

PRINCIPALS' WORK-LIFE BALANCE: DOES CAMPUS GRADE LEVEL MAKE A
DIFFERENCE?

A Dissertation

by

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This dissertation meets the standards for scope and quality of
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and is hereby approved.

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative study sought to determine how the work-life balance of Texas principals changes according to the grade levels of their campuses in terms of role balance, role ease, and role overload. The researcher applied the role balance theory to make the complex matter of principals' work-life balance more understandable. Participants in this research study were given the Role Balance Scale questionnaire, which asked them to report on their self-perceptions of role balance, ease, and overload. An inferential analysis using a one-way ANOVA test was conducted to ascertain whether there was a difference in Texas principals' work-life balance regarding role balance, ease, and overload based on their campus's grade levels (elementary, middle, and high school). According to the study's findings, a principal's role balance and ease did not change depending on their campus level. The statistical analysis also revealed significant differences between middle school and high school principals in terms of role overload. Based on the findings discussed from this research study, differentiated education, training, and support to develop stable and healthy campus leadership would not be needed to support role balance and role ease. However, to support middle school principals' high role overload, differentiated strategies would be needed.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband and my children. To my husband, Joel, your encouragement, love, and support is what allowed me to start and finish this dream—without you, none of this would have been possible. To my children, Brian and Savannah, always remember to set goals and dream big; anything is possible with motivation, drive, love, and support.

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Somewhere along my academic journey, I came across the saying, “There is only one way to eat an elephant: one bite at a time.” To me, the elephant stands for anything in life that seems difficult, overpowering, or even impossible, but if done gradually by taking things little by little, any monumental task can be accomplished. Often, as I worked on my doctoral degree and this dissertation, I had to remind myself of this thought; however, without countless supportive people, I would have never been able to finish this grand endeavor, which often felt much larger than an elephant.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Success in schools across the country depends on resilient and stable school leadership. A principal is a crucial leader on a campus. As campus leaders, principals must manage a school while ensuring a culture of high expectations, success, growth, and a sense of belonging for all students, staff, and families. Through analyzing two decades of empirical research on a principal's impact, Grissom et al. (2021) found that effective principals substantially affect student achievement; however, principals also significantly impact areas beyond student achievement. Because of the impact a principal has on hundreds or thousands of students every year (Goddard et al., 2020; Liebowitz & Porter, 2019; Wu & Shen, 2022), one current issue that necessitates a solution is the problem of principals' stress, burnout, and intention to leave the profession, which should be examined by studying principals' work-life balance.

Compared to the broader working population, teachers and principals struggle with well-being as measured by job-related stress, depression, and burnout (Doan et al., 2022). In a recent survey by the RAND Corporation, educators were more likely to express depressive symptoms and less likely to report feeling resilient to stressful circumstances than other working adults (Doan et al., 2022). In comparison to teachers (73%) and other working adults (35%), principals (85%) were more likely to report experiencing stress at work, according to the survey results. While 28% of principals report having symptoms of depression, 48% of them experience exhaustion. The results of this survey support the need to study principals' work-life balance. In this research study, work-life balance refers to a person's ability to carry out work and non-work responsibilities in a balanced way, enhancing their well-being (Frone, 2003; Marks, 2009; Marks & MacDermid, 1996).

Scholarly research and studies are necessary for educational organizations to support a principal's work-life balance. This quantitative research study examined the difference in Texas principals' role balance, role ease, and role overload (Marks & MacDermid, 1996) regarding work-life balance based on their campus grade levels. Through the Role Balance Scale questionnaire, principals were asked to assess their current role balance, ease, and overload to identify potential differences based on the grade levels they lead on campus. A focused group of variables was used in the study to provide an answer to the research question (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Studying principals' work-life balance is a positive step toward minimizing the adverse effects of stress and burnout, which affect campus leadership turnover.

This chapter discusses the problem statement, background, and context of investigating principals' work-life balance. The purpose of the study and research question are then shared. The subsequent sections include the rationale for and significance of the study, assumptions, and limitations. The last section of Chapter I includes operational definitions followed by a summary.

Statement of the Problem

A problem in the field of education is that one out of every two school leaders is experiencing stress levels so high that they are contemplating retirement or a career change (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2022), which could lead to the nation experiencing a principal shortage in grades K-12 (Clifford & Coggshall, 2021; Reyes-Guerra et al., 2021). In a study conducted in 2020, four out of ten principals said they planned to leave their positions in the next three years. The COVID-19 pandemic and increased political tensions are the most currently cited factors causing principals to contemplate fast-tracking their decisions (Clifford & Coggshall, 2021).

DeMatthews (2020) found that principals in rural districts departed at a higher rate than those in other districts. He discusses how one rural school district in East Texas had three principals in five years. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) took over the management of this school due to poor academic performance. The frequent turnover of the campus principal directly correlated to the decline of that campus' academic success. Similarly, according to Kaufman et al. (2022), over 20% of principals were considering leaving their positions by the end of the 2020–2021 academic year. These principals had not thought about leaving their positions as school leaders prior to the additional stress and responsibilities of the pandemic. According to DeMatthews (2020) and Kaufman et al. (2022), principal turnover is common in K–12 institutions.

The reality of a principal's everyday life includes relentless stress (Mahfouz, 2020). Principals are dealing with growing stress levels, increasing stakeholder accountability, and increased risk of burnout (Klocko & Justis, 2019; Mahfouz, 2020). Lee and Moa (2023) found that principals blame demanding working conditions as the primary factor in deciding to leave the profession. Due to the pandemic and a surge of racial and political conflicts in the spring of 2020, schools were propelled into a sudden transformation to virtual learning along with unique challenges relating to social, economic, and political changes that affected the American educational system (Song, 2020).

In a recent survey, 28% of school leaders believed they would continue as campus principals if they could create or keep a better work-life balance (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2022). This supports the need for the educational leadership community to continue to analyze, critique, improve, research, and support principals' work-life balance to help solve this problem of principal stress and burnout. Supporting a principal's work-

life balance depends on empirical research; therefore, the researcher investigated the work-life balance of principals as a positive step toward reducing the negative consequences of stress and burnout.

Background and Context

A way to define the important conceptual issue of principals' work-life balance is through the problem's background and context. Historical, social, and cultural perspectives frame the problem's background and context. Synthesizing national principal turnover literature from the past two decades, Snodgrass Rangel (2018) discovered that principal turnover has been increasing over the years. Given the existing issue of principals' stress, burnout, and turnover rate, it is important to consider the historical, social, and cultural perspectives associated with the problem.

Historical Perspectives

Stress and leaving the profession are not new considerations for principals, as historically, researchers have cited fears for the future of principalship and consequential principal shortages (Clifford, 2010; Fink & Brayman, 2006; Pijanowski et al., 2009; Whitaker, 2001). Several studies connecting principals' overwhelming job duties and resulting stressors have been conducted. In a review of articles spanning 30 years, Wells (2013) described accounts of the educational leadership experience as infused with concerns about daily stress levels for principals. This historical review of research, taking special note of the occupational stress that principals encounter, shows that occupational stress is not a new concern for principals. For instance, a study by Whitaker (2001) revealed that nine out of ten superintendents reported a moderate to extreme lack of principal candidates. The factors cited for a principal shortage by the superintendents in the study include overall job pressures and time commitment. Historically,

weighty job responsibilities increase stress, and elevated stress has been cited as a contributing factor to principal shortages.

In Texas, principal attrition is not a new problem. Superville (2020) investigated principal turnover in Texas among urban school administrators. He found that 33% of novice principals departed from Texas public schools within five years. The study investigated 1,100 principals who embarked on the principalship during the 2008–2009 and 2010–2011 school years and found that 30% chose to leave their school. Even more alarmingly, in the first year, one out of every ten principals abandoned the Texas public school system completely. Only half of the principals remained in their original schools by the second year. Research has found principals' stress and burnout impact principal turnover and shortages; this problem is not new and continues to be of concern for schools.

Social Perspectives

From a social perspective, Klocko and Justis (2019) discovered that principals experience elevated stress levels because of growing accountability, rising legislative expectations, and outside mandates. The social role of a school leader has transformed due to greater high-stakes accountability, more prescriptive teacher evaluation systems, and a need for more educational equity. Because of these social and structural changes, there is a different expectation regarding how a principal spends their day, what knowledge they need, and what outcomes are expected of them. According to Clifford and Cogshall's (2021) findings, principals believe that the principalship has extended to encompass crisis management in addition to social media and communications management. The principal's daily routine is challenging and stressful. Most of a principal's daily tasks are reactive, contributing to their stress. Principals in the U.S. typically put in lengthy hours. According to the National Schools and Staffing Survey, a U.S. public

school principal works an average of 59 hours per week, and many continue to work at home (Lavigne et al., 2016).

While there are statistics on principal burnout from the National Schools and Staffing Survey, more research needs to focus on the actual work-life balance of principals (Lavigne et al., 2016). Because campus leadership and student achievement have a statistically significant beneficial association (Goddard et al., 2020; Liebowitz & Porter, 2019; Wu & Shen, 2022), countless educational practitioners and researchers have intently investigated the act of leading through leadership theories, models, and frameworks. Given the nature of their profession, principals frequently experience burnout and stress, which the pandemic, high-stakes accountability, and the current political climate have only served to worsen (Clifford & Cogshall, 2021; Klocko & Justis, 2019). How principals balance increasing occupational demands to achieve work-life balance is a critical area of investigation.

Cultural Perspectives

Being a school principal is a demanding and stressful profession, even though there is an amount of educational leadership research and literature to help guide successful leadership practices (Aravena & González, 2021; Klocko & Wells, 2015; Mahfouz, 2020; Reid, 2021; Wells & Klocko, 2018). Work-related stress can be described as a feeling of burden or pressure because of innumerable and additional work demands (Walker, 2020). Klocko and Justis (2019) discovered increases in perceived stress levels related to individual stressors and variables linked to increased demands on principals. Stress has become part of the accepted everyday culture for a principal.

A school principal's work-related stress becomes evident when their flexibility to align with goals conflicts with their aims and ability to deal with the current issues in their workplace

(Wells, 2013). Rommel and Cooner (2020) discovered that administrators face chronic stress in multiple circumstances during their initial years in school leadership roles. They determined this chronic stress includes compassion fatigue for new principals, isolation, pressure to achieve work-life balance, time limits, and fear of failure or uncertainty. In a similar study, Mahfouz (2020) discovered that principals' stressors affect their job performance and well-being. The study's principals revealed their three main stressors related to work, relationships, and time. In reaction to these stressors, the principals in the study reported negative emotions like guilt, resentment, loneliness, or disappointment. A principal's stress caused by conflict, fears, pressures, and negative feelings creates a shared negative culture among principals that seems to have become the accepted norm.

An essential cultural feature for principals is their beliefs and emotions. According to a recent study (Kaufman et al., 2022), half of principals acknowledged a lack of enthusiasm compared to when they initially started as educational leaders. Not surprisingly, 43% of principals would leave the principalship if a higher salary presented itself, and one out of five principals considered moving campuses. For over one-fourth of the principals, the stress and disappointments were not worth it, and 9% felt negative about their work as principals. In general, the number of principals who reported unfavorable feelings in this study was greater than the comparable percentage of principals who answered the same questions on a nationally representative government survey conducted in the 2015–2016 school year before the pandemic.

According to research, principals are experiencing exceptionally elevated levels of unfavorable attitudes about their jobs (Clifford & Cogshall, 2021; Levin et al., 2020; Reyes-Guerra et al., 2021). These principals' pessimistic feelings could translate into greater attrition rates in the future. This sentiment is concerning because research has linked primary turnover

rates to discontent (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). Kaufman et al. (2022) suggest that future research and initiatives be embarked upon to support educators' well-being. Their research on work-life balance identified principals' job resources and job demands as factors influencing principals' well-being.

The number of principals experiencing heightened pressures and responsibilities has increased, and the emotional and physical issues at the workplace caused by these pressures and responsibilities have negatively affected principals' work-life balance (Maxwell & Riley, 2017; Mahfouz, 2020). These emotional and physical issues include emotional demands, workload, burnout, job satisfaction, coping, mental health, lack of happiness, guilt, a sense of unfairness, loneliness, or disappointment. Like many other principals, Principal Luongo (2021) experienced stress and burnout. He asserts that the educational system lacks structures to support principals with the weight of the job, particularly in underserved communities of color. According to him, educational institutions must design and implement systems of assistance for administrators to help them deal with the mental stress and traumatizing effects of working in a school environment. Luongo suggests implementing structures that include employing administrative mentors and coaches who specialize in social-emotional support or organizing small teams of administrators to take part in ongoing professional development to help one another regularly. He further asserts that by fostering a climate of deep trust, school districts would provide administrators with a secure and encouraging setting to talk openly about the demanding job of running schools. Although people and committed support systems surround principals, Drago-Severson et al. (2018) determined that most felt alone in their responsibilities. These principals' experiences all had one thing in common: they described a feeling of being worn out all the time.

Drago-Severson et al. and Luongo argued that the educational community must take the health and well-being of principals seriously.

First-year and novice principals are at considerable risk for stress and burnout, which could lead to struggling with work-life balance. DeMatthews et al. (2023) found that novice principals experienced burnout, compounded by not being supported by district support and structures. The principals in the study (DeMatthews et al., 2023) were professionally neglected and had to cope with their job duties independently. Oplatka (2012) reviewed empirical research studies and determined that new principals experience surprise, reality shock, inadequate managerial aptitude, low real-world expertise in educational administration, a greater tendency to make mistakes, elevated levels of stress, and a sense of loneliness. In addition, new principals focused primarily on procedural aspects of the principalship and struggled to balance their vision, current norms, and realities in the school (Oplatka, 2012; Spillane & Anderson, 2014).

A Washington Post story (Natanson, 2022) highlighted the widely reported national teacher shortage. The article mentioned several contributing factors, including pandemic-induced teacher tiredness, low pay, little respect for the profession, and educational culture warfare. These same factors are impactful stressors for principals as well. This cultural environment could also impact principals' stress and burnout, leading to a principal shortage. Historical, social, and cultural perspectives impact principals' stress and burnout, affecting their work-life balance.

Theoretical Framework

Principal retention is essential to American school districts due to the principal's impact on students' learning outcomes (Goddard et al., 2020; Liebowitz & Porter, 2019; Wu & Shen, 2022). Therefore, education institutions must find ways to support, train, and retrain campus principals to deal with stress, burnout, and work-life balance to stabilize campuses and promote

academic growth. The theoretical framework of role balance theory, which includes the constructs of role balance, role ease, and role overload, was utilized to discover the nuances of balance among roles and how that balance can benefit principals (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). This connects to the problem of principals' stress and burnout because, according to role balance theory, an individual who maintains a well-ordered self-system has a better work-life balance and less stress and burnout.

The researcher followed role balance theorists Marks and MacDermid (1996) and avoided naming specific roles for principals because an individual's overall role system may include an unnamed role or roles that could significantly impact the other roles in the system. Through the current quantitative research study, the researcher could not determine either the role or the impact of the unnamed role(s). Marks and MacDermid held that the only way to solve this issue was to allow participants to know their entire role system without the researchers attempting to name its components for the participants (Marks, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative, nonexperimental, cross-sectional, descriptive study (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014) was to examine how Texas principals' work-life balance varies depending on the grade levels on their campuses regarding role balance, role ease, and role overload. The quantitative analytical approach was most suited for this research study since it can be used to examine how principals manage their work and non-work lives.

As a practitioner, the researcher's primary research focus was improving the well-being of principals within the context of their work. Therefore, studying work-related roles is directly relevant to the challenges and issues the researcher encounters in professional practice. Focusing on work-related roles allowed the researcher to identify and make recommendations to address

specific challenges principals face in their jobs. The researcher also considered how non-work roles influenced and impacted individuals' work-life balance; however, the primary focus of this research study was obtaining participant information connected to work-related roles.

In quantitative research, descriptive statistics are used to summarize and classify data to identify patterns that are not immediately apparent when analyzing raw data. Researchers use inferential statistics to conclude a population's traits or characteristics based on a sample taken from that population; therefore, this study focused on public school principals in Texas who agreed to participate in the study by responding to the online Role Balance Scale questionnaire. The Role Balance Scale questionnaire obtains data from all participants regarding their perceptions of role ease, role overload, and role balance, thus learning from principals who both have and do not have perceived work-life balance. For this quantitative research study, the principal's campus grade level (elementary, middle, and high school) was the independent variable, while a principal's role balance, role ease, and role overload sum scores were the dependent variables (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014).

Central Research Question

There is a wealth of literature on the impact a principal has on student achievement (Goddard et al., 2020; Grissom et al., 2021; Liebowitz & Porter, 2019; Wu & Shen, 2022) and how the responsibilities of a principal cause stress, burnout, and intention to leave the profession (Clifford & Cogshall, 2021; Doan et al., 2022; Kaufman et al., 2022; Klocko & Justis, 2019; Lee & Moa, 2023; Mahfouz, 2020; National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2022; Reyes-Guerra et al., 2021; Song, 2020). However, little research has been conducted on the difference the principal's campus level has on stress, burnout, and desire to leave the job. This

research study aimed to contribute to the literature on principals' role balance, role ease, and role overload in public schools in Texas with a closer examination of principals' work-life balance.

The researcher found the quantitative methodological approach was most suited for examining the problem of principals' work-life balance. The following central research question guided this investigation: Does a principal's work-life balance differ based on their campus level? By answering the research question, this quantitative study intended to compare the work-life balance of Texas principals depending on the grade levels of their campuses in terms of role balance, role ease, and role overload (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014).

Scholarly research and studies are essential to assisting educational organizations in supporting a principal's work-life balance. Addressing and reducing the effects of stress and burnout, in turn, supports healthy and stable campus leadership. The importance of studying principals' work-life balance, stress, burnout, and well-being has been echoed by numerous scholars and researchers (Drago-Severson et al., 2018; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019; Kaufman et al., 2022; Mahfouz, 2020; Maxwell & Riley, 2017; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018).

Rationale for the Study

Principal shortage and turnover are on the rise in the U.S. (Snodgrass Rangel, 2018), and pandemic-related difficulties will likely cause turnover rates to rise in the coming years. The potential internal conflict of principals between being a campus leader with ever-changing and overwhelming job responsibilities and home-life demands is causing many principals to retire, quit, or search for alternative job opportunities (Clifford & Coggshall, 2021). This study examined how Texas principals' role balance, ease, and overload alter depending on the grade levels of their campuses, given the significance of their work-life balance on their career satisfaction.

The study's potential participants included a large number of principals, and the researcher was interested in learning more about their work-life balance. The researcher used role balance theory to translate principals' work-life balance phenomena into clearer representations. Principals used the online Role Balance Scale questionnaire to supply the data for this research study. The survey for this research project was created and sent digitally using Qualtrics as part of the data collection processes. The researcher asserts that effectively applying statistical analysis accomplished the objective of the quantitative investigation. Quantitative research is characterized by using statistics and a rational approach (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). A one-way ANOVA was used for statistical analysis. The one-way ANOVA determined if the dependent variable changed according to the level of the independent variable.

Significance of the Study

As principals are experiencing stress and burnout, there is a need for empirical research on a principal's work-life balance. Without this research to guide support for principals' well-being, the educational community of stakeholders will not be able to address the impending principal shortage. Numerous academics and researchers have emphasized the value of researching principals' work-life balance, stress, burnout, and well-being (Drago-Severson et al., 2018; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019; Kaufman et al., 2022; Mahfouz, 2020; Maxwell & Riley, 2017; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018). The literature has not yet addressed a school principal's work-life balance using the framework of role balance theory (Marks & MacDermid, 1996), leaving a gap in the body of knowledge.

This research study's findings revealed if a principal's work-life balance differed based on their campus level. The findings are of major importance in assessing if differentiated support is needed for Texas principals based on whether they lead an elementary, middle, or high school.

One study discovered that school administrators yearned for frequent, ongoing opportunities to discuss the challenges of leadership with other principals and colleagues, highlighting how this kind of collegial reflection would help them exercise leadership more effectively, avoid burnout, and revitalize themselves (Drago-Severson et al., 2018). The study emphasized the value of offering principals guidance and support through introspection and group support. This favors a comprehensive and organized approach to principals' well-being; however, the principals in the study were not differentiated by campus level. In addition, the researcher was unable to find research on retention or turnover rates differentiated across grade levels. This quantitative research study adds to the literature relating to principals' work-life balance to inform differentiated education, training, and support to create stable and healthy campus leadership.

Assumptions and Limitations

The researcher assumed that all principals are self-aware of their work-life balance and could answer the questions on the survey with honesty and self-reflection. Another assumption was that principals would have 7–10 minutes of uninterrupted time to complete the Role Balance Scale questionnaire and be willing to share demographic data. Additionally, the researcher assumed that each group sample would have a normally distributed population with all populations having a common variance, so one-way ANOVA could be utilized for statistical analysis. Another assumption, based on role balance theory (Marks & MacDermid, 1996), was that some principals do not experience role strain or overload while fulfilling many tasks with limited resources.

By allowing principals to choose to participate based on an email, one anticipated limitation was a small convenience sample of the population. A small sample size decreases the statistical power to identify significant interactions between the variables, which could result in

inaccurate data that cannot be generalized to the entire population (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). Due to using a quantitative methodology approach, the research was limited to gathering data from closed-ended questions rather than deeply probing to obtain rich, vivid data about principals' work-life balance. Unexpected limitations included emails that were unsuccessfully delivered and campus principals being out of contract due to the time of year the survey was sent. Other unanticipated limitations included not acquiring an equal amount of responses from principals at all levels and race/ethnicity ratios not being representative of the state. Understanding these assumptions and limitations is essential to keeping the results in perspective, assessing the data's validity, and establishing confidence in the research's conclusions.

Definitions

- **Role balance:** Role balance refers to an individual's common orientation across roles that includes an inter-role propensity rather than a role-distinctive one. It is an approach to mindfulness or impartial vigilance that focuses on the present while allowing one to acknowledge and accept one's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors to create a state of mind (Marks & MacDermid, 1996).
- **Role balance theory:** Role balance theory contends that people inherently strive for rich and meaningful experiences at work and home. According to role balance theory, a person who maintains a well-ordered self-system has a better work-life balance than someone with a significant hierarchy of roles (Marks & MacDermid, 1996).
- **Role ease:** Role ease is the degree to which a person feels comfortable performing a role. Role ease and role balance are positively correlated, and role ease should occur if participating in one role makes it less difficult to do the other (Marks & MacDermid, 1996).

- **Role overload:** Role overload is the difficulty of balancing multiple roles within a demanding overall role structure. Role overload is not role-specific; rather, it results from a person's varied activities and how they move through their complete system of roles. Role overload equates to role strain or conflict (Marks & MacDermid, 1996).
- **Texas Education Agency:** The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is the state organization in charge of managing public elementary and secondary education and is led by the commissioner of education. By offering leadership, direction, and assistance to school systems, the Texas Education Agency enhances results for all state public school children (Texas Education Agency, n.d.).
- **Work-life balance:** Work-life balance is when an individual can continue to perform both work and non-work duties or roles in a balanced manner, improving their well-being (Frone, 2003; Marks, 2009; Marks & MacDermid, 1996).

Summary

The principal is one of the most critical driving forces on campus. Adaptable and reliable school leadership is essential for success in classrooms all over the nation. In addition to significantly impacting student achievement, effective principals have a wider impact (Grissom et al., 2021). A contemporary problem is the issue of principals' stress, burnout, and intention to leave the profession, which needs to be studied by examining principals' work-life balance. Given a principal's impact on hundreds or thousands of students every year, this problem must be addressed.

In recent studies, 40–50% of principals said they had considered leaving the principalship (Clifford & Cogshall, 2021; National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2022), with rural principals departing at an even higher rate (DeMatthews, 2020). Principal turnover is

typical at K–12 institutions, according to DeMatthews (2020) and Kaufman et al. (2022).

Historically, stress and quitting the profession are not new concerns for principals; in the past, numerous scholars have mentioned shortages and worries about principals' futures (Clifford, 2010; Fink & Brayman, 2006; Pijanowski et al., 2009; Whitaker, 2001). The social role of a school leader has changed because of structural and social shifts in the principalship, including the need for more educational equity, increased emphasis on high-stakes accountability, and more prescriptive teacher evaluation systems. According to Clifford and Coggshall's (2021) research, principals believe that principalship has expanded to include crisis management and social media and communications management. According to studies, principals are experiencing exceptionally elevated levels of negative views toward their profession (Clifford & Coggshall, 2021; Levin et al., 2020; Reyes-Guerra et al., 2021). The pessimism of these principals may result in higher turnover rates in the future. Research has connected primary turnover rates to discontent (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). This sentiment is troubling and continues to be a problem in need of research.

This research study on principals' work-life balance is further explained in Chapters II and III. Chapter II examines the literature on work-life balance through the perspective of role balance theory (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Chapter II includes two primary sections. The theoretical framework of role balance theory, which includes the constructs of role balance, role ease, and role overload, is discussed in the first section of Chapter II, followed by the empirical research on work-life balance, which is discussed in the second section. The empirical research section draws on the theoretical analysis of the role balance theory to investigate and synthesize each construct of role balance, role ease, and role overload. Each construct is then examined utilizing research with employees, educators, and managers.

In Chapter II, the researcher moves from Chapter I's introduction and explanation of the problem of principals' stress, burnout, and intention to leave the profession to reviewing the literature. As part of the theoretical framework and empirical literature examination, Chapter II evaluates the body of research on principals' work-life balance via the perspective of role balance theory. Strengths, weaknesses, and next steps will also be discussed in Chapter II.

In Chapter III, the quantitative research methods and design are covered in relation to the study of the work-life balance of principals. Along with the population and sample selection, the primary research question, research method, and study design are all reviewed. The validity, reliability, data collection processes, and data analysis procedures are then covered in relation to the instrumentation and data sources. Ethical considerations are discussed in Chapter III's concluding section, which is followed by a summary.

The researcher presents the findings, including demographic, descriptive, and inferential data, in Chapter IV. The study's conclusions and findings will provide an answer to the topic of whether principals' work-life balance varies according to the level of their campus. After providing a summary of the results, Chapter V offers conclusions and suggestions for further research and practice.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Even though there is a wealth of research and literature on educational leadership that can help guide effective professional development on leadership, being a school principal continues to be a demanding and stressful job (Aravena & González, 2021; Klocko & Wells, 2015; Mahfouz, 2020; Reid, 2021; Wells & Klocko, 2018). Principal burnout is a pressing and growing concern. Stress at work has become an unavoidable aspect of being a school administrator, which includes school principals (Mahfouz, 2020). The educational leadership community must keep analyzing, criticizing, enhancing, researching, and supporting principals' work-life balance to address principal stress and burnout.

This chapter examines the literature on work-life balance from the perspective of role balance theory (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). There are two sections to this literature review. The theoretical framework of role balance theory, which includes the constructs of role balance, role ease, and role overload, is discussed in the first section. Empirical research on work-life balance, in connection with role balance, role ease, and role overload, is discussed in the second section. More specifically, the first section begins with a discussion of the role balance theory described by Marks and MacDermid (1996). This theoretical framework section provides a foundational understanding of the driving theories behind role balance theory, along with role balance, ease, and overload. The empirical research review section builds from the theoretical analysis of role balance theory to analyze and synthesize each construct of role balance, ease, and overload. Subsections include how each construct has been researched with employees, educators, and managers.

This theoretical framework and empirical literature review provide an impartial, succinct, critical evaluation of the existing research literature pertinent to principals' work-life balance through the lens of role balance theory. The researcher utilized the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Mary and Jeff Bell Library online resources and databases. When articles or resources were unavailable through the online resources and databases, the researcher requested materials from the Mary and Jeff Bell Library interlibrary loan. Key terms utilized for this research included work-life balance, role balance, role ease, role overload, role conflict, role enrichment, balance measure, work-life interface, role demands, role theory, and role balance theory. At times, the researcher utilized the key term work-family in place of work-life.

A historical study of the literature demonstrates that principals have long been impacted by stress. Wells (2013), reviewing literature spanning 30 years, found reports of being an educational leader to be filled with worries about principals' daily stress levels. According to related research, principal turnover has been increasing nationally (Snodgrass Rangel, 2018), and it is anticipated that post-pandemic issues will cause turnover rates to increase in the coming years. Many principals are retiring, quitting their jobs, or looking for new employment because of the internal tension between being a campus leader while juggling the constantly shifting and demanding professional obligations and needs of their personal lives (Clifford & Coggshall, 2021). According to the researchers, principals struggled to maintain a work-life balance when working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic due to blurred boundaries between occupational and non-work demands.

Future research on role balance theory is required to recognize, comprehend, and enhance the work-life balance of K–12 principals. The definition of work-life balance in relation to role balance, role ease, and role overload is part of the research agenda. Work-life balance research

has been varied, with some limited instances utilizing role balance theory. The literature has not addressed a school principal's work-life balance through the role balance theory framework, creating a gap in the literature. This study aimed to evaluate the differences in Texas principals' role balance, role ease, and role overload as it relates to work-life balance to give future researchers a basis to recommend varied support for principals at different grade-level campuses. This research is essential if educational institutions are to address the stress and burnout experienced by principals, which could result in a national principal shortage.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework for a research study is a relational group of theories or constructs that shows the theoretical foundations in relation to a problem of practice. In quantitative studies, the researcher uses deductive reasoning to assess or validate a theory (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This research study on principals' work-life balance advances the role balance theory by gathering data and analyzing whether it confirms or disproves the theory. This section on the theoretical framework discusses role balance theory's theoretical foundations as empirically researched by Marks & MacDermid (1996). The underlying constructs supporting the role balance theory, including role balance, role ease, and role overload, are described as part of the theoretical framework to investigate principals' work-life balance.

Role Balance Theory

Owing to the existing and worsening issue of principal stress and burnout, this study investigated principals' work-life balance through the lens of the role balance theory. As a theory, role balance is utilized to discover the nuances of balance among roles and how that balance can benefit individuals (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Role balance theory proposes that people, in both family and work life, inherently strive to achieve rich and meaningful

experiences. According to role balance theory, an individual who maintains a well-ordered self-system has a better work-life balance than an individual with a significant hierarchy of roles. In a hierarchy of roles, a person assigns more importance to some roles than others, creating a hierarchy or ranking system in which roles are put at various levels or ranks according to their significance. The extensive research on work-life balance has led to much complexity in words, definitions, theoretical perspectives, tools, factors, and outcomes (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). The abundance of empirical exploration has caused perplexity and confusion for those interested in studying work-life balance, which could be interpreted as a weakness of this theory. However, role balance theory can be generalized across many disciplines, which is a strength of the theory (Frone, 2003). Role balance theory suggests that people with sophisticated self-analysis skills can better manage circumstances where roles contradict (Marks & MacDermid, 1996).

Role balance theory is based on the early works of Mead (1934/1972), who claimed that the real world did not allow for authentic existence. Mead believed that reality is dynamically shaped as people appear and function in their existence. Mead's interpretation of interactions among individuals implies that people ground their realization of reality and, therefore, remember what has most benefited them about those relationships. These individuals then adjust those separate roles according to what no longer serves them (Mead, 1934/1972). Most people occupy many roles, each connected to their expectations. This led to Mead asserting a vision of multiple selves or roles that individuals balance to maintain a holistic and nonhierarchical role system.

Another perspective is offered by Goode (1960), who maintained that role strain includes the struggle experienced in fulfilling a role when an individual's entire role system is exceedingly challenging. An example of an individual's entire role system being challenging

would be when they feel that they must do things they do not have the time and energy for and there are too many demands on their time. Marks and MacDermid (1996) discuss Goode's interpretation of role strain as not being role-specific in its origin. Instead, it is an outcome of an individual's many pursuits and navigation of the entire system of usual role endeavors. Role conflict is the term used to explain the discrepancies between one role's expectations and another's expectations. Role overload occurs when a person navigates several roles without the resources to do so. Role strain results from the difficulty fulfilling role expectations caused by role overload and role conflict (Goode, 1960).

In contrast to Goode (1960), Marks (1977) argued that empirical evidence showed that some individuals do not struggle with role strain or overload even when serving multiple roles with scarce resources. Before Marks, empirical research studying multiple roles in the work and family domains focused on the conflicts or overload between the roles using a scarcity approach (Marks, 1977; Marks et al., 2001), which is congruent with Goode's role strain theory. Based on Marks' theory, academics started investigating the advantages of people playing several roles (Marks et al., 2001). Subsequent researchers asserted that an individual could continue to perform duties in a balanced manner, improving their well-being or work-life balance (Frone, 2003; Marks, 2009; Marks & MacDermid, 1996).

Marks and MacDermid (1996) draw from Mead's (1934/1972) doctrine, which espouses a holistic and nonhierarchical vision of multiple selves. Marks and MacDermid utilize this concept of multiple selves to develop and clarify role balance theory. The researchers developed and studied two conceptual innovations: role balance and role ease. A person who can participate in and conduct several distinct roles does so with less role stress, lower rates of depression, and higher levels of self-esteem and innovation. According to the study, many roles are crucial for

personal and intellectual development.

Marks and MacDermid (1996) conceptualized role balance theory first with female bank workers and then with college students. Through the first study with female bank workers, the researchers gained confidence that they could measure role balance across entire role systems, and differences in this measure could predict meaningful consequences. The researchers discovered that when individuals scored highly on the role balance scale, they were less likely to report role overload difficulties and scored higher on self-esteem and parental nurturing and lower for depression. They also reported being closer to their spouses and working more effectively. Additionally, they were less likely to restrict or scale back their leisure time activities. The findings from the first study were supported by a second study with college students, which suggested that role balance is a powerful predictor of role ease. In the second research study, the researchers discovered that participants with higher role balance scores than those with lower scores experienced less role strain, greater role ease, higher self-esteem, less depression, and more positive role-specific experiences. Additionally, the participants with higher role balance scores performed better in their college courses and reported spending more time with friends weekly. Marks and MacDermid encouraged further studies informed by multidisciplinary perspectives, including anthropology, psychology, and sociology.

The theoretical framework of role balance theory furnishes the foundation for constructs that provide a structure for understanding, analyzing, and constructing approaches to investigate the problem of principals' stress and burnout as related to work-life balance. Role balance, role ease, and role overload are constructs within the role balance theory (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Role balance theory has been employed in a myriad of studies, including parent and non-parent employees (Haar, 2013), full-time employees (Carlson et al., 2009), non-profit

organization employees (Ferdous et al., 2021), frontline employees (van der Borgh et al., 2019), married couples (Chen & Li, 2012), and public accounting professionals (Greenhaus et al., 2003).

Like Marks and MacDermid's (1996) research, Haar's (2013) research confirms that beneficial outcomes for the individual do not result from the roles themselves but from the believed successful management of these roles. By arguing that maintaining balance does not necessitate equal time and attention to work and non-work activities, Haar (2013) supports the theoretical underpinnings of role balance theory. Haar asserts that balance is a personal assessment or self-perception of how fittingly these multiple roles support and complement one another.

This chapter analyzes and synthesizes empirical research on role balance, role ease, and role overload. Various terms referring to role balance, role ease, and role overload have been utilized in research related to work-life balance. These terms will be considered as each construct is analyzed and synthesized. Continuing Marks and MacDermid's (1996) assertion that role balance is distinct from role conflict and role ease, each construct will be discussed independently with empirical research.

Role Balance

Role balance is a common orientation across roles for an individual. It includes an inter-role predisposition, not a role-distinctive one (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Marks and MacDermid investigated how individuals tend to devote all their attention to playing each role in their entire system of roles. They found that participants chose to identify role balance with positive understandings. Marks and MacDermid describe role balance as mindfulness or impartial vigilance to achieve a state of mind by focusing on the present while simply

acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, ideas, and actions.

According to Marks et al. (2001), it is important to comprehend how a person's lived experience with one role influences another role. Rather than focusing on how one function affects another, they underline the significance of the common phenomena of role balance as both an independent variable and an outcome. Marks and MacDermid (1996) and Greenhaus et al. (2003) identified study participants who were favorably engaged as balanced. Role balance alone cannot be studied without considering and understanding the construct of role ease.

Role Ease

Through empirical research, Marks and MacDermid (1996) determined role ease as distinctly separate and different from positive role balance or the mere lack of role strain. They identified role ease as any feeling of comfort in performing an individual's role. Role balance, according to Marks and MacDermid, has a favorable relationship with role ease. According to the study, role ease should happen if either a non-work or work role makes it easier to perform the other.

Like role balance, role ease is not unique to job and family duties; however, one study concentrated on job and family duties when measuring role ease. According to this study, role ease and balance are positively correlated (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). According to Marks and MacDermid, those with more balanced role systems experienced less role strain and more role ease, well-being, and pleasant role-specific experiences. People with less balanced role systems did not report these good experiences.

Role Overload

According to Goode (1960), role strain is the challenge of meeting demands within an overly demanding overall role structure. Goode focused on how an individual's roles function as

a single pattern or system. In their studies, Marks and MacDermid (1996) utilize “role overload” as a term that equates to role strain or role conflict. The researchers argue that role strain is not role-specific; instead, it is the product of an individual’s various activities and how they navigate their entire system of roles.

Very few theories exist within or outside public K-12 schools explicitly related to the difference in a principal’s role balance, role ease, and role overload (work-life balance) based on the campus grade level in Texas schools. However, the theory of role balance (Marks & MacDermid, 1996) lends itself to effectively comparing elementary, middle, and high school principals’ work-life balance by allowing the researcher to measure and consider three distinct constructs: role balance, role ease, and role overload. To date, empirical research does not exist that utilizes the role balance theory to examine a principal’s role balance, ease, and overload. This quantitative research study will aid in filling this research void. The researcher is interested in examining the work-life balance among Texas principals, who may represent numerous participants. The researcher has chosen to use the role balance theory to translate the phenomenon of principals’ work-life balance into clearer representations. Quantitative research uses statistics and a logical reasoning approach (O’Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). The researcher asserts that using statistical analysis best served the goals of the quantitative investigation. The research question guiding this study was “Does a principal’s work-life balance differ based on their campus level?” This quantitative study examined the difference in Texas principals’ role balance, ease, and overload as it relates to work-life balance based on their campus grade levels.

Review of the Literature

According to Frone (2003), the research history of the work and family interface dates back to the 1930s, with varied theories and constructs being utilized. Building from the

theoretical examination of role balance theory (Marks & MacDermid, 1996), this empirical analysis analyzed and synthesized empirical research. This section is based on observed and measured constructs, including role balance, role ease, and role overload. The following examination of empirical research considers 1) role balance comparable to work-life balance, 2) role ease analogous with work-life enrichment, and 3) role overload and role strain akin to work-life conflict.

Role Balance

Role balance or work-life balance has been empirically researched as a separate and distinct construct from role ease and role overload (Carlson et al., 2009; Ferdous et al., 2021; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Haar, 2013). Furthermore, Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) contend that role balance theory should serve as the theoretical foundation for work-life balance research since it highlights the inherently social aspect of individuals' job-related obligations. Various researchers and theorists (Carlson et al., 2009; Ferdous et al., 2021; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Haar, 2013; Koubova & Buchko, 2013; Landolfi & Presti, 2022) conducted studies to develop a more rigorous, theoretically based empirical understanding of work-life or role balance. Each researcher built upon prior findings. For example, Carlson et al. (2009) utilized the conceptualization of work-family balance through the theoretical lens of the theory of role balance. They created a novel measure of work-life balance and proved discriminant validity between it, work-life conflict, and work-life enrichment. To broaden the theoretical lens for understanding the work-life interface beyond conflict and enrichment, Haar (2013) employed measures from Marks and MacDermid (1996) and Carlson et al. (2009). Furthermore, Landolfi and Presti (2022) investigated the psychometric properties of the Work-Family Balance scale developed by Carlson et al. by applying it to Italian participants.

Employees

Much of the research on work-life balance and role balance has been conducted outside the U.S. In addition, most research on role balance has utilized participants from employee groups in corporate or university settings. For example, quantitative researchers have examined the role balance and work-life balance of various employees, including college students and parents, in various countries and contexts (Byron, 2005; Carlson et al., 2009; Ferdous et al., 2021; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Haar, 2013; Landolfi & Presti, 2022). The role balance of K–12 principals has not been empirically researched by comparing groups of principals by campus level. Studies utilizing the theoretical framework of role balance theory have shown that work-life balance is associated with greater overall self-perceived life satisfaction (Bryant & Constantine, 2006; Mitra et al., 2021); therefore, the researcher infers that a principal with more role balance will have greater overall life satisfaction and will have less stress and burnout.

Quantitative studies have determined that employees who were more balanced in managing several roles were able to reap the rewards beyond the enrichment that occurred inside those roles (Carlson et al., 2009; Ferdous et al., 2021; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Haar, 2013; Ji & Jung, 2021). Researchers discovered that support for work-life balance was more effective at influencing results than conflict and enrichment (Ferdous et al., 2021; Haar, 2013; Ji & Jung, 2021). A common finding across studies was that individuals who maintain a work-life balance or role balance across home and work roles experience less role overload and more role ease (Carlson et al., 2009; Ferdous et al., 2021; Ji & Jung, 2021; Vaziri et al., 2022). These findings relate to the problem of principals struggling with well-being (Doan et al., 2022). The researcher infers that principals who can establish and keep a balanced work-life balance will also experience less role overload and more role ease, decreasing job-related stress, depression, and

burnout.

While utilizing the role balance or work-life balance construct, researchers have found consistent and related findings for employees. By having balanced roles, working individuals have greater self-esteem (Haar, 2013) and organizational commitment (Carlson et al., 2009). In addition, studies have found that a balanced role system supports more positive well-being and improved job and life satisfaction (Brough et al., 2014; Bryant & Constantine, 2006; Ferdous et al., 2021; Haar, 2013; Haar et al., 2014; Mitra et al., 2021; Orellana et al., 2021; Taşdelen-Karçkay & Bakalım, 2017). A quantitative study examining the effects of work-life balance on several specific outcomes for employees from seven distinct populations concluded that work-life balance was positively related to job and life satisfaction across all cultures (Haar et al., 2014). Another quantitative study looked at the impact of work-life balance on employees' performance in small and medium-sized businesses (Susanto et al., 2022). The findings showed that performance and job satisfaction are both positively impacted by work-life balance. Work-life balance literature not only considers the positive qualities connected to the role balance construct; researchers have also found undesirable aspects connected to role balance in working individuals.

In contrast to a balanced role system, unbalanced roles or an unbalanced work-life system result in higher turnover intention (Brough et al., 2014; Ferdous et al., 2021; Kaur & Randhawa, 2021), psychological strain (Brough et al., 2014), anxiety (Haar et al., 2014), and rates of depression (Haar et al., 2014; Kaur & Randhawa, 2021). Researchers used a mixed methods study of employees working in Australia and New Zealand to evaluate the association between work-life balance and turnover intentions along with psychological distress while creating and validating a brief measure of work-life balance. The study discovered that individuals' work-life

balance was adversely correlated with their workload, intention to leave their current position, and psychological distress (Brough et al., 2014). A quantitative cross-national research study that included full-time workers in New Zealand, France, Italy, and Spain found that work-life balance was adversely correlated with the antecedents of work demands, hours worked, and family demands. Family and work demands were each measured with three items related to having too much work and more house/family work than can be done well. The study's findings varied from country to country. For instance, parental status was positively correlated with work-life balance in France and Italy but negatively correlated with overtime hours worked (Haar et al., 2019). Working hours were also found to be significantly associated with work-life balance for Chinese physicians (Liu et al., 2021). Unbalanced roles or an unbalanced work-life system have been associated with undesirable aspects of an individual's work and family life. This research study will add to the literature on role balance by measuring a principal's work-life balance.

Work-life balance research literature has not only considered the influence of a balanced or unbalanced role system but has also investigated the impact of resources on work-life balance (Chan et al., 2016; Chan et al., 2017; Haar et al., 2019; Orellana et al., 2021). In a quantitative study of Australian workers, researchers discovered that self-efficacy is a significant resource that affects how employees perceive and interpret the demands of their jobs and families. The study demonstrated how self-efficacy is a crucial personal resource for individuals' work and family obligations (Chan et al., 2016; Chan et al., 2017). Similarly, researchers explored the work-life balance of different-sex dual-earner couples in a separate quantitative study. The researchers discovered that family support had a positive influence on each parent; that is, the mother's role balance and well-being benefited from the father's family support. Perceived family support was measured by asking the opposite partner four questions about the

family support they receive (Orellana et al., 2021). In a different study, work-life balance was positively linked with supervisor support and job autonomy. The researchers found that when demands are high, work-life balance can be accomplished, assuming resources are also elevated (Haar et al., 2019). These studies add to the body of knowledge on work-life balance by examining the advantages of employees' resources.

Educators

In work more closely related to this study, researchers have investigated work-life balance among teachers (Kaur & Randhawa, 2021), school counselors (Bryant & Constantine, 2006), university professors (Badri & Panatik, 2020), and school administrators (Abbasi et al., 2021; Beisser et al., 2014). These and other quantitative studies have produced many findings, including various outcomes and moderating and mediating variables, as discussed in this section. Among the research findings involving educators was how a more balanced role fosters life satisfaction and well-being. More specifically, the researchers discovered that higher levels of multiple role balance ability were linked to higher levels of life satisfaction. The capacity of female school counselors to successfully manage many responsibilities in their lives appears to be advantageous to their overall psychological well-being (Bryant & Constantine, 2006). In a quantitative research study involving the teaching staff of private schools in India, researchers discovered that supportive principals could lower the likelihood of private school instructors quitting by encouraging employee engagement and work-life balance (Kaur & Randhawa, 2021).

Researchers not only examined associations impacting educators' balanced systems but also investigated what effects occurred when educators did not have or maintain balanced roles. One study of teachers with higher job turnover intentions found a lack of work-life balance (Kaur & Randhawa, 2021). In a related mixed methods study, researchers examined work-life

balance in secondary administrators in both public and private schools in Iowa. The results indicated that stress was frequently expressed as a reason for lack of work-life balance (Beisser et al., 2014). The literature on work-life balance contains far more quantitative than qualitative research. Yet, in one qualitative study, interviews were conducted with 15 female school principals. The study discovered that family conditions are crucial in striking a balance between work and life, followed by time management strategies, which include setting a schedule for activities, setting priorities, and following a process (Abbasi et al., 2021). The family conditions cited as essential factors for female school principals included family circumstances, selection and intimacy in family connections, adequate child development and cognitive conditions, and familial comprehension of job requirements. Even with these studies focusing on educators, including school administrators, a gap in the literature remains for examining the role balance of K-12 principals in Texas utilizing quantitative methodology.

Managers

Principals are school managers in that they must make good use of the available resources while managing the administration of all work related to students, teachers, and staff; therefore, studies utilizing managers as participants are included in this literature review.

Empirical research investigating managers' work-life balance includes qualitative (Bahiru & Mengistu, 2018; Kelly et al., 2019; Kim & Windsor, 2015), quantitative (Cain et al., 2018), and mixed methods research (Vinberg & Danielson, 2021). Managers from multiple contexts and countries were included in this section to provide a breadth of research; these participants include executive chefs (Cain et al., 2018), nurse managers and leaders (Kelly et al., 2019; Kim & Windsor, 2015), female business leaders in Ethiopia (Bahiru & Mengistu, 2018), and micro- and small-sized organization managers in Sweden (Vinberg & Danielsson, 2021). A quantitative

study of executive chefs found that their work-life balance was positively linked to their employees' engagement and life satisfaction (Cain et al., 2018). This result is comparable to that of a quantitative research study that involved the teaching staff of private schools in India. In that study, researchers found that supportive principals could reduce the likelihood of private school instructors quitting by promoting employee engagement and work-life balance (Kaur & Randhawa, 2021). To compare managers of different-sized businesses, researchers investigated the differences between managers' work-life balance in micro- and small-sized businesses utilizing mixed methods methodology. The study indicated that managers of micro-sized organizations reported less work-life balance than managers of small-sized firms. Less time for relaxation and recuperation, work-related thinking, and family activities led to the poor work-life balance scores indicated in the study (Vinberg & Danielsson, 2021). This mixed methods study was of particular interest to the researcher since the current research question includes investigating the differences in principals' work-life balance based on campus grade levels.

Multiple qualitative research studies were insightful in understanding the everyday realities of managers' work-life balance. According to a qualitative study, female leaders in Ethiopia faced difficulties balancing their job and home obligations due to organizational, cultural, and personal reasons. One of the participants defined home obligations as the duty to manage the family's needs, particularly ensuring they eat healthy food and maintain good hygiene. Work overload, cultural and societal standards, family duties, and upbringing-related habits were explicitly seen among these problems. According to researchers, because the Ethiopian culture places high importance on social relationships with a greater burden on women, their inability to meet these demands places a heavy load on the emotional well-being of female leaders and leads to an imbalance between work and family (Bahiru & Mengistu, 2018).

A separate qualitative study discovered that Korean nurse managers believed that dynamic, reflective practices affected work-life balance and resilience. When autonomy and effective time management were possible, these managers' work-life balance improved (Kim & Windsor, 2015). Similar research using a qualitative methodology found that nurses experienced increasing difficulties balancing work and personal obligations as they advanced into leadership roles. The nurse leaders stated that technology, a lack of peer and supervisor support, and a lack of resources were the most common obstacles to achieving work-life balance (Kelly et al., 2019). These empirical research studies on managers' work-life balance are important for this research study since a principal is also a manager.

Role balance or work-life balance has been systematically examined as a separate and independent construct from role ease and role overload (Carlson et al., 2009; Ferdous et al., 2021; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Haar, 2013). In this section, role balance empirical literature has been investigated to include role balance in general research, as well as role balance or work-life balance for employees, educators, and managers. The research studies considered included quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods studies to provide a well-rounded, extensive literature review of role balance or work-life balance. The breadth and depth of work-life balance studies are numerous but lack a focus on K-12 school principals. In the next section, role ease is discussed in relation to empirical research studies.

Role Ease

Role ease as a construct is more than the absence of role strain, as evidenced by having unique properties and characteristics (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Work-life enrichment has been argued as a distinct construct aligned with role ease (Carlson et al., 2006; Frone, 2003). Role ease is when either work or home life facilitates performance in the other. Multiple

researchers have empirically studied the specific construct of work-life enrichment (Badri & Panatik, 2020; Beigi et al., 2017; Carlson et al., 2006; Carlson et al., 2014; Daniel & Sonnentag, 2014; Fischer et al., 2015; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Hermann et al., 2020; Jaga et al., 2013; Peng et al., 2022; Sturges, 2012). Even though there is a lack of research on a K–12 school principal's role ease and work-like enrichment, reviewing studies with other participants can inform and drive future research. Common conclusions across work-life enrichment research are when individuals achieve work-life enrichment, they also experience positive self-worth, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-control, as well as a healthy mindset and psychological well-being (Badri & Panatik, 2020; Carlson et al., 2006; Hermann et al., 2020). External factors that contributed to role ease and work-life enrichment were organizational and familial support (Osei Boakye et al., 2021; Peng et al., 2022; Sturges, 2012; Vaziri et al., 2022), job autonomy (Badri & Panatik, 2020; Vaziri et al., 2022), and work schedule flexibility (Osei Boakye et al., 2021; Sturges, 2012; Vaziri et al., 2022); however, the current research study increases the body of knowledge of the role ease construct by adding a unique focus on K-12 principals according to their campus level.

Employees

Research on role ease and work-life enrichment expands the literature review of role balance theory. Work-life enrichment has been explored in working mothers who are also college students (Osei Boakye et al., 2021), young professionals (Sturges, 2012), full-time employees (Carlson et al., 2014; Daniel & Sonnentag, 2014; Jaga et al., 2013), and employed mid-life adults (Fischer et al., 2015). Two qualitative studies examined the positive aspects of role balance, specifically role ease and work-life enrichment, with working participants (Osei Boakye et al., 2021; Sturges, 2012). A novel finding in one qualitative study with young

professionals was that some individuals who put in the most time at work achieved perceived work-life enrichment. The study's findings revealed that every research participant who engaged in self-controlled actions and intended to actively manage and shape their work-life balance did so in a positive way (Sturges, 2012). In a different qualitative study, researchers discovered that job flexibility and supervisor and coworker support allowed college students who are also working mothers to successfully balance their roles, creating role ease. The participants described job flexibility as flexible time, flexible working procedures, flexible work arrangements, and relaxed protocols (Osei Boakye et al., 2021). These qualitative studies on work-life enrichment and role ease allowed the researcher to explore the construct through employees.

In addition to qualitative studies, quantitative empirical research has investigated the construct of role ease or work-life enrichment. One longitudinal quantitative study of full-time employees in Germany found that positive work experiences (specifically work engagement) were linked to work-life enrichment. The same study also discovered that positively reflecting on work created more work-life enrichment (Daniel & Sonnentag, 2014). Similarly, two other quantitative studies found direct effects on work-life enrichment, including job satisfaction (Carlson et al., 2014) and subjective well-being, as well as lower levels of depression and emotional exhaustion (Jaga et al., 2013) in full-time employees. While these studies focused on subjective well-being, Carlson et al. (2014) discovered that the mediators of pleasant mood and emotional distress facilitate the indirect relationship between enrichment and satisfaction. These studies help expand the role ease and work-life enrichment construct for working participants.

Educators

There is a significant gap in the literature on role ease and work-life enrichment in

educators. One study was conducted with preschool teachers in China (Peng et al., 2022) and another with school counselors who were mothers (Hermann et al., 2020). In the quantitative research study of preschool teachers in China, the researchers found that organizational and family support were directly and significantly correlated with work-life enrichment (Peng et al., 2022). In a similar qualitative study of school counselors who were mothers, the researchers discovered that balancing multiple jobs helps women define priorities at work and at home, resulting in role ease among these educators. The findings of this study also suggest that work-life enrichment benefits could mitigate some of the difficulties that mothers who are counselor-educators face (Hermann et al., 2020).

This section on educators' role ease includes work-life enrichment research involving academic staff and professors (Badri & Panatik, 2020; Beigi et al., 2017). Research studying university academic staff associated self-efficacy and job autonomy with work-life enrichment. A quantitative study confirmed the moderating effects of self-efficacy and job autonomy by finding that work-life enrichment was higher when both factors were strong (Badri & Panatik, 2020). In another study of academic staff, the researchers investigated the role ease of prominent professors through qualitative methodology to examine the lived experiences of these educators. The researchers discovered that personal passion for work and spousal support were the most significant commonalities impacting work-life enrichment (Beigi et al., 2017). These research findings suggest that role ease and work-life enrichment exist for some educators, while a gap remains in the literature for K–12 principals.

Managers

A principal is an instructional leader and the manager of a campus. The principal controls or administers all parts of the school organization. Without empirical literature investigating a

principal's role ease or work-life enrichment, the researcher examined research studies on work-life enrichment of managers. Investigations of role ease in managers include researchers exploring work-life enrichment in middle managers in India (Mishra et al., 2014), married managers in China (Zhang et al., 2011), retail store managers in Hong Kong (Loi et al., 2018), mid-managers in India (Bhargava & Baral, 2009), female managers in Iran (Makipour et al., 2021), and junior and senior managers and CEOs in New Zealand (Roche & Haar, 2020). One common finding among three of the research studies was that work-life enrichment had a positive influence on organizational citizenship behavior, which is described as behavior that benefits the organization but is not directly connected to job duties and responsibilities (Bhargava & Baral, 2009; Mishra et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2011). The role balance literature did not note this impact of work-life enrichment. In multiple research studies, work-life balance was also positively related to job satisfaction (Bhargava & Baral, 2009; Roche & Haar, 2020). In the role balance construct, life satisfaction was noted more often than job satisfaction.

According to a qualitative research study that investigated work-life enrichment in female managers, self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, support, and environmental network impacted work-life enrichment. In the same study, work-life enrichment led to job and marital satisfaction, yet socio-cultural, familial, and cultural factors, as well as a non-supportive organizational culture, were noted as barriers (Makipour et al., 2021). In a different qualitative study exploring work-life enrichment in middle managers in India, researchers found that work culture and community resources contribute to work-life enrichment. In the same study, managers' work-life enrichment negatively influenced the intention to quit (Mishra et al., 2014). The similarities in these two qualitative studies were the impact of the work or organizational culture on the managers' role ease. Researchers in Hong Kong quantitatively studied retail store managers and

discovered that adverse client interactions reduced the managers' work-life enrichment and the significance of their work (Loi et al., 2018). In other empirical research, quantitative studies examined the differences in work-life enrichment for junior and senior managers compared to CEOs in New Zealand (Roche & Haar, 2020). The researchers found no statistical difference between the groups' work-life enrichment. Since the current research question includes examining variations in principals' work-life balance based on the campus grade levels, this quantitative methods study was of particular interest to the researcher.

Role ease encompasses more than just the absence of role strain, as shown by its distinct qualities and traits (Carlson et al., 2006; Frone, 2003; Marks & MacDermid, 1996). In general, studies on work-life enrichment point to the fact that when people experience work-life enrichment, they also have positive feelings of self-worth, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-control, as well as a positive outlook and psychological well-being (Badri & Panatik, 2020; Carlson et al., 2006; Hermann et al., 2020). Organizational and familial support, job autonomy, and work-life balance were all external factors that enhanced role ease and work-life enrichment (Badri & Panatik, 2020; Osei Boakye et al., 2021; Peng et al., 2022; Sturges, 2012; Vaziri et al., 2022). This research study provides added information to the corpus of literature supporting the role ease construct.

Role Overload

In addition to role balance and role ease, researchers have studied role overload and/or role strain. Role strain is an individual's difficulty that occurs when two or more roles overlap and are incompatible, causing the individual's total role system to become overdemanding (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Work-life conflict more precisely refers to when role expectations from the job and home life domains are irreconcilable (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Role

overload happens when an individual must satisfy multiple roles concurrently and has too many role demands (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Work-life conflict is the conflict between a person's home and professional roles (Frone, 2003). When an individual's home and work roles are mutually incompatible, dissonance and work-life conflict occur (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Early work-life balance and role balance literature were dominated by role strain and work-life conflict constructs (Greenhaus & Foley, 2007; Sirgy & Lee, 2018).

Various researchers utilized the terms role strain, role overload, and role conflict. For this quantitative study and literature review, the researcher considers these terms strongly interconnected. Work-life conflict has been linked positively in several studies to a variety of external factors, such as role stressors (Rubel et al., 2017), job overload, organizational constraints (Chen et al., 2017), job demands (Sarwar et al., 2021), and job overtime (Eckart & Ziomek-Daigle, 2019). Consistent external and internal moderators of work-life conflict were emotional intelligence, social and individual support, and autonomy (Eckart & Ziomek-Daigle, 2019; Gao et al., 2013; Lenghan et al., 2007; Sarwar et al., 2021). Researchers have also found that role strain or work-life conflict is correlated to the internal influences of turnover intention, lower satisfaction, and higher burnout (Rubel et al., 2017; Sarwar et al., 2021; Simões et al., 2021). Role overload findings are consistent in that work-life conflict has a detrimental impact on an individual's life. As discussed above, researchers have discovered that both internal and external influences can moderate work-life conflict. Understanding the theoretical underpinnings of role balance benefits from examining study findings for role overload, role strain, and work-life conflict. In this section, the researcher considered the construct of role overload for employees, educators, and managers.

Employees

Empirical research involving working individuals' role overload, role strain, or work-life conflict was reviewed to help better inform the current study of principals' role balance, ease, and overload. Researchers have utilized quantitative methods to study diverse employees' work-life conflict including employees in the northeast U.S. (Lenghan et al., 2007), medical professionals in Pakistan (Zeb et al., 2021), Turkish employees (Taşdelen-Karçkay & Bakalım, 2017), financial sector employees in Australia (Talukder, 2019), working mothers in Switzerland (Seiger & Wiese, 2009), female nurses in Taiwan (Chen et al., 2017), and public accounting auditors in Indonesia (Rini et al., 2020). A common finding in two research studies was that emotional intelligence impacts work-life conflict (Lenghan et al., 2007; Zeb et al., 2021). In a study involving diverse U.S. employees, researchers discovered that emotional intelligence serves as a mediator or protector of well-being. At the same time, work-life conflict substantially impacts well-being (Lenghan et al., 2007). The researchers found a strong correlation between greater work-life conflict, lower overall self-efficacy, and lesser emotional intelligence (Zeb et al., 2021). These two research studies show that a working person with higher emotional intelligence should experience less role overload. A different commonality found in other role overload literature was the correlation between work-life conflict and satisfaction. One study found a significant correlation between work-life conflict and job and life satisfaction, with work-life conflict harming both work and family life (Taşdelen-Karçkay & Bakalım, 2017). In a similar study, greater work-life conflict created less job satisfaction, but supervisor support was found to reduce work-life conflict (Talukder, 2019). One study investigated social support, including support for working mothers (Seiger & Wiese, 2009) and another involving Brazilian professionals (Casper et al., 2011). The researchers found that social support from a supervisor or a partner mediates work-family conflict. Support from others, such as a supervisor or partner,

is not in the employee's control. Similar findings connected to lack of employee control were that organizational constraints and excessive job overload were positively related to work-life conflict (Chen et al., 2017). Instead of focusing on job satisfaction, research involving auditors examined job performance. This study discovered that the association between work-life conflict and job performance is mediated by work-life balance. The study also found that work-life conflict is caused by demands at work rather than outside work (Rini et al., 2020). To better enrich the current study of principals' role balance, role ease, and role overload, empirical research regarding working individuals' role overload was evaluated in this section.

Educators

Since this research study investigates principals' work-life balance, including the construct of role overload, reviewing available literature related to educators' work-life conflict is beneficial. Empirical research on educators in K–12 and higher education settings helps inform this research study. Quantitative studies involving educators as participants have included teachers (Al-Alawi et al., 2021; Gao et al., 2013; Simões et al., 2021), counselors (Eckart & Ziomek-Daigle, 2019), university academics (Sarwar et al., 2021), and principals (Yang et al., 2021). Three of these quantitative studies examined the work-life conflict of Saudi female teachers (Al-Alawi et al., 2021), Chinese teachers (Gao et al., 2013), and Portuguese teachers (Simões et al., 2021). In one of these studies, as work-life conflict increased for Portuguese teachers, burnout increased, lowering job satisfaction (Simões et al., 2021). In studies including Chinese teachers (Gao et al., 2013) and Saudi female teachers (Al-Alawi et al., 2021), the researchers discovered that work-life conflict negatively impacted job satisfaction and employee performance. This is similar to findings reported by working individuals from other countries and work sectors. Other quantitative studies involving educators' work-life conflict involved

university academic faculty in Pakistan and found that university academics' job demands led to higher work-life conflict and lesser satisfaction (Sarwar et al., 2021). Researchers investigated the impact of working more than 40 hours a week on female counselors in Louisiana and Alabama. They reported that working beyond a 40-hour work week contributed to work-life conflict, yet support from others seemed to lessen the impact (Eckart & Ziomek-Daigle, 2019). This section on educators' role overload includes a prominent study that looks at the tension between work and personal life for Chinese primary and secondary school leaders. Work-life conflict was found to have a substantial negative connection with work engagement that was partially mitigated by job satisfaction (Yang et al., 2021). Throughout the research on educators, the recurring theme was that job demands result in increased role strain and overload, consequently affecting satisfaction. Since this research study investigated role overload for principals, a review of these studies involving educators was crucial.

Managers

A principal is a manager of a campus and a leader in education. As a manager, all aspects of the school organization must be supervised under the principal's direction. The researcher assessed empirical studies on the role overload of managers due to the lack of research literature examining the strain of a principal's role or work-life conflict. The assessed quantitative research related to managers' role overload and included manufacturing industry managers in China (She et al., 2019), managers in the U.S. (Yucel, 2021), managers in Australia (Hosie et al., 2019), construction industry managers in China (Wu et al., 2019), garment industry supervisors in Bangladesh (Rubel et al., 2017), and department managers in China (Zhou et al., 2020). As mentioned earlier in other role overload research, support influences individuals' work-life conflict. In one study, lesser organizational support correlated with elevated role overload. The

researchers also found that the managerial duty of coaching increases managers' role overload, resulting in work fatigue (She et al., 2019). Another study investigated social support, which included four types of support: from family and friends, colleagues, supervisors, and the organization. In this study, job demands negatively influenced managers' well-being; however, social support was determined to be a moderator (Yucel, 2021). Another role overload study explored managers' well-being concerning role conflict and role overload. The researchers determined that role stressors (role conflict and role overload) have a direct negative effect on managers' well-being and job satisfaction (Hosie et al., 2019). The research on managers' role overload mentioned thus far has commonalities; however, other research considered in this section lacks similarities.

Three distinctive studies investigating managers' role stressors or work-life conflict are also discussed in this section, as each one utilized different variables and observed dissimilar results. Increased role stressors from role conflict and role overload were positively connected with work-life conflict and intention to leave (Rubel et al., 2017). Role conflict was discovered in another study to have a detrimental impact on job burnout, but it had a negligible impact on job performance. The researchers found that career calling, when experienced by managers, favorably moderates role conflict and job burnout (Wu et al., 2019). Quantitative methodology was also utilized to investigate the impact of servant leadership behaviors on managers' work-life balance. This study found that servant leadership behaviors intensify a leader's work-life conflict. According to the study, servant leadership involves not just accommodating employees' requests and needs at work but also giving them access to resources or assistance in their home lives so they may take care of their familial obligations (Zhou et al., 2020). As evidenced through the empirical research, role overload, role strain, or work-life conflict were found to all

have a detrimental effect on a manager, even though each research study the researcher considered in this section had distinctive qualities.

Role overload findings are consistent in that work-life conflict has a negative impact on an individual's life, whether they are a working individual, educator, or manager; however, researchers have found that both external and internal factors can moderate work-life conflict. Examining empirical research findings for role overload, role strain, and work-life conflict is valuable to understanding the theoretical framework of role balance. Despite this broad range of research participants and findings in the noted studies, principals have not been adequately studied in the literature on role overload.

Summary

A school principal's job remains challenging and stressful despite the abundance of research and literature on educational leadership that can help guide effective leadership (Aravena & González, 2021; Klocko & Wells, 2015; Mahfouz, 2020; Reid, 2021; Wells & Klocko, 2018). Being a school administrator entails an unavoidable amount of stress at work (Mahfouz, 2020), and burnout among principals is an urgent issue that is getting worse. To deal with the current problem of principal stress and burnout, the educational leadership community must continue to assess, critique, improve, investigate, and support principals' work-life balance.

Work-life balance has been the subject of discussions and research in quantitative and qualitative studies, including various participants. Based on role balance theory, this theoretical and empirical analysis has investigated research organized around the three constructs of role balance, role ease, and role overload (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). The theoretical analysis of role balance theory was supported by empirical research in this chapter, which analyzed each construct of role balance, ease, and overload. Each construct's research with employees,

educators, and managers was described separately.

Through the literature, the researcher found role balance to be a separate and distinct construct from role ease and role overload (Carlson et al., 2009; Ferdous et al., 2021; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Haar, 2013). Work-life balance has been linked to higher levels of life satisfaction, according to studies using role balance theory's theoretical framework (Bryant & Constantine, 2006; Mitra et al., 2021). According to studies (Brough et al., 2014; Bryant & Constantine, 2006; Ferdous et al., 2021; Haar, 2013; Haar et al., 2014; Mitra et al., 2021; Orellana et al., 2021; Taşdelen-Karçkay & Bakalım, 2017), a balanced role system promotes more positive well-being and improved job and life satisfaction.

Role ease is a construct that encompasses more than just the absence of role strain, as shown by its distinct qualities and traits (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Role ease occurs when an individual's role at work or home makes the other role less difficult. According to common findings in work-life enrichment research (Badri & Panatik, 2020; Carlson et al., 2006; Hermann et al., 2020), when people experience role ease, they also experience positive self-worth, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-control, as well as a healthy mindset and psychological well-being. Organizational and familial support, job autonomy (Badri & Panatik, 2020; Vaziri et al., 2022), and work schedule flexibility (Osei Boakye et al., 2021; Peng et al., 2022; Sturges, 2012; Vaziri et al., 2022) were external factors that influenced role ease and work-life enrichment.

Researchers have investigated role overload and/or strain in addition to role balance and role ease. Role strain is a person's difficulty when two or more roles conflict and overlap, making the person's overall role system too demanding (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Role overload occurs when a person juggles too many roles at once and has too many demands placed on them. Numerous studies have found a positive correlation between work-life conflict and a

range of outside issues, including role stresses (Rubel et al., 2017), job overload and organizational limits (Chen et al., 2017), job demands (Sarwar et al., 2021), and working overtime (Eckart & Ziomek-Daigle, 2019). Emotional intelligence, social and individual support, and autonomy were consistently found to be moderators of work-life conflict (Eckart & Ziomek-Daigle, 2019; Gao et al., 2013; Lenghan et al., 2007; Sarwar et al., 2021). Role strain or work-life conflict has also been linked to higher burnout, worse satisfaction, and intention to quit (Rubel et al., 2017; Sarwar et al., 2021; Simões et al., 2021).

Considering this literature, the overall strength is the breadth of participants, which includes a broad spectrum of countries and occupational roles. Another strength was that quantitative and qualitative methods had been utilized to study work-life balance. A weakness in the literature is the inconsistency of terms, definitions, theoretical frameworks, variables, moderators, and mediators (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). Without consistency in the research, it is difficult to interpret patterns, themes, and trends, making potential solutions challenging. Through this empirical literature review, the researcher addressed one major weakness in the lack of research on education staff, specifically K–12 school principals.

There is a lack of scholarly research and knowledge about how a principal's work-life balance varies depending on the campus grade level in Texas schools, either inside or outside public K–12 schools. Role balance theory has not yet been applied to empirical studies examining a principal's role balance, ease, and overload. This quantitative investigation helped to close this knowledge gap.

Future research around role balance theory (Marks & MacDermid, 1996) must recognize, understand, and improve K–12 principals' work-life balance. The goal of this study was to investigate the difference in Texas principals' role balance, ease, and overload as it relates to

work-life balance based on campus grade levels to provide a basis for future researchers to suggest differentiated support for principals at different campus grade levels. This research is imperative to help educational organizations address principals' stress and burnout because there could be a national principal shortage without addressing these issues.

The research design for this study involved investigating differences between qualities and groups as a descriptive study design (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). Without any experimental controls, principals were questioned about their current role balance, role ease, and role overload to see if there was a difference depending on the grade level they oversee on their campus. The research utilized a determined set of variables to address the research question to fulfill the study's objectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Using a quantitative research method, the researcher attempted to gather information from a large sample of people (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). The study's potential participants included a considerable number of principals. The researcher used the role balance theory to translate principals' work-life balance phenomena into clearer representations. The researcher also asserts that applying statistical analysis could effectively accomplish the objective of the quantitative investigation by applying a deductive reasoning approach, which is the trademark of quantitative research (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). Chapter III further describes the methods and design for this quantitative study, which investigated how Texas principals' work-life balance varies depending on the grade levels on their campus in terms of role balance, ease, and overload.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN

Introduction

The goal of this quantitative, nonexperimental, cross-sectional descriptive study (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014) was to investigate how Texas principals' work-life balance differs depending on the grade levels on their campuses. The quantitative analytical approach was best suited for this research study since it examined how principals balance their work and non-work lives in terms of role balance, role ease, and role overload. The support of a principal's work-life balance by educational organizations depends on scholarly research and studies; this research study contributes to the literature. Studying the work-life balance of principals is a positive step toward reducing the negative consequences of stress and burnout, which impacts the turnover of campus leadership.

Several researchers and academics have emphasized the need to research principals' work-life balance, stress, burnout, and well-being (Drago-Severson et al., 2018; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019; Kaufman et al., 2022; Mahfouz, 2020; Maxwell & Riley, 2017; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018). However, there was a gap in the available body of information. The literature had not yet addressed a school principal's work-life balance using the framework of role balance theory (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). The results of this study show whether a principal's work-life balance varies depending on their campus level. The results are crucial in determining whether Texas' elementary, middle, or high school principals require differentiating support.

A research question should guide the research methods and design in a research study; the components should coherently complement each other. A research design is a structural framework of research methods and techniques utilized by a researcher. The research question

and theoretical framework drive the purpose statement and inform the methodological approach. The methodological approach then determines data collection, sample size, data analysis, and sharing of findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Educational leaders are responsible for expanding educational opportunities while emphasizing instruction and building community. One of the main initiatives in the country is to create future educational leaders, especially in K–12 educational settings. In an environment of change, scrutiny, and criticism, educational leaders must be politically and socially astute leaders who maintain moral courage and exhibit professional integrity. One current issue that needs to be resolved is the problem of principals' stress, burnout, and intention to leave the profession, which needs to be examined by studying principals' work-life balance (Drago-Severson et al., 2018; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019; Kaufman et al., 2022; Mahfouz, 2020; Maxwell & Riley, 2017; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018).

In this chapter, the research methods and design are discussed as they relate to investigating principals' work-life balance. The first two sections examine the central research question and research methodology. The next sections include details related to the research design, population, and sample selection. Instrumentation and data sources are then discussed, including validity, reliability, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. The last section of Chapter III includes ethical considerations and limitations, followed by a summary.

Central Research Question

The quantitative methodological approach was the best fit for investigating the problem of practice by studying principals' work-life balance through the central research question. The research question was: Does a principal's work-life balance differ based on their campus level? The problem of principals' work-life balance, as posed in the research question, was best

researched through statistical analysis utilizing a survey. This quantitative study aimed to examine the difference in Texas principals' role balance, role ease, and role overload as it relates to work-life balance based on their campus grade levels (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014).

Principals were asked to self-report through the Role Balance Scale questionnaire on their current role balance, ease, and overload, without any experimental controls, to determine a possible difference depending on the campus grade level in which they lead. To achieve this study's purpose, the researcher utilized a focused set of variables to answer the research question (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher aimed to better understand principals' work-life balance phenomena into simpler representations utilizing the role balance theory. The researcher also contends that statistical analysis appropriately achieved the quantitative study's goal (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). The Role Balance Scale questionnaire gathered information from participants on their perceived role balance, ease, and overload to learn from participants who both have and do not currently have perceived work-life balance.

Research Methodology

Researchers must consider the philosophical presuppositions they bring to the study, the research design based on these assumptions, and the specific research methodologies or procedures that put the approach into action. As discussed in Chapter II, Marks and MacDermid (1996) utilized deductive reasoning to test and validate role balance theory. Through their quantitative research and findings, the researchers took a positivist approach where the role of the researcher is limited to data collection and objective interpretation, thus arriving at the absolute truth of knowledge. In a more recent study, Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) also utilized quantitative methodology but presented a slightly different epistemological frame for role balance theory. These researchers applied a postpositivist worldview, being mindful of

contextual issues in their approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The current proposed research study investigating principals' work-life balance took the postpositivist approach to include studying the causes that influence outcomes, therefore making quantitative methodology the appropriate research method.

When interpreting empirical results, quantitative research incorporates impartiality, accuracy, empiricism, logical reasoning, generalizability, replication and verification, prudent explanation, and conditional conclusions (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). By using questionnaires, the quantitative methodological approach makes use of the philosophical presumption of postpositivist knowledge claims. Quantitative inquiry includes closed-ended questions, predetermined approaches, and numeric data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher tests or validates theories or explanations in quantitative research through three key elements: design, measurement, and statistics or data analysis (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). Another key element of quantitative research is measurement and data collection.

The objectivity of a quantitative research study is one of its main advantages. Fewer variables and specific numbers are used. This can aid in removing biases from the study and improve the reliability of the results. Another advantage is that acquiring large sample sizes is frequently simpler. Quantitative research allows for the collection of data from a large sample of people (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). The researcher wished to potentially include a large number of participants and utilized the role balance theory to simplify the complex phenomenon of principals' work-life balance (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). In this research study, the researcher used the Role Balance Scale questionnaire, a data collection instrument utilized in quantitative methodology, to ask participants to report on their perceptions of role ease, role

overload, and role balance to learn from individuals who both have and do not currently perceive a positive work-life balance.

Research Design

The goal of descriptive statistics, which summarize and characterize data in quantitative research, is to identify patterns that are not immediately obvious when analyzing raw data.

Researchers utilize inferential statistics to conclude the traits or characteristics of a population using a sample from that population. Statistical analysis compares the expected outcome of a chance event with the actual event. The statistical test a researcher uses depends on the research question posed at the beginning of the quantitative research investigation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014).

This quantitative study examined the difference in Texas principals' role balance, role ease, and role overload as it relates to work-life balance based on their campus grade levels. As classified by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), elementary, middle, and high schools were utilized for the grade-level divisions. This study utilized a nonexperimental, cross-sectional, descriptive research design (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). As part of the nonexperimental research design, principals were asked to self-report through the Role Balance Scale questionnaire on their current role balance, ease, and overload, without any experimental controls, to determine a possible difference depending on their campus grade level. Nonexperimental research is conducted in a real-world situation, and the researcher is unable to fully control all potential variables. The researcher did not control the variables for principals' work-life balance, which is nonexperimental. Cross-sectional research designs are undertaken at a single point in time; as a result, they are best utilized to find patterns, correlations, and incidence rates of a study subject among a population. Since principals were completing the Role

Balance Scale questionnaire, which records their work-life balance at a certain point in time, this aligns with the current research design. Descriptive research designs describe relationships and differences between attributes and groups. When conducting descriptive research, a researcher describes the actions of the individuals, which in this case involved describing the principals' work-life balance. The researcher utilized a focused set of variables to answer the research question and achieve the purpose of this study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Researchers can collect data from a wide sample of participants through quantitative research (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). The researcher was interested in investigating principals' work-life balance across Texas, the study of which potentially has numerous participants. The researcher's goal was to better understand the aspects of principals' work-life balance by transforming them into simpler representations utilizing the role balance theory. The researcher believed that statistical analysis would appropriately achieve the quantitative study's goal. Applying a deductive reasoning approach and statistics are hallmarks of quantitative research (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014).

Population and Sample Selection

The general population targeted in this study included all public school principals in Texas. A school's overall success is the principal's responsibility, as is overseeing the administrative team, teachers, and students. Managing all aspects of school operations is a typical principal's job description, as well as creating, putting into practice, and upholding curriculum standards. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) maintains a public website database with principals' emails. The researcher targeted all Texas public school principals with posted emails in the AskTED database (AskTED home, n.d.), which included over 8,820 individuals. The study sample included Texas principals who volunteered to participate in the research by

completing the Role Balance Scale questionnaire. The study did not intentionally limit participants based on their perceived current role balance, role ease, and role overload; instead, the research study intended to gather information from all participants on their perceived role balance, ease, and overload to learn from participants who both have and do not currently have perceived work-life balance. Participants were over 18 years old and could read and understand English.

O'Dwyer and Bernauer (2014) suggest quantitative research should include at least 50 participants. Convenience sampling was utilized since the researcher could not control who participated in the research study (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). At the time of the survey distribution, 8,820 (N=8,820) principals in Texas had public/posted email addresses in the AskTED (AskTED Home, n.d.) website database. The researcher estimated the response rate as 44% for online surveys, as suggested by Wu et al. (2022). Considering the target population was 8,820 (N=8,820) and Wu et al.'s 44% suggested response rate, the anticipated number of participants for this quantitative study was 3,880 (n=3,880) current public school principals. The goal was to have an equal balance of elementary, middle, and high school principals to give an equal voice to each campus level; however, the researcher could not control this. Due to the limitations discussed in Chapters IV and V, the actual response rate was 1.77%.

The researcher leveraged their personal and professional networks to recruit participation; however, due to the large target population of 8,820 (N=8,820) principals within the 261,193 square miles of Texas (United States Census Bureau, n.d.), the researcher also used email to convince principals to participate in the research study. The email included the estimated time to complete the survey to recruit more participants who likely had limited time.

Instrumentation and Data Sources

After establishing the population and participant sample, a researcher must choose the instrumentation and data sources. A questionnaire is a research instrument where participants self-report specific characteristics (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). The Role Balance Scale questionnaire elicited participant demographic data, including the level of the campus, the approximate number of students on the campus, years of experience as a principal, number of administrators on campus, average hours worked weekly, number of dependents in the participant's household, and participant race/ethnicity. The options for campus level included elementary school, middle school, or high school. In determining the number of students on campuses, the choices were 0–250 students, 251–500 students, 501–750 students, 751–1,000 students, 1,000–1,500 students, or 1,500 or more students. The principals' year of experience was captured on a sliding scale from 0–35. Principals reported the number of administrators on campus using a sliding scale from zero to ten. The Role Balance Scale questionnaire had a sliding scale from 35 to 80 hours to capture hours worked weekly. For the number of dependents in the household, options were from zero to ten on a sliding scale. Race/ethnicity followed standards on race and ethnicity set by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in 1997 (Office of Management and Budget, 1997).

It is important to note that the absence of gender as a variable or focus in research should not imply that gender is unimportant in work-life balance research. Gender is a critical factor in many aspects of research, including work-life balance, and it is essential to consider gender-based disparities and differences in various research contexts; however, the decision to exclude gender as a variable in this study was based on the specific research goals of this study. The researcher acknowledged studies that focused on gender-specific participants through the

literature review. With the limited scope of this research study, the researcher chose not to include gender to not reinforce stereotypes and biases against any gender group. In addition, selected researchers have found no significant gender differences in participants' work-life balance (Byron, 2005; Casper et al., 2011; Frone, 2003; Johnston et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2021; Offer & Schneider, 2011).

The Role Balance Scale questionnaire used in this quantitative research study was developed by Marks and MacDermid (1996). The questions on the Role Balance Scale included 21 questions comprising eight items to measure role balance, eight items to measure role overload, and five items to measure role ease. The Role Balance Scale was utilized to investigate the degree to which principals experience balance across their entire role systems. Several researchers have utilized items from the Role Balance Scale. Marks et al. (2001) investigated the dependent variable of role balance for spouses by employing four items from the Role Balance Scale; the results included a Cronbach's alpha of .64 for wives and .56 for husbands. Utilizing the same four items, Chen and Li (2012) found Cronbach's alpha to be .72 for husbands and .71 for wives. As a measure for dependent variables, Lee et al. (2014) used the eight items for role balance and found the coefficient alpha to be .63, while Bryant and Constantine's (2006) research found a Cronbach's alpha of .76 for the eight-item scale. Lenaghan and Sengupta (2007), employing the measures specific to role overload and role ease from the Role Balance Scale (Marks & MacDermid, 1996), summed the score for each construct and then calculated the mean.

This study utilized all 21 items in the Role Balance Scale (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Five of the eight items connected the participant to different distinctions of the role balance construct. The first item related to the balance of enjoyment across roles; the second item related

to the balance of attention; the fourth item related to the distribution of importance; the sixth item correlated to the balance of satisfaction across roles; and the seventh item related to the balance of effort. The other three items (the third, fifth, and eighth) were reverse scored. These three items centered on assertions indicating different subtleties of a non-balanced or a more hierarchically organized role system. These eight items utilized to measure participants' role balance were scored on a six-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The Role Balance Scale (Marks & MacDermid, 1996) includes eight items that capture the construct of the participants' role overload. An example of a question relating to role overload is, "I have to do things which I don't really have the time and energy for." These items were scored on a six-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The role ease construct was measured through five items on the Role Balance Scale (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). These five items asked participants to rate the ease of accomplishing different undertakings. Examples included the participants having quality time with friends, having a pleasant meal, and having satisfying leisure time. These items were scored on a six-point scale from very difficult to very easy.

Validity

In quantitative research, the degree to which the results of a measure reflect the variable they are intended to evaluate is known as validity (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). Marks and MacDermid (1996) assessed the validity of the items on the Role Balance Scale. They summed individual items for each construct to determine the scores for role balance, role ease, and role overload. Simple sums were applied, as opposed to weighted scores, so that scale scores could be understood. These unit-weighted scores had correlations of 0.95 with factor-weighted scores, according to the study. Item-total correlations of more than 0.7 are typically regarded as

favorable (Cronk, 2020). In this approach, the researchers utilized factor analysis to determine which items load on each factor, then combined the items for each factor, thus creating a new variable as a factor-based score.

To gain confidence that the items on the Marks and MacDermid's (1996) Role Balance Scale were empirically distinct, the researchers conducted confirmatory maximum likelihood factor analysis of all 21 items on the three scales. The three scale scores were correlated as follows: role balance and role overload: $r = -.35$, $p < .001$; role balance and role ease: $r = .23$, $p < .001$; role overload and role ease: $r = -.49$, $p < .001$. These findings indicate that role balance and role overload, as well as role balance and role ease, have weak associations, which supports the constructs being distinct (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). The researchers suggested that the negative moderate correlation between role overload and role ease was expected but not high enough to contradict their claim that the two constructs are empirically distinct since the shared variance is only 24% ($r^2 = .24$). Although there may be a moderate relationship between role overload and role ease, this relationship is not exclusive, suggesting that these two constructs are different and thus independently valid as measured by the instrument (Marks & MacDermid, 1996).

Reliability

A strong, positive correlation between data from a questionnaire at two different points in time supports the Role Balance Scale's reliability (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). The reliability of the research instrument for this study was analyzed by Marks and MacDermid (1996) during two distinct studies. A scale's reliability is quantified by a Cronbach's alpha ranging between 0 and 1, with optimal values ranging between .7 and .9 (Cronk, 2020). The researchers determined Cronbach's alpha was .68 for the eight role balance items, .89 for the eight items measuring role

overload, and .66 for the five role ease items (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). The Cronbach's alpha values for the Role Balance Scale range from moderate to strong (Cronk, 2020).

Data Collection Procedures

Participation in the research study was solicited by emailing public school principals requesting participation by completing the Role Balance Scale questionnaire. Participants' consent was obtained for the research study since personal and demographic information was gathered. A link to the survey was included in the email, and those who decided to take part in the study were asked to confirm their consent by starting the survey. A more detailed consent form was included as a linked document.

The objective of this research study was shared with the principals both in the email and on the consent form. They were informed about the confidentiality of the information they shared. Principals were given two weeks to complete the survey. A reminder email was sent to principals two weeks after the initial email. Extending the timeline to five additional days was allowed due to a low response rate.

The data for this research study was collected through the online Role Balance Scale survey completed by principals, which took 7–10 minutes. The survey for this research study was built and delivered digitally as part of the data-gathering procedures using Qualtrics, a web-based survey tool for conducting survey research, assessments, and other data collection activities. Qualtrics allows an anonymous environment for gathering data. The survey did not collect identifiable demographic information such as names or addresses. No data was collected over the phone or in person to prevent the researcher from convincing the respondents through discussion or explanation. For survey consistency, the questions were the same for each responder. The researcher downloaded results onto a flash memory device, thumb drive, or USB

drive. The data analysis began once the research study data was collected from principals online and downloaded onto an external memory device, which remained secured in a locked cabinet when not used by the researcher.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data collected and downloaded from the Role Balance Scale questionnaire in Qualtrics was exported to SPSS version 28. SPSS is a statistical software platform that offers a user-friendly interface and a comprehensive collection of tools designed to assist researchers in discovering patterns in data. Once the data was downloaded and exported to SPSS, it was kept on a secured flash memory device, thumb drive, or USB drive that was only accessible to the researcher. SPSS version 28 software was used to analyze the data gathered from public school principals. Responses with missing data were removed from the data set. Missing data can weaken the analysis, limiting the study and the findings (Cronk, 2020). Errors resulting from transferring data from Qualtrics to SPSS were corrected. Redundancy was analyzed by running a frequency table to include a unique ID for each participant that identified such an error. Data transformations were completed, which included reversing responses or calculating sum score values as needed based on the questions and the variables (Cronk, 2020).

Descriptive statistics were conducted to describe the participant population (Cronk, 2020). Descriptive statistics included a Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality for role balance, role ease, and role overload. The test reported $p > .05$, indicating a possible normal distribution of the data.

For inferential statistical analysis, one-way ANOVA (Cronk, 2020) was completed to determine if there was a difference in Texas principals' role balance, role ease, and role overload as it relates to work-life balance, based on their campus grade levels (elementary, middle, and

high schools). The one-way ANOVA compares the means of two or more participant groups that differ on a single independent variable. If the mean and median are comparable or close, one-way ANOVA is a reliable parametric test that can manage the majority of non-normal distributions. The dependent variables must be interval variables and have a normal distribution for one-way ANOVA. There must be at least three groups in the independent variable, which must be nominal. One-way ANOVA involves no significant outliers that distort the mean. Participants cannot belong to more than one group, and all groups must have equal variance, referred to in quantitative methodology as homogeneity of variance or homoscedasticity. The one-way ANOVA will allow violations of equal variances. If group size differs, such options may exist within tests (Cronk, 2020).

The research examined the homogeneity of variances (Levene's Test) to interpret the one-way ANOVA's statistical results. When $p > .05$, the ANOVA table was utilized. In reference to significance, when $p < .05$, the researcher used the ANOVA effect size table, but if $p > .05$, then the effect size was not considered. The one-way ANOVA only reveals if any group is different from any other group. Therefore, the researcher employed a post-hoc test. Post-hoc tests are needed when a significant ANOVA is found so that the researcher can determine which groups are different from other groups. The researcher examined the Tukey table when using an ANOVA table. The researcher specified the value of F , the degrees of freedom, and the significance level to draw conclusions from the one-way ANOVA (Cronk, 2020). The statistical data analysis to answer the central research question in this quantitative research study was primarily based on the one-way ANOVA.

Ethical Considerations

All research studies must contemplate ethical considerations. During this quantitative survey research study, risks were not anticipated to be any more than in principals' usual lives; however, participants could have been upset or bothered by items on the instrument. Participants were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time. The stored data collected had no identifiers. Participants were given a number identifier, so no names were attached. The Role Balance Scale questionnaire did not collect names, addresses, and other personally identifiable demographic data to preserve confidentiality and anonymity.

Once the data had been downloaded onto an external memory device, the device remained secured in a locked personal home office cabinet when not used by the researcher. Following acceptance of the dissertation, the data will be retained in a locked cabinet for three years. After three years, the external memory device will be destroyed in a large shredder to individually crush/shred the chips inside the device's case. As with all research studies, it is important to adhere to ethical principles to protect research participants' dignity, rights, and welfare.

Limitations

This research study had various limitations. The small sample size posed the biggest restriction on the generalizability of these findings. A small sample size reduces the statistical power to detect significant interactions between the variables, which could lead to inaccurate conclusions that cannot be applied to the full population (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). The researcher sent a reminder email to address the limitation of a small sample size. Due to the data being gathered through an online form, there was a probability that participants might not have been fully engaged or might not have provided correct demographic information. Another

limitation was that all data gathered by the Role Balance Scale was self-reported. Instead of being truthful, people could have selected a more socially acceptable response. Principals who operate in a setting where “more is better” might have anxiety when discussing work-life balance. Some administrators might have changed their answers depending on what they believed to be the “right” responses. The voluntary nature of the survey and the study’s design may have unintentionally excluded the most overworked potential participants, since participants may have had more free time to complete it if they experienced less job-related stress and had a healthier work-life balance. Due to the time of year in which the survey was distributed, campus principals were off-contract, and emails that were sent but not received were unexpected limitations. Other unforeseen limitations included the inability to obtain an equal number of responses from principals at all levels and the fact that race/ethnicity ratios in the sample did not precisely match the state ratios.

The state of Texas was a delimitation for this research study. Principals across the U.S. were considered for participants; however, only emails from Texas principals were readily available to the researcher. This delimitation prevented the researcher from generalizing the research across multiple states. Another delimitation was that this study did not cover other campus or district leadership. The scope of this research study was to focus specifically on the campus principal as the primary leader at a school. It investigated the differences in principals’ work-life balance based on campus grade level, which was another delimitation. Other factors, such as demographic or family structures, might have impacted the principals’ work-life balance. This study’s analysis did not consider these potential factors due to the focused research question and purpose. Understanding these limitations and delimitations is crucial for contextualizing

these study results, evaluating the reliability of the data, and assigning a level of confidence to the research findings.

Summary

The objective of descriptive statistics, which summarize and characterize data in quantitative research, is to find patterns that are not immediately apparent when evaluating raw data. To make inferences about the qualities or attributes of a population using a sample from that group, researchers use inferential statistics. Driven by the research question provided at the outset of this quantitative research study, the researcher utilized statistical analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). The purpose of this quantitative, nonexperimental, cross-sectional, descriptive study (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014) was to examine how Texas principals' work-life balance varied depending on the grade levels on their campuses in terms of role balance, role ease, and role overload. By examining the work-life balance of principals, the quantitative methodological method was the most appropriate for this research study. The research question was, "Does a principal's work-life balance vary depending on the level of their campus?" The best way to study the issue of principals' work-life balance expressed in the research question was through statistical analysis using a survey instrument.

A convenience sample (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014) of 3,880 participants ($n=3,880$) was the goal for this study. Participants were current principals in Texas. The 21 items on the Role Balance Scale (Marks & MacDermid, 1996) were electronically distributed to all participants via Qualtrics. The Role Balance Scale measured role balance through eight questions and role overload through eight questions, all scored on a six-point scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Role ease was measured through five questions on a six-point scale from "very difficult" to "very easy." A one-way ANOVA (Cronk, 2020) was calculated using SPSS version

28 to determine if there was a difference in Texas principals' role balance, role ease, and role overload as it related to work-life balance, based on their campus grade levels.

Chapter III has discussed the research question, which aligns with the research methodology and design. This chapter shared the participant population and sample along with the instrumentation and data sources. Chapter III also covered validity, reliability, data collection techniques, and data analysis techniques, which are related to the research instrument and data. Ethical considerations and limitations were covered in the last section of this chapter. After data collection and analysis of this research study, in Chapter IV, the researcher presents the findings, including descriptive and inferential statistics. The research findings will answer the question of whether principals' work-life balance differs depending on their campus level.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Introduction

According to recent studies (Clifford & Coggsall, 2021; Kaufman et al., 2022; National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2022), between 20–50% of principals are reporting stress levels that are so severe that they are considering leaving the position. In a related study, 85% of principals reported work-related stress, with 28% experiencing symptoms of depression and 48% experiencing exhaustion (Doan et al., 2022); however, 28% of school leaders in the United States believe they would continue as campus principals if they could create or maintain a better work-life balance (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2022). If principals' work-life balance is not addressed and improved, the country may face a principal shortage (Clifford & Coggsall, 2021; Reyes-Guerra et al., 2021).

Given the statistically significant positive relationship between campus leadership and student achievement (Goddard et al., 2020; Liebowitz & Porter, 2019; Wu & Shen, 2022), the issue of principals' work-life balance needs to be investigated. Several academics and researchers have emphasized the importance of studying principals' work-life balance, stress, burnout, and well-being (Drago-Severson et al., 2018; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019; Kaufman et al., 2022; Mahfouz, 2020; Maxwell & Riley, 2017; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018); however, there is a gap in the literature specifically related to the campus grade level the principal leads. Due to this gap in the research, the purpose of this quantitative, nonexperimental, cross-sectional, descriptive study (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014) is to examine how Texas principals' work-life balance varies depending on the grade levels of their campuses regarding role balance, role ease, and role overload. This design allows for examining large groups of participants by utilizing a

questionnaire without the need to manipulate variables. The central research question in this study is: Does a principal's work-life balance differ based on their campus level? This study used convenience sampling of principals in public schools in Texas.

In this chapter, the data analysis and results are discussed as they relate to investigating principals' work-life balance. The descriptive findings and data analysis procedures are examined in the first two sections. The last section of Chapter IV includes the results, followed by a summary.

Descriptive Findings

Descriptive findings in quantitative research involve presenting and summarizing the main characteristics, trends, patterns, and distributions of the data collected during the study. These findings are supported by statistical measures that help to quantify and describe the data more precisely. Descriptive findings are a crucial part of research to summarize and present the data meaningfully and clearly. It provides the foundation for further analysis and interpretation, leading to more advanced statistical techniques and insights. This section will present a description of the sample, demographic data analysis, and descriptive data analysis organized around each role balance theory construct (Marks & MacDermid, 1996).

Description of the Sample

The study's target population consisted of Texas K–12 principals who volunteered to take part in the research by answering survey questions. Participants' current self-perceived work-life balance was not a deliberate criterion for exclusion from the study. Rather, the survey gathered data from all participants to learn from individuals who believe they have and those who do not believe they have a favorable work-life balance.

The online survey used in this research study was electronically distributed to all participants via Qualtrics. The participant population included 8,820 (N=8,820) principals in Texas who have public/posted email addresses in the AskTED (AskTED Home, n.d.) website database. Of the 8,820 emails that were sent through Qualtrics, 676 emails failed to deliver, 417 were duplicate email addresses, and 835 emails bounced. Qualtrics provides potential reasons an email is bounced, including the email address not existing, the receiving server having a high-security firewall, the receiving mailbox being full, or the recipient server being offline. The online survey link was successfully delivered to 6,892 Texas principals' email addresses. Of the 6,892 successfully delivered emails, there was a response rate of 1.84%. Responses with missing information or incomplete data were deleted for the descriptive and inferential analysis. This resulted in 122 completed surveys for the study sample, which resulted in a 1.77% response rate for analysis.

Demographic Data Analysis

As part of the online survey, participants provided information regarding campus and personal demographic data for the study. Demographic data included the approximate number of students on the campus, years of experience as a principal, number of administrators on campus, average hours worked weekly, number of dependents in the household, and participant race/ethnicity. The demographic information was gathered to analyze any unexpected outcomes. Principals' campus level provided the other demographic variable in this study.

Size of Campus

Individual participants identified how many students were on their campus. Groupings based on the number of students or size of the campus were created for the survey and are summarized in Table 1. Based on these groupings, 29.5% of the principals lead a campus with

251–500 students, while approximately 28.7% lead a campus with 501–750 students. A summary of the other campus sizes is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution of Number of Students on Campus

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
0–250 students	25	20.5	20.5	20.5
251–500 students	36	29.5	29.5	50.0
501–750 students	35	28.7	28.7	78.7
751–1,000 students	11	9.0	9.0	87.7
1,000–1,500 students	8	6.6	6.6	94.3
1,500 + students	7	5.7	5.7	100.0
Total	122	100.0	100.0	

Principals' Experience

Individual participants were also grouped according to their years of experience. Principals' experience was combined into six categories for descriptive data analysis: 0–5 years, 6–10 years, 11–15 years, and 16 or more years. Approximately 48% percent of the participants indicated that they had been a principal for five or fewer years, while 9% indicated that they had led a campus for 16 or more years. A summary of the experience levels of the participating principals is provided in Table 2.

Table 2*Frequency Distribution of Experience Level*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
0–5 years	59	48.4	48.4	48.4
6–10 years	32	26.2	26.2	74.6
11–15 years	20	16.4	16.4	91.0
16 or more years	11	9.0	9.0	100
Total	122	100.0	100.0	

Administrators on Campus

The number of administrators on the principals' campuses was analyzed as part of the descriptive statistics. The majority (59.8%) of principals lead a campus with fewer than three administrators; 8.2% of principals reported their campus having six or more administrators. A summary of the number of campus administrators on the campuses of the participating principals is provided in Table 3.

Table 3*Frequency Distribution of Number of Administrators on Campus*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 3 administrators	73	59.8	59.8	59.8
3–5 administrators	39	32.0	32.0	91.8
6+ administrators	10	8.2	8.2	100
Total	122	100.0	100.0	

Principals' Average Weekly Hours Worked

Individual participants identified the average hours they worked weekly. Groupings based on the self-identified average hours worked weekly are summarized in Table 4. Based on these groupings, 44.3% of the principals work between 60–69 hours per week, while approximately 8.2% indicated they work between 70–80 hours a week.

Table 4

Frequency Distribution of Average Weekly Hours Worked

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
40–49 hours	11	9.5	9.0	9.0
50–59 hours	47	38.5	38.5	47.5
60–69 hours	54	44.3	44.3	91.8
70–80 hours	10	8.2	8.2	100
Total	122	100.0	100.0	

Dependents in the Principals' Households

Principals with 0–3 dependents in the household comprised the greatest majority (92.6%) of survey participants. Of the 92.6% of principals with 0–3 dependents, 29.5% had zero dependents, while 1.6% indicated that they had six dependents in the household. These results are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5*Frequency Distribution of Dependents in the Household*

Dependents	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	36	29.5	29.5	29.5
1	22	18.0	18.0	47.5
2	37	30.3	30.3	77.9
3	18	14.8	14.8	92.6
4	4	3.3	3.3	95.9
5	3	2.5	2.5	98.4
6	2	1.6	1.6	100.0
Total	122	100.0	100.0	

Principals' Race and Ethnicity

The online survey gathered data related to principals' race and ethnicity as determined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) 1997 criteria (Office of Management and Budget, 1997). Of the participants, 34.4% identified as Hispanic or Latino, as displayed in Table 6.

Table 6*Frequency Distribution of Ethnicity*

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Hispanic or Latino	42	34.4	34.4	34.4
Not Hispanic or Latino	80	65.6	65.6	100.0
Total	122	100.0	100.0	

Regarding race, 86.9% of participants identified as White, and 11.5% identified as Black or African American. The summary of results is detailed in Table 7. Participants were allowed to choose more than one race; therefore, the total number of participants (n=122) does not equal the sum of participants' races.

Table 7

Frequency Distribution of Race

Race	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
American Indian or Alaska Native	2	1.6	1.6
Asian	0	0	0
Black or African-American	14	11.5	11.5
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0	0
White	106	86.9	13.1
Other	3	2.5	2.5

Descriptive Data Analysis

Prior to answering the research question, the normal distribution of the variables was checked utilizing descriptive statistics in SPSS. A crucial step in statistical analysis is ensuring that the variables are distributed normally because many inferential statistical tests, such as the one-way ANOVA, rely on this assumption. Prior to using the one-way ANOVA, the researcher was able to test whether these assumptions were true by investigating normality. It would have been essential to investigate alternative techniques if the data considerably deviated from normalcy. The findings of parametric tests are less reliable when the data violates the assumption of normalcy. A non-normal distribution of the data would have produced false conclusions. Making decisions about how to manage research data and assuring the validity and

reliability of statistical analysis depend on identifying the normal distribution of variables using descriptive statistics in SPSS.

Role Balance Descriptives

With respect to the role balance construct sum, the skewness of elementary (.037), middle school (.430), and high school (.259) were in acceptable ranges for parametric testing. The kurtosis of elementary (-.570), middle school (-.019), and high school (-.433) were also in acceptable ranges. From this data, as shown in Table 8, the researcher proceeded with the assumption that the variables for the role balance construct sum were normally distributed; therefore, the Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality (Cronk, 2020) was calculated.

Table 8

Descriptives Role Balance Sum

	N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Kurtosis
Elementary	62	29.1129	29	5.45354	18	41	.037	-.570
Middle school	25	26.8800	26	4.80729	18	38	.430	-.019
High school	35	29.7429	30	5.50050	20	42	.259	-.433
Total	122							

Role Overload Descriptives

On investigation of the descriptive analysis for the role overload sum, the skewness of middle school (-.756) and high school (-.945) were in acceptable ranges for parametric testing. The kurtosis of elementary (.496), middle school (-.105), and high school (.526) were also in acceptable ranges. The skewness of elementary (-1.084) possibly indicated a non-normal distribution. From this data, as shown in Table 9, the researcher assumed that the variables were possibly normally distributed and completed the Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality (Cronk, 2020).

Since the one-way ANOVA is a robust test, it can handle variables not within the preferred 1 to -1 acceptable range for skewness and kurtosis (George & Mallery, 2020).

Table 9

Descriptives of Role Overload Sum

	N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Kurtosis
Elementary	62	35.7097	38	8.35363	13	47	-1.084	.496
Middle school	25	37.8000	40	7.95822	19	48	-.756	-.105
High school	35	32.4857	34	7.11821	16	43	-.945	.526
Total	122							

Role Ease Descriptives

As noted in Table 10, the researcher examined the role ease sum descriptive analysis and determined the skewness of elementary (.483) and high school (.603) were in acceptable ranges for parametric testing. The kurtosis of elementary (-.087), middle school (.442), and high school (-.139) were also in acceptable ranges. The skewness of middle school (1.085) was slightly above the acceptable range for parametric testing; however, the researcher assumed that the variables were possibly normally distributed. Since the one-way ANOVA is a robust test, it can handle variables outside the preferred 1 to -1 acceptable range for skewness and kurtosis (George & Mallery, 2020). The researcher completed the Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality (Cronk, 2020) for the role ease construct sum.

Table 10*Descriptives of Role Ease Sum*

	N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Kurtosis
Elementary	62	15.2581	14.5	5.79693	5	29	.483	-.087
Middle school	25	12.2400	11.0	5.36408	6	25	1.085	.442
High school	35	15.0000	15.0	4.55683	7	25	.603	-.139
Total	122							

Descriptive Assumptions Analysis

For the role balance construct sum, the Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality (Cronk, 2020) was calculated and reported $p > .05$ for all three campus levels, indicating a possible normal distribution of the data. Table 11 includes the results of this test. From this data, the researcher proceeded with the assumption that the variables for the role balance construct sum were normally distributed.

Table 11*Tests of Normality*

	Campus Level	Statistic	Shapiro-Wilk	
			df	Sig.
Total score (sum) for role balance	Elementary	.982	62	.487
	Middle school	.975	25	.781
	High school	.968	35	.383

For the role overload construct sum, the Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality (Cronk, 2020) was calculated as $p > .05$ for middle school but not for elementary or high school, which

questioned a possible normal distribution of the data. Table 12 includes the results of this test. This data adds to the descriptive analysis, as shown in Table 9. From this data, the researcher assumed the variables were possibly normally distributed. Since the one-way ANOVA is a robust test, the researcher completed the one-way ANOVA.

Table 12

Tests of Normality

			Shapiro-Wilk	
	Campus Level	Statistic	df	Sig.
Total score (sum) for role overload	Elementary	.894	62	<.001
	Middle school	.928	25	.078
	High school	.906	35	.006

For the role ease construct sum, the Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality (Cronk, 2020) was calculated as $p > .05$ for elementary and high school but not for middle school, which questioned a possible normal distribution of the data. Table 10 includes the results of this test. This data adds to the descriptive analysis, as shown in Table 13. From this data, the researcher assumed the variables were possibly normally distributed. Since the one-way ANOVA is a robust test, the researcher completed the one-way ANOVA.

Table 13*Tests of Normality*

	Campus Level	Statistic	Shapiro-Wilk	
			df	Sig.
Total score (sum) for role ease	Elementary	.962	62	.054
	Middle school	.879	25	.007
	High school	.948	35	.100

Levene's Test for Homogeneity

An underlying assumption of the one-way ANOVA test is that the variances of the dependent variable within each group under consideration are equal (George & Mallery, 2020). This assumption is referred to as the homogeneity of variance. When data has the potential to be non-normal, the homogeneity test is performed to ensure that variances are equal for all samples. Before performing the one-way ANOVA, the assumption of equal variances was verified using Levene's test. For this research study, Levene's Test for Homogeneity was calculated for the sum of role balance. The results specified $p > .05$, indicating equal variances between groups for self-perceived role balance. Table 14 includes the complete results of this test.

Table 14*Tests of Homogeneity of Variances Role Balance*

		Levene			
		Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Total score (sum) for role balance	Based on mean	.608	2	119	.546
	Based on median	.613	2	119	.543
	Based on median and with adjusted df	.613	2	118.895	.543
	Based on trimmed mean	.621	2	119	.539

Levene's test was also used to confirm the equality of variances before performing the one-way ANOVA for the role overload construct sum. Levene's Test for Homogeneity was computed for the total role overload in this study. The findings specified $p > .05$, suggesting equal variations for self-perceived role overload between groups. The complete findings of this test are shown in Table 15.

Table 15*Tests of Homogeneity of Variances Role Overload*

		Levene			
		Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Total score (sum) for role overload	Based on mean	1.088	2	119	.340
	Based on median	.622	2	119	.539
	Based on median and with adjusted df	.622	2	116.158	.539
	Based on trimmed mean	.937	2	119	.395

In addition, the sum for role ease in this research study was computed using Levene's Test for Homogeneity. The assumption of equal variances was confirmed using Levene's test before the one-way ANOVA was run. In terms of self-perceived role ease, the results showed that $p > .05$, which indicated equivalent variances between groups. The full outcomes of this test are shown in Table 16.

Table 16*Tests of Homogeneity of Variances Role Ease*

		Levene			
		Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Total score (sum) for role ease	Based on mean	.800	2	119	.452
	Based on median	.643	2	119	.528
	Based on median and with adjusted df	.643	2	112.688	.528
	Based on trimmed mean	.708	2	119	.495

Data Analysis Procedures

Data was collected and downloaded from the survey, including the Role Balance Scale questionnaire in Qualtrics. It was then exported to SPSS version 28. Once the data was downloaded and exported to SPSS, responses with missing data were removed from the data set. There were five surveys that were started but not completed. Missing data would have weakened the analysis, limiting the study and the findings (Cronk, 2020). Redundancy was analyzed by running a frequency table to include a unique ID for each participant that would have identified such an error. Extraneous data was deleted, such as the date the survey was started and completed. Data transformations were completed, which included reversing responses for items 3, 5, and 8 for the role balance construct questions. Sums for each construct, role balance, role overload, and role ease, were created using SPSS (Cronk, 2020).

Once the data was clean in SPSS, descriptive statistics were conducted to describe the participants (Cronk, 2020). Creating the descriptive statistics included completing a Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality for the role balance, role ease, and role overload sums. If the test

reported $p > .05$, this indicated a possible normal distribution of the data. When the Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality reported $p < .05$, skewness and kurtosis were also analyzed to see if they lay in an acceptable range of 1 to -1.

After the descriptive statistics confirmed normal or near normal distribution, the researcher completed the inferential statistical analysis. One-way ANOVA (Cronk, 2020) was used to determine if there was a difference in Texas principals' role balance, role ease, and role overload as it relates to work-life balance based on their campus grade levels (elementary, middle, and high school). To interpret the one-way ANOVA's statistical results, the researcher examined the homogeneity of variances (Levene's Test). The researcher specified the value of F, the degrees of freedom, and the significance level to draw conclusions for the one-way ANOVA (Cronk, 2020).

Marks and MacDermid's (1996) Role Balance Scale was employed in this quantitative research study for inferential data analysis. The Role Balance Scale consists of 21 questions, eight of which are used to measure role balance, eight to measure role overload, and five to measure role ease. A one-way ANOVA was utilized to answer the central research question: "Does a principal's work-life balance (SumRoleBalance, SumRoleOverload, and SumRoleEase) differ based on their campus level (CAMPUSLEVEL)?" For a one-way ANOVA, the dependent variables (SumRoleBalance, SumRoleOverload, and SumRoleEase) must be interval variables and have a normal distribution. The independent variable (CAMPUSLEVEL) must have a minimum of three categories and be a nominal variable. Marks and MacDermid (1996) assessed the validity of the items on the Role Balance Scale. According to their study, there were 0.95 correlations between the unit-weighted and factor-weighted scores for each construct of role balance, role overload, and role ease. Marks and MacDermid also examined the reliability of this

study's research instrument in two separate studies. They found the constructs' Cronbach's alpha values fell between .66 and .89, corresponding with moderate to strong reliability (Cronk, 2020).

Results

This section presents descriptive statistics comparing principals' self-perceived work-life balance (sum of role balance questions, sum of role overload questions, and sum of role ease questions) with the principal's campus grade level. The results from the descriptive statistics were utilized to determine normal distribution, which is an assumption for using the one-way ANOVA. In addition, Levene's test for homogeneity was performed for the sum of role balance, the sum of role overload, and the sum of role ease. The results specified $p > .05$, indicating equal variances between groups, another assumption for using the one-way ANOVA, as shown in Tables 14, 15, and 16.

Role Balance

Descriptive statistics comparing principals' self-perceived role balance (sum of role balance questions) with the principal's campus grade level are presented in Table 17.

Table 17*Descriptive Statistics for Role Balance*

95% Confidence								
Interval for Mean								
			Std.	Std.				
	N	Mean	Deviation	Error	Lower	Upper	Minimum	Maximum
Elementary	62	29.1129	5.45354	.69260	27.7280	30.4978	18	41
Middle school	25	26.8800	4.80729	.96146	24.8956	28.8644	18	38
High school	35	29.7429	5.50050	.92975	27.8534	31.6323	20	42
Total	122	28.8361	5.39875	.48878	27.8684	29.8037	18	42

A one-way ANOVA (Cronk, 2020) was computed comparing principals' self-perceived role balance (SumRoleBalance) with their campus grade level. No significant difference was found among principals' campus grade levels ($F(2, 119) = 2.262, p > .05$). Table 18 gives the results of this test. Based on the survey results, principals who lead an elementary campus had a mean role balance score of 29.1129 ($sd = 5.45354$). Principal participants who lead a middle school campus had a mean role balance score of 26.8800 ($sd = 4.80729$). Principal participants who lead a high school campus had a mean role balance score of 29.7429 ($sd = 5.50050$). Note: Post Hoc analysis was not included due to no significant difference being found. These results confirm no significant difference when comparing principals' self-perceived role balance according to their campus grade levels.

Table 18*ANOVA: Total Score (Sum) for Role Balance*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	129.186	2	64.593	2.262	.109
Within groups	3397.535	119	28.551		
Total	3526.721	121			

Role Overload

In Table 19, descriptive statistics are shown comparing the principal's campus grade levels with their self-perceived role overload (the sum of role overload questions).

Table 19*Descriptive Statistics for Role Overload*

		95% Confidence						
		Interval for Mean						
		Std.	Std.					
	N	Mean	Deviation	Error	Lower	Upper	Minimum	Maximum
Elementary	62	35.7097	8.35363	1.06091	33.5883	37.8311	13	47
Middle school	25	37.8000	7.95822	1.59164	34.5150	41.0850	19	48
High school	35	32.4857	7.11821	1.20320	30.0405	34.9309	16	43
Total	122	35.2131	8.10186	.73351	33.7609	36.6653	13	48

A one-way ANOVA (Cronk, 2020) was computed comparing principals' self-perceived role overload (SumRoleOverload) with their campus grade level. A significant difference was

found among participants' perceived role overload according to their campus grade levels ($F(2, 119) = 3.514, p < .05$). Table 20 includes the results of this test.

Table 20

ANOVA: Total Score (Sum) for Role Overload

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	442.942	2	221.471	3.514	.033
Within groups	7499.517	119	63.021		
Total	7942.459	121			

Based on the sum of squares being 442.942 and the total being 7942.459, the effect size (η^2) is 0.56. This equates to a moderate effect size (Cronk, 2020). The effect size is calculated as the sum of squares divided by the total. Table 21 gives the results of this test.

Table 21

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (Dependent Variable: Total Score (Sum) for Role Overload)

Source	Type III Sum					Partial Eta
	of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Squared
Corrected model	442.942 ^a	2	221.471	3.514	.033	.056
Intercept	132644.179	1	132644.179	2104.757	<.001	.946
CAMPUSLEVEL	442.942	2	221.471	3.514	.033	.056
Error	7499.517	119	63.021			
Total	159218.000	122				
Corrected total	7942.459	121				

a. R Squared = .056 (Adjusted R Squared = .040)

A significant ANOVA necessitates the use of post hoc tests. The only result that the ANOVA shows is whether one group differs from any other group. If the difference is found to be significant, it must be determined which groups differ from which other groups (Cronk, 2020). In this research study, a post hoc test was completed due to a significant difference being found. Tukey's HSD was used to determine the nature of the differences between the principal participants at each grade level, as shown in Table 22. This analysis revealed that principals' perceived role overload on a middle school campus scored significantly higher ($M = 37.8000$, $sd = 7.95822$) than principals who lead a high school campus ($M = 32.4857$, $sd = 7.11821$). Principals who lead an elementary campus ($M = 35.7097$, $sd = 8.35363$) did not have significantly different self-perceived role overload from either of the other two groups.

Table 22

Post Hoc Tests: Multiple Comparisons. Total Score (Sum) for Role Overload, Tukey HSD

		95% Confidence Interval for			
		Mean			
	Campus Level	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Elementary	Middle school	-2.09032	1.88078	.509	-6.5542
	High school	3.22396	1.67841	.137	-.7596
Middle school	Elementary	2.09032	1.88078	.509	-2.3735
	High school	5.31429*	2.07881	.032	.3804
High school	Elementary	-3.22396	1.67841	.137	-7.2075
	Middle school	-5.31429*	2.07881	.032	-10.2481

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Role Ease

As displayed in Table 23, descriptive statistics comparing principals' self-perceived role ease (sum of role ease questions) with the principal's campus grade level were calculated and considered before completing the one-way ANOVA.

Table 23

Descriptive Statistics for Role Ease

95% Confidence								
Interval for Mean								
			Std.	Std.				
	N	Mean	Deviation	Error	Lower	Upper	Minimum	Maximum
Elementary	62	15.2581	5.79693	.73621	13.7859	16.7302	5	29
Middle school	25	12.2400	5.36408	1.07282	10.0258	14.4542	6	25
High school	35	15.0000	4.55683	.77024	13.4347	16.5653	7	25
Total	122	14.5656	5.46815	.49506	13.5855	15.5457	5	29

A one-way ANOVA (Cronk, 2020) was computed comparing principals' self-perceived role ease (SumRoleEase) with their campus grade level. No significant difference was found among participants' campus grade levels ($F(2, 119) = 2.962, p > .05$). Table 24 includes the results of this test. Principals who lead an elementary campus had a mean role ease score of 15.2581 ($sd = 5.79693$). Principals who lead a middle school campus had a mean role ease score of 12.2400 ($sd = 5.36408$). Principals who lead a high school campus had a mean role ease score of 15.0000 ($sd = 4.55683$). Note: A post-hoc test was not included due to no significant difference being found. These results confirm no significant difference when comparing principals' self-perceived role ease according to their campus grade levels.

Table 24*ANOVA: Total Score (Sum) for Role Ease*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	171.544	2	85.772	2.962	.056
Within groups	3446.431	119	28.962		
Total	3617.975	121			

Summary

The researcher chose the one-way ANOVA to determine the difference between a principal's role balance, role overload, and role ease based on their campus level. Descriptive statistics determined that the one-way ANOVA was the appropriate statistical tool due to normal or near-normal distribution. The results from the one-way ANOVA confirm no significant difference when comparing principals' self-perceived role balance according to their campus grade levels. In contrast, middle school principals' perceived role overload scored higher than that of high school or elementary principals. High school and middle school principals' perceived role overload was significantly different. Similar to principals' role balance, statistical analysis confirms no significant difference when comparing principals' self-perceived role ease according to their campus grade levels.

The one-way ANOVA results show no statistically significant difference between how principals see their role balance in relation to the grade levels on their campuses. On the other hand, middle school principals saw their role as more demanding than high school or elementary school principals. There were statistically significant differences between middle and high school principals' perceptions of role overload. This statistical research indicated no substantial

difference between principals' self-perceived role ease according to their campus grade levels, similar to principals' role balance.

This quantitative study sought to determine how the work-life balance of Texas principals differs according to the grade levels of their campuses in terms of role balance, role ease, and role overload. This design made it possible to use a questionnaire to examine large numbers of individuals. The main research question this study examined is whether a principal's work-life balance varies depending on their campus level. This study utilized a convenience sample of Texas public school principals.

This chapter examined the work-life balance of principals and contained data analysis and findings. The results were discussed in the last section of Chapter IV after the descriptive findings and data analysis were explored in the previous two sections. The next chapter, Chapter V, shares a synthesis of findings and concludes with implications and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction and Study Summary

On a campus, the principal is a crucial leader. School leadership that is strong and consistent is essential for success. According to one study, 50% of school leaders are so stressed that they are thinking about retiring or changing careers (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2022), which could result in a shortage of principals in grades K–12 across the country (Clifford & Cogshall, 2021; Reyes-Guerra et al., 2022). In the same study, 28% of school administrators said that if they could maintain or develop a better work-life balance, they would remain campus principals (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2022). To address the issue of principal stress and burnout, researchers must study the work-life balance of principals. Research is necessary to support a principals' work-life balance; thus, this study examined principals' work-life balance through the constructs of role balance, role overload, and role ease.

This quantitative, nonexperimental, cross-sectional, descriptive study (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014) set out to investigate how Texas principals' work-life balance differs in terms of role balance, role ease, and role overload based on the grade levels on their campuses. The quantitative approach best fits this research study since it looks at how principals balance their personal and professional lives. The following central research question was answered in this study: Does a principal's work-life balance differ based on their campus level? As part of the quantitative approach, one-way ANOVA (Cronk, 2020) was used to conduct inferential statistical analysis to determine any differences in Texas principals' perceptions of work-life balance based on the grade levels of their campuses (elementary, middle, and high school). One-

way ANOVA was used to compare the means of two or more participant groups that differ on a single independent variable.

In this chapter, the researcher will discuss the study's findings by examining and evaluating the results. The analysis of the central research question, which includes a review of descriptive statistics, is subsequently discussed, and the significance of the findings is determined. Chapter V concludes with a discussion of the study's implications, limitations, and recommendations, as well as ideas for future research and other observations made by the researcher.

Synthesis of Findings and Conclusion

The importance of studying principals' work-life balance and well-being has been stressed by several academics and researchers (Drago-Severson et al., 2018; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019; Kaufman et al., 2022; Mahfouz, 2020; Maxwell & Riley, 2017; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018). Empirical research on principals' work-life balance is needed since it is known that principals are under stress and are becoming burnt out. According to the literature review, a gap in the body of knowledge existed related to a school principal's work-life balance. The results of this study showed whether a principal's work-life balance varies depending on their campus level. The findings, as discussed in this chapter, are crucial in determining whether Texas administrators need differentiating support depending on whether they oversee an elementary, middle, or high school.

Findings

The best way to investigate the issue of principals' work-life balance, as posed in the central research question, was through statistical analysis using a survey. This quantitative study compared the work-life balance of Texas principals depending on the grade levels of their

campuses in terms of role balance, role ease, and role overload. This study examined principals' work-life balance through the lens of the role balance theory (Marks & MacDermid, 1996), to consider the ongoing and impending problem of principals' stress and burnout.

Demographic Analysis

The study's target group was made up of Texas K–12 principals who agreed to participate in the study by answering survey questions. The study sample included 122 principals with complete data sets. Participants in the online survey supplied demographic data for themselves as well as information about the campus. The majority of participants lead campuses with 251–500 (29.5%) or 501–750 (28.7%) students (Table 1). The pattern of the sample participants' campus size is consistent with the overall state size. The average public school in Texas has approximately 607 students (Public School Review, n.d.). The largest group of principals who participated in the research study (48.4%) had five or fewer years of experience (Table 2). The study's participants' low experience levels are confirmed by prior research because turnover contributes to a significant portion of principals having little experience. According to Superville (2020), who looked at principal turnover in Texas, one in ten new principals left the state's public school system in the first year, and 33% of novice principals left Texas public schools. Researchers have discovered that principals' stress and burnout have an impact on principal turnover and shortages (Clifford, 2010; Fink & Brayman, 2006; Pijanowski et al., 2009; Whitaker, 2001).

Of the 92.6% of principal participants with 0–3 dependents, the largest group (29.5%) had zero dependents, as indicated in Table 5. Researchers have found that family support is directly and significantly correlated with work-life enrichment, role ease, life satisfaction, and work-life balance (Hermann et al., 2020; Orellana et al., 2021; Peng et al., 2022). Based on this

research, having dependents in the household supported work-life balance for the 70.5% of principals with one or more dependents. Principals whose ethnicity identification was Hispanic or Latino consisted of 34.4% of the participants. In relation to race, 86.9% of participants chose White and 11.5% chose Black or African American when selecting a race (Tables 6 and 7). The race and ethnicity percentages of the participants are dissimilar from state reports (Landa, 2022). According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), during the 2021-2022 academic year, approximately 58% of principals Texas identify as White, 15% identify as Black or African American, and 25% identify as Hispanic or Latino. In comparing the sample participants from state percentages, the researcher considered these differences in the discussion about limitations.

The majority (59.8%) of the Texas school leaders who took part in the study oversee campuses with no more than three administrators, while 8.2% of principals said their campus has six or more (Table 3). As the number of campus administrators increases, organizational support also increases since the principal's workload can be shared with more campus leaders. Researchers found that organizational support was an external factor that contributed to role ease and work-life enrichment (Osei Boakye et al., 2021; Peng et al., 2022; Sturges, 2012; Vaziri et al., 2022). Organizational constraints and excessive job overload were also noted in the literature as positively related to work-life conflict (Chen et al., 2017; She et al., 2019). Participants listed their average weekly hours worked; the majority (44.3%) work between 60 and 69 hours per week (Table 4). According to a national study, most American principals work long hours. The National Schools and Staffing Survey estimates that a public school administrator in the United States works 59 hours on average per week; many even work from home in addition to the hours spent at work (Lavigne et al., 2016). The participants in this study work longer hours than the national average for school administrators.

Descriptive Analysis

The researcher utilized the role balance theory (Marks & MacDermid, 1996) to simplify the complex phenomenon of principals' work-life balance, including the constructs of role balance, role overload, and role ease. In this research study, the Role Balance Scale questionnaire was used to ask participants to report on their perceptions of role ease, role overload, and role balance to learn from principals at three different campus levels (elementary, middle, and high school). The study sample for this research study was 122 Texas public school principals who voluntarily completed the Role Balance Scale questionnaire. The section that follows discusses the descriptive analysis of the data from these principals.

Role Balance. The participants' role balance sum score was captured through eight questions, with each question scored on a six-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). Three items (the third, fifth, and eighth) were reverse scored. The higher the role balance sum for the participant, the more self-perceived role balance the participant experiences. In interpreting the results from this research study, role balance is the shared orientation that a person has across roles rather than an inclination specific to a given role (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Principals with a higher role balance score accept and appreciate their feelings, thoughts, and behaviors to establish a balanced state of mind.

As noted in Table 8, elementary principals' mean score for role balance was 29.1129, while middle school principals' mean was 26.8800, and high school principals' mean was 29.7429. When comparing principals from one level to another, high school principals have the highest self-perceived role balance, followed by elementary principals and then middle school principals. Considering eight questions with the highest self-perceived role balance to be six per question, 48 would be the highest possible score for a participant. On average, middle school

principals felt their roles were balanced, based on the questionnaire, in which they scored 56% of the total possible. In contrast, elementary and high school principals scored about 61% of the total possible. When looking at the six-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6), on average, principals fall between “somewhat agreeing” and “somewhat disagreeing” that they are currently balancing their roles productively and positively. Since research has shown that a balanced role system promotes more positive well-being along with improved job and life satisfaction (Brough et al., 2014; Bryant & Constantine, 2006; Ferdous et al., 2021; Haar, 2013; Haar et al., 2014; Mitra et al., 2021; Orellana et al., 2021; Taşdelen-Karçkay & Bakalım, 2017), this researcher argues that principals across all grade levels do not currently enjoy a balanced role system. As evidenced by their low median scores, middle school principals struggle the most with role balance.

The role balance skewness was .037 for elementary principals, .430 for middle school principals, and .259 for high school principals, all indicating a positive (right) skew. Principals’ role balance positive (right) skew occurs because probabilities taper off more slowly for higher values. In other words, fewer principals had high role balance scores. Concerning kurtosis, all data sets had a negative kurtosis; elementary was -.570, middle school was -.019, and high school was -.433. When a data set has a negative kurtosis, the participants’ scores cluster around the mean more closely with fewer outliers. This descriptive data analysis supported a symmetrical or near symmetrical or normal distribution of data for principals’ role balance.

Role Overload. The participants’ overall role overload score was determined through eight questions, each scored on a six-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). The participant’s self-perceived role overload increases in proportion to the participant’s role overload sum. Role overload is not a role-specific condition; rather, it results from a person’s

many activities and how they navigate their entire system of roles. According to Marks and MacDermid (1996), role overload results in role tension or conflict. Therefore, role overload in the context of the current study is defined as the challenge of balancing many roles within a demanding overall role structure. When comparing principals at different levels, middle school principals had the highest role overload mean score (37.8), while high school principals had the lowest self-perceived role overload mean score (32.4857). Elementary principals' self-perceived role overload mean score (35.7097) fell between middle and high school principals' mean scores. The maximum score a participant might receive would be 48 if the answer to all eight questions was six. According to the questionnaire, middle school principals experienced role overload at a rate of 79% of the total possible, compared to elementary school principals at a rate of 68% and high school principals at a rate of 61%. On the six-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6), principals typically scored between agreeing and somewhat agreeing that they were burdened by role overload. Based on the role balance and role overload means for principals according to their campus levels from this study, the researcher surmised that when a principal had less role balance, they also had higher role overload. The low median scores of middle school principals show that they have the most difficulty balancing their roles, which seems to be directly related to role overload.

The role overload skewness for elementary school was negative (left skew). It was -1.084 for principals, -.756 for middle school principals, and -.945 for high school principals. Positive skews caused by principals' role overload exist because probability drops off more gradually for lower values. As a result, extreme values deviate greatly from the mode, more often on the low side than the high side. To put it another way, fewer principals had low role overload mean scores. In terms of role balance kurtosis, elementary school principals showed a positive kurtosis

of .496, high school principals showed a positive kurtosis of .526, and middle school principals showed a negative kurtosis of -.105. The participants' scores cluster more closely around the mean with fewer outliers when a data set has a negative kurtosis. On the other hand, when data has a positive kurtosis, scores are more varied and contain more extreme values. This descriptive data analysis was used to determine if the data had a near-normal distribution for principals' role overload.

Role Ease. The participants' role ease sum score was captured through five questions, with each question scored on a six-point scale from very difficult (1) to very easy (6). The higher the role ease sum for the participant, the more self-perceived role ease the participant experiences. The degree to which a person feels at ease performing a role was considered in evaluating the findings from this research study. Role ease and role balance have a positive relationship, and role ease should exist if engaging in one role makes executing another easier (Marks & MacDermid, 1996).

Table 10 shows that the mean role ease score for elementary school principals was 15.2581, whereas the mean for middle school principals was 12.24, and the mean for high school principals was 15. Principals in elementary schools rate their roles as having more ease than those in high schools and middle schools. The greatest possible score for a participant would be 30 since there were five questions, with a score of six as the highest. Based on middle school principals' responses, on average, their means equate to 41% of the total possible as opposed to elementary and high school principals' means, which are about 50% of the total possible. In empirical research, quantitative studies were used to explore the differences between junior and senior managers in New Zealand and CEOs in terms of work-life enrichment or the ease of their roles (Roche & Haar, 2020). The work-life enrichment between the two groups was not

statistically different, according to the researchers. This connects to the current findings being discussed. High school and elementary principals' role ease mean scores were very close, which supports the previous literature (Roche & Haar, 2020). The consistent finding among all three constructs in the current research findings is that middle school principals struggle with work-life balance the most, as evidenced by their low role balance, high role overload, and low role ease mean scores compared to the other two groups of principals.

The researcher further investigated the role ease construct by considering skewness and kurtosis. The role ease skewness was .483 for elementary principals, 1.085 for middle school principals, and .603 for high school principals, all indicating a positive (right) skew. The probability decreases more gradually for smaller values, which leads to positive skews based on the principals' role ease. As a result, extreme values depart substantially from the mode on the low side more frequently than on the high side. In other words, fewer principals with extremely low role ease mean scores were found. Kurtosis was -.087 for elementary principals and -.139 for high school principals, indicating a negative kurtosis, while it was .442 for middle school principals, showing a positive (right) kurtosis. The participants' scores cluster more closely around the mean with fewer outliers when a data set has a negative kurtosis. Positive kurtosis, on the other hand, means scores that are more diverse and contain more extreme values. This descriptive data analysis supported a need for additional assumptions analysis to determine symmetrical or nonsymmetrical distribution.

Assumptions Analysis

Some assumptions needed to be investigated before the researcher could perform inferential statistics tests. Each data set had to come from a population that was normally distributed. The participant groups must have equal variances. Each group's members must be

separate from one another. Ensuring that the variables are distributed normally is a key step in statistical analysis because many inferential statistical tests, including the one-way ANOVA, rely on this assumption. One three-level independent variable (campus level) at the nominal level must be used to utilize the one-way ANOVA. In addition, the dependent variables (role balance, role overload, and role ease sums) must be a scale variable (Cronk, 2020). The researcher verified these assumptions through investigation before employing the one-way ANOVA, as discussed below.

Role Balance. The first role balance theory (Marks & MacDermid, 1996) construct examined was role balance. The skewness and kurtosis of elementary, middle school, and high school principals' role balance sums were within acceptable limits for parametric testing regarding the role balance construct sum, as shown in Table 8. Acceptable ranges for skewness and kurtosis are 1 to -1 (George & Mallery, 2020). Based on the data meeting acceptable limits for parametric testing, the researcher conducted the Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality (Cronk, 2020) and found $p > .05$ for principals' role balance for all three campus levels. The data is normal if the Shapiro-Wilk Test p-value is larger than 0.05. The data significantly deviate from a normal distribution if it is less than 0.05. The researcher determined that the variables for the role balance construct sum were normally distributed from the analysis of the assumptions for role balance.

Role Overload. Role overload was the second construct of the role balance theory (Marks & MacDermid, 1996) that was examined. The skewness for middle school and high school principals' role balance sum was within acceptable limits (1 to -1) for parametric testing when examining the descriptive analysis for the role overload score. Elementary, middle, and high school principals' data sets all had acceptable ranges for kurtosis, as shown in Table 9.

Elementary principals' skewness (-1.084) revealed a possibly non-normal distribution. In order to rule out a potential non-normal distribution of the role overload data set, the Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality (Cronk, 2020) was calculated and reported as $p > .05$ for middle school principals but not for elementary or high school principals. Role overload for elementary and high school principals was potentially not a normal distribution; however, the researcher proceeded with the one-way ANOVA for the role overload sums due to the one-way ANOVA being a robust statistical test that can handle non-normal variables (Cronk, 2020).

Role Ease. Role ease was the last construct of role balance theory (Marks & MacDermid, 1996) investigated. The researcher looked at the role ease sum descriptive analysis, as shown in Table 10, and found that the skewness of elementary and high school principals was within the acceptable range for parametric testing. All three principal groups' kurtosis values fell within acceptable bounds. Although the middle school's group skewness was slightly higher than permitted for parametric testing, the researcher moved forward under the presumption that the variables could have been normally distributed. As shown in Table 10, the researcher completed the Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality (Cronk, 2020) for the role ease construct and found $p > .05$ for the elementary and high school principals but not for the middle school principals, calling into question a possible normal distribution of the data. The researcher moved forward based on the data and the potential normal distribution of the variables.

Levene's Test for Homogeneity. Levene's test for homogeneity tests if variances are equal for all sample groups (Cronk, 2020). The one-way ANOVA test bases its results on the premise that the variances of the dependent variable within each group are equal (George & Mallery, 2020). The homogeneity test is carried out to make sure that variances are equal for all samples when data has the potential to be non-normal, as noted for some variables in the above

analysis. In this study, the sums for role balance, role overload, and role ease were calculated using Levene's Test for Homogeneity. The results indicated that self-perceived role balance, overload, and ease varied equally between groups for each variable set at $p > .05$. Tables 14, 15, and 16 display these results. Based on the assumptions analysis, the one-way ANOVA was the appropriate statistical test to answer the central research question regarding principals' work-life balance.

Central Research Question

This research study has added to the body of knowledge on principals' role balance, role ease, and role overload in Texas public schools by more deeply investigating the work-life balance of principals. This investigation was guided by the following central research question: Does a principal's work-life balance vary depending on the grade levels of their campus? This quantitative study answered the research question by comparing the work-life balance of Texas principals based on the grade levels of their campuses in terms of role balance, ease, and overload.

Role Balance. As discussed in Chapter 2, Marks and MacDermid (1996), through empirical research, found that many roles are crucial for personality and intellectual development. Their research conclusions confirmed the idea that role ease is strongly predicted by role balance. This research study supports Marks and MacDermid's conclusions. The researcher determined whether there was a statistical difference in the sum score for the eight questions measuring role balance for principals from different campus levels who participated in the survey. The findings were that there was no statistical difference when comparing principals' self-perceived role balance according to their campus grade levels, as evidenced by the results of the one-way ANOVA. Since there is no significant difference in perceived role balance between

principals who lead an elementary, middle, or high school, support for a principal's role balance could include "one-size fits all" strategies. The importance of supporting principals' role balance is echoed in the literature. Cain et al. (2018) found that managers' work-life balance was positively correlated with employee engagement and life satisfaction. Kaur and Randhawa (2002) found that principal support decreased the likelihood of private school instructors quitting by encouraging employee engagement and work-life balance.

Role Overload. The researcher investigated if there was a statistically significant difference between the sum scores for the eight questions measuring role overload for principals from various campus levels who took part in the survey. A significant difference was identified utilizing the one-way ANOVA in participants' perceived role overload according to their campus grade levels. The effect size is moderate, corresponding to the sum of squares. The perception of role overload among middle school principals was much higher than that of high school principals. The self-perception of role overload among principals who oversee elementary campuses was not significantly different from that of middle school or high school principals.

Through the one-way ANOVA, the researcher found that role balance was not statistically significantly different among the three groups of principals from elementary, middle, and high schools. This research study's findings also support Marks and MacDermid's (1996) assertion that role balance is distinct from role overload and role ease since role overload had a statistically significant difference among the groups, but role balance did not. According to Marks and MacDermid, role strain and role overload are caused by a person's varied activities and how they traverse their full system of roles rather than being role specific. How middle school principals navigate their entire role system causes them more role strain or role overload than high school principals. According to several studies (Rubel et al., 2017; Sarwar et al., 2021;

Simes et al., 2021), role overload or work-life conflict is associated with higher levels of burnout, worse job satisfaction, and intentions to resign. The researcher concludes that principal turnover is caused by the role overload of principals, which affects their intention to quit and their level of burnout. According to research on role overload, work-life conflict negatively affects an individual. This empirical research, combined with the current research findings, indicates that middle school principals have a higher role overload than high school principals. Therefore, the researcher argues that external and internal factors negatively affect middle school principals' work-life balance.

Work-life conflict has been positively associated with external factors in several studies, including role stressors (Rubel et al., 2017), job overload and organizational limits (Chen et al., 2017), job demands (Sarwar et al., 2021), and overtime on the job (Eckart & Ziomek-Daigle, 2019). Work-life conflict was consistently moderated by emotional intelligence, social and individualized support, and autonomy (Eckart & Ziomek-Daigle, 2019; Gao et al., 2013; Lenghan et al., 2007; Sarwar et al., 2021).

Role Ease. The researcher examined whether there was a statistically significant difference in the sum score for the five questions measuring role ease for principals across campus levels. The results from the one-way ANOVA showed that there was not a significant difference in participants' perceived role ease based on their campus grade levels. The researcher determined that the perceived ease of the roles held by principals of elementary, middle, and high schools did not have a statistically significant difference.

According to the literature review, job autonomy (Badri & Panatik, 2020; Vaziri et al., 2022), work schedule flexibility (Osei Boakye et al., 2021; Peng et al., 2022; Sturges, 2012; Vaziri et al., 2022) and organizational and familial support are external factors that contribute to

role ease and work-life enrichment. Based on this empirical research and the most recent research findings, the researcher contends that principals at all school levels experience these external influences similarly because their role ease was not statistically significantly different.

Significance

Empirical research on principals' work-life balance is required because it is known that principals are under stress and are becoming burnt out. The educational community will be unable to solve the looming principal shortage without the guidance of research to support principals' well-being. The importance of studying principals' work-life balance, stress, burnout, and well-being has been discussed by several researchers and scholars (Drago-Severson et al., 2018; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019; Kaufman et al., 2022; Mahfouz, 2020; Maxwell & Riley, 2017; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018).

Role balance is used as a theory to learn the subtleties of how people juggle various roles and how achieving better balance might help people (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Continuing the assertion from Marks and MacDermid that role balance is distinct from role overload and role ease, the findings in this research study produced distinct results for each construct. Marks and MacDermid (1996) contend that role strain results from a person's varied activities and interaction with their entire system of roles rather than being role specific. In this study, the mean, median, standard deviation, and maximum values were the greatest for role overload.

This study showed that a principal's role ease and role balance did not vary significantly according to their campus level. The lack of a significant difference in the three groups of principals' role ease connected to a quantitative research study that found no statistical differences in work-life enrichment for junior and senior managers compared to CEOs in New Zealand (Roche & Haar, 2020). Additionally, the researcher discovered that the elementary

school principals' role overload was not significantly different than middle school or high school principals. However, the statistical analysis showed a significant difference in the role overload experienced between middle school and high school principals. These results are crucial in determining whether Texas administrators should receive differentiated support depending on whether they oversee an elementary, middle, or high school.

In a previous study, it was found that school administrators desired regular, ongoing opportunities to discuss the challenges of leadership with other principals and colleagues, highlighting how this kind of collegial reflection would help them exercise leadership more effectively, prevent burnout, and support well-being (Drago-Severson et al., 2018). The study stressed the need to provide principals with direction and assistance through reflection and group support. This supports a thorough and systematic approach to principals' well-being; nevertheless, the study's principals were not distinguished by campus level. Based on the findings in this research study, differentiated education, training, and support to develop stable and healthy campus leadership would not be needed to support role balance and role ease. However, a differentiated approach for middle school principals would be a great benefit regarding role overload.

Implications

The topic of work-life balance has been explored in quantitative and qualitative studies with various participants. This theoretical, empirical, and quantitative analysis based on role balance theory has examined research and conclusions centered on the three constructs of role balance, role ease, and role overload (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). The significance of this research study is shared in this theoretical and practical implications section, which highlights how the study's results suggest its theoretical and practical consequences.

Theoretical Implications

Role balance has been identified by researchers as distinct from role ease and role overload (Carlson et al., 2009; Ferdous et al., 2021; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Haar, 2013).

The current research findings support this argument since the results were distinct for each construct: role overload, role ease, and role balance. The role balance and role ease reported by principals did not significantly differ amongst leaders on different levels of campuses; however, the role overload experienced by middle school principals was significantly distinct from that of high school principals. The current research study did not reveal any previously unknown understanding regarding the role balance theory. The research findings did not yield new insights or discoveries that added to the existing knowledge or understanding of the role balance theory; however, this research contributes to the cumulative body of knowledge and helps validate existing findings.

Practical Implications

Despite the wealth of research and literature on educational leadership that can help guide effective leadership (Aravena & González, 2021; Klocko & Wells, 2015; Mahfouz, 2020; Reid, 2021; Well & Klocko, 2018), the job of a school administrator continues to be difficult and stressful. Stress at work is an unavoidable part of being a school administrator (Mahfouz, 2020); principal burnout is a critical, escalating problem.

This study adds to the body of knowledge regarding work-life balance, particularly for public school principals. The study's findings provided useful information for both campus leaders and district school officials who support principals in shedding light on how role balance, role ease, and role overload affect or do not affect perceived work-life balance. From these research findings, district-level officials should be informed that middle school principals have

unique needs regarding managing their role overload. Campus leaders need to be aware that how they balance their roles could relate to the ease and overload of those roles.

Limitations

The previously mentioned limitations of this research study were the methods used for data gathering and the methodology approach. A further limitation was the small convenience sample of the population due to the principals' ability to opt out via email. According to O'Dwyer and Bernauer (2014), a limited sample size reduces the statistical power to detect significant interactions between the variables, which could have led to erroneous results that could not be applied to the complete population. Due to the research's use of a quantitative methodology approach, it was only possible to collect information from closed-ended questions rather than extensively exploring rich, vivid information regarding the work-life balance of leaders.

An additional limitation of this research study was not capturing the participants' gender. Gender is an important consideration in many research areas, including work-life balance, and it is important to take gender-based disparities and differences into account in research contexts. The decision to exclude gender as a variable in this study was based on the specific research goals of this study; however, not asking about gender in research can indeed be a limitation, as it may result in a lack of understanding of potential gender-specific factors or differences related to the topic being studied.

Unexpected limitations included the large number of duplicate email addresses and emails that failed to deliver or bounced. Emails could have bounced because the email address did not exist, the receiving server had a high-security firewall, the receiving mailbox was full, or the recipient server was offline. Another limitation was that the email was sent in July. Many

principals are not in the office in July due to their work calendars, conferences, meetings, or professional development. The unequal groups of principals were an additional limitation. The participant percentages for race and ethnicity groups were not consistent with state reports, according to the TEA (Landa, 2022). This discrepancy between the sample participants and Texas principals is a limitation of this research study. Only 25 middle school principals participated in the study, while 35 high school principals and 62 elementary school principals responded. It is crucial to recognize these limitations to put the research findings in perspective, evaluate the validity of the research study, and assign a level of trust to the findings and conclusions.

Recommendations

This research adds to the work-life balance literature in attempting to ascertain whether a campus's grade level had any bearing on a building administrator's capacity to achieve work-life balance. Whether the campus level affects a principal's work-life balance has never been investigated before, and this study is the first and only one that does so. Recommendations and subsequent actions for future research and practice can be made considering the findings.

Recommendations for Future Research

The factors that impact school principals' work-life balance offer unlimited research opportunities. This study confirmed the necessity for greater research into the elements that affect principals' work-life balance. The current study explored principals' role balance, role overload, and role ease based on their campus grade levels. There are potentially more variables and composite variables that impact principals' work-life balance, which may be the subject of a follow-up study. There are three specific variables related to the campus where further research is needed. The first concerns the difference between principals who have additional

administrators on their campus and how that influences their ability to achieve work-life balance. Another variable is the impact experience has on a principal's ability to achieve work-life balance. A third variable to investigate in terms of how it impacts a principal's work-life balance is the number of students on campus.

Future research should also consider the role of a caregiver rather than limiting questions related to the number of dependents in the household. The role of a caregiver can significantly impact work-life balance, as caregivers often juggle the responsibilities of providing care for a loved one while also managing their own work and personal life. Acting as a caregiver often requires an individual to make complex decisions and seek support to maintain their well-being while fulfilling their caregiving responsibilities. Research on this topic would offer insight into the challenges caregivers face and the strategies they can use to achieve a more balanced life.

Other campus administrators, such as assistant principals or academic deans, were excluded from the current study. Although the study has an acceptable sample size, more research that involves different administrative levels might improve school administrators' comprehension of work-life balance. It would also be helpful to know more about the factors that affect the work-life balance of principals' supervisors.

Another suggestion is to gather details about the school district, such as its size, location, and name, as well as the school's name. Finding organizational differences through data analysis offers the chance to study which organizational cultures appear to encourage work-life balance. This information would be well suited for a mixed-methods study in which the researcher first categorizes districts and/or administrators as having work-life balance or not based on how far apart they fall on the spectrum. A qualitative study would then be needed to find themes of variables within such administrative groups or districts.

The final suggestion is to conduct targeted research on middle school principals' work-life balance to understand the moderators and variables influencing their role overload. In the present study, these principals were shown to have statistically significant different self-perceptions of their role overload, in which a higher score translates to more role overload or strain. In previous research, work-life conflict and role stress were positively correlated (Rubel et al., 2017), as were job demands (Sarwar et al., 2021), organizational restrictions (Chen et al., 2017), job overload (Eckart & Ziomek-Daigle, 2019), and working overtime (Rubel et al., 2017). Work-life conflict was repeatedly found to be moderated by emotional intelligence, social and individual support, and autonomy (Eckart & Ziomek-Daigle, 2019; Gao et al., 2013; Lenghan et al., 2007; Sarwar et al., 2021). This targeted research would better inform the understanding of middle school administrators' work-life balance.

Recommendations for Future Practice

Principals play a part in determining their work-life balance because they either take part actively or passively in the social negotiation of expectations associated with their specific roles. One strategy for district or executive level leaders would be to work at the organizational level along with other departments to support and foster work-life balance among principals. This could be accomplished by promoting health and wellness across the entire system of schools. Organizing coordinated, mutually supportive strategies at the individual and organizational levels, requires top level leaders to understand that a principal's control or authority is a complex factor in achieving work-life balance (Badri & Panatik, 2020; Vaziri et al., 2022). The use of multilevel and coordinated approaches in school systems is suggested for further consideration and practice.

The results from this study could be used to create differentiated strategies to improve principals' work-life balance. According to this research study, principals' role balance and role ease should be supported in the same manner; however, middle school principals need differentiated support in relation to role overload. This could include a mentor who has experience at the middle school level. This mentor could provide organizational support through being a source of knowledge, encouragement, connection, and feedback.

A qualitative research study found that self-efficacy and emotional intelligence impacted the enrichment of work-life balance for managers (Makipour et al., 2021). This study supports encouraging emotional intelligence and self-efficacy in principals. In a study including educators, Guidetti et al. (2019) found that mindfulness practice lessens the harmful stress process that could cause burnout. Legislators and policymakers should consider how important it is to support school leaders' mental health. Creating and implementing mindfulness programs for principals to address their work-life balance should be a guideline for future practice.

The educational leadership community must continue to evaluate, critique, improve, research, and assist principals' work-life balance to address the current issue of principals' stress and burnout. Since work-life conflict has been linked to higher burnout, worse satisfaction, and intentions to quit (Rubel et al., 2017; Sarwar et al., 2021; Simões et al., 2021), a recommendation for practice is to promote stress-moderating factors for principals, especially middle school principals. As evidenced in the literature, emotional intelligence, social and individual support, and autonomy were consistently found to be moderators of work-life conflict (Eckart & Ziomek-Daigle, 2019; Gao et al., 2013; Lenghan et al., 2007; Sarwar et al., 2021). Therefore, district- and state-level organizations must investigate and provide support and training to strengthen these moderators to ensure principals can attain work-life balance. This is crucial to maintain school

leadership that is resilient and stable, which is essential for success in every school across the nation.

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APPENDIX A: IRB OUTCOME LETTER



Date: June 28, 2023
To: Christopher Benedetti PhD
CC: Julie Ponton
From: Office of Research Compliance
Subject: Exempt Determination

Dear Dr. Benedetti,

On 06/28/2023, the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Institutional Review Board reviewed the following submission:

Title of Study: Principals' Work-life Balance: Does Campus Grade Level Make a Difference?
Principal Investigator: Christopher Benedetti
IRB Number: TAMU-CC-IRB-2023-0845
Submission Outcome: Exempt Determination
Approval Date: 06/28/2023

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Institutional Review Board has reviewed the above-referenced submission and has determined the project is exempt. This submission was approved by the review process in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Human Research Protection Program.

Therefore, this project has been determined to be exempt under Exempt Category 2: Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met: i. The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; ii. Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation; or iii. The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by .111(a)(7).

You may proceed with this project.

This approval corresponds with the versions of the application and attachments in the electronic system most recently approved as of the date of this letter.

A Reminder of Investigator Responsibilities: As principal investigator, you must ensure:

1. **Informed Consent:** Ensure informed consent processes are followed and information presented enables individuals to voluntarily decide whether to participate in research.
2. **Amendments:** This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. **Any planned changes require an amendment** to be submitted to the IRB to ensure that the research continues to meet the criteria for exemption. The Amendment must be approved before being implemented.
3. **Completion Report:** Upon completion of the research project (including data analysis and final written papers), a Completion Report must be submitted.
4. **Records Retention:** All research-related records must be retained for three (3) years beyond the completion date of the study in a secure location. At a minimum, these documents include the research protocol, all questionnaires, survey instruments, interview questions and/or data collection instruments associated with this research protocol, recruiting or advertising materials, any consent forms or information sheets given to participants, all correspondence to or from the IRB or, and any other pertinent documents.
5. **Adverse Events:** Adverse events must be reported to the IRB immediately.



6. **Post-approval monitoring:** Requested materials for post-approval monitoring must be provided by the dates requested.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact us at irb@tamucc.edu.

Sincerely,

Michael Sollitto, PhD
IRB Chair

APPENDIX B: ROLE BALANCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions

As a principal, your information is valuable to further the research on principals' work-life balance. This quick, engaging questionnaire has 28 questions that should take no longer than 7 minutes to complete!

Demographics

Section 1 of 3

Demographics:

This section of the survey contains 8 questions about you and your campus demographics.

What level is your current campus?

- ☐ Elementary School
- ☐ Middle School
- ☐ High School

Approximately how many students are on your campus?

- ☐ 0-250 students
- ☐ 251-500 students
- ☐ 501-750 students
- ☐ 751-1000 students
- ☐ 1000-1500 students
- ☐ 1500 or more students

How many years experience do you have serving as a principal?

0 4 7 11 14 18 21 25 28 32 35

Years as a principal

Including yourself, how many administrators are on your campus?

0 1 2 3 4 6 7 8 9 10

Administrators on
campus

Approximately how many hours do you work weekly?

35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70 75 80

Average hours
worked weekly

How many dependents do you have in your household?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Dependents in the household

Are you Hispanic or Latino?

- ☐ Yes, Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ No, not Hispanic or Latino

What is your race? (Select one or more)

- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ☐ White
- ☐ Other

Role Balance

Section 2 of 3

Complete the next 16 questions based on your personal feelings on a scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Nowadays, I seem to enjoy every part of my life equally well.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

I am pretty good at keeping the different parts of my life in balance; I generally don't let things "slide."

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree

- ☐ Somewhat Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

Some things I do seem very important, but other things I do are a waste of my time.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

Everything I do feels special to me; nothing stands out as more important or more valuable than anything else.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

There are some parts of my life that I don't care much about, and there are other parts I care deeply about.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

Work time, partner time, friend time, family time, leisure time-I find satisfaction in everything I do.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Agree
- ☐ Agree

☐ Strongly Agree

I try to put a lot of myself into everything I do.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

There are some things I like to do so much that I often neglect other things I also care about.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

I have to do things which I don't really have the time and energy for.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

There are too many demands on my time.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

I need more hours in the day to do all the things which are expected of me.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree

- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

I can't ever seem to get caught up.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

I don't ever seem to have any time for myself.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

I seem to have to overextend myself in order to be able to finish everything I have to do.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

I feel I have to do things hastily and maybe less carefully in order to get everything done.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

I just can't find the energy in me to do all the things expected of me.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

Role Ease

Section 3 of 3

Complete the next 5 questions based on your personal feelings on a scale from very difficult to very easy.

During the school year, how easy is it for me to have some "quality time" with my friend(s), including phone calls?

- ☐ Very Difficult
- ☐ Difficult
- ☐ Somewhat Difficult
- ☐ Somewhat Easy
- ☐ Easy
- ☐ Very Easy

During the school year, how easy is it for me to get my housework, laundry, and other chores done?

- ☐ Very Difficult
- ☐ Difficult
- ☐ Somewhat Difficult
- ☐ Somewhat Easy
- ☐ Easy
- ☐ Very Easy

During the school year, how easy is it for me to have a pleasant meal, either alone or with someone else?

- ☐ Very Difficult
- ☐ Difficult
- ☐ Somewhat Difficult

- ☐ Somewhat Easy
- ☐ Easy
- ☐ Very Easy

During the school year, how easy is it for me to have some satisfying leisure time?

- ☐ Very Difficult
- ☐ Difficult
- ☐ Somewhat Difficult
- ☐ Somewhat Easy
- ☐ Easy
- ☐ Very Easy

During the school year, how easy is it for me to maintain contact with my family?

- ☐ Very Difficult
- ☐ Difficult
- ☐ Somewhat Difficult
- ☐ Somewhat Easy
- ☐ Easy
- ☐ Very Easy

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