Exploring How Physical Artifacts Motivate Teacher Leaders: A Hermeneutic Phenomenology about the Lived Experiences of Teacher Leaders

Allison A. Crum
Liberty University
aacrum@liberty.edu
ORCID ID 0009-0001-0262-3231

ABSTRACT
This hermeneutic phenomenology addressed the problem of falling teacher retention rates of K-12 teachers due to teacher burnout by exploring the lived experiences of teacher leaders and how they are motivated by physical artifacts. The theory framing this study is thing theory. Thing theory framed the study by exploring life experience and the relationship between teacher leaders and their things. The study offered additional information on the use of physical artifacts in qualitative research and the object discussion. This hermeneutic phenomenology used a triangulation of data collection including the semi-structured interview, object discussion, and in-person interviews. The research study setting was a K-12 charter school incorporated in rural Southeastern United States. The study included 16 teacher leaders from grades 2-12. Eligible candidates earned a qualifying score between 124 and 155 on the pre-screening survey, a valid and reliable tool adapted from two specific teacher leadership instruments. Findings suggest that teacher leadership creates positive experiences for teacher leadership and that physical artifacts motivate teacher leaders by creating a relational bridge and affirming professional choice.
Keywords: teacher leadership, thing theory, physical artifact, object discussion, self-efficacy, collective efficacy, teacher identity

INTRODUCTION
Historically, teacher leadership served as a means of improving school reform. The implementation of teacher leadership aimed to improve school reform efforts by democratically sharing authority through leadership frameworks such as distributed leadership (Spillane, 2005), in which leadership is shared between school administration and teacher leaders (Smylie et al., 2002; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Moreover, adding leadership to the role of teacher was meant to professionalize and empower teachers and offer a solution to teacher attrition (Hallinger et al., 2020). To date, teacher leadership has existed for well over a century, yet teacher turnover and attrition are at an all-time high, with some research reporting that half of all new teachers leave the field within the first five years (Lovett, 2023; Madigan & Kim, 202).

Socially, increasingly more educational research reports fewer teachers remaining in the field for many reasons, including but not limited to environmental factors such as school climate and culture and, to a greater degree, psychosocial factors such as being overworked, experiencing burnout, and feeling stress (Madigan & Kim, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2020; Schott et al., 2020). Teacher leadership remains a relevant and practical means of school reform, if only for the teacher leaders themselves. Teacher leaders experience positive leadership outcomes such as diverse collaborative leadership, empowered professional growth, transformative learning connections, and leadership and validation (Crum, 2024). Primarily, teacher leaders show high degrees of influence in the classroom, on peers, and in the school (Yalçın & Çoban, 2023). The influence expressed by teacher leaders takes many forms, such as pedagogical excellence (Harris & Jones, 2019) and overall school improvement (Shen et al., 2020) through professional development and mentorship (Nerlino, 2020). The role of the teacher leader and partnership with school administration, through shared authority, empowers the teacher leader to support increased self-agency and self-efficacy within the teacher leader (Nguyen et al.se, 2020). Nevertheless, the problem of teacher attrition continues to grow.

Theoretically, the field of teacher leadership lacks robust empirical evidence extending the research base of teacher leadership (McGinity et al., 2022; Pan et al., 2023). Therefore, this study aimed to make a significant theoretical contribution by applying the thing theory (Brown, 2001). The study explored the lived experiences of teacher leaders and how physical artifacts, or things, motivate them. Things collected and kept by teacher leaders often induce nostalgia, promoting the authentic self and action-forward motivation (Sedikides & Wildschut, 2023). Thing theory expresses the idea of objects transcending to the place of things through a relationship with the human, particularly the subject-object relationship, and is rooted in Heidegger's thing-centered worldview of "das ding" (Brown, 2001; Zhao, 2023). Things inhabit and animate; things deliver artistic and philosophical findings, bringing with them their presence, force, and meaning to society (Brown, 2001). Dipert (1995) reported the

hesitancy of literature in defining artifacts. Hence, physical artifacts in this study are things collected and kept by teachers because they hold significance. Objects that become things have lives of their own and are no longer being used in their practical or usual way but in a new way that is representative of the "uncanniness" and nostalgia of the fantasy of life (Robertson, 2020).

Problem and Purpose of the Study
The research study addressed the problem of the falling teacher retention rates of K-12 teachers due to teacher burnout (Lovett, 2023; Pineda-Báez et al., 2020; Shen et al., 2020). Teacher leadership, a widely implemented solution to school reform efforts, holds the potential for increased teacher motivation and retention (Gordon et al., 2021; Y. Liu et al., 2021). Extant literature reported teacher leaders as experiencing increased self-efficacy and motivation due to increased possibility and avenues of influence on peers and students (Nerlino, 2020; Schott et al., 2020), yet attrition looms as an insurmountable challenge to teacher leadership due to burnout caused by high degrees of responsibility on the part of the teacher leaders (Arthur & Bradley, 2023; Ingersoll, 2023; Madigan & Kim, 2021).

This hermeneutic phenomenological study explored how physical artifacts motivate teacher leaders at a K-12 charter school system in the rural Southeastern United States. The seminal work of York-Barr and Duke (2004) defined teacher leadership as the individual or collective manner by which teachers influence peers, principals, students, and stakeholders to improve instructional practices to increase student achievement. The theory framing this study is thing theory (Brown, 2001). This hermeneutic phenomenology exploring how physical artifacts motivate teacher leaders was necessary to extend the current body of teacher leadership literature and provide workable solutions to teacher attrition through the practical avenue of motivation represented by physical artifacts.

The Significance of the Study
The research study drew theoretical significance from the thing theory (Brown, 2001). Thing theory aligned with the focus of hermeneutic phenomenology through Heidegger's phenomenological traditions of joining phenomenology and the philosophy of appearances (Rømer, 2011). Thing theory framed the study by exploring life experience and the relationship between teacher leaders and their things. The lens of thing theory allowed the researcher to examine the importance of things collected, kept, treasured, and used by teacher leaders for optimism, motivation, authenticity, and the pursuit of goals (Sedikides & Wildschut, 2023). Moreover, the framework of thing theory allowed the examination of things belonging to teacher leaders and what they say about teacher leaders concomitant with nostalgia and its affair with one's imagined life (Robertson, 2020). Many researchers report extant teacher leadership research to be unconcerned with theory (Ford et al., 2020; McGinity et al., 2022). Thus, the application of theory to the field of teacher leadership research is vitally significant in extending the knowledge base. Although thing theory primarily applies to human sciences such as psychology and anthropology, it was relevant to this study to examine the relationship between teachers and the things they keep (Roberston, 2020).

The empirical significance of the research study was to fill a gap in the current research by exploring how teacher leaders are motivated (Gordon et al., 2021; Y. Liu et al., 2021) by physical artifacts. Teacher burnout and attrition pose ongoing challenges to educational leaders, so understanding what induces the motivation causing teachers to stay in the classroom is an under-developed area of research integral to teacher retention (Arthur & Bradley, 2023). Intrinsic motivation is an innate factor driving teacher performance currently augmented through professional learning opportunities meant to improve teacher quality through teacher accountability (Guenther, 2021). The persistent and growing problem of teacher attrition demands answers to gaps in the literature about teacher identity development (Hong et al., 2024). Teacher identity is a complex construct revealing what teachers do and how and why they do it (Schutz et al., 2020). Understanding how physical artifacts motivate teacher leaders offers a unique view of teacher identity that is often unexplored and an avenue into apprehending what causes teachers to stay in the classroom. The physical artifacts collected and kept by teacher leaders show relevant messages about the lived experiences of teacher leaders supporting the extension of the field (Mozeley et al., 2023). The field of teacher leadership research is rife with myriads of definitions and unclear avenues of teacher leadership influence, so further research into the lived experiences of teacher leaders offers the possibility of consolidating the term and potential for best implementation (Nguyen et al., 2020). Other empirical significance regards using physical artifacts in qualitative methodologies and the material potency of things teachers keep (Harrison et al., 2024; Mozely et al., 2023).

The research study was significant because it explored how physical artifacts motivate teacher leaders, revealing the potency of physical artifacts (Woodward, 2020) in the lives of teacher leaders. The research study aimed to maximize teacher leadership as a school reform effort, offering a potential solution to teacher burnout by using physical artifacts to motivate and provide professional learning for teacher leaders. The research study revealed how the physical artifact functions as a relational bridge, revealing experiences with well-being (Mozely et al.,

2023; Thorpe et al., 2024). Thus, the research study targeted why teacher leaders stay in the classroom by finding physical artifacts to validate and confirm through storytelling (Woodward, 2020).

Central Research Question
How do physical artifacts motivate teacher leaders?

LITERATURE REVIEW
Teacher Leadership
Extant literature shares a variety of definitions related to teacher leadership inhibiting the extension of knowledge (Berg & Zoellick, 2019; Nerlino, 2020). The variety of definitions includes the differing positions, dimensions, and roles of teacher leadership, incurring ambiguity and impeding the potency of teacher leadership as a means of school reform effort (York-Barr & Duke, 2004; Nguyen et al., 2020; Wenner & Campbell, 2017). The seminal work of York-Barr and Duke (2004) called attention to the role of teacher leader due to the complexities related to the position. Similarly, Wenner and Campbell (2017) shared concerns about the position of the teacher leader, dubbing it an 'umbrella' term that integrates infinite possibilities of functions. Within the field, definitions mistakenly promote normative teacher actions and behaviors like the assumption of authority, decision-making, and collaboration as leadership (Gümüş et al., 2022; Sawalhi & Chaaban, 2022; Wenner & Campbell, 2017). The ambiguity of the term exhausts research, slowing advancement with redundant and competing definitions and dimensions varying from the idea of leadership residing in the classroom next door and every teacher sharing ideas and being a leader (Gordon et al., 2021) to exhibiting leadership outside the classroom and school (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Other seminal works report teacher leadership centered on the teacher leader's influence, position, and performance (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Lieberman, 1988) such as needing proof of teacher leadership measured by the improvement of colleagues (Reid et al., 2022).

The variety of definitions and dimensions of teacher leadership reveal disagreement on the core theoretical meaning of the term diminishing rather than improving the legitimacy of teacher leadership (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2020; T. Wang et al., 2022). Recent research in the field of teacher leadership recognizes the need for a combined and operational definition, maximizing the potential of teacher leadership by offering unique variations of the term. Supovitz and Comstock (2023) targeted distributed leadership as a positive antecedent to teacher leadership. Distributed leadership, the most popular means of teacher leadership (Hallinger & Kovačević, 2022) elevates the role of the teacher leader from the classroom to the school and organization, thereby empowering teacher leaders (Gordon et al., 2021; Pineda-Báez et al., 2020). Oppi et al. (2023) delineated between the formal and informal and individual and collective aspects of teacher leadership, while Nerlino (2020) proposed four relevant dimensions of teacher leadership with a specific and compensated role for the teacher leader, extending the work of Berg and Zoellick (2019). Notably, out of 150 empirical articles, Nguyen et al., (2020) reported 17 different definitions along with the inadequacy of reports, 11 stating their definition of teacher leadership, and only six articles sharing their chosen definition from the extant literature. Therefore, the definition guiding this work is that of York-Barr & Duke (2004), stating that teacher leadership is how teachers influence all educational stakeholders, improving pedagogical practices to improve student achievement. Regardless of the manner, extant research agrees that teacher leadership unites the school community and promotes success for all stakeholders (Friesen & Brown, 2022).

Teacher Burnout and Attrition
The practice of teacher leadership produces overwhelmingly positive results, as reported in the literature (Schott et al., 2020), including both job satisfaction and student achievement as related outcomes (Fernández Espinosa & López González, 2023); however, a duality of teacher leadership exists whereby the nexus of burnout leading to attrition resides (Nerlino, 2020). Teacher attrition is a global problem, with the need for the global recruitment of 69 million teachers by 2030 (Madigan & Kim, 2021) to provide quality education. Teacher attrition is a common, longstanding problem in the United States (Han, 2023). Moreover, extant literature reports attrition in the ranks of new teachers, causing the loss of at least half of all new teachers within five years (Perryman & Calvert, 2020). Burnout, a state of exhaustion caused by demanding work conditions, cannot be reported as a direct cause of teacher attrition, but it is a contributing factor (Marcionetti & Castelli, 2023). The role of teacher leader offers a practical solution to burnout and attrition due to increased self-efficacy and feelings of empowerment, yet, coincidentally, the higher workload and greater responsibility of the role pose threats to job satisfaction (Nerlino, 2020). Often, when teachers transition from classroom teacher to teacher leader, the change generates resistance and opposition, resulting in isolation from peers due to the egalitarian nature of teaching (Nerlino, 2020; Sawalhi & Chaaban, 2022). Experiences such as these induce guilt and shame for the teacher leader, competing with the positive outcomes of teacher leadership (Schott et al., 2020). Nonetheless, extant literature reports teacher leadership, due to greater self-agency gained from leadership experience (Yoon & Goddard, 2023), as a means of increasing self-efficacy for the teacher leader and improving job satisfaction. These positive outcomes might draw

stronger candidates to the field and support teacher retention (Akman, 2021; Conan Simpson, 2021). This research study explored ways to increase teacher job satisfaction, offering a potential solution to teacher burnout, attrition, and gaps in the literature related to teacher identity (Hong et al., 2024) by answering how physical artifacts motivate teacher leaders.

Self-Efficacy and Collective Efficacy
Self-efficacy and collective efficacy are critical factors related to teacher motivation and degree of job satisfaction. Self-efficacy is an individual's belief about their ability to produce change and reach desired goals (Bandura, 1977a; Khan et al., 2024). Specifically, when teachers experience self-efficacy related to student engagement, learning, and achievement outcomes, it is known as teacher self-efficacy (Shafiee & Ghani, 2022). Self-efficacy is an essential factor in teacher leader because, when facing burnout and low job satisfaction, efficacious teachers exhibit greater degrees of resilience and self-esteem and are more active in leadership (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Kılınç et al., 2021) subsequently leading to higher morale and additional positive outcomes (Fernández Espinosa & López González, 2023; King & Holland, 2022; Yoon & Goddard, 2023). Efficacious teachers experience less conflict and closer relationships with students and exhibit persistence when facing challenging situations, positively affecting their teaching practices and overall commitment to the field (Marcionetti & Castelli, 2023; Yin et al., 2022). Collective efficacy includes the beliefs of the faculty, grade level, or department members related to their capability to create positive change and reach set goals (Bandura, 2000). Extant literature reports improved teacher morale and successful schools resulting from collective efficacy, while higher degrees of self-efficacy produce successful teachers, potentially leading to improved teacher retention (De Jong et al., 2022; Hosseingholizadeh et al., 2023; Y. Liu et al., 2022; Qadach et al., 2020).

Physical Artifacts in Qualitative Research
For this research study, artifacts are any objects humans make to which symbolic, emotional, and affective meanings are connected (Saldaña & Omasta, 2021). The physical artifacts collected by teacher leaders reveal their attitudes, beliefs, and values. Physical artifacts have stories, and through this research study, the researcher looked to infer the meanings of the artifacts that teacher leaders keep. The researcher applied four analytic frames for incorporating physical artifacts into qualitative research, including analysis of how the artifact is an extension of the owner, how the artifact belongs in its space, the symbolism of the artifact, and the process related to the thing (Saldaña & Omasta, 2021). The research study included object interviews during which the participants shared an artifact standing for their teacher leadership (Thorpe et al., 2024). The object interview prioritizes human experience and intelligence with objects instead of relying upon dialogue alone (Holmes, 2020).

The Study
The research study engaged a hermeneutic phenomenological research design with inductive data analysis and criterion sampling. The research study setting was a K-12 charter school incorporated in rural Southeastern United States. The study included 16 teacher leaders from grades 2-12. Eligible candidates earned a qualifying score between 124 and 155 on the pre-screening survey, a valid and reliable tool adapted from two specific teacher leadership instruments created by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) and J. Chen (2022). After acquiring IRB approval from Liberty University and site permission from the K-12 charter school incorporation Chief Educational Officer, all employed teachers, up to 190, were invited to participate in the study via email.

In total, 24 teachers responded. The researcher collected informed consent from 18 teachers, resulting in a final number of 16 participants. The 16 candidates participated in all three data collection methods: the semi-structured interview, object discussion, and in-person focus group meetings. For each method, data was collected in person and via Microsoft Teams to fit the candidate's schedule.

The researcher has a current CITI certification and receives no financial or otherwise gains from conducting the research. The data was stored on a password-protected computer that no one else could access. The researcher used qualitative data analysis software, NVivo 14, to aid the data analysis process and derive themes from codes with the highest frequency using theory as a lens.

Researcher's Positionality
The interpretive framework suited to my position as a researcher is social constructivism because, through it, I assign meaning to the world concerning my lived experiences, including both where I live and where I work (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Like hermeneutic phenomenology, social constructivism seeks to find meaning through people's personal and subjective experiences and views, such as the research study participants (Naidoo & Mabaso, 2023). Social constructivism is well partnered with hermeneutic phenomenology because both "borrow" the experiences of others to find more profound and more significant meaning in the world (van Manen, 2015).

Interpretive Framework

The qualitative methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology permits the researcher to understand and interpret participants' lived experiences. Before delving into the research study's findings, the reader must understand how my thoughts and behaviors influence my personal beliefs and biases, acting as a lens through which I view the world (Smith, 2020).

I am the middle of three siblings and a first-generation college graduate. My younger sister earned her college degree in adulthood, four months before succumbing to breast cancer. My older sister graduated from high school and stayed home due to her disability. My parents both dropped out of high school in their teenage years to earn their general equivalency diploma (GED) in adulthood. My parents are determined and hard-working individuals who inspired and motivated me from an early age to pursue my education. I grew up believing in the power of education even though I did not have a role model with higher learning to whom I could look, so I found my role models at school as teachers.

While still in grade school, I decided, rightfully so, that I would become a teacher. Thus far, I have been in school my entire life, whether as a student, teacher, administrator, instructional specialist, or curriculum coordinator; I have dedicated my life to pursuing education for myself and my students. I have been a teacher leader in middle and high schools, and the teacher leader role has been the best professional development I have ever experienced. Teacher leadership empowered my personal growth as an educator and a leader, and this is why I earned my master's in educational leadership and, finally, my doctorate. Although I no longer have a classroom or students, I still consider teacher leadership my responsibility and duty. On every possible occasion, I champion teacher leadership.

Therefore, this research study on how teacher leaders are motivated by physical artifacts holds excellent personal value because I see the vitality of teacher leadership diminishing under the strain of increased workload and responsibility. Teacher leadership is valuable to education, and it is incumbent upon educational researchers to uncover ways to fill the gaps in the literature, like teacher identity and motivation, and solve the pervasive problems, such as burnout and attrition, facing the field. This research study aimed to present the experiential reality of teacher leaders' lifeworlds (van Manen, 2015) through the theoretical framework of thing theory and is a work of human science research and the heart, which Rousseau says provides surer insight than reason (van Manen, 2015).

Findings

This hermeneutic phenomenological study explored how physical artifacts motivate teacher leaders at a K-12 charter school system in the rural Southeastern United States. The seminal work of York-Barr and Duke (2004) defined teacher leadership as the individual or collective manner by which teachers influence peers, principals, students, and stakeholders to improve instructional practices to increase student achievement. The theory framing this study is thing theory (Brown, 2001). Table 1 provides an overview of the study's themes, sub-themes, and codes.

The study revealed the lifeworld of the teacher leaders and how they are motivated by physical artifacts. The triangulation of data collection methods provided rich evidence revealing themes and sub-themes expressing the lifeworld of the candidates. Data analysis uncovered three themes with two sub-themes each. The themes and sub-themes follow:

- Inspired Leadership Embracing Growth with the sub-themes Motivating and Challenging and A Bridge to Connection
- Personal Connections Facilitating Engagement with sub-themes Sense of Belonging and Reflection and Emotional Connection
- Small Victories Confirming Effort with the sub-themes Accomplishment and Ownership and Affirmation of Effort

Table 1: *Themes, Sub-themes, and Codes*

Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes
Theme 1 Inspired Leadership Embracing Growth	Motivating and Challenging A Bridge to Connection	Belief in Self, Leading with Peers, How I changed, Where TL Happens, Answering to Others, I Can Do It, Confidence, Experienced Teacher, Collaborative Culture, Lending a Hand, Influencing Peers, Leading

		in the Classroom, Modeling for Peers, Modeling for Students, Practical Use, Taking Initiative, Improved Job Satisfaction, More Work and Stress, Teacher Leadership Behaviors, Trusting Relationships, Purposeful Planning
Theme 2 Personal Connections Facilitating Engagement	Reflection and Emotional Connection Sense of Belonging	Evidence of Student Learning, Improving Learning, Close Relationships with Students, Curriculum and instruction, Encouraging Students, Any Signs of Growth, Applying Learning to Real Life, Reaching Goals, Student Grades, Handwritten Notes from Students, Students Share Feedback, Students Gave it To Me, Very Important to Me
Theme 3 Small Victories Confirming Effort	Accomplishment and Ownership Affirmation of Effort	Confirms My Career Choice, Motivating, Feeling Good, Delegating Tasks to Peers, Uncertainty about Leading Peers, Being Just the Leader, Frustrating, Self-Doubt, Greater Responsibility, Highly Stressed, Improved Job Satisfaction, Keeps Me Going, Leading Peers, Just the Leader, Uncertain about Leading, Monitoring Students, Challenging, Types of Physical Artifacts, Notes and Cards from Students and Colleagues

Inspired Leadership Embracing Growth

All rounds of data collection, including the semi-structured interview, object discussion, and in-person focus groups, created evidence supporting theme one. All 16 participants referenced theme one in their interviews and discussions. The data collection resulted in the most significant references to this theme, with the richest quotes allowing for a deeper understanding of the lifeworld of teacher leaders and how physical artifacts motivate them. Theme one revealed that the role of teacher leadership nurtures inspiration within the teacher leader through the experiences of facing and overcoming challenging situations, resulting in motivation and fueling future success. Further, the role of the teacher leader allows the leader to build bridges of connection with students, peers, and stakeholders. Lilly Marie, a second-year teacher, said, "Everyone needs to feel supported." She also wanted to reassure others that they were "doing things right" and ensuring students and peers were "seen and heard." Jennifer, an 18-year veteran teacher, shared her goal of "doing what is best for the section" and "showing positive examples" in a teacher leader's classroom. Jennifer directly addressed the sub-theme of motivating and challenging when referring to "not bossing" and leadership opportunities requiring her to be "assertive" and to "pick their battles."

Lisa, a veteran teacher with over 30 years of experience, shared about leadership in the classroom. She does not tolerate misbehavior in the classroom and takes care of student behavior without the aid of the school administration. This information directly relates to the motivating and challenging experiences of teacher leadership. With this quote, Lisa also shared additional challenges related to leading peers, "I have been privately a mediator between folks." Moreover, Lisa shared experiences of "there are haters" and teacher leadership of peers "being more collaborative than leadership." Most importantly, Lisa shared their inspiration and motivation for students to have fun in class so they "would come to school every day" and the utmost desire to "keep their team together."

Trusting relationships, a nuanced code supporting theme one and the sub-theme of bridges of connection, revealed how teacher leaders forge relationships with students and peers. A veteran math teacher, Bethany, shared how

students who hate math love her class. Courtney, another veteran math teacher, shared her goal of making students comfortable in class, and Debra, another veteran math teacher, repeatedly emphasized her goal of building a classroom community. While math can be daunting for some students, these math teacher leaders work hard to build bridges of connection, embracing growth.

Improved job satisfaction, a code with 52 references, included phrases such as, "I do not feel like I will get burned out" and "You cannot associate teacher leadership with extra work." Several teacher leaders in the study referred to emotional well-being and how they maintain self-care. Bobby, a third-year high school electives teacher, said, "I mentally prepare for what I need to do beginning on Sunday afternoon." Courtney shared how she prepares for school, so they do not have to bring work home. Further, Courtney shared that her leadership goal is to retain teachers by helping them reduce their workload. Lisa shared the decision to not "dabble in too many things," thereby protecting herself from burnout.

Directly related to the embracing growth aspect of theme one, *belief in self*, a dense code with 65 references revealed that teacher leaders experience self-efficacy and have confidence in their abilities. Related to this, teacher leaders shared words such as "self-fulfilled," "proud of myself," "I feel important," "I positively affect others," "More confident," "Gave me a little boost," and "I am doing what I am supposed to be doing." Although teacher leadership of students and peers can be challenging, teacher leaders experience inspiration through leadership, which results in growth.

Personal Connections Facilitating Engagement
A triangulation of data supports theme two with references from each data collection method. Theme two exemplified the lived experiences of teacher leaders by capturing the essence of personal connection through the sub-themes of reflection, emotional connection, and sense of belonging. Teacher leaders create personal connections through academic means such as instruction and learning, as shown by the codes, with 73 references related to *evidence of student learning*, *curriculum and instruction,* and *student grades.* For example, the following descriptions capture the essence of the codes, student data related to testing, meeting the goals set by behavior plans, feeling emotionally secure, bridging gaps in academic learning, and students showing progress and mastery of content. However, the most powerful method of facilitating engagement occurs through reflection, emotional connections, and feeling a sense of belonging. The emotional connections created by teacher leaders significantly impact the engagement of peers and students. Emotional connections confirm the leader's career path and forge strong and lasting bonds, inducing feelings of belonging for the teacher leader and the recipients of the teacher's leadership. To this end, Pam shared that "Empowering students to become problem solvers" facilitates engagement. During the object discussion, Elizabeth stated, "[Physical artifacts] state I made a difference in somebody's life."

The study participants with the most to say about these two were Debra, with 32 references; Elizabeth, with 25 references; Jillian, with 15 references; and Hayley, with 16 references. Debra shared that the satisfaction she experiences from teacher leadership is "verification that I am doing what I am supposed to be doing." Further, Debra shared that she desires to instill faith in her teaching ability and that student learning is the reason she teaches directly relating to the sub-theme of sense of belonging. Elizabeth, regarding the object discussion and collection of physical artifacts, said many of the objects she collected throughout her 40-year career are notes written by former students who struggled and succeeded in her math class. A veteran math teacher, Jillian, shared that she collects and rereads handwritten notes from students, parents, and administration because they "encourage her to be a good teacher." A novice teacher, Hayley shared how she monitors student progress through "conversations with students" and "happy mail notes." The physical artifacts shared during the object interview exemplify a sense of belonging for teacher leaders.

Influencing students, a parent code with 245 references included child codes referencing the ways teacher leaders influence students. The study revealed ways of influencing students, including *trusting relationships*, *evidence of student learning*, *encouragement of students*, and *handwritten notes*. Relating the emotional influence exhibited by teacher leaders, Lilly Marie, during the object discussion, recounted a story about her first-year teaching as a preschool teacher and a challenging situation with one student. The student, formerly combative, grew to trust Lilly Marie, and the physical artifact chosen for the object interview, a silly, seasonal headband, was the vehicle for building that trust. Lilly Marie shared how she allowed the student to wear the headband and how the gesture sparked a trusting relationship. She went on to say that, although she teaches high school now, she wears the headband as a reminder of the first powerful experience of winning her student's trust. From a different point of view, Marie, a veteran high school English teacher, shared how she works to find ways to help her students achieve and do well. Marie related an example of personal connection and facilitating engagement by influencing students by creating a data sheet collecting students' answers to questions about what motivates them to learn. Marie shared

student answers such as "ice cream" and "using headphones." Teacher leaders maximize the power of their influence to create personal connections and facilitate engagement.

Small Victories Confirming Effort
Theme three included references from all three data sources, resulting in data triangulation. Theme three depicts the dual nature of teacher leadership by exploring the notion of small victories. Small victories often yield compromises, yet teacher leaders view them as proof that personal effort wins. The sub-themes of accomplishment and ownership and affirmation of effort portray the essence of teacher leadership through codes such as *keeps me going*, illustrating how the objects collected by teacher leaders incite them to keep working because the objects "show they love me too." The code *motivating* supports the sub-theme of accomplishment and ownership by apprehending how teacher leaders view the work of leadership. Regarding the code *motivating* and the sub-theme affirmation of effort, the study participants used words such as "genuine," "warm feelings to my heart," and "I mattered."

In *leading peers,* a code with 66 references, Harper, a veteran teacher secondary teacher, shared about mentoring a novice science teacher, trouble-shooting with experienced colleagues, and promoting positive behavior through positive feedback. Heather shared that teacher leadership means engendering "followership" among students and peers. Stanley, a third-year teacher, shared how he finds leading peers whose experience exceeds his challenging. Conversely, Pam called for "training sessions" on teacher leadership and more teacher leaders in general. In that vein, the competing ideas of *delegating tasks to peers*, *uncertainty about leading peers*, and *being just the leader* add layers of meaning to theme three. Lisa shared that she "likes to delegate more." Considering feeling uncertain about leading, Marie mentioned "self-confidence" as an issue. In the in-person focus group, Heather and Elizabeth shared that the best leaders "treated me as an equal." The code, *leading peers*, offers insight into the small victories that confirm effort for teacher leaders.

Challenging, a code with 31 references and *confirms my career choice*, with 33 references, relates the elements of effort, accomplishment, victory, and affirmation within the contradictory lifeworld of teacher leaders. Bethany shared about her physical artifact, a toolbox, and how it symbolizes what she tries to do for students and peers. Autumn shared that the written feedback she gets from students is "humbling" in sincerity. Debra said her physical artifact, a quilt with a motivational quote, challenges her "to go for it every day." Elizabeth, relating how student behavior can be challenging, said some students for whom math was hard were "goofy," yet she ended the sentiment by saying they made "me laugh." The physical artifact was integral to the code and *confirmed my career choice* because it physically confirmed the influence and leadership of the teacher leader.

Table 2 follows, listing participants, years taught, words describing the artifact, physical artifact, and grade level taught. Following Table 2, a short narrative provides more information about the object discussion and how the research study answered the central research question.

Table 2: *Participants and Physical Artifacts*

Teacher Participant	Years Taught	Words Describing Artifact	Physical Artifact	Grade Level
Debra	30 +	Treasure, inspirational, reflection	Inspirational hanging quilt from parents from first-year teaching	9-12
Autumn	1	Humbling, empowering, sweet	Notes and pictures from students from first-year teaching	6-12
Harper	16	Vital, fluid, neat	Portable, paper calendar	6-12
Jennifer	18	Encouragement, a breath of fresh air, a reminder	Holy Bible	6
Marie	15	Research-based, useful, inspirational	Table of student motivators, self-created	10
Heather	8	Sentimental, fulfilling, sad	Manilla folder kept in classroom with notes from stakeholders	6-12
Bobby	3	Connection, feel good, personal	School yearbook with handwritten notes from students	9-12
Lisa	32	Special, relevant, funny	Kitty paw pointer from student	5

Bethany	26	Portable, resource, adapt, organized chaos	Toolbox with tools inside inspired by her father	8
Stanley	3	Empathy, caring, motivate	A note left by student from first year teaching	6-8
Elizabeth	42	Uplifting, motivating, and treasured	A box of student letters from first year teaching	9-12
Hayley	1	Special, heartfelt, and honest	Flashback Friday student worksheet	2
Pam	20	Delicate, unique, and ongoing	Seashell reference book	6-8
Courtney	27	Confidence, relevance, and intelligent	Cross-curricular student math unit, self-created	7-8
Jillian	18	Motivating, heartwarming, good	Folder of things collected from first year of teaching	6-12
Lilly Marie	2	Perseverance, empathy, joy	Seasonal, silly headband from self-bought	9-12

Debra
Debra is a veteran math teacher with over 30 years of experience. She used the words *treasure, inspirational,* and *reflection* to describe her physical artifact. Debra's artifact was a hanging wall quilt with an inspirational saying stitched into it. The saying follows, "Good, better, best! Never let it rest until your good is better and your better is best." Debra explained how her mother, a non-quilter, now in her late 80s, quilted that for her to hang in her first classroom over 30 years ago. She shared how the quilt has decorated each of her classrooms throughout the years and how the inspirational saying has become her motto. Debra related the story of receiving the quilt with tears in her eyes because her dad had passed away and charged her with not stopping until her better was best. She mentioned how she often points it out to students when they struggle and nostalgically recalls her dad's voice. While relating this story, Debra brushes tears from her eyes. For Debra, the physical artifact evokes memories of transitioning into adulthood and how her parents "sent" her off to work. The artifact motivates her to do her best for her students because that is what her daddy, an educator like her, would have wanted.

Autumn
Autumn is a new teacher with only one year of experience. She used the words *humbling, empowering,* and *sweet* to describe her artifacts. She had two artifacts: a handwritten note from a student explaining why she was her favorite teacher and a note with a doodled picture saying how she was the number one teacher. In the object discussion, Autumn directly answered how the physical artifact motivated her when she related how the artifacts confirm "why she does this." She also shared how, should she stop receiving physical artifacts like these, she would have to "re-evaluate" herself.

Harper
Harper is a veteran teacher who is currently not assigned to students. She used the words *vital, fluid,* and *neat* to describe her physical artifact, a portable paper calendar into which she pencils crucial, time-sensitive information. For her, the artifact symbolizes how she is a role model for students and teaches them to be responsible with their time by modeling the attribute herself. The physical artifact motivates her because it reminds her of a critical attribute she must model for her students and those around her.

Jennifer
Jennifer is a veteran teacher at the middle school. She used the words *encouragement, breath of fresh air,* and *reminder* to describe her physical artifact, the Holy Bible. She related a story about how she was a member of an unhealthy teaching team, and the bible encouraged her to be to others what she needed during that negative time in her life. She said teaching and leading in middle school is challenging, but the bible motivates her through encouraging and soothing scriptures.

Marie
Marie is a veteran high school English teacher. She used the words *research-based*, *useful*, and *inspirational* to describe her artifact, a self-created spreadsheet of students' self-reported items describing what would motivate them to participate in class. Marie said the artifact inspires her to do more for her students, answering the central research question.

Heather

Heather is a veteran high school English teacher in the Exceptional Student Education department. She used the words *sentimental, fulfilling*, and *sad* to describe her artifact. Her artifact was a folder of handwritten notes, cards, and pictures from students, colleagues, and parents. She pulled three different artifacts from the folder and shared stories related to each. She shared how the artifacts remained with her for motivation even though she recently moved classrooms. She directly answered the central research question when sharing how the artifacts belonged to her so she could access them when she had a "hard" day. Interestingly, Heather described her artifact as sad because she thinks it sad that she needs something like an artifact for personal affirmation when she works so hard as a teacher leader.

Bobby

Bobby is a third-year electives teacher in high school. He used the words *connection, feel good*, and *personal* to describe his artifact, a high school yearbook with handwritten notes from students. Bobby's eyes were full as he described what it meant to him that students took the initiative to write in his yearbook on their own time. The artifact motivates him because it shows that he did reach a few students.

Lisa

Lisa is a veteran elementary teacher who used the words *memorable, relevant*, and *funny* to describe her artifact, a pointer with a kitty paw at the end of it. She shared that a student bought it for her one year when she took her class to the book fair. Lisa said it was a surprise. She uses it for practical purposes, such as pointing out things with a dash of humor. Related to the central research question, the physical artifact motivates Lisa to instill humor into her lessons by reminding her that she teaches children who look up to her.

Bethany

Bethany is a veteran teacher currently teaching middle school math. Her physical artifact was a tool box containing typical tools. She used the words *portable, resource, adapt*, and *organized chaos* to describe her artifact. She shared how her dad inspired her to have her toolbox at school and how she helps many teachers during preschool planning when decorating classrooms. However, she related the symbolic meaning of the toolbox regarding teaching and learning math and the need for tools to complete the work. She also related the symbolic meaning of the toolbox and how it is a connecting point between her and other teachers who now see her as someone to rely upon for help. In answer to the central research question, Bethany's toolbox motivates her to provide what others need when they need it.

Stanley

Stanley is a third-year electives teacher at the middle school level. His artifact was an anonymous student note left behind on his desk. He used the words *empathy, caring*, and *motivate* to describe the note. The note said, "The way I see it. If you want the rainbow, you must put up with the rain." He said the note arrived by "cool timing." Stanley said he references the note every few weeks when he "is not having a good day." Stanley's artifact motivates him because it shows that someone "did care."

Elizabeth

Elizabeth is a veteran teacher with over 40 years of experience. She brought a few handwritten notes and cards from a more extensive collection she keeps at home. She described the artifacts as *uplifting, motivating*, and *treasured*. She stated that she has been collecting artifacts like these since her first year of teaching. The physical artifacts motivate Elizabeth because they tell her why she teaches and encourages her when she questions whether she is making a difference. When asked to read from one of the cards, Elizabeth begins only to stop with tears in her eyes, saying it is too "emotional" for her.

Hayley

Hayley is a novice elementary teacher, and her artifact was a Flashback Friday student handout, which she described as *unique, heartfelt*, and *honest*. Hayley shared how the handout proved she could help a student make friends in class. During the object discussion, Hayley shared about the student to whom the handout belonged. The student was struggling to make friends. The handout related to Hayley and how the student made "great friends." This year, Hayley challenged herself to work on the social-emotional learning of her students, and the artifact proved that she achieved her goal.

Pam

Pam, a veteran teacher, chose a seashell reference book as her physical artifact. She described it as *delicate, unique*, and *ongoing*. Pam symbolically related the seashell and its growth to teacher leadership and the influence of a teacher leader. She expressed how the seashell is a "metaphor for beauty and uniqueness in handling other

humans." Pam's physical artifact motivated her because it figuratively reminded her to handle her students carefully.

Courtney

Courtney is a veteran middle school teacher whose physical artifact was her first self-created cross-curricular project. She described the artifact as *confident*, *relevant*, and *intelligent*. She explained how and why she developed the unit on her own and how her students engaged with it. The artifact is significant because it was her first unit of that type. Since then, Courtney has created several units, which she posted online for free teacher use. Courtney's physical artifact motivates her to believe in her ability to create learning units for students.

Jillian

Jillian, a veteran secondary teacher, brought a few handwritten notes from students, colleagues, and administrators as her physical artifact. Jillian described the artifacts as *motivating*, *heartwarming*, and *sound*. Jillian shared the importance of her artifacts by describing how her file of artifacts follows no matter where she moves as a military wife and teacher. She also files the artifacts next to her tax documents. Like Debra and Elizabeth, Jillian grew very emotional when reading from her artifacts. Jillian shared that she thinks every teacher should have a folder of artifacts and work to be the teacher the artifacts describe.

Lilly Marie

Lilly Marie is a second-year high school teacher whose artifact was a silly, seasonal headband that she described as *perseverance*, *empathy*, and *joy*. She recounted how the artifact was integral in helping her build a trusting relationship with a struggling student. She keeps the artifact to remind herself when having a "really bad day" that what she does matters.

Conclusion

The research study corroborated several existing empirical findings in teacher leadership research. To begin, teacher leaders experience many positive outcomes, including earning legitimacy from peers, such as Harper's mentorship of new teachers. Legitimacy occurs when peers recognize leadership in the classroom next door (Bezzina & Bufalino, 2019; Harris & Jones, 2022) and seek help from those with the necessary "toolbox" like that belonging to Bethany. Another positive outcome of teacher leadership is individual and collective improvement experienced through self-efficacy and collective efficacy (Donohoo et al., 2020; Goddard et al., 2021). For example, Lisa's desire to keep her team together and the codes referencing improved pedagogy. Further, as expressed in the themes and sub-themes, teacher leadership embodies various behaviors and nuanced meanings (Nguyen et al., 2020; Pan et al., 2023; Schott et al., 2020; Wenner & Campbell, 2017).

The study addressed burnout-related factors through all three themes and sub-theme groupings. While the physical artifact and the object discussion do not offer an overall solution to teacher burnout and subsequent teacher attrition, the lived experiences expressed by the study's participants provide insight into why teachers stay (Marcionetti & Castelli, 2023). Further research into making every teacher a teacher leader must occur to maximize the influence of teacher leadership for all stakeholders, but most importantly, the teacher leader. Further, for the teacher leader, the physical artifact is a tangible reminder of why they teach. When teachers have bad days, the physical artifact lifts their spirits, reminding them that they make a difference and have the skills to complete the job. Teacher leaders express great resiliency; the physical artifact is a touchpoint for that resiliency. The artifacts hold material potency (Mozely, 2023), expanding the understanding of the lifeworlds of teacher leaders and creating relational bridges (Thorpe et al., 2024).

REFERENCES

Akman, Y. (2021). The relationships among teacher leadership, teacher self-efficacy and teacher performance. *Kuramsal Eğitimbilim Dergisi*, 14(4), 720-744. https://doi.org/10.30831/akukeg.930802

Arthur, L., & Bradley, S. (2023). Teacher retention in challenging schools: please don't say goodbye!. *Teachers and Teaching, 29*(7-8), 753-771. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2023.2201423

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, *84*(2), 191-215. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0033-295X.84.2.191

Bandura, A. (2000). Exercise of human agency through collective efficacy. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *9*(3), 75–78. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8721.00064

Bellibaş, M. Ş., Gümüş, S., & Liu, Y. (2021). Does school leadership matter for teachers' classroom practice? The influence of instructional leadership and distributed leadership on instructional quality. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, *32*(3), 387-412. https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2020.1858119

Berg, J. H., & Zoellick, B. (2019). Teacher leadership: Toward a new conceptual framework. *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*, *4*(1), 2-14. https://doi.org/10.1108/JPCC-06-2018-0017

Bezzina, C., & Bufalino, G. (2019). Nurturing authentic leadership for teacher leaders: The challenges ahead. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, *55*(1), 18-23. https://doi.org/10.1080/00228958.2019.1549434

Brown, B. (2001). Thing Theory. *Critical Inquiry*, *28*(1), 1-22. https://doi.org/10.1086/449030

Chen, J. (2022). Understanding teacher leaders' behaviours: Development and validation of the teacher leadership inventory. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *50*(4), 630-648. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143220945704

Conan Simpson, J. (2021). Fostering teacher leadership in K-12 schools: A review of the literature. *Performance Improvement Quarterly, 34*(3), 229-246. https://doi.org/10.1002/piq.21374

Crum, A. (2024). An exploration of how teacher leaders perceive their influence on student learning: A transcendental phenomenology of the experiences of teacher leaders [Doctoral dissertation, Liberty University]. *Scholars Crossing*. The Institutional Repository of Liberty University. https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/5962/

De Jong, L., Meirink, J., & Admiraal, W. (2022). School-based collaboration as a learning context for teachers: A systematic review. *International Journal of Educational Research, 112*, 101927. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2022.101927

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dipert, R. R., & The Hegeler Institute. (1995). Some issues in the theory of artifacts: defining 'artifact' and related notions. *Monist*, *78*(2), 119-135. https://doi.org/10.5840/monist199578218

Donohoo, J., O'Leary, T., & Hattie, J. (2020). The design and validation of the enabling conditions for collective teacher efficacy scale (EC-CTES). *Journal of Professional Capital & Community, 5*(2), 147–166. https://doi.org/10.1108/JPCC-08-2019-0020

Fernández Espinosa, V., & López González, J. (2023). The effect of teacher leadership on students' purposeful learning. *Cogent Social Sciences, 9*(1).

Ford, T. G., Lavigne, A. L., Fiegener, A. M., & Si, S. (2020). Understanding district support for leader development and success in the accountability era: A review of the literature using social-cognitive theories of motivation. *Review of Educational Research, 90*(2), 264–307. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654319899723

Friesen, S., & Brown, B. (2022). Teacher leaders: Developing collective responsibility through design-based professional learning. *Teaching Education, 33*(3), 254-271. https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210.2020.1856805

Goddard, R. D., Bailes, L. P., & Kim, M. (2021). Principal efficacy beliefs for instructional leadership and their relation to teachers' sense of collective efficacy and student achievement. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 20*(3), 472-493. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2019.1696369

Gordon, S. P., Jacobs, J., Croteau, S. M., & Solis, R. (2021). Informal teacher leaders: Who they are, what they do, and how they impact teaching and learning. *Journal of School Leadership, 31*(6), 526–547. https://doi.org/10.1177/1052684620924468

Guenther, A. R. (2021). "It should be helping me improve, not telling me I'm a bad teacher": The influence of accountability-focused evaluations on teachers' professional identities. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 108*, 103511. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103511

Gümüş, S., Çağatay Kılınç, A., & Bellibaş, M. S. (2022). The relationship between teacher leadership capacity at school and teacher self-efficacy: The mediating role of teacher professional learning. *School Leadership & Management, 42*(5), 478-497. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2022.2123791

Hallinger, P., Gümüş, S., & Bellibaş, M. Ş. (2020). 'Are principals instructional leaders yet?' A science map of the knowledge base on instructional leadership, 1940–2018. *Scientometrics, 122*(3), 1629-1650. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-020-03360-5

Hallinger, P., & Kovačević, J. (2022). Mapping the intellectual lineage of educational management, administration and leadership, 1972–2020. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 50*(2), 192-216. https://doi.org/10.1177/17411432211006093

Han, E. (2023). The gendered effects of teachers' unions on teacher attrition: Evidence from district-teacher matched data in the US. *Feminist Economics, 29*(1), 141-173. https://doi.org/10.1080/13545701.2022.2105375

Harris, A., & Jones, M. (2022). Teachers leading enquiry. *School Leadership & Management, 42*(4), 309-312. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2022.2117522

Harrison, M., Rhodes, T., & Lancaster, K. (2024). Object-oriented interviews in qualitative longitudinal research. *Qualitative Research* : QR, https://doi.org/10.1177/14687941241255248

Holmes, H. (2020). Material relationships: Object interviews as a means of studying everyday life. *Mundane Methods*. https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526152732.00011.

Hong, J., Cross Francis, D., & Schutz, P. A. (2024). Reconceptualizing teacher identity development. *Educational Psychologist, 59*(3), 159-176. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2023.2292713

Hosseingholizadeh, R., Amrahi, A., & El-Farr, H. (2023). Instructional leadership, and teacher's collective efficacy, commitment, and professional learning in primary schools: A mediation model. *Professional Development in Education, 49*(3), 518-535. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2020.1850510

Ingersoll, R. M., & Tran, H. (2023). Teacher shortages and turnover in rural schools in the US: an organizational analysis. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 59*(2), 396-431. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161x231159922

Katzenmeyer, M., & Moller, G. (2009). *Awakening the sleeping giant; helping teachers develop as leaders*, 3d ed. Ringgold, Inc.

Khan, F., Preeti, & Gupta, V. (2024). Examining the relationships between instructional leadership, teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction: a study of primary schools in India. *Journal of Educational Administration, 62*(2), 223-238. https://doi.org/10.1108/jea-09-2022-0145

Kılınç, A. Ç., Bellibaş, M. Ş., & Bektaş, F. (2021). Antecedents and outcomes of teacher leadership: the role of teacher trust, teacher self-efficacy and instructional practice. *International Journal of Educational Management, 35*(7), 1556-1571. https://doi.org/10.1108/ijem-04-2021-0148

King, F., & Holland, E. (2022). A transformative professional learning meta-model to support leadership learning and growth of early career teachers. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2022.2037021

Lieberman, A. (1988). *Building a professional culture in schools*. Teachers College Press, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1234 Amsterdam Ave., New York, NY 10027.

Liu, Y., Bellibaş, M. Ş., & Gümüş, S. (2021). The effect of instructional and distributed leadership on teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction: Mediating roles of supportive school culture and teacher collaboration. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 49*(3), 430–453. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143220910438

Liu, Y., Li, L., & Huang, C. (2022). To what extent is shared instructional leadership related to teacher self-efficacy and student academic performance in China? *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 33*(3), 381-402.

Lovett, S. (2023). Teacher leadership and teachers' learning: Actualizing the connection from day one. *Professional Development in Education*, https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2023.2235583

Madigan, D. J., & Kim, L. E. (2021). Towards an understanding of teacher attrition: A meta-analysis of burnout, job satisfaction, and teachers' intentions to quit. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 105*, 103425. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103425

Marcionetti, J., & Castelli, L. (2023). The job and life satisfaction of teachers: A social cognitive model integrating teachers' burnout, self-efficacy, dispositional optimism, and social support. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance 23*, 441–463. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-021-09516-w

McGinity, R., Heffernan, A., & Courtney, S. J. (2022). Mapping trends in educational-leadership research: A longitudinal examination of knowledge production, approaches and locations. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 50*(2), 217–232. https://doi.org/10.1177/17411432211030758

Mozeley, F., Judge, S. K., Long, D., McGregor, J., Wild, N., & Johnston, J. (2023). Things that tell: An object-centered methodology for restorying women's longing and belonging. *Qualitative Inquiry, 29*(5), 610-621. https://doi.org/10.1177/10778004221114125

Naidoo, D., & Mabaso, M. (2023). Social constructivist pedagogy in business studies classrooms – teachers' experiences and practices. *Perspectives in Education, 41*(2), 62-76. https://doi.org/10.38140/pie.v41i2.7151

Nerlino, E. (2020). A theoretical grounding of teacher leadership. *Journal of Professional Capital and Community, 5*(2), 117-128. https://doi.org/10.1108/JPCC-12-2019-0034

Nguyen, D., Harris, A., & Ng, D. (2020). A review of the empirical research on teacher leadership (2003–2017). *MCB Publications Ltd etc*. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-02-2018-0023

Oppi, P., Eisenschmidt, E., & Stingu, M. (2023). Seeking sustainable ways for school development: Teachers' and principals' views regarding teacher leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 26*(4), 581-603. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2020.1849809

Pan, H. L. W., Wiens, P. D., & Moyal, A. (2023). A bibliometric analysis of the teacher leadership scholarship. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 121*, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103936

Perryman, J., & Calvert, G. (2020). What motivates people to teach, and why do they leave? Accountability, performativity and teacher retention. British Journal of Educational Studies, 68(1), 3–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2019.1589417

Pineda-Báez, C., Bauman, C., & Andrews, D. (2020). Empowering teacher leadership: A cross-country study. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 23*(4), 388-414. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2018.1543804

Qadach, M., Schechter, C., & Da'as, R. (2020). Instructional leadership and teachers' intent to leave: The mediating role of collective teacher efficacy and shared vision. *Educational Management, Administration & Leadership, 48*(4), 617-634. https://doi.org/10.1177/17411pp43219836683

Reid, J. W., Hardee, A. B., Criswell, B. A., Elrod, M., Berryhill, S. B., & Rushton, G. T. (2022). Empowering teacher leaders: The role of research in changing teacher leaders' sense of themselves as professionals. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, ahead-of-print(ahead-of-print), 1-44. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2022.2045629

Robertson, R. (2020). Speaking Objects: A (Suit)case Study. *Life Writing, 17*(4), 573–579. https://doi.org/10.1080/14484528.2020.1769845

Rømer, T. A. The Educational Thing. *Stud Philos Educ 30*, 499–506 (2011). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-011-9250-y

Saldaña, J., & Omasta, M. (2021). *Qualitative research: Analyzing life*. Sage

Sawalhi, R., & Chaaban, Y. (2022). Student teachers' perspectives towards teacher leadership, International Journal of Leadership in Education, 25(4), 586-602, https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2019.1666430

Schott, C., van Roekel, H., & Tummers, L. G. (2020). Teacher leadership: A systematic review, methodological quality assessment and conceptual framework. *Educational Research Review, 31*, 878-896. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2020.100352

Schutz, P. A., Hong, J., & Cross Francis, D. (2020). Teachers' goals, beliefs, emotions, and identity development: Investigating complexities in the profession. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429456008

Sedikides, C., & Wildschut, T. (2023). Nostalgia as motivation. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 49*, 101537. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2022.101537

Shafiee, N. S., & Ghani, M. A. (2022). The influence of teacher efficacy on 21st century pedagogy. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research, 21*(1), 217-230. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.21.1.13

Shen, J., Wu, H., Reeves, P., Zheng, Y., Ryan, L., & Anderson, D. (2020). The association between teacher leadership and student achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational Research Review, 31*, 100357. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2020.100357

Smith, S. J. (2020). *Windows into the history & philosophy of education*. Kendall Hunt Publishing Company.

Smylie, M. A., Conley, S., & Marks, H. M. (2002). Section four: Reshaping leadership in action: exploring new approaches to teacher leadership for school improvement. *Teachers College Record, 104*(9), 162–188. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146810210400908

Spillane, J. P. (2005). Distributed leadership. *The Educational Forum, 69*(2), 143–150. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131720508984678

Supovitz, J. A., & Comstock, M. (2023). How teacher leaders influence instruction. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 22*(2), 418-437. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2021.1971260

Thorpe, H., Brice, J., Soltani, A., Nemani, M., & O'Leary, G. (2024). Methods for more-than-human wellbeing: A collaborative journey with object interviews. *Qualitative Research*: QR, 24(2), 147-170. https://doi.org/10.1177/14687941221129374

Van Manen, M. (2015). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Wang, T., Deng, M., & Tian, G. (2022). More leadership, more efficacy for inclusive practices? Exploring the relationships between distributed leadership, teacher leadership, and self-efficacy among inclusive education teachers in China. *Sustainability, 14*(23), 16168. https://doi.org/10.3390/su142316168

Wenner, J. A., & Campbell, T. (2017). The theoretical and empirical basis of teacher leadership: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research, 87*(1), 134–171. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316653478

Woodward, S. (2020). *Material Methods: Researching and Thinking with Things*. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529799699.

Yalçın, M. T., & Çoban, Ö. (2023). Effect of school leadership on student academic achievement: School level path variables. *Current Psychology*, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-04886-6

Yin, H., Tam, W. W. Y., & Lau, E. (2022). Examining the relationships between teachers' affective states, self-efficacy, and teacher-child relationships in kindergartens: An integration of SCT and positive psychology. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 74*, 101188. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2022.101188

Yoon, I., & Goddard, R. D. (2023). Professional development quality and instructional effectiveness: Testing the mediating role of teacher self-efficacy beliefs. *Professional Development in Education*, 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2023.2264309

York-Barr, J., & Duke, K. (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship. *Review of Educational Research, 74*(3), 255–316. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543074003255

Zhao, X. (2023). Heidegger's world: Re-enchanting through thingness. *Religions, 15*(1), 3. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15010003