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PERCEPTION OF THE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROFESSION AND LEVELS OF JOB SATISFACTION: IS THERE A CORRELATION?

by

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty at Anderson University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION IN LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

Concentration: School and Community Leadership

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The student author, whose presentation of the scholarship herein was approved by the program of study committee, is solely responsible for the content of this dissertation. The College of Education will ensure this dissertation is globally accessible and will not permit alterations after a degree is conferred.

Anderson University

Anderson, SC

2024

DEDICATION

To my husband, Cole. Thank you for everything you do to support, encourage, and love me. Life with you is extraordinary.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to say thank you to my committee chair, Dr. DeeDee Washington, and my committee members, Dr. Kimberly Tisi, and Dr. Ashley Butler for their guidance and support throughout the course of this dissertation. I am extremely humbled when I reflect upon the countless hours my committee so graciously dedicated to assist me in the completion of this dissertation. This work could not have been completed without their advice, encouragement, and expertise. I am forever grateful for my committee's eagerness and determination to see me succeed in this endeavor.

In addition, I would also like to thank God for His ever present blessings upon my life. I am blessed to have had such a wonderful experience while working on this project and to have had the opportunity to accomplish a lifelong goal through the completion of this project. I am hopeful that I am able to use this experience to bring honor and glory to God as I can never repay all that He has done for me and ways in which He has found favor in me through this project.

I would like to say a very special thank you to my husband, Cole, who has provided me with an undeserving amount of support during this process and has always been my biggest cheerleader. Without his love, support, and encouragement, this dissertation would not have been possible. I would also like to express my gratitude to my friends and family members who took the time to provide their support and encouragement in a variety of ways. Special thanks for all those long nights spent working in the library! Thank you to the department, faculty, and staff for making my time at Anderson University a wonderful experience. I want to also offer my appreciation

to those who were willing to participate in my surveys, without whom, this dissertation would not have also not been possible.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation was to introduce the context and purpose of the research study. The study's focus was on the perception of the elementary education profession and the prestige ascribed to classroom teachers working in public education by individuals outside the education system. The research questions were as follows: (1) What level of prestige is afforded to the elementary public school classroom teacher from the noneducator perspective? (2) To what extent do noneducators' perceptions affect the level of job satisfaction among elementary public school classroom teachers? Themes found in literature supporting the research questions included the perceived devaluation of the education profession, professional training teachers receive, and potential impacts on prestige due to advancements in technology. In addition to levels of job satisfaction among teachers, review of literature also revealed potential factors leading to the teacher shortage that is prevalent among schools spanning the United States of America. Based upon the reviews of literature, the United States is currently experiencing a shortage of certified individuals willing to occupy teaching positions in public classrooms across the country (Sutcher et al., 2019). The literature hypothesizes the shortage is caused by potential reasons that include a decline in teacher preparation program enrollment, working conditions, teacher certification reciprocity limitations across states, teacher salaries, class sizes, pupil to teacher ratios, and high teacher attrition rates (Sutcher et al., 2019). Survey questionnaires were distributed to two people groups: noneducators and elementary public school teachers. Both people groups completed quantitative Likert scale surveys measuring participants' perceptions and opinions regarding prestige afforded to the elementary education profession and job satisfaction among elementary

teachers. Quantitative methodology was an appropriate method for this study because it allowed the collected data to be represented in numerical and statistical formats and portray any potential correlations clearly and comprehensively.

CHAPTER 1. PROBLEM AND SIGNIFICANCE

Introduction

This study sought to examine the potential relationship between the level of job satisfaction reported by public school elementary teachers of grades kindergarten through 5th grade (K-5) and the levels of prestige ascribed to the elementary education profession by noneducators. The study was conducted using a sample of noneducators in the upstate region of a southeastern state and elementary teachers working in public school systems in the same region and state. For the purposes of this study, a participant was required to be over the age of 18 and working in an occupation outside of the education system, including both currently employed and retired workers. Noneducators were given a survey instrument to assess personal perceptions of prestige ascribed to the elementary school teaching profession, while elementary public school teachers were given a survey instrument to assess job satisfaction rates. The surveys were analyzed to determine what, if any, correlations were present between prestige ascribed to the elementary teaching profession and its potential effect on elementary teachers' job satisfaction. The hypothesis held by the researcher of this study were that noneducators would likely ascribe a low level of occupational prestige to the elementary education profession, however this will have very little impact on the job satisfaction levels among elementary teachers. Occupational prestige, for the purposes of this study, refers to the level of respect and admiration that an individual, item or event receives due to its success or important position in society (Valentino, 2022). The first chapter of the dissertation outlines significant background themes found within the study, identifies the problem of

the study, describes in detail the research methods used during the course of the study, and defines key terms and important definitions as they relate to this study.

Background of Problem

There is an educational crisis happening in the United States of America today as states, districts, and local school systems all seek to fill open teacher vacancies (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). School systems across the country are suffering due to low teacher retention rates, inadequately certified teachers working in classrooms, and a pronounced lack in supply of teacher candidates graduating with an undergraduate degree in education who are prepared to enter into the classroom (Reichardt et al., 2020; Sutcher et al., 2019). During the 2012-13 school year, across the nation, nearly 16% of teachers left the school at which they taught in the previous year (Sutcher et al., 2019). It is unknown the exact number of schools that are currently being affected by the mass number of teacher vacancies; however, research has shown that more than two-thirds of surveyed districts have over 87,000 teacher vacancies that are being filled by non-certified employees (Sutcher et al., 2019). Research has found that during the 2017-18 school year, 46 states reported experiencing a teacher shortage to the U.S. Department of Education (Sutcher et al., 2019). While certain content areas, such as special education, math, science, multi-language learners, and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), are experiencing more severe shortages than others, the education system in the United States as a whole is experiencing at some level of distress in its process of fulfilling the vast amount of teacher vacancies in many school systems (Cowan et al., 2016; Sutcher et al., 2019).

There are sure to be common themes present that are potential causes for the current teacher shortage crisis with such an exponential number of teachers leaving the profession at high rates, and with a low supply of teacher candidates graduating college ready to enter the profession (Sutcher et al., 2019; Williams et al., 2022, as cited in Darling Hammond et al., 2019). For example, in 2014, it is estimated that a total of 451,155 prospective teachers entered into a teaching preparation program and only 178,891 students graduated from a program as a certified teacher (Sutcher et al., 2019). In the literature, researchers have found that some of the causes for high levels of teacher attrition include dissatisfaction with the salaries, poor working conditions and working environments, and a lack of positive support for teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Jentsch et al., 2023).

Research has proven that dissatisfaction with one's social status can lead to lower levels of job satisfaction (Langdon, 1996, as cited in Newlyn, 2015). Culkin (1999, as cited in Landeros, 2011) asserts many noneducators perceive elementary teachers as semi-professionals rather than professionals with high esteem, which has the potential to cause individuals in the general public to foster a lack of social respect for those working in the elementary education

profession. According to research found within the literature, low prestige levels assigned to the elementary education profession are a result of a lack of understanding of the skills and training that are required to become successful in the education field (Culkin, 1999 as cited in Landeros, 2011). Prestige is defined as being "the respect and admiration which an individual, item or event receives due to its successes or importance of position within society" (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, n.d.). The continual lack

of prestige that is ascribed to the teaching profession has caused some teachers to feel undervalued, underappreciated, and taken for granted (Landeros, 2011).

Teaching is a demanding job as it requires both mental and emotional preparedness (O'Brian, 2007, as cited in Landeros, 2011). Daily, teachers must be mentally prepared and equipped to deal with students' cognitive learning processes on an academic level. Teachers are expected to efficiently and successfully educate a wide array of students, all of whom possess varying sets of academic abilities, encompassing both strengths and weaknesses (Jones, 2019; VanTassel-Baska, 2020). No two students are alike; therefore, teachers must create differentiated lesson plans to meet the needs of all students (Jones, 2019). This is a difficult task that requires educators to have mental stamina and expertise, including knowledge of both students and standards (Williams, 2022).

In cases where students do not fully master standards, teachers use their expertise, knowledge of educational strategies and content, professional experience, and knowledge of the students to adapt the plans and reteach in a way that will allow for optimum learning outcomes (Williams, 2022). Lesson planning and lesson re-teaching are two small facets of the

extensive mentally challenging work that teachers do on a daily basis. Additionally, responding to challenging student behaviors can often present itself as quite mentally demanding as well (Garrity et al., 2019). Managing student issues, which often require parental involvement, presents both a mental and emotional challenge as well. Just as each student has unique academic needs, each student also has a unique set of behavioral and emotional needs.

Continuously dealing with a myriad of student behaviors, oscillating emotions, academic needs, and parental involvement on a daily basis will likely negatively impact teachers' mental and emotional state of being (Landeros, 2011; Jones, 2019). One example of the mental demands of the teaching profession includes the legal obligations teachers are required to fulfill while educating students. There are many students in American classrooms who receive Individual Education Plans (IEPs) which allow for the student to receive accommodations or modifications to the classroom environment or assignments to better serve his or her academic needs (O'Connor et al., 2016). At all times during the school day, the teacher must ensure that the accommodations and modifications are being followed in every situation for each student's success (O'Connor et al., 2016). Often, teachers have multiple students in a single classroom who have IEPs or 504 plans, and each one requires unique modifications and accommodations. In addition to being legally obligated to serve the students with an IEP according to regulations, teachers are also responsible for ensuring all the other students in the classroom are successful, safe, and cared for as well.

A teacher's job has many mental and physical demands; therefore, it is imperative that educational leaders take the necessary steps to improve the way in which elementary teachers are perceived by noneducators and that elementary teachers receive the recognition their dutiful and challenging work deserves. The research conducted in this study provides foundational information for educational leaders to have the information necessary to approach the possible issue.

Statement of Problem

The work of educating America's youth is a critical factor in the success of our nation, yet the work is often overlooked, belittled, and undervalued (Landeros, 2011). The teaching profession does not always receive a high level of prestige and praise in the community of noneducators (Landeros, 2011). For example, according to research conducted by Landeros (2011), some teachers feel their expertise goes unnoticed by parents, often by middle-class working parents. Landeros (2011) cites teachers who claim to have interactions with middle class families who hold a less than respectful attitude toward teachers because they feel as though they could have been a teacher themselves, but rather hold a profession with a higher level of societal status. Landeros (2011), in his research also quotes teachers who perceive the reason for teachers' undervalued expertise is caused by the belief that the information presented to students during their elementary years is basic knowledge; therefore, it does not require much training to effectively educate elementary students. Landeros (2011) exemplifies the idea that those who devalue teachers' work are unfamiliar with the operational details of the profession such as the vast amounts of professional training teachers receive during preparation programs and throughout their career (Landeros, 2011; Livers et al, 2021; Williams et al., 2022 as cited in Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

The lack of prestige and respect given to the education profession by noneducators may negatively impact teachers' levels of job satisfaction thus causing highly trained, educated, and

effective educators to leave the profession (Langdon, 1996, as cited in Newlyn, 2015). When there is a high level of teacher attrition present, the achievement of many students

in a school is negatively impacted due to the inability for teachers to collaborate consistently with the intent of improving student instruction (Carver-Thomas et al., 2019, as cited in Guin, 2004; Sutcher et al., 2016). Teachers' limited opportunities to professionally collaborate with colleagues over the course of consecutive years harms teachers' abilities to educate students at a highly effective level ultimately placing students at risk and jeopardizing the education of the future of American society (Banerjee et al., 2017). In addition to low levels of prestige being ascribed to elementary teachers, educational leaders are facing more and more challenges fulfilling the operational needs of schools, thus adding to the public's worsening perceptions of the profession of elementary education.

Significance of Study

There is potential that continual low levels of prestige ascribed to teachers may begin to create a negative impact on the education of American students, as the teacher shortage may continue to rise as a direct result (Ronfeldt et al., 2011). Noneducators have a tendency to take for granted the time and effort that truly goes into educating future generations (Landeros, 2011). For example, whether this be due to negative school experiences, a lack of understanding of the true work teachers do, or various stereotypes and prejudices, the prevailing issue is that teachers are underappreciated, undervalued, and face occupational discrimination by many noneducators (Valentino, 2020). This study will hold great significance in educational leadership because it is essential educational leaders create pathways for teachers to be given the praise, prestige, and respect which they dutifully earn each day through the demanding emotional and mental workload the profession requires, which will allow for more successful recruitment of

teachers, raise job satisfaction levels, and higher retention levels of qualified and effective teachers (Menon & Narayanan, 2015).

Teachers' work is vital in the continual process of preparing future successful generations, even as early as the elementary school level (Duncan & Magnuson, 2013). This study identified the role in which noneducator perceptions affect teacher job satisfaction. This study was beneficial to both school districts and their surrounding communities in an effort to bring forth attention to educational leadership the urgent need to enhance the relationship between teachers, the school system, and noneducators while simultaneously bringing public attention to the lack of prestige that is given to the profession and raising the levels of occupational status for teachers in the community.

Limitations of Study

Included in this section of the dissertation are potential limitations that may have impacted the results of the study. One study limitation includes the amount of demographic and geographical variance that was available to the researcher in terms of survey participants and potential researcher bias. The use of Likert scales also presents certain limitations in studies, such as the inclusion of unclear or poorly worded survey items, and the removal of irrelevant survey items. Each of these limitations may impair the validity of this research study (Chyung et al., 2018; Weijters et al., 2013).

Limitations

There were limitations found within the study at the conclusion of the research process that may have potentially impacted the complete reliability and validity of the study's findings. Survey A was administered to noneducators with the intent to measure the levels of prestige each participant affords to elementary teachers working in public

school classrooms. One limitation that likely was a considerable limitation factor of Survey A was the researcher's inability to survey a wide diversity of the noneducator population, as the researcher was only able to analyze survey results from those who elected to participate in the survey. It was hypothesized by the researcher that the noneducator participants would likely be of similar occupations, gender, and economic status; therefore, this would limit the researcher's ability to generalize the findings of Survey A to the entire noneducator population. With a sample pool of participants who share similar demographic makeups, the data collected did not include perceptions of teachers held by participants of diverse demographic makeups, thus the data reflects a limited people groups' opinions.

Additionally, the researcher found a similar limitation with Survey B that was administered to elementary education teachers. Due to teaching being a heavily female populated occupation, female teachers primarily completed the survey, thus influencing the researcher's ability to generalize the findings of Survey B to the complete population of elementary education teachers, as the results likely will not be accurately representative of the male elementary education teacher population (Landeros, 2011). Due to the makeup of the region where the survey is given, the researcher also found that the participants partaking in Survey B are mostly of Caucasian ethnicity. For example, as of 2022, the southeastern state where the research was conducted has a population that is 68.9% Caucasian and 26.3% Black; therefore, the results are not likely generalizable to all ethnicities making up the elementary education teacher population (United States Census Bureau, 2022). For example, during the 2021-2022 school year, in the same southeastern state, 77% of the teachers are Caucasian, while only 15.6% of the

total number of teachers are Black (South Carolina Department of Education, 2022). The population of teachers who are White is greater than the percentage of state residents who are White, while the population of teachers who are Black is less than the percentage of state residents who are Black. Because of this discrepancy, the survey results are likely not representative of the whole state's population.

Another limitation in this study was the researcher's capability to include differing geographical regions during the process of administering Survey A and Survey B. Survey A gathered its data pool from participants residing in a wide variety of locations such as multiple towns and cities within the specified region. Survey B gathered its data from teachers working in districts located only in a specific region of a southern state in the United States.

Another limitation noted by the researcher was the difficulty to ensure that participants' occupations aligned with the survey requirement. It is essential to the validity of the research that only noneducators partake in the completion of Survey A, and only public school elementary teachers partake in the completion of Survey B. The researcher included in the early stages of the survey, an agreement where the participant must authenticate his or her occupation through a clickwrap agreement to ensure participants were of the correct occupation to complete the survey. While it was unrealistic to assume the researcher was able to eliminate all instances of noncompliance, the researcher was hopeful this would eliminate as much hindrance to the validity of the study as possible.

The researcher held a certain level of bias during the course of the research. The researcher has had personal experience with occupational stereotyping that fostered a

certain level of bias during this study. The researcher removed as much personal bias as possible from the study, but it is important to state this potential weakness that could be present in the results of the study.

It is important to note that a quantitative instrument, specifically a Likert scale, restricts the participants' answers by not including participants' elaboration regarding their thoughts, feelings, and opinions on any given survey statement. The participant is restricted to solely choosing a number 1 through 5 to accurately describe his or her reaction to the statement (Chyung et al., 2010). This can create certain situations in which the respondent must choose a number that does not wholly and accurately represent his or her true opinions on the statement. The use of a 5- point Likert scale may restrict the researcher's ability to wholly analyze both the noneducators' perception of teachers and teachers' levels of job satisfaction (Chyung et al., 2010).

Research done using Likert scales have shown that the wording of a Likert scale survey has an impact on a participant's response (Weijters et al, 2013). The more intense the wording of a statement, the less likely participants are to respond positively (Weijters et al., 2013). For example, a researcher utilizing an instrument with a Likert scale must be aware of word choices such as "I do not like going to school" versus "I hate going to school" (Weijters et al., 2013, p. 8). The researcher's decision to implement the word choice of the term "hate*"* would increase the chances that the participant responds more negatively to the question as opposed to the way in which the participant would respond to the statement had the instrument utilized the term "do not like" as an alternative. It is

important to note the wording of the survey may have influenced participants' responses, ultimately affecting the results of this study.

The researcher made every attempt to omit specific questions from the results of the survey due to their lack of relevance to the study's research questions. On neither survey do all the items wholly align to the intended measurement; therefore, some survey items were removed when analyzing the results. There is a possibility that survey item omission affected the findings of the survey. It is also important to note that the study assumed participants comprehended the survey items in the same way in which they were intended by the researcher. In order for the results of the study to be reliable, it was assumed that all participants were of similar understanding for the intentions of each survey. For example, for the purposes of this study, it was assumed that noneducators were completing their answers to the survey based on their honest opinions of elementary educators. While it is difficult to remove all limitations to a research study, the researcher made attempts at limiting any hindrances to the reliability and validity of the study.

Organization of Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between the occupational prestige given to the public school elementary teaching profession and the levels of job satisfaction found among those teachers who may face occupational discrimination. The research that was conducted during this study consisted of two quantitative surveys, each given to approximately 100-140 participants living and working in various locations within the upstate region of the southeastern state where the

study took place. The surveys administered sought to answer these two research questions:

RQ1. What level of prestige is afforded to the elementary public school classroom teacher from the noneducator perspective?

RQ2. To what extent do noneducators' perceptions affect the level of job satisfaction among elementary public school classroom teachers?

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs was applied as the framework for the foundational educational theory influencing this theory (Maslow, 1943). Maslow (1943) asserts that human beings must have basic psychological needs met before being able to prosper by way of having one's emotional needs met. This study was founded upon Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs due to Maslow's direct connection between a person's need for physiological needs to be met and self-esteem needs to reach their peak levels (Maslow, 1943). This closely related to the researcher's hypothesis that a teacher needs to experience a sense of social acceptance before being able to reach high levels of job esteem and occupational satisfaction.

This study was also heavily informed by Bolman and Deal's (2013) Human Resource Leadership Framework, which outlines a leadership style which significantly relies on ensuring employees emotional needs are being met during the daily operations of the organization (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Due to the emotional nature that accompanies experiencing high levels of occupational prestige, educational leaders may experience high levels of success through the implementation of the Human Resource Leadership styles into their decision making processes. Employing this leadership style

would allow educational leaders the opportunity to continuously improve educational practices with the intent to improve the prestige of the elementary teacher profession.

Clarification of Terms

Elementary educator is a term generally used to identify an individual who is a certified educator who has been hired to work in a school setting while teaching any grade from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade. For the context of this study, the term elementary educator refers to teachers specifically working in public school pre-kindergarten through fifth grade classrooms.

Noneducator is a term used to describe any individual living in the United States of America. For the context of this study, the individual was required to be 18 years of age or older and not working in any type of educational setting. Jobs in the educational setting include, but are not limited to, classroom teacher, both public or private school, administrators, school office staff, school custodians, school cafeteria staff, school board members, district office staff, school state department employees, and United States Department of Education employees.

Occupational prestige is a term used to describe the way in which society values the division of labor by noting whose roles are most worthy, important and deserving of social acclaim (Valentino, 2022). This is typically based on societal contexts and conditions- not individual contexts and conditions (Durkheim, 1978).

Prestige is a term that describes the level of respect, recognition, and admiration that an individual, item or event receives due to its success or important position in society (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, n.d.).

Profession is a term used to refer to a job that requires a high level of education and training to be qualified to do the requirements the job states (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, n.d.).

Public school is a term used in America to describe a free tax-supported school controlled by a local governmental authority (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Semi-professional is a term used for someone who receives payment for completing an activity, but he or she does not rely on the activity for a sole income (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, n.d.).

Survey A is the term used in this study to refer to the quantitative survey given to noneducators to measure the level of prestige given to the elementary education public school profession.

Survey B is the term used in this study to refer to the quantitative survey given to elementary teachers measuring their levels of job satisfaction in accordance with the levels of noneducator prestige placed on the profession.

Teacher attrition is a term used to describe the rate at which teachers are leaving the education profession in order to pursue a career or lifestyle outside of education (Borman & Dowling, 2014).

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to synthesize the research that has been conducted on noneducators' perceptions of prestige given to elementary public school teachers as well as present levels of job satisfaction among teachers currently in the profession. In contrast to other countries, in the United States of America, there has been little research done on levels of prestige given to the elementary teacher (Akhmetova et al., 2014; Chistolini, 2010; Demirkol, 2022; Harwood & Tukonic, 2016; Kabulovna et al., 2022; Kahraman & Çelik, 2020; Kudinov et al., 2021; Kyshtymova & Rozhkova, 2019; Nagovitsyn et al., 2019; Ozatabak, 2021; Paula & Priževoite, 2019; Saifulloval et al., 2018; Tarman, 2012; Willis et al., 2021). Alternatively, an abundance of research has been conducted regarding the levels of job satisfaction that teachers experience within their current position as a public school educator (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Cowan et al., 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2016; Elsayed & Roch, 2023; Hughes, 2012; Podolsky et al., 2016; Reichardt et al., 2020; Sutcher et al., 2016, 2019; Williams et al., 2022 as cited in Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

It was the goal of this dissertation research study to distinguish a relationship between the prestige afforded to teachers by noneducators and the relative levels of job satisfaction elementary teachers assume as a result of the prestige which is afforded to the profession. The research conducted during this study finds its pertinence by conveying awareness to the proposed devaluation of the teaching profession, allowing educational leaders opportunities to assert political changes which will provide assistance in the increased valuation of teachers. The theoretical framework impacting the research

includes occupational prestige, as well as educational research theories including Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Bolman and Deal's Human Resource Framework (Maslow, 1943; Bolman & Deal, 2013). Each of these theories allows educational leaders the opportunity to impact the American education system in a way that will enhance the likelihood of teachers receiving high praise and prestige levels that accompany careers regarded as holding high occupational status.

Chapter II outlines major themes found in the literature relating to teacher prestige and teacher job satisfaction, as well as relevant educational theories and leadership theories. Chapter II identifies the theoretical framework upon which the study is founded. Finally, Chapter II concludes with the overarching themes in the literature and leadership in accordance with the study's research questions and the foundations of the methodology to be used in the data collection process of this study.

Theoretical Framework

Occupational prestige is a term used to describe the way in which society values the division of labor by noting whose roles are most worthy, important and deserving of social acclaim (Valentino, 2022). This is typically based on societal contexts and conditions- not individual contexts and conditions (Durkheim, 1978). The concept of occupational prestige and society's tendency to place higher respect and admiration on certain occupations more than others is the theoretical framework that this research study is founded upon. Research has found two distinct perspective theories that heavily influence the way in which members of society ascribe prestige to various occupations. Researchers refer to the perspectives as the occupational homoarchy and the occupational

heterarchy (Valentino, 2021). Each theory is unique in the way its perspective influences the way members of society afford prestige to various occupations.

Occupational Prestige

Humans have a predisposition to assert judgment and assign varying levels of social status and prestige onto one another within society (Eriksson, 2022; Farkas, 2022). According to Fiske (2017) levels of prestige are assigned to distinct people groups based on various criteria such as age, gender, religion and race; however, Valentino (2021) asserts that one of the primeval forms of social judgment is found in humans' natural desire to assign status to one's occupation occupational prestige.

In years past, the homoarchy perspective was used when categorizing jobs based on occupational prestige. According to Valentino (2021), the homoarchy perspective refers to the way in which society applies the process by which individuals rank occupations and their correlating societal values through a single, unifying lens. For example, according to early stratification studies defining the homoarchy perspective, members of society often assert judgments about an occupation's prestige based upon its salary and the highest level of education required for occupational qualifications (Valentino, 2021). Therefore, occupations who hold the highest levels of prestige would be those which are highly paid and that require high levels of education (Valentino, 2021).

However, in more recent years, the homarchy perspective has undergone a decline in utilization and, more often, occupational heterarchy is being used to rank levels of occupational prestige. It is bleived that this change has taken place due to the occupational heterarchy perspective asserting occupational prestige through the use of a

more complex, dimensional process, rather than on a single, unifying process (Valentino, 2021; Valentino, 2022). For example, studies have shown, according to the heterarchy perspective, factors such as an occupation's relationship to formal knowledge, authority, and science, an occupation's gender and racial composition, and the division between manual and mental labor required all impact the level of prestige ascribed to an occupation (England, 2005; Gauchat & Andrews, 2018; Hodges, 2020; Valentino, 2019: Valentino, 2020; Zhou, 2005)

The distinction between the use of the homoarchy perspective and the heterarchy perspective is important because, based on Valentino's (2021) assertion, research has found a myriad of ways in which society ascribes prestige to the value of various professions. The prestige that society affords to teachers was heavily influenced by the perspective that each individual chooses to use when asserting his or her occupational judgment, creating a potential variance in society's opinions of the prestige of teaching. Valentino (2021) states:

> Occupational hierarchy implies that there is a single, unifying logic that people use to ascribe worth in a society's division of labor. Nevertheless, an emerging framework from cultural sociology has put forth an alternative perspective heterarchy that instead predicts that the logic a person uses to order the prestige structure depends on their social position. The heterarchy perspective therefore implies that there are multiple, diverse, perhaps conflicting logics that people use to assign value to occupations and the people who work in them. (p. 1396)

Research suggests that a person's race, educational background, gender, income level, religiosity, and geographical location all are influential factors in how one may perceive the amount of value that should be given to a certain profession (Valentino, 2022). Valentino (2022) hypothesizes that the people groups who have been central to America's power centers view occupational prestige differently than the people groups

who have been traditionally excluded from the same centers of power. Historically, when referencing those who are included in the group which is central to American power, Whites, males, the highly educated, and those earning higher incomes are included. Conversely, the group that has been excluded from central power includes ethno-racial minorities, women, the less educated, and those earning a lower income (Valentino, 2022). For example, those who are considered to be in the higher educated category have a tendency, when assessing a profession's occupational prestige, to place emphasis upon the amount of education that is required to enter a particular profession (Valentino, 2021).

There are also other factors that may influence society's perception of various occupations and the prestige that is attributed to them. Valentino's (2021) research finds that most society members, as stated above, utilize the influence of multiple factors when assessing the level of prestige given to professions. An individual's past experiences, circumstances, and life experiences heavily influence the way in which he or she will construct his or her perspective through which occupational prestige is afforded to various professions and the respective individuals who fulfill the professions. Valentino (2021) asserts:

> We now know that a number of occupational characteristics play a role in how people assign worth to the hierarchy of work; a job's requirements (educational/training requirement) and rewards (pay or salary) matter, but so too do a job's relationship to science/formal knowledge, the degree to which a job is gendered and racialized, as well as the type of labor involved in the job. (p. 1398)

Literature Review

In this section of the dissertation proposal, the researcher outlines significant themes found in the literature surrounding the topic. Significant themes found within the literature impacting the way in which noneducators perceive the teaching profession include the devaluation of the education profession, the amount of professional training elementary teachers receive, the evolution of technology, as well as the implementation of scripted curricula.

Public Perceptions of Teachers

Research has demonstrated that the levels of prestige ascribed to the elementary teaching profession by noneducators can potentially have negative impacts job satisfaction among portions of elementary teachers, and it can also be assumed that it indirectly has led to an increase teacher vacancies in classrooms all over the country due to dissatisfied teachers (Mintrop & Ordenes, 2017). As research suggests, it has become evident in American society that the education system is experiencing a crisis in staffing qualified educators to fill an abundance of vacancies within classrooms all across America (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Cowan et al., 2016; Elsayed & Roch, 2023; Hughes, 2012; Podolsky et al., 2016; Reichardt et al., 2020; Sutcher et al., 2016, 2019; Williams et al., 2022 as cited in Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Based upon research found in the literature, themes potentially affecting the low levels of prestige ascribed to the elementary teaching profession include the devaluation of the profession, professional training provided to elementary teachers, technological advances, and the implementation of scripted curricula. It is the goal of this study to determine if there is a

relationship between the perception of elementary teachers and the prestige given to the profession and the level of job satisfaction found among elementary school teachers.

Devaluation of the Education Profession

Researchers have found that teacher stereotypes originating from noneducators are often inclined to stem from a negative perspective due to the devaluation of the profession, which harms the social standing of the profession, leading to a negative impact on teachers' levels of job satisfaction (Eriksson, 2022; Strinić, 2022; Valentino, 2020). Teaching is a profession that faces devaluation because it is heavily dominated by female employees (Landeros, 2011). According to England (1992, as cited in Valentino, 2020), the term *devaluation* refers to a "widespread cultural belief that women's work is inherently less valuable," (pp. 31-32). This suggests that professions heavily dominated by females are likely to be viewed as less prestigious than those that are dominated more heavily by a male population. This assertion comes from a research study conducted in which participants in Sweden were given a survey and asked to rank a list of professions based on two factors necessary for any given profession: competence and warmth (Strinić, 2022). Based on the results contracted by Strinić's study (2022), the study suggests women are more likely to be ranked with higher levels of warmth and lower levels of competence while executing the duties of their profession whereas men are ranked as having higher levels of competency during the daily duties of their profession, yet lower levels of warmth. The results from this study suggest the jobs in which females heavily dominate the workforce was stereotyped as having less competency when performing the required professional duties, therefore rendering the profession less valuable than those heavily dominated by men (Valentino, 2020).

Ingersoll et al. (2022), found noneducators view education as a profession that does not require the employment of competent professionals, rather only women who can have a positive influence on students by being a caring, mother-like figure in students' lives. The belief that women have higher levels of warmth as a personality trait is further elaborate on in James' (2010) research. Beliefs such as this may lead noneducators to view individuals working as an elementary level school teacher as a semi-professional, rather than a professional (Landeros, 2011). Landeros (2011) speaks to this by making the claim:

> Elementary education in particular has traditionally been viewed as a woman's field due to an emphasis on emotional care work over the craft of teaching. A lack of social respect and understanding of the skills and training required of teachers cause many in the general public to view them as semi-professionals. (p. 249)

As a result of the gender stereotyping and devaluation of women's work that so prevalently takes place in the world, often teachers' hard work, professional training, expertise, professional abilities, and societal contributions go unnoticed, underappreciated, and devalued (Landeros, 2011).

Professional Training

Noneducators often overlook the amount of professional training that is required to become a teacher as well as remain as a certified teacher, which harms the prestige given to the profession (Landeros, 2011). In interviews conducted by Landeros (2011), teachers were asked to respond to assertions from mothers in a school district who hold a predisposition to forgo their child's teacher's professional expertise when making educational decisions for the student. According to research, mothers in one school district feel as though their children's teachers are less qualified to make an informed

decision regarding the student's education than the mothers themselves because of their personal knowledge of the child (Landeros, 2011). One teacher in the school district explained:

> They don't respect our expertise anymore, they don't respect the fact that we have gone through four, five, nine years of college, solely on this topic. Especially in the elementary level, because there isn't information that is so hard, parents do know the majority of the information that we are teaching, but there is so much more that goes into teaching than information. It really isn't about getting information. (p. 256)

This teacher speaks out in her frustrations regarding the lack of respect given to the profession due to the absence of awareness for training that goes into becoming a highly trained and effective teacher (Landeros, 2011).

Reiss (1961, as cited in Erikkson, 2022) asserts that the importance of the role that a particular job plays in society does not definitively nor directly correlate to the level of prestige that is attributed to the individuals who work in that job. For example, according to a study conducted by Eriksson in 2006 (2022), there were certain situations in which professions that were ranked with the highest contributions to society actually rank in some of the lowest positions of prestige given by those outside the field. Eriksson's findings of his 2006 study correlate to the hypothesis of this study in that he makes the assertion that elementary teachers, while contributing greatly to the advancement of society through the education of young students, receive low levels of prestige from noneducators in the public sector. According to Eriksson (2022), "The functional necessity of occupations seems to be less relevant for the actual prestige and it is only a variable of worth for some occupations (such as physicians) and not for others (such as child-minders and cleaners)" (p.718).

Technology

Many of the 21st century technological advancements that have been made have accelerated teachers' ability to effectively educate students as well as the students' ability to learn at high levels; however, teachers have experienced a decline in prestige due to the rise in readily available technology (Mutluer & Yüksel, 2019). In the 21st century, limitless amounts of technology has become readily available to a vast majority of the population living in the United States of America encouraging immediate access to an unfathomable amount of resources that can be obtained within a matter of seconds. The prevalence and immediacy of available technology has been proven to affect the way in which students learn and the way in which teachers are ascribed prestige (Carstens et al, 2021; Mutluer & Yüksel, 2019).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (n.d.), as of 2019, 95% of Americans ranging from ages three to eighteen have access to the internet inside of their home. An important implication to note resulting from this statistic as it relates to this research study is how deeply accustomed students are to the consistent presence of technology in their daily lives while at both school and at home. Even from an extremely early age, people in society are conditioned to live in a state of expecting instant gratification through the immediate resources that are available with the help of 21st century technology. This will likely influence a student's ability to participate in school for long hours receiving information, when they are accustomed to receiving information in an immediate format via the internet.

Examples of technology being implemented into the classroom include, but are not limited to, interactive whiteboards, laptops, iPads, projectors, student learning websites, educational apps, and individual student devices (Francom, 2016). Each one of the technologies mentioned has profoundly altered the way in which teachers are able to perform their professional duties during the school day, ultimately altering the format in which students receive information. For example, one research study conducted determined that 49.7% of classrooms claim to utilize 1:1 technology, which refers to classrooms where each student has access to his or her own individual device (iPad, tablet, chromebook, etc.) and is able to utilize such device at all times during the day to support his or her learning activities throughout the day (Francom, 2016). The use of 1:1 technology allows for teachers and students to present and receive information through a format which has not been done previously in the American education system.

The rise of technology has undoubtedly impacted the way in which teachers educate students and the way in which students are engaged throughout their learning. As of 2018, 84% of American households own a smart device, making the process of acquiring new knowledge easier than ever before (United States Census Bureau, n.d.). Through the internet, society now has gained access to a wealth of information at their disposal with search engines such as Google, Google Scholar, and Microsoft Academic (Fagan, 2017). Smart device users have the ability to use such search engines to locate information concerning an infinite amount of topics within seconds.

However, prior to the rise of immediately informative smart devices, teachers were society's most proficient and immediate source of acquiring new learning (Mutluer & Yüksel, 2019). Gathering new information was not nearly as easily accessible before

the presence of smart devices. Due to teachers being regarded as the best source of gathering new information, the profession was highly respected, and afforded high prestige by noneducators (Mutluer & Yüksel, 2019). However, as technology has become more widespread and commonplace, anyone with access to a smart device has the ability to locate any information on the internet that he or she wishes to, thus eliminating the requirement for a teacher to provide such information (Mutluer & Yüksel, 2019). The noneducators' ability to locate information quickly demonstrates the irrelevance that is assigned to the teaching profession due to information becoming so easily accessible and available to everyone, thus harming the prestige of the profession of educators (Mutluer & Yüksel, 2019).

Scripted Curricula

According to research, one of the reasons teachers are undervalued as professionals is that they are not appointed to acceptable levels of autonomy within their classrooms (Anderson & Cohen, 2015; Landeros, 2011). For example, teachers have been provided with various pre-developed tools that detail exactly what teachers should say and when they should say it during the course of a lesson, referred to as scripted curricula (Milner, 2013). While it is unclear whether scripted curricula have more positive or negative effects on teachers' ability to effectively educate students, it has become increasingly clear that these curricula have decreased the level of professionalism and prestige given to teachers (Anderson & Cohen, 2015; Milner, 2013).

Teachers feel as though their professionalism is being minimized by scripted curriculum because it removes the autonomy to use their own professional judgment to

efficiently educate students (Anderson & Cohen, 2015; Milner, 2013). Milner (2013) asserts:

> In this view, teachers are to act as automatons rather than as professionals solving the complex problems of teaching and learning. Teaching is seen as technical and mindless, as work that does not require the cognitive ability to be responsive to learners because curriculum decisions have been predetermined by others for them. (p.15)

This further validates the idea that teachers do not need to be competent in order to do their job due to having access to a pre-developed tool that will do the hard work of creating education programs that will effectively educate students (Strinić et al., 2022).

Teacher Job Satisfaction

In recent years, America has begun to see an unfortunate trend in the education system as teachers are leaving the profession at an unprecedented rate due to low levels of job satisfaction and teacher devaluation (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Cowan et al., 2016; Elsayed & Roch, 2023; Hughes, 2012; Landeros, 2011; Podolsky et al., 2016; Reichardt et al., 2020; Sutcher et al., 2016, 2019; Williams et al., 2022, as cited in Darling Hammond et al., 2019). Research also suggests fewer college graduates are entering the profession, increasing the urgent of the teacher shortage devastating the nation's current educational system (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Cowan et al., 2016; Elsayed & Roch, 2023; Hughes, 2012; Podolsky et al., 2016; Reichardt et al., 2020; Sutcher et al., 2016, 2019; Williams et al., 2022, as cited in Darling Hammond et al., 2019). It is essential to the success of American students in the elementary classroom that highly trained, highly qualified and highly effective teachers are employed in the schools. Without effective teachers, students lack the opportunity to receive an

appropriate education that properly prepares them for a career in American society (Husbands, 2016).

The successful education of American students due to copious amounts of teachers leaving the profession sooner than the standard retirement age and fewer college graduates entering the education profession after college, the successful education of American students has become a cause for concern (Darling-Hammond et al., 2016; Sutcher et al., 2016). The amount of teachers exiting the profession has caused many in educational leadership and research positions to conduct research to identify potential causes of the teacher shortage (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Cowan et al., 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2016; Elsayed & Roch, 2023; Hughes, 2012; Podolsky et al., 2016; Reichardt et al., 2020; Sutcher et al., 2016, 2019; Williams et al., 2022). No matter what causes research dictates as potential reasons that are leading to the teacher shortage, it has become apparent there is a distinct lack of job satisfaction among many teachers. The following sections outline potential reasons that may be causing teachers to leave the profession prior to retirement age or not enter the profession at all after college.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The research study was strongly undergirded by highly regarded and researched theories within the educational field which directly support teacher job satisfaction and noneducator devaluation. Maslow's (1943) research detailing the progression of human needs provides the basis for the researcher's hypothesis that elementary teachers must first experience a certain level of occupational social acceptance before being able to gain self-esteem and self-actualization, which will give rise to high levels of job satisfaction

among elementary teachers. This is directly aligned with the purpose of this study; to discover a potential correlation between teacher's feeling of a sense of social acceptance and the job satisfaction they are able to experience. This is just one example of the highly regarded and generally accepted research upon which this research is founded.

In 1943, Abraham Maslow introduced a revolutionary concept of humans' behaviors being dictated by a social system referred to as a hierarchy of needs, claiming that in order for humans to thrive and continue on the ladder of hierarchy of needs, they must first have certain basic needs met (Maslow, 1943, as cited in Lussier, 2019). Maslow divided the basic human needs into categories and arranged them hierarchically in a progressive sequence (Maslow, 1943, as cited in Lussier, 2019, p. 321). At the lowest level on the hierarchy of needs are basic physiological needs including food, water, and shelter. According to Maslow's theory, humans must have access to a sufficient amount of the basic physiological needs before they are able to concern themselves with achieving higher levels of needs which include safety, security, and stability needs. For example, in individuals' daily lives, once physiological needs have been met, the individual can begin to shift focus onto familial and occupational stability. Once the two lower levels of basic human needs are met, humans will then desire to share a sense of social belonging with those they surround themselves with. Once the desire for social belonging has been met, then humans are able to build positive self-esteem, and finally, at the top of the hierarchy, human self-actualization, referring to one's ability to maximize personal growth and achievement (Maslow, 1943, as cited in Lussier, 2019).

Within the context of this research, Maslow's hierarchy of needs closely aligns with a teacher's need to experience social belonging, in hopes of eventually progressing to the achievement of receiving a high level of professional self-esteem. Once a teacher becomes employed, their basic needs have now been met because they are able to provide themselves with the basic physiological needs. However, the teacher now desires to progress upwards within Maslow's hierarchy and experience social belonging and professional maximized growth opportunities. With the lack of prestige and social acceptance placed on the teaching profession, it has become increasingly difficult for teachers to experience the upper levels of Maslow's hierarchy due to occupational stereotypes (Landeros, 2011; Strinić et al., 2022). Stereotypes concerning the teaching profession include the belief that teachers' work requires lower levels of competency than other professions, and the social belief that earning a higher salary is a sign of high prestige (Strinić et al., 2022; Valentino, 2022). Social beliefs such as these assist in corroborating noneducators' perception of education being a profession worthy of low prestige.

As teachers are continually confronted with negative stereotypes surrounding their professional efforts, teachers may begin to feel as though they are socially disrespected (Landeros, 2011). In accordance with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, without a sense of social belonging, teachers will not be able to progress in the hierarchy and successfully achieve strong levels of professional self-esteem (Maslow, 1943, as cited in Lussier, 2019). Without appropriate levels of social belonging and professional self-esteem, the likelihood that teachers will experience job dissatisfaction increases and

ultimately creates a more emergent teacher shortage in America (Fairbairn & Gillespie, 2022).

Teacher Compensation

Valentino (2022) asserts the idea that, among other factors, an individual's income is one of the determinants used as society seeks to subconsciously place professions within a ranked hierarchy system, which often places teachers on the lower end of the occupational hierarchy. Teachers are often placed on the lower end of this hierarchy because the average wage in the southeastern state where this research is conducted is approximately $54,800 annually, which is lower than other professions with similar education and backgrounds (SCEA, 2023). Due to levels of occupational prestige being heavily influenced by incomes, this variable will potentially affect the way in which society as an entire entity perceives the social status held by teachers and the prestige afforded to the profession (Valentino, 2022).

During the 2019-2020 academic school year, the average beginning teacher salary in the United States was $41,163 annually. Yet, in 2023, the average starting annual salary for engineering majors was $69,188, math and science majors' average starting salary was $62,177, business majors' average starting salary was $57,657, and communications majors' average starting salary was $52,056 (ThinkImpact, 2023). Education majors are not listed as being one of the top earners for beginning salaries as of 2023 (ThinkImpact, 2023). Aligning with Valentino's (2022) theory that education is not a highly compensated profession; the salary deficit could cause the public to assert judgment onto those who work in the education profession as being less deserving of societal acclamation. Based upon the single step salary models that many school districts

use to compensate their employees, there are limited opportunities for economic advancements as a teacher, outside of obtaining advanced degrees and increasing years of service in the field (Prieto et al., 2023). In a society where higher earning professionals are ascribed more value and prestige, it is pivotal to note that teachers are not afforded high levels of prestige due to lack of monetary compensation (Valentino, 2022).

The Effect of Prestige from Teachers' Points of View

Teacher prestige is mentioned as one of the lesser influential variables which impact teacher satisfaction rates; it remains as a principal, yet understated, cause of low levels of job satisfaction among teachers. Mintrop and Ordenes (2017) conducted a study examining to what extent various intrinsic and extrinsic factors influence teachers' performance inside the classroom. Mintrop and Ordenes (2017) provided participants with a list of factors that potentially influence performance and prestige was listed as one of the extrinsic factors provided. According to the results of the study, prestige ranked seventh out of nine potential factors indicating that, while prestige of the profession does have somewhat of an impact on teacher performance and eventual job satisfaction, it is not, however, a highly determining factor (Mintrop & Ordenes, 2017) .

However, research suggests that prestige holds somewhat of an effect on job satisfaction (Blase 2009, as cited in Williams et al., 2022). Classroom teachers are more likely to retain a level of satisfaction in their professional role if they feel valued, respected, and hold a sense of self-worth in their position (Blase 2009, as cited in Williams et al., 2022). Blase (2009, as cited in Williams et al., 2022) asserts the idea that teacher retention rates are higher when teachers feel a sense of value, professional success, and high levels of self-worth. As teachers begin to feel a greater sense of respect,

prestige, and valuation placed upon their work by noneducators, it is hypothesized by the researcher that there is potential for an increase of teachers to remain in the profession due to heightened self perceptions of their work. As evident from these findings research has demonstrated mixed results regarding the level of influence prestige has on teacher job satisfaction suggesting that more conclusive research is needed.

Teacher Shortage

Early teacher attrition continues to be a considerable problem in the United States of America as teachers leave the profession at increasingly alarming rates, which demonstrates the effects of low teacher job satisfaction rates and low levels of prestige being ascribed to the teachers by noneducators (Carver Thomas et al., 2017; Cowan et al., 2016; Elsayed & Roch, 2023; Hughes, 2012; Podolsky et al., 2016; Reichardt et al., 2020; Sutcher et al., 2016, 2019; Blase 2009, as cited in Williams et al., 2022). In fact, research has shown that teaching has seen higher levels of turnover than many other professions in corporate America (Hughes, 2012). Research even goes so far as to assert the possibility that, by many who enter the teaching profession, it was never their intent to be in the profession for the entirety of their career (Guarino et al., 2006, as cited in Hughes, 2012). Potential reasons for teachers entering into the profession, no matter the length of time he or she intends to remain, include, but are not limited to, vacation schedule, working environment, compensation, and the intrinsic satisfaction of making a difference in the lives of young people (Hughes, 2012).

As teachers enter the field and have the opportunity to glean the benefits of the profession, they begin to analyze these benefits and determine if they outweigh the drawbacks of the profession compared with those of alternative professions (Hughes,

2012). While, in many cases, teachers leave the profession due to job dissatisfaction for a numerous amount of reasons, there are cases when teachers leave the classroom because of reasons apart from job dissatisfaction (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Cowan et al., 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2016; Elsayed & Roch, 2023; Hughes, 2012; Podolsky et al., 2016; Reichardt et al., 2020; Sutcher et al., 2016, 2019; Williams et al., 2022). For example, there have been cases where teachers leave their position in a classroom to take another position in the field of education, such as principal or district level employee, or teachers may also exit the profession due to personal reasons (Elsayed & Roch, 2023; Hughes, 2012). However, according to research, elementary school teachers are less likely to experience high levels of teacher attrition than secondary schools (Hughes, 2012). More research is needed to determine a cause for this variance as Hughes (2012) did not denote expanding upon this specific idea.

Psychological and Educational Theory

Psychology and Educational research were important to this study because they established an underpinning for the way in which society forms its, often subconscious, interpersonal interactions, leadership styles, beliefs, and prejudices towards others' occupations. Bolman and Deal (2013) provide an educational leadership theory that establishes a foundation for teachers to achieve high levels of job satisfaction even while commonly facing low levels of occupational prestige created through societal norms (Landeros, 2011). Included in Bolman and Deal's research are four distinct leadership frameworks which encompass various leadership styles that define the strategies various leaders implement while structuring their organizations and making organizational decisions (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The four leadership frameworks include Political,

Symbolic, Structural, and Human Resources (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Bolman and Deal assert the idea that leaders who employ the Political framework understand the importance of addressing conflicts in the workplace and resolving the conflicts, even if each involved party does not find resolve with the final solution (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Leaders who tend to implement the Structural framework in their leadership style have an aptness to focus on the routines, procedures, and structure to which the organization adheres (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The Symbolic framework describes leaders who find success through building community by means of storytelling, charisma, and symbols which provides the organization with a sense of purpose among its workers (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Similarly to the Symbolic framework, Bolman and Deal's (2013) Human Resource Leadership Frame details a style of leadership that prioritizes employees' emotional well-being while at work.

The Human Resource Leadership Frame closely aligns with the idea of ensuring elementary teachers gain prestige due to the need of teachers to have their emotional needs met through the reception of prestige before being able to obtain the desired levels of job satisfaction that educational leaders would hope to achieve among its educators. As educators believe their emotional needs are not being met and they are not viewed as valued members of society, the decline in teacher job satisfaction may grow increasingly larger and the American education system may see an even greater teacher shortage take place (Carver Thomas et al., 2017; Cowan et al., 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2016; Elsayed & Roch, 2023; Hughes, 2012; Podolsky et al., 2016; Reichardt et al., 2020; Sutcher et al., 2016, 2019; Williams et al., 2022). It is imperative for educational leaders to avoid a continual increase in teacher vacancies in future days. Through the

implementation of Bolman and Deal's (2013) leadership theories, educational leaders was more capable of meeting teachers' emotional needs in practical, yet effective ways that retain high levels of job satisfaction among teachers and low levels of teacher attrition.

Human Resources Leadership Frame

Bolman and Deal (2013) assert the claim that when leaders utilize the Human Resource Frame, heavy emphasis is placed on an individual's needs and emotions within the organization (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Application of the Human Resources frame works to ensure that all stakeholders are afforded the opportunity to function with a satisfied mindset as their professional needs, wants, and demands are being properly and appropriately met (Bolman & Deal, 2013). More specifically, when the Human Resources Frame is employed successfully, it allows for stakeholders to enjoy high levels of job satisfaction in their position (Bolman & Deal, 2013). As this study explores noneducators' perceptions of the elementary teachers' professional prestige and the potential ways in which it correlates to teachers' job satisfaction levels, it is crucial for leaders in the educational setting to explore how the Human Resources Frame can be applied when addressing issues concerning prestige levels relative to job satisfaction among teachers.

As educational leaders make strides in developing policies to elevate the prestigiousness of the elementary education profession, the presence of scripted curriculum in the classroom is one that may need to be reconsidered. As teachers feel as though their professionalism and autonomy is being removed, this will likely deepen the levels of job dissatisfaction among teachers (Anderson & Cohen, 2015). Bolman and

Deal's (2013) Human Resource Frame asserts that by placing employees' emotional well-being at the forefront of concern, job satisfaction rates will increase. Educational leaders may consider the correlation between the devaluation of the teaching profession, the professional training teachers receive, the introduction of technology into the classroom, and scripted curriculum to determine if there is a need to alter any educational policies that may provide assistance in gaining prestige back to the elementary teaching profession.

Foundations of the Methodology

The research method utilized in this research study was entirely quantitative through the use of two distinct surveys as the instruments for data collection. The data that was collected through the surveys worked to determine any correlations between the prestige given

to the elementary education profession by noneducators and the levels of job satisfaction held by elementary teachers. It was the goal of this study to determine to what extent, if any, the prestige and respect given to these professionals affects the levels of job satisfaction that are present in their careers. Both surveys required participants to utilize a Likert scale to rate their response to a set of statements demonstrating their level of agreement or disagreement with each. The research of this study will utilize quantitative methodology while using bivariate correlation statistics to determine the findings of the study.

Quantitative Methodology

Quantitative methodology is the form of research that involves the primary use of numerical data and statistics which collect such data through use of a variety of methods

(Chalmers & Cowdell, 2021; Drew et al., 2014; Yue & Xu, 2019). Quantitative research can be conducted through clinical trials, cohort studies, systematic reviews, and, quite popularly, surveys in the format of a questionnaire (Bendixen & Yurova, 2012; Chalmers & Cowdell, 2021; Chyung et al., 2018; Chyung et al., 2020; Chyung et al., 2017; Chyung et al., 2018; Chyung et al., 2018; Drew et al., 2014; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2019; Guo et al., 2022; Haryanto et al., 2022; Hutchinson & Chyung, 2023; Lewis, 2022; Loddick & Mansfield, 2023; Lu et al., 2021; Mamytbayeva et al., 2022; Novosel, 2022; Peperkorn & Wegner, 2020; Tang et al., 2022; Weijters et al., 2013; Yue & Xu, 2019). Quantitative methodology is considered to be one of the most important and significant forms of research and, as such, its usage has increased rapidly in the world of educational research (Yue & Xu, 2019).

Quantitative methodology leaves little room for ambiguity and doubt due to its usage of numerical data and statistics that are determined through the data collection process. Quantitative research relies heavily on statistical facts rather than open-ended opinions (Yue & Xu, 2019). A researcher in the field of quantitative methodology studies asserts the idea that quantitative research heavily focuses on facts rather than ideals. The goal of this research style is to identify accepted phenomena that explains human behavior through evident data presented in numerical format known as quantitative data (Yue & Xu, 2019). At one point in history, quantitative data was rarely utilized in research studies, but as educational researchers began to study more and more educational issues, statistical analysis became a necessity, and the significance and importance of reliable and valid quantitative data began to increase (Yue & Xu, 2019).

Likert Scale

The Likert Scale was introduced by Rensis Likert who was interested in assessing the attitudes held by individuals (Croasmun & Ostrum, 2011). These scales allow researchers to measure the attitudes of individuals as well as whole people groups by providing participants with a series of statements that they must then provide an answer when given a specified set of responses (Croasmun & Ostrum, 2011). On most Likert scales, participants were given a set of five response ratings to choose from ranging from one to five, however there is an ongoing debate regarding the optimum number of response ratings (Chyung et al., 2020; Chyung et al., 2017; Chyung et al., 2018; Croasmun & Ostrum, 2011; Hutchinson & Chyung, 2023; Mamytbayeva et al., 2022). There are researchers who favor seven-point scales or evenly numbered scales Croasmun & Ostrum, 2011). There are even some Likert scales based on a 3-point scale as well as some continuous scales that contain responses ranging from one to 100 (Chyung et al., 2018; Chyung et al., 2020). However, the following lists the stereotypical context of each response rating on a standard five-point Likert scale: "1, representing strongly disagree; 2, representing disagree; 3. representing neutral; 4, representing agree; and 5, representing strongly agree" (Croasmun & Ostrum, 2011).

When creating a Likert scale survey, the responses provided are commonly organized in two contrasting ways; ascending order or descending order (Chyung et al., 2018). Ascending order refers to Likert scales that begin with *strongly disagree* and increase to *strongly agree* while Likert scales that are in descending order begin with *strongly agree* and decrease to *strongly disagree* (Chyung et al., 2018). Chyung (2018) analyzed previously conducted research which utilized various Likert scales during its

data to determine if the order in which responses were listed had an effect on which response participants chose. After analyzing research studies, Chyung (2018) noted the idea of primary effects and recency effects:

> A *primacy effect* refers to the survey respondents' tendency to select the options that are presented at the beginning of the response-option list. A *recency effect* is the opposite— the tendency of survey respondents to select the options that they see at the end of the response-option list. The primacy effect is expected when options are presented visually—for example, people tend to choose among the first-presented categories in self administered written survey questionnaires. Conversely, the recency effect is expected when options are presented orally. (p. 10)

Survey A was a written survey questionnaire; therefore, the primacy effect may unintentionally have an effect on the sample pool's selection processing.

Chyung's (2018) findings of his research analyses indicate that, in many surveys, participants have a left-sided bias, which means participants were more likely to choose the response that was on the left side of the Likert scale no matter if the positive responses or negative responses were listed on the left side. Another unique finding of Chyung's (2018) research analysis is his discovery that the scales listed in descending order were more likely to return positive data than those surveys listing the responses in an ascending order, closely aligning with Chyung's (2018) assertion of the primacy effect (Chyung et al., 2018, as cited in Holbrook et al., 2007).

Validity and Reliability

It is of the utmost importance when conducting a research study that the instrument that is chosen to use is considered to be both a valid and reliable measurement of the intended data. According to Cobern and Adams (2020) a research instrument is considered to be valid only when the participants are able to interpret each item as it is

intended to be understood by the instrument's creator. In order to create a valid research instrument, the creator must construct a theoretical model before beginning the creation of the instrument (Cobern & Adams, 2020). The theoretical model the creator must implement into the creation process refers to the predetermination of deciding exactly what it is that the instrument is intended to answer (Cobern & Adams, 2020). Once the theoretical model has been determined, it is then possible to create an instrument consisting of valid items to measure the intended data set (Cobern & Adams, 2020). Krosnick (2017) makes the assumption that there is no absolute way in which to minimize respondent error. There is potential for the respondent to respond to survey items in a way that is different from the researcher's intention.

The reliability of a survey refers to the idea that a respondent's answers will not change over a short period, given that there are not significant events that cause a development to occur in the respondent's point of view (Cobern & Adams, 2020). Answer stability is the basis of an instrument's reliability; therefore, assuming answers provided by the respondents are stable, then an instrument can be deemed reliable (Cobern & Adams, 2020). However, according to Cobern and Adams (2020), internal consistency is not synonymous with reliability. Reliability is proven by administering the identical instrument to the same group of respondents twice and analyzing the differences in results between the two answer groups. The instrument is considered reliable if the answers align with one another at a 0.70 or higher (Cobern & Adams, 2020).

Summary

The themes found in the literature presented above include details regarding the ways in which the elementary education profession is devalued in America by

noneducators, differing levels of job satisfaction held by elementary teachers in American public schools, and the teacher shortage crisis occurring all across the United States of America. The research found within the literature of each of the aforementioned topics is essential to the conduction of this dissertation study because of its related nature and strong ability to foster a thorough and concrete foundation for the context of the study. The literature provides thorough support for the ideas found within the study.

CHAPTER 3. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Study Overview

The purpose of this dissertation study was to explore the relationship between the prestige afforded to the elementary education teaching profession by noneducators and its effect on the level of job satisfaction among elementary education public school teachers. Below are the two research questions that guided this dissertation research study.

RQ1. What level of prestige is afforded to the elementary education public school teaching profession from the noneducators' perspective?

RQ2. To what extent do noneducators' perceptions affect the level of job satisfaction among public school elementary education public school teachers?

The study employed the use of two surveys to collect its necessary data, both of which will utilize quantitative research methodology. For the purposes of this study, the surveys are referred to as Survey A and Survey B. Survey A refers to the instrument administered to noneducators while Survey B refers to the instruments administered to elementary educators. The goal of this project was to determine to what extent a relationship is present between prestige ascribed to the elementary teaching profession by noneducators and elementary teachers' job satisfaction levels. The researcher held the hypothesis that while noneducators will likely ascribe a low level of prestige to the elementary education profession, this will have very little impact on the job satisfaction levels among elementary teachers.

Research Design

Quantitative methodology is defined as being the research method in which numbers and statistics are the primary strategy in which researchers collect data (Chalmers & Cowdell, 2021; Drew et al., 2014; Yue & Xu, 2019). The use of quantitative methodology has quickly become one of the more prevalent formats that educational research studies are conducted due to its ability to leave very little room for ambiguity or doubt since the results are both numerically and statistically proven via research studies (Yue & Xu, 2019). Quantitative data can be used in a variety of formats such as surveys, clinical trials, cohort studies, and systematic reviews. The methodology used during the course of this study was quantitative research through the use of surveys. Quantitative research methodology is appropriate for this research study due to its numerical nature through causal comparative data, which allows the researcher to determine present correlations and relationships between variables (Haryanto, 2022).

For this research study, two Likert scale survey designs were administered to two distinct study groups. A Likert scale is designed in such a way that it allows the researcher to measure the self-reported attitudes and beliefs held by those who consent to participation (Croasmun & Ostrum, 2011). Likert scales are formatted so that the participant is able to demonstrate his or her attitudes and beliefs through each statement or question on the given survey. Typically, Likert scale surveys are written in a format that allows the participant to choose a response which most closely aligns with his or her self-reported attitudes and beliefs regarding the stated claim (Chyung et al., 2017; Chyung et al., 2018; Chyung et al., 2020; Croasmun & Ostrum, 2011; Hutchinson &

Chyung, 2023; Mamytbayeva et al., 2022). Likert scale surveys are the appropriate method to best collect and analyze the intended data because from the research which was collected and read, Likert scale formats appear to be the most widely used method for studies similar to the research being conducted in this study (Oztabak, 2021; Paula & Priževoite, 2019).

Postpositivist

The worldview this study was founded up is Postpositivist, meaning that when conducting research, the goal is to examine the effects and outcomes of various variables, most likely through the use of empirical measurement, experiments, and observations (Creswell, 2009). Postpositivists assume the idea that, when studying the behaviors of humans, there can be no absolute truths, therefore knowledge is conjectural (Creswell, 2009). The researcher selected implement this worldview as the foundation for the research due to dealing with the nature and delicacy of conducting research with human subjects. Once final survey results were gathered and analyzed, it is essential to note that the results were not indicative of the beliefs of the entirety of both the noneducator and elementary teacher population. Due to limitations of the study model, a small portion of the population was surveyed, leaving a mass amount of the population's opinions not represented during the research study. At the conclusion of the study, the researcher remained under the assumption that the findings are not an absolute truth as there is no such thing when dealing with human opinions, behavior, and actions (Creswell, 2009).

Causal comparative research is appropriate when trying to determine relationships between two variables, making it the most appropriate to use throughout the data

collection process of this study where a correlation was sought after (Haryanto, 2022). Causal comparative research methodologies are useful when determining relationships where the variable is unable to be experimentally manipulated (Schenker & Rumrill, 2004). For example, the variables which are unable to be manipulated through experimentation of this study include the participants of each of the two surveys. As the study is framework is built upon participants' occupations, the occupational variable will not be altered as it is predetermined by participants before the study begins.

Setting

The data collected during this study was gathered through the two surveys, each with the goal of measuring a different variable. Survey A measured the variable of the occupational prestige ascribed to elementary public school teachers by noneducators and Survey B measured the variable of elementary public school teacher job satisfaction levels. The purpose of the study was to examine the correlation between noneducators' perception of teachers and their own levels of job satisfaction. The methodology of the study required data collection from two groups of people, which required the use of two survey instruments.

Survey A

Survey A was distributed to its sample pool of participants through social media postings and through an anonymous link, provided by Qualtrics, which was shared through the community to participants. The survey was accessible to diverse groups of people with the hope of collecting responses that reflect the community's demographics (United States Census Bureau, 2022). The region of the southeastern state is home to many forms of diversity such as race, ethnicity, economic status, age, education levels,

and occupations, as the participants partaking in the survey will demonstrate (United States Census Bureau, 2022).

County A is home to an estimated 133,462 residents, 88.5% of whom are White, 7.2% are Black, 2.0% are Asian, and 2.3% are of an unlisted race. The county also has 86.6% of its residents holding a high school diploma or higher, 27% holding a bachelor's degree or higher, and a median household income of $53,188. The county also has a 10.4% disability rate of those under the age of 65 (United States Census Bureau, 2022). County B has an estimated population of 547,950 residents, 76.1% of whom are White, 18.2% are Black, 2.9% are Asian, and 2.% of the residents are of an alternate race. The county also has 89.7% of its residents with a high school degree or higher, and 37.9% of its residents holding a bachelor's degree or higher. The median household income within County Two is $65,021. The county also has an 8.5% disability rate of those under the age of 65 (United States Census Bureau, 2022).

County C has an estimated population of 209,581, 80.3% of whom are White, 16.0% are Black, 1.2% are Asian, and 2.5% of the population being of an alternate race. County C has 85.38% of its residents holding a High School degree or higher, and 24.7% of its population holding a bachelor's degree or higher. The county has a median household income of $56,796. The county also has an 11.2% disability rate of those under the age of 65 (United States Census Bureau, 2022). County D is home to an estimated 80,180 residents, 89.3% of whom are White, 7.5% are Black, 0.8% are Asian, and 2.4% are of an alternate race. Of all the county residents, 86.1% earned a High School diploma or higher, and 27.9% earned a bachelor's degree or higher. The county

has a median household income of $52,842. The county also has a 15.6% disability rate of those under the age of 65 (United States Census Bureau, 2022).

The participants of Survey A were located in a variety of settings. Participants were employed with various organizations, however, none of which included any form of public education in grades pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. This eliminated all employees working in a public school, even those who do not hold a valid teaching certificate, yet still are employed within the public school system. This also eliminated those who at any point worked in a public elementary school but are no longer employed due to retirement or early departure reasons. In the early stages of the survey, participants indicated that they are, in fact, an employee of an organization outside of the K-5 public school setting. This ensured that all those participating in the survey were employed by the appropriate occupations for the purposes of this research study.

It was important to the validity of the research that the survey yielded a response rate from a wide array of career fields within the region of the selected state. Within this region, jobs in the following fields are the most heavily populated and dominating careers in the area: manufacturing, engineering, financial services, construction, architecture, information and communications technology, life science, and health services (United States Census Bureau, 2022). Due to the large population of these career fields in the upstate of the southeastern state where the research was conducted, it was predicted that a vast majority of the survey respondents would hold employee status in one of these types of settings.

The region of this southeastern state has at least four public transportation systems that provide its residents in various areas of the upstate with the opportunity to travel

from differing locations within each community (SCDOT, 2023). Each public transit system follows the same scheduled route each day making stops at various points in the community. Community members have online access to view the transit schedule and its stops through the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) website (SCDOT, 2023). The public transit system in the upstate of South Carolina allows its residents open access to transportation to and from a wide variety of destinations as the transits make scheduled stops at numerous locations, many of which are potential workplaces of potential survey participants.

The sample frame for Survey A consisted of 108 noneducators and implemented the use of convenience sampling in selecting participants for Survey A. This was the most appropriate method to use because the survey was sent out to mass populations through social media postings and electronic sharing abilities that are accessible to the researcher, thus involving convenience sampling. There were not any interactions between the researcher and those who chose to participate in an effort to lessen the likelihood of people consenting to participate in the research study. Those who chose to participate, however, were not representative of the entire population. For example, a large percentage of participants were women; therefore, this was not wholly representative of the beliefs of the men residing in the same community. Due to Survey A being administered within the community through platforms often used by teachers, Survey A had an option for participants to select their occupation as being in education. Responses who indicated they are involved in education were discarded. These responses were discarded so that the validity of the study remained intact and teacher perspectives did not impact the results of the study. Those who chose to partake in the

survey also were asked to validate that they were not currently employed with a public school system through the use of a clickwrap agreement.

Survey B

The location of Survey B took place in local elementary schools in the region of the selected southeastern state. The research study administered its surveys in two public school districts in the region. The two districts which were used to collect data provided consent for their teachers to participate. Teachers were also administered the survey via social media platforms and electronic sharing, therefore; it was unknown which specific school districts within the region these teachers represent. The demographics of teachers who responded to the survey via social media or anonymous links were not included as it is unknown which districts are represented within the region of the southeastern state. The demographics of each proposed school can be found in Table 3.1. The school districts remain anonymous to protect the identity of each school district and its students.

Table 3.1

Demographics of School Districts

Demographics	School District	
Student Demographics	A	B
Number of Schools	14	6
Estimated Total Enrollment	10,834	3,001
Students living in poverty	5,538	1,790
Number of White students	8,165	2,193
Number of Black students	808	412
Number of Hispanic Students	1,139	169
Teacher Demographics	A	B
Number of Teachers	657	194
Percentage of teachers with advanced degrees	64.4%	65.4%
Percentage of teacher returning from the previous year	89.3%	91.1%
Percentage of teachers on a continuing contract	99.7%	100.0%

Note. Adapted from South Carolina Department of Education (2022).

The sample frame for Survey B consisted of 131 elementary teachers working in K-5 public elementary schools in the region of the southeastern state. The sampling method used for the selection of participants for Survey B was convenience sampling. The chosen method was the most appropriate because the researcher sent Survey B to schools that are located locally in the region of the selected state because this is the platform of schools that is available to the researcher. However, it was the researcher's goal that a representative amount of surveys were returned from each elementary school that were able to accurately represent the demographics of each individual school. Each school represented unique demographics, student populations, and economic makeups.

An advantage of the sampling method for Survey B included the researcher's ability to make contact with local schools and get teachers involved in completing the survey. It was the researcher's hope that a majority of teachers participated from each school to accurately represent the demographics found in each school. A limitation of the sampling method for Survey B included the researcher not having access to obtaining survey responses from the entirety of the selected state, rather only a region, therefore; the results of the study may not have been representative of the beliefs of all teachers in the state.

Participants

The participants of Survey A were individuals residing in the upstart region of the southeastern state who self-identify as being at least 18 years of age or older, including both men and women of various races and ethnicities.

The participant pool was also made up of different socioeconomic backgrounds. The researcher attempted to ensure a wide variety of participant characteristics by administering the survey to platforms with diverse populations, however, this was not always possible due to convenience sampling and the optional nature of participation in the study.

The participants of Survey B included public school elementary teachers working in the region of the selected southeastern state. All teachers who participated in the study were currently employed in an elementary school teaching grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. It was expected that most participants who completed the survey were going to be of similar race, socioeconomic status, and gender. The majority of teachers participating in the survey were White, middle class, females due to the demographics of participating schools. This is noted in the limitations of the study.

The participants of Survey B were employed in differing public elementary schools and districts in the region of the southeastern state. Each teacher had participated in different professional development seminars, teach a unique clientele, have his or her own unique parental involvement situations, and have differing technology availability to students. All of these factors likely impacted his or her responses to Survey B due to varying professional experiences.

Procedure: Data Collection and Analysis

In this section of the chapter, the elemental steps of the researcher's data collection process are outlined in such a way that the study is able to be

replicated by future researchers. Due to the correlational nature of the study, two independent surveys was utilized during the data collection process: Survey A and Survey B (Haryanto et al., 2022).

Based upon the individual data being collected, the researcher selected two surveys that best suit the requirements of the study and the research process. Each of the two surveys were selected based on their unique ability to collect data that was most appropriate and parallel to the study's two research questions. Due to regulations on fair use for educational purposes, permission to utilize both surveys in this research study was not needed from the original survey authors (Copyright Information Center, n.d.). Each survey was then transferred into Qualtrics for participants to be able to access the survey during the research phase of the study.

Survey A

Methods used to solicit survey results from participants in various occupational settings included administering informational flyers with a Quick Response (QR) code on the front. The flyer provided a QR code directing participants to the survey, as well as detailed the purposes of the study. The researcher also obtained participants through social media postings, as well as shared posting on social media, and other forms of electronic sharing.

Survey B

Survey B was administered to participants working at eight anonymous school districts in the upstate of the Southeastern state where research was conducted. The researcher first received consent from each school district to

conduct research within its schools and once consent was obtained, the researcher began making contact with specific principals to request permission to send out the surveys to the teachers within each school via district email. Once permission was granted for distribution of surveys by both districts and principals, participants had the option to provide their own consent to participate in the surveys or to decline participation.

Data Collection and Storage

Data from the surveys was collected using a QR code directing the participant to a survey which will then be stored in the researcher's Google Drive for the next three years. Data was stored here so that the research and data are able to be used for future research or any other needs. The Drive was encrypted to protect the privacy and confidentiality of all involved in the study. Once the three years has concluded, data will be destroyed by permanently deleting the file within Google Drive. The researcher will then ensure the data is deleted from any other databases further than simply deleting within Google Drive. Table 3 shows the proposed timeline for the data collection process of this research study.

The timeframe in which the entire process of data collection is outlined in this paragraph. In November and December of 2023, the surveys that were used for data collection were located and formatted into Qualtrics. After this, at the conclusion of December of 2023 and throughout the beginning of January 2024, surveys were administered to both samples of participants. In January 2024, the responses to each survey were exported into software

programming, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), for data analysis purposes. Ultimately, responses were analyzed and answers to the research questions were provided.

Table 3.2

Timeline of the Data-Collection Process

Step in the Data-collection process	Timeline
Locate survey instruments	November and December, 2023
Administer surveys to both sample participant groups for data collection purposes	December, 2023, and January, 2024
Input data into SPSS software to analyze research findings	January, 2024
Conclude the study in Chapter IV and Chapter V by outlining the study's findings	February, 2024

Once all data had been collected from both Survey A and Survey B, all data was input into SPSS. Then, the data collected via surveys was analyzed within the selected software using Pearson's Bivariate Correlation. Data was analyzed using Pearson's Correlation to establish possible correlations between the prestige given to elementary teachers by noneducators and teachers' levels of job satisfaction. The researcher collected and analyzed descriptive statistics such as mean, median, mode, and standard deviation of the results from the surveys to determine any potential correlations between variables. The results of this research study were considered reliable and valid because the researcher utilized instruments that have been previously tested for reliability and validity during past research.

Ethical Considerations

It was the goal of the researcher to ensure the safety of all participants during the course of the study. It was also the goal of the researcher to ensure the results of the study are reliable and valid. In order to ensure the safety, validity, and reliability of the study, below are listed the precautions that was taken to meet safety and ethical research guidelines.

Letter of Informed Consent

Both Survey A and Survey B required consent from participants in order to be valid during the data collection process. This was collected at the beginning of the survey through the use of a participation agreement and consent letter. This letter outlined the purpose of the research and informed the participant of any pertinent information before they agree to participate in the research process. Participants who declined the consent form were directed to exit the survey and their participation in the research process stopped there. However, participants who consented to participating indicated their agreement in the letter of informed consent agreement and were then directed to complete the survey. The letter of informed consent informed the participant that his or her identity would remain anonymous throughout the entire research process, the data collected would remain stored in the researcher's database for three years, but all data and responses will then be permanently deleted, and also reaffirmed to the participant that he or she was choosing to participate in the study out of his or her own complete free will. It was clear to the participant that there was no coercion used to acquire

participation. Additionally, it was made known to the participant that no penalty was given for failure to complete the survey.

Conflicts of Interest

The researcher encountered no conflicts of interest that were pernicious to the participants' processes or outcome of this research study. However, there was potential for the researcher to have had both personal and professional connections with a portion of the participants. As the researcher currently works in one of the school districts where Survey B was administered, there was likely a certain level of a conflict of interest between a portion of the sample pool and the researcher. There may also have been a conflict of interest with those who partook in Survey B. Because of the way in which the survey was administered in a local area of the southeastern state, the researcher may have had personal connections of an assorted nature with a number of Survey A participants. The researcher utilized convenience sampling (Andrade, 2021) for a portion of the data collection pool; therefore, it was likely that the participants were familiar with the researcher as this is the same area where the researcher resides and works. Nonetheless, the survey results remained anonymous, and the researcher was never present as participants completed the survey. These are the steps that were taken to prevent potential conflicts of interest having a harmful effect on the validity of the results.

Instrumentation

There were two distinct data collection strategies used during the data collection process of this research study. Participants accessed the surveys through a QR code which then directed them to a survey where the data was stored and collected. The survey instruments were composed of multiple sections, each collecting its own unique portion of data or necessary information.

Survey A

The first section of Survey A included a consent form at which point the participant indicated his or her choice to either proceed with the process by allowing consent and completing the survey, or the participant chose to decline to participate. For those who provided consent and completed the first portion survey, he or she was then directed to the second section of the survey. The survey that was used during the data collection process of this study was obtained from a previously conducted dissertation study conducted through the California Lutheran University (Peplinksi, 2014). The survey evaluated participants' beliefs about various aspects regarding teacher prestige.

Survey B

The instrument which was used for Survey B was similar to Survey A. Survey B began with a section prompting the participant to provide informed consent indicating he or she wishes to partake in the research study, and once consent had been given, the participant was directed to the survey. The

researcher utilized a survey created for a dissertation study completed in 2006 titled “Recognition and Praise Relate to Teachers’ Job Satisfaction” (Bialopotocki, 2006).

Summary

The goal of this research study was to determine a correlation between the prestige given to the elementary education profession and how this impacts the job satisfaction levels present among elementary teachers in public school settings. The study was completed through the use of quantitative surveys using bivariate correlational statistics to locate a potential correlation. The study required participants from various demographic backgrounds and unique occupations as well as participants working in public school classrooms. The study’s two research questions guided the data collection process and analysis through the entirety of the process.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed description of the findings discovered after conducting a quantitative methodology study that sought to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What level of prestige is afforded to the elementary public school classroom teacher from the noneducator perspective?

RQ2: To what extent do noneducators' perceptions affect the level of job satisfaction among elementary public school classroom teachers?

The analysis of the findings within this chapter provides a detailed description of the demographic characteristics of those who participated in the study in order to demonstrate the study's limited ability to generalize its findings to those outside of the demographics befitting to those who participated in the study. The chapter also communicates the findings of the study and provides information on the processes that were used to code the results from the study to determine a correlation between the variables using Pearson's Bivariate Correlation through SPSS data analysis software. Additionally, this chapter includes a discussion where the meaning of the results are clearly defined as well as proving or disproving the researcher's hypothesis.

As stated in Chapter I on page 8, the researcher held the hypothesis that while noneducators will likely ascribe a low level of prestige to the elementary education profession, this will have very little impact on the job

satisfaction levels among elementary teachers. Tables and graphics were included in this chapter to assist in communicating the results and correlations found during the course of the study.

Participant Demographics

The quantitative study conducted in this research included the use of two five-point Likert scale surveys to gather data concerning the correlation between the two research questions. Both surveys collected data from a sample pool of participants residing in the upstate region of the same southeastern state. Any responses collected from participants residing outside of the upstate of the specified southeastern state were discarded from both survey responses and were not included in the data analysis process. These responses were excluded from data analysis in order to further bolster the validity of the study's results, as the study's purpose was to measure occupational prestige perspectives from those residing only in the specified region of the southeastern state. Including responses from participants who reside outside of the specified region or state would discredit the results as the study would then not accurately measure what was intended by the researcher. Survey A was open and administered to participants for approximately three weeks, with the goal to collect as many responses as possible to enhance validity in the responses. No follow up was needed during data collection. Survey B was open and administered to participants for approximately two weeks and required no follow up, as responses were collected according to the allotted time frame.

Survey A

Survey A collected data from noneducators with the intention of measuring their perceptions of the prestige placed onto the public elementary school teaching profession. Surveys were distributed through an anonymous link, flyers with a QR code, and social media postings. The data demonstrates that 88 responses were collected via anonymous link, 20 via social media postings, and 4 via QR codes.

In order to participate in Survey A, one must self-identify to the following parameters: being at least 18 years of age, with a permanent residence in the upstate of the specified southeastern state, and work in a field outside of education. Respondents who stated they worked in the education field were discarded from the data analysis process. This allowed the sample pool to effectively represent the beliefs of just those working outside of the education profession in an effort to minimize the amount of bias in the data collection process. Of the 112 respondents who fit the necessary criteria for completing the survey, 108 agreed to the click wrap agreement and chose to continue the survey, while four chose to opt out of completing the survey. Therefore, all demographic percentages were based on the 108 participants who completed the survey. It is important to note that all questions in the survey were optional and participants were not required to select an answer for any given question. Participants could choose “Prefer not to say” as an answer choice or to omit the question entirely.

Based on the demographics collected in the survey, 67% of the respondents were female and 33% were male, 35% of respondents were in the age category of 18-29, 29% of the respondents were ages 30-39, 7% of the respondents were ages 40-49, 17% of the respondents were ages 50-59, 9% of the respondents were ages 60-69, 2% of the respondents were ages 70-79, and 1% of the respondents were ages 80 or above. According to Upstate SC Alliance (n.d.), the median age in the upstate of the same southeastern state is 39.9 years old, with each age bracket between 15 and 65+ making up an average of 13.6% of the region's population. The demographics of the researcher's survey are more heavily populated by the 18-39 age range with fewer respondents in the age range of 40 and above.

Participants were also asked to indicate their annual household income: 2% indicated their annual household income is less than $25,000, 11% responded $50,000-$75,000, 14% responded $75,000-$100,000, 21% responded $100,000-$125,000, 11% responded $125,000-$150,000, 18% responded more than $150,000, and 5% selected "prefer not to say". According to Upstate SC Alliance, (n.d.), the median household income in the region where data was collected is $53,145. The median household income of the survey participants is $100,000- $125,000. The survey respondents of this survey represent a higher socioeconomic status than the median of most residents living in the area.

Respondents were also asked to indicate their current employment status. The vast majority, 69%, indicated that they were employed full time in

a professional capacity. Twelve percent reported that they were employed part time, 5% are unemployed and currently looking for work, 4% are unemployed and not currently working, 7% indicated that they are retired professionals, 2% are students, and 1% of the sample pool indicates their employment status as disabled.

When asked to indicate their ethnicity, 96% of respondents stated White, 2% reported Black, 1% reported Asian, and 1% reported "Other". The sample pool is not fully representative of the ethnic diversity found in the upstate of the southeastern state where data was collected, due to the area's collective population, in 2020, averaging at 74.8% White, and 17.5% Black (Upstate SC Alliance, n.d.). However, according to Upstate SC Alliance (n.d.), the Asian population in the region was 1.9%, which is comparable to the sample pool of the survey participants. The amount of ethnic diversity found in the sample pool is much less than that of the region's actual percentages of ethnic diversity. This lack of ethnic diversity must be considered when generalizing the results of this study.

Respondents were asked to indicate their current field of employment. One percent of the respondents indicated Agriculture, 2% indicated Utilities, 5% indicated Finance, 2% indicated Entertainment, 26% indicated Healthcare, 3% indicated Information Services, 1% indicated Data Processing, 5% indicated Ministry, 4% indicated Legal Services, 1% indicated Military/Law Enforcement, 3% indicated Construction, 44% indicated "Other", and 2% indicated "Prefer not to say". Due to the diversity

of responses, including the 46% who selected “Other”, it is unknown if the sample pool employment demographics are representative of the employment fields of the region’s population.

The respondents were also asked their level of education received. One percent indicated they have received less than a high school diploma, 9% indicated they have received a high school degree, 14% indicated they attended some amount of college, 10% indicated they received a two year degree, 42% indicated they received a four year degree from a university or college, 17% indicated they received a master’s degree, and 6% indicated they received a doctoral degree. The demographics from the sample pool are somewhat higher than the region’s overall demographics for its education levels. According to Upstate SC Alliance (2020), the region’s average education attainment demonstrates only 27% of the population having a bachelor’s degree or higher, while the demographics of the survey’s sample pool indicate 65% of respondents have a bachelor’s degree or higher.

Certain categories of demographics found on Survey A (household income and employment status) are more representative of the region’s accurate demographics than others (ethnicity and education levels). Because of certain demographic differences, it cannot be assumed that the opinions and beliefs found in this research study are fully applicable to all those residing in the region. Another survey of more representative demographics would need to be conducted in order to allow for generalization across the

region's population. Table 4.1 demonstrates the descriptive statistics of the sample pool demographics collected.

Table 4.1

Survey A: Demographics of Participants

Demographic Information	Number of Participants	Percentage
Gender		
Male	33	33
Female	67	67
Age		
18–29	35	35
30–39	29	29
40–49	7	7
50–59	17	17
60–69	9	9
70–79	2	2
80+	1	1
Annual Household Income		
Less than $25,000	2	2
$50,000–$75,000	11	11
$75,000–$100,000	14	14
$100,000–$125,000	21	21
$125,000–$150,000	11	11
More than $150,000	18	18
Prefer not say	5	5
Current Employment Status		
Employed full-time	68	69
Employed part-time	12	12
Unemployed and looking for work	5	5
Unemployed and not looking for work	4	4
Retired	7	7
Student	2	2
Disabled	1	1
Ethnicity		
White	95	96
Black	2	2
Asian	1	1
Other	1	1
Current field of employment		
Agriculture	1	1
Utilities	2	2
Finance	5	5

Table 4.1, continued

Demographic Information	Number of Participants	Percentage
Entertainment	2	2
Healthcare	25	26
Information Services	3	3
Data Processing	1	1
Ministry	5	5
Legal Services	4	4
Military/Law Enforcement	1	1
Construction	3	3
Other	42	44
Prefer not to say	2	2
Highest Level of Education		
Less than a high school diploma	1	1
High school diploma	9	9
Some college	14	14
2-year degree	10	10
4-year degree	42	42
Master's degree	17	17
Doctoral degree	6	6

Survey B

Survey B was distributed to public elementary school teachers in the upstate of a southeastern state with the intention of measuring their levels of job satisfaction in accordance with how they believe noneducators ascribe prestige to their profession. Surveys were administered through anonymous links and social media postings. The data demonstrates that 131 surveys were completed via anonymous link while no responses were collected via social media postings. In order to take this survey, teachers must be currently employed as an elementary school teacher in a public school located in the upstate of the specified southeastern state. Respondents who stated they worked in a school outside of the upstate of the southeastern state were discarded from the data analysis process. This allowed the data collected from

the sample pool to effectively gauge the beliefs of just those working in the specified region in an effort to limit the amount of limitations in the data collection process. It was essential to the validity of the study to only collect data from teachers and noneducators working and living in the same region. Of the 131 respondents who fit the necessary criteria for completing the survey, all agreed to the click wrap agreement and chose to continue the survey, therefore; all demographic percentages was based on the 131 participants who completed the survey. It is important to note that all questions in the survey were optional and participants were not required to select an answer for any given question. Participants could choose "Prefer not to say" as an answer choice or to omit the question entirely.

Based on the teacher demographics collected during the research study, 95% of respondents are female and 5% male. The teachers covered a wide array of age ranges as 31% were ages 20-29, 26% were ages 30-39, 34% were ages 40-49, and 9% were ages 50-59. Teachers were also asked to state how many years they have been teaching in the classroom with results showing 46% have been teaching for 0-10 years, 31% have been teaching for 10-20 years, 21% have been teaching 20-30 years, and 2% have been teaching 30 or more years. Teachers were asked to state their ethnicity and results demonstrated that 99% were White and 1% who completed the survey were Asian. Among all teachers who responded to the survey, 10% teach kindergarten, 12% teach first grade, 15% teach second grade, 9% teach third grade, 9% teach fourth grade, 10% teach fifth grade, 9% teach Related Arts

(nonacademic classes such as Music, Physical Education, Art, Library, Science Lab, Computer Lab, etc.), and 18% teach Special Education. When asked what level of degree they had attained, 34% stated they hold a 4 year degree, 66% stated they hold a master's degree, and 1% stated they hold a doctoral degree. While the percentages found in this study are widely representative of the diversity present among elementary teachers in the region, the results of the survey cannot be generalized to all persons working in the elementary education profession whose demographics are not accurately represented in the diversity of respondents. The demographics are listed in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2

Survey B: Demographics of Participants

Demographic Information	Number of Participants	Percentage
Gender		
Male	6	5%
Female	121	95%
Age		
20–29	40	31%
30–39	33	26%
40–49	43	34%
50–59	11	9%
Years as a Certified Teacher		
0–10	59	46%
10–20	39	31%
20–30	27	21%
30+	2	2%
Ethnicity		
White	127	99%
Asian	1	1%
Grade currently taught		
Kindergarten	14	10%
First grade	16	12%
Second grade	20	15%

Table 4.2, continued

Demographic Information	Number of Participants	Percentage
Third grade	13	9%
Fouth grade	13	9%
Fifth grade	14	10%
Related Arts	13	9%
Special Education	25	18%
Highest Level of Education		
4-year degree	43	34%
Master's degree	84	66%
Doctoral degree	1	1%

Survey A Results

The data which was collected from Survey A was entered into SPSS using correlation statistics and to glean descriptive statistics including the mean and standard deviation of various data points found within the data collection instruments. Relevant survey items were inputted into the correlation analysis software to determine significant statistics within the data set. Survey items that did not directly pertain to the study's research questions were not analyzed in this data set. Respondents were asked to select an answer on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The data analysis software used attributed each answer a value with strongly agree being valued at 1, agree being valued at 2, neither agree nor disagree being valued at 3, disagree being valued at 4, and strongly disagree being valued at 5. For the data presented with this data, the average standard deviation is 1.035. Standard deviations found valuing less than 1.035 will indicate there were low levels of variance among respondents' answer selections. Yet, standard deviations found valuing more than 1.035 will

indicate there were higher levels of variance among respondents' answer selections. The statistical findings are listed below in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Survey A: Descriptive Statistics

Survey question	*M*	*SD*	*N*
The teaching profession has a promising future.	2.82	1.163	84
I have a very high level of respect for teachers.	1.30	.873	84
Teachers are held in very high regard by the general public.	2.45	1.196	84
I believe that teachers should be more highly compensated.	1.54	.924	84
I would recommend that a young person consider teaching as a profession.	2.54	1.145	84
I have a high level of trust in the ability of our teachers to educate our children.	2.11	1.064	84
The teaching profession in this country attracts high quality candidates.	3.01	1.081	84

The first survey item stated, "The teaching profession has a promising future." According to the table, this item received a mean score of 2.8 with a standard deviation of 1.163 indicating that the typical response to this question was located medially among agree and neither agree or disagree. Standard deviation data for this item demonstrates higher levels of variance present among respondents' answer selection. The next survey item stated, "I have a very high level of respect for teachers." This survey item received a mean score of 1.3 indicating very high levels of respect for teachers among survey respondents as most selected strongly agree as their answer. The standard deviation is valued at 0.673 meaning there was little variance among participants' responses to this item. Survey item, "Teachers are held in very high regard by the general public," received a mean score of 2.45 indicating most respondents agreed with this statement. However, this statement also

received the highest standard deviation score at 1.196 meaning there was evident disagreement among respondents' answers. The statement, "I believe teachers should be more highly compensated," received a mean score of 1.54 and standard deviation score of 0.924. This statistic demonstrates high levels of agreement that teachers should be compensated at higher rates, and very little variance among responses. "I would recommend that a young person consider teaching as a profession," received a mean score of 2.54 indicating that most respondents are either neutral on the subject or agree with the statement. The standard deviation score is 1.145 indicating high levels of variance in responses. "I have a high level of trust in the ability of our teachers to educate our children." valued its mean score at 2.11 indicating a discrepancy between agreement and neutrality. The standard deviation is 1.064 meaning that there are high levels of disagreement in the responses from this survey item. The last survey item analyzed in this particular data set stated, "The teaching profession in this country attracts high quality candidates." The mean score is 3.01 indicating that most respondents are neutral on the subject matter. However, the standard deviation score is 1.081 meaning there were higher than average amounts of dissimilarities among responses.

Survey B Results

Data collected from Survey B was entered into SPSS using correlation statistics and to glean descriptive statistics including the mean and standard deviation of various data points found within the data collection instruments.

Relevant survey items were inputted into the correlation analysis software to determine significant statistics within the data set. Survey items that did not clearly measure various components of job satisfaction were not analyzed in this data set. For the analysis of this data set, job satisfaction components include coworkers, salary and benefits, overall daily enjoyment, self-esteem in one's work, and supervisors. These were the categories chosen to formulate the components of job satisfaction as each one was discussed in the literature review throughout Chapter II.

Respondents were asked to select an answer on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The data analysis software used attributed each answer a value with strongly agree being valued at 1, agree being valued at 2, neither agree nor disagree being valued at 3, disagree being valued at 4, and strongly disagree being valued at 5. For the data presented with this data, the average standard deviation is 0.9023. The low standard deviation present in this data set was indicative of typically low variance in how respondents answered survey items. Standard deviations found valuing less than 0.9023 will indicate there were extremely low levels of variance among respondents' answer selections. However, standard deviations found valuing more than 0.9023 will indicate there were higher levels of variance among respondents' answer selections. According to Table 4.4, 118 out of the 131 total respondents opted to answer these particular survey items.

Table 4.4

Survey B: Descriptive Statistics

Survey question	*M*	*SD*	*N*
I like the people I work with.	1.28	.487	118
I enjoy my coworkers.	1.31	.515	118
I sometimes feel my job is meaningless.	4.08	1.209	118
I feel a sense of pride in doing my job.	1.43	.577	118
I like doing the things I do at work.	1.62	.569	118
My job is enjoyable.	1.65	.590	118
I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive.	3.34	1.171	118
I feel unappreciated by the organization when I think about how much they pay me.	1.28	.487	118
I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do.	1.31	.515	118
I like my supervisor.	4.08	1.209	118

In accordance with coworkers affecting job satisfaction, according to the results of the survey item, "I like the people I work with," accumulated a mean score of 1.28 indicating that most respondents strongly agree with the statement. The standard deviation value of this item values at 0.487 meaning there were low levels of variance present among this survey item. As stated in the chart, the maximum score this survey item received was a 3, neither agree nor disagree, indicating that not one teacher who chose to respond to this item felt that they disagreed with the statement. When asked a question with similar connotation, "I enjoy my coworkers," the results were quite similar indicating that overall, teachers have built strong bonds with one another making the workday more enjoyable. This survey item received a mean score of 1.31 with low levels of variance as the standard deviation score is 0.515.

Regarding elementary teachers feeling a sense of pride and meaning in their career, the survey results seemed to yield extremely positive results. The

survey item, “I sometimes feel my job is meaningless” received a mean score of 4.08 indicating that the average teacher disagrees with this statement. However, the standard deviation for this item reveals itself to be quite high as its value is 1.209 indicating there were high levels of variance. High levels of variance are also demonstrated in the chart as it appears responses to this item ranged from 1, strongly agree to 5, and strongly disagree. Comparably, the survey item, “I feel a sense of pride in doing my job,” received a mean score of 1.43 indicating most teachers agree with this statement quite heavily and feel pride when conducting their professional responsibilities. The variance is quite low as the standard deviation is measured at 0.577.

According to the survey results, teachers have positive experiences with the level of enjoyment they experience during their career. The survey item, “I like doing the things I do at work,” received a mean score of 1.62 with little variance according to the standard deviation rate of 0.569. The similar survey item, “My job is enjoyable,” received a mean score of 1.65 and demonstrated low levels of variance among responses with a standard deviation score of 0.590.

The survey items with the lowest levels of positive responses include topics such as salary and benefits teachers receive. The mean score of the survey item, “I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive,” values at 3.34 and high levels of variance among questions due to the standard deviation value of 1.17. Additionally, the mean score of survey item, “I feel unappreciated by the organization when I think about how much they pay me,” has a mean

score of 2.79 and a standard deviation score of 1.218 indicating an overall higher agreement with this statement but still presents with high levels of variance. The survey item, “I feel I am paid a fair amount for the work I do,” accrues a mean score of 3.55 and a standard deviation of 1.238 indicating high levels of variance among these responses as well.

According to the survey, teachers have a positive attitude toward their supervisors. The survey item, “I like my supervisor,” has a mean score of 1.31 with low levels of variance due to the 0.609 standard deviation. Educational supervisors do not tend to have a negative effect on educator’s job satisfaction levels.

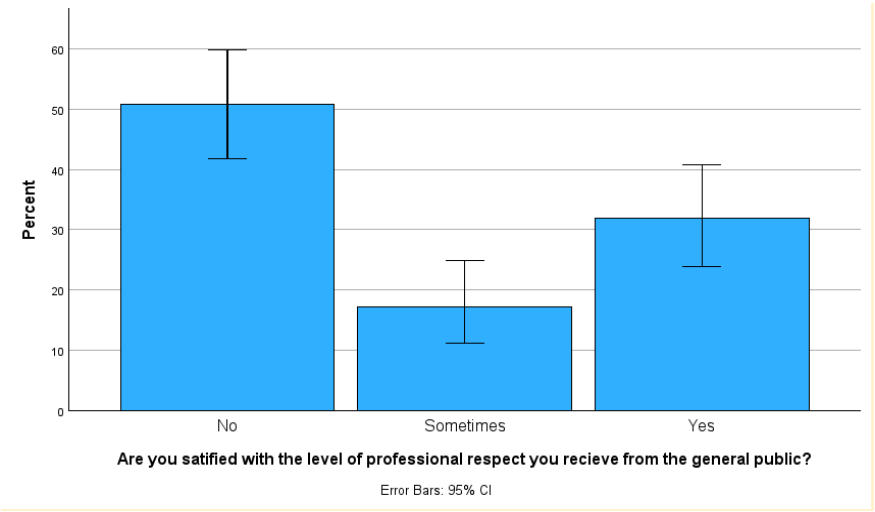
Below is a bar graph that demonstrates the values at which teachers who completed the survey feel satisfied with the amount of respect they receive. The graph demonstrates that while not a significantly large difference, the majority of teachers from noneducators. Teacher responses were written in a comment section on question 49 during Survey B, but the open-ended responses were recoded in order to statistically analyze through the SPSS data analysis system. During the recoding process, all responses retained their original meaning as intended by respondents.

According to the data, with a 95% confidence interval, approximately 51% of teachers are satisfied with the levels of respect they have received for their work from noneducators. Approximately 17% of teachers feel somewhat satisfied with the respect levels afforded to them, and approximately 32% of teachers feel dissatisfied with respect levels ascribed to

them by noneducators. This indicated that the majority of teachers do feel satisfied with the respect they receive from noneducators. These figures are represented in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1

Professional Respect Satisfaction Levels among Teachers



Note. Errors bars are included on each x-axis variable.

Correlation Findings

The purpose of this study sought to determine if the levels of prestige ascribed to the elementary school teaching profession had any effect on the aforementioned teacher' job satisfaction. The researcher's hypothesis stated that while noneducators will likely ascribe a low level of prestige to the elementary education profession, this will have very little impact on the job satisfaction levels among elementary teachers. In an effort to determine the level of significance between the variables, Bivariate (Pearson) Correlation processing was implemented. According to the International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) (2023), Bivariate (Pearson) Correlation is

recommended when determining linear relationships such as the two research questions guiding this research study.

In order to determine a correlation between the research questions, three variables were elected that encapsulated the focal points sought after in the survey. For example, the purpose of Survey A was to obtain an understanding of the levels of respect ascribed to elementary teachers among noneducators. The survey item which clearly answers RQ1 is, "I have a very high respect for teachers." According to the data presented above, this survey item received a mean score of 1.3 indicating very high levels of respect for the profession with little evidence of variance among respondents. RQ2 makes references to teacher job satisfaction, therefore; the two survey items from Survey B which best encapsulate the purpose of RQ2 include, "My job is enjoyable," and "I am satisfied with the recognition I receive for my work." Both survey items are able to provide a sense of teachers' contentment and fulfillment within their professional role according to the amount of respect they receive. These questions do not include specifics such as compensation, autonomy, supervisors, or other various factors as those contain specifics, and in order to fulfill the purpose of the study, the selected survey items required generalized ideas rather than specifics of job satisfaction.

Table 4.5

Prestige and Job Satisfaction Correlation

		Variables			
		I have a very high level of respect for teachers.	My job is enjoyable.	I am satisfied with the recognition I receive for my work.	I feel a sense of pride in doing my job.
I have a very high level of respect for teachers.	Pearson Correlation	1	—.085	–.156	–.052
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.442	.157	.636
	N	84	84	84	84
My job is enjoyable.	Pearson Correlation	–.085	1	.290**	.620**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.442		.002	<.001
	N	84	118	115	118
I am satisfied with the recognition I receive for my work.	Pearson Correlation	–.156	.290**	1	.187*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.157	.002		.045
	N	84	115	115	115
I feel a sense of pride in doing my job.	Pearson Correlation	–.052	.620**	.187*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.636	<.001	.045	
	N	84	118	115	118

Note. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

When data from the selected variables were input into SPSS data analysis software in order to determine Pearson's correlation, *r*, it was found that there is not a significant correlation between a teachers's level of job satisfaction he or she experiences and the prestige and recognition the profession receives from the public. The findings are listed above in Table 4.5. When the variable "I have a high level of respect for teachers," is correlated with the variable, "My job is enjoyable," it receives a correlation value of -.085 according to the Pearson correlation coefficient. According to the Pearson correlation coefficient, a variable relationship has perfect positive correlation at 1.0, no correlation at 0.0, and a perfect negative correlation at -1.0 (AERD Statistics). Statistics are found to have significant correlations when their Sig. (2-tailed) value is < 0.01. With this taken into consideration, -.085 is significantly close to Pearson's 0 indicating little to no correlation between variables. The significance level, *p*, is equal to .442 which is greater than .01 indicating no statistical significance. SPSS data analysis software were able to utilize 84 survey responses to obtain this statistic. When analyzing the data from variables, "I have a high level of respect for teachers," and, "I am satisfied with the recognition I receive for my work," the variables are as follows, $p = -.156$ and $r = .157$ indicating no statistical significance. SPSS data analysis software were able to utilize 84 survey responses to obtain this statistic. Variables, "My job is enjoyable," and, "I am satisfied with the recognition I receive for my work," received a *p* value of .290 and an *r* value of .002, which is < .001 indicating high statistical

significance. SPSS data analysis software were able to utilize 115 survey responses to obtain this statistic. It is noteworthy findings to address the statistical significance of variables, "I feel a sense of pride in my job" and "My job is enjoyable." When processed with bivariate correlation statistics, these received an *r* score of .620 indicating high levels of positive correlation as well as receiving a *p* score of <.001 a significant correlation between variables.

Conclusion

Prior to conducting the research study, the researcher held a hypothesis that while noneducators will likely ascribe a low level of prestige to the elementary education profession, this will have very little impact on the job satisfaction levels among elementary teachers. According to the results of the study, the researcher was incorrect with the hypothesis of RQ1. It was believed that noneducators will ascribe low levels of prestige to the elementary teaching profession. However, according to the results, noneducators residing in the upstate of the southeastern state where the study was conducted have extremely high levels of respect for elementary teachers as the data indicated that the average rating for "I have a very high level of respect for teachers." was a 1.3 according to Table 4.1. This demonstrates that most survey respondents strongly agree with this statement. This finding from the research study disproved the assertion in the researcher's RQ1 hypothesis.

However, RQ2 attempted to determine what level of impact RQ1 Would have on a teacher's job satisfaction. The researcher's hypothesis

claimed that the prestige ascribed to elementary school teachers would have very little impact on job satisfaction levels. According to the Table 4.4, survey item, “My job is enjoyable” confirmed the hypothesis indicating teacher’s job satisfaction levels are extremely high receiving a mean score of 1.65. Also according to Table 4.4, teachers indicate they are highly satisfied with many domains of their job including coworkers, the pride and meaning they are able to glean from their responsibilities, daily tasks of the profession, and their supervisors. According to this study, the only facet of their job that teachers seemed dissatisfied with was salary and benefits. According to Table 4.4, monetary domains of the profession, including salary and benefits, received a palpable lower mean score than the other domains. Further research would be needed to assess how monetary benefits affect overall job satisfaction among teachers.

Table 4.5 provides the correlation between the findings to further answer RQ1 and RQ2. The former of the researcher’s hypothesis was disproved by the study, while the latter of the researcher’s hypothesis was confirmed by the study. According to Table 4.5, through the use of Bivariate Correlation, there is no significant correlation between respect given to teachers by noneducators and the levels of job satisfaction teachers are able to enjoy. The statistically significant correlation found according to Table 4.5 is between variables “My job is enjoyable,” and, “I am satisfied with the recognition I receive for my work.”

These findings found in Figure 4.1 indicate that while over 50% of teachers are dissatisfied with the levels of professional respect given to them by noneductors, the overwhelming majority strongly agree that their job is enjoyable and they have a strong sense of pride in doing their job according to Table 4.4. This further proves that there is little correlation between job satisfaction and prestige ascribed to teachers. These results would appear to indicate that while there are many teachers who feel dissatisfied with the respect they are given, it is not an obstruction to overall job satisfaction. However, further research is needed to determine potential reasons as to why over 50% of teachers feel dissatisfaction with the professional respect they receive, yet, according to Figure 4.1, an overwhelming majority of noneducators strongly agree that they hold high levels of respect towards teachers.

CHAPTER 5. SUMMARY, FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Study

The purpose of this research study was to determine a potential correlation between the amounts of occupational prestige ascribed to the public elementary teaching profession and the levels of job satisfaction that public elementary school teacher's experience. The study consisted of two RQs that provided a foundation for the research and drove the data collection process. The study's RQs are as follows:

RQ1: What level of prestige is afforded to the elementary public school classroom teacher from the noneducator perspective?

RQ2: To what extent do noneducators' perceptions affect the level of job satisfaction among elementary public school classroom teachers?

This study was conducted to address a current problem in the field of education as discussed in Chapters I and II. These chapters discussed a teacher shortage in America that has begun to be detrimental to schools across America (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Cowan et al., 2016; Elsayed & Roch, 2023; Hughes, 2012; Podolsky et al., 2016; Reichardt et al., 2020; Sutcher et al., 2016, 2019; Williams et al., 2022, as cited in Darling Hammond et al., 2019). Schools in America have begun to experience difficulty hiring highly qualified candidates as well as retaining highly qualified candidates for numerous reasons (Carver Thomas et al., 2017; Cowan et al., 2016; Elsayed & Roch, 2023; Hughes, 2012; Podolsky et al., 2016; Reichardt et al., 2020; Sutcher et al., 2016, 2019; Blase 2009, as cited in

Williams et al., 2022). Researcher Langdon (1996, as cited in Newlyn, 2015), asserts the claim that low levels of prestige ascribed to the education profession may cause many teachers to experience low levels of job satisfaction, thus leading to many teachers exiting the profession.

Informed by research findings such as Langdon's, this dissertation study sought to determine if there was a correlation between the prestige given to elementary teachers, in a specified region of a southeastern state, and the impact on the job satisfaction they experience in their profession. This study was important to the field of education because, in accordance with research as well as Maslow's educational theory addressing human beings Hierarchy of Needs, teachers must feel a sense of social belonging in order to experience job satisfaction (Maslow, 1943, as cited in Lussier, 2019). If educators do not experience a sense of social belonging, with high occupational prestige, it is possible that teachers will continue to leave the profession prematurely causing a continual and even greater teacher shortage to take place, ultimately harming the education of young American students (Carver Thomas et al., 2017; Cowan et al., 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2016; Elsayed & Roch, 2023; Hughes, 2012; Podolsky et al., 2016; Reichardt et al., 2020; Sutcher et al., 2016, 2019; Williams et al., 2022). It was the goal of the researcher to determine if teachers are experiencing low levels of occupational prestige, and if this is causing low levels of prestige. During the course of their research, some researchers have found that low occupational prestige is a cause of teacher job dissatisfaction, and others have found that it does not have an

impact on job satisfaction among teachers (Langdon, 1996, as cited in Newlyn, 2015; Mintrop & Ordenes, 2017).

Findings

Although the results of the study are discussed in Chapter IV, a deeper discussion of the meaning of the results is discussed in this section of the study. The intention of this study was to collect information that would provide enough to inform stakeholders about the current state of occupational prestige placed on elementary education. While this study does explicitly answer the guiding research questions, this study also has uncovered some additional results as well that are pertinent to the current study or future research.

For example, an interesting finding stemmed from the results indicating that an overwhelming majority of noneducators do, in fact, place a very high level of respect on the elementary education profession, as shown in Table 4.3. The survey item prompting participants to respond to the statement, "I have a very high level of respect for teachers," yielded an average response of "Strongly agree" with very little variances in answers from participants. Yet, as shown in Figure 4.1, approximately 68% of elementary educators indicate feeling either entirely dissatisfied or sometimes dissatisfied with the occupational prestige they receive or have received in the past. This finding from the study undoubtedly indicates a compelling imbalance of opinions between noneducators and teachers centered on occupational prestige ascribed to educators. Based on the limited data

collection instruments utilized during this research study, it was not possible to determine potential causes for this discrepancy of opinions. Further research would be needed to determine potential causes.

Similarly, as shown in Table 4.3, noneducators indicate a slightly lower level of agreement with statements about the profession such as, “The teaching profession has a promising future,” “Teachers are held in very high regard by the general public,” “I would recommend that a young person consider teaching as a profession,” “I have a high level of trust in the ability of our teachers to educate our children,” and “The teaching profession in this country attracts high quality candidates” all received a mean score of 2.11 to 3.01 indicating that most noneducators on average selected “Agree” or “Neither agree nor disagree” as their response to this question as opposed to most selecting “Strongly Agree” when asked to indicate their level of respect for the profession. This is an interesting finding of the study as noneducators seem to assert high levels of respect for elementary teachers, yet in other subcategories of respect, they claim slightly lower scores of respect. Further research would be needed to determine why these survey items received scores indicating lower levels of agreement.

According to the results of the study, the overwhelming majority of teachers are highly satisfied with their job, as shown in Table 4.4. Teachers surveyed in this study indicated they either “Strongly agree,” or “Agree,” with a large portion of survey items that collectively provide strong foundational aspects of what of job satisfaction includes, such as enjoying coworkers,

experiencing personal fulfillment, enjoying the completion of daily tasks, receiving monetary benefits, and enjoying ones supervisors. For each subcategory, with the exception of monetary benefits, mean scores were indicative of very high levels of job satisfaction among teachers. Based on the scores of each survey item, teachers seem to very much enjoy their coworkers, feel a sense of pride and meaning in their work, enjoy the tasks required of them on a daily basis, and are pleased with their supervisors. However, the only category in which teachers display a wavering sense of job satisfaction is in the monetary benefits they receive. Teachers, on average, answered with neutrality when asked their opinion of satisfaction in regards to the benefits they receive. These results are demonstrated in Table 4.4. Even more so than the benefits they receive, teachers were even more dissatisfied with pay. The results of the survey indicated that many even went as far to indicate that they feel unappreciated when thinking about how much they receive in salary. This statement, however, yielded a rather large standard deviation compared with other survey items (12, 13, 21, 28, 30, 33, 37), therefore; there seems to be variance in opinions on financial compensation. However, even taking into account the standard deviation of this survey item, there still does not appear to be a large number of teachers who “Strongly agree" that they are satisfied with their pay. The research findings of this study are closely aligned with other researchers discussed in Chapter II’s literature review in suggesting that low wages are a cause of job dissatisfaction among many in the education profession (Hughes, 2012; Prieto et al., 2023; SCEA, 2023). Further research

is needed to more directly address the dissatisfaction among many teachers in regards to their pay and benefits which they receive.

However, according to Table 4.5, there was no significant relationship found between noneducators' perception of the education profession's prestige and teacher job satisfaction. According to the results of the study, it seems that's teachers' high levels of job satisfaction, as demonstrated in Table 4.4, has little to do with the ways in which the public perceives the profession, even in spite of 68% of teachers feeling unsatisfied with the professional recognition they receive from the public, as shown in Figure 4.1.

Previous research on the subject has revealed ambiguous results as some research has asserted prestige does in fact affect job satisfaction, while other research has asserted it has very little affect on job satisfaction at all (Blase, as cited in Williams, 2022; Langdon, 1996, as cited in Newlyn, 2015; Maslow, 1943, as cited in Lussier, 2019; Mintrop & Ordenes, 2017). The results of this study more closely align with the assertions of researchers who claim issues such as occupational prestige have little to no effect on job satisfaction.

While the purpose of this study was not to determine the individual factors that contribute to teacher job satisfaction, nor do the results of the study definitely provide any information regarding this, it remains a hypothesis of the researcher that teachers may more often acquire job satisfaction from intrinsic determinants such as pride and the fulfillment rather than external determinants such as occupational prestige. The hypothesis

stems from the high percentage of teachers who report dissatisfaction with the professional respect they receive as shown in Figure 4.1. Yet, Table 4.4 indicates agreement among teachers of being able to experience a sense of internal pride and fulfillment in their profession. Table 4.5 demonstrates that there is a strong statistical correlation between teachers having pride in their job and enjoying their profession. Although this is a hypothesis that was supported by research conducted during this study, further research is required to accurately reveal data to support or refute this hypothesis.

Implications of Research

The results of this study, as shown in Table 4.5, determined that there is no statistical correlation between noneducators' view of the educator's prestige and teachers' job satisfaction. Interestingly, according to the results of the study, noneducators hold teachers in very high regard, according to Table 4.3; however, teachers, on the other hand, overwhelmingly show displeasure with the amount of recognition and prestige placed on their profession. Figure 4.1 demonstrates that 68% of teachers are either dissatisfied or somewhat dissatisfied with the levels of recognition and respect they receive from noneducators. The results in this area of the research findings do not seem to align with one another, as one would assume that if teachers were highly respected, they would then, by default, experience high levels of recognition and respect. However, this does not seem to be the case according to the research found in this study.

This finding is important to the education field and educational leaders because it provides an obvious disparity between the prestige that is being claimed to be placed on the teaching profession, and the teachers actually experiencing the benefits of being held in such esteem. If 68% of teachers claim to be dissatisfied with their experiences of professional recognition, what then is the disconnect? More research is needed to identify what potential causes are prompting noneducators to view teachers in such a positive light, yet teachers are not experiencing recognition in this way. Future research conducted that attempts to address, answer, and solve this issue could help many teachers to gain the professional recognition they feel they are missing, according to Figure 4.1. Fortunately, the research conducted in this study established evidence that, although many teachers do in fact feel as though they do not receive the prestige that many noneducators claim to have for the profession, this does not affect their job satisfaction as many teachers still very much find their profession enjoyable. The findings in Figure 4.1 provide a foundation for research to further investigate this disparity.

Recommendations for Future Research

The research conducted in this study provided evidence that responds to the two research questions posed prior in the study; however, results of this study yield additional questions that require further research to be conducted. For example, as discussed as an implication of research, there is a clear disconnect between the respect noneducators ascribe to teachers and the amount of respect teachers feel they receive. The field of education would

benefit from further research studies attempting to determine what factors may be a cause of the disconnect between the two sample population groups. Not only could the study assist in identifying potential causes, but once results have been provided, recommendations could then be made as to what steps could be taken to remedy the disconnect and to allow teachers to better experience the professional recognition they are claimed to be given. Lawmakers and educational leaders would be able to apply the prospective findings and intervene with the intent to remedy the disconnect.

The purpose of this study was simply to determine what level of prestige noneducators held the teaching profession in and what, if any, effect this has on teacher job satisfaction. The results of this study indicate that there is no correlation between occupational prestige and job satisfaction. However, data shown in Table 4.4, demonstrate that teachers do in fact have high levels of job satisfaction. Because the purpose of the study was not to determine what specific factors are that influence teachers' job satisfaction, the results of this study do raise this question: if not occupational prestige, what does affect job satisfaction? Factors that have been discussed in prior literature that researchers believe to impact elementary teachers' job satisfaction include working conditions, students, administration, mental health, and salary (Marlow, 1996). Further research is needed to determine which of these do tend to have a higher influence on teachers' job satisfaction rather than occupational prestige.

The sample population group that was the focal point of this study included currently employed educators working in a public elementary school. Educators working in other areas of education were not included in the research process of this study. It is possible that the study results would have differed had the study widened its focus to other areas of education such as private schools, charter schools, secondary education, or post-secondary education. The prestige placed onto educators working as post-secondary professionals could be compared and contrasted with the results of those with elementary educations as found in this study. It is recommended that each group of educators are studied separately to add validity and clarity as to how each area is perceived by the public as this would allow each area to be easily compared with one another.

Further research could also be done to determine if location of the study has any impact and would yield different results. Conducting this study in different regions of the state, region, or country would also allow researchers to determine if societal norms, biases, or professional expectations impact the results of the study. As this study was conducted in the upstate of a southeastern state, a similar study could be conducted in various regions and analyze the difference in findings to determine if location has an impact on noneducators' views of the education profession.

The results of this study are indicative that there are clear disconnects between the general public of noneducators and those within the education system due to the wide differences in perspectives among the two sample

population groups. It is important to identify potential causes of this and expand the research done in the field of education as the more knowledge we have of the profession, the more changes that are able to take place with the intention to improve areas of need within the field.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a correlation between the occupational prestige ascribed to the public elementary teaching profession and the job satisfaction that public elementary teachers experience. Through quantitative research and data collection instruments that utilize Likert scale formatting, the results of the study indicate that there is no correlation between the two variables. This is an important research study as teachers are in the business of educating young students who will one day become the workforce of America; therefore, it is essential these students receive a high quality education from high quality teachers to prepare them for a successful future in the American workforce (Husbands, 2016). There is potential for many of the young students in today's classrooms to also enter into the field of education, making it even more vital for the profession of education to remain in high standing according to noneducators so as not to deter any prospective teachers from entering the workforce due to low occupational prestige. This premise would benefit from further research to determine if occupational prestige has an effect on prospective teachers entering the field.

In order to employ and retain high quality teachers, it is essential that teachers experience high levels of job satisfaction as it hypothesized that high levels of job satisfaction will likely lead to district and schools being able to retain more teachers due to higher levels of job satisfaction across the nation (Carver Thomas et al., 2017; Cowan et al., 2016; Elsayed & Roch, 2023; Hughes, 2012; Podolsky et al., 2016; Reichardt et al., 2020; Sutcher et al., 2016, 2019; Blase 2009, as cited in Williams et al., 2022). Teaching has proven to have a higher level of employee turnover than any other profession in corporate America, therefore; it is important to identify any causes of teacher job dissatisfaction (Hughes, 2012). The findings presented in this study provide a concrete foundation that will others to continually make strides in improving issues present in the American education system.

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APPENDIX A. APPROVAL FOR RESEARCH (IRB)

Human Subjects Committee (HSC)
Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Dear Alexis L Hiott,

Proposal Title: Prestige of the Elementary Educator Profession and Levels of Job Satisfaction: Finding a Correlation

Submission date: Monday, December 4, 2023, 4:04 PM

The Human Subjects Committee (HSC) has received and reviewed the above-titled research proposal. I am happy to inform you that AU's IRB has voted to **APPROVE** your above- mentioned proposal. Your approval number is **AU202346IRB**. Please, whenever you contact us about this proposal, use your IRB approval number.

Also, be reminded that if at any point during the research, the risk level to any human subjects involved changes, either physical harm or loss of anonymity, or should you find it necessary to make any adjustments to the study as approved, please contact the HSC/IRB Chair in advance of implementing such changes. This may require that you submit an IRB Modification form.

We wish you well in your research.

If you need clarification regarding the committee's decision, please contact Dr. Gilbert Eyabi, IRB Chair, at HSC@andersonuniversity.edu.

Sincerely,

Gilbert Eyabi, PhD
12/20/2023
Professor of Mathematics, Assistant Provost,
IRB Chair, Anderson University.

APPENDIX B. SURVEY A

Start of Block: Block 1

Q2 What term best describes your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Prefer not to say (3)

Q3 What is your age?

- 18-29 (1)
- 30-39 (2)
- 40-49 (3)
- 50-59 (4)
- 60-69 (5)
- 70-79 (6)
- 80+ (7)
- Prefer not to say (8)

Q4 In which geographic location do you reside?

- Upstate SC (1)
- Other (2)
- Prefer not to say (3)

Q5 What is your annual household income?

- Less than $25,000 (1)
- $25,000 - $50,000 (2)
- $50,000 - $75,000 (3)
- $75,000 - $100,000 (4)
- $100,000 - $125,000 (5)
- $125,000 - $150,000 (6)
- More than $150,000 (7)
- Prefer not to say (8)

Q6 Which best describes your current employment status?

- Employed full time (1)
- Employed part time (2)
- Unemployed looking for work (3)
- Unemployed not looking for work (4)
- Retired (5)
- Student (6)
- Disabled (7)
- Other (8)
- Prefer not to say (9)

Q7 Which best describes your ethnicity?

- White (1)
- Black or African American (2)
- American Indian or Alaska Native (3)
- Asian (4)
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)
- Other (6)
- Prefer not to say (7)

Q8 Which category best describes your occupation?

- ○ Agriculture (1)
- ○ Utilities (2)
- ○ Finance (3)
- ○ Entertainment (4)
- ○ Healthcare (5)
- ○ Education (6)
- ○ Information Services (7)
- ○ Data Processing (8)
- ○ Food Services (9)
- ○ Hotel Services (10)
- ○ Ministry (11)
- ○ Legal Services (12)
- ○ Military/Law Enforcement (13)
- ○ Construction (14)
- ○ Other (15)
- ○ Prefer not to say (16)

Q9 What us your highest level of education?

- Less than high school (1)
- High school graduate (2)
- Some college (3)
- 2 year degree (4)
- 4 year degree (5)
- Master's Degree (6)
- Doctorate (7)
- Other (8)
- Prefer not to say (9)

End of Block: Block 1

Start of Block: Prestige

Q10 The prestige of the teaching profession has declined in recent years.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q11 The teaching profession has a promising future.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q12 I have a very high level of respect for teachers.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q13 Teachers are held in very high regard by the general public.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q14 I believe that teachers should be more highly compensated.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q15 I would recommend that a young person consider teaching as a profession.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q16 The collective bargaining rights of teachers should be protected.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q17 Unions have had a negative impact on the prestige of the teaching profession.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q18 Teacher tenure should be more difficult to earn.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q19 Teacher tenure helps ensure fairness in personnel decisions.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q20 The quality of teachers is very high in my community.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

Q21 Teacher unions have been effective in protecting state education funding.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q22 The teaching profession in this country attracts high quality candidates.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q23 I have a high level of trust in the ability of our teachers to educate our children.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q24 Teachers should be given more autonomy in curriculum development.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q25 Teacher unions are too involved in the political process.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q26 The involvement of teacher unions in the political process is important for the profession.

- ○ Strongly agree (6)
- ○ Somewhat agree (7)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (8)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (9)
- ○ Strongly disagree (10)

Q27 Teacher tenure makes it more difficult to remove ineffective teachers.

- ○ Strongly agree (16)
- ○ Somewhat agree (17)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (18)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (19)
- ○ Strongly disagree (20)

Q28 Teacher tenure contributes positively to student academic achievement.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q29 Tenure relieves some of the stress that teachers often experience by being in the profession.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q30 Please include any additional comments or thoughts here.

_____

End of Block: Prestige

APPENDIX C. SURVEY B

Q1 What is your gender?

- ○ Male (1)
- ○ Female (2)
- ○ Prefer not to say (3)

Q2 What is your age range?

- ○ 20-29 (1)
- ○ 30-39 (2)
- ○ 40-49 (3)
- ○ 50-59 (4)
- ○ 60+ (5)
- ○ Prefer not to say (6)

Q57 What grade level do you teach?

- ○ Kindergarten (1)
- ○ 1st Grade (2)
- ○ 2nd Grade (3)
- ○ 3rd Grade (4)
- ○ 4th Grade (5)
- ○ 5th Grade (6)
- ○ Related Arts (7)
- ○ Special Education (8)
- ○ Other (9)
- ○ Prefer not to say (11)

Q3 How many years have you been a certified teacher?

- ○ 0-10 years (1)
- ○ 10-20 years (2)
- ○ 20-30 years (3)
- ○ 30+ years (4)
- ○ Prefer not to say (5)

Q4 What region do you teach in?

- ○ Upstate SC (1)
- ○ Other (2)
- ○ Prefer not to say (3)

Q5 What is your ethnicity?

- ○ White (1)
- ○ Black or African American (2)
- ○ American Indian or Alaska Native (3)
- ○ Asian (4)
- ○ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)
- ○ Other (6)
- ○ Prefer not to say (7)

Q6 What is your highest level of education completed?

- ○ Less than high school (1)
- ○ High school graduate (2)
- ○ Some college (3)
- ○ 2 year degree (4)
- ○ 4 year degree (5)
- ○ Master's degree (6)
- ○ Doctorate (7)
- ○ Prefer not to say (8)

Page Break

Q7 I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q8 There is really too little chance for promotion on my job.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q9 My supervisor is quite competent in doing his/her job.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q10 I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q11 Many of our rules and procedures make doing a good job difficult.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q12 I like the people I work with.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q13 I sometimes feel my job is meaningless.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q14 Communications seem good within this organization.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q15 Raises are too few and far between.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q16 Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted.

- ○ Strongly agree (7)
- ○ Somewhat agree (8)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (9)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (10)
- ○ Strongly disagree (11)

Q17 My supervisor is unfair to me.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Somewhat agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

Q18 The benefits we receive are as good as most other organizations offer.

- ○ Strongly agree (6)
- ○ Somewhat agree (7)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (8)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (9)
- ○ Strongly disagree (10)

Q19 My efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by red tape.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q20 I find I have to work harder at my job because of the incompetence of people I work with.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q21 I like doing the things I do at work.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q22 The goals of this organization are not clear to me.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q23 I feel unappreciated by the organization when I think about what they pay me.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q24 People get ahead as fast here as they do in other places.

- Strongly agree (6)
- Somewhat agree (7)
- Neither agree nor disagree (8)
- Somewhat disagree (9)
- Strongly disagree (10)

Q25 My supervisor shows too little interest in the feelings of subordinates.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q26 The benefit package we have is equitable.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q27 I have too much to do at work.

- Strongly agree (6)
- Somewhat agree (7)
- Neither agree nor disagree (8)
- Somewhat disagree (9)
- Strongly disagree (10)

Q28 I enjoy my coworkers.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q29 I often feel that I do not know what is going on with the organization.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q30 I feel a sense of pride in doing my job.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q31 I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q32 There are benefits we do not have which we should have.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q33 I like my supervisor.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q34 I have too much paperwork.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q35 I am satisfied with my chances for promotion.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q36 There is too much bickering and fighting at work.

- Strongly agree (6)
- Somewhat agree (7)
- Neither agree nor disagree (8)
- Somewhat disagree (9)
- Strongly disagree (10)

Q37 My job is enjoyable.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q38 Work assignments are not fully explained.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q39 Do you feel your profession is valued by society?

_____

Q46 Are you satisfied with the level of professional respect you recieve from the general public?

_____

Page Break

Q47 It is important for me to be recognized for my accomplishments.

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Q48 I am satisfied with the recognition I receive for my work.

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

End of Block: Demographic Information

Start of Block: Block 1

Q50 Place a 5 by the individual or group you prefer to be recognized by the most. Then place a 4 by the individual or group you prefer next, then do the same for 3, 2, and 1.

The number 5 indicates the most preference and 1 the least preference.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)
Principal (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Team Leader (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Peers (3)	○	○	○	○	○
Students (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Parents (5)	○	○	○	○	○

Q51 Have you ever deserved to be recognized and weren’t

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Q53 Rate the frequency you have received each of the following types of non-monetary recognition from a principal, assistant principal, team leader, or peer.

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Very Often (5)
Note of thanks (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Praised in front of peers (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Verbal praise in front of others (3)	○	○	○	○	○
Email message (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Recognition in school or local newspaper/letter (5)	○	○	○	○	○
Pat on the back (6)	○	○	○	○	○
Hand shake (7)	○	○	○	○	○
Letter of commendation (8)	○	○	○	○	○
Participation in professional development activities (9)	○	○	○	○	○
Time off or leave early (10)	○	○	○	○	○

Q54 Rate the frequency you have received each of the following types of non-monetary recognition from students or parents.

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Very Often (5)
Note of thanks (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Praised in front of others (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Verbal praise given privately (3)	○	○	○	○	○
Email message (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Hand shake (5)	○	○	○	○	○
Hug (6)	○	○	○	○	○
Drawing or artwork (7)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Block 1

APPENDIX D. LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT- SURVEY A

Noneducator survey

Start of Block: Informed Consent

Q1 INFORMED CONSENT FOR
Proposed Dissertation Research Plan: Prestige of the Elementary Educator Profession and Levels of Job Satisfaction: Finding a Correlation
You are invited to participate in a research study that will measure the beliefs and opinions surrounding the prestige given to the elementary education public school teaching profession and the job satisfaction among elementary teachers at public schools. This study will pose no health risks or harm to the individual who will participate in the study and all information that will be provided during participation in the study will be fully anonymous and will be kept confidential. The information that will be collected during this study will help the researcher to identify potential correlations between prestige afforded to elementary educators and how this may or may not affect job satisfaction levels found among elementary educators' in public school systems. You will complete the survey intended for individuals working outside the field of education. This survey will measure your beliefs about the prestige of the elementary education profession. This study will be conducted by Alli Redman under the supervision of Dr. DeeDee Washington, Dissertation Committee Chair. You will be selected as a possible participant for this study because you are 18 years of age or older working in a career field outside of elementary education. If you decide to participate, you will immediately be directed to a survey where you will respond to a list of items with the answer that best matches your personal beliefs or opinions. Once the survey has been completed, you will exit the website. You will only participate in the survey once. Participation in the survey will take approximately 10-20 minutes. All responses will remain confidential and you will not be asked to provide any identifying information. There are no risks, harm, or discomfort present during participation should you choose to provide your consent for participation. The benefits of this study will include allowing the researcher to gain insight into the beliefs and opinions of those individuals working outside the field of education regarding how prestigious the elementary education is perceived to be. The information provided during participation of this study will allow the researcher the opportunity to evaluate the best way to foster any educational alterations that could be made for the betterment of the education system and/or local school and community relations. I cannot promise that you will receive any or all of the benefits described. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential. Information that will be collected through your participation may be used to fulfill an educational requirement, published in a professional journal, and/or presented at a professional meeting. If so, none of your identifiable information will be included. Data will be confidential and all information collected during the course of this study will be protected and all identifying data will be destroyed. Should you provide your consent for participation, you may withdraw from participation at any

time, without penalty, and you may withdraw any data which has been collected. Your decision whether or not to participate will not jeopardize your future relations with Anderson University in any way. If you have any questions I invite you to ask them now. If you have questions later, Alli Redman was happy to answer them. Please email at ahiott124@andersonuniversity.edu. For more information regarding your rights as a research participant you may contact the Co-Chairs of the Institutional Review Board by phone or e-mail. The HSC Co-Chairs, Dr. Joni Criswell and Dr. Robert Franklin, can be reached at (864) 231-2000 or by email at hsc@andersonuniversity.edu. If you wish to provide your consent to participate in this research study, please select "Yes, I consent to participating in this survey and confirm that I am not currently employed as an elementary teacher and am 18 years of age or older" and continue to the next page.

Survey Retrieved from:
Peplinski, J. M. (2014). Perception of the prestige of the teaching profession [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. California Lutheran University.

○ Yes, I consent to participating in this survey and confirm that I am not currently employed as an elementary teacher and am 18 years of age or older (1)

○ I disagree (2)

End of Block: Informed Consent

APPENDIX E. LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT- SURVEY B

Educator Survey

Start of Block: Informed Consent

Q56 INFORMED CONSENT FOR
Proposed Dissertation Research Plan: Prestige of the Elementary Educator Profession and Levels of Job Satisfaction: Finding a Correlation

You are invited to participate in a research study that will measure the beliefs and opinions surrounding the prestige given to the elementary education public school teaching profession and the job satisfaction among elementary teachers at public schools. This study will pose no health risks or harm to the individual participating in the study and all information provided during participation in the study will be fully anonymous and will be kept confidential. The information collected during this study will help the researcher to identify potential correlations between prestige afforded to elementary educators and how this may or may not affect job satisfaction levels found among elementary educators' in public school systems. You will complete the survey intended for individuals working as full time classroom educators in a public school teaching in grades kindergarten through fifth grade. This survey will measure your level of job satisfaction as well as the amount of respect and recognition you believe you receive for your professional work as an educator. This study will be conducted by Alli Redman under the supervision of Dr. DeeDee Washington, Dissertation Committee Chair. You will be selected as a possible participant for this study because you are employed full time as a public school elementary educator teaching any grade level between pre-kindergarten and fifth grade. If you choose to continue with this survey, you are confirming that you are currently employed as a certified elementary teacher in a public school in South Carolina. If you decide to participate, you will immediately be directed to a survey where you will respond to a list of items with the answer that best matches your personal beliefs or opinions. Once the survey has been completed, you will exit the website. You will only participate in the survey once. Participation in the survey will take approximately 10-20 minutes. There are no risks, harm, or discomfort present during participation should you choose to provide your consent for participation. All responses will remain confidential and you will not be asked to provide any identifying information. The benefits of this study will include allowing the researcher to gain insight into the beliefs and opinions of those individuals working outside the field of education regarding how prestigious the elementary education is perceived to be. The information that is provided during participation of this study will allow the researcher the opportunity to evaluate the best way to foster any educational alterations that could be made for the betterment of the education system and/or local school and community relations. I cannot promise that you will receive any or all of the benefits described. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential. Information collected through your participation may be used to fulfill an educational requirement, published in a professional journal, and/or presented at a

professional meeting. If so, none of your identifiable information will be included. Data will be confidential and all information collected during the course of this study will be protected and all identifying data will be destroyed. Should you provide your consent for participation, you may withdraw from participation at any time, without penalty, and you may withdraw any data which has been collected. Your decision whether or not to participate will not jeopardize your future relations with Anderson University or any school district in any way. If you have any questions I invite you to ask them now. If you have questions later Alli Redman was happy to answer them. Please email at ahiott124@andersonuniversity.edu. For more information regarding your rights as a research participant you may contact the Co-Chairs of the Institutional Review Board by phone or e-mail. HSC Co-Chairs, Dr. Jon Criswell and Dr. Robert Franklin, can be reached at (864) 231-2000 or by email at hsc@andersonuniversity.edu. If you wish to provide your consent to participate in this research study, please select "Yes, I consent to participate in this survey and confirm that I am currently employed as an elementary teacher in a public South Carolina school." to continue on the next page.

Survey retrieved from:
Bialopotocki, R. N. (2006). Recognition and praise relate to teachers' job satisfaction [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska.
Spector, P. (1985). Measurement of human service staff satisfaction: development of the job satisfaction survey. American Journal of Community Psychology, 13(6), 693- 713.
Spector, P. (1997). Job Satisfaction Application, Assessment, Causes, and Consequences. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

○ I consent to participate in this survey and confirm that I am currently employed as an elementary teacher in a public South Carolina school. (1)

○ I disagree (2)

End of Block: Informed Consent

Start of Block: Demographic Information

Page Break