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Exploring Three Predictors of Burnout for Rural Public School Student Services Personnel

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EXPLORING THREE PREDICTORS OF BURNOUT FOR RURAL PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT SERVICES PERSONNEL

DISSERTATION

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By

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Area of Specialization: Higher Education Administration

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING THREE PREDICTORS OF BURNOUT FOR RURAL

PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT SERVICES PERSONNEL

Jesslin Joy Williams

Barry University, 2011

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The purpose of this study was to investigate three predictors of burnout for rural public school student services personnel. The three predictors included school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment. Student services personnel were not limited to, but included, guidance counselors, school psychologists, social workers, behavior specialists, hospital/homebound coordinators, speech/language pathologists, specialists for hearing impaired students, specialists for visually impaired students, occupational therapists, physical therapists, home-to-school liaisons, and program staffing specialists for the population of this study. This group of participants was homogeneous in that they are all required to work directly with students outside of the instructional classroom setting.

The theoretical framework for this study was the Person-Environment Fit Theory, which is derived from the roots of Person-Environment (P-E) Interaction Theory (Lewin, 1935). This theory is influenced by Lewin's proposal that behavior is a utility of the person and the environment (1938). The assumption of this theory is that results are a function of the interaction between individuals and their environment(s).

Self-report questionnaire data were gathered to determine the degree to which a relationship exists between school climate, motivation, organizational commitment, and burnout.

The data analyzed for the predictive values of these constructs were measured by scores on the American School Climate Survey (2006), the Motivation Questionnaire (2004), the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (1993), and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (1981). Multiple regression analysis was used to measure the strength of the relationship between the three independent variables (school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment) and the dependent variable of burnout.

Correlational and multiple regression analyses suggested that only one predictor, motivation, was significant. This was unanticipated. The analyses indicated that each independent variable (school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment) was negatively correlated to the dependent variable of burnout. An increase in the scores on the American School Climate Survey (2006), Motivation Questionnaire (2004), and Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (1993), resulted in lower burnout scores on the Maslach Burnout Inventory (1981). It may be learned from the significance of motivation that employees' perspectives and enthusiasm, or a lack thereof, may determine whether or not burnout is experienced ($p < .05$).

The implications of this study included the recognition that employees' attitudes and morale, and working conditions are areas of concern that need to be addressed by employers. Concerns such as employees' attitudes toward the school(s) in which they work and serve, conditions that tend to strengthen or diminish enthusiasm and motivation within the workplace, employees' psychological attachment to the workplace, and feelings of emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment need to be considered, evaluated, and monitored at all levels of the public school system to include the elementary, middle, and secondary school levels.

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The auspicious initiation and completion of this doctoral journey was possible due to the support and optimism received from several avenues. From the inception of my doctoral cohort in January of 2006 to the triumphant moment of graduating in May of 2012, I had the pleasure of being exposed to, and most importantly learning from, a team of extremely intelligent and experienced professors.

The team leader and statistical genius who continued to carry the torch for me throughout this academic marathon was Dr. Ed Bernstein. He was my dissertation chairman and my wise mentor. Our six years of correspondence and work together took place in person, as well through telephone calls, emails, facsimiles, and the United States Postal Service. Regardless of the communication medium, Dr. Bernstein was available to offer insight, advice, encouragement, listening ears, and a compassionate heart. He holds an indelible place in my life.

My family has served as the backbone to support this academic endeavor. Together, my parents, Dr. Paul Williams, Jr. and Linda Lee Williams, and my older brothers Troy and Lonnie, have inquired, listened, and offered praise constantly. My parents have been remarkably helpful to care for my little boy while I attended classes and commuted to the Barry University main campus. I gleaned experience from my father and enjoyed delicious suppers lovingly prepared by my mother.

I must acknowledge my Gifted, intelligent little boy, Ridge. He was 2 ½ years old when I began my doctoral studies, and he is now 8 ½ years old at the conclusion of my PhD pilgrimage. He has grown up watching his Mommy complete homework, all the while balancing life as a single-mother. Despite my sharp academic focus, my first

priority has always been, and always will be, my son Ridge. There were many late nights and hot cups of coffee in order to work on homework, develop my proposal, analyze statistical data, and write this dissertation after my little one was tucked into bed. I am a firm believer that hard work pays off in the long run. It is my hope and prayer that I serve as a strong example to my son of being a highly educated student and graduate. May he follow in my footsteps into the wonderful world of academia and higher education.

Last, but certainly not least, I wish to recognize Peter James Preston. He has been my dedicated and attentive partner throughout this six year journey. It has been “just like Heaven” to experience this with him. We have inspired and guided each other all along. As his name signifies in the Bible, Peter has been “my rock”. Together, we have crossed the finish-line of this academic marathon.

Dr. Peter James Preston and Dr. Jesslin Joy Williams will forever just know this...

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my father, Dr. Paul Williams, Jr. Growing up in a home and family where education was highly respected and expected, I always thrived academically. My greatest source of inspiration came from watching my father continue his education by working on his doctorate degree. He miraculously managed to successfully balance married life, fatherhood, his career in the public school system, coaching high school sports teams, and furthering his drive for higher education. My father graduated from Florida International University (FIU) in May of 1991 with his doctorate degree in Educational Administration and Supervision. Now, twenty-one years later, I am graduating with my doctorate degree as well, and have earned the right to be the next "Dr. Williams" in this family.

Being "Daddy's Little Girl", I have loved him all of my life. Beyond that, I admire and respect him. He is the only man in my life who has been there for me from the very beginning, and he will be there until the end. My father is my Coach, my Hero, my Knight in Shining Armor, and I am proud to be his daughter.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Burnout is a psychological phrase which refers to the experience of long-term fatigue and weakened interest. The term burnout was first used by Freudenberger (1974), who defined the term as “to fail, to wear out, or become exhausted by making excessive demands on energy, strength, or resources” (p. 159). Maslach and Jackson (1981) emphasized the psychological nature of the burnout syndrome, which usually occurs within the context of work. It is often interpreted as the consequence of a range of time in which too much effort is being expended at work coupled with a lack of revival time.

Maslach and Jackson (1981) further clarified the definition of burnout as a syndrome that is composed of three aspects. These include emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and abridged personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion is characterized by symptoms of both physical and emotional decline. It refers to burdens and stressors that lead individuals to feel overwhelmed and unable to contribute at a psychological level. This exhaustion may lead to depersonalization or cynicism (Dillon & Tanner, 1995). Depersonalization is the expansion of negative and cynical attitudes and outlooks that can generate a coldhearted view of others. It leads to a lack of empathy and emotional distance from others. Individuals experiencing depersonalization perceive others as deserving of their troubles and toils. Personal accomplishment describes feelings of satisfaction and capability in one’s job (Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006). Therefore, a reduced sense of accomplishment is the propensity to see oneself negatively and to be dissatisfied with achievements.

Burnout is related to a range of personal dysfunctions. It is most often understood as a pattern of negative symptoms that relates directly to all areas of functioning (Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006). Stress is also linked to burnout. The prolonged stress associated with burnout can cause physical, mental, or emotional exhaustion, or a combination of all three. As the stress perseveres, an individual can lose interest or motivation in the task(s) at hand. Burnout reduces productivity and energy which can lead to feelings of hopelessness, powerlessness, cynicism, and resentfulness. Some symptoms of burnout include lower motivation and satisfaction with work, greater risk of health impairments, social difficulties, and lower efficiency with daily activities (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1997). The sadness caused by burnout can threaten job stability, personal relationships, and individual health. Other personal dysfunctions may include physical exhaustion, insomnia, and even increased drug and alcohol use (Jacobs & Dodd, 2003).

Burnout can affect workers in any field. According to Cordes and Dougherty (1993), higher stress jobs can lead to more burnout than other types of work. These would include, but are not limited to, the customer service industry, taxicab drivers, law enforcement personnel, air traffic controllers, musicians, authors, teachers, engineers, emergency service workers, counselors, soldiers, reporters, high technology professionals, and general practitioners. Negative outcomes related to burnout may include job functions, physical health related outcomes, as well as mental health problems.

Moving beyond the previously mentioned category of specific higher stress jobs, the purpose of this study was to investigate burnout among employees within the rural public school system other than teachers. Specific focus was directed to other employee positions that are classified as student services personnel and require working directly with students to provide

additional services that are not provided by teachers in the classroom(s) within a rural school district.

There are noted positive experiences associated with working in a rural setting (Blirk & Kim, 1995; Stamm, 2003; Weigel & Baker, 2002). Within a rural school system, these benefits include close-knit families and connections, professional freedom, autonomy, greater independence, reduced competition, lower overhead, collaborative professional relationships, a faster track to administrative positions, and a lower cost of living.

Nonetheless, there are also challenges linked with working in a rural school setting. These drawbacks include working as a generalist, dealing with boundary issues and dual relationships, lack of supports, multiple roles, isolation, privacy and confidentiality issues, lack of anonymity, higher risks of burnout, shortage of referral sources and specializations, role confusion and ambiguity, lack of resources, geographical and accessibility issues, and lack of training and professional development opportunities (Hargrove, 2003; Helbok, 2003; Stamm, 2003; Weigel & Baker, 2002).

In order to explore the existence of burnout among rural public school student services personnel, attention should be directed to the evidence of cutbacks that the field of education is experiencing. The struggle to maintain sufficient public education is just beginning. Nationally, approximately 120 school districts, primarily those in rural areas, have gone to a 4-day school week in order to reduce transportation and utility costs (Hefling, 2011). Rural school districts are addressing budget cuts by implementing fees to play extracurricular sports, eliminating field trips, ending after-school programs, reducing library hours, withholding spending on supplies, merging bus stop locations in order to reduce transportation costs, elevating thermostats at school

sites, and eliminating instructional positions, which include teachers, librarians, guidance counselors, technology resource staff, social workers, school psychologists, and speech/language pathologists. Rural school districts, which are smaller and tend to be poorer in socioeconomic status of the student population, have been hit harder by the economic crisis in public education because they are more reliant on state dollars (2011). According to Postal and Weber (2011), the choice of classes is smaller, and the wait for a guidance counselor is now longer at public schools. It may now take weeks for a student to see a counselor.

One of these student services personnel positions, as categorized by the rural school district in this study, is that of the school guidance counselor. According to DeLuccia-Reinstein (2004), the location of schools and the socioeconomic status of the student population have an effect on the burnout rates of guidance counselors. Poverty-stricken communities, as is common in a rural district, may have uninvolved parents or students with difficult issues related to poverty. Factors such as these make the job of the school guidance counselor more stressful. Indeed, school environmental factors directly influence school counselor burnout (Stephan, 2005). These are variables of school climate and organizational characteristics that influence the school counselor.

Also included in the category of student services in the rural school district are school psychologists. Huebner and Huberty (1984) discussed conditions in rural school settings which may create or aggravate problems of burnout among rural school psychologists. In particular, problems concerning role and function, professional support, visibility and service training are related to rural practice.

School social workers are also classified as student services personnel in the rural school district. Social workers help students and families cope with social and psychological difficulties. These problems may arise at school, home, work, or in the community. The diversity within human service practice reflects a need to respond to a wide range of social problems and needs (Lonne, 2003).

Occupational and physical therapists are categorized as student services personnel in the rural school district as well. Burnout has been connected to job retention in both occupational and physical therapists. In a study conducted by Schlenz, Guthrie, and Dudgeon (1995), it was discovered that professional development activities are most often associated with feelings of personal accomplishment. The researchers concluded that professional development activities in the workplace may supplement feelings of personal accomplishment and reduce burnout as an issue in job retention.

The effects of burnout extend to the clients of the student services personnel. This includes recipients of services, including children, parents, school personnel, and other community service providers. Student services personnel who experience burnout lack the emotional resources to offer effective services to needy clients. Given the challenges connected with working in a rural school setting, as well as the noted stressors associated with specific student services personnel positions within the rural public school district (guidance counselors, school psychologists, and social workers), the purpose of this study was to investigate three predictors of burnout for rural public school student services personnel.

Problem Statement

Burnout does not happen overnight, but rather occurs gradually. Byrne (1998) stressed the importance of recognizing the early signs of burnout. It usually has its roots in stress. Therefore, the earlier the signs and symptoms of stress are addressed, the greater the chances are for avoiding or alleviating burnout. Cordes and Dougherty (1993) affirmed that the signs of burnout tend to be more physical than mental. These signs may include feelings of powerlessness, frustration, hopelessness, being trapped, emotional exhaustion, failure, detachment, despair, isolation, cynicism, irritability, and apathy.

Burnout is most common in the workplace. However, there is a difference between a bad workday or two, and job burnout (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). Characteristics at the workplace aiming toward burnout involve the employee having a bad day every day, losing the energy to care about work, viewing work-related tasks as dull or unpleasant, and feeling that nothing one does makes a difference anymore (1993). Burnout comprises emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a decreased sense of personal accomplishment (Platsidou & Agaliotis, 2008). Emotional exhaustion involves feelings of being overextended and exhausted by work responsibilities. Depersonalization may surface through a negative, cynical attitude. Personal accomplishment is negatively impacted due to downbeat evaluation of performance and achievement on the job. When burned out, the employee does not see any hope of improvement.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The term *student services personnel* is defined in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, as reauthorized under the No Child Left Behind Act, Sec. 9101, paragraph 36) as “school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, and other

qualified professional personnel involved in providing assessment, diagnosis, counseling, educational, therapeutic, and other necessary services." These positions require working directly with students to provide additional services that are not provided by teachers in the classroom(s) within a rural school district. Student services personnel offer services that address barriers to learning and help students to be successful in school. These fundamental services focus on prevention and intervention activities. Student services personnel collaborate and consult with teachers, administrators, and other staff to ensure that students receive high quality instruction that is receptive to the diverse group of students' learning and developmental needs and challenges.

Although teachers and counselors have been previously examined with regard for high stress jobs, they are only two of numerous employee positions within the public school system. The purpose of this study was to consider burnout among different employee populations within the public school system and to investigate three predictors of burnout for rural public school student services personnel. Student services personnel were not limited to, but included, guidance counselors, school psychologists, social workers, behavior specialists, hospital/homebound coordinators, speech/language pathologists, specialists for hearing impaired students, specialists for vision impaired students, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and program staffing specialists for the population of this study.

The incidence of burnout has been explored with specific focus directed to educators within school settings. Professional school counselors are required to perform multiple functions and duties as part of daily responsibilities. Prior research has indicated that school guidance counselors feel pulled in too many various directions and consequently report high levels of stress (Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006). This is a concern due to the link between stress and overall

well-being. Increased levels of stress and burnout can lead to unproductive delivery of services, exhaustion, physical conditions, anxiety, depression, and sometimes even substance abuse (2006).

School guidance counselors are required to deliver comprehensive services to students, parents, and teachers. “In fact, with their specialized training in group dynamics and interpersonal relationships, who are better poised than school counselors to contribute this expertise to their schools?” (Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006, p. 448). If school counselors’ abilities to fulfill these obligations are compromised as levels of stress and burnout are experienced and continue to amplify, the burnout must first be recognized and addressed. Then, strategies need to be developed for coping techniques.

This quantitative study used the regression analysis method to produce information about school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment and the predictive values these constructs have on burnout for rural public school student services personnel. The goal for student services personnel is to better serve the population of students, parents, and teachers with whom they work. Healthy individuals are better equipped to undertake this task than are those who are experiencing enlarged levels of burnout. The significance of this study was the identification of predictors of burnout, which lead to a clearer understanding of burnout. Implications for professional job satisfaction, as well as the role that employers may play in the recognition and circumvention of burnout for employees, were considered.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was the Person-Environment Fit Theory, which is derived from the roots of Person-Environment (P-E) Interaction Theory (Lewin, 1935). This

theory is influenced by Lewin's proposal that behavior is a utility of the person and the environment (1938). It can also be traced back to Persons' congruence concept (1909) in vocational guidance (Sekiguchi, 2004). The assumption of this theory is that results are a function of the interaction between individuals and their environment(s). This theory is an important concept in both psychology and organizational behavior.

The concept of P-E fit theory points to the position between the characteristics of people as well as their environments. It suggests that the alignment between them yields positive results for both the individuals and the organizations. It advocates that a better fit will lead to a decrease in alienation and burnout, along with an increase in commitment, self-esteem, and satisfaction (Hesketh and Gardner, 1993). Certain clear constructs have developed from the P-E fit concept. These include an individual fit with job (P-J fit), an individual fit with group (P-G fit), an individual fit with organization (P-O fit), as well as an individual fit with vocation or occupation (P-V fit).

According to Sekiguchi (2004), there are various ways to conceptualize the P-E fit theory. One way includes the needs-supplies and demand-abilities distinction. This refers to the fit between individual needs and environmental supplies versus the fit between environmental demands and distinctive abilities. Another way to conceptualize the P-E fit involves the actual and perceived distinction, which differentiates the actual or objective fit against the perceived or subjective fit.

The framework of Person-Environment (P-E) fit has an extended history (2004). Yet despite a great amount of theoretical and empirical work, the P-E fit perspective is often criticized as constant for characterizing the interaction between the person and the situation. It is

accused of being a static view. Consequently, researchers have proposed more lively models of P-E fit theory (2004).

The majority of the P-E fit models concentrate on the stable features of the person and the environment. The P-E fit is usually only assessed at one point in time in empirical studies. This occurs either when the job choice decisions are being determined or at a later time during the person's organizational tenure.

Holland's P-E fit theory (Holland, 1959) is considered one of the timeless models of P-E fit theory. This theory proposes that vocational choice is based on the idea of congruence between the individual and the occupational surroundings. Holland projected that both individuals and occupational environments are typified by the RIASEC typology. This accounts for realistic (R), investigative (I), artistic (A), social (S), enterprising (E), and conventional (C) characteristics. Interest inventories may be utilized in order to evaluate an individual's RIASEC categorization. The environment serves as a function of career interests and character of its members. According to this theory, individuals look for vocations that have a career environment that complements their interests. Therefore, a high P-E fit results in approval, vocational stability, and attainment. On the contrary, a low P-E fit results in dissatisfaction, which may lead to an abandonment of that occupation. Despite being one of the classic models, Holland's P-E fit theory is still considered unchanging, rather than dynamic.

Sekiguchi (2004) discussed two dynamic P-E fit models from career theory. These included the Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA) and the general model of achieving fit during early career. Career theory centers on personal development through occupation. The focal point of TWA is the concept of correspondence between the individual and the environment.

According to Bradley et al. (2002), this theory emphasizes the process where individuals try to obtain and maintain correspondence with their environments. Individuals will change themselves or their environments to achieve fit. Environments or jobs may naturally change over time, which will result in either increased or decreased correspondence between the individual and the environment.

Concerning the general model of achieving fit during early career, there is a goal-striving process taking place through individual development. Individuals are inclined to reassess and reevaluate career goals incessantly as more knowledge is learned and more skills are acquired. Positive responses from the environment yield stronger goals and career choice persistence, as well as pertinent skill attainment. Conversely, negative responses from the environment will involve a reassessment and possible changing of goals and career options (Sekiguchi, 2004).

Research Question

The theme of the research question must be able to be explored so that the researcher can gather data in order to thoroughly respond to the question (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). In a study, the research question should be viable, unambiguous, important, and moral. This study was conducted in order to determine three specific predictors of burnout for rural public school student services personnel. The three predictors, or independent variables, for this study included school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment. The dependent variable for this study was burnout. The research question in this study was: What is the multiple correlation between a set of three predictors and burnout among rural public school student services personnel?

Hypotheses

Demographic data was not collected for this study. The dependent variable for this research study was burnout, which was a score for each participant as determined by individual results obtained on the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI, 1981). There were three independent variables, which included school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment. Each participant received three additional scores, one for each of the three independent variables. The individual scores for school climate were obtained on the American School Climate Survey (2006). The individual scores for motivation were obtained on the Motivation Questionnaire (2004). The individual scores for organizational commitment were obtained on the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (1993).

The null, or statistical, hypothesis was the following:

Ho: There is no multiple correlation between school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment as predictors of burnout for rural public school student services personnel.

The research hypothesis was as follows:

HA: There is a multiple correlation between school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment as predictors of burnout for rural public school student services personnel.

Definition of Terms

In order to better understand the purpose of the study, several important terms have been identified. The terminology that was recognized and explored for this study included burnout,

school climate, motivation, organizational commitment, and student services personnel. Careful scrutiny of the vocabulary allowed the researcher to closely characterize focal points for the study. Thus, three predictors of burnout for rural public school student services personnel have been distinctively delineated.

Burnout is the experience of lasting exhaustion and reduced interest, usually in the context of the work setting. This construct was first coined in the 1970's by Christina Maslach and her colleague, Susan Jackson. For the purpose of this study, burnout was determined by a score from rural public school student services personnel on the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI, 1981). Burnout leads to views of *not enough*, which can yield feelings of emptiness and apathy. People experiencing burnout often do not see any hope of positive change in situations.

School Climate is the physical and psychological aspects of a school or institution that are susceptible to change and that provide the preconditions essential for both teaching and learning to take place. For the purpose of this study, school climate was determined by a score on the American School Climate Survey (2006) from rural public school student services personnel.

Motivation is an incentive or reason for doing something or engaging in a particular behavior. Motivation was determined by a score from rural public school student services personnel on the Motivation Questionnaire (2004).

Organizational Commitment is an employee's psychological attachment to the workplace or organization. For the purpose of this study, organizational commitment was determined by a score on the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (1993).

Student Services Personnel includes school guidance counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, behavior specialists, hospital/homebound coordinators, occupational

therapists, physical therapists, speech/language pathologists, specialists for hearing impaired students, specialists for visually impaired students, and program staffing specialists. Individually, the student services personnel perform different roles and responsibilities for the rural public schools. Yet together, they function under the umbrella of student services. The personnel included in this study served as a representation of the elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools in a rural public K-12 school district.

Assumptions

Rural public school student services personnel completed the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to determine predictors of burnout. Each student services employee also completed survey instruments concerning school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment. The study assumed that the student services personnel honestly responded to each of the instruments with regard for school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment. It was also assumed that the American School Climate Survey (2006), Motivation Questionnaire (2004), Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (1993), and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI, 1981) were valid and reliable instruments for their intended purposes.

Limitations of the Study

It is likewise important to recognize that there were several limitations to this study. A first limitation was that the data was self-reported. The participants' answers were recorded at face value without being independently verified.

A second limitation was that the researcher focused on the schools located within one rural county for this study. Multiple counties were not considered or cross-referenced. Therefore, the data may not be generalized to other rural school districts.

A final limitation concerned the fact that the participants in the sample consisted solely of volunteers. Volunteers are not necessarily representative of the population. Only a small sample of participants were recruited for the study. This may have lead to a minimal number of contributors.

Setting

The study included all of the K-12 public schools in a rural school district. This included elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. There were a total of 17 schools in the rural school district. Ten of the schools were elementary schools, which encompass students between the grades of kindergarten through the 5th grade. Four of the schools were middle schools, which house students in the 6th through the 8th grades. The remaining three schools were high schools, which consist of students enrolled in the 9th through the 12th grades. The student population at each of these schools was diverse including representations of White non-Hispanic, Hispanic, Black non-Hispanic, Asian, and Multi-racial students.

Summary

The purpose of chapter one was to serve as an introduction to this prediction study of burnout for rural public school student services personnel. The remaining four chapters of this study are organized specifically. Chapter two will present a review of the literature. Chapter three will impart the research methodology and procedures for the study. Chapter four will offer an analysis of the data obtained by the researcher. Finally, chapter five will include a summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

Chapter one began with the statement of the problem through the exploration of burnout. Background information and significance of burnout in the workplace were considered. The

problem statement was clarified, followed by the purpose and significance of the study. The Person-Environment Fit Theory was identified as the theoretical framework for this study. The research questions were delineated, including the recognition of the three independent variables and the dependent variable. The statistical and research hypotheses followed. Operational definitions of terms and hypothetical constructs were offered. Both assumptions and limitations were considered and identified. The purpose of this study was to investigate three predictors of burnout for rural public school student services personnel.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Burnout is a commonly experienced phenomenon for working professionals in different career fields. According to Boice (1993), it hits the average worker in the seventh year, then again in the tenth, and then either attacks intermittently or is a chronic existence. Burnout brings results that may affect the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of the individual. Burnout may be typified by a three factor model: a degree of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization in dealings with the recipients of one's services, and a lack of sense of personal accomplishment (Maslach, 1982). Emotional exhaustion is defined as the fatigued feeling that develops as emotional energy is drained. Depersonalization mirrors the apathy and negative attitudes that individuals may display toward colleagues. Personal accomplishments include feelings of competence and successful attainments.

Employees at highest risk for burnout are those who feel underpaid, unappreciated, or criticized for matters beyond their control. Some other reasons for job burnout include employees setting unrealistic goals, being overextended, working under coercive or disciplinary conditions, failing to be challenged, and feeling trapped for financial reasons. Although some careers have higher rates of burnout than others, it is at hand in every occupation.

Work stress indicates a diversity of causes of stress (Gorter et al., 1998). A study was conducted to investigate which occupational factors were related to levels of burnout among Dutch dentists. A difference was drawn between actual work place characteristics and experienced pressure from particular aspects of dental work. A representative sample of

approximately 709 Dutch dentists responded to three questionnaires, which included a Dutch version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory, the Dentists' Experienced Work Stress Scale (DEWSS), as well as a collection of items on work place circumstances. The response rate was approximately 75%. Work place conditions could not be demonstrated to be correlated with high burnout levels. Nevertheless, the lack of career perspective presented as the stress factor most powerfully related to burnout.

Stress has been reported to have considerably affected the health of school teachers (Unterbrink et al., 2008). A study was conducted with a sample of approximately 949 German teachers in order to examine factors influencing both physical and mental health. Further purpose of the study was to investigate how certain individual factors influenced job stress, job strain, and mental health.

Perceived job stress was analyzed through the use of the Effort-Reward Imbalance Inventory (ERI). Perceived job strain was examined through the use of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Finally, mental health problems were detected through the implementation of the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ). High rates of burnout symptoms were reported by the teachers through the completion of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). The symptoms included emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low personal accomplishment. Independent variables taken into account included part-time versus full-time teaching status, school type, class size, support from colleagues, feedback from students and parents, age, gender, personal relationships outside of the workplace, and whether or not parenthood was applicable for the teachers. The dependent variables were perceived job stress, perceived job strain, mental health problems, and burnout.

The results of this study showed that verbal insults by students had the strongest impression. Likewise, positive feedback from parents and students, as well as support from colleagues, had a strong influence. The data revealed that interpersonal factors played an important role regarding both strain and defense of the teachers' health. A connection has been demonstrated between high amounts of occupational stress and ill health in individuals (Siegrist, 1998).

Principals have been aware of the symptoms of teacher burnout. Reed (1979) stated that the burnout syndrome is becoming an epidemic, especially in veteran teachers with seven to ten years of experience in the teaching field. They are experiencing boredom, disillusionment, and dissatisfaction with their careers. In order to combat boredom, Reed (1979) suggested that principals should offer new challenges and a change of environment in order to keep things interesting. Teachers may be allowed to change classrooms and grade levels and spread out into new curriculum fields. Also, principals can encourage teachers to take sabbaticals, trade opportunities, grants, and fellowships, and they can also promote the use of professional days. Pertaining to feelings of disillusionment and dissatisfaction, principals can directly involve teachers more in the decision-making process. Self-esteem may be elevated in veteran teachers through the efforts of the principals to assign veteran teachers to mentor new teacher employees by inspiring, teaching, and guiding them (Reed, 1979).

According to Maudgalya et al. (2006), burnout is a widely acknowledged stress outcome. While this topic has been explored within a wide range of professions, it had not often been previously explored among Informational Technology (IT) professionals. Therefore, Maudgalya et al. (2006) conducted a study to examine a relationship between the working environment of IT professionals and burnout. The independent variables were role ambiguity, role conflict, and job

tasks. Role ambiguity referred to the range of what is to be accomplished by the employee. Role conflict referred to competing priorities and being required to report to more than one supervisor. Job tasks included duties and other work requirements. Critical appraisal was addressed with the IT professionals through the use of the Epidemiological Appraisal Instrument (EAI) (Genaidy and LeMasters, 2005). The cost of recruiting and training someone to perform in the role of IT is very high (Maudgalya et al., 2006). Therefore, organizations need to understand the environment that these employees work within. The managers must be conscious of the exposure variables and take action to protect the IT employees. Additionally, they need to take action to alleviate the stress for these IT employees.

The occurrence of burnout syndrome is rising among doctors and nurses (Escriba-Aguir et al., 2006). A study was carried out to analyze the relationship between the psychosocial work environment and burnout syndrome among emergency medical and nursing staff in Spain. A cross-sectional survey was distributed through the form of a mail questionnaire to approximately 945 emergency doctors and nurses in Spain. The outcome variable was three aspects of burnout syndrome. These included emotional exhaustion (EE), personal accomplishment (PA), and depersonalization (DP). The results revealed that the probability of high emotional exhaustion was higher among those doctors and nurses who were exposed to high psychological demands and received low social support from superiors. The individuals exposed to low job control had a greater risk of having low personal accomplishment. Escriba-Aguir et al. (2006) concluded that the manifestation of risk factors within the work environment augments the likelihood of presenting burnout syndrome and emotional exhaustion.

Job burnout can be counteracted (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). Employees experiencing burnout can gain clarity on job descriptions. Another option is to request for a transfer or ask for

new job responsibilities. Finally, taking time off from work may be the most beneficial way to be removed from the present situation and revitalized with a change of scenery.

Employee Stress

Much research on burnout and employee stress has been conducted on particular occupational populations such as salespeople, teachers, nurses, human service workers, counselors, community psychologists, and school psychologists. Employee stress can occur from feelings of inability to do an assigned task, lack of feedback from authority and management, not knowing what to do or how to do it, as well as from personal value conflicts (Schuler, 1979). Schuler (1979) suggested that through effective and proper use of communication by supervisors, much employee stress can be reduced. The use of encouragement is helpful for strengthening the employee's feelings of confidence and self-worth. While employee stress is reduced, motivation is increased.

Schuler (1979) recommended two different approaches for stress to be reduced in the workplace. First, "participative communication behavior" may take place (p. 44). This is when a supervisor and employees discuss and smooth out conflicts and discrepancies on a one-to-one basis. In other situations, a directive approach may be better warranted. This is when the supervisor tells the employee exactly what to do and exactly how to do it. An effective supervisor knows how to implement the appropriate communication behaviors at the appropriate times in order to get the job done, all the while keeping employee stress to a minimum.

According to Adams (1979), three main factors arbitrate an individual's experience of stress. These include the individual's personality, his or her interpersonal environment, and the disposition of the organization in which he or she is employed. Certain organizational

improvements can aid in the reduction of employee stress such as role clarification, stress education and assessment, and the identification and alteration of stress-provoking standards (p. 35). Changing stress-inducing behaviors should be a gradual process following several steps outlined by Adams (1979). The first step is an explicit personal commitment to change. The next step is to select a simple and manageable change project. The final step is to build and uphold interpersonal support systems that will foster and support positive change.

In a study conducted by Chen and Miller (1997), research was gathered on organizational and individual characteristics positively correlated to stress in the school system setting. Organizational traits included time constraints, workload, job demands, role conflict and ambiguity, income, resources, administrative bureaucracy, autonomy in decision making, student discipline and interaction, reward and recognition, as well as career advancement. Individual features included age, marital status, and gender.

The subject of role stress has remained a matter of concern in organizational research, with particular attention being paid to the topics of role conflict and role ambiguity. Kahn and Quinn (1970) defined role stress as "anything about an organizational role that produces adverse consequences for the individual" (p. 41). The impact of role stresses such as role conflict and role ambiguity have been linked with a variety of negative work outcomes. These include tension, absenteeism, low satisfaction, low job involvement, low expectancies, and low motivation potential (Schuler et al., 1977). In role stress research, organizational commitment has been described as a bond or linking of the individual to the organization (Leong et al., 1996).

Other research has highlighted that the negative outcomes considered in role stress research usually involve the individual's well-being. According to Beehr et al. (1976), the

negative outcomes include dissatisfaction with work, dissatisfaction with life, low self-esteem, depressed mood, self-reported fatigue, tension, anxiety, and several risk factors in coronary heart disease that have been shown to be related to role stresses.

Moving away from the individual's well-being, less attention has been directed to how role stresses affect the organizationally valued states of the individual, such as work commitment and employee retention. More recently, Beehr (1995) indicated that the majority of the outcomes examined were psychological or emotional strains, such as job dissatisfaction and tension. Beehr concluded that outcomes valued by the organization in role stress research has a practical advantage in that it may provide managers a stronger rationale for reducing role stress (1995).

Educational researchers have consistently been concerned with role stress among teachers. Classroom teaching has been distinguished as a profession where numerous role demands are present. Sutton (1984) designated that role demands may become stressful for a teacher when organizational members' expectations about the teacher's behavior are unclear. This leads to role ambiguity. Role ambiguity has been found to be a strong predictor of general stress among both elementary and secondary school teachers (Bacharach et al., 1986). Excessive expectations about the teacher's behavior lead to role overload. Further, when meeting one set of expectations causes meeting other expectations to be more difficult, role conflict results.

A study by Conley & Woosley (2000) focused on education and the repercussions of such role stress for teachers with consideration for job satisfaction and decreased stress. Approximately 371 elementary and secondary teachers were included in the sample for the study. The researchers empirically inspected whether three role stresses were related to two individually valued states and two organizationally valued states. The three role stresses were

role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload. The researchers also examined whether teachers' higher-order strengths moderated the role stress-outcome relationships.

Temperament

Personality characteristics have normally been related to burnout. According to Lundstrom et al. (2007), personality may impact the experiences of strain among staff in the workplace. Specifically, a study was conducted to explore the relationships among personality and emotional reactions, work-related strain, and experiences of burnout among staff exposed to violence when caring for people with intellectual disabilities as compared to staff that were not exposed to violence when caring for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

This study took place in northern Sweden. The participants were staff members working in group homes for adult individuals with intellectual disabilities. The staff members were distributed questionnaires designed to measure personality, emotional responses, strain, burnout, and exposure to violence with the intellectually disabled adults living in the group homes. The results of the study did not reveal evidence of a direct influence of personality variables on exposure to violence when working with the individuals with intellectual disabilities. Likewise, no direct relationships were discovered between exposure to violence and the staff members' personality characteristics. This was measured through the Temperament and Character Inventory and Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (2007).

Nonetheless, the researchers did find a relationship between personality and strain and the risk of burnout based upon the discovery that certain staff members exposed to violence reported feeling more emotionally exhausted compared to the staff members who were not exposed to violence. With consideration for the association between exposure to violence,

personality, and the risk of burnout, this study gleaned an understanding of specific supports needed by staff members in working with individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Another study was conducted to assess the relationships among temperament, caring orientation, and dimensions of burnout among educators (Teven, 2007). Perceptions of supervisor care, job satisfaction, and motivation were measured. The participants in this study included forty-eight college faculty members teaching a variety of courses at a medium-sized Southwestern university. Results revealed that caring orientation was negatively related to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, loss of personal accomplishment, and neuroticism. However, caring orientation was positively related to agreeableness, conscientiousness, job satisfaction, and motivation. Therefore, temperament predicted a considerable amount of difference of caring.

Originally, research on burnout focused on individuals in various occupational groups, such as human service workers, teachers, nurses, and psychologists. However, less is known about burnout among college students. Stress has been shown to be correlated with college students' health behaviors, anxiety concerning exams, self-esteem, and coping tactics (Dwyer & Cummings, 2001).

Due to the shortage of research on burnout among college students, Jacobs and Dodd (2003) investigated student burnout as a function of personality, social support, and workload. The study involved 149 college students and the measurement of social support, personality, and workload in relation to burnout. Social support was measured through the use of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Dahlem et al., 1991). The General Temperament Survey (Clark & Watson, 1990) was utilized to measure personality, and

psychological burnout was measured through the use of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). The mean age of the college student participants was approximately 20.8 years old. The study was designed to assess the relative influences of intrapersonal factors, interpersonal factors, and workload on psychological burnout. The strongest predictor of burnout was personality. The evidence was provided through the General Temperament Survey (Clark & Watson, 1990).

The results of the study suggested that personality, particularly negative temperament, may predispose college students to burnout. High levels of burnout were predicted by negative temperament and subjective workload. Negative temperament reflects feelings of chronic stress and nervousness, worrying, and strong negative emotions (Clark, 1993). In combination or separately, these traits can impair concentration and disrupt sleep.

In contrast, low levels of burnout were predicted by positive temperament, social support from friends, as well as involvement with extracurricular activities. Each of these offered a significant buffer against burnout. Extracurricular activities proved to be important to a student's sense of accomplishment. Positive characteristics such as energy and hopefulness offered a buffer to stressors that can lead to dissatisfaction with personal accomplishments. Objective measures of workload, whether or not a student was employed, and the number of hours of employment, when applicable, were not reliably related to burnout. Also, impulsivity and a lack of meticulousness failed to predict any aspect of burnout (Jacobs & Dodd, 2003).

College students tend to view burnout as simply an occupational hazard that does not warrant professional intervention or, at the very least, social support (Jacobs & Dodd, 2003). Nonetheless, it is important for friends and family members to be able to recognize the signs of

student burnout and respond successfully. According to Jacobs and Dodd (2003), it is reasonable to suggest that parents should advise their students to balance academic, employment, and social schedules with significant extracurricular activities, instead of assuming a severe academic priority stance. Likewise, students should be educated about the factors of burnout along with probable coping techniques.

This study demonstrated the value of temperament as a correlate of burnout. It also revealed the magnitude of social support. The authors (Jacobs and Dodd, 2003) concluded that the subjective experience of overload, as opposed to the actual objective workload, strongly contributed to burnout. Extracurricular activities tended to be associated with less burnout among college students. More research among college students still needs to be gathered in order to better understand how daily activities and time management skills may be related to burnout as well. Through a more thorough understanding of the predictors of burnout in college students, along with useful ways of providing social support to students, higher education student development personnel can develop programs to assist in the reduction of burnout and promotion of greater academic and personal accomplishment for college students (2003).

Burnout and Personality

Theory and data suggest that burnout is related to personality. Personality has been portrayed as both a coping mechanism and as a valuable resource in combating burnout (Ghorpade et al., 2007). Personality may also play a role in giving and receiving social support in the workplace (Bowling et al., 2005). Social support is an important aspect in occupational stress research and theory. In order to better understand the factors that influence the amount of social

support individuals give and receive at work, Bowling et al. (2005) investigated personality and reciprocity as potential precursors to giving and receiving support from co-workers.

Personality was explored with regard for extroversion, neuroticism, and agreeableness. Data was gathered from a sample of 108 participants employed in different organizations. The data revealed that giving social support was positively associated with the acceptance of social support. Both extroversion and agreeableness predicted giving and receiving non-job support and positive work-related support. The relationship between personality and social support was mediated by social support offered (Bowling et al., 2005).

Ghorpade, Lackritz, and Singh (2007) investigated the relationship between burnout and personality using the multiple theoretical perspectives of stress, conservation of resources, and deviance. They measured burnout with the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) for the consideration of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishments. Personality was measured with the Mini-Markers Inventory for the consideration of extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience, and emotional stability. The participants included 265 faculty instructors at a large state university. Regression analyses controlled for demographic features. Results yielded that emotional exhaustion was negatively related to extroversion and emotional stability, but was positively related to openness to experience. Depersonalization was negatively related to emotional stability and agreeableness. Personal accomplishments were positively related to extroversion, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and agreeableness.

In a quantitative study by Swider and Zimmerman (2010), the relationship between the Five-Factor Model (FFM) of personality traits (Costa & McCrae, 1992), job burnout dimensions,

absenteeism, turnover, and job performance was examined and summarized. The Five-Factor Model consisted of Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. Job burnout dimensions included emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment.

All five of the FFM personality traits had multiple true score correlations of 0.57 with emotional exhaustion, 0.46 with depersonalization, and 0.52 with personal accomplishment. All three dimensions of job burnout had multiple correlations of 0.23 with absenteeism, 0.33 with turnover, and 0.36 with job performance. Meta-analytic path modeling revealed that the sequential ordering of job burnout dimensions was contingent on the central outcome, thereby supporting three different models of the burnout process. Swider and Zimmermann (2010) concluded that job burnout partially interceded the relationships between the FFM personality traits and turnover and job performance, yet fully interceded the relationships with absenteeism.

Stress and Work Outcomes

While it may be reasonable to conclude that objective workload contributes causally to burnout, many workers still manage to cope successfully and productively with heavy workloads, whereas other workers do not cope well. Stress is known to have two opposite results on individuals (Stevenson & Harper, 2006). The effects may be either positive or negative. Tolerable amounts of stress may yield positive results by helping to improve the individual's performance. On the contrary, disproportionate amounts of stress may lead to reduced performance. Eustress has been defined as stress which leads to good results or positive effects, while distress has been described as unpleasant, incapacitating, and unhealthy (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2004).

Statt (2004) drew attention to the perception of the individual in the determination of whether or not the stress will have a productive or detrimental effect. According to Statt (2004), much depends on the context of the phenomenon in question coupled with the nature of the individual's perception of it.

Work withdrawal has been defined as absenteeism and lateness (Somers, 2009). With a sample of 288 hospital nurses, commitment profiles were compared to turnover intentions, job search behavior, work withdrawal, and job stress. Five empirically-derived commitment profiles emerged through the research and included *highly committed, affective-normative dominant, continuance-normative dominant, continuance dominant,* and *uncommitted*. The results revealed that the most constructive work outcomes were associated with the *affective-normative dominant* profile which included lower turnover intentions and lower levels of psychological stress among the nursing staff. There were no differences between the commitment groups for lateness to work. The *continuance-normative dominant* group had the lowest levels of absenteeism (Somers, 2009).

According to Boswell et al. (2004), stress may not always be harmful to an individual or organization. A study involved a heterogeneous sample of 461 university staff employees. The study hypothesized that two types of reported stress, which included challenge-related and hindrance-related, have a different relationship with work outcomes, relating to both desirable and undesirable outcomes, as well as a similar relationship with psychological tension. Results from the heterogeneous sample of university staff employees supported some of the hypotheses. Both challenge-related and hindrance-related stresses were differentially related to work outcomes, yet they were positively related to psychological anxiety. Also, felt challenge

interceded the affiliation between challenge-related stress and work outcomes, but the effect of challenge-related stress did not depend on job control.

Nevertheless, there are some typical stressors that are more than likely to arise in an organizational context (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2004). These include a deficient physical working environment, inappropriate job design, poor management style, poor relationships among colleagues, uncertain futures, and divided loyalties. Tehrani (2002) further validated the inevitable existence of stressors to consist of an unsympathetic organizational culture, poor communication between managers and employees, indecisiveness, bullying and harassment within the workplace, continual or sudden change, scarce resources, conflicting priorities, and even a lack of challenge for employees.

Webster et al. (2010) investigated the processes whereby hindrance and challenge stressors may affect work behavior. In order to explain the different outcomes that stressors demonstrate, three measures were investigated: job satisfaction, strains, and work self-efficacy. The study involved a sample of 143 employees from a variety of organizational settings. It was discovered that both job satisfaction and work self-efficacy resulted in increased strains among the employees. Above all, job satisfaction was involved in the connection between hindrance behaviors and citizenship behavior. Work self-efficacy was involved in the affiliation between challenge stressors and job performance. The results of this study supported the dual-stressor framework revealing significant relationships to the work outcomes through the proposed processes. Even so, the link between work self-efficacy and job performance was not significant.

Mellander and Mellander (1998) addressed problems in community colleges that pose challenges in higher education. Some of the greatest challenges posed are high student dropout

rates, low funds, lethargy and discouragement, and faculty burnout. In order to resolve the difficulties, it has been suggested that faculty become more involved in change-oriented activities, be encouraged to develop greater connections with community resources, continue to update and enhance the teaching atmosphere, and promote changing the academic calendar to offer more flexibility for the faculty. Also, faculty may be provided with more incentives to reward effective teaching, help educate the public about the professionalism of teaching, and be provided with more employee-assistance programs. One of the most important steps is to accept the faculty as full partners and colleagues and listen to valuable suggestions they may offer in order to help chart a path in the direction of real education reform (1998).

Lackritz looked at burnout and related issues among 265 university faculty members (2004). Results revealed that female faculty members had higher mean scores on emotional exhaustion than males, while male faculty members had higher scores on depersonalization. Despite the fact that significant differences were not found across race and ethnicity groups, age was inversely correlated to emotional exhaustion. Burnout was significantly correlated with the number of students taught, time invested in various activities, and numerical student evaluations. Lackritz (2004) suggested that university administrators use preventive strategies to anticipate burnout instead of relying on reactive measures.

Another study was conducted to investigate the possible effects of workplace stress in academics on the overall student learning experience (Stevenson & Harper, 2006). This study was carried out at a Scottish higher education institute. A questionnaire was developed and given to all academic staff at the institution. The questionnaire was designed to measure perceived levels of stress among academic staff, as well as the influence of this on the learning experience of students.

Of the respondents, more than half of them considered themselves to be considerably or extremely stressed, and they indicated the belief that stress caused teaching methods to be affected negatively, therefore causing a negative impact on the student learning experience. Though this study was conducted at only one higher education institute, the findings highlighted the need for the institution, as well as the employees within it, to identify and control stress levels, as the ultimate goal is to make certain that student learning is not negatively impacted. Stevenson and Harper (2006) indicated that stress levels should be such that they do not cause deterioration in employee performance. Specifically in higher education, a worsening of performance will not only affect the performance of the individual and the institution, it will have a direct impact upon the students' learning experience.

Indeed, students being taught by teachers under stress are at a disadvantage (Overland, 2004). Together, stress and burnout may damage the relationship a teacher has with students, as well as the quality of teaching and commitment that the teacher is able to exhibit. Joy-Matthews et al. (20004) offered perspective to emphasize that the individuals structuring and delivering the learning process ultimately possess the capability to make either a positive or negative impact on student learning. Moreover, the student learning experience may depend upon the stress levels of the teaching staff.

Occupational Stress

According to Blix et al. (1994), burnout is not a problem reserved for the conclusion of a long career, but may be experienced at intervals along the career continuum (p. 166). Indeed, burnout is costly to both the organization and to the individual. "Occupational stress is considered to be one of the ten leading work-related health problems" (p. 157). Gersch and

Teuma (2005) further defined occupational or work-related stress as that which develops from conditions in the workplace and is thought to occur when workers sense that they cannot tolerably cope with the demands made on them, or with intimidation to their jobs and the circumstances in which they are conducted. Job stress is often attributed to external factors related to the work environment. These may include work demands, physical and social working conditions, and inadequate supervision. Negative effects of stress include, but are not limited to, diminished efficiency, a decreased performance capacity, weakened initiative, and a lack of concern for colleagues and the organization overall (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003).

In an effort to examine the effect of age and task difficulty on employee stress levels, Mallo et al. (2007) organized a study to implement an Electronic Performance Monitoring (EPM) system. EPM is a technique used to record employee performance with consideration for computer keystrokes, checking employees' phone calls or internet activity, or noting time spent on work activities. Advocates of EPM uphold the belief that tracking work activity and performance is necessary for high productivity (Schleifer & Shell, 1992).

In this study, a sample of 85 older adults and 77 younger adults were included. The mean age of the older adults was 46.9 years, and the mean age of the younger adults was 22.1 years. The participants were randomly assigned to perform either a simple or difficult computer data-entry task under two conditions. The two conditions included either being monitored or not being monitored. The study used a 2x2x2 factorial design. Dependent variables included computer task performance and reported stress levels. Three hypotheses were formulated. The first hypothesis was that there would be a significant task difficulty through monitoring status interaction on performance. The second hypothesis was that older participants would demonstrate the poorest performance on the computer tasks compared to the younger participants while being monitored

electronically. Finally, the third hypothesis was that older participants would demonstrate the highest levels of stress on the tasks while being monitored electronically.

ANCOVA results revealed that EPM lessened performance and created higher levels of stress in comparison to non-monitored conditions. Additionally, older adults revealed a trend of being more impacted by EPM than were the younger adults. The results of this study suggest that employers should exercise caution when using EPM when employees perform multifaceted tasks because EPM may end up serving as more of a stressor than a motivator for the employees (Mallo et al., 2007).

In the process of performing professional duties, teachers experience occupational stress (Platsidou & Agaliotis, 2008). Frequent and lasting periods of occupational stress may lead to professional burnout. According to Embich (2001), burnout may be explained as a syndrome consisting of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a decreased sense of personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion tends to appear first and leads to depersonalization. Together, they then lead to a feeling of low personal accomplishment. In the teaching occupation, burnout has been linked to dissatisfaction with the job and to negative affective and occupational results such as depression or impaired occupational functioning. These results extend from the teachers themselves to their families, students, and schools (Platsidou & Agaliotis, 2008).

Due to a lack of literature specifically regarding Greek special education teachers, researchers investigated the perceived levels of burnout, job satisfaction, and job-related stress factors for this population (2008). A study was conducted with a sample of 127 Greek special education teachers at the primary school level. The first aim of the study was to measure the

perceived level of burnout among Greek special education teachers at the primary school level. The second focus of the study was to gauge the role of certain selected demographic variables in teachers' perceived levels of burnout and job satisfaction for the purpose of specifying whether those variables were implicated in individual differences. The third aim of the study was to evaluate the stressors related to instructional assignment, as perceived by the Greek special education teachers. Instruments included in the study were the Maslach Burnout Inventory, the Employee Satisfaction Inventory, and the Inventory of Job-related Stress Factors, which was developed by the authors just for this study.

The outcomes revealed that the Greek special education teachers reported average to low levels of burnout. Also reported were rather high levels of job satisfaction, as well as satisfaction with the principal of the school and the school as an organization. The participants indicated average levels of satisfaction with work conditions, yet low satisfaction with promotion opportunities and salary. In addition, age, gender, and family status were rather insignificant, as they did not serve as predictors of individual differences. Overall, the researchers concluded that Greek special education teachers do not experience high levels of occupational stress (2008).

A similar study was steered earlier in the United Kingdom with a focus upon educational school psychologists (Gersch & Teuma, 2005). An exploratory pilot research project directed at investigating occupational stress among educational school psychologists was carried out with a concentration on three particular areas. The areas included educational psychologists' perceptions of personal stress levels, sources of stress, and possible work conditions which may reduce stress levels. The main goal of this study was to explore educational psychologists' perceptions of the stress they are experiencing, the sources of the stress, and the types of work conditions that would most likely reduce the stressors.

The data was gathered through questionnaires, which were delivered through four educational psychology services to school psychologists. Results yielded that approximately 58% of educational psychologists felt that their work is moderately stressful. The greatest source of stress indicated was amount of work. Concerning possible conditions which may lessen stress levels, psychologists divulged that having more administration time would most likely reduce stress (Gersch & Teuma, 2005).

Huebner and Huberty (1984) discussed conditions in rural school settings which may create or aggravate problems of burnout among rural school psychologists. In particular, problems concerning role and function, professional support, visibility and service training are related to rural practice.

Burnout among school guidance counselors has been correlated with demographic variables, personality attributes, and organizational issues. A study was conducted to investigate the multiple factors and variables connected to burnout among school counselors through the combination and analysis of demographic, intrapersonal, and organizational elements among a population of school guidance counselors in the northeastern United States (Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006). Demographic variables considered were school-based populations, student/counselor ratio, school counselor setting, division level (elementary, middle, and high school), gender, and age of the counselor(s). Intrapersonal variables associated with burnout included locus of control, coping styles, ego development, and personality dimensions. Organizational variables included role conflict, role ambiguity, professional job overload, lack of decision-making authority, financial security, counselor-teacher professional relationships, and counselor-principal professional relationships.

Three hierarchical regression analyses were completed to ascertain the amount of variance that each cluster contributed to the three subscales on the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey. The three subscales included Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment. The final models accounted for 45% concerning Emotional Exhaustion, 30% pertaining to Depersonalization, and 42% regarding Personal Accomplishment (2006).

According to DeLuccia-Reinstein (2004), the location of schools and the socioeconomic status of the student population have an effect on the burnout rates of guidance counselors. Poverty-stricken communities, as is common in a rural school district, may have uninvolved parents or students with difficult issues related to poverty. Factors such as these make the job of the school guidance counselor more stressful. Indeed, school environmental factors directly influence school counselor burnout (Stephan, 2005). These are variables of school climate and organizational characteristics that influence the school counselor.

Moving toward higher education, a study was conducted utilizing the Person-Environment Fit model to analyze the lack of fit between motivational style and job rewards as a causal factor in developing occupational stress symptoms in university teachers (Blix et al., 1994). Data was gathered from questionnaires mailed to 400 randomly selected tenure-track university teachers. Occupational stress symptoms were calculated by items reflecting burnout, stress-related health problems, perceived work stress, productivity, job satisfaction and deliberation for job change. The majority of the respondents indicated a good fit between motivational style and job rewards. Nonetheless, two-thirds of the teachers revealed that they perceived stress at work at least fifty percent of the time. They also reported burnout, stress-related health problems, decreased work productivity, an incapability to cope with stress, and the

consideration for a change of job. A positive perception of ability to manage work stress was negatively correlated with stress symptoms. Concerning gender differences, female faculty members had higher imbalances in scores than did male faculty members. Female faculty members were also more likely to consider job change due to job stress.

In higher education, occupational satisfaction is swayed by the environment and by the dispositional variables explored for occupation in general (Hill, 2009). Differences are experienced based upon many factors, including gender, minority status, and tenure status. Within the context of counselor education, there were no empirical studies that examined the occupational satisfaction of counselor educators within higher education. Therefore, Hill (2009) provided an overview of the empirical research exploring group differences based on tenure status, gender, and minority status in occupational stress, coping strategies, and personal strain ratings for counselor educators.

The occupational satisfaction of counselor educators is particularly critical to understand since faculty members directly affect graduate students and an even larger community of clients. Counselor educators are especially susceptible to stress given their direct service to graduate students and clients (Huebner, 1992). The stress revolution of the 1970's and 1980's led to the organizational credit that reducing stress and advancing wellness correlates with a boost in productivity and decline in absences and turnovers within the workplace (Witmer & Young, 1996). Within the context of wellness, Oshagbemi (1999) defined occupational satisfaction as an individual's perception of how desired outcomes match expected outcomes.

Inspired by scholarly discussion on how role conflict and ambiguity impinged on stress and coping research, Osipow and Spokane produced a model for understanding occupational

stress and strain (1983, 1984). The model contended that workers' perception of their work role is essential to understanding emotional experiences at work. The subjective gauge of role stressors is more important than an objective gauge due to the fact that individual perception establishes emotional reactivity, stress, and the ability to cope. The contention is that occupational stress is reconciled by role factors and coping resources. The model developed by Osipow and Spokane (1983) included three primary dimensions: occupational stress, coping, and strain. The model was interactive and therefore provided a framework for measuring occupational satisfaction.

New faculty members face multiple challenges as they matriculate into the academic culture of higher education. Role overload, as well as the experience of more demands than available time, is negatively correlated to occupational satisfaction (Lease, 1999). Adding to the struggle of balancing multiple demands with inadequate time is the lack of collegial relations and support (Austin & Rice, 1998; Scorcinelli, 1994). It has been further suggested that pre-tenured faculty members are frustrated and anxious about unclear and conflicting information about the tenure process (Austin & Rice, 1998). Tenure status is one factor that affects occupational satisfaction.

Along with tenure status, gender is another variable that affects occupational satisfaction. There are many similarities among women and pre-tenured faculty. According to Hagedorn (1996), time after time female faculty members emphasize support and fair treatment as essential aspects of occupational satisfaction. Two elemental themes surround the challenges experienced by female educators. The first challenge is inequity among male and female faculty. The second challenge is disparity with regard for teaching, service, and scholarship (Hill, 2009). As for pre-tenured faculty, occupational strain is a reality for female educators. A study was carried out

with a sample of 400 randomly selected tenure-track faculty. Approximately 66% of the women reported feeling stress at work at least 50% of the time (Blix et al., 1994).

Another variable that affects occupational satisfaction is minority status. Hill (2009) defined minority status as the four major cultural groups in the United States who do not hold the majority of economic, educational, social, and political power. These four groups are African American/Black, Asian American, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American. Faculty members who are minorities are more represented at the pre-tenure level within higher education (Flint, 1995: Toutkoushian, 1998). Promotion and tenure both remain a challenge within the field of higher education for the reason that minority faculty are over-represented in entry-level positions. Niemann and Dovidio stated that this isolation contributes to a sense of situational salience in which individuals consider themselves to represent the token status of a minority in a particular department (1998).

Theoretical models of occupational satisfaction indicate that non-tenured, female, and minority faculty members face higher levels of occupational strain (Lease, 1999; Mintz, 1999; Sorcinelli, 1994). In a study, the Occupational Stress Inventory-Revised (OSI-R) was used as the measure of occupational satisfaction (Osipow, 1998). The quantitative nature of this study focused on creating a cross-sectional understanding of occupational satisfaction ratings.

Pre-tenured counselor educators experienced more role overload, unclear expectations, feelings of being personally isolated, more interpersonal strain, concentration difficulties, and stress-related physical symptoms when compared with tenured colleagues. They were more likely to experience feelings of irritability and anxiety, and other stress-related health concerns. Some of the correlates of occupational strain for the pre-tenured faculty were depression,

anxiety, psychosomatic concerns, emotional exhaustion, and burnout. Perhaps due to the representation of the sample, neither gender nor minority status contributed to significant differences in occupational satisfaction within this study (Hill, 2009).

Sorcinelli (1994) pointed out that there is a dearth of coping resources for pre-tenured faculty. They do not seem to be mediated by the higher education environment itself or by the behaviors of the new faculty members. Apparently, the responsibility for engendering realistic expectations, offering opportunities to gain support, and role modeling stress-reduction skills such as problem solving, time management, and communication rests with the counselor education programs toward training future faculty members and with counselor education departments that bring new faculty into the higher education culture (Hill, 2009).

Although academic work has customarily been considered as non-stressful (Winefield et al., 2008), current research contradicts this view. Due to drastic reductions in government funding for public colleges and universities, the higher education system is under strain financially and occupationally. Stress is growing in university staff due to increased work pressure and diminished social support (2008).

The changes to working conditions have led to grave consequences for universities in Australia (2008). Higher education institutions play a fundamental role in the economic, environmental, cultural, social, and intellectual life of Australia. Therefore, a study was conducted in 2000 to gather information concerning occupational stress in 13 Australian universities. A follow-up survey was held in 2003. Approximately 6,000 staff members among the 13 universities participated at each time. Of the 6,000 participants, roughly 969 individuals participated both times.

From the original administration of the survey in 2000 to the second administration of the survey in 2003, results revealed growth in organizational commitment, job involvement, job autonomy, procedural fairness, and trust in senior management. There were decreases reported in work pressure and job insecurity. Yet, there were also increases in psychological strain and work-home conflict. Specifically pertaining to the 969 participants that contributed information on both distributions of the surveys, results showed increases in job involvement, job autonomy, belief in procedural fairness, trust in senior management, and a decrease in job insecurity, along with augmented work-home conflict and psychological strain. Nevertheless, the repeat participants did not show improvements in organizational commitment or work pressure. They reported reduced job satisfaction. Overall, the improvements were more noticeable for general staff, rather than academic staff. Regarding gender, the improvements were also more pronounced for female staff members than for male staff members.

Regression analyses established that the best predictors of organizational commitment were job satisfaction and trust in senior management. The clearest predictors of trust in senior management were procedural fairness and organizational commitment. The top predictor of job satisfaction was procedural fairness. The only noteworthy predictor of psychological strain was neuroticism (Winefield et al., 2008).

Rejuvenation

Wellness, both professional and personal, has become a critical issue as individuals and society respond to the pressure and demands of living in the new millennium (Hill, 2009). Tait (2008) directed attention to the human strengths that educators demonstrate when they confront and overcome stress. Resilience is one of the compelling assets that some educators bring to the

work experience. There is a relationship between resilience and the human strengths of personal efficacy and emotional competence (2008). High levels of occupational satisfaction derive from a positive affective evaluation of how consistent work goals are with work demands and triumphs.

Seldin (2008) considered the burnout experienced by higher education faculty members. He referred to them as “tired” professors. He defined tired educators as most often senior professors who have worked at their institutions for many years. During the course of time, motivation levels have decreased significantly, thus leading toward the classification of tired educators. Having risen through the ranks and earned tenure, they are simply not teaching as effectively as they once did or could possibly do in the future.

In order to revitalize these experienced educators, several suggestions were offered for institutions to implement (Seldin, 2008). These implementations included providing opportunities for reflection, teaching faculty members some new skills, offering financial assistance, setting up mentor programs, helping professors give something back, stimulating team teaching, and supporting faculty exchanges.

The role and usefulness of group-work in undergraduate teaching and its implications on motivation and learning were explored (Pollalis, 1995). It was discovered that collaborative environments in the classroom provoked much stronger degrees of learning than classroom environments that are based on the conventional teacher-dependent or lecture-based styles. Group-work and role taking can increase motivation of students and improve learning. In addition, this can build up the intellectual development and confidence of the students. Likewise, this can also expand the excitement and rejuvenation of the instructor.

According to Chambliss (1994), the key to rejuvenating faculty for an optimal response to society's challenges is to help faculty members recognize that by fulfilling work responsibilities and requirements and improving standard operating procedures, faculty members will be better able to preserve a privileged, autonomous career. At the same time, students will be permitted to enjoy the pleasures of a liberal education. Chambliss (1994) also advocated that faculty needs to be given the chance to arrive at their own conclusion that self-improvement within the workplace is a necessity, rather than an alternative.

In order to more closely evaluate teacher motivation and job satisfaction within higher education, a paper was written (Chambliss, 1994) to discuss the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) plans for faculty development at Ursinus College in Pennsylvania. The use and execution of TQM is for the improvement of the marketing of faculty and institutional attainments. Concerning the business industry, the focus of TQM is on the consumer. This focus similarly parallels the focus on the student within the higher education industry.

At Ursinus College, the administration used informal meetings to develop faculty initiatives in the areas of new student recruitment, mentoring relationships, and refining educational quality. The college faculty members were advised to be prepared to advertise and market their accomplishments before the public. This requirement became a very powerful reinforcement tool for the faculty with regard for job satisfaction and motivation. It served as an impetus for setting grand standards and meeting them. Outcome assessment was tied to improved instruction which created a motivating innovation. The college also utilized a "Distinctive Teaching Survey" as a segment in an annual self-evaluation process for each faculty member. The survey was developed by Chambliss (1994). The survey allowed the faculty to communicate crowning moments in the classroom. The distribution and completion of the survey gathered

considerable support among the faculty. The general sense of pride within the institution increased, which then formed a climate that fostered greater productivity among the students and faculty (1994).

Summary

Chapter two served as a review of the literature relevant to support the proposed study. The literature was introduced regarding employee stress, temperament, personality type, critical thinking, and self concept. Stress and work outcomes were discussed, along with occupational stress for educators. Ideas for rejuvenation were considered. Finally, the relationship between personality and burnout was explored.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Prior research has not thoroughly examined the extent to which specific stressors predict burnout among educators in the student services realm. The term *student services* personnel is defined in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, as reauthorized under the No Child Left Behind Act, Sec. 9101, paragraph 36) as "school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, and other qualified professional personnel involved in providing assessment, diagnosis, counseling, educational, therapeutic, and other necessary services". The purpose of this study was to deliberately identify three precise predictors of burnout for rural public school student services personnel.

There are challenges linked with working in a rural school setting. These drawbacks include working as a generalist, dealing with boundary issues and dual relationships, lack of supports, multiple roles, isolation, privacy and confidentiality issues, lack of anonymity, higher risks of burnout, shortage of referral sources and specializations, role confusion and ambiguity, lack of resources, geographical and accessibility issues, and lack of training and professional development opportunities (Hargrove, 2003; Helbok, 2003; Stamm, 2003; Weigel & Baker, 2002).

Research design will be discussed in this chapter, and the setting(s) for the study will be highlighted. Participants and instruments to be included in the study will be identified. Reliability and validity of each of the four instruments will be examined. Finally, data analysis will be followed by a summary of the chapter.

Research Design

This study was a predictive study. Fraenkel and Wallen (2003, p. 337) state that "if a relationship of sufficient magnitude exists between two variables, it becomes possible to predict a score on one variable if a score on the other variable is known." Data was collected to determine the degree to which a relationship exists between school climate, motivation, organizational commitment, and burnout.

In prediction studies, multiple correlations are utilized. The coefficient of multiple correlation reveals the strength of the correlation between the combination of the predictor variables and the criterion variable (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). This type of research design was appropriate because the affiliation between school climate, motivation, organizational commitment, and burnout was examined. Thus, a multiple correlation was determined. The dependent variable in this study was burnout. The three independent variables in this research design were school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment.

Setting for the Study

There were multiple settings for this study. They included all of the K-12 public schools in one rural school district, including elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. There were a total of 17 schools included in the study. Ten of the schools were elementary division level, consisting of students enrolled in the Kindergarten through 5th grade levels. Four of the schools were middle school division level, consisting of students enrolled in the 6th through the 8th grades. Three of the schools were high school division level, encompassing students enrolled in the 9th through the 12th grades.

Participants

The population for this study included rural public school student services personnel at all of the elementary, middle, and high schools in the rural school district. The student services personnel included guidance counselors, school psychologists, social workers, behavior specialists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech/language therapists, specialists for visually impaired students, specialists for hearing impaired students, hospital/homebound coordinators, home-to-school liaisons, and program staffing specialists. The homogenous sample consisted of 51 volunteers. Administrators, teachers, and non-instructional employees were not targeted or selected for the sample in this study.

Each participant received a packet consisting of four instruments, along with an addressed, stamped envelope in which to return the completed instruments to the researcher. The researcher mailed the instruments to the work location(s) of each participant. There were no names or other identifying information on any of the questionnaires sent to the participants. In this way, anonymity was maintained.

Instruments

Four instruments were utilized in this study. Each participant was asked to complete the four instruments. The four instruments provided to the participants included the American School Climate Survey (2006), the Motivation Questionnaire (2004), the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (1993), and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (1981).

In order to assess school climate, the American School Climate Survey (2006) was completed by each participant. This survey was designed to gain opinions concerning some

aspects of school climate and the employees' attitudes toward the school(s) in which they work. It contained a total of 25 questions for the participant(s) to complete.

The Motivation Questionnaire (2004) was used to measure motivation. This instrument was designed to help individuals understand and explore the conditions that tend to increase or diminish enthusiasm and motivation at work. It also examined how far these exist in the current workplace of the individual(s) completing the questionnaire.

Organizational commitment was determined for each participant through the administration of the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (1993). This questionnaire was designed to measure the participants' psychological attachment to the workplace. It was comprised of 23 questions.

Finally, burnout was assessed through the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI, 1981). It was designed to assess the three components of the burnout syndrome which include emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. There were a total of 22 items, which were separated into three subscales. The items were written in the style of statements about personal feelings or attitudes. The items were answered in terms of the incidence with which the respondent experienced these feelings on a 7-point scale. The scale ranged from a "0", indicating "never" to a "6", indicating "every day".

The nine articles in the Emotional Exhaustion subscale measured feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work. Regarding the Depersonalization subscale, the five items assessed an unfeeling and impersonal response toward recipients of one's service, care, treatment, or instruction. For both of these subscales, higher mean scores corresponded to higher degrees of experienced burnout. The eight items on the Personal

Accomplishment subscale gauged feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work with other people. In direct contrast to the other two subscales, lower mean scores on this subscale corresponded to higher degrees of experienced burnout. This subscale was independent of the other two.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the instrument's ability to provide consistent results. Concerning the American School Climate survey, reliability is 0.96 through the use of the Chronbach's Alpha. The Motivation Questionnaire has adequate internal consistency reliability with a median scale reliability of 0.66 through the use of Chronbach's Coefficient Alpha. Regarding the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire, reliability is 0.91 through the use of the Chronbach's Alpha.

The reliability coefficients for the three subscales of the Maslach Burnout Inventory are as follows: 0.90 for Emotional Exhaustion, 0.79 for Depersonalization, and 0.71 for Personal Accomplishment. The standard error of measurement for each subscale is as follows: 3.80 for Emotional Exhaustion, 3.16 for Depersonalization, and 3.73 for Personal Accomplishment. The MBI subscales have been found to be stable over time, with correlations in the .50 to .82 range (Zalaquett & Wood, 1997).

Validity

Validity refers to whether the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. Both the American School Climate Survey and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire have construct validity. The internal consistency median of coefficients is 0.90 for the Organizational

Commitment Questionnaire. Pertaining to the Motivation Questionnaire, the internal consistency median of coefficients is 0.61. The instrument is also shown to have construct validity.

The MBI has been shown to have convergent validity in several ways. First, individual scores were correlated with behavioral ratings made independently by a person who knew the individual well. Second, scores were correlated with the presence of particular job characteristics that were expected to add to experienced burnout. Finally, MBI scores were correlated with measures of outcomes that had been hypothesized to be related to burnout. All three sets of correlations have provided evidence for the validity of the MBI. Additional evidence of the validity of the MBI has been obtained by differentiating it from measures of other psychological constructs that might be believed to be confounded with burnout.

Data Analysis

Linear multiple regression is a technique that allows the researcher to ascertain a multiple correlation between a criterion variable and the best combination of two or more predictor variables (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). One of the purposes of correlational research is to clarify an understanding of important phenomena by identifying relationships among variables. “If a relationship of sufficient magnitude exists between two variables, it becomes possible to predict a score on one variable if a score on the other variable is known” (p. 337). Errors of prediction should be lessened if the researcher has more information on the participants.

The American School Climate Survey, Motivation Questionnaire, Organizational Commitment Questionnaire, and the Maslach Burnout Inventory instruments were scored by the researcher for each participant in the study. To test the hypotheses using a statistical procedure, multiple regression was utilized.

The statistical, or null, hypothesis for this study was:

Ho: There is no multiple correlation between school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment as predictors of burnout for rural public school student services personnel.

The research hypothesis was:

H_A: There is a multiple correlation between school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment as predictors of burnout for rural public school student services personnel.

The data was analyzed through the use of PSPP.

Summary

Chapter three served as an explanation of the methodology and procedures that were incorporated in the study. The research design was recognized as a predictive study. The setting(s) for the study and the participants for selection were identified. Four instruments were given to each participant. These included the American School Climate Survey (2006), the Motivation Questionnaire (2004), the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (1993), and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (1981). A brief description of each instrument was offered in this chapter, along with the reliability and validity of each. A linear multiple regression technique was used for data analysis toward this prediction study.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of this study was to examine the predictive values of school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment on burnout for rural public school student services personnel. Chapter four presents the results of the study. It is arranged through a discussion of the research question, data analysis of the survey instrumentation, and results. The data for the predictive values of these constructs were measured by the American School Climate Survey (2006), the Motivation Questionnaire (2004), the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (1993), and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI, 1981). Through the implementation and completion of these four instruments, self-reported data was gathered from participants.

The outcome of the data analyses are presented in this chapter. This chapter will incorporate the research question and review the population for the study. Descriptive statistics for each of the predictor variables will be covered. Additionally, the survey instruments and hypothesis will be addressed. Finally, the research conclusions will be revealed, as well as whether or not the null hypothesis was able to be rejected by the data.

Research Question

In order to determine the multiple correlation between the three predictors (school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment) on burnout for rural public school student services personnel, a response was required to the following research question:

What is the multiple correlation between a set of three predictors (school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment) and burnout among rural public school student services personnel?

Description of the Sample

Input was sought from a total of 83 potential participants for this study. The homogeneous population recruited for this study included rural public school student services personnel at all of the elementary, middle, and high schools in the rural public school district. The student services personnel consisted of guidance counselors, school psychologists, social workers, behavior specialists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech/language pathologists, hospital/homebound coordinators, home-to-school liaisons, specialists for hearing impaired students, specialists for visually impaired students, and program staffing specialists. Approximately 83 people were invited to participate in this study.

The data analyzed were based on the results of the survey instruments completed by public school student services personnel. A total of 83 sets of four instruments were distributed to the target population. Of the 83 possible participants, 51 individuals chose to contribute to the study, for a completion rate of 61.4%. In order to preserve anonymity for the participants, no names or other identifying information was collected for this study.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics such as the mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, and the range were conducted for each of the variables in the study. The data for the four variables is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for School Climate, Motivation, Organizational Commitment, and Burnout

	School Climate	Motivation	Organ. Commit	Burnout
N	51	51	51	51
Mean	81.59	125.63	102.47	33.27
Standard Deviation	19.29	23.90	15.25	17.65
Minimum	40.00	28.00	61.00	3.00
Maximum	111.00	174.00	140.00	78.00
Range	71.00	146.00	79.00	75.00

Data-Analysis Overview

The data were analyzed utilizing a statistical program known as PSPP, which is a software application for analysis of sampled data. The statistical process of multiple regression was used to decide the combined relationship, R, of three independent variables on the single dependent variable of burnout. Multiple regression is a statistical practice for looking at the combined relationship of manifold variables with a single dependent variable. The variation in the dependent variable is accounted for by the variance of each independent variable, along with the combined effect of all of the independent variables (Creswell, 2002).

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze the data for the study. Descriptive statistics contained means and standard deviations. Inferential statistics consisted of multiple regression, ANOVA, Pearson's R correlation coefficients, and beta coefficients with significance levels set at $p < .05$. Correlation analyses were run to conclude whether or not there were any statistically significant relationships among any of the following predictors: burnout and school climate; burnout and motivation; and burnout and organizational commitment.

American School Climate Survey

The American School Climate Survey (2006) was intended to achieve opinions about some aspects of school climate and the employees' attitudes toward the school(s) in which they work. It contained a total of 25 questions for the participant(s) to complete and used a Likert-type scale with a range of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Not Sure), 4 (Agree), and 5 (Strongly Agree). The reliability for this instrument is 0.96 through the use of the Chronbach Alpha. The mean score of participants in this study was 81.59 with a standard deviation of 19.29 (Table 1).

Motivation Questionnaire

The Motivation Questionnaire (2004) was designed to measure motivation. It was also created to help individuals recognize and consider the conditions that tend to intensify or reduce enthusiasm and motivation in the workplace. Additionally, this instrument examined how far these conditions exist in the current work environment of the participant(s) completing the questionnaire. It included a total of 20 questions for the participant(s) to complete and used a scoring range of 1, 2,or 3 (Low), 4, 5, 6, or 7 (Average), and 8, 9, or 10 (High). This instrument has satisfactory internal consistency reliability with a median scale reliability of 0.66 using the

Chronbach Alpha. The mean score of participants in this study was 125.63 with a standard deviation of 23.90 (Table 1).

Organizational Commitment Questionnaire

The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (1993) was developed to measure the participants' psychological attachment to the workplace. It involved a total of 23 questions for the participant(s) to complete using a Likert-type scale with a range of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Slightly Disagree), 4 (Neither Agree Nor Disagree), 5 (Slightly Agree), 6 (Agree), and 7 (Strongly Agree). Through the use of Chronbach's Alpha, a reliability analysis for this instrument is 0.91. The mean score of participants in this study was 102.47 with a standard deviation of 15.25 (Table 1).

Maslach Burnout Inventory

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI, 1981) was designed to gauge the three components of the burnout syndrome which include Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment. It included a total of 22 items developed in the style of statements about personal feelings or outlooks. The items used a Likert-type scale with a range of 0 (Never), 1 (A few times a year of less), 2 (Once a month or less), 3 (A few times a month or less), 4 (Once a week), 5 (A few times a week), and 6 (Everyday). Using the Chronbach's Alpha, the reliability for this instrument is 0.90 for Emotional Exhaustion, 0.79 for Depersonalization, and 0.71 for Personal Accomplishment. The mean score of participants in this study was 33.27 with a standard deviation of 17.65 (Table 1).

Research Findings

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients (r) were calculated to determine whether a relationship existed between the dependent variable of burnout and the independent variables of school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment (see Table 2). Each independent variable was negatively correlated with the dependent variable of burnout, which indicates that an increase in school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment resulted in lower burnout scores. However, only one independent variable, motivation, was significantly correlated with the dependent variable of burnout, $r\ (51) = -.32$, $p < .05$. This coefficient indicates that approximately 10% of variance of burnout was accounted for by the variance of the predictor, motivation. The other two independent variables, school climate and organizational commitment, each only accounted for 3% of variance of burnout. The results are provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Pearson Correlation of School Climate, Motivation, Organizational Commitment, and Burnout

		CLIME	MOTIVE	COMMIT	BURN
CLIME	Pearson Correlation	1			-.16
	Sig. (2-tailed)				.26
	N	51			51
MOTIVE	Pearson Correlation		1		-.32
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1			.02
	N	51	51		51
COMMIT	Pearson Correlation	.22	.31	1	-.16
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.12			.25
	N	51	51	51	51
BURN	Pearson Correlation				1
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N				51

The correlation matrix portrays the correlation for each predictor with the dependent variable of burnout. In table two, the correlation matrix depicts a correlation of, $r(51) = -.16$, $p > .05$, between the independent variable of school climate and the dependent variable of burnout. This correlation implies that approximately 3% of variance of burnout was accounted for by the variance of the predictor, school climate.

Also in table two, the correlation matrix establishes a correlation of, $r(51) = -.32$, $p < .05$, between the independent variable of motivation and the dependent variable of burnout. This correlation coefficient suggests that approximately 10% of variance of burnout was accounted for by the variance of the predictor, motivation.

Finally, the correlation matrix demonstrates a correlation of, $r(51) = -.16$, $p > .05$, between the independent variable of organizational commitment and the dependent variable of burnout. This correlation coefficient implies that approximately 3% of variance of burnout was accounted for by the variance of the predictor, organizational commitment.

Quantitative Data Analysis Using Regression

In order to address the main research question of this study, the dependent variable of burnout was statistically regressed on three predictor variables. A multiple regression analysis was performed to determine the predicting equation between the three independent variables of school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment and the dependent variable of burnout. All analyses were conducted at the .05 significance level. A model summary (see Table 3) displays the multiple correlation R, R Square, and the adjusted R Square.

When using the three independent variables of school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment together as predictors of the rural public school student services personnel members' level of burnout, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to predict the burnout. The model summary (Table 3) indicated an R value of .36 and an R square value of .13.

Table 3

Model Summary: School Climate, Motivation, and Organizational Commitment

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.36	.13	.09	17.00

The R square of .13 indicates that 13% of the variance of the dependent variable of burnout was accounted for by the variance of the three predictors, which included school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment. Therefore, approximately 87% of the variance was not explained.

Table 4 shows the coefficients for each of the predictors in the regression equation using the three independent variables of school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment. The coefficient of -.23 for motivation was significant, $p < .05$. However, the coefficients for climate and organizational commitment were not significant.

Table 4

Coefficients: School Climate, Motivation, and Organizational Commitment

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	77.23	19.60		3.94	.16
CLIME	-.14	.13	-.15	-1.09	.28
MOTIVE	-.23	.11	-.31	-2.15	.04
COMMIT	-.04	.17	-.03	-.22	.83

Dependent Variable: Burnout

The results indicate that the equation for the regression line is as follows: predicted burnout score = 77.23 - .14 (school climate) - .23 (motivation) - .04 (organizational commitment) (Table 4).

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) in table five shows the sum of squares (between variation) and the residual (within variation). Additionally, it reveals the mean square and the F ratio. The F ratio [F (1, 47) = 2.31] was not significant at the .05 level. The linear combination of the three independent variables was not significantly related to the dependent variable of burnout even though one variable, motivation, was significantly related. [F (3, 47) = 2.31, $p > .05$]. Based on the ANOVA results, the null hypothesis was not rejected (Table 5).

Table 5

ANOVA Table Providing F Statistics for Regression Model: School Climate, Motivation, and Organizational Commitment

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2004.37	3	668.12	2.31	.09
Residual	13577.79	47	288.89		
Total	15582.16	50			

Summary of Results

In summation, this study sought to explore the predictive values of three independent variables on burnout for rural public school student services personnel. This study examined one hypothesis through statistical means of multiple regression analysis in which the dependent variable of burnout was regressed on three independent, or predictor, variables. These predictor variables included school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment. The data for the predictive values of these constructs were measured by the American School Climate Survey (2006), the Motivation Questionnaire (2004), the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (1993), and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (1981). Self-reported data was gathered from participants that completed the four instruments. The research question that guided this study was: What is the multiple correlation between a set of three predictors and burnout among rural public school student services personnel?

Participation was requested from a total of 83 prospective participants for this study. The population sought for this study included rural public school student services personnel at all of the elementary, middle, and high schools in a rural public school district. The personnel consisted of guidance counselors, school psychologists, social workers, behavior specialists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech/language pathologists, hospital/homebound coordinators, home-to-school liaisons, specialists for hearing impaired students, specialists for visually impaired students, and program staffing specialists. Of the 83 possible participants, 51 chose to participate for a completion rate of 61.4%. No names or other identifying information was collected so as to maintain anonymity of the participants.

Descriptive statistics such as the mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, and the range were conducted for each of the variables in the study. The data were examined through the use of a statistical program known as PSPP. Multiple regression was used to decide the combined relationship, R, of three independent variables on the single dependent variable of burnout. Correlation analyses were run to determine whether or not there were any statistically significant relationships among any of the predictors: burnout and school climate, burnout and motivation, and burnout and organizational commitment.

A correlation matrix was produced for each predictor with the dependent variable, burnout. The null hypothesis that predicted no multiple correlation between the three predictors (school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment) and burnout was not rejected. The study did not yield significance overall. Correlational and multiple regression analyses suggested that only one predictor, motivation, was significant. Nevertheless, the overall equation itself was not significant, as $p = .09$ (shown in Table 5). The greater the scores on the American School Climate Survey (2006), the Motivation Questionnaire (2004), and the Organizational

Commitment Questionnaire (1993), the lower the scores on the Maslach Burnout Inventory (1981). Only motivation was significantly related to burnout.

The following chapter presents conclusions of this study. Chapter five imparts general discussion and a review of some of the limitations of the study as well. Lastly, it offers implications of the study as well as suggestions for further development of the outcome of this study.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study aimed to contribute to the general body of knowledge regarding burnout among rural public school student services personnel. Burnout refers to the experience of ongoing weariness and waning interest and usually occurs within the context of the work setting. This study specifically focused on three predictors of burnout for rural public school student services personnel, which included school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment.

Burnout is related to a range of personal dysfunctions and is most often associated as a pattern of negative symptoms that directly affects areas of functioning (Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006). Maslach and Jackson (1981) drew further attention and popularity to the psychological nature of the burnout syndrome through the creation and development of the Maslach Burnout Inventory. Together, they further explained burnout as a syndrome that is made up of three aspects, which include emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and shortened personal accomplishment.

A multiple correlation was conducted in order to find out whether relationships existed between burnout and the three variables of school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment. The data was gathered from 51 participants working within the student services personnel division of a rural public school system. For the purpose of the study, student services personnel were not limited to, but included, guidance counselors, social workers, school psychologists, behavior specialists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech/language therapists, hospital/homebound coordinators, home-to-school liaisons, specialists for hearing

impaired students, specialists for visually impaired students, and program staffing specialists. The data provided a response to the research question: What is the multiple correlation between a set of three predictors (school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment) and burnout among rural public school student services personnel?

The information for this study was obtained through four questionnaires mailed with self-addressed stamped envelopes to 83 potential participants working within the student services personnel division of a rural public school system. The four questionnaires included the American School Climate Survey (2006), Motivation Questionnaire (2004), Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (1993), and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (1981).

The American School Climate Survey (2006) served as the instrument in this study to assess the physical and psychological aspects of a school or institution that are susceptible to change and that provide the preconditions essential for both teaching and learning to take place. This instrument was intended to achieve opinions about some aspects of school climate and the employees' attitudes toward the school(s) in which they work. It contained a total of 25 questions for the participant(s) to complete and used a Likert-type scale with a range of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Not Sure), 4 (Agree), and 5 (Strongly Agree).

The Motivation Questionnaire (2004) served as the instrument in this study to measure an incentive or reason for doing something or engaging in a particular behavior. It was created to help individuals recognize and consider the conditions that either intensify or reduce enthusiasm and motivation in the workplace. It included a total of 20 questions for the participant(s) to complete and used a scoring range of 1, 2, or 3 (Low), 4, 5, 6, or 7 (Average), and 8, 9, or 10 (High).

The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (1993) served as the instrument in this study to weigh the employees' psychological attachment to the workplace or organization. It contained a total of 23 questions for the participant(s) to complete using a Likert-type scale with a range of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Slightly Disagree), 4 (Neither Agree Nor Disagree), 5 (Slightly Agree), 6 (Agree), and 7 (Strongly Agree).

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI, 1981) served as the instrument in this study to gauge the three components of the burnout syndrome which include Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment. It included a total of 22 items developed in the style of statements about personal feelings or outlooks. The items used a Likert-type scale with a range of 0 (Never), 1 (A few times a year or less), 2 (Once a month or less), 3 (A few times a month or less), 4 (Once a week), 5 (A few times a week), and 6 (Everyday). For the purposes of this study, the three components of the burnout syndrome were not separately observed.

The literature review suggested that burnout is a commonly experienced occurrence for working professionals in different career fields. Burnout brings results that may affect the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of the individual. It either attacks intermittently or is a chronic existence (Boice, 1993). Employees at greatest risk for burnout are those who feel underpaid, unappreciated, or criticized for matters beyond their control. Work stress indicates a diversity of causes of stress (Gorter et al., 1998). Other reasons for job burnout include setting unrealistic goals, being overextended, working under coercive or disciplinary conditions, failing to be challenged, and feeling trapped for financial means.

Research has been conducted toward the investigation of burnout and employee stress among dentists (Gorter et al., 1998), school teachers (Bacharach et al., 1986; Conley & Woosley, 2000; Reed, 1979; Sutton, 1984; Teven, 2007; Unterbrink et al., 2008;), school system settings (Chen & Miller, 1997), Informational Technology (IT) professionals (Maudgalya et al., 2006), as well as medical doctors and nurses (Escriba-Aguir et al., 2006). Nevertheless, there has been little research particularly demonstrating predictors of burnout among rural student services personnel.

The dependent variable for this study was burnout. The independent variables were school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment. The study did not collect any demographic information from the participants. No names or other identifying information was gathered so as to maintain anonymity. The dependent variable of burnout, along with the independent variables of school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment were obtained through self-reported data provided on the American School Climate Survey (2006), Motivation Questionnaire (2004), Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (1993), and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI, 1981).

The data analyzed were based on four instruments completed by 51 student services personnel in a rural public school system. A total of 83 sets of questionnaires were distributed to the target population. A total of 51 or 61.4% completed sets of instruments were returned to the researcher. No names or other identifying information was collected so as to preserve anonymity.

Conclusions

This study provides additional support to existing research about burnout in the workplace setting (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). The study provides evidence that the more

motivated an individual is, the less burned out he/she will be. As mentioned previously, research establishes that burnout is a commonly experienced phenomenon for working professionals in various career fields. Although some careers have higher rates of burnout than others, it exists in some form in every occupation (Schuler, 1979). According to Beehr et al. (1976), the negative outcomes include dissatisfaction with work, dissatisfaction with life, low self-esteem, depressed mood, self-reported fatigue, tension, anxiety, and several health risk factors. This study attempted to focus more intently on three predictors of burnout for rural public school student services personnel.

The analysis indicated that each independent variable (school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment) was negatively correlated with the dependent variable of burnout. This indicates that an increase in school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment resulted in lower burnout scores. Nevertheless, only one independent variable, motivation, was significantly correlated with the dependent variable of burnout, $r\ (51) = -.32$, $p < .05$. This coefficient indicates that approximately 10% of variance of burnout was accounted for by the variance of the predictor, motivation. The other two independent variables, school climate and organizational commitment, each only accounted for 3% of variance of burnout.

Discussion

The literature review revealed sufficient research on burnout within various professional work settings. While the reviewed research did include school teachers, it did not specifically consider student services personnel. For the purpose of this study, the student services personnel sought for participation included guidance counselors, social workers, school psychologists, behavior specialists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech/language therapists,

hospital/homebound coordinators, home-to-school liaisons, specialists for hearing impaired students, specialists for visually impaired students, and program staffing specialists. This current study attempted to provide data toward three specific predictors of burnout among rural public school student services personnel.

The results of this study displayed negative correlations between the independent variables of school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment, and the dependent variable of burnout. This demonstrated that an increase in school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment resulted in lower burnout scores. Correlational and multiple regression analyses indicated that only the independent variable of motivation was significantly correlated to burnout. Considering the research literature, it was unanticipated that only one predictor, motivation, was significant.

The correlation matrix depicted a correlation of, $r(51) = -.16$, $p > .05$, between the independent variable of school climate and the dependent variable of burnout. This implies that approximately 3% of variance of burnout was accounted for by the variance of the predictor, school climate. Also, the correlation matrix established a correlation of, $r(51) = -.32$, $p < .05$, between the independent variable of motivation and the dependent variable of burnout. This correlation coefficient suggests that approximately 10% of variance of burnout was accounted for by the variance of the predictor, motivation. In addition, the correlation matrix demonstrated a correlation of, $r(51) = -.16$, $p > .05$, between the independent variable of organizational commitment and the dependent variable of burnout. This correlation coefficient implied that approximately 3% of variance of burnout was accounted for by the variance of the predictor, organizational commitment.

This study provided opposing results. Only the independent variable of motivation showed a significant correlation with the dependent variable, burnout. It was unforeseen to discover that this study showed no significant correlation between burnout and either of the remaining two independent variables of school climate and organizational commitment.

Limitations

The limitations of this study included several factors. A first limitation was that the data was self-reported. The participants' answers were recorded at face value without being independently verified.

A second limitation was that the researcher focused solely on the K-12 public schools located within one rural county for this study. Multiple counties were not considered or cross-referenced. Therefore, the data may not be generalized to other rural school districts.

A final limitation concerned the fact that only a small sample of participants were sought for the study, which may have led to a minimal number of participants. The participants in the sample consisted solely of volunteers. Volunteers are not necessarily representative of the population. Of the 83 participants recruited for participation, 51 chose to participate in the study, for a completion rate of 61.4%. Despite a strong rate of participation, the sample was small from the beginning.

Implications

Research on burnout and employee stress has been conducted on particular occupational populations such as salespeople, teachers, medical professionals, and human service workers. Research suggests that employee stress can occur from feelings of inability to do an assigned

task, lack of feedback from authority and management, not knowing what to do or how to do it, as well as from personal value conflicts (Schuler, 1979). Schuler (1979) suggested that through effective and proper use of communication by supervisors and superiors, much employee stress can be reduced. The use of encouragement is helpful for increasing employees' feelings of confidence and self-worth. While employee stress is reduced, motivation is increased.

Specifically within the school setting, principals have been aware of the symptoms of teacher burnout. Reed (1979) stated that the burnout syndrome is becoming an epidemic, especially in veteran teachers with seven to ten years of experience in the teaching field. They are experiencing boredom, disillusionment, and dissatisfaction with their careers. In order to combat boredom, Reed (1979) suggested that principals should offer new challenges and a change of environment in order to keep things interesting. Teachers may be allowed to change classrooms and grade levels and spread out into new curriculum fields. Also, principals can encourage teachers to take sabbaticals, trade opportunities, grants, and fellowships, and they can also promote the use of professional days. Pertaining to feelings of disillusionment and dissatisfaction, principals can directly involve teachers more in the decision-making process. Self-esteem may be elevated in veteran teachers through the efforts of the principals to assign veteran teachers to mentor new teacher employees by inspiring, teaching, and guiding them (Reed, 1979).

A study of this nature draws attention to the notion that job burnout can be counteracted (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). Employees experiencing burnout can gain clarification on job descriptions. Employees may request for a transfer or ask for new job responsibilities. Taking time off from work may be beneficial to be removed from the present situation and revitalized before returning to work.

Leaders and administrators within the education system should observe and stay aware of the existence of burnout among student services employees. Concerns such as employees' attitudes toward the school(s) in which they work, conditions that tend to strengthen or diminish enthusiasm and motivation within the workplace, employees' psychological attachment to the workplace, and feelings of emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment need to be considered, evaluated, and monitored at all levels of the public school system to include the elementary, middle, and secondary school levels. Morale in the workplace is affected by school climate, motivation, organizational commitment, and burnout among student services personnel.

Recommendations

Future research is necessary to explore the relationship between school climate, motivation, organizational commitment, and burnout for public school student services personnel. Future studies should consider other independent variables which were not considered in this predictive study. These independent variables are not limited to, but may include, gender, stress, and years of experience in the school setting(s).

This study should be repeated with a larger number of participants. Perhaps the same three specific predictors could be analyzed along with the dependent variable of burnout in a metropolitan public school district. This would allow for a substantially larger number of participants within the division of student services personnel.

A future study may involve requesting demographic information from the participants. The demographic data may include the gender of the participants, and years of experience in the school setting(s). Gathering this type of demographic data would shed different light on the responses from the participants.

In addition, a future study may more closely examine employee stress. Less attention has been directed to how role stresses affect the organizationally valued states of the individual, such as work commitment and employee retention. Beehr (1995) indicated that the majority of the outcomes examined were psychological or emotional strains, such as job dissatisfaction and tension. Schuler (1979) suggested that through effective use of communication by supervisors, employee stress can be reduced. The use of encouragement is helpful for amplifying employees' feelings of confidence and self-worth. When employee stress is reduced, motivation is increased (1979).

Educational researchers have consistently been concerned with role stress among teachers. Classroom teaching has been distinguished as a profession where numerous role demands are present. Sutton (1984) designated that role demands may become stressful for a teacher when organizational members' expectations about the teacher's behavior are unclear. This leads to role ambiguity. Role ambiguity has been found to be a strong predictor of general stress among both elementary and secondary school teachers (Bacharach et al., 1986). Excessive expectations about the teacher's behavior lead to role overload. Further, when meeting one set of expectations causes meeting other expectations to be more difficult, role conflict results. A future study may examine the role of stress among student services personnel, as opposed to teachers.

This quantitative study utilized Likert-style questions in order to measure burnout. Replication in the form of a qualitative study to include different factors influencing burnout would potentially provide different results. Furthermore, administrators may be included as participants in a future study.

Other components to consider with a future replicated study may include legal actions regarding high-stakes testing within schools, the increased financial contributions being made by employees toward the Florida Retirement System (FRS), and the recent changes that have been made to the DROP (Deferred Retirement Option Program) program for educators. Each of these relevant topics could be incorporated into future study of burnout among student services personnel.

Summary

This study sought to explore the predictive values of three independent variables on burnout for rural public school student services personnel. This study investigated one hypothesis through statistical means of multiple regression analysis in which the dependent variable of burnout was regressed on three independent, or predictor, variables. These predictor variables included school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment. The data for the predictive values of these constructs were measured by the American School Climate Survey (2006), the Motivation Questionnaire (2004), the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (1993), and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (1981). Self-reported data was obtained from participants that completed the four instruments. The research question that guided this study was: What is the multiple correlation between a set of three predictors and burnout among rural public school student services personnel?

Participation was requested from a total of 83 prospective participants for this study. The population recruited for this study included rural public school student services personnel at all of the elementary, middle, and high schools in a rural public school district. The personnel included guidance counselors, school psychologists, social workers, behavior specialists,

occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech/language pathologists, hospital/homebound coordinators, home-to-school liaisons, specialists for hearing impaired students, specialists for visually impaired students, and program staffing specialists. Of the 83 possible participants, 51 chose to participate for a completion rate of 61.4%. No names or other identifying information was collected so as to maintain anonymity for the participants in this study.

Descriptive statistics such as the mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, and the range were conducted for each of the variables in the study. The data were examined through the use of a statistical program known as PSPP. Multiple regression was used to determine the combined relationship, R, of three independent variables on the single dependent variable of burnout. Correlation analyses were run to determine whether or not there were any statistically significant relationships among any of the predictors: burnout and school climate, burnout and motivation, and burnout and organizational commitment.

A correlation matrix was produced for each predictor with the dependent variable, burnout. The null hypothesis that predicted no multiple correlation between the three predictors (school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment) and burnout was not rejected. Overall, the study did not yield significance. Correlational and multiple regression analyses suggested that only one predictor, motivation, was significant.

The overall findings of this research provided support for the proposed hypothesis. The data revealed that each independent variable (school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment) was negatively correlated with the dependent variable of burnout. Nevertheless, the overall equation itself was not significant, as $p = .09$ (shown in Table 5). The greater the scores on the American School Climate Survey (2006), the Motivation Questionnaire (2004), and

the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (1993), the lower the scores on the Maslach Burnout Inventory (1981). This indicated that an increase in school climate, motivation, and organizational commitment resulted in lower burnout scores. Only motivation was significantly related to burnout.

Burnout is not a problem reserved for the conclusion of a long career, but is experienced at intervals along the career continuum (Blix et al., 1994). Given the documented existence of burnout among the workplace, much still remains to be discovered, analyzed, and addressed about the relationship between school climate, motivation, organizational commitment, and burnout for rural public school student services personnel. As an educator, and more importantly a lifelong learner, the researcher anticipates that this current study will contribute toward, as well as advance, future research in the area of burnout for student services personnel within the public school system.

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APPENDICES

Barry University
Cover Letter

APPENDIX A

Dear Research Participant:

Your participation in a research project is requested. The title of the study is *Three Predictors of Burnout for Rural Public School Student Services Personnel*. The research is being conducted by Jesslin Joy Williams, a student in the School of Education, Department of Higher Education and Leadership at Barry University, and is seeking information that will be useful in the field of Education and Leadership. The aims of the research are to investigate three predictors of burnout for rural public school student services personnel. In accordance with these aims, the following four instruments will be used: the American School Climate Survey, a Motivation Questionnaire, the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire, and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). I anticipate the number of participants to be approximately 56.

If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to do the following: Answer the questions on each of the four questionnaire instruments. All together, the four questionnaires are estimated to take 30 minutes to complete.

Your consent to be a research participant is strictly voluntary and should you decline to participate or should you choose to drop out at any time during the study, there will be no adverse effects.

There are no known risks to you for participating in this study. There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to research in the area of Education and Leadership.

As a research participant, information you provide will be kept anonymous. Therefore, no names or other identifiers will be collected on any of the instruments used. If you choose to participate, you will receive the four instruments through the mail system. The researcher will mail the instruments to the work location of each participant. Along with the instruments, each participant will be provided with an addressed, stamped envelope in which to return the completed instruments to the researcher. In this way, anonymity will be maintained. Data will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's office. After approximately five years, the retained data will be destroyed By completing and returning the survey instruments you have shown your agreement to participate in the study.

If you choose to participate in this research study, please complete the four questionnaire instruments and enclose the completed instruments in the provided addressed, stamped envelope. In order to return the instruments to the researcher, please mail the envelope through the United States postal service. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study or your participation in the study, you may contact me, Jesslin Joy Williams, by telephone at (863) 471-5500 ext. 281, or by email at williamj1@highlands.k12.fl.us. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Edward Bernstein, at (305) 899-3861, or the Institutional Review Board point of contact, Barbara Cook, at (305) 899-3020.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Jesslin Joy Williams

APPENDIX B
I. AMERICAN SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY
2006

This survey is designed to get your opinions concerning some aspects of school climate and your attitudes concerning the school in which you work, its community, and yourself. Your input is very important. Your responses are strictly anonymous, and you will not be asked to identify yourself at anytime during the survey. Please respond honestly and completely.

DIRECTIONS:

- Indicate your response by circling it.
- Make your marks dark.
- Erase changes completely.

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement by circling one of the five responses.

1. This school is a safe place in which to work.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

2. I am currently pursuing in-service opportunities to improve myself as a professional.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

3. There are sufficient opportunities to learn new professional methods.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

4. Students at this school fight a lot.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

5. Most students at this school would not be successful at a community college or university.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

6. Students at this school trust the teachers.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

7. I have been able to deter bullying behavior among students.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

8. Administrators at this school trust my professional judgment.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

9. I respect the students.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

10. Students at this school are capable of high achievement on standardized exams.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

11. I would benefit from more professional development provided by the district.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

12. Students at this school are not motivated to learn.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

13. Some children carry guns or knives in this school.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

14. Most students in the school will live beyond the age of 25 years.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

15. I address bully behavior at my school site(s) at least once per month.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

16. Teachers at this school care whether or not the students are successful.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

17. Parents are supportive of the school and its activities.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

18. Teachers are not fair to some students at this school.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

19. There are students who will be successful in this school because of their race.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

20. Teachers at this school work to foster a supportive climate for the students.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

21. We are preparing students to become productive citizens.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

22. I look forward to coming to work most days.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

23. Students in this school will have difficulty with core academic subjects regardless of strength of instruction.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

24. I have met most of my students' parents or adult caretaker.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

25. Racial barriers to educational and economic opportunity no longer exist in the United States.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

APPENDIX C
II. MOTIVATION QUESTIONNAIRE
2004

Motivation, ability, competence and attitude provide the ingredients for job success. The Motivation Questionnaire (MQ) is designed to help you understand and explore the conditions that will tend to increase or reduce your enthusiasm and motivation at work. The MQ also looks at how far these exist in your current job. This report describes your job motivation profile or style against 20 dimensions covering five motivation factors – **Drive, Control, Challenge, Relationships, and Rewards.** Your profile is based on what you have said about yourself through your responses to the questionnaire. What is being measured is your own perception of what you are like and what you find motivating. The results will reveal how your motivation style, along with your personality and abilities may be influencing your current job performance. Results will also reveal your strengths and areas where further development would improve your performance.

DIRECTIONS:

-Indicate your response by circling it.
-Make your marks dark.
-Erase changes completely.

-Please indicate the level at which the motivation dimension is motivating or demotivating in your current job. If the dimension is not present in your current job, please skip that dimension. The scoring scale is listed below.

LOW: 1, 2, 3 **AVERAGE: 4, 5, 6, 7** **HIGH: 8, 9, 10**

DRIVE FACTOR

Activity: Having a lot to do, being on the go, staying busy all the time. _____
Achievement: Testing job objectives, demanding responsibilities, new challenges. _____
Competition: Working in a competitive environment, striving to be the best. _____
Fear of Failure: Not wanting to let self and others down, being able to prove oneself. _____

CONTROL FACTOR

Power: Being in charge, exercising control, having responsibility for people. _____
Recognition: Acknowledgment by bosses and colleagues of efforts, skills, and competencies. _____
Status: Deriving standing and feelings of importance from work and job seniority. _____
Ethics: Working in accordance with ethical standards and personal principles. _____

CHALLENGE FACTOR

Interest: Varied, stimulating and creative job objectives and work activities. _____
Flexibility: Accommodating bosses, hours and working conditions. _____
Progression: Opportunity to continually advance to more senior positions. _____
Pressure: Handling competing priorities, facing tight deadlines, managing setbacks. _____

RELATIONSHIPS FACTOR

Teamwork: Operating as part of a team rather than as an individual contributor. _____
Management: Supervising other people's tasks and performance. _____
Customers: Dealing directly with customers, handling problems. _____
Business: Working in business sector rather than public service. _____

REWARDS FACTOR

Remuneration: Opportunity to boost earnings related to job performance. _____
Job Security: Secure, permanent, and reliable job position. _____
Autonomy: Freedom and discretion to decide how to carry out work. _____
Growth: Opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills, reach maximum potential. _____

APPENDIX D
III. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE
1993

DIRECTIONS:
Using the rating scale below, please mark a number on the blank line before each statement that best describes your feelings to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with it.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
STRONGLY AGREE	DISAGREE	SLIGHTLY DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	SLIGHTLY AGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE

_____ 1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization.
_____ 2. I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it.
_____ 3. I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.
_____ 4. I think I could become as attached to another organization as I am to this one.
_____ 5. I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization.
_____ 6. I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization.
_____ 7. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.
_____ 8. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.
_____ 9. I am afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up.
_____ 10. It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to.
_____ 11. Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization right now.
_____ 12. It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my organization in the near future.
_____ 13. Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire.
_____ 14. I believe that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization.
_____ 15. One of the few negative consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives.
_____ 16. One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice; another organization may not match the overall benefits I have here.
_____ 17. If I had not already put so much of myself into this organization, I might consider working elsewhere.
_____ 18. I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer.
_____ 19. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organization now.
_____ 20. I would feel guilty if I left my organization now.
_____ 21. This organization deserves my loyalty.
_____ 22. I would not leave my organization right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.
_____ 23. I owe a great deal to my organization.

APPENDIX E

IV. MASLACH BURNOUT INVENTORY (MBI, 1981)

The purpose of this survey is to discover how educators view their job and the people with whom they work closely. There are 22 statements of job-related feelings. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way *about your job.* If you have *never* had this feeling, write a "0" (zero) in the space before the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate *how often* you feel it by writing the number (from 1-6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

HOW OFTEN:	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
	Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month or less	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

HOW OFTEN 0-6	**STATEMENTS:**
_____	I feel emotionally drained.
_____	I feel used up at the end of the workday.
_____	I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.
_____	I can easily understand how my students feel about things.
_____	I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal objects.
_____	Working with people all day is really a strain for me.
_____	I deal very effectively with the problems of my students.
_____	I feel burned out.
_____	I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work.
_____	I've become more callous toward people since I took this job.
_____	I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.
_____	I feel very energetic.
_____	I feel frustrated with my work.
_____	I feel I'm working too hard.
_____	I don't really care what happens to some students.
_____	Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.
_____	I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my students.
_____	I feel exhilarated after working closely with my students.
_____	I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.
_____	I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.
_____	I deal with emotional problems very calmly.
_____	I feel students blame me for some of their problems.