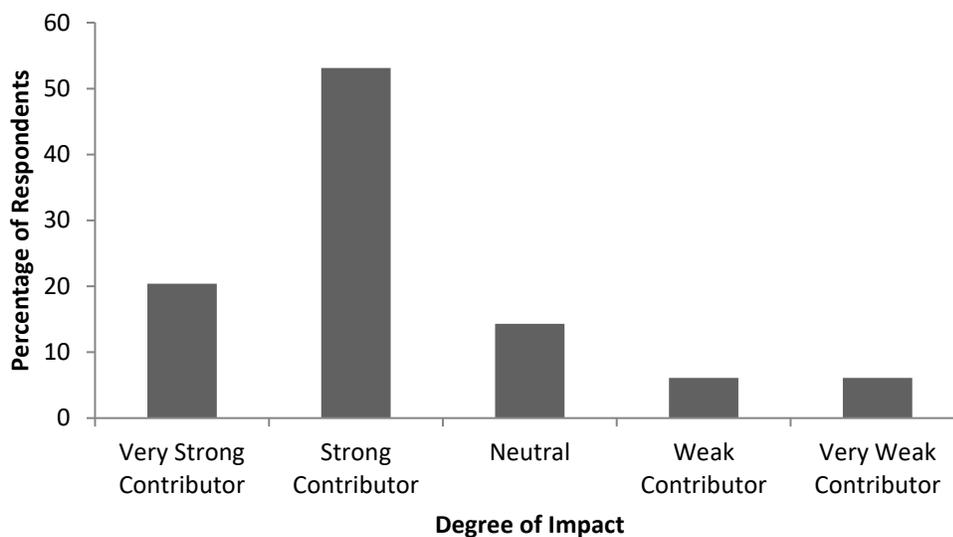


Figure 4. Survey response: The administrators within my school have established a sense of mutual trust among all members of the school community.

According to Trump (2011), "School leaders face a tense struggle between maintaining welcoming and supportive schools with a positive climate for students while also keeping schools safe, safe, secure, and prepared for managing crises that cannot be prevented" (p. 1). Recognizing safety is an ongoing concern within schools, teachers were prompted with, "I feel that my school is a safe place." Eighty-three teachers responded this feeling of safety within their schools was a very strong or strong contributor (see Figure 5).

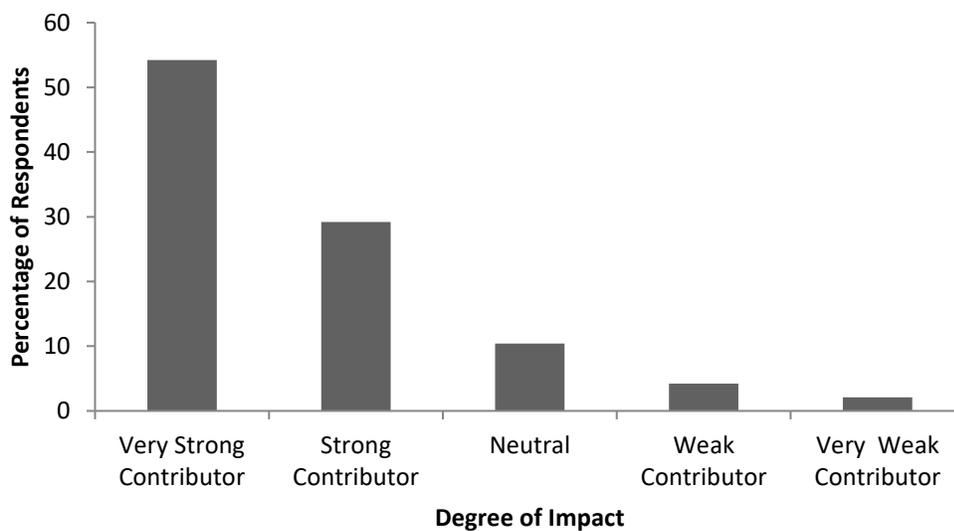


Figure 5. Survey response: I feel that my school is a safe place.

Teachers were also asked to consider if being provided with sufficient resources and planning opportunities to support effective teaching and learning within their classrooms was a significant factor in their decisions to stay. Seventy-seven percent felt such resources and planning opportunities were a very strong or strong contributor. Few respondents disagreed (see Figure 6).

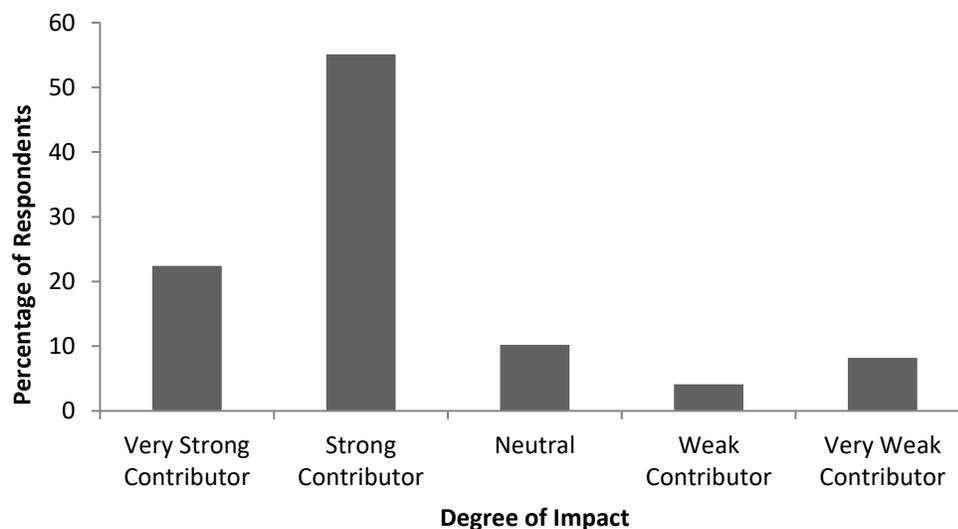


Figure 6. Survey response: I am provided with sufficient resources and planning opportunities to support effective teaching and learning in my classroom.

Teachers were asked to consider the impact of various other extrinsic and intrinsic factors including the impact of access to professional development activities upon their decisions to stay. Teachers responded to the following prompt, “I am provided with ample opportunities to participate in useful and relevant professional development activities.” Nine teachers (18%) indicated access to such professional development was a very strong contributor, and 24 (49%) stated it was a strong contributor. Eight teachers (16%) were neutral. Four (8%) indicated being provided with ample opportunities to participate was a weak contributor, and four (8%) stated it was a very weak contributor (see Figure 7).

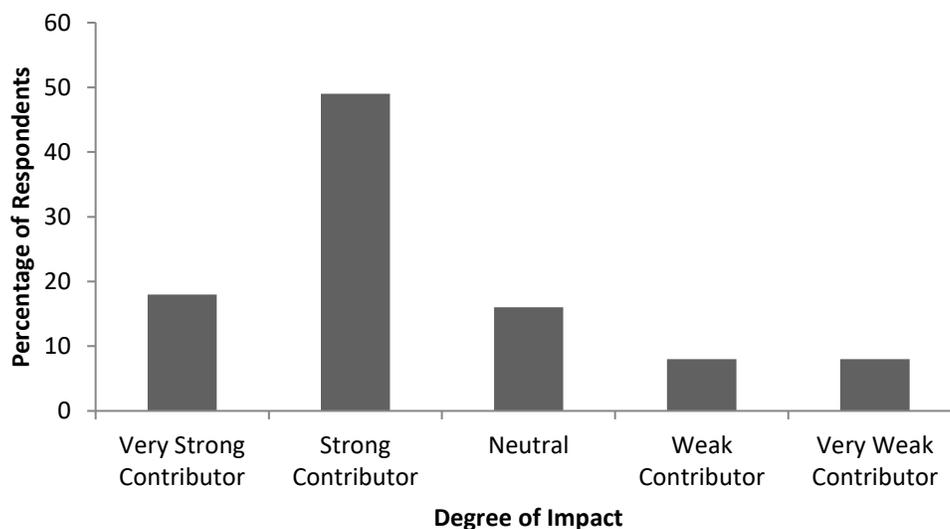


Figure 7. Survey response: I am provided with ample opportunities to participate in useful and relevant professional development activities.

Teachers were next asked to consider the impact of a competitive salary schedule upon their decisions to stay. Seven (14%) responded a competitive salary was a very strong contributor, and 11 (22%) reported it was a strong contributor. Nine (18%) were neutral. Salary proved to be a weak contributor for 16 teachers (33%) and a very weak contributor for six teachers (12%) (see Figure 8).

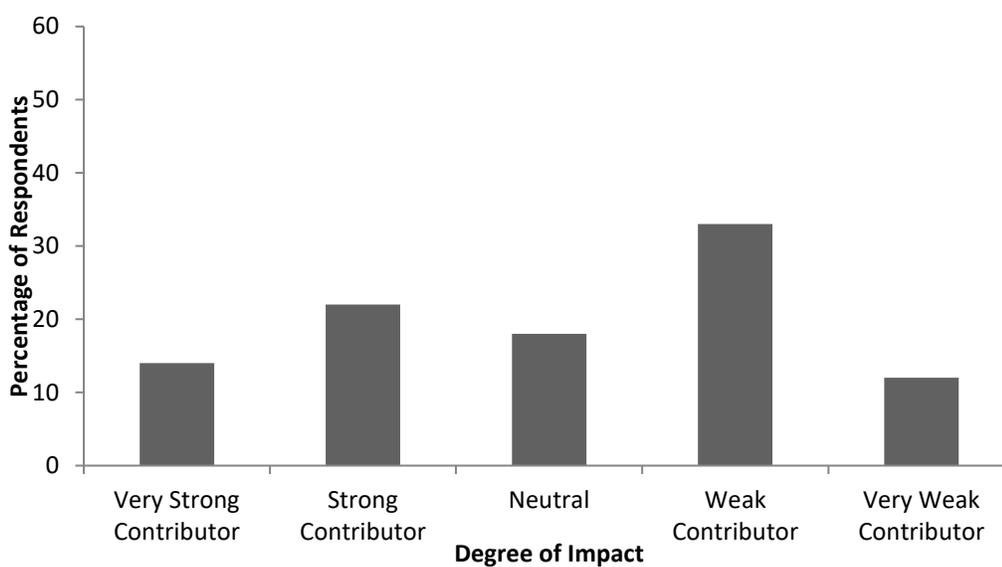


Figure 8. Survey response: My district has a competitive salary schedule.

Teachers reported tuition reimbursement was not a strong contributing factor. Twenty-two (45%) reported it was a very weak contributor, three (6%) stated it was a weak contributor, and 19 (39%) were neutral. Only four (8%) said it was a strong contributor, and one (2%) listed it as a very strong contributing factor (see Figure 9).

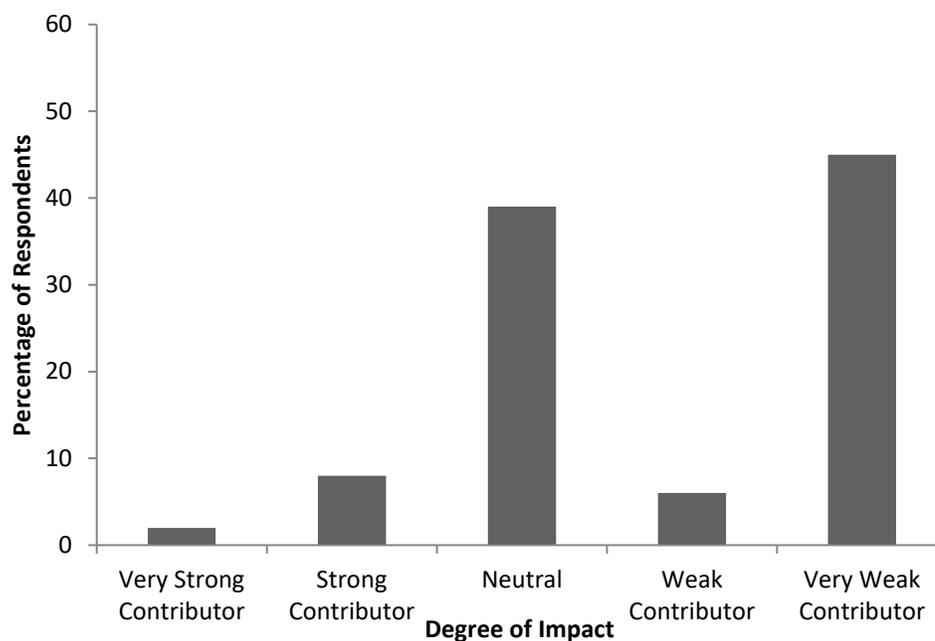


Figure 9. Survey response: My district has a tuition reimbursement program.

The next prompt stated the following. “The administration seeks my input when developing goals.” Nine (18%) teachers reported it was a very strong contributing factor to their decision to stay, and 18 (37%) indicated it was a strong contributing factor. Thirteen (27%) were neutral on this point, six (12%) felt it was a weak contributor, and three (6%) a very weak contributor (see Figure 10).

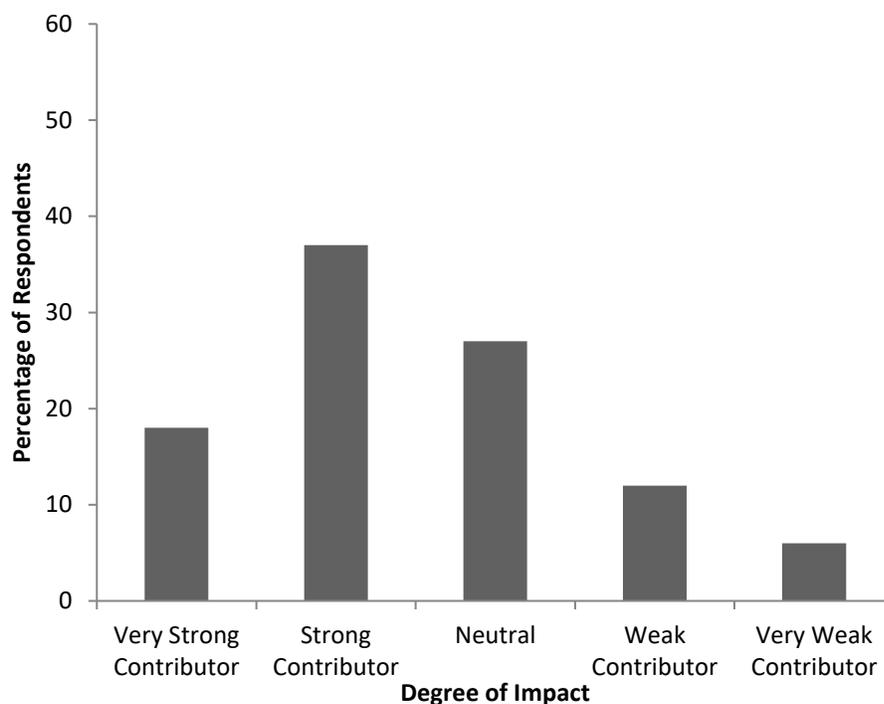


Figure 10. The administration seeks my input when developing goals.

According to Bambick-Santoyo, Lemov, and Peiser (2012), "In the past decade, a lot of research has suggested that the decisive determinant of whether students will learn is not school technology, nor building logistics, nor administrative funding, but the presence of high-quality instruction" (p. 4). The next prompt was developed to determine the impact of administrative instructional leadership upon a high-quality rural veteran educator's decision to stay within a given district, "The administration provides clear feedback and specific suggestions for improvement and challenges me to be a better teacher." While only six (12%) chose the option of a very strong indicator, 22 (45%) selected a strong contributor. Ten (20%) were neutral, nine (18%) selected the weak

contributor option, and two (4%) reported it was a very weak contributing factor to their decision to stay more than 10 years (see Figure 11).

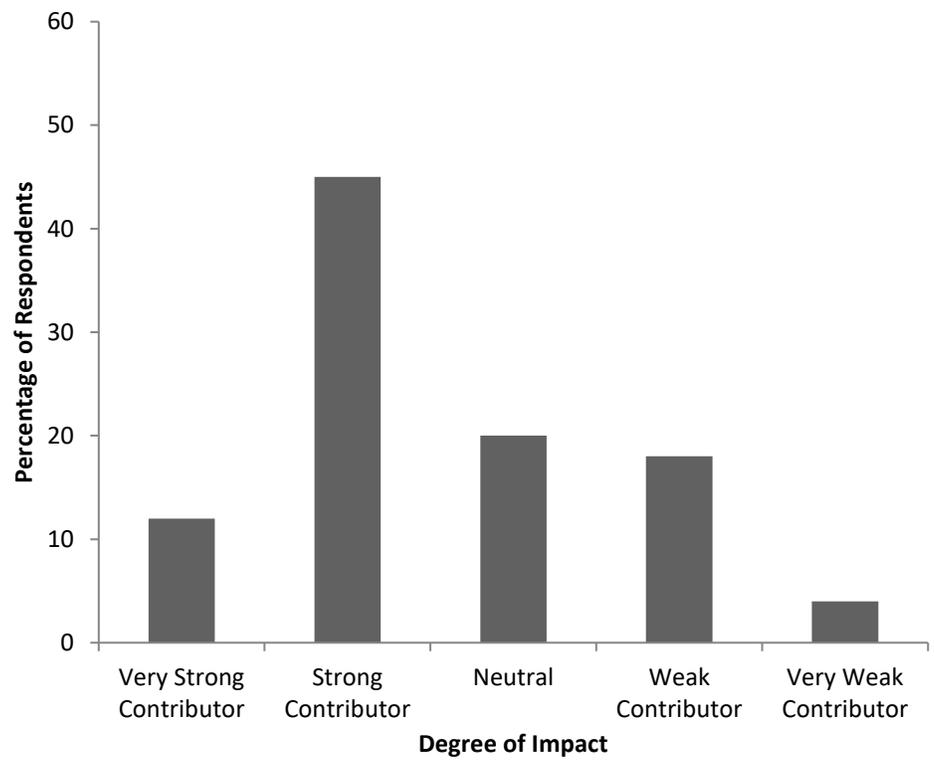


Figure 11. The administration provides clear feedback and specific suggestions for improvement and challenges me to be a better teacher.

Educators were next asked to consider if "my district has clearly set rules for student behavior and discipline is implemented in a fair, consistent, and effective manner." Ten (20%) stated this was a very strong contributor, 26 (53%) a strong contributor, while eight (16%) remained neutral. Four (8.2%) responded such a factor was a weak contributor, and one (2%) stated it was a very weak contributor (see Figure 12)

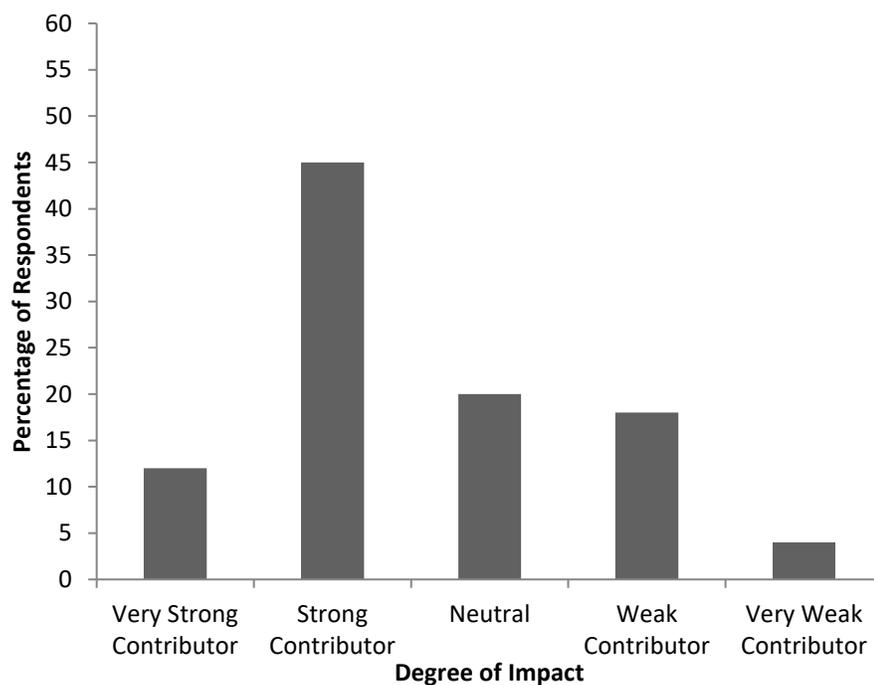


Figure 12. My district has clearly set rules for student behavior and discipline is implemented in a fair, consistent, and effective manner.

Ten (20%) teachers stated being provided with opportunities to interact with parents as a very strong contributing factor in their decisions to stay. Twenty-two (45%) cited these opportunities as a strong contributor, and 12 (25%) were neutral. Four (8%) listed it as a weak contributor, and only one (2%) felt it was a very weak contributor (see Figure 13).

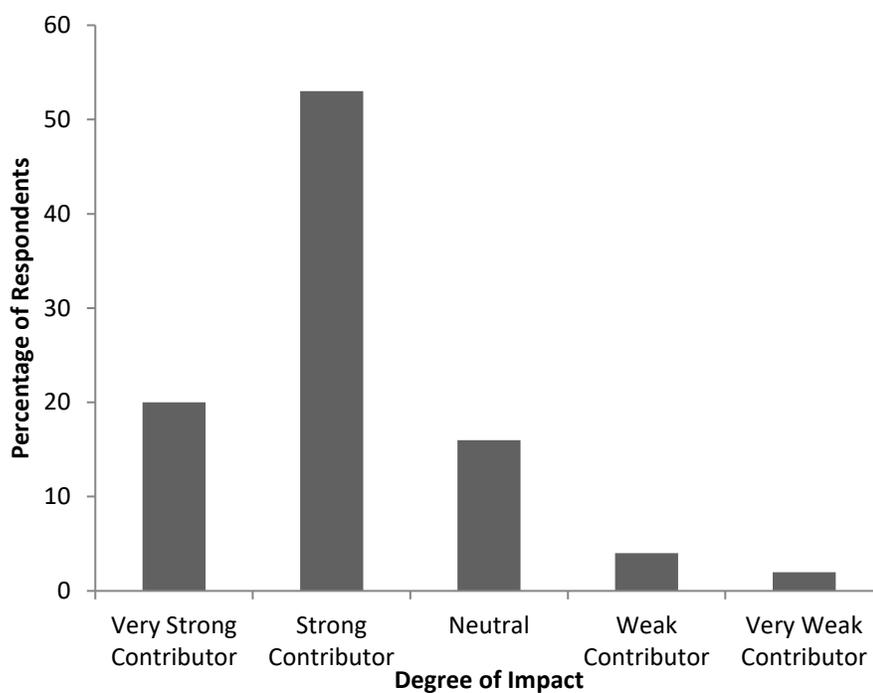


Figure 13. My district provides opportunities to interact with parents.

Fifteen teachers (31%) indicated the careful selection of initial assignments, which avoid the placement of new teachers in the most difficult schools or in the most difficult situations was a very weak contributor to their decision to stay. Eight (16%) stated this was a weak contributor, and 16 (33%) were neutral on this factor. Eight (16%) felt it was a strong contributor, and only two (4%) listed it as a very strong contributor (see Figure 14).

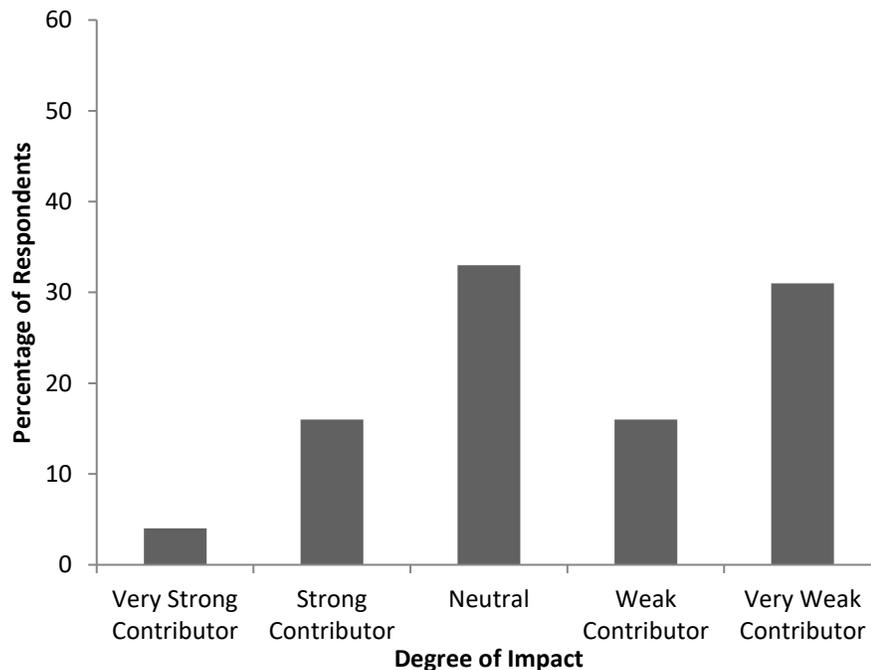


Figure 14. My district carefully selects initial assignments, which avoids the placement of new teachers in the most difficult schools or in the most difficult situations.

Teachers were next asked to consider if they were afforded more opportunities to work with children in sports or other extra-curricular activities than in a suburban or urban school district and if such a factor contributed to their decisions to stay in their rural school. Six (12%) felt this was a very strong contributing factor, and 13 (27%) indicated it was a strong contributing factor. Another 13 (27%) were neutral on this point, while four (8%) felt it was a weak contributor, and lastly 13 (27%) stated it was a very weak contributing factor (see Figure 15).

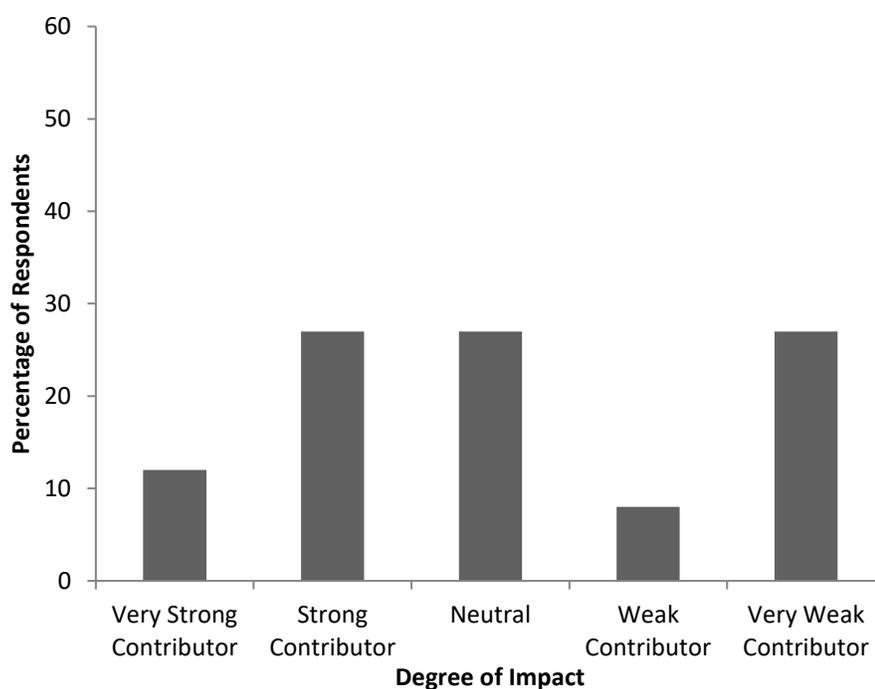


Figure 15. I feel that I am afforded more opportunities to work with children in sports or other extra-curricular activities than I would in a suburban or urban educational setting.

The prompt, "Curriculum is revised and updated on a routine basis," received eight (16%) answers in the very strong contributor category and 19 (39%) selections in the strong contributor listing. Fourteen (29%) gave a neutral response. Six (12%) listed this factor as a weak contributor, and two (4%) stated the revision and updating of curriculum was a very weak contributing factor (see Figure 16).

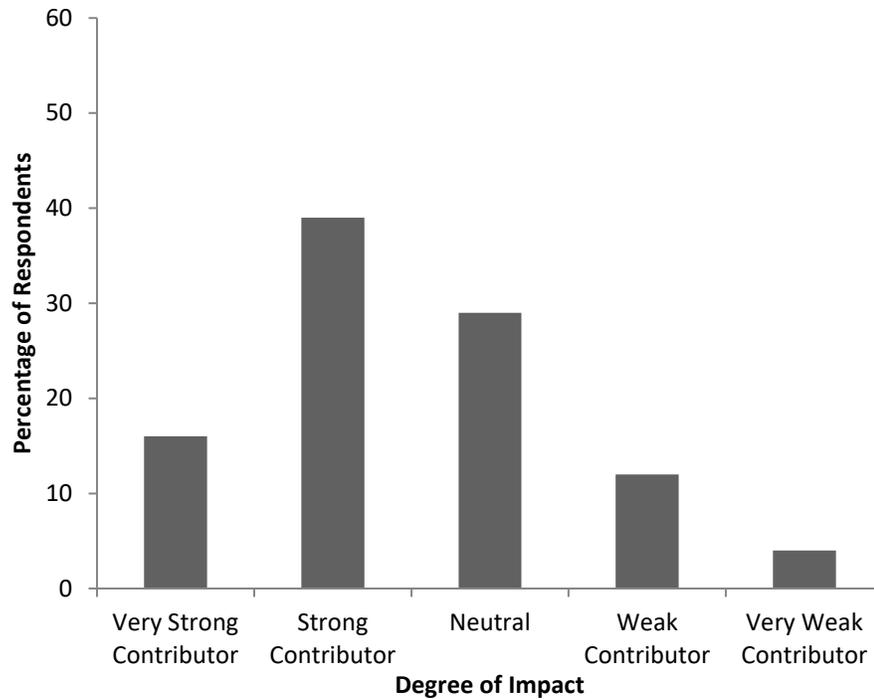


Figure 16. Curriculum is revised or updated on a routine basis.

The prompt "The school community is proud and supportive of our school," elicited zero responses in the very weak contributor category and only two (4%) as a weak contributor. Twenty-two (45%) stated having a proud and supportive community was a very strong contributing factor, while 17 (35%) listed it as a strong contributor. Eight (16%) were neutral when considering the impact of this factor upon their decision to stay (see Figure 17).

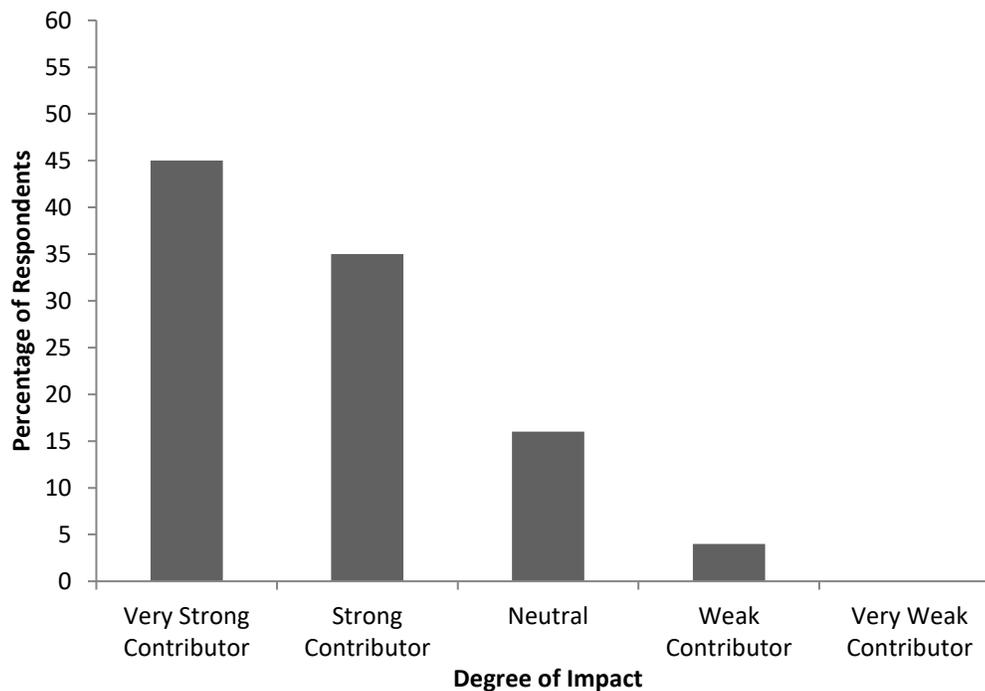


Figure 17. The school community is proud and supportive of our school.

Fourteen (28%) listed having a school building and campus that are attractive and appealing as a very strong contributing factor. Another 14 (28%) listed this same factor as a strong contributor, while an additional 14 (28%) were neutral. Four (8%) stated it was a weak contributor, and lastly, four (8%) listed an attractive and appealing campus and building a very weak contributor (see Figure 18).

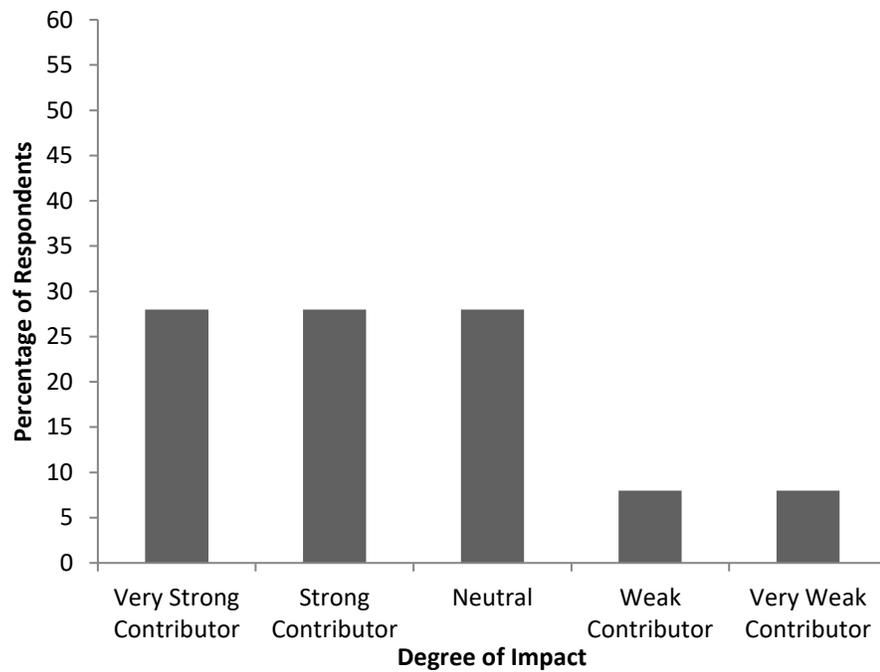


Figure 18. Our school building and campus are attractive and appealing.

The impact of an effective mentor program upon each teacher's decision to stay was the next consideration. Only five (10%) listed effective mentoring as a very strong contributor. Ten (20%) reported mentoring was a strong contributor, and 14 (29%) were neutral. Eleven (22%) listed mentoring as a weak contributor, and nine (18%) stated it was a very weak contributor (see Figure 19).

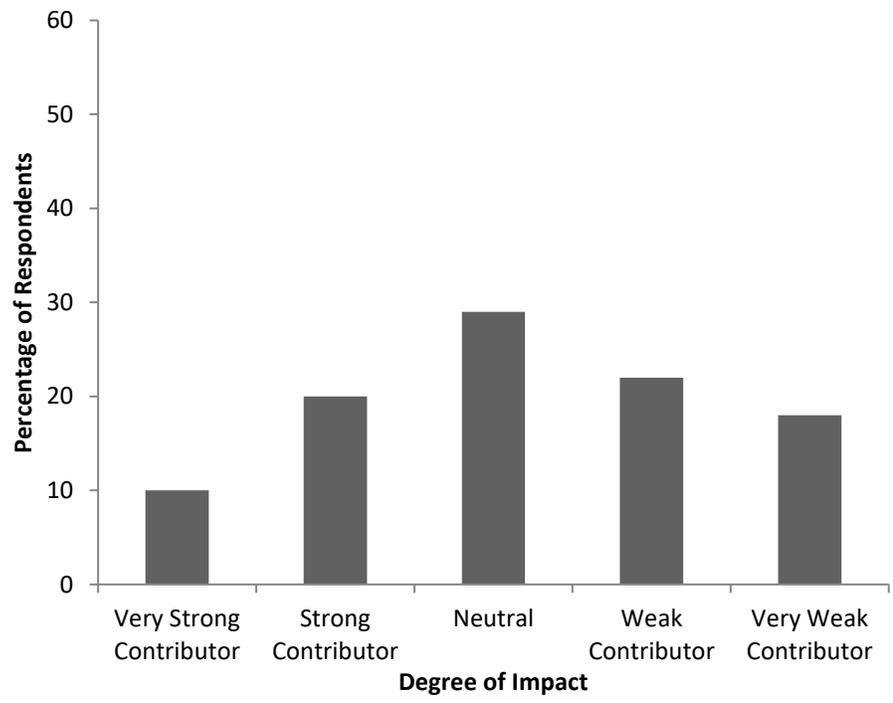


Figure 19. My district has an effective mentor program.

The next prompt dealt with the impact of stress upon each teacher's decision to stay and was simply written, "My job is very stressful." Seven (14%) selected the very strong contributor option, while eight (16%) indicated it was a strong contributor. Fifteen (31%) of the respondents were neutral. Fourteen (29%) stated a very stressful job was a weak contributor, and five (10%) stated it was a very weak contributor (see Figure 20).

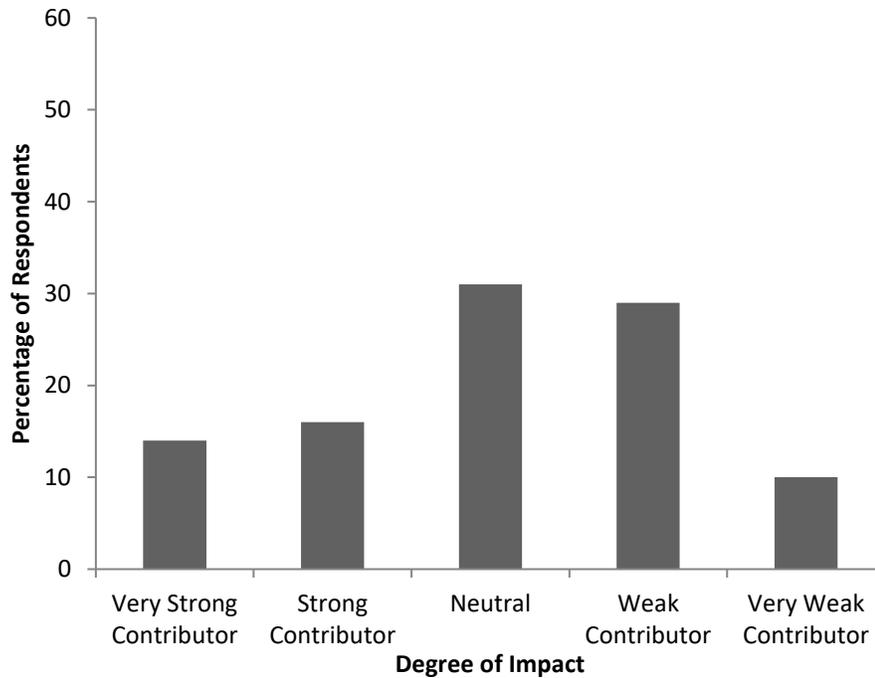


Figure 20. My job is very stressful.

The next prompt investigated the impact of being able to earn additional income outside of a teaching contract upon each teacher's decision to stay. Nine (18%) indicated such opportunities were a very strong contributor, and 18 (37%) indicated extra income opportunities were a strong contributor. Nine (18%) were neutral relative to the impact of such a factor, while seven (14%) felt it was a weak contributor, and six (12%) reported it was a very weak contributor (see Figure 21).

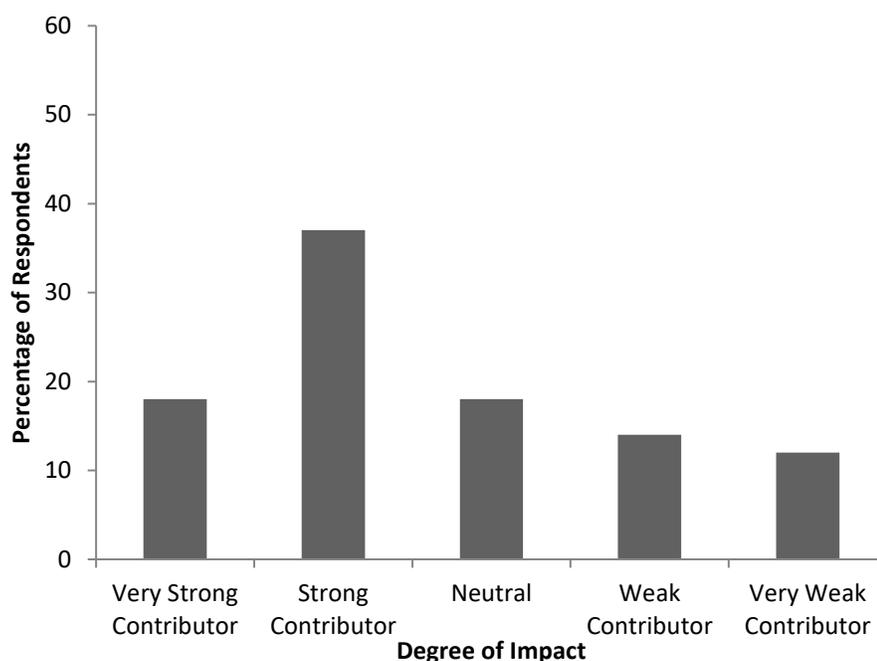


Figure 21. My district provides opportunities to earn income outside of my teaching contract, such as paying an hourly wage for tutoring, teaching summer school, or writing grants.

Teachers were next prompted with, "I am involved in activities outside of the school that generally occur in a rural setting (such as farming or hunting) and enjoy the freedom that teaching affords me to pursue those activities". Fifteen (30%) chose the option of a very strong contributor, 11 (22%) selected strong contributor, and 12 (25%) were neutral. Seven (14%) reported the freedom to pursue other activities was a weak contributor, and four (8%) felt it was a very weak contributor (see Figure 22).

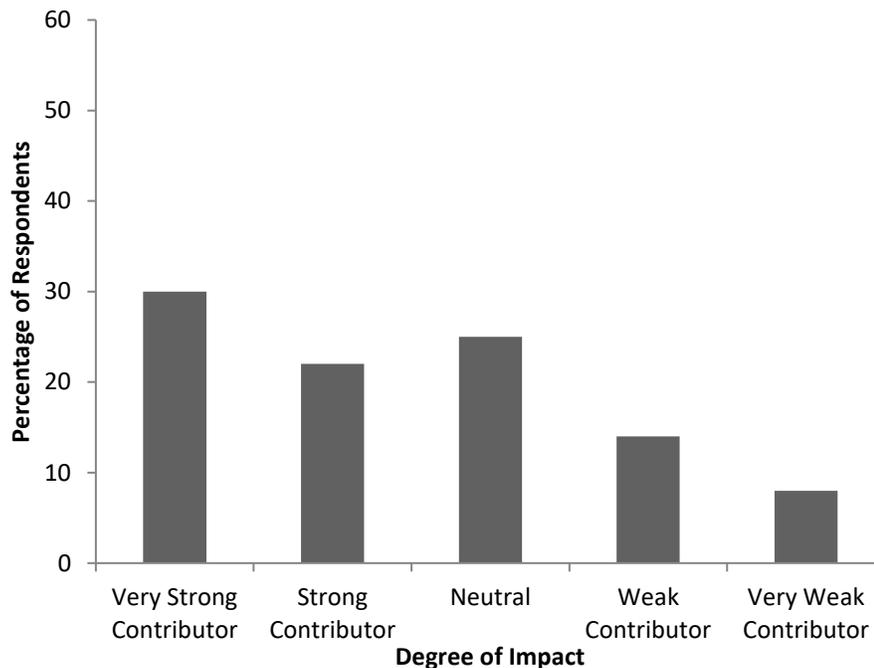


Figure 22. I am involved in activities outside of the school that generally occur in a rural setting (such as farming or hunting) and enjoy the freedom that teaching affords me to pursue those activities.

As Moolenaar (2012) concluded, "When the pattern of social relationships is such that many teachers are disconnected from the flow of resources in their school, that school's ability to achieve its goals may be hindered." (p. 11). Recognizing the existence of PLCs within schools represents a mechanism for the exchange of information and collaboration for the purpose of improving student performance, teachers were asked to consider the following prompt: "My school is a professional learning community (PLC) in we have a schedule for weekly collaboration, discussion of data, data-informed decision making, and action research."

Five (10%) felt this was a very strong contributing factor, and seven (14%) reported it was a strong factor. The majority of the respondents were neutral on this point with 20 (41%) selecting the neutral option. Four (8%) reported that it was a weak contributor, and 13 (27%) stated it was a very weak contributor (see Figure 23).

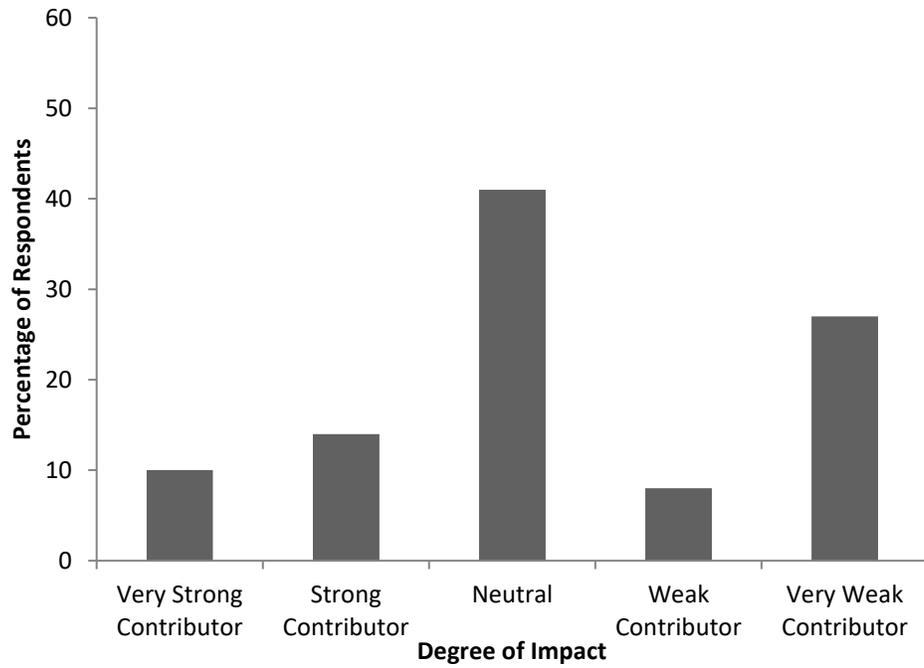


Figure 23. My school is a professional learning community (PLC) in that we have a schedule for weekly collaboration, discussion of data, data-informed decision making, and action research.

Seven (14%) veterans reported having a sufficient system to identify and support struggling learners to achieve grade-level norms was a very strong contributor. Twenty-four (49%) reported such a system was a strong contributor, and 11 (22%) were neutral. Three (6%) selected the weak contributor option, and four (8%) said it was a very weak contributor (see Figure 24).

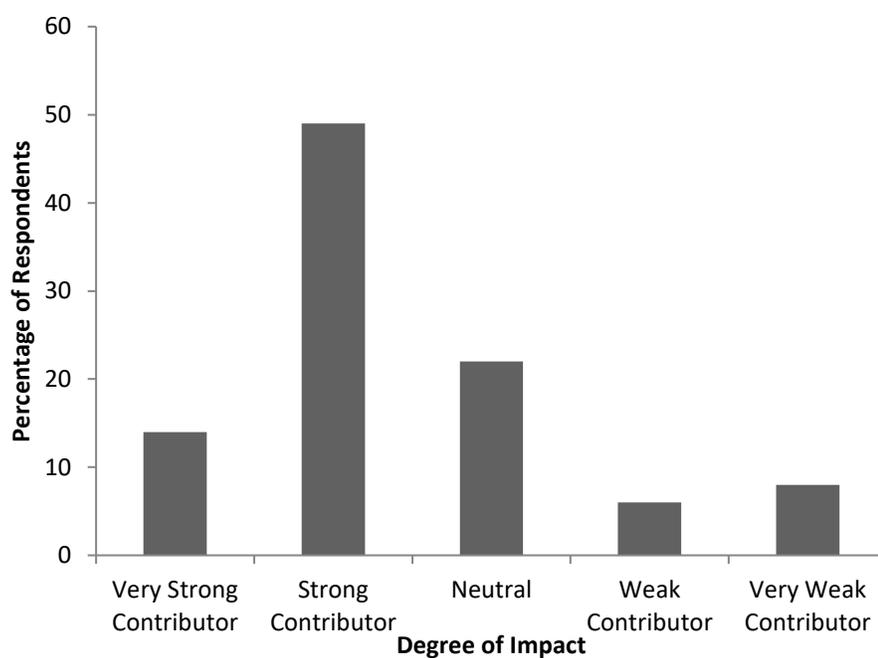


Figure 24. Our school has a sufficient system to identify and support struggling learners to achieve grade-level norms.

The next prompt was, "My students have ample opportunities to access the internet and utilize technology." Fifteen (31%) reported such technology access was a very strong contributor, and 16 (33%) felt it was a strong contributor. Ten (21%) were neutral, while four (8%) reported it was a weak contributor, and three (6%) a very weak contributor (see Figure 25).

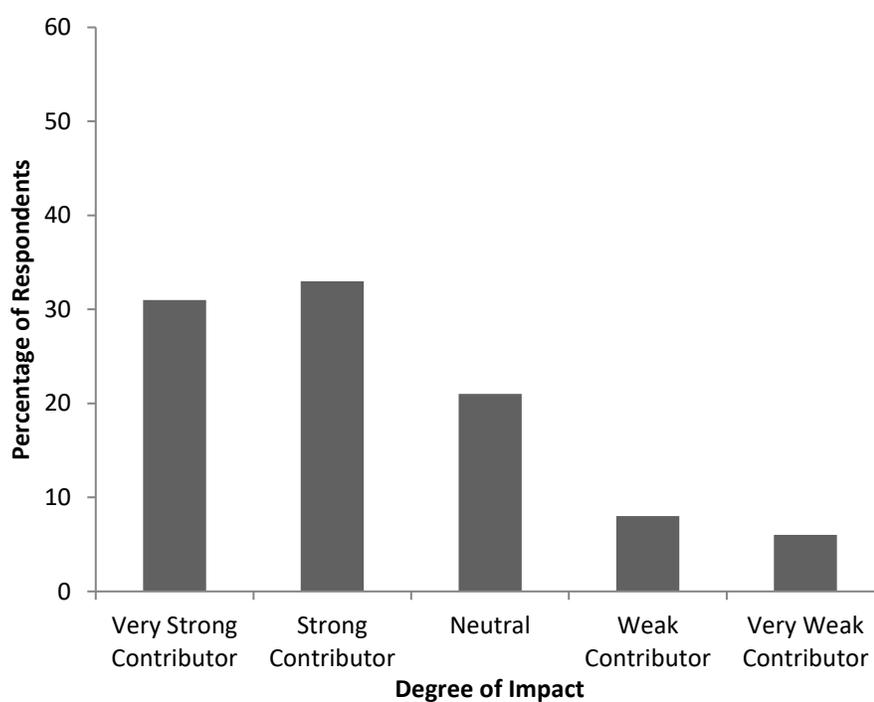


Figure 25. My students have ample opportunities to access the internet and utilize technology.

The following prompt focused upon the need to stay in a rural area due to a factor such as a spouse's occupation. Thirteen (27%) cited their spouse's occupation as a very strong contributor, and 14 (29%) a strong contributor. Eight (16%) were neutral, while two (4%) cited their spouse's occupation as a weak contributor, and 12 (25%) a very weak contributor (see Figure 26).

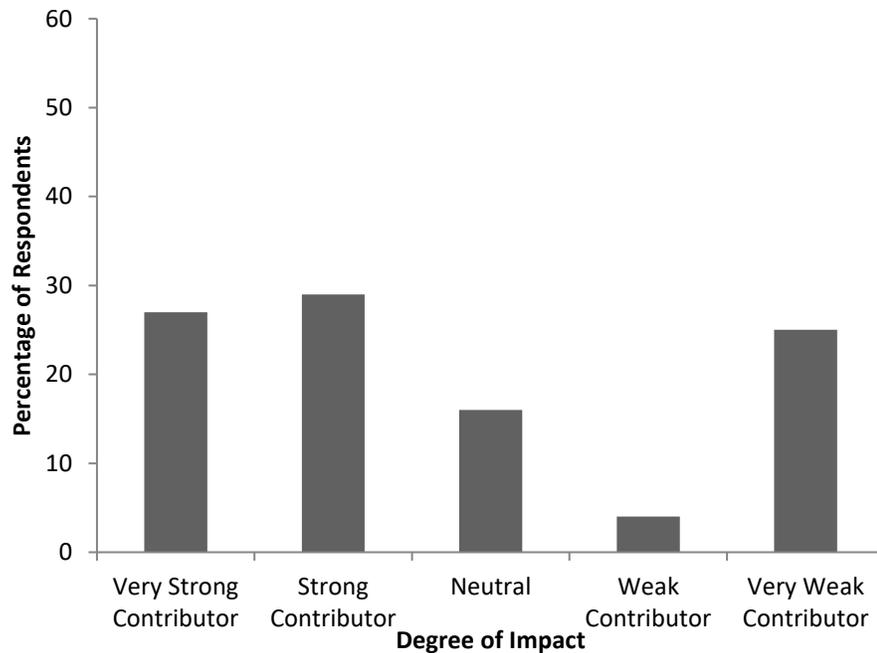


Figure 26. The need to stay in the area due to a factor such as a spouse's occupation has prompted me to maintain my position in the district.

Teachers who listed feeling they have a much lower cost of living as compared to teachers living and working in suburban and urban settings as a very strong contributor numbered eight (16%). Those who felt it was a strong contributor were 16 (33%), while 11 (22%) were neutral. In response to this factor, six (12%) selected the weak contributor option, and eight (16%) listed it as a very weak contributor (see Figure 27).

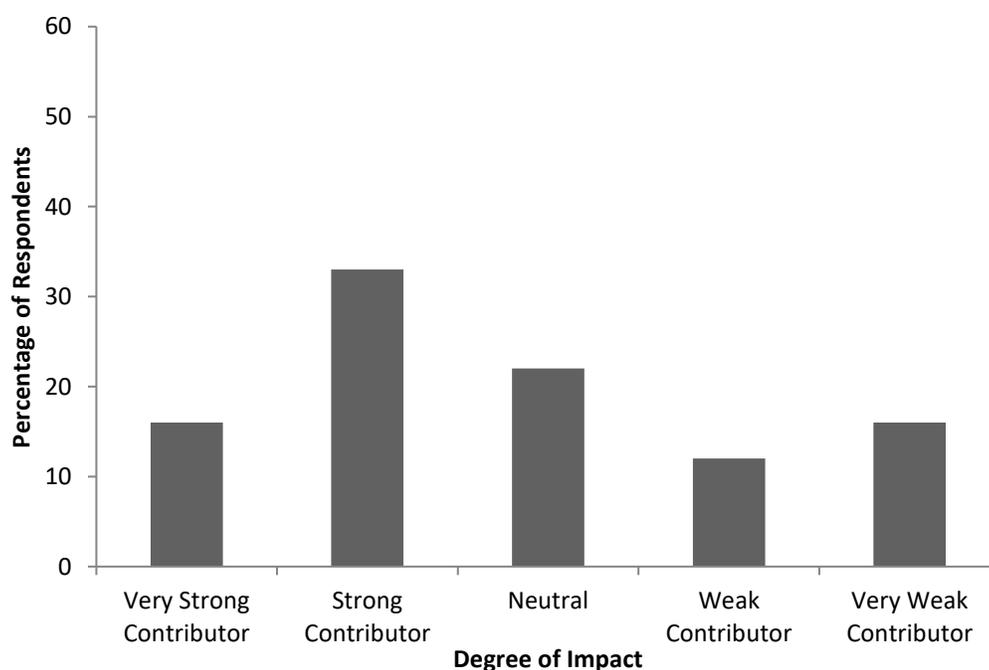


Figure 27. I feel that I have a much lower cost of living as compared to teachers living and working in suburban and urban settings.

Survey Comments

At the end of the survey, space was left for educators to include factors that were not mentioned. Each educator was asked to write the factor and also indicate to what degree it had influenced his or her decision not to leave the district. For example, one respondent wrote, "School location to where I live," and indicated this was a very strong contributing factor. In each instance, every teacher who wrote a factor listed it as a very strong contributor for continuing to teach at a small, rural school district.

A few responses centered upon the theme of closeness and community within small rural districts. For example, one teacher indicated, "I like it that all of the kids at all levels seem to watch out and interact with one another." A second stated, "I know my kids really well after 12 years in the district and feel that I can get them to work without difficulty." A third touched upon a sense of closeness as well, explaining:

I like the community; the people here come together in difficult times as well as good ones. I grew up, attended this school, and I want to give back to my school what the teachers gave to me so our community can continue to grow and be successful with my help.

Another teacher echoed this sentiment reporting, "I am a graduate of the district I am teaching in and feel that hometown pride toward my school and community." Lastly, one teacher touched upon a sense of community mentioning, "I have familiarity with students and families. I don't mind commuting to teach in the county in which I was raised. I grew up in this kind of area, with these kinds of students; I feel at home here."

Other educators chose to emphasize the differences between large and small schools, citing perceived advantages. One teacher shared, "We have always had small

class sizes. I feel this is very important for the children." A second educator indicated she taught in a small, rural school so that her own children would benefit. She stated, "I want my children to go to the small schools I attended so they can participate in all the extracurricular activities they choose." A third teacher made a direct comparison, between larger districts and small, rural schools, sharing, "Small schools allow teachers to really reach and understand most of their students in a way that big school teachers cannot."

The final teacher to make a comparison between small rural and larger districts expressed the following:

The positive, supportive work environment in our rural setting affords many perks, though not financial, that I'm not sure I would find in a larger school district. Our staff is very collegial and provides much assistance to not only each other but to the students and their families.

One last noteworthy respondent touched upon two different themes. The first half of the response centered upon the factor of administrative support. The second half focused upon the school's proximity to other locations were important to the teacher. This multi-faceted response included:

The support I have received as both a teacher and administrator have influenced my decision to remain in this district over 30 years, along with the fact that my extended family and church are in this area.

It was apparent that highly qualified rural educators indicated climate and support as two areas which effect retention.

Telephone Interviews

The next portion of the study included telephone interviews of three high-quality veteran rural educators who were also recipients of the Missouri Association of Rural Education (MARE) Teacher of the Year Award. The interviews included questions to collect categorical data about the respondents' years in education, highest degrees obtained, subject or grade level taught, and the population of students in their school buildings. The analysis that follows compares the demographic data of the 50 respondents in the first survey to that of the three interviewees. The demographic data obtained from the interviews were entered into an Excel spreadsheet to determine the mean and standard deviation. The data were initially analyzed by examining descriptive statistics and disaggregating the data in a table of means.

The average term of number of years in education was evenly spread across the educators completing the survey. Interestingly, educators spanned from 11 to 15 years in education to more than 30 years. This span provides a good representation of experience (see Table 7).

Table 7

Demographics of Teachers' Number of Years in Education

Years	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
11 - 15	1	33.3	33.3
16 - 20	1	33.3	66.6
21 - 25	0	0	66.6
26 - 30	0	0	66.6
30 +	1	33.4	100.0

Note. $N = 3$, $M = 24.2$, $SD = 5.88$

Educators were represented in all areas of education ranging from elementary to high school educators. One educator from each building level completed the telephone survey (see Table 8). Again, these data represent the entire range for the purposes of this study.

Table 8

Demographics of Teachers by Job Title

Building	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Elementary	1	33.3	33.3
Middle School	0	0	0
High School Only	1	33.3	66.6
Middle & High	1	33.4	100

Note. $N = 3$

All teachers interviewed held Master's degrees. No educators held Specialist or Doctorate degrees. All educators met the highly qualified status warranted for participation in the study (see Table 9).

Table 9

Demographics of Teachers by Highest Degree

Degree	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Bachelor's	0	0	0
Master's	3	100	100
Specialist	0	0	100
Doctorate	0	0	100

Note. $N = 3$

One interviewee's building population was between 500 and 600. One educator's building served between 0 and 100 students. Another served 401 to 500 students (see Table 10). A span of differing building populations was represented within the study.

Table 10

Demographics of Number of Students in Each Teacher's Building

Enrollment	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
0-100	1	33.3	33.3
101-200	0	0	33.3
201-300	0	0	33.3
301-400	0	0	33.3
401-500	1	33.3	66.6
500-600	1	33.4	100

Note. $N = 3$, $M = 360$, $SD = 441$

Statistical School Data

In addition to collecting demographic data about each educator, the MODESE database was queried to obtain statistical information about each educator's school. The three school districts have been given fictitious names to protect the identity of the participants. The school districts' names reflect the number of students who were enrolled during the 2012-2013 school year. Smallville, a K-8 school district had an enrollment of 80 students. Littletown, a K-12 district had an enrollment of 417 students. The last district represented, Metropolis, had the largest enrollment of 598 students.

It was essential all areas of education were represented. Educators working in the elementary, middle, and high school settings provided pertinent information. Additionally, a wide span of building enrollment was represented among the educators. The demographics revealed a successful representation of all educators was achieved.

Graphs provide a comparison of each of the districts as well as the average of all schools in the state of Missouri.

Each of the schools had a percentage of students whose households qualified for the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) free and reduced price meals program that was higher than 60%. Additionally, each school's percentage was higher than that of the average number of students who qualified in the entire state of Missouri. A comparison is listed below (see Figure 28).

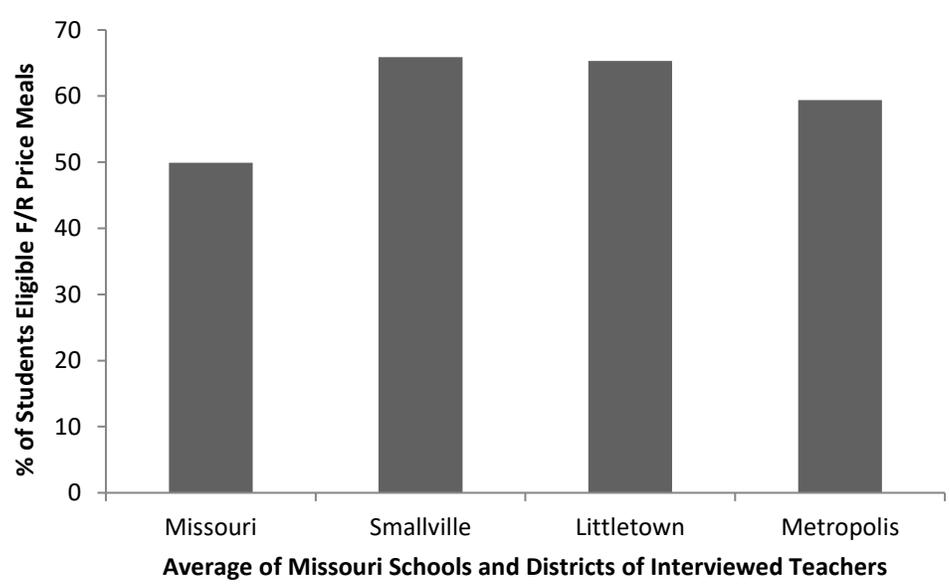


Figure 28. Comparison of students receiving free and reduced price meals.

The MODESE collects information from schools each year through an online database. One such category that schools report is the average number of years of experience teachers have taught within districts. This average does not reflect how many years each teacher taught within that specific district. For example, a teacher may have taught four years at one school and seven years at another for a total of 11 years. The district in which teacher was currently employed would report that this particular teacher had 11 years of total teaching experience. In the smallest school, the average was 16.7 years of teaching experience, which was much higher than the Metropolis, Littletown, and Missouri averages, which were 10.9, 12.3, and 12.4 years respectively (see Figure 29).

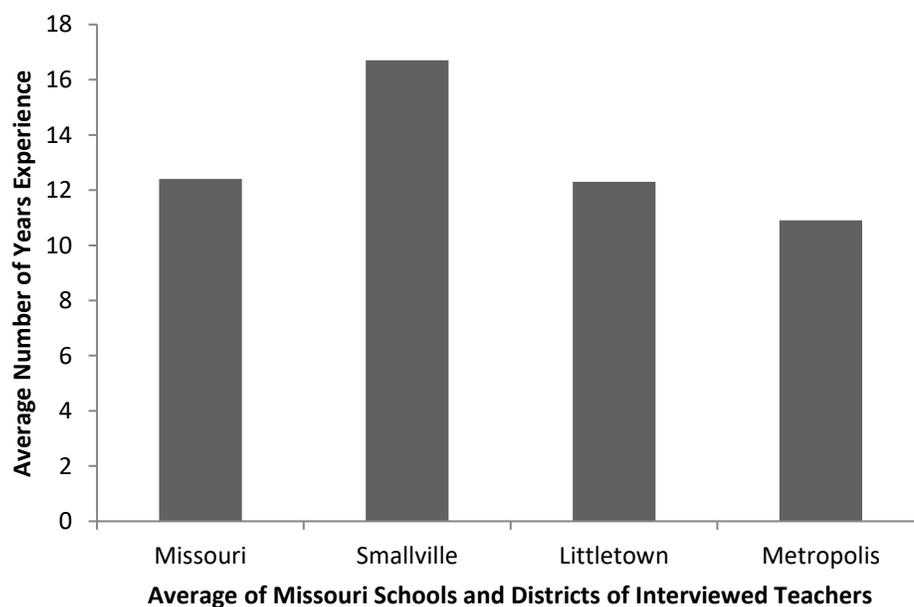


Figure 29. Comparison of average years of experience of professional staff.

The average salary of a teacher in a Missouri school district in 2013 was found to be \$47,243. This salary was \$11,026 higher than that of the average salary of the teachers in Littletown, which was the highest average of the three districts. Metropolis and Smallville had an even greater disparity and were \$11,212 and \$12,542 lower than the average Missouri teacher's salary (see Figure 30).

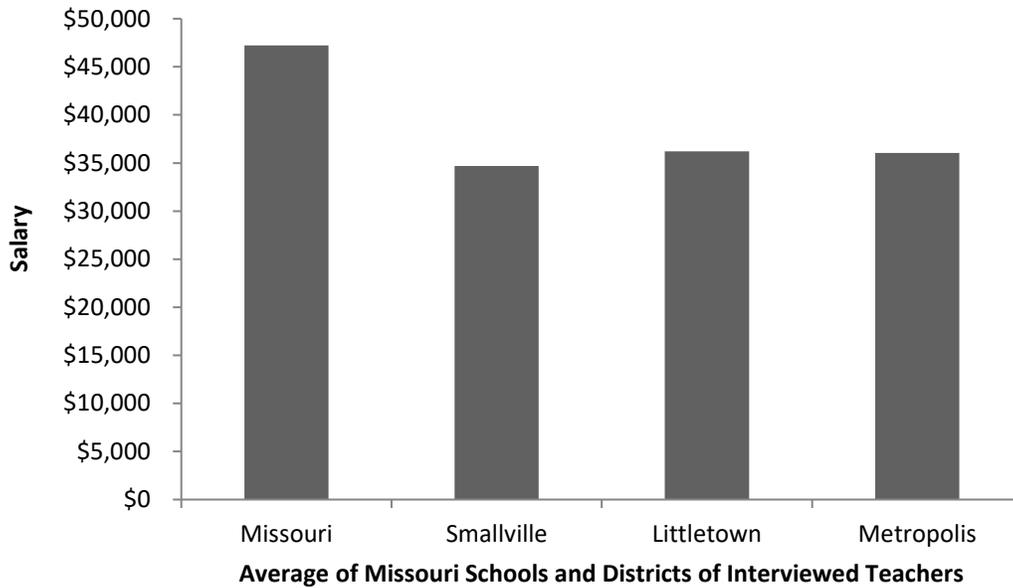


Figure 30. Comparison of average salary of teachers by district.

The state of Missouri’s average expenditure per pupil in 2013 was \$9,840. By comparison, each of the three districts with a teacher participating in the interview process ranged from \$7,250 in Metropolis on the low end to \$10,474 in Smallville (see Figure 31).

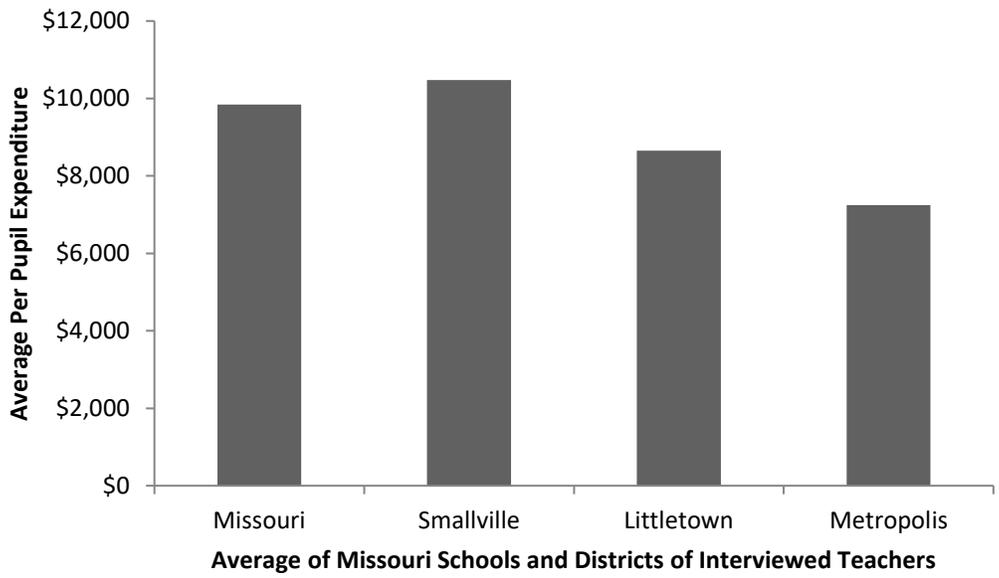


Figure 31. Comparison of average expenditure per average daily attendance.

When comparing tax rates of the three schools it was found the larger the size of the district, the lower the tax rate. The tax rates in 2013 were \$2.86, \$3.30, and \$3.56 for Metropolis, Littletown, and Smallville, respectively (see Figure 32). The average tax rate for Missouri districts in 2013 was \$3.34.

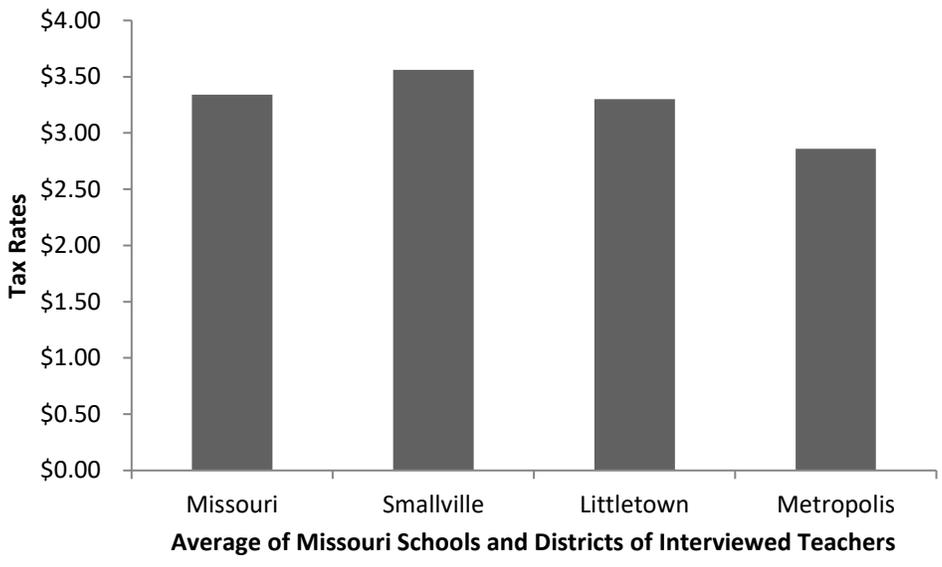


Figure 32. Comparison of tax rates.

Interview Responses

The first teacher interviewed was a sixth-grade language arts teacher with a Masters in Education who had taught for 25 years in the high-performing rural district of Metropolis. The second teacher was currently a Title 1 math teacher who taught first grade for several years, special education, and spent at least a year in grades one through eight during her 33-year career at Smallville. The third teacher interviewed has 16 years of teaching experience, all in the third grade at Littletown.

The teacher from Littletown's highest degree attained was a Masters. There were 101 to 200 students in the K-6 building in which she teaches. She stated one strength is "the close knit staff. It is easier to work together with people that you know well." She also shared that in her small community, "It is easy to be involved with activities outside of the school" and that because of these connections, "People know that you care about their kids."

She expressed that these outside of school connections also make it easier to teach because so many of her students already have a relationship with her and respect her before they even get to her classroom. She considers the A+ program to be a strong suit in her district. She cited, "Through the years, many former students have come back" after utilizing the A+ program to assist them in completing college.

During the interviews teachers were asked to share what they perceived to be the strengths of their school buildings. One indicated that while the strengths of her district varied from year to year, she perceived the relative amount of freedom to teach to the needs of her students as she saw fit to be a strength. She discussed the importance of not

being scripted and the importance of being given leeway and of being allowed to exercise professional judgment.

Common themes emerged amongst the three educators interviewed. These commonalities included having community support and being allowed to collaborate with community agencies. Educators regarded in a positive light within the community and opportunities to build rapport and camaraderie with the community were common themes. All three mentioned that being allowed to work together and bounce ideas off of each other while making team decisions were strengths within their districts.

While the strengths that interviewees highlighted within their districts revealed many commonalities, weaknesses varied from district to district. For example, one educator discussed a lack of communication as her district's biggest weakness, stating, "The left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing." No other interviewee mentioned communication as a weakness.

Summary

This chapter was organized into different segments. The participants within the study were discussed. An explanation of the demographics of the school districts of the three teachers selected for an interview were provided. Additionally, data analysis and a discussion of the conclusions drawn from the data were discussed.

Intrinsic motivators largely guide the retention of rural educators. Themes emerging from successful rural educators who chose to stay in the small, rural school setting centered around community and school climate. Moreover, educators completing the survey cited administrator support and the ability to use professional judgment within the classrooms as motivating factors when choosing to stay.

Conversely, it was evident perceived factors which would tend to draw educators to leave the small, rural setting, such as money, were not indicated as motivators to stay. Conclusions drawn are consistent with the indicators that are most important when educators choose to stay in the small, rural setting. Additionally, individuals who leave possibly do not have the intrinsic motivation to stay.

The following chapter provides an outline of the study in its entirety. A summary of findings is detailed, and conclusions are drawn. Implications for education are outlined and supported through research. Moreover, recommendations for future research projects are detailed.

Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that exist within successful small, rural schools that aide in the recruitment and retention of highly qualified, successful educators. This study was completed by surveying highly qualified veteran educators from high-performing small, rural school districts. Additionally, a telephone interview was conducted with three veteran rural educators who were the recipients of the Missouri Association of Rural Education (MARE) Teacher of the Year Award.

Demographic data obtained from both survey instruments were entered into an Excel spreadsheet to determine the mean and standard deviation. Data collected from each of the self-administered survey questions were depicted in simple bar graphs and presented utilizing descriptive statistics. Data collected from the telephone interviews were organized through the use of descriptive statistics and by the common themes that emerged through analysis.

The specific findings of this study are discussed in this chapter. At the conclusion of the paper, all relevant information that arose is mentioned. Lastly, details regarding the implications of this study as well possible parameters for future research are shared.

Findings: Self-Administered Survey

Herzberg et al.'s (1993) motivation-hygiene theory of job satisfaction describes an individual's intrinsic reasons or factors for working as "motivators" (p. 114) and indicates the factors lead directly to job satisfaction. In the case of an educator, such a factor would likely be related to the actual act of teaching or working with children (Goldring et al., 2014). Several of the survey questions were developed to identify motivational factors within the field of education. Survey results revealed intrinsic

motivators, such as professionalism and collegiality, were the two most highly valued reasons for an educator to remain in a district for more than 10 years.

According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics (2013), the elementary and middle school labor force is comprised of 19% male teachers and the secondary labor force is comprised of 43% male teachers. The survey results reflected national averages as the percentage of male high-quality veteran educators who took the survey was 18%.

While the overall survey results were similar to the national average for males, the percentage of high-quality veteran rural male teachers in high school was found to be significantly lower than the national average of 43%. Of those responding to the survey, only six, or 12%, were male. This may have something to do with the fact more males in high schools serve as coaches (a position with a higher mobility rate than the average classroom teacher) and tend to leave the classroom to assume administrative positions (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013).

Sixty-two percent of the teachers responding to the survey indicated they did not feel they were afforded more opportunities to work with children in sports or other extracurricular activities in a small rural school setting than in a suburban or urban educational setting (or that this was not a significant reason for remaining). It is difficult to discern from the data whether or not women tend to be more likely to maintain their positions within small rural districts more than men. There was no discernment as to whether there are more women teachers in the workforce than men, or whether men are more likely to leave as a result of coaching or to pursue administrative positions in other districts.

For the purposes of data analysis, the survey questions were divided into three groups of factors that included intrinsic or professional motives, extrinsic environmental

factors, and extrinsic hygienic factors. Herzberg et al. (1993) found intrinsic “motivators” (p. 114), such as being afforded opportunities to grow professionally and the act of teaching led directly to job satisfaction. Herzberg et al. (1993) also concluded that while external environmental and hygienic factors will not lead to job satisfaction, the presence of positive factors can only thwart job dissatisfaction.

Respondents indicated that the intrinsic motivators of professionalism, trust, opportunities to learn new skills, and being given clear feedback were the greatest contributing factors in the decision to stay in a given district. While each of these factors meet the intrinsic needs of educators, the prevalence of each is directly connected to the performance of administrators within each district. For example, in order for a teacher to receive clear and specific feedback, an administrator must be present who not only understands instructional leadership, but makes it a priority to routinely spend time observing and dialoguing with teachers about performance in a professional manner.

In much the same way, administrators must work to follow-up on concerns, create avenues of communication, and follow-through with commitments to foster a climate of mutual trust. However, while administrators should be working to create positive climates where intrinsic needs are met, they must do so as facilitators who recognize the importance of including teachers in the decision-making process. Only 29% of those responding to the survey indicated their school had an effective mentor program.

Findings: Interviews

Three educators were interviewed for the purposes of this study. The first interviewee included a 25-year veteran language arts teacher. A 33-year veteran educator who served in numerous first through eighth-grade roles was interviewed, as well as a 16-

year third-grade veteran teacher. All educators were recipients of the MARE Teacher of the Year award.

All three veteran educators held Master's degrees. All educators were employed within the small, rural school setting. Each individual was asked to share strengths and weaknesses within his or her district. Commonalities emerged through the interview process.

Strengths included working with a close-knit staff. Familiarity with coworkers and the ability to become involved with the community were listed as strengths. Connections existing outside of the school setting were seen as positive ways to build relationships with students. An additional strength included the ability to work closely in collaborative teams. Encouragement from the administration to utilize professional judgment was also noted.

Furthermore, commonalities such as community support and collaboration through community businesses and churches was noted. Additionally, opportunities for receiving community support through various venues was common among the interviewees. A family-type atmosphere among all stakeholders was noted as a strength.

Weaknesses shared varied among interviewees. One educator shared a lack of communication was a weakness. Others did not mention this as a concern. Weaknesses were district-specific.

Conclusions

Conclusions were drawn from data retrieved from teacher surveys and interviews. The data were used to answer the research questions. The following research questions guided this study:

1. *What are the reasons high-quality rural veteran teachers choose to remain in small rural school district setting?*

High-quality veteran teachers choose to remain in the small, rural school setting due to intrinsic motivators. Veteran educators noted strong support from fellow educators and the community contributed to their desire to remain employed within their districts. Other survey data revealed educators were interested in autonomy within the classroom and support from administrators.

2. *What are the common factors among small rural school districts that have high numbers of highly qualified veteran teachers?*

Research revealed small, rural schools that have high numbers of highly qualified veteran teachers have high levels of administrative support. These educators have a sense of belonging within their districts and high levels of job satisfaction. Opportunities for educators to collaborate are readily available and support is given through teacher evaluations. Additionally, these educators feel connections within their school communities, which enable them to better teach the district's students. Furthermore, educators voiced school climate played a large role in their decisions to stay in the small, rural setting.

Implications for Practice

The survey results and interviews obtained from highly qualified rural educators lead to conclusions based on the data. A few themes emerged during the course of the research, which are areas administrators should address if retaining high-quality, rural educators is an objective of the district. Furthermore, specific data trends lend to

pertinent information, which should be available to all administrators in the rural education setting.

Climate. An overwhelming response of rural educators identified school climate as an integral factor in determining whether or not to remain in the rural education setting. Oftentimes, small, rural school districts promote a family-type atmosphere within the districts. Students are known by educators in all grade levels, and family dynamics are also more often known by school faculty and staff. These types of personal knowledge lead educators to effectively meet the needs of their students and in turn, form closer bonds with one another.

Climate is essential in determining contentment with one's job. When working in the small, rural school, one's choice to vacate the position for another often feels like leaving family. Climate is also delicate within the school setting. It is essential for rural administrators to be in tune to the climate within the district and to take steps to ensure that climate is positive. According to DeWitt and Slade (2014), "There is evidence that a positive school climate not only attributes to immediate student achievement, but persists for years" (p. 6). DeWitt and Slade (2014) stated this develops through administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Servant leadership. In addressing the importance of positive climate to retain high-quality rural educators, it is essential administrators seek to establish this as a priority within the school setting. One such success is when administrators take on a servant-leadership role. According to Baldner (2013), "Servant Leadership is doing what you think is the right thing to do and feeling good about the decision you make" (p. 241). Administrators must lead their districts with the never-ending mantra that what they are

doing is right. Administrators must do what is right for students. They must do what is right for their faculty and staff. They must lead the charge in doing what is right for the community as a whole. It is a lofty goal to lead by doing what is right. Baldner (2013) went on to state, "Doing the right thing is Servant Leadership in action" (p. 242).

As stated by Wallace (2011), "Leading is about caring, authentic relationships." (p. 5). It is essential for administrators to spend adequate time building, and then maintaining caring relationships with district faculty and staff. Additionally, administrators should lead by example, working alongside faculty and staff through all obstacles that are faced by the school community.

Educator mentoring program. Rural educators viewed an effective educator mentoring program as essential to ensure the retention of high-quality rural educators. Across the state of Missouri, school districts are responsible for the creation and implementation of their own mentoring programs. Oftentimes, rural school districts, that very rarely have their own human resources or professional development departments, lack in creating high-quality mentorship programs for beginning teachers or new teachers to the district. Many rural schools participate in professional development within the district's conference.

As rural administrators wear an array of hats on a daily basis, this aspect of the rural school setting can oftentimes become overlooked. Rural administrators should seek to become involved in professional development opportunities arranged through the district's conference. This avenue would enable overworked administrators to build upon what is effective in other districts to ensure a high-quality employee mentoring program.

Coaching is a form of teacher mentorship that is gaining momentum in the 21st Century. According to Aguilar (2013), "Coaching can transform schools—through improving teacher practices, addressing systemic issues, and improving outcomes for children . . ." (p. 3). Implementing coaching in the small, rural school setting is one way to utilize the abilities of highly qualified veteran educators while improving the opportunities and experiences of new teachers.

Effective educator evaluations. The importance of districts employing a system of effective educator evaluations was paramount. Educator survey results identified effective educator evaluations as a must-have in the small rural school setting. It is essential small, rural schools embrace a system that provides specific, measurable, time-sensitive feedback to educators through evaluation systems.

Currently, evaluation systems in the state of Missouri are going through changes. According to MODESE's (2013) Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation, administrators should provide specific feedback after observing an educator. Additionally, Missouri's new system recommends peer evaluators aid in providing effective feedback to Missouri educators (MODESE, 2013). This philosophy coincides with the mentoring approach of coaching. Whichever evaluation system is utilized within a small, rural district, it must include time-sensitive feedback to ensure educator growth.

Recommendations for Future Research

Throughout the course of this study, an apparent break-down of effective collaboration and professional development opportunities for the small, rural school was noted. These districts, while experiencing many positives including small class size,

familiarity with stakeholders, and close-knit networking within the district face challenges with which larger districts do not identify. Lack of funding for professional development is an issue for the small, rural school. Finding opportunities for grade-level or content-area teaming is also an issue for the small, rural school.

Research regarding ways the MODESE promotes the same opportunities for professional development as larger districts is warranted. Additionally, research regarding state assistance to the small, rural district that does not belong to a conference and is therefore unable to participate in conference professional development, is needed. Issues faced in these respects occur in academics, athletics, and fine art venues.

Small, rural school districts tend to have lower student-teacher ratios. Research involving test scores of schools that have lower student-teacher ratios could be of benefit. It would increase the promotion of the small, rural school if research showed a correlation between smaller class size and higher student achievement. A state-wide research effort comparing each class of Missouri school size accompanied by state scores would be of interest to the educational community in Missouri.

Additional research is necessary to apply these concepts to all Missouri school districts. Small, rural schools are not the only venues that face concerns with teacher attrition. A large-scale study categorizing all districts by size would benefit the educational processes in the state of Missouri. Exit surveys given when an employee leaves a district could provide valuable information as to why that individual chose to leave. These surveys could provide direct insight as to the issue with teacher attrition and retention of highly qualified educators. Furthermore, this type of research would benefit the MODESE and Missouri school districts on a larger scale.

Quality teacher retention is at the forefront of administrative concerns across the state. Any future research regarding teacher retention or teacher attrition would benefit the whole of education. Further research that focuses upon determining the perspectives of administrators who work to overcome difficulties in recruitment and retention could be conducted. These administrators could be queried to determine their perceptions as to why highly qualified veteran educators remained in their districts. The perspectives of highly qualified veteran educators could be compared to those of administrators to determine the most effective retention characteristics within schools.

Summary

This study was initiated to learn what motivates high-quality veteran rural educators to remain in a school district and not seek employment elsewhere. This research was also instituted to determine common characteristics among high-performing rural schools with low teacher turnover. In-depth research and data analysis through demographics, surveys, and interviews provided solid conclusions as to the research questions guiding this study.

It is evident from the data analysis high-quality rural educators stay within the small, rural school setting largely for intrinsically motivated factors. Furthermore, these educators do not put a price tag on contentment within their districts. Through the recourse of the study, apparent themes arose through data collection. Strong administrative support via mutual trust was among the leading themes. Rural educators also desired clear, specific administrative feedback. Moreover, administrators who supported teacher professional judgment in the classroom aided in job satisfaction.

Finally, intrinsic motivators of collegiality, collaboration, and professional development opportunities were paramount in rural educator job satisfaction.

This study is pertinent to the field of education as it affords administrators a real-time look into the thoughts and feelings of successful veteran rural educators. Information is relative to the field of education today. It is a raw-data approach to identifying factors that contribute to teacher retention, an area of issue within all educational settings across the state of Missouri.

Appendix A

Recruitment Letter

Dear Administrator,

I am conducting research relative to the teacher retention practices of rural school districts. Please consider forwarding this electronic mail to any of your teaching staff who are considered to be veterans (have taught at least 10 years in your district) and are also highly qualified. Both terms are further defined below:

1. Veteran teacher. A veteran teacher will be defined as an individual who has met the two-part test of (1) remaining in the teaching profession for at least 10 years and (2) remained in a given school district for at least 10 years.

2. Highly qualified teacher. The State of Missouri (2008) has defined highly qualified as a teacher who has: (1) Obtained full State certification as a teacher or passed the State teacher licensing examination and holds a license to teach in the State, and does not have certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis; (2) Holds a minimum of a bachelor's degree; and (3) Demonstrated subject-matter competency in each of the academic subjects in which they teach, in a manner determined by the State and in compliance with Section 9101(23) of ESEA (Highly Qualified Teacher, para. 1).

Thank you for your help in collecting this doctoral dissertation data. Attached is an informed consent form in which specific information about this research is provided.

Sincerely,

Josh Phillips

Lindenwood University
School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Appendix B

Lindenwood University

School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

Retaining Rural Educators: Characteristics of Teacher Retention Practices of Rural School Districts

Principal Investigator: Mr. Joshua C. Phillips

Telephone: [REDACTED] E-mail: jcp272@lionmail.lindenwood.edu

Participant _____ Contact info _____

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Joshua Phillips under the guidance of Dr. Sherry DeVore. The purpose of this research is two-fold. First the researcher is seeking to determine the reasons high-quality rural veteran educators choose to remain in a small, rural school setting. Second, the researcher wishes to identify the common factors between small, rural school districts that have high numbers of highly qualified veteran teachers.
2. a) The participation of most teachers in this research study will be limited to the completion of a brief confidential on-line survey. In the survey you will be asked to identify the degree to which a given factor's presence or absence has impacted your decision to stay at your school. At the end of the survey there are optional open-ended responses to identify factors that may not have been presented in the survey that have influenced your decision to stay.

Three to five participants will be selected for a more in-depth telephone interview that will consist of seven questions.

b) The amount of time involved will be five to ten minutes to complete the on-line survey portion and no more than 30 minutes to complete the telephone interview.

c) The telephone interviews will be *audio recorded*.

Approximately 300 teachers will be involved in this research.

3. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.
4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about teacher retention and school climate.

5. Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.
6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study, and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location.
7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Josh Phillips, or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Sherry DeVore at 417-881-0009. You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs, at 636-949-4846.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

 Participant's Signature

 Date

 Participant's Printed Name

 Signature of Principal Investigator

 Date

 Investigator Printed Name

Appendix C

Teacher Survey

You have been selected to participate in a confidential survey to help determine the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that have motivated you to maintain your position with a rural school district beyond 10 years. For the purposes of this study, your principal has identified you as a high-quality veteran rural educator and given the researcher permission to query you in an attempt to isolate factors impacting your decision not to leave your district.

Please indicate whether or not a given factor is present within your school, and then circle the number that accurately describes how its presence or absence has impacted your decision not to leave your school district. Before starting the survey, please respond to the following questions about yourself. Please note that all parts of this survey will be kept confidential and anonymous.

Please select the category that most accurately describes you at present:

Age: 21 – 30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61 or more

Gender: Male Female

of Years in the Classroom: 11–15 16–20 21-25 26– 30 31 or more

Job Title (please include content area and/or grade level) Ex: HS/MS PE teacher or 3rd

Grade Teacher:

Highest Degree obtained: Bachelors Masters Specialist Doctorate

Number of students in your building: 0–100 101–200 201-300 301-400 401 – 500

Please proceed to the next portion of the survey.

Very Strong Contributor 5	Strong Contributor 4	Neutral Contributor 3	Weak Contributor 2	Very Weak Contributor 1	
Factor				Degree to which the factor's presence or absence has impacted your decision to stay	
1. My district recognizes that I am a professional and trusts me to modify and adjust instruction as I see fit.	5	4	3	2	1
2. The administrators within my school have established a sense of mutual trust among all members of the school community.	5	4	3	2	1
3. I am provided with ample opportunities to participate in useful and relevant professional development activities.	5	4	3	2	1
4. My district has a competitive salary schedule.	5	4	3	2	1
5. My district has a tuition reimbursement program.	5	4	3	2	1
6. The administration seeks my input when developing goals.	5	4	3	2	1
7. The administration provides clear feedback and specific suggestions for improvement and challenges me to be a better teacher.	5	4	3	2	1
8. My district has clearly set rules for student behavior, and discipline is implemented in a fair, consistent, and effective manner in my school.	5	4	3	2	1
9. My district provides opportunities to interact with parents.	5	4	3	2	1
10. My district carefully selects initial assignments, which avoids the placement of new teachers in the most difficult schools or in the most difficult situations.	5	4	3	2	1
11. I feel that I am afforded more opportunities to work with children in sports or other extra-curricular activities than I would have in a suburban or urban educational setting.	5	4	3	2	1
12. I am provided with sufficient resources and planning opportunities to support effective teaching and learning in my classroom.	5	4	3	2	1

Very Strong Contributor 5	Strong Contributor 4	Neutral Contributor 3	Weak Contributor 2	Very Weak Contributor 1
Factor				Degree to which the factor's presence or absence has impacted your decision to stay
13. Curriculum is revised and updated on a routine basis.				5 4 3 2 1
14. The school community is proud and supportive of our school.				5 4 3 2 1
15. Our school building and campus are attractive and appealing.				5 4 3 2 1
16. My district has an effective mentor program.				5 4 3 2 1
17. My district provides board-paid health insurance.				5 4 3 2 1
18. My job is very stressful.				5 4 3 2 1
19. My district provides opportunities to earn income outside of my teaching contract, such as paying an hourly wage for tutoring, teaching summer school, or writing grants.				5 4 3 2 1
20. I feel that my school is a safe place.				5 4 3 2 1
21. I am involved in activities outside of the school that generally occur in a rural setting (such as farming or hunting) and enjoy the freedom that teaching affords me to pursue those activities.				5 4 3 2 1
22. My school is a professional learning community (PLC) in that we have a schedule for weekly collaboration, discussion of data, data-informed decision making, and action research.				5 4 3 2 1
23. I am well-acquainted with my colleagues and feel that our school has a family-like atmosphere.				5 4 3 2 1

Very Strong Contributor 5	Strong Contributor 4	Neutral Contributor 3	Weak Contributor 2	Very Weak Contributor 1			
Factor			Degree to which the factor's presence or absence has impacted your decision to stay				
24. Our school has a sufficient system to identify and support struggling learners to achieve grade level norms.			5	4	3	2	1
25. My students have ample opportunities to access the internet and utilize technology.			5	4	3	2	1
26. The need to stay in the area due to a factor such as my spouse's occupation has prompted me to maintain my position in the district.			5	4	3	2	1
27. I feel that I have a much lower cost of living as compared to teachers living and working in suburban and urban settings.			5	4	3	2	1

In the spaces below please write other factors that have contributed to your decision to continue teaching in your rural school district that may not have been mentioned in this survey. Please indicate whether or not the factor was present and to what degree it impacted your decision not to leave.

Very Strong Contributor 5	Strong Contributor 4	Neutral Contributor 3	Weak Contributor 2	Very Weak Contributor 1
Factor				Degree to which the factor's presence or absence has impacted your decision to stay
				5 4 3 2 1
				5 4 3 2 1
				5 4 3 2 1

Appendix D

Teacher Retention Interview Questions

Which category most accurately describes you at present:

Age: 21 – 30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61 or more

Gender: Male Female

of Years in the Classroom: 11–15 16–20 21-25 26– 30 31 or more

Job Title (content area and/or grade level) Ex: HS/MS PE teacher
or 3rd Grade Teacher:

Highest Degree obtained: Bachelors Masters Specialist Doctorate

of students in your building: 0–100 100-200 201-300 301-400 401-500

1. What do you feel to be your school's strengths and weaknesses?
2. How would you describe the climate of your school?
3. To your knowledge, does your school assess and monitor school climate? Please describe these techniques in more detail.
4. What does the leadership within your district do to foster a love of learning within your school community?
5. To what factors do you attribute the longevity of other high-quality veteran educators within your building?
6. What factors have motivated you to continue teaching within this district for so many years?
7. What disparities do you believe exist between your district and larger non-rural schools, and how have those disparities impacted your decision to stay?

Appendix E

LINDENWOOD

LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY ST. CHARLES, MISSOURI

DATE: January 23, 2013

TO: Joshua Phillips

FROM: Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board

STUDY TITLE: [401511-1] Retaining Rural Educators: Characteristics of Teacher Retention Practices of Rural School Districts

IRB REFERENCE #:

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: January 23, 2013

EXPIRATION DATE: January 23, 2014

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research project. Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board has APPROVED your submission pending one addition to the consent form. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document. **Please inform participants that the interviews will be audiorecorded in the consent form.**

In addition, when reporting the results of the study, please aggregate results so that the participants' identities will be concealed. The survey asks for such detailed demographics that the identity of a participant might be easily determined.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to the IRB.

This project has been determined to be a Minimal Risk project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the completion/amendment form for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of January 23, 2014.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.

If you have any questions, please contact Beth Kania-Gosche at (636) 949-4576 or bkania-gosche@lindenwood.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

If you have any questions, please send them to IRB@lindenwood.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board's records.

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Vita

Joshua C. Phillips was born and raised in Southeastern Connecticut. He currently serves as superintendent of schools in a small, rural school district in central Missouri. His 15 years in education have afforded him opportunities to serve in the capacities of classroom teacher, instructional coach, and elementary principal.

Mr. Phillips received his Bachelors in Education from Missouri Southern State University in 2000. He attained his Master's Degree in Education Administration from Lindenwood University in 2003. He received his Specialist Degree in Education Administration from William Woods University in 2006.

Mr. Phillips hopes to continue serving in the role as superintendent in the small, rural school. He and his wife are currently working to coauthor a book relative to their experiences in the small, rural school setting. Another goal is to become an adjunct professor in the field of education.