

EDUCATOR BURNOUT: SOURCES AND CONSEQUENCES

By

Richard L. Schwab
University of New Hampshire
Susan E. Jackson
University of Michigan
and
Randall S. Schuler
New York University

Several research studies have examined the problem of educator burnout. None, however, have attempted to develop and test a comprehensive model of both the sources and consequences of burnout. This study offers a model and tests it with a population of 339 randomly selected elementary and secondary teachers. Sources of burnout were found to include a combination of the individual's unmet expectations and job conditions of low participation in decision making, high levels of role conflict, a lack of freedom and autonomy, absence of social support networks, and, inconsistent reward and punishment structures. Burnout consequences included intention to leave teaching, absenteeism, lessened effort, and lower quality of personal life.

The profession of teaching has historically been viewed as a labor of love. Unfortunately, the realities of classroom life have made teaching a stressful occupation. Educators today are expected to cure society's ills, prepare *young adults for life in a complex, technological society and accomplish* both of these for salaries not commensurate with their education. As a consequence of the job conditions, many teachers are finding that their feelings about themselves, their students, and their profession are more negative than they were initially. These teachers are susceptible to developing chronic feelings of emotional exhaustion and fatigue, negative attitudes toward their students, and a loss of feelings of accomplishment on the job. Maslach and Jackson (1981) have described people experiencing these feelings as suffering from job burnout.

Job burnout can be thought of as a psychological process- a series of *attitudinal and emotional reactions - that an employee goes through as a result of job-related and personal experiences*. Although definitions of burnout vary, Maslach (1982) has argued that three core aspects of burnout are commonly included in these definitions: *emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and feelings of low accomplishment. Often the first sign of burnout is a feeling of being emotionally exhausted from one's work*. When asked to describe how they feel, emotionally exhausted teachers might say they feel drained or used-up, that they are at the end of their rope

and are physically fatigued. Waking up in the morning maybe accompanied by a feeling of dread at the thought of having to put in another day ON the job. For those who were once enthusiastic about their jobs and idealistic about what they could accomplish, feelings of emotional exhaustion may come somewhat unexpectedly. However their principal or co-workers may perceive the emotional exhaustion as a natural response to working too hard. Emotionally exhausted teachers may do what many individuals in their situation have done; they cope by depersonalizing their co-workers and students and by putting distance between themselves and others. They develop a "detached concern," become cynical, and feel calloused toward others in the organization. A third aspect of burnout is a feeling of low personal accomplishment. Many individuals began their careers with great expectations of making a contribution to their employer and to society. After a year or two on the job, they begin to realize they are not living up to these expectations.

There may be systemic reasons for the gap between a new employee's goals and the veteran's actual accomplishments including: 1) unrealistically high expectations due to a lack of realistic exposure to the job during training (Kramer, 1974); 2) constraints placed on the worker through the policies and procedures of the organization; 3) inadequate resources for performing one's job; 4) co-workers who are frequently uncooperative and occasionally rebellious; and, 5) lack of feedback about one's successes (Jackson & Schuler, 1983). These and other characteristics of almost any organization practically guarantee that employees will be frustrated in attempts to reach goals. Yet these employees may not recognize the role of the organization in producing their frustration. Instead, they may feel personally responsible and begin to think of themselves as failures. When combined with emotional exhaustion, feelings of low personal accomplishment may reduce motivation to a point where performance is, in fact, impaired which leads to more failure experiences. Social psychologists have referred to this phenomenon as learned helplessness (Miller & Norman, 1979).

CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

Recent studies have examined sources of burnout as defined by Maslach and Jackson (1981) in both teaching and human service organizations. These studies indicate that the primary sources of burnout are related to organizational conditions and personal characteristics of the helping professional (Jackson & Schuler, 1983; Schwab, 1983; Iwanicki, 1983). For teachers, organizational conditions include those factors that are unique to the school, system in which they work. Personal characteristics are those that are unique to each individual in the organization.

Organizational conditions. In examining organizational factors that contribute to job stress, numerous studies have identified *role conflict* and *role ambiguity* as important contributors (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970; Schuler, Aldag & Brief, 1979). Role conflict is the simultaneous occurrence of two or more sets of inconsistent, expected role behaviors. Role ambiguity is the lack of clear, consistent information regarding the rights, duties, and responsibilities of the job and how these duties/responsibilities; can best be performed (Rizzo et al.). In their study of role stress in educational organizations, Schwab and Iwanicki (1982a) found that, where high levels of role conflict and role ambiguity were present, teachers experienced high levels of emotional exhaustion and fatigue as well as negative attitudes toward students. For these two aspects of burnout, role conflict accounted for the largest portion of explained variance. In regard to feelings of personal accomplishment, role ambiguity had a significant effect whereas role conflict did not. Crane and Iwanicki (1983) reported similar results in a replication of the Schwab and Iwanicki study with a population of special education teachers.

Several researchers (e.g., Maslach & Pines, 1977; Pines, Aronson Kafry, 1981) have noted that the lack of control or autonomy in one's job also contributes to burnout. Control involves the employee's perception of his influence on decisionmaking regarding such issues as work scheduling and the development of policies that directly affect the work environment.

Research by Jackson (1983) suggests that increasing employee's participation in the decision-making process is an effective way to prevent job-related stress, or, at least, to minimize its effect. This occurs in part because participation enhances the control employees have over their work environment

The absence of a support group can also lead to job burnout (Pines et al.). An effective support group includes people who provide emotional comfort, confront the individual in human ways when the individual's behaviors are inappropriate, provide technical support in work-related areas, present technical challenges that encourage individual growth, serve as active listeners, and share similar values, beliefs, and perceptions of reality (Pines et al.). These support networks can emanate from the administration of the organization, from one's colleagues, or from others outside the job environment. In essence, support groups can assist employees in two major ways - providing task-relevant information and by providing unconditional positive acceptance (House, 1981). When serving in the former capacity, such groups are referred to as task support groups; when serving in the latter, they are referred to as social support groups. Task support groups are beneficial since they can help reduce or minimize some of the organizational conditions causing burnout, e.g., role conflict, Social support

groups are beneficial since they can minimize the effects of burnout on individuals (House).

Reward and punishment structures in organizations have also been linked to burnout, largely through their impact on personal accomplishment and depersonalization. For many employees, receipt of reward and/or punishment is their only way of knowing how well they are doing and what others think of their work. However, employees may not even get this type of information and feedback. This occurs because supervisors, the main source of organizational rewards and punishments for many employees, fail to provide rewards and punishments on a contingency basis, i.e., employee performance. Only through contingency rewards can employees know how well they are doing and how much their work is appreciated. And only by getting contingency punishment can employees know what they are doing wrong and thus how they might improve in order to get contingent rewards (Podsakoff, Todor, Grover & Huber, 1984).

Background and Personal Characteristics. A second set of contributors to burnout can be classified as personal or background variables. Background variables include such factors as sex, age, grade level taught, and type of client served. Personal qualities include both the individual expectations about what their job would be like and the personality characteristics of the individual.

Age of the teacher has been linked to burnout. Younger teachers and younger helping professionals tend to experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion and fatigue (Anderson & Iwanicki 1984; Crane & Iwanicki, 1983; McIntyre, 1981; Schwab & Iwanicki, 1982b). Schwab and Iwanicki also found sex and grade level taught related to feelings of burnout. Male teachers were found to have more negative attitudes toward students than females. High school and middle school teachers had more negative attitudes toward students and less frequent feelings of accomplishment in teaching than did elementary teachers. While these background variables have been found to be significantly related to burnout, others such as marital status, type of community taught in (urban, rural, suburban), level of education, and a number of years of teaching experience were not significantly related to burnout.

One of the personal qualities that has been hypothesized to affect a person's level of burnout is the expectations one has for what can be accomplished on the job. Most human service professionals, including teachers, enter their profession with a commitment to people and an expectation that their work will lead to growth and change for those they serve. Many expect that in turn this will change and improve society. When the realities of what one person can accomplish are realized, some teachers perceive they have failed and blame themselves. Expectations can also involve career goals.

Teachers who establish unrealistic or lofty career goals may develop a sense of failure when they find they cannot achieve such goals. These feelings of inadequacy characterize a person with low feelings of personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

CONSEQUENCES OF JOB BURNOUT

Consequences of job burnout affect both the organization and employee. (Maslach & Jackson; Jackson & Maslach, 1982; Schwab, 1983). One of the first reactions of those experiencing burnout is withdrawal. Withdrawal reactions include spending as little time on the job as possible, taking longer breaks, distancing one's self as much as possible from the job. Withdrawal can be physical, by not being present, or psychological where the teacher is physically present but mentally somewhere else. As Jackson and Maslach found, a desire to withdraw relates not only to on-the-job behaviors but also to reactions with family and friends.

Just as burnout leads to behaviors that have a negative impact on the quality of one's work life, it leads to behaviors that cause a deterioration of the quality of one's home [life](#). In a study of police families, burnout was assessed in 142 married, male police officers (Jackson & Maslach). Their wives were then asked, independently, to describe how these officers behaved at home when they were interacting with their families. Emotionally exhausted officers were described by their wives as coming home tense, anxious, upset and angry, and as complaining about work problems. These officers were also more withdrawn while at home, preferred to be left alone rather than share time with the family. The wives' reports also revealed that officers who had developed negative attitudes toward the people they dealt with (depersonalization) also had fewer close friends. As Jackson and Maslach pointed out, the negative effects of burnout on one's family life may be especially detrimental because, over time, family members are likely to find it increasingly difficult to remain supportive of the afflicted parent/spouse.

Finally,, burnout may eventually lead to health-related problems . In the study of police families, burnout victims were more likely to suffer from insomnia and to use medications of various kinds. The officers reported using alcohol as a way of coping with their burnout. A study of female nurses revealed a similar link between burnout and alcohol use (Jackson & Maslach).

MODEL OF JOB BURNOUT.

Based upon the existing research on job burnout and related research from studies in organizational behavior, a model of teacher burnout is offered here. The present study was designed to test this model. The model

does not include however the variable of personality as it is a difficult one to assess in large-scale studies.

Whereas the existing empirical studies cited earlier examined isolated organizational and personal variables in relation to burnout, none has looked at these variables in combination to determine which are the best predictors of burnout. One goal of the present study was to examine the combined usefulness of these variables for understanding the causes of burnout. Additionally, this study examines the consequences of teacher burnout that have not been reported in the literature to date.

The specific model that this study tested is illustrated in Figure A.

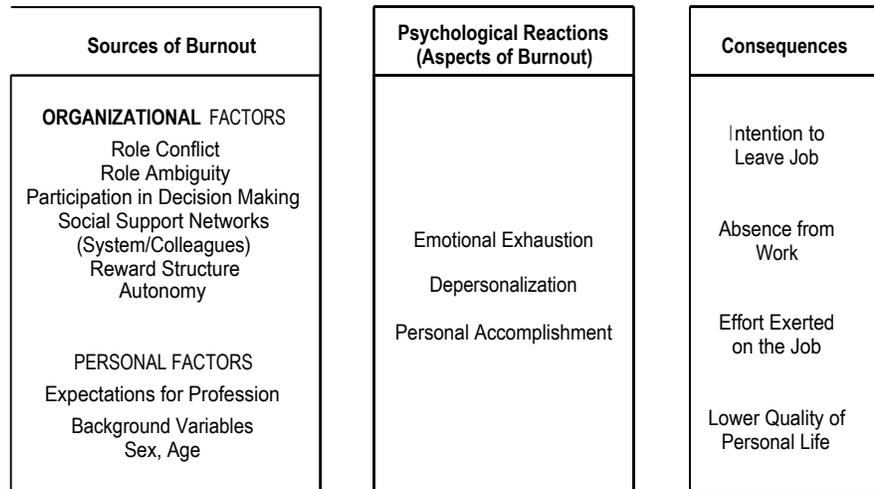


Figure 1. Model of teacher burnout used in this study to determine predictors of burnout.

Specifically, this study examined the following research questions:

- 1) What are the most powerful organizational and personal predictors of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low personal accomplishments?
- 2) What are the most important consequences of each of the three components of burnout for the organization and the individual?

METHODOLOGY

The sample used in this study was composed of 339 teachers who were members of the National Education Association/New Hampshire. In November of 1982, 700 randomly selected teachers were asked to complete a 16-page questionnaire. Of those 700 teachers, 339 volunteers returned usable surveys representing a 48% return rate.

INSTRUMENTATION

The first six sections of the questionnaire were designed to assess the potential causes of job burnout. Each of these sections used a seven-point Likert-type scale that asked respondents to rate the statements as 1 ("not at all true of my job") through 7 ("extremely true of my job"). These sections assessed the factors to be described. Reliability estimates for all indices were computed using Cronbach's coefficient alpha.

Participation in Decision Making. This section was comprised of eight items ($\alpha=0.95$) that examined how much teacher participation the principal allowed in the decision-making processes of the school. Vroom's (1959) four-item index of perceived influence and House and Mitchell's (1974) four-item index of participation were reworded to specify the principal teacher relationship. Sample items are: "The principal tries to get teachers involved in discussing the problems they face on the job"; and, "The principal seriously considers the suggestions and ideas she/he receives from me and my colleagues."

Role Conflict and Ambiguity. Consisting of 14 items, this section measured degrees of role conflict and role ambiguity. The scale used was developed by Rizzo et al. (1970). Studies by Schwab, Iwanicki, and Pierson (1983) and Schuler et al. (1979) have validated this instrument with teachers and other professionals. The internal reliabilities for this sample were 0.87 for Role Conflict and 0.87 for Role Ambiguity.

Freedom and Autonomy. Autonomy was assessed using six items ($\alpha=0.79$) from Moos and Insel's (1974) *Work Environment Scale*, reworded slightly to fit an education context. A sample item is: "I am allowed a great deal of freedom to do as I like in the classroom."

Social Support. Measures of social support from colleagues and social support from one's principal were developed by adapting Moos and Insel's (1974) peer cohesion and staff support subscales, respectively, to fit the school context. Internal reliabilities were 0.87 for Colleague's Support (12 items) and 0.94 for Principal's' Support (six items).

Rewards and Punishments. Supervisor's rewarding and punishing behaviors were assessed using four indices developed by Podsakoff et al (1984). The internal reliabilities and examples of each supervisor behavior are as follows: Contingent rewards ($\alpha=0.96$), "My supervisor personally compliments teachers when they do outstanding work"; Non-contingent rewards ($\alpha=0.69$), "My supervisor is just as likely to praise me if I do poorly as if I do well"; Contingent punishment ($\alpha=0.83$), "My-supervisor reprimands me if my work is below standard."; and, Non-contingent punishment ($\alpha=0.80$), "My supervisor is often displeased with my work for no apparent reason"

Expectations. Items in this section were designed to determine the discrepancy between an individual's early career perceptions of the teaching profession and current perceptions of what teaching actually is like. Seven statements were designed to test the discrepancy for each of the potential sources of burnout - participation in decision making, role conflict, role ambiguity, freedom and autonomy, social support from colleagues, social support from principal, and the administration and punishments. These questions were of the general form, "Overall how does [the amount of participation you have in the decision processes of your school] compare to what you *believed* would be true when *you began your teaching career?*" Responses were on a five-point, anchored scale where the midpoint of the scale indicated that the teacher's "initial beliefs matched the actual situation today." Values of 1 and 2 were used to indicate that the current situation is better than anticipated and values of 4 and 5 were used to indicate that the current situation is worse than anticipated. Responses to these items were summed to form an overall index expectation discrepancy. The internal reliability of this scale for this sample was 0.59.

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). The seventh section was designed to assess the individual's levels of burnout as measured by the *Maslach Burnout Inventory* (Maslach & Jackson, 1981), a valid and reliable instrument that measures a person's perceived levels of emotional exhaustion and fatigue, negative attitudes toward students, and feelings of personal accomplishment on the job (Maslach & Jackson; Iwanicki & Schwab, 1981). The original *MBI* assesses two dimensions for each of the three subscales, one for frequency of feelings and one for intensity of feelings. Since the two dimensions are highly correlated when used with teachers (Iwanicki & Schwab), it was decided to use only the frequency scale for this study. The frequency of feelings were measured on a seven-point, anchored Likert-type scale. A rating of zero indicated the person perceived no such feelings during the last year while a 6 indicated the respondent experienced the feelings daily. Internal reliabilities for the burnout subscales scales using this sample were 0.87 for Emotional Exhaustion, 0.78 for Personal Accomplishment and 0.73 for Depersonalization.

Consequences of Job Burnout. This section was designed to assess several hypothesized reactions to burnout. Fourteen statements were written to assess behaviors both on and off the job. Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they had changed since beginning teaching, using a five-point scale ranging from -2 to +2; a negative 2 (-2) represented a decrease or negative change in behavior. Factor analyses of the 14 items yielded three indices: Job-related Effort (5

Items; $\alpha = 0.85$) Quality of Personal life (3 items; $\alpha = 0.72$); and, Self reported Absence (2 items, $\alpha = 0.83$).

Demographic Data. The final section of the questionnaire obtained information on background and demographic variables, including sex and age of the respondent, which were used as control variables in this study. Also included in the demographic section was a question designed to determine the individual's intention to leave the teaching profession: "How likely is it that you will still be working as a teacher next year?" Responses were made using an anchored scale ranging from 1, "definitely will be teaching," through 7, "definitely will not be teaching." Responses to this question were used as an index of turnover intention.

Data Analysis. Stepwise multiple regression analyses were used to examine the relationships among the three burnout measures and the predictor variables of role conflict, role ambiguity, contingent rewards, contingent punishment, non-contingent rewards, non-contingent punishment, freedom and autonomy, participation in decision making, social support from the principal, social support from colleagues, and discrepancy between the job and one's personal expectations. Following the procedure used by Schwab and Iwanicki (1982a), three separate regression analyses were conducted, one for each subscale of the MBI. In conducting the analyses, the background variables of sex and age were controlled for by forcing their entry in the analyses at the first step. The remaining predictor variables were then allowed to enter the equation in a stepwise fashion. The design of the study does not permit conclusions about the causal relationships underlying empirical associations among variables; the labels "predictor" and "consequence" are used to clarify the hypothesized model. Stepwise multiple regression was also used to analyze the consequences of job burnout. Scores on the emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment scales were used to predict turnover intention, effort put into the job, quality of personal life, and absences from work.

RESULTS

Means, standard deviations and correlation coefficients for all variables in the study are presented in Table 1. The results presented in Table 2 support the model proposed for the factors contributing to burnout and the resulting consequences of burnout. In general, the organizational and personal factors of Role Conflict, Role Ambiguity, Colleague Social Support, Contingent Punishment, Participation in Decision Making, Autonomy, and the Individual's Expectations for the Job were significantly related to burnout aspects. The only variables not found to have a significant relationship with the burnout aspects were principal social support, contingent rewards, non-contingent punishment and non-contingent rewards.

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations for Variables in
Sources of Job Burnout Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis
(N=339)

Variables	Mean	SD	EE	PA	DEP	PDM	RC	RA	AUT	CSS	SSS	CR	CP	EXPECT	NCR	NCP
EE	22.19	10.53														
PA	38.06	6.30	-.34													
DEP	6.73	5.21	.46	-.39												
PDM	33.38	13.44	-.33	.20	-.21											
RC	27.52	11.39	.48	-.11	.25	-.41										
RA	28.12	8.52	-.40	.19	.24	.49	-.58									
AUT	32.69	6.56	-.31	.29	-.19	.45	-.43	.44								
CSS	57.42	13.22	-.37	.22	-.23	.32	-.35	.27	.26							
SSS	28.51	9.72	-.39	.22	-.23	.80	-.51	.55	.45	.41						
CR	40.83	16.76	-.29	.12	-.11	.59	-.37	.43	.32	.33	.61					
CID	21.71	6.68	.14	-.02	.16	-.01	.15	.00	-.15	.04	-.01	.19				
EXPECT	21.29	4.42	.45	-.19	.20	-.50	.56	.49	.48	.48	-.61	-.54	.05			
NCR	5.36	2.90	.06	-.07	.10	-.03	.16	-.13	-.06	-.05	-.13	-.07	-.19	.03		
NCP	7.89	1.98	.33	-.15	.22	-.41	.55	-.47	-.46	-.28	-.48	-.47	.27	.42	.17	

EE = Emotional Exhaustion; PA = Personal Accomplishment; DEP = Depersonalization; PDM = Participates in Decision Making; RC = Role Conflict; RA = Role Ambiguity; AUT = Autonomy; CSS = Colleague Social Support; SSS = Systemic Social Support; CR = Contingent Response; CP = Contingent Punishment; EXPECT = Expectation; NCR = Non-Contingent Reward; NCP = Non-Contingent Punishment.

TABLE 2
 Stepwise Multiple Regression Analyses for the Relationship Among
 Significant Organizational/Personal Variables and Three Aspects of
 Burnout When Controlling for Age and Sex
 (N= 339)

Step	Variable Entered	R	R ²	Increase R ²	Beta	For R ² F**
EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION						
1	Sex and Age	.120	.014	.014		N.S. ^o
2	Role Conflict	.493	.243	.229	.48	35.17
3	Expectations	.537	.288	.059'	.26	33.14
4	Colleague Social Support	.553	.306	.018	-.16	28.79
5 -	Contingent Punishment	.562	.315	.009	.10'	24.95
	Role Ambiguity	<u>.570</u>	<u>.325</u>	<u>.010</u>	<u>-.13</u>	<u>22.27</u>
DEPERSONALIZATION						
1	Sex and Age	.285	.081	.081		14.56
2	Role Conflict	.352	.124	.043'	.21	15.50
3	Participation in Decision Making	.374	.140	.016	-.14	13.26
4	Contingent' Punishment	.393	.155	.015	.12	11.92
	Colleague Social Support	<u>.407</u>	<u>.166</u>	<u>.011</u>	<u>-.12</u>	<u>10.76</u>
PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT						
1	Sex and Age	.192'	.037	.037		6.33
2	Autonomy	.349	.122	.045	.29	15.14
3	Colleague Social Support	<u>.366'</u>	<u>.134</u>	<u>.012</u>	<u>.12</u>	<u>12.62</u>

^oThe background variables of sex and age were forced into the Stepwise Analysis at Step One. The remaining variables were allowed to enter in a stepwise fashion.

'N,S = Non Significant

**p .01

Results presented in Table 2 support previous findings that various contributors to burnout have differing effects upon the aspects of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Schwab & Iwanicki, 1982a). For example, after controlling for sex and age, Role Conflict explained the largest percentage of variance in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (24 and 12% respectively) while Autonomy does so in personal accomplishment (12%). Five of the hypothesized predictors accounted for significant variance in emotional ex-

haustion, four in depersonalization and only two in personal accomplishment. The only predictor significantly related to all aspects was Colleague Social Support. As indicated by the beta weights, the relationships between the significant organizational conditions and the aspects of burnout were in the directions hypothesized and had been reported in previous research (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Schwab & Iwanicki, 1982a).

Although the model hypothesized that the organizational conditions would be significantly related to the three aspects of burnout, varying predictions about the amounts of variance that would be explained in each aspect by each condition were not set out. Nevertheless, the results did show substantial differences in the variance explained for each aspect of burnout. Together the five significant organizational conditions explained almost 33% of the variance in emotional exhaustion while only 17% and 13% of the variance in depersonalization and (low) personal accomplishment were explained. This pattern of results, i.e., where the most explained variance is in emotional exhaustion and the least is in personal accomplishment is consistent with previous studies of burnout (Anderson & Iwanicki, 1984; Crane & Iwanicki, 1983; Kottkamp & Mansfield, 1983; Pierson & Archambault, 1983; Schwab & Iwanicki).

The results (see Table 3) did support the hypothesized effects of burnout for both the quality of service delivery by the organization and the quality of the affected individual's life outside teaching. As shown in Table 3, individu-

TABLE 3
Stepwise Multiple Regression Analyses for the
Relationships Among Turnover Intention, Effort, Personal
Life, Absence and Three Aspects of Burnout

Step	Variable	R	R ²	Increase R ²	Beta	F** For R ²
Turnover Intention						
1	Emotional Exhaustion	.236	.056	.056	.29	19.53
Effort on the Job						
1	Depersonalization	.291	.085	.085	-.36	30.70
2	Personal Accomplishment	.345	.119	.034	.21	22.38
Lowered Quality of Personal Life						
1	Emotional Exhaustion	.300	.090	.090	.44	32.85
2	Personal Accomplishment	.329	.108	.018	-.24	20.10
3	Depersonalization	.352	.124	.016	.16	15.56
Absence						
1	Emotional Exhaustion	.161	.026	.026	.11	8.79

**p<.01

als suffering from burnout were more likely to: expect to leave teaching; exert less effort teaching than they once did; have difficulty, relaxing, controlling their temper and relating to family members; and, be absent.

The consequences of burnout also varied with the aspect of burnout experienced by the teacher. People experiencing higher levels of emotional exhaustion were more likely to leave teaching, be absent from work and have their home and personal life adversely affected. Those experiencing depersonalization tended to exert less effort and suffered problems with their home life. Finally, those experiencing low feelings of personal accomplishment exerted less effort, and had more home problems. In summary, not only does the quality of work performance appear to decline but so does the quality of life beyond teaching.

DISCUSSION

Although these summary statements are critical for the teaching profession, they must be tempered by the fact that they are based on cross-sectional data rather than longitudinal data. However, whereas the variance explained in each of the consequences by the burnout aspects might be regarded as modest (i.e., 6% in turnover intention, 12% in effort, 12% in non-work and 3% in absence), it may be argued that reduction of turnover and absenteeism by as little as 6% and 3% respectively would represent significant gains for the teaching profession. And few would argue that even small percentage gains in increased effort would be of value to the education system.

The results of this study have several significant implications. First, these results, along with results from several other studies, provide additional support for existence of the burnout phenomenon among educators. The means for each aspect of burnout, shown in Table 1, reveal that on the average the teachers in this study experienced feelings of emotional exhaustion almost every week; they became calloused and detached from their students several times a year. Fortunately, feelings of personal accomplishment are experienced weekly and probably serve to keep most teachers somewhat motivated. Because the findings are based on only 48% of the original random sample of teachers, the results cannot confidently be generalized to the larger population. However, they do suggest that burnout is not an infrequent problem.

The results also point to several likely causes of burnout, including role conflict and ambiguity, powerlessness, low autonomy, low participation in decision making, little colleague social support, high professional expectations and contingent punishment by the administrator.

Possible strategies to reduce burnout and its consequences may include:

- 1) Establishing of clear lines of authority and responsibility to help reduce ambiguity and conflict;
- 2) Soliciting of teacher input for decision making in areas that affect classroom life, as many organizations are now doing in an attempt to gain greater employee involvement and commitment and to reduce feelings of powerlessness;
- 3) Facilitating of the development of social support among teachers by providing adequate time and location interaction, i.e., release time for teachers with a particular expertise to work directly in the classroom with those who would benefit from such expertise;
- 4) Involving of staff and teachers in the selection process so as to decrease feelings of powerlessness and increase feelings of personal responsibility for their profession;
- 5) Involving of teachers in the evaluation process by allowing them a voice in goal setting and self-evaluation, thereby reducing the chance of conflicting expectations and ambiguity;
- 6) Encouraging of the development of mentor relationships between older, master teachers and new faculty so that issues of unrealistic expectations, reality of classroom life and technical questions about teaching could be shared.

Although implementing all these strategies would require a great deal of time and effort, it is likely that only a subset of them would be appropriate and/or necessary in any single situation. Consequently, it is imperative that an organizational diagnosis be accomplished implementing any of these strategies. This process is often overlooked in school systems whereas in the business world it is common practice.

Clearly, further study of teacher burnout is necessary. A first concern is that other predictors of burnout need examination. While the results of this study largely supported the model, this support was confined largely to the emotional exhaustion aspect of burnout. However, it appears as if other variables do exist that may be better predictors of burnout, especially depersonalization and personal accomplishment.

Other predictors that have not been included in this model and yet warrant examination are conditions that are unique to the teaching profession. Iwanicki (1983) referred to these as role-related factors. These conditions include factors that are unique to life in the classroom i.e., student discipline, dealing with emotional problems of students, meeting the needs of special education students, and stress related to uncooperative parents. Though these factors were not addressed in the model, studies by Alexander, Adams and Martray (1983), Beasley, Myette and Serna (1983) and Cichon and Koff (1978) have indicated a potential effect upon the various aspects of burnout.

A second research question that future investigations must address concerns the unit of analysis. Hubert, Gable and Iwanicki (1983) raised the issue of the appropriateness of data obtained from individual teachers and translating those findings to the organizational level without aggregating the data at the school level. These researchers contended that in order to make assumptions about organizational practices, studies need to aggregate data at the school level. Otherwise the results reported are reflective of individual teacher perceptions. To determine if the findings in this study would hold true when examined at the school level and to determine if other predictors would have a significant effect on aspects of burnout, it is recommended that future studies do the following

- 1) Examine the combined effects of significant organizational factors identified in this study with role-related factors that are hypothesized to contribute to burnout;
- 2) Replicate this study using the school district as the unit of analysis to determine if the predictor variables hold true at the organizational level.

Though these research questions need to be addressed to provide a more complete understanding of the burnout phenomenon, it is imperative the problem of burnout be given serious consideration. Based on findings to date, it appears that, if the national desire for higher quality education is to become a reality, there must emerge, a national concern for and commitment to a higher quality of the educational environment of the teachers. While higher salaries may attract higher quality individuals into teaching, some claim these salaries may not be as successful in retaining those individuals or keeping them motivated to do an excellent job. As much attention must be given to the environment as to incentives if the desire for higher quality education is to become a reality.

REFERENCES

- Alexander, L., Adams, R.D., & Martray, C.R. (1983, April). *Personal and professional stressors associated with the teacher burnout phenomenon*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Montreal, Canada.
- Anderson, M.B., & Iwanicki, E.F. (1984). Teacher motivation and its relationship to burnout. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 20(2), 94-109.
- Beasley, C.R., Myette, B.M., & Serna, B. (1983, April). *On-the-job stress and burnout: Contributing factors and environmental alternatives in educational settings*. A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Montreal, Canada.
- Cichon, P. & Koff, R. (1978, March). *The teaching events stress inventory*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- Crane, S., & Iwanicki, E.F. (1983, April). *The effect of role conflict and role ambiguity on perceived levels of burnout among special education teachers*. A paper presented at the American Educational Research Association. Montreal, Canada.

- House, J.S. (1981). *Work stress and social support*. Addison Wesley.
- House, R.J., & Mitchell, T.R. (1974). Path-goal theory of leadership. *Journal of Contemporary Business*, 3, 81-97.
- Hubert, J.A., Gable, R.K., & Iwanicki, E.F. (1983, October). *The unit of analysis in the study of teacher stress to school variables*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Northeastern Educational Research Association, Ellenville, NY.
- Iwanicki, E.F. (1983). Toward understanding and alleviating teacher burnout. *Theory Into Practice*, 22(1), 27-32.
- Iwanicki, E.F., & Schwab, R.L. (1981). Across-validation of the *Maslach Burnout Inventory*. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 41, 1167-1174.
- Jackson, S.E. (1983). Participation in decision making as a strategy for reducing job-related strain. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 68, 3-19.
- Jackson, S. E., & Maslach, C. (1982). After-effects of job related stress: Families as victims. *Journal of Occupational Behavior*, 3, 63-77.
- Jackson, S.E., & Schuler, R.S. (1983). Preventing employee burnout. *Personnel*, March/April, 58-68.
- Kottkamp, R. E. & Mansfield, J.R. (1983, April). *Role conflict, role ambiguity, powerlessness and burnout among secondary school department heads*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Montreal, Canada.
- Kramer, M. (1974). *Reality shock: Why nurses leave nursing*. St. Louis: Mosby.
- Maslach, C. (1982). Understanding burnout: Definitional issues in analyzing a complex phenomenon. In W.S. Paine (Ed.) *Job Stress and burnout*. (pp. 29-40). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1981). *The Maslach Burnout Inventory*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.
- Maslach, C., & Pines, A. (1977). The burnout syndrome in the daycare setting. *Child Care Quarterly*, 62 (Summer), 100-113.
- McIntyre, T.F. (1981). An investigation of the relationships among burnout, locus of control, and selected personal/professional factors in special education teachers. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 42/09, 3949A. (Order No. DA 8205164).
- Miller, I.W., III, & Norman, W.H. (1979). Learned helplessness in humans: A review and attribution theory model. *Psychological Bulletin*, 86, 93-118.
- Moos, R. H. & Insel, P.M. (1974). *Work Environment Scale, Form R*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.
- Pierson, D.A., & Archambault, F.X. (1983, April). *Assessing burnout among supportive service and teacher groups: Perceptions of the intensity of burnout among support service and teacher groups as related to need deficiencies, role stress, and selected variables and perceptions*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada.
- Pines, A., Aronson, E., & Kafry, D. (1981). *Burnout: From tedium to personal growth*. New York: Free Press.
- Podsakoff, P.M., Todor, W.D., Grover, R.A., & Huber, V.L. (1984). Situational moderators of leader reward and punishment behaviors: Fact or fiction? *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 34, 21-63.
- Rizzo, J. R., House, R.J., & Lirtzman, S. 1. (1970). Role conflict and ambiguity in complex organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 15, 150-163.
- Schwab, R. L. (1983). Teacher burnout: Moving beyond psychobabble. *Theory Into Practice*, 22(1), 21-27.
- Schwab, R.L., & Iwanicki, E.F. (1982a). Perceived role conflict, role ambiguity and teacher burnout. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 18, 60-74.
- Schwab, R.L., & Iwanicki, E. F. (1982b). Who are our burned out teachers? *Educational Research Quarterly*, 7(2), 5-17.

- Schwab, R.L., & Iwanicki, E.F., & Pierson, D.A. (1983). Assessing role conflict and role ambiguity: A cross validation study. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 43, 587-593.
- Schuler, R. Aldag, P., & Brief, J. (1979). Role conflict and role ambiguity. A scale analysis. *Organizational and Human Performance*, 20, 268-291.
- Vroom, V.H. (1959). Some personality determinants of the effect of *participation*. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 59, 322-327.

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH QUARTERLY

Is

A refereed journal which brings research to both the **practitioner** and the **researcher** in a practical and timely manner.

It covers a broad selection of major topics such as

- Curriculum
- Teaching
- Special Education
- Measurement
- Multicultural/international
- Computer Literacy

Subscription Rates - Four Issues per Year

Individuals:	\$20.50
Institutions:	\$23.00
Outside U.S.:	\$36.50

Send subscription and special issue orders to:

Educational Research Quarterly
School of Education WPH 703D
University Park, M00031
University of Southern California
Los Angeles, California 90089-0031