A CAUSAL-COMPARATIVE STUDY OF BURNOUT AMONG RURAL ELEMENTARY,

MIDDLE, AND HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

by

Keisha Nichole Hamby

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

There is a prevalent shortage of school teachers in the United States. Teacher burnout is a chronic issue that plagues school districts. Burnout is one of the primary causes of teachers leaving the profession altogether. The purpose of this study was to determine differences of burnout among elementary, middle, and high school teachers in a rural area. A gap in literature was addressed by comparing the burnout levels of teachers in a rural school district across all grade levels. The chosen research design for this study was a causal-comparative design. The independent variable was teachers' grade across three levels (elementary, middle, and high school) in a rural area. The dependent variables for the research questions were emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey (MBI-ES) was used to measure the dependent variables of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment of educators and those who work in school settings. The survey was given to 126 participants who were selected from a convenience sample of rural educators in a Southeast Tennessee school district. One-way ANOVAs with Bonferroni corrections were used to determine differences of burnout among the three groups of educators. Results revealed no significant differences in burnout, measured as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, present among rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers.

Keywords: burnout, depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, Maslach burnout inventory educator survey, personal accomplishment, rural education

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my former, current, and future students. Seeing the spark in your eyes as you learn something new keeps my flame burning. Whether it be learning how to read, completing a challenging mathematics task, understanding our historical implications, or experimenting during science, I will always stand by you. Thank you for giving my life a purpose. I present this work with you in my heart. I hope to be an example for you of how to let your light shine!

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First, I want to thank the Lord for providing me the ability to complete the daunting task of a dissertation. Many prayers were sent up from myself and many others. All glory be to God for all of my accomplishments that may arise in the future and for all the good I have experienced in my life so far.

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Thank you to my family. This paper was written in many different locations, including your living rooms, kitchen tables, and front porches. You all tried to help me in any way that you could. I am forever grateful for your love and support. Boys, I know there were many times when I had to choose writing over spending time with you. Thankfully, that time will be lost no more. Bristol and Mylee, I hope to be an example for you of what you can accomplish if you put your mind to it. Hard work always pays off.

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Analysis of Variances (ANOVA)

Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)

Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey (MBI-ES)

Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Teacher burnout is a prevalent research topic for stakeholders in schools across the United States. The following sections of Chapter One detail relevant historical, theoretical, and societal backgrounds in teacher burnout. The purpose and problem of this causal-comparative research study are provided, along with significance of the study and the research questions.

Background

There is a prevalent shortage of school teachers in the United States (Riggs, 2013; Rumschlag, 2017; Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). Within the first five years of teaching, 50% of educators move to another school district or leave the education professional altogether (Alliance for Excellence Education, 2014a). Teacher burnout is a chronic issue that plagues school districts. Freudenberger (1974) coined the term "burnout," defining it as "becoming exhausted by making excessive demands on energy, strength, or resources" (p. 159). Occupational burnout is defined as a syndrome of the three feelings of (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) depersonalization, and (c) low personal accomplishment (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996).

Burnout is the main cause of teachers leaving the profession altogether (Rumschlag, 2017). Burnout has historically been linked to the teaching profession. Teacher shortages are not a new issue. Shortages began in the mid-1980s due to increasing student enrollments and decreasing numbers of college graduates becoming teachers (Ingersoll, 1997). The teacher turnover rate was 15% in the 1980s, 13.2% in the early 1990s, and 14.3% in the mid-1990s (Ingersoll, 2001). In 2001, teachers were one of the largest professional groups, but teachers had the highest turnover rates across occupations (Ingersoll, 2001). From June 2015 to November

2015, 300 newspaper articles appeared regarding teacher shortages (Sutcher et al., 2016).

Teacher demand has begun to increase since the Great Recession, yet attrition is high and teacher

preparatory program enrollments have fallen 35% nationwide in the last five years (Sutcher et

al., 2016). In 2014-2015, 56% of school districts reported hiring as "a big challenge" (Sutcher et

al., 2016, p. 10). Educator positions remain vacant, and there has been a decline in the number

of college students who graduate from teacher preparatory programs (Riggs, 2013).

Teacher burnout affects the education system, not just on a local level, but on a larger

scale. The United States spends up to $2.2 billion on teacher turnover yearly (Alliance for

Excellence Education, 2014b; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future

[NCTAF], 2007; Phillips, 2015). Those excess funds are pulled away from other issues in the

education system, such as building budgets and curriculum resources. There is also evidence

that teacher burnout affects students' achievement and learning. Teachers' stress levels can

cause hostility and anger towards students, leading to a conflicting relationship among the

teacher and students (Yoon, 2002). A teacher who is experiencing burnout will show less

empathy for and be more detached from students, resulting in negative effects on achievement

outcomes (Hamre & Pianta, 2004). To compound the problem of teacher burnout, the school

system's geographical location brings about its own unique problems, especially among rural

schools. Rural school districts face their own specific problems with teacher retention.

In 2011-2012, 68% of rural schools reported having at least one unfilled teacher vacancy

(Aragon, 2016). Although rural and urban schools often have much in common, the bulk of the

current research literature is targeted to understand urban education (Gallo & Beckman, 2016).

Rural education has specific characteristics that demand attention in educational research (Gallo

& Beckman, 2016). Most small rural schools have a limited number of instructional staff. When

teacher turnover does occur, recruitment is very difficult due to the geographic location of rural schools. Thirty-nine percent of rural schools struggle to fill positions (Latterman & Steffes, 2017). In 2013-2014, the attrition rate for rural teachers was 8.4%, 7.3% for suburban teachers, and 7.9% for urban teachers (Latterman & Steffes, 2017).

Rural schools face persistent staffing challenges. Working conditions and neighborhood characteristics influence teachers' decisions about where to teach (Aragon, 2016). Teachers may not be inclined to work in a district with less housing and limited commerce options (Barton, 2012). If the rural schools are very remote, transportation costs may take resources from other budget items, such as supplies and teacher salaries (Barton, 2012). Rural school districts attract teachers without advanced academic degrees (Barton, 2012). National education policies often do not often fit with the needs of rural school districts (Eppley, 2009). For example, with the ESEA legislation of 1965, the idea of rural education ideas is ignored in standardized assessments (Eppley, 2009). The GOALS legislation of 1994 implied that the role of the teacher is to prepare students to compete economically. In rural education, most students already fall behind economically (Eppley, 2009). This leads to frustrations for teachers who feel their personal professional needs and concerns are not met by national standards provided for teaching. These issues may lead to elevated levels of burnout among the teachers who do teach in a rural area.

Another issue that may lead to elevated levels of burnout among the teachers is the grade level they teach. The role of a teacher sometimes differs when in a specific grade level or school setting. Elementary school, middle, and high school teachers face different stressors that may impact burnout. According to Stauffer and Mason (2013), elementary school teachers identified five categories of stressors: (a) political and educational structures, (b) instructional factors, (c)

student factors, (d) parent and family factors, and (e) school climate. Themes of political and educational structures were local administration and lack of support and resources. Themes of instructional factors were workload and curriculum changes and accountability. Student factors included student achievement and student behavior. Examples of parent and family factors included lack of parent support and home environment. Negativity among colleagues and personnel matters influenced school climate as a stressor (Stauffer & Mason, 2013). This provides an overview of stressors that influence elementary school teachers. These stressors may lead to burnout in teachers at the elementary level.

In most educational research, middle school (sixth grade through eighth grade) and high school (ninth grade through twelfth grade) teachers are categorized together as secondary educators. Mahan et al. (2010) described work stressors as events that happen over an extended period of time. Lack of support from supervisors, coworkers, and parents emerged as a frequent chronic work stressor. A demanding workload and student misbehavior were also identified as work stressors for secondary teachers. Constant exposure to these work stressors may have consequences, such as anxiety and depression for teachers (Mahan et al., 2010). All of these stressors, along with depression and anxiety, may lead to teacher burnout. Burnout was first identified by Freudenberger (1974), and occupational teacher burnout was first recognized and researched by Maslach beginning in 1976.

Freudenberger (1974) began exploring the topic of burnout after experiencing the feeling while working in a clinic. He coined the term "burnout," defining it as "becoming exhausted by making excessive demands on energy, strength, or resources" (Freudenberger, 1974, p. 159). He discussed how the cognitive, judgmental, and emotional factors are intruded once the process of burnout has begun (Freudenberger, 1974). To further the research of occupational burnout,

Maslach (1976) divided the concept of burnout into three dimensions: (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) depersonalization, and (c) personal accomplishment. Occupational burnout is defined as a syndrome of the three feelings of (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) depersonalization, and (c) low personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 1996).

According to Maslach et al. (1996), emotional exhaustion is the most thoroughly analyzed of the three dimensions of burnout. The exhaustion dimension of burnout relates to the feelings of being emotionally overworked and exhausted by one's work (Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Emotional exhaustion is the main factor of burnout (Maslach et al., 1996). Emotional exhaustion is necessary to experience burnout, but that is not all that is necessary to experience burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). An initial aspect of burnout is the tired and fatigued feeling of work. These chronic feelings lead to burnout (Maslach et al., 1996).

Maslach et al. (1996) described depersonalization as an unfeeling and impersonal response toward those in one's work environment. For teachers, this would include students, colleagues, and parents. Teachers experiencing burnout would no longer experience positive feelings about their students (Koenen, Vervoort, Kelchtermans, Verschueren, & Spilt, 2017). It has been stated that some people use cognitive distancing by developing an indifference or cynical attitude when they are exhausted and discouraged. Educators experiencing depersonalization may display negative attitudes towards their students, physically distance themselves, or psychologically withdraw. Educators experiencing burnout may also distance themselves from colleagues. A hostile environment may become a problem if educators depersonalize from colleagues (Cheuk, Wong, & Rosen, 2011). Working and learning from others is a critical aspect of education. Educators may depersonalize themselves from parents of

students (Maslach, 2003). With negative attitudes already present toward students, educators may not have positive relationships with parents. This can lead to situations when educators and parents do not hold the same ideas about what is best for the student (Maslach et al., 1996).

The personal accomplishment dimension of burnout is described as a feeling of competence and successful achievement in one's work (Maslach et al., 1996). When educators no longer feel that they are helping students learn and grow, disappointment leads to lost feelings of accomplishment. A feeling of low personal accomplishment is due to a person's negative self-assessment and the absence of personal accomplishment (Akbaba, 2014). These lost feelings of accomplishment may lead educators to leave the profession. According to a study by Akbaba (2014), the values of obtaining a consistent job, earning a lot of money, and social honor in the profession are not met for those educators experiencing a lack of personal accomplishment. The teaching profession does satisfy the personal accomplishment values of helping individuals, having social security, and working conditions (Akbaba, 2014). There are few opportunities for educators to advance their work and regain that feeling of personal accomplishment. One must have personal accomplishment in the actual job and must satisfy internal values as well. After researching the three subsections in relation to burnout, Maslach et al. (1996) created the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). The inventory was needed due to the desire to study burnout in more depth, especially with how it relates to the health of individuals and negative consequences related to burnout.

A historical issue of burnout has been described as beginning in the 1980s (Ingersoll, 1997). Terms were coined to describe burnout and instruments were designed to measure the phenomenon. The issue of burnout affects the society-at-large due to the high attrition of rates of teachers in the United States. Burnout is not just a personal issue but also affects students and

school systems in a great magnitude (Rumschlag, 2017). This issue is worthwhile to research in depth.

Problem Statement

The current literature has addressed the issue of teacher burnout with specific demographics, subjects taught, and specific settings. There is evidence of high burnout and turnover in the specific subjects of special education and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programs (Goldhaber, Krieg, Theobald, & Brown, 2015). Teachers in rural settings, when compared to teachers in suburban settings, experienced higher burnout levels (Ingersoll, 2003). Research is lacking in determining differences in burnout across grade levels (Cowan, Goldhaber, Hayes, & Theobald, 2016). The problem is that current burnout research does not focus on teachers across grade levels in the same school district and specifically in a rural area. With teachers in different grade levels experiencing different issues, burnout levels may differ across grade levels. This research is foundational and may lead to further research into the possibility of why teachers in different grade levels experience differences in burnout levels. Also, future studies may suggest that teachers in rural areas may experience a different level of burnout than teachers in urban or suburban settings in the same grade levels.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this causal-comparative study was to determine differences of burnout among elementary, middle, and high school teachers in a rural area. The independent variable was the teachers' grade level taught across three levels, elementary, middle, and high school. Elementary teachers are defined as those teaching kindergarten to fifth grade. Middle school teachers are defined as those teaching sixth grade to eighth grade. High school teachers are defined as those teaching ninth through twelfth grade. The dependent variable was teacher

burnout. This score was determined by administering the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI).

Burnout is defined as a syndrome of the three feelings of emotional exhaustion,

depersonalization, and low personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 1996). Emotional

exhaustion is the feelings of being emotionally overworked and exhausted by one's work;

depersonalization is an unfeeling and impersonal response toward those in one's work

environment; and finally, personal accomplishment is a feeling of competence and successful

achievement in one's work. The participants of this study were selected from a convenience

sample of a rural school district in Tennessee. There are three elementary schools, one middle

school, and two high schools in this district. There were potentially 85 elementary teachers

surveyed, 41 middle school teachers surveyed, and 57 high school teachers surveyed.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to address a gap in literature surrounding the burnout

levels of teachers in rural school districts across all grade levels. This will provide insight into

how teachers in different grade levels experience burnout. Existing literature illustrates that

special education teachers and teachers in STEM programs experience teacher burnout, leading

to teacher shortages (Goldhaber et al., 2015). Current research also identifies differences in

burnout levels among teachers in different settings, such as rural versus suburban (Rumschlag,

2017).

The results of this study may lend information to stakeholders about indicating how

prevalent teacher burnout may be in rural areas. Administrators will receive data informing

which grade level teachers may experience burnout factors more than others. Administrators and

school districts may use this data to initiate support that combats teacher burnout, such as extra

support for classroom management and extra resources (Clement, 2017). With teacher burnout

leading to attrition, intervening with the specific grade levels experiencing burnout will create less turnover of teachers (Rumschlag, 2017). Less teacher turnover will save the United States billions of dollars spent every year on attrition (Phillips, 2015).

Research Questions

RQ1: Is there a difference in the *emotional exhaustion* burnout scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey?

RQ2: Is there a difference in the *depersonalization* burnout scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey?

RQ3: Is there a difference in the *personal accomplishment* burnout scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey?

Definitions

1. *Burnout* - Burnout is defined as becoming exhausted from excessive demands of energy, strength, or resources (Freudenberger, 1974).

2. *Depersonalization* - Depersonalization is an unfeeling and impersonal response toward others in one's work environment (Maslach et al., 1996).

3. *Emotional Exhaustion* - Emotional exhaustion is the feelings of being emotionally overworked and exhausted by one's work (Maslach et al., 1996).

4. *Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey* - A standardized measure of an individual's experience of burnout. Also known as MBI-ES (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

5. *Personal Accomplishment* - Personal accomplishment is defined as a feeling of competence and successful achievement in one's work (Maslach et al., 1996).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

There is a problem of burnout among teachers in rural areas across the United States (Riggs, 2013; Rumschlag, 2017; Sutcher et al., 2016). The theoretical framework for this study is based on Maslach's theory regarding development of burnout, Bandura's ideas of self-efficacy, and Maslow's portrayal of the hierarchy needs. A review of the literature pertaining to the role of educators, issues in rural education, symptoms and consequences of burnout, and causes of burnout is also discussed.

Introduction

Approximately 12.4 million children in America attend public schools in rural places (Aud et al., 2013). Although the number of children enrolled in rural schools is high, rural schools and rural education are unfortunately typically overlooked for policy and academic scholarship (Sipple & Brent, 2009). Rural schools play a large role in the community, not only educational but cultural, civic, economic, and symbolic as well (Schafft, 2016). It is important that rural schools are successful so that the surrounding communities remain or grow successfully. Unfortunately, as schools increasingly must focus on state and federal demands rather than local issues, a growing divide threatens this community-school relationship (Tieken, 2014). Reform has been used over the years to try and fix rural schooling, as well as to change the communities surrounding those schools (Tieken, 2014).

From 1909 to 1945, the reformation of rural life was significant in the United States (Biddle & Azano, 2016). The rural school problem during this period seemed to be that youth were migrating away to cities for education purposes. This opened up an urgent need to train rural teachers to better deliver a purposeful education. Focus was placed on new infrastructure

of one room schoolhouses so teachers would feel the comforts of home from the city in rural

areas (Biddle & Azano, 2016).

Washington (1936) shared thoughts on why rural education was in a disadvantageous

position:

    The average salary of teachers in one-room rural schools is approximately $900 per year.

    As a result, rural children are being taught by relatively young, transient, immature,

    inexperienced, and untrained teachers. Their schools are open thirty-three days less each

    year than city schools. They enjoy fewer high-school opportunities. While three city

    school children out of every ten are enrolled in high schools, only one rural school child

    in ten is enrolled in high school. Rural school buildings are worth about one-third as

    much as city school buildings. Rural schools spend less than half as much for

    educational equipment as city schools spend. (p. 421)

By the 1950s a shift was made to stop bringing teachers from the city to teach but to train

rural people how to teach. Dawson and Hubbard (1944) stated that rural students should have

the right to teachers and administrators who understood rural life and circumstances. In the

1970s it was noted again that rural schools might need efforts from the universities to properly

train and recruit teachers in rural education (Bruce, Hubright, & Yarbrough, 1976). In current

times the emphasis for rural education is on performance-based accountability. This again

sparks the desire to focus on rural teacher preparation, recruitment, and retention (Biddle &

Azano, 2016).

In a geographic study of rural districts in Kentucky by Fowler, Butler, Cowen, Streams,

and Toma (2014), teachers were more likely to be initially employed in larger districts with

higher populations and higher salaries for beginning teachers. These are generally not the rural

districts, as rural districts have lower populations and lower monies for well-paying salaries for first-year teachers. The data from this study also revealed that teachers educated at Appalachian institutions (rural in nature) were three times as likely to earn a beginning job in a rural district over a non-Appalachian applicant. This analysis suggests that the region of origin has a powerful influence over location of a teacher's career (Fowler et al., 2014). Teachers who received a K-12 education in a rural area tend to seek teaching positions in rural areas, whereas those who received a K-12 education in non-rural areas tend to not teach in rural areas.

The ultimate goal for rural schools is to recruit and retain effective teachers (Fowler et al., 2014). The difficulty finding and retaining high-quality teachers in rural areas is well documented. A challenge is that rural areas produce fewer teachers than urban areas (Gagnon & Mattingly, 2015). Fewer rural students attend college in comparison to non-rural students, and fewer teacher preparatory programs are available in rural areas (Provasnik et al., 2007). Teachers express a preference for working in the area where they grew up, so lower levels of teacher supply in rural areas lessen the pool of applicants, even though less teachers are needed in rural areas (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005).

Rural teachers are also less likely to hold master's degrees. Research shows that rural teachers are less likely to possess high qualities of teaching (Provasnik et al., 2007). The most turnover occurs in schools that serve the most disadvantaged populations (Mattingly, Johnson, & Schaefer, 2011). Remote rural schools are challenged by their distance from human capital. The effects of losing a high-quality teacher in a small, rural school is usually more detrimental than in larger schools. It is challenging to find another high-quality teacher to replace the one who left (Gagnon & Mattingly, 2015).

Recruitment and retention become an issue when rural schools are not already up to par to recruit these high-quality teachers (Barton, 2012). Universities can do their part by providing the opportunities for students to experience rural education while studying (Mollenkopf, 2009). Rural schools must use funding to make schools as enticing as possible for potential educators. Just as Washington described in 1936, rural school districts usually do not have the newer buildings and resources available as in other areas. Teacher salaries are low due to the economy funding surrounding the school (Lemke, 2010). Federal aid is available but with this comes obligations that teachers do not find attractive, such as less autonomy in the classroom. The policies that come along with federal aid does not often fit the needs of rural school districts (Gallo & Beckman, 2016). Districts have begun to provide incentives for teachers in rural areas, such as signing bonuses and housing packages (Yaffe, 2016).

A final issue in rural education is the number of students in poverty. Research shows that students in poverty come to school unprepared to learn in comparison to students with professional parents (Kline & Walters, 2016). Students in poverty come to school lacking skills needed to succeed. Programs are available to benefit those students before school, such as head start and prekindergarten, but not all children are able to attend (McKinney, 2014). With these head start and prekindergarten programs, the learning gap could be possibly reduced before students begin kindergarten, providing public schools a higher chance of succeeding (Kline & Walters, 2016). When students do not experience success and experience a learning gap, some educators may experience burnout symptoms related to being unsuccessful in the classroom (Maslach, 2003).

Working in a rural school district can weigh heavily on the emotional exhaustion, feeling of personal accomplishment, and depersonalization of teachers. When dealing with students in

poverty-stricken rural areas, teachers tend to provide much more than a general education (McKinney, 2014). Students deal with hunger, limited resources, and home troubles. These factors, along with the low success rate of students in poverty, contribute to teachers' emotional exhaustion and low feeling of personal accomplishment (Sipple & Brent, 2009). Unfortunately, these teachers may also face their career with pessimism and negativity due to difficult circumstances, leading to depersonalization from students and colleagues (Rumschlag, 2017). The combined feelings of emotional exhaustion, no personal accomplishment, and depersonalization lead to occupational burnout (Maslach et al., 2001).

Furthermore, beyond the issue teaching in rural areas, there is stress of being a teacher in present day 2019. There are generally two categories in teacher certifications: elementary (kindergarten through sixth grade) and secondary (seventh through twelfth grade). Educators experience different teaching styles and expectations based on the grade level(s) taught.

Elementary school, or primary, teachers experience stress in context of the job, along with personal stress. Stauffer and Mason (2013) identified the following as contextual stressors for elementary school teachers: (a) political and educational structures, (b) school climate, (c) instructional factors, (d) student factors, and (e) parent and family factors. These stressors are listed in order from *most* frequently mentioned to *least* frequently mentioned by elementary school teachers.

The stressors of political and educational structures were mentioned most frequently in the Stauffer and Mason (2013) study. Teachers experience a lack of support and resources in the classroom, high expectations and demands, and accountability pressures from the political agenda (Stauffer & Mason, 2013). In a rural district, lack of support and resources is even more common than in other areas (Barton, 2012). The added pressure of standardized testing and

teacher accountability leads to higher rates of burnout and turnover intent (Cockburn, 2000; Ryan et al., 2017). Teachers also commented about instructional stressors, such as workload and curriculum concerns (Stauffer & Mason, 2013).

School climate is affected by turnover rate in staff and low morale among administration and educators (Stauffer & Mason, 2013). Poor relationships among colleagues may interfere with one's work environment (Maslach et al., 2001). School leaders have the opportunity to improve teacher retention by creating positive school climate and investing time in relationships with teachers (Vanderslice, 2010). An intimidating environment influenced by the school climate may lead to emotional exhaustion, which may lead to occupational burnout (Rumschlag, 2017). Student behavior and low achievement were stressors for elementary school teachers (Stauffer & Mason, 2013). Multiple discipline problems and low student achievement contributes to a teacher's lack of personal accomplishment, creating a stressor (Sipple & Brent, 2009).

Secondary educators, or middle and high school teachers, also experience burnout and stress on a contextual level. O'Brennan, Pas, and Bradshaw (2017) discovered that high school educators who have less self-efficacy for handling behavior problems experienced higher levels of burnout and stress. Staff who felt connected to their students and felt a sense of belonging in the community tended to feel less burnout (O'Brennan et al., 2017). In this study white and female staff reported higher levels of stress and burnout. School staff at the high school level who have worked at their schools for four or more years were more likely to report burnout. School level suspension rates, relating to student behavior issues, were significantly related to reports of burnout (O'Brennan et al., 2017).

Secondary teachers may also benefit from a mentoring program to limit stress and burnout. In this type of system, the mentor must begin a trusting relationship with the teacher. Then, the mentor must lead the teacher in creating a classroom environment that supports learning. Mentors must guide teachers with strategies and skills needed to be successful inside the classroom and in how to cope with stress in the workplace (Sowell, 2017). These mentors help teachers meet their goals in instruction and being the process of retaining teachers.

<div align="center">**Theoretical Framework**</div>

Maslach's Development of Burnout

Maslach is known as a major researcher in the field of occupational burnout. Maslach, a social psychologist, began studying burnout in relation to the workplace in the mid-1970s, building off the work of Freudenberger (Maslach & Shaufeli, 1993; Maslach et al., 2001). Freudenberger (1974) was a psychiatrist who began studying emotional depletion, lack of motivation, and commitment in the workplace. Freudenberger coined the term *burnout,* which at the time was a term related to the effects of extensive drug abuse. Freudenberger provided direct accounts by which he and others experienced emotional depletion and a loss of motivation and commitment, which led to forms of job withdrawal-absenteeism, intention to leave the job, and turnover (Freudenberger, 1975).

During the pioneer phase of burnout research in the 1970s, the work was meant to explain the phenomenon of burnout to those new to the concept in a qualitative way (Maslach et al., 2001). Early research of burnout was based on the experiences of people working in human services and health care occupations, in which the goal is to provide services and aid to people in need (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993). During this early research, Maslach studied emotions in the workplace. Maslach interviewed a range of human service workers about the emotional stress of

their jobs and discovered that the coping strategies of stress had implications on the workers'

professional identity and job behavior. Roots of research were in jobs where there was a

relationship between the provider and recipient (Maslach et al., 2001).

During the early burnout research, Maslach focused on the relationship between the

provider and recipient of service, along with burnout issues and mental health (Maslach &

Jackson, 1981). General themes began appearing from this research. Any job requiring the

provision of care is demanding and emotional exhaustion is not an uncommon response to this

job overload. The theme of depersonalization emerged as people described how they tried to

cope with the emotional stresses of the job. Emotional distance to patients was viewed as a way

to protect oneself from emotional stress. Furthermore, this excessive detachment led staff to

respond to clients in negative and cynical manners. Factors that led workers distancing

themselves from patients were a high number of clients, negative client feedback, and scarcity of

resources (Maslach et al., 2001). Maslach's future research focused on relationships among

provider of service, recipient of service, and coworkers.

The empirical phase of burnout research occurred in the 1980s. A switch from

qualitative to quantitative research occurred due to new questionnaires and surveys available to

measure burnout. The switch to quantitative research led to a larger sample size for each study,

yielding more results (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). The MBI was developed in 1981 as an

assessment for burnout levels of human service workers. As research branched out to other

fields, a second version of the MBI was developed for educational occupations (Maslach &

Jackson, 1981). With this new research utilizing the MBI, burnout was identified as a form of

job stress, with links to overall job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover.

Burnout was originally a challenging concept. There was no standard definition of it. Different people used the term to mean many different things. However, there was an underlying consensus about the three core dimensions of burnout: (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) personal accomplishment, and (c) depersonalization. This multidimensional theory of burnout continues to be the predominant one in the field of research, rather than a unidimensional theory of stress (Maslach et al., 2001).

Emotional exhaustion is the central quality of burnout and the most obvious signal of the syndrome. When people describe themselves as experiencing burnout, they are often referring to exhaustion. Exhaustion is the most widely reported and the most analyzed dimension of burnout. The relationship of burnout and exhaustion is so strong that some believe they are both one in the same (Maslach et al., 2001). However, exhaustion is a necessary component of burnout but not the criterion of the syndrome. Exhaustion reflects the stress dimension of burnout but does not necessarily deal with the relationships people have (Maslach, 2003).

Emotional exhaustion takes place when demands are put on an individual that overextends or overwhelms him or her. To deal with such emotions, people distance themselves from others through emotions and mental state of mind. A person's emotional resources are depleted. Teacher emotional exhaustion has a potentially serious consequence for students, school districts, and for the teachers themselves (Rumschlag, 2017).

A second dimension of burnout is depersonalization. Depersonalization is an attempt to put distance between oneself and service recipients by actively ignoring the qualities that make them unique and engaging people. Their demands become more manageable when they become impersonal objects of one's work. People use cognitive distancing by developing an indifference or cynical attitude when they are exhausted and discouraged. Distancing is such an immediate

response to exhaustion that a strong relationship exists between exhaustion and depersonalization (Maslach et al., 2001; Rumschlag, 2017).

The third dimension of burnout is the lack of personal accomplishment. Reduced personal accomplishment refers to a tendency that teachers evaluate themselves negatively as well as a general feeling that they are no longer doing a meaningful and important job. Reduced personal accomplishment is also known as inefficacy. In some studies, reduced personal accomplishment appears to be a function of the other two dimensions of exhaustion and cynicism (Maslach et al., 2001; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). A work situation with chronic overwhelming demands that contribute to exhaustion or cynicism may diminish one's effectiveness.

Exhaustion or depersonalization can interfere with effectiveness. It is difficult to gain a sense of accomplishment when feeling exhausted or when helping people with no personal connection due to cynicism (Maslach et al., 2001). However, in other studies inefficacy appears to develop parallel with exhaustion and depersonalization instead of after the initial feelings of these dimensions. The lack of efficacy seems to arise more clearly from a lack of relevant resources, where cynicism and exhaustion emerge from work overload and social conflict. Lack of personal accomplishment is also caused by self-reflection feelings of being ineffective and lacking qualifications (Maslach, 2016). Self-esteem diminishes and depression may start to take place. Workers may feel unhappy about themselves and dissatisfied with their accomplishments on the job (Rumschlag, 2017).

According to the sequential model of Maslach et al. (2001), one dimension of burnout must occur before the next. For example, exhaustion occurs first, leading to the development of cynicism, which leads to inefficacy. Folk theories have emerged about the development burnout over the course of research. One theory is that the best and most idealistic workers are the ones

who experience burnout, with the belief that those workers will do whatever necessary to be successful (Maslach, 2003). A second theory is that burnout is a result of long exposure to chronic job stressors, meaning it should occur later in people's careers (Maslach et al., 2001). It is also debatable if burnout results from overload on the job or from underload (Maslach et al., 2001).

Burnout has outcomes for the individuals experiencing symptoms. Burnout has been associated with various forms of job withdrawal, including absenteeism, intention to leave the job, and turnover. For people who stay on the job, burnout leads to lower productivity and effectiveness at work (Rumschlag, 2017). It is associated with decreased job satisfaction and reduced commitment to the job. Those experiencing burnout can also have a negative impact on their colleagues (Maslach et al., 2001). The exhaustion dimension of burnout is predictive of stress-related health outcomes (Maslach et al., 2001).

A mismatch model from Maslach and Leiter (2016) is used to describe how burnout occurs. A mismatch in workload is generally found as excessive overload when too many demands exhaust a person. A mismatch in control relates to having insufficient control over the resources needed to do their work in an effective manner. A third mismatch involves insufficient rewards, whether financial or achievement rewards. The fourth mismatch occurs when people lose a sense of positive connection with others in the workplace, losing a sense of community. A serious mismatch between the person and the job occurs when there is not perceived fairness in the workplace. The sixth area of mismatch occurs when there is conflict of values in the workplace. Any feelings of these mismatch domains relate to the feelings and development of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001).

Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy in Social Cognitive Theory

Self-efficacy, also known as confidence, is the optimistic self-belief in one's competence and chance of successfully producing a desired outcome (Bandura, 1993). Self-efficacy beliefs come from four sources: (a) performance accomplishment, (b) vicarious experiences, (c) verbal persuasion, and (d) physiological factors. Performance accomplishment is created through successful performance of a task. A person who has felt success in a difficult task may feel more confidence when attempting other challenging tasks. Vicarious experiences occur when an individual learns from observing the behaviors of others. Verbal persuasion occurs when a person receives verbal praise or encouragement when completing a task. Praise may lead to repeated positive behavior. Finally, psychological factors take shape in the form of nervousness, nausea, fatigue, shakes, etc. (Bandura, 1993). For the purpose of linking self-efficacy to burnout, the focus is on performance accomplishment and verbal persuasion (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

Self-beliefs of efficacy play a key role in the self-regulation of motivation. People form beliefs about what they can do and will anticipate likely outcomes. Motivation is governed by the expectation that behavior will produce certain outcomes and the value of those outcomes (Bandura, 2012). People's beliefs in their capabilities affect how much stress and depression they experience in threatening or difficult situations, as well as their motivation. Efficacy beliefs regulate emotions. People who believe they can handle threats are less distressed, but those who have low self-efficacy are more likely to increase risks (Bandura, 1997). People with high self-efficacy have lower stress and anxiety because they act in ways that make their surroundings less threatening. Self-efficacy helps people cope and have control over troubling thoughts. Low self-efficacy can contribute to depression because of not being able to suppress depressive thoughts. Low self-efficacy can lead to a lack of social relationship satisfaction (Bandura, 2012).

Perceived self-efficacy is the belief in one's personal capabilities. Self-efficacy influences a person's choice of effort and coping strategies. Those with strong perceived self-efficacy will take risks and attempt activities that others may not. Self-efficacy gives people the motivation to try something new and try again if failure occurs (Bandura & Locke, 2003).

Self-efficacy is a factor in helping teachers progress in their careers by influencing job aspects such as job satisfaction, classroom effectiveness (Sandholtz & Ringstaff, 2014), job commitment (Chesnut & Burley, 2015), and student achievement (Zee & Koomen, 2016). Self-efficacy also reduces negative aspects of the job, such as burnout (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014). This concept also provides teachers the ability to compensate for their needs when not met at the school level (Holzberger, Philipp, & Kunter, 2013).

Educators with high amounts of self-efficacy understand accomplishment in different ways. Accomplishment may mean helping students realize their true potential for the future even if not successful on state exams. These educators are able to combat burnout because of their own feelings of personal accomplishment in the workplace (Rumschlag, 2017). Some educators only place their personal accomplishment in state test scores. In some areas, especially rural and urban, test scores are not proficient for a number of reasons (Sipple & Brent, 2009). Teachers may lose their self-efficacy on their own accord due to testing, or the negativity from administration about scores may lead to feelings of burnout. When the amount of hard work put in by educators does not live up to expectations based on test scores, feelings of personal accomplishment and self-efficacy are hard to experience (Chang, 2009). It is important to provide teachers with all resources and positivity necessary to feel successful in the workplace.

Self-efficacy is built on self-perceptions of oneself, but research finds that self-efficacy can be improved for teachers by participating in interventions and interactions with others.

Research has recommended that pre-service teacher programs provide emphasis on the importance of self-efficacy to improve student achievement, and current teachers should participate in professional development to improve self-efficacy (Tindall & Culhane, 2014; Walan & Rundgren, 2014). Walan and Rundgren (2014) noted that when teachers have high self-efficacy, they are more interested in further professional development, which develops pedagogy to increase student achievement.

Teacher self-efficacy can also have an effect on student behavior and achievement. Researchers suspect that increases in teacher self-efficacy initiated student engagement with content, encouraged student efficacy, and resulted in better classroom management (Ross & Bruce, 2007). In a study completed by Bruce, Esmonde, Ross, Dookie, and Beatty (2010), the relationship between teacher efficacy and student achievement was examined. The study concluded that a teacher with high teacher efficacy in math related these ideas to students: (a) implements and persists with challenging but effective strategies, (b) has high expectations for mathematics students, and (c) has effective classroom management strategies involving non-custodial approaches to student regulation and students taking responsibility for learning. These practices of the teacher with high self-efficacy yielded increased student self-regulation, which in turn increased student achievement in math (Bruce et al., 2010).

Job satisfaction is a factor that helps prevent teacher burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). There is literature that examines the relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction. In a study by Akomolafe and Ogunmakin (2014), a significant relationship was found between job satisfaction levels and amount of self-efficacy. A negative correlation was also determined between job satisfaction and occupational stressors. In a separate study, Viel-Ruma, Houchins, Jolivette, and Benson (2010) researched the correlations among job satisfaction, teacher self-

efficacy, and collective efficacy. In this study a significant predictor of job satisfaction was only attributed to teacher efficacy. Another study found a positive, significant relationship between self-efficacy and job performance for public school teachers (Olayiwola, 2011).

Literature agrees that a positive relationship exists between job satisfaction and self-efficacy. Self-efficacy also relates to higher student achievement. In relation to this current study, higher job satisfaction can correlate to lower levels of teacher burnout (Maslach et al., 2001; Rumschlag, 2017). With this chain of research, high levels of self-efficacy are important to having job satisfaction, which can decrease the development of burnout.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow defines motivation in a hierarchy of five levels. These five levels are as follows: (a) physiological needs, (b) safety needs, (c) love and belonging needs, (d) self-esteem needs, and (e) the need for self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). Lower levels must first be satisfied before higher level needs can be met. For example, basic needs such as food and shelter must be met before self-esteem can be accomplished. When lower-level needs are satisfied, people ultimately seek self-actualization, realizing one's potential and creating efficacy (Maslow, 1943). For educators, especially those in rural environments, burnout may show up more in those teachers who lack resources to perform their job up to their personal standards (Fowler et al., 2014).

Motivation is a result from the interaction between an individual and the environment. The circumstances of the workplace have an impact on one's perception of the needs to be met before success is felt. Those teachers feeling burnout symptoms of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment may not have their needs met on a lower level in the workplace (Maslach & Shaufeli, 1993; Maslach et al., 2001). For example, teachers

who do not feel appreciated at work may experience a lack of personal accomplishment. Teachers who are overworked beyond what is required may be led to emotional exhaustion.

Teachers in rural areas feel the pressure of living up to test scores of the surrounding suburban areas (Barton, 2012). According to Maslow, needs must be met before success can happen. Rural funding for education is lower than in urban and suburban areas (Schafft, 2016). Federal funding is provided for the poorest schools, yet resources are still not up to par compared to other schools in more affluent areas (Sipple & Brent, 2009). With fewer resources, teachers may struggle to feel successful and cannot provide their students with the necessary materials to be successful.

The theory of Maslow's hierarchy of needs relates to workplace satisfaction. People cannot be sensitized higher level needs until lower level needs are met. In a study by Rasskazova, Ivanova, and Sheldon (2016), needs were divided into low level (security, financial satisfaction) and high level (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) satisfaction. When both levels of satisfaction were met, there were strong main effects upon positive work outcomes, including intrinsic motivation and commitment. Satisfaction of high-level needs had slightly larger effects on workplace outcomes when combined with low level needs. This means that those workers with lower level needs met displayed positive work outcomes, but when the higher-level needs were met as well, the displayed work outcomes were even more positive (Rasskazova et al., 2016).

Related Literature

Variables that Contribute to Teacher Burnout

Teachers who experience burnout relate the feelings to multiple causes. Burnout symptoms may be caused by the job demands. Educators relate accountability and testing measures as a factor in burnout. Work environment and relationships with coworkers and administrators may contribute to feelings of burnout. Student behavior and achievement may play a role in an educator feeling symptoms of burnout.

Educators have a time-consuming job. Not only do teachers spend up to six hours a day in front of students, the work load outside of the classroom is daunting. Successful lesson planning may take many hours outside of the classroom. Papers must be graded and recorded in a timely manner, while some teachers may have 100 students or more. Most teachers report working more than 40 hours a week, with 40 hours a week being considered a full-time job (Romanowska-Tolloczko, 2013). Some educators add to their plate by working a part-time job to supplement their low paying salaries. With stressors in and outside of the classroom with regards to the job, overwork plays into the feeling of emotional exhaustion and burnout (Chang, 2009).

Current legislature from state governments places a large amount of emphasis on educators to yield successful students (Hunt, Gurvitch, & Lund, 2016). A major part of teachers' job evaluations is based on student achievement outcomes (Aldeman, 2017). Students bring baggage into the classroom. If their basic needs of food, shelter, and love are not met, successful testing outcomes are challenging to obtain (Maslow, 1943). Job security is not as strong as in the past with tenure more difficult to attain. Many rural and urban teachers are losing their jobs over student achievement and lack of funding for the schools (Minnici, 2014). When teachers do not

earn high evaluations due to testing outcomes, personal accomplishment will not be a high

characteristic of the job (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). In this instance the personal accomplishment

of educators is related to outcomes of students.

The work environment for educators differs based on the school. When teachers describe

the environment at their school, it should be a positive one. Unfortunately, many teachers report

that their teaching environment is one of hostility (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-

D'Alessandro, 2013). Stressors of others may influence the atmosphere of the school (Grayson

& Alvarez, 2008). If many teachers are experiencing burnout or negativity in the job, this

creates a negative air in the school. The administration of the building plays a large role in the

atmosphere of the school. Schools with a positive administration have teachers that experience

less levels of burnout over a school with negative administration. Schools with negative

atmospheres are more likely to have teachers who experience burnout (Barton, 2012).

Finally, the behaviors, efforts, and struggles of students can weigh heavy on the emotions

of educators. When teachers work in environments where students' misbehavior takes over the

climate of the classroom, successful teaching is difficult to display. Teachers who battle constant

classroom discipline cannot focus their energy on successful teaching (Aloe, Shisler, Norris,

Nickerson, & Rinker, 2014). This lack of control may cause teachers to depersonalize

themselves from their students (Rumschlag, 2017).

In some school climates students do not have the motivation to complete coursework or

display appropriate behavior. Many factors play into this lack of intrinsic motivation, including

poor home life situations and lack of self-efficacy due to previous failures in the classroom. It is

challenging for educators to be passionate about teaching when students are not willing to

receive instruction and work hard. Students bring many issues with them into the classroom.

Caring teachers want to meet the needs of every student, whether educational or not. Just being aware of the unfortunate situations students are placed in can factor into the emotional exhaustion of educators (Chang, 2009).

In 2017, a meta-analysis of work environment and burnout symptoms was published (Aronsson et al., 2017). This study discovered that many burnout studies focused their research on emotional exhaustion or did not report results tied to personal accomplishment and depersonalization. Twenty-five studies were reviewed, and results were compiled. Strong evidence was determined in the association of job control and reduced emotional exhaustion, as well as between low workplace support and increased emotional exhaustion. Limited evidence was found between low workplace justice, demands, high workload, low reward, low supervisor support, low co-worker support, and job insecurity associated with a change in emotional exhaustion. However, the work factors listed above were associated with job cynicism and depersonalization. Reduced personal accomplishment was only associated with low reward (Aronsson et al., 2017). The meta-analysis conducted by Aronsson et al. (2017) concluded that high demands, low job control, high workload, low reward, and job insecurity increased the risk for developing workplace emotional exhaustion. Those workers with high levels of job support and workplace justice seemed protected against emotional exhaustion.

Symptoms of Burnout in Educators

According to Hypolito and Grishcke (2013), the symptoms of burnout have been researched due to recent changes in schools and education in general. Teachers are emotionally attached to their jobs, so symptoms of burnout show up during times of profound changes. Over the decades, many profound changes have occurred that affected educators. Some of these changes have occurred over the past 10 years with No Child Left Behind and the push for

Common Core Standards from the federal government. Teachers seek autonomy and consistency, and when these are jeopardized, the following symptoms of burnout may become prevalent in their jobs.

Stress is used as a synonym for burnout, especially within the dimension of emotional exhaustion (Diehl & Carlotto, 2014; Gil-Monte, 2012; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). In multiple qualitative studies, participants asked about burnout relate the syndrome to stress and depression. Symptoms of burnout can be classified in three categories: (a) physical, (b) psychic, (c) and behavioral (Diehl & Carlotta, 2014).

The physical symptoms of burnout include reactions related to physical exhaustion (Diehl & Carlotto, 2014). Professionals experience of lack of energy and fight physical fatigue (Kaschka, Korczak, & Broich, 2011). This exhaustion is correlated with stress symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, gastrointestinal issues, and sleep problems (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). These symptoms correlate to the experience of stress, but also relate the seriousness of burnout to substance abuse (Burke, Shearer, & Deszca, 1984). Two participants in a qualitative study by Diehl and Carlotta (2014) explained burnout as mental exhaustion that transformed into physical pain and excessive work with no breaks that caused vertigo and difficulty relaxing:

> You feel drained, you know? It seems all of your energies were taken from you. Then you get physically, mentally tired. It is a disease that is proper of the job, like tendinitis, back pain. Today is one of the worst days, because I stay four periods in the classroom, and supervise the playtime, then I get home dizzy because it's a lot of agitation. (p. 747)

The psychic symptoms of burnout relate to psychological reactions, such as anxiety, reduction of cognitive performance, and decreased memory capacity in the short term (Kaschka et al., 2011). Burnout may prompt educators to leave the profession due to the lack of job satisfaction, causing

high turnover (Dupriez, Delvaux, & Lothaire, 2016; Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Burnout leads to

lower productivity and an impaired quality of work for those educators who continue to stay in

the profession (Donitsa-Schmidt & Zuzovsky, 2016; Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Maslach et al.,

2001). It is common that educators think about leaving the profession but stay due to thinking

circumstances may change (Yong & Yue, 2007). When circumstances do not change, educators

define the situation: "Then you don't see a perspective, a light at the end of tunnel … That's why

many abandon the career, you see?" "You act as if you had no hope in life, no perspective of

better times" (Diehl & Carlotto, 2014, p. 748).

Behavioral symptoms of burnout show up as isolation (Diehl & Carlotto, 2014; Maslach

& Leiter, 2016). This directly relates to depersonalization, the third dimension of burnout

(Maslach et al., 1996). Detachment and isolation are traits that appear when educators do not

want to take on responsibility and make a connection with the students they teach. There is a

distance needed between the educator and students for the educator to feel as though there is no

responsibility for what takes place in the workplace (Diehl & Carlotto, 2014). Depersonalization

is the teachers' attempt to put distance between themselves and students by actively ignoring the

qualities that make students unique and engaging (McCarthy, Kissen, Yadley, Wood, &

Lambert, 2006). These reactions can have a negative impact on colleagues, creating harsh work

environments among staff (Burke & Greenglass, 2001).

Consequences of Burnout for Educators

When educators display signs of burnout, a lower self-efficacy normally occurs as well.

Self-efficacy refers to the idea of the belief of what oneself is able to accomplish and achieve

(Oakes, Lane, Jenkins, & Booker, 2013). Someone with a strong self-efficacy will persevere

through difficult circumstances, while someone who does not have belief in oneself may give up

and not persevere to try again. The factor of personal accomplishment linked to burnout is an issue for those educators with low self-efficacy (Maslach et al., 2001).

In education today, the factors that allow educators to feel personal accomplishment is based on a number of indicators. First, school climate plays a part in whether educators experience personal accomplishment. With supportive administration and coworkers, educators can feel accomplished about their work even when student results come up short (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). These individuals link hard work and effort to personal accomplishment and high levels of self-efficacy. Even in the student test results or other results are not up to par, educators still value the hard work put into the job. The educators that struggle with self-efficacy are the ones who do not ever feel success in their jobs (Donitsa-Schmidt & Zuzovsky, 2016). In some instances, administration does not celebrate hard work as success. They only look for success in data or statistics instead of the everyday work of educators. When teachers are hard on themselves for not having success, lower amounts of self-efficacy may lead to burnout symptoms (Rumschlag, 2017).

When symptoms of burnout are felt by an educator, it has consequences on their job performance. When educators feel burnout, engagement with their job and students is lower (Donitsa-Schmidt & Zuzovsky, 2016; Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Maslach et al., 2001). Those with higher self-efficacy are more positive and responsive to students, experience less stress, and show less anger about student behavior (Bandura, 1993). These characteristics are linked to higher student achievement (Shen, McCaughtry, Martin, Garn, Kulik, & Fahlman, 2015).

When educators lack the self-efficacy to feel comfortable on the job, there are consequences for the school and students. When educators give a minimal level of performance due to burnout, student success drops (Shen et al., 2015). There is less of a relationship with

students, providing the chance for poor behavior by students and less academic success

(Clement, 2017). Negativity and burnout radiate from a person experiencing burnout. This

negativity may become contagious to students and coworkers. A school climate may be affected

by a few educators with burnout. An educator may be terminated if student achievement

becomes too low or if he/she exhibits too much negativity. Administrators realize that a positive

school climate is necessary for educators to have high job performance, which in turn correlates

to student achievement (Barton, 2012).

The job of educators is to provide instruction in skills needed for college and career

readiness. Most people realize that an educator can be much more than a basic instructor. When

educators are passionate about their career and the outcomes of students, it is noticed. Students

make connections with those teachers who provide guidance in other areas of life.

Unfortunately, when teachers experience burnout syndrome, these extra instances with students

dramatically decrease (Clement, 2017). If teachers do not feel connected to their job due to

burnout, they will not go the extra lengths to make relationships with students (Tomlinson,

2016). Studies show that students are aware when teachers are burned out (Bryan & Solmon,

2007; Evers, Tomic, & Brouwers, 2004; Shen et al., 2015). This may become contagious to the

students and motivation to succeed may drop due to the negativity from the teacher (Evers et al.,

2004). Student success may be the number one goal for some educators, so if this does not occur

due to factors of burnout, this becomes a larger issue for school districts and administrators.

When educators experience burnout, there are three options with regards to the job. The

first is to remain on the job. Teachers who remain on the job while experiencing burnout tend to

have poorer job performance and lower student achievement (Diehl & Carlotto, 2014; Maslach

& Goldberg, 1998). This may lead to the second option of losing the job. Teachers with poor

student achievement and job performance may be terminated without even being recognized as burned out. The cycle of burnout may continue with a new employee if conversations do not happen about why the previous employee was struggling. Administrators can look into burnout mediation and provide resources for those teachers struggling (Flook, Goldberg, Pinger, Bonus, & Davidson, 2013; Stauffer & Mason, 2013).

The third option of dealing with burnout is to leave the profession. After experiencing many factors that possibly contribute to burnout, thousands of teachers add to the attrition rate every year (Rumschlag, 2017). When the burnout symptoms become too difficult to manage, teachers may find it easier to leave the profession and find a new career than to continue teaching (Clement, 2017). Feelings of guilt may occur after quitting a job, because educators spend money and years of schooling to become a professional. Those who leave the profession feel the worst of burnout symptoms and cannot handle the negative feelings (Yaffe, 2016). The thought of working a lower paying and less impactful job may be more appealing than teaching.

Stress has been defined as synonymous with burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). Educators deal with stress in many different ways, some very successfully. Burnout and stress can be combatted successfully with different means. Teachers may have their own coping techniques for dealing with stress (Polman, Borkoles, & Nicholls, 2010; Yoon, 2002). Administration may provide mediation for those teachers struggling with feelings of burnout (Flook et al., 2013). For those educators who are able to cope with symptoms, a comeback can be made for a successful and fulfilling career.

For those who cannot successfully cope with burnout and stress, health issues may arise (Maslach et al., 2001). Depression also affects one's health (Shin, Noh, Jang, Park, & Lee, 2013). Poor cardiovascular strength and anxiety are examples of effects felt on the body due to

depression. Some people deal with depression with unhealthy eating habits, which may lead to obesity. With obesity comes many health issues, including diabetes and heart disease. Unfortunately, suicide may also be a consequence of the stress and burnout in the workplace or from losing/leaving a job.

Other Factors Contributing to Teacher Turnover

Public school teaching is not a long-term career for some teachers in the United States. Attrition rates have increased so that more teachers leave the profession voluntarily early on rather than remain in teaching until retirement (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014). From 2005 to 2013, actual new teacher hires were less than the actual supply of new teachers. After 2013, the supply of new teachers became less than the estimated demand for teachers (Sutcher et al., 2016). By 2020, an estimated 300,000 new teachers will be needed, which may increase teacher shortages to as many as 112,000 teachers (Sutcher et al., 2016). Most careers experience some turnover; however, the level of teacher turnover is high (Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2016). This high level of teacher turnover exhibits negative consequences for districts, schools, and students.

Teachers desire stability in the workplace. Teachers who teach the same grade in their first two years are approximately 20% more likely to stay than teachers who are forced to switch grade levels (Ost & Schiman, 2015). When teachers stay in the same grade level, smaller workloads are present since they can reuse lesson plans and already have a grasp on the content necessary to teach that grade. Teachers with the fewest years of experience in a grade level have the highest probability of attrition. If a teacher is reassigned to teach a new grade, this reassignment is associated with higher levels of turnover (Ost & Schiman, 2015). The change for the teacher creates unnecessary stress that would not be present if in the same grade level as before.

The workloads of teachers can cause stress and create burnout symptoms (Maslach, 2003). At one charter school organization, Charter Management Organizations, an unsustainable workload is considered the primary cause of teacher turnover (Torres, 2016). Teachers' perceptions of workload are significantly associated with decisions to leave the profession. In this instance, about one out of three teachers who rated their workload as unmanageable left school. Only one out of 10 teachers who left did not rate their workload unmanageable (Torres, 2016). With the relation of workload to burnout symptoms, reducing the unmanageable workload of teachers may help prevent turnover in this situation. However, when the schools had high perceptions of leadership and professional growth opportunities, workload was no longer associated with turnover (Torres, 2016).

Research denotes that teachers tend to teach in the areas where they were raised and schooled, especially those in rural areas (Boyd et al., 2005). The type of schooling and student teaching may also affect employment and retention in specific areas. Teachers who attended high-poverty urban K-12 schooling, volunteered in these urban schools, and performed student teaching training in urban schools are successful in high-poverty urban schools. These factors listed predicted strong urban commitment, and urban commitment strongly predicted first job location and further retention (Whipp & Geronime, 2017). If this study was reproduced in high-poverty rural areas, results may be similar.

In a study conducted by Kraft, Marinell, and Yee (2016), results presented that schools with higher quality contexts experienced lower turnover. Improvements in the organizational context within a school are associated with decreases in teacher turnover. School contexts are measured using the following: (a) leadership and professional development, (b) academic

expectations, (c) teacher relationships and collaboration, and (d) safety and order. Those schools with high demonstrations in these categories had lower teacher turnover rates.

Much can be learned about teacher attrition when reviewing careers and experiences of long-term teachers who did leave the profession. The participants of Glazer's study (2018) did not leave the profession due to feelings of incompetence. Each of the 25 participants described feelings of competence and success in the classroom. When examining decisions to leave the profession, three themes emerged: (a) interference of imposed curricula, (b) testing and accountability, and (c) job insecurity (Glazer, 2018). Throughout interviews, participants described the frustration of using forced curriculum. Teachers enjoyed the ability to plan their own lessons, but this forced curriculum took classroom autonomy away. Testing influenced the school environment, created less teaching and more rote practicing of skills, took time away from classroom instruction, and aided in the loss of curricular control for teachers. With budget cuts and the importance of high-quality teachers, job insecurity was an issue for these participants. Teachers felt anxious if they did not have wonderful test scores, did not have a great relationship with administration, or were lower on the seniority ladder when budget cuts occurred (Glazer, 2018).

Summary

There is a problem of burnout among teachers in rural areas across the United States. Rural schools and rural education are typically overlooked within policy and academic scholarship (Sipple & Brent, 2009). Rural funding for education is lower than other areas (Schafft, 2016). Additional federal funding is provided for the poorest schools, yet resources are still not up to par compared to other schools in more affluent areas (Sipple & Brent, 2009). With fewer resources, teachers may struggle to feel successful and cannot provide their students with

the necessary materials to be successful. In current times the emphasis for rural education is on performance-based accountability. This again sparks the desire to focus on rural teacher preparation, recruitment, and retention (Biddle & Azano, 2016). The ultimate goal for rural schools is to recruit and retain effective teachers (Fowler et al., 2014). A challenge is that rural areas produce fewer teachers than urban areas (Gagnon & Mattingly, 2015). The most turnover occurs in schools that serve the most disadvantaged populations that can be present in high poverty situations (Mattingly et al., 2011).

Research shows that students in poverty come to school unprepared to learn in comparison to students with professional parents (Kline & Walters, 2016). Working in a rural school district can weigh heavily on the emotional exhaustion, feeling of personal accomplishment, and depersonalization of teachers. When dealing with students in poverty-stricken rural areas, teachers tend to provide much more than a general education (McKinney, 2014). The combined feelings of emotional exhaustion, no personal accomplishment, and depersonalization lead to occupational burnout (Maslach et al., 2001).

Freudenberger (1974) was a psychiatrist who began studying emotional depletion, lack of motivation, and commitment in the workplace. Freudenberger coined the term *burnout,* which at the time was a term related to the effects of extensive drug abuse. Freudenberger provided direct accounts by which he and others experienced emotional depletion and a loss of motivation and commitment, which led to forms of job withdrawal-absenteeism, intention to leave the job, and turnover (Freudenberger, 1975). During the early burnout research, Maslach focused on the relationship between the provider and recipient of service, along with burnout issues and mental health (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Emotional exhaustion takes place when demands are put on an individual that overextends or overwhelms him or her. Depersonalization is an attempt to put

distance between oneself and service recipients by actively ignoring the qualities that make them unique and engaging people. Reduced personal accomplishment refers to a tendency that teachers evaluate themselves negatively as well as a general feeling that they are no longer doing a meaningful and important job. Exhaustion or depersonalization can interfere with effectiveness.

Self-efficacy, also known as confidence, is the optimistic self-belief in one's competence and chance of successfully producing a desired outcome (Bandura, 1993). Perceived self-efficacy is the belief in one's personal capabilities. Self-efficacy is a factor in helping teachers progress in their careers by influencing job aspects such as job satisfaction, classroom effectiveness (Sandholtz & Ringstaff, 2014), job commitment (Chesnut & Burley, 2015), and student achievement (Zee & Koomen, 2016). Self-efficacy also reduces negative aspects of the job such as burnout (Aloe et al., 2014). This concept also provides teachers the ability to compensate for their needs when not met at the school level (Holzberger et al., 2013). Job satisfaction is a factor that helps prevent teacher burnout (Maslach et al., 2001).

Maslow defines motivation in a hierarchy of five levels. These five levels are as follows: (a) physiological needs, (b) safety needs, (c) love and belonging needs, (d) self-esteem needs, and (e) the need for self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). Lower levels must first be satisfied before higher level needs can be met. Teachers in rural areas feel the pressure of living up to test scores in the surrounding suburban areas (Barton, 2012). According to Maslow, needs must be met before success can happen.

Educators experience variables that contribute to teacher burnout. Educators have a time-consuming job. With stressors in and outside of the classroom with regards to the job, overwork plays into the feeling of emotional exhaustion and burnout (Chang, 2009). Current legislature

from state governments places a large amount of emphasis on educators to yield successful students (Hunt et al., 2016). Many rural and urban teachers are losing their jobs over student achievement and lack of funding for the schools (Minnici, 2014). The teaching environment also can play a factor in how teachers view their professions. When teachers describe the environment at their school, it should be a positive one. Unfortunately, many teachers report that their teaching environment is one of hostility (Thapa et al., 2013). Finally, the behaviors, efforts, and struggles of students can weigh heavy on the emotions of educators. This lack of control may cause teachers to depersonalize themselves from their students (Rumschlag, 2017).

Educators experiencing burnout may present symptoms. Stress is used as a synonym for burnout, especially within the dimension of emotional exhaustion (Diehl & Carlotto, 2014; Gil-Monte, 2012; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). The physical symptoms of burnout include reactions related to physical exhaustion (Diehl & Carlotto, 2014). This exhaustion is correlated with stress symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, gastrointestinal issues, and sleep problems (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). The psychic symptoms of burnout relate to psychological reactions, such as anxiety, reduction of cognitive performance, and decreased memory capacity in the short term (Kaschka et al., 2011). Behavioral symptoms of burnout show up as isolation (Diehl & Carlotto, 2014; Maslach & Leiter, 2016). This directly relates to depersonalization, the third dimension of burnout (Maslach et al., 1996). Detachment and isolation are traits that appear when educators do not want to take on responsibility and make a connection with the students they teach.

There are consequences for teachers, students, and schools if educators experience burnout. Successful educators have a positive experience with personal accomplishment. School climate plays a part in whether educators experience personal accomplishment. The educators that struggle with self-efficacy are the ones who do not ever feel success in their jobs

(Donitsa-Schmidt & Zuzovsky, 2016). When teachers are hard on themselves for not having success, lower amounts of self-efficacy may lead to burnout symptoms (Rumschlag, 2017). When educators feel burnout, engagement with their job and students is lower (Donitsa-Schmidt & Zuzovsky, 2016; Maslah & Leiter, 2016; Maslach et al., 2001). When educators give a minimal level of performance due to burnout, student success drops (Shen et al., 2015). This negativity may become contagious to students and coworkers.

Attrition rates have increased so that more teachers leave the profession voluntarily early on rather than remain teaching until retirement (Ingersoll et al., 2014). Teachers who teach the same grade in their first two years are approximately 20% more likely to stay than teachers who are forced to switch grade levels (Ost & Schiman, 2015). If a teacher is reassigned to teach a new grade, this reassignment is associated with higher levels of turnover (Ost & Schiman, 2015). The workloads of teachers can cause stress and create burnout symptoms (Maslach, 2003).

In conclusion, teachers' environments and personal experiences factor into feelings of burnout. Educators in rural environments may experience more symptoms of occupational burnout than others based on their work situations. Rural schools tend to have poverty-stricken students and the added stress of low student achievement.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

To determine differences in burnout among elementary, middle, and high school teachers, a causal-comparative research design was used to address three research questions and three null hypotheses. This chapter describes the methods that were used in this study. The details of the design, participants, setting, procedures, and data analysis are described below.

Design

The chosen research design for this study is a causal-comparative design. No manipulation of the independent variable occurred (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). According to Gall et al. (2007), this research design is a fit for this study because the groups were naturally formed.

The independent variable was teachers' grade level taught across three levels (elementary, middle, and high school) in a rural area of southeast Tennessee. For the purpose of this study, elementary school teachers are defined as those who teach kindergarten through fifth grades. Middle school teachers are defined as those who teach sixth grade through eighth grade. High school teachers are defined as those who teach ninth grade through twelfth grade.

The dependent variable for the first research question was emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion is defined as the feelings of being emotionally overworked and exhausted by one's work (Maslach et al., 1996). The dependent variable for the second research question was depersonalization. Depersonalization is defined as an unfeeling and impersonal response toward those in one's work environment (Maslach et al., 1996). The dependent variable for the third research question was personal accomplishment. Personal accomplishment is defined as a feeling of competence and successful achievement in one's work (Maslach et al., 1996).

Research Questions

RQ1: Is there a difference in the *emotional exhaustion* burnout scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey?

RQ2: Is there a difference in the *depersonalization* burnout scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey?

RQ3: Is there a difference in the *personal accomplishment* burnout scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey?

Null Hypotheses

H$_0$1: There is no statistically significant difference in the *emotional exhaustion* burnout scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey.

H$_0$2: There is no statistically significant difference in the *depersonalization* burnout scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey.

H$_0$3: There is no statistically significant difference in the *personal accomplishment* burnout scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey.

Participants and Setting

The participants for this study were selected by convenience sampling from a rural southeast Tennessee school district. All certified educators who interact with students,

kindergarten through twelfth grade, were invited to participate in the survey. The total number of surveys delivered to educators were 172. The number of surveys completed and returned were 126.

The setting of this study was a rural school district in southeast Tennessee. The school district consists of three elementary, one middle, and two high schools. The population of this rural area is 16,773 people (United States Census Bureau, 2016). The school district serves 2,507 students. Thirty-five percent of students are economically disadvantaged, meaning the school district is classified as Title I, receiving government aid due to the percentage of the low income student population (TN Department of Education, 2016).

Sample

The total sample size of educators was 126. According to Gall et al. (2007), this sample size met 126, which is the required minimum for a medium effect size with the statistical power of .7 at the .05 alpha level. Demographic information was collected at the beginning of the online survey (see Appendix A). Age ranges were reported, and 5 educators identified as being 18-24 years old, 26 reported as 25-34 years old, 33 reported as 35-44 years old, 33 reported as 45-54 years old, 25 reported as 55-64 years old, and 4 reported as being over 65 years old. Years of teaching experience were reported, and 27 educators identified as having 1-10 years of experience, 44 as having 11-20 years of experience, and 37 as having 21-30 years of experience, and 18 as having over 30 years of experience. Thirty educators reported having a bachelor's degree, 52 reported having a master's degree, 44 reported having a specialist degree, and 0 reported having a doctoral degree. Fifty-three reported teaching at the elementary school level (kindergarten through fifth grade), 31 reported teaching at the middle school level (sixth through eighth grade), and 42 reported teaching at high school level (ninth through twelfth grade).

Elementary School Teacher Group

The first group of educators were at the elementary school level consisting of 53

educators. Age ranges were reported, and 4 educators identified as being 18-24 years old, 10

reported as 25-34 years old, 14 reported as 35-44 years old, 14 reported as 45-54 years old, 10

reported as 55-64 years old, and 1 reported as being over 65 years old. Years of teaching

experience were reported, and 14 educators identified as having 1-10 years of experience, 17 as

having 11-20 years of experience, and 14 as having 21-30 years of experience, and 8 as having

over 30 years of experience. Twelve educators reported having a bachelor's degree, 19 reported

having a master's degree, 22 reported having a specialist degree, and 0 reported having a

doctoral degree.

Middle School Teacher Group

The second group of educators were at the middle school level consisting of 32

educators. Age ranges were reported, and 1 educator identified as being 18-24 years old, 6

reported as 25-34 years old, 8 reported as 35-44 years old, 9 reported as 45-54 years old, 6

reported as 55-64 years old, and 1 reported as being over 65 years old. Years of teaching

experience were reported, and 8 educators identified as having 1-10 years of experience, 9 as

having 11-20 years of experience, and 11 as having 21-30 years of experience, and 3 as having

over 30 years of experience. Twelve educators reported having a bachelor's degree, 9 reported

having a master's degree, 10 reported having a specialist degree, and 0 reported having a

doctoral degree.

High School Teacher Group

The third group of educators were at the high school level consisting of 41 educators.

Age ranges were reported, and 0 educators identified as being 18-24 years old, 10 reported as 25-

34 years old, 11 reported as 35-44 years old, 10 reported as 45-54 years old, 9 reported as 55-64 years old, and 2 reported as being over 65 years old. Years of teaching experience were reported, and 5 educators identified as having 1-10 years of experience, 18 as having 11-20 years of experience, and 12 as having 21-30 years of experience, and 7 as having over 30 years of experience. Six educators reported having a bachelor's degree, 24 reported having a master's degree, 12 reported having a specialist degree, and 0 reported having a doctoral degree.

Instrumentation

The Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey, or MBI-ES, (Maslach et al., 1986) was used to measure the dependent variables of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment of educators and those who work in school settings. The MBI-ES is a version of the Human Services Survey from Maslach. The purpose of the MBI-ES is to create a standardized measure of an individual's experience of burnout. The instrument was developed when an interest in the phenomenon of burnout was evident, but there was no way to measure the burnout of an individual. The MBI is now the recognized leading measure of burnout. The survey was not a clinical-diagnostic tool to label burnout but may be used as a self-assessment for educators to use reflection.

The MBI-ES items are written in the form of statements. Respondents describe their feelings or attitudes toward each statement using a Likert scale. The authors described the item selection process for the MBI-ES. A form of the MBI that included 47 items was administered to a sample of 605 people. Factor analysis and selection criteria were applied, and the items were reduced to 25. These 25 items met a single factor loading greater than .40, a large range of responses, a low percentage of "never" responses, and a high item-total correlation. The 25 items were administered to a new sample of 420 people. The 22 items that performed

consistently across the two large samples, as well as other smaller samples, were retained. These 22 items are included on the current version of the MBI-ES.

The instrument uses a seven-point Likert scale that ranges from Never to Every Day. Responses are as follows: *Never* = 0, *A Few Times a Year* = 1, *Once a Month* = 2, *A Few Times a Month* = 3, *Once a Week* = 4, *A Few Times a Week* = 5, *Every Day* = 6. The 22 items are designated as one of three subscales: (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) depersonalization, or (c) personal accomplishment. This instrument has been used in numerous studies since development in 1986 (Boujut, Dean, Grouselle, & Cappe, 2016; Flook et al., 2013; Košir, Tement, Licardo, & Habe, 2015; Shen et al., 2015).

Validity was tested in several ways. Scores were correlated with behaviors seen by someone close to the participant, such as a spouse of someone living with participants. Scores were correlated with specific job characteristics related to burnout and with outcomes related to burnout (Maslach, 2003; Maslach et al., 1996). Evidence supporting validity of the MBI-ES is shown from studies that have assessed the relationships between burnout scales and work experience. Role conflict, work overload, classroom climate, and social support were correlated with the three subscales of the MBI-ES (Leiter, 2005). Another correlation found of burnout for teachers is student misbehavior (Aloe et al., 2014). A meta-analysis examined the relationship between workplace demands, resources, and experienced burnout (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). Workplace demands were positively associated with burnout (Leiter, 2005). Studies were found that correlate burnout scale scores with burnout predicted outcomes (Evers, Brouwers, & Tomic, 2002).

The first scale of the MBI-ES was emotional exhaustion. The emotional exhaustion scale assesses feelings of being emotionally exhausted by one's work. Internal reliability of the

emotional exhaustion scale has been reported as a Cronbach alpha of .90, which is greater than the standard of .70. Test-retest reliability was lower, with a Cronbach alpha of .60 within a one-year interval. The standard error of measurement for this scale is 3.80. The emotional exhaustion scale consists of nine questions. The range of scores for this scale is 0 to 54. Scores 27 or higher indicate a high level of emotional exhaustion. Scores from 17 to 26 indicate a moderate level of emotional exhaustion. Scores from 0 to 16 indicate a low level of emotional exhaustion.

The second scale of the MBI-ES was depersonalization. The depersonalization scale assesses an educator's impersonal response toward students and negativity to those in the workplace. Internal reliability of the depersonalization scale has been reported as a Cronbach alpha of .76, which is greater than the standard of .70. Test-retest reliability was lower, with a Cronbach alpha of .54 within a one-year interval. The standard error of measurement for this scale is 3.16. The depersonalization scale consists of five questions. The range of scores for this scale is 0 to 30. Scores of 13 or higher indicate a high level of depersonalization. Scores from 7 to 12 indicate a moderate level of depersonalization. Scores from 0 to 6 indicate a low level of depersonalization.

The third scale of the MBI-ES was personal accomplishment. The personal accomplishment scale assesses feelings of success and achievement in one's work. Internal reliability of the personal accomplishment scale has been reported as a Cronbach alpha of .76, which is greater than the standard of .70. Test-retest reliability was lower, with a Cronbach alpha of .57 within a one-year interval. The standard error of measurement for this scale is 3.73. The personal accomplishment scale consists of eight questions. The range of scores for this scale is 0 to 48. Scores from 0 to 31 indicate a high level of personal accomplishment. Scores from

32 to 38 indicate a moderate level of personal accomplishment. Scores of 39 or higher indicate a low level of personal accomplishment.

The MBI-ES takes 10 to 15 minutes to complete. No training is needed to administer the survey. Administration of the survey was emailed through Mind Garden, Inc. software. The survey was scored by the researcher by using Mind Garden, Inc. software. The researcher had permission to use this instrument from Mind Garden, Inc. after purchasing the survey (see Appendix B).

Procedures

The superintendent of the participating school district granted written permission for his/her teachers (kindergarten through twelfth grade) to participate in this study (see Appendix C). The researcher obtained permission to conduct this study from Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (see Appendix D). Upon approval from the superintendent, the principal of each school was contacted via email discussing the survey and what it would entail for his/her teachers (see Appendix E). No contact was made with teacher participants before data collection.

To initiate data collection, the researcher added a cover letter and consent form to the survey in an online format created by the software developer, Mind Garden, Inc. (see Appendix F). This cover letter and consent form explained the anonymity of the survey and provided survey instructions for educators. The online survey was sent out as an email by the principals of the school system. After the survey was emailed, educators had 21 days to respond. Two days before data collection ended, the principals were instructed to email or remind teachers in other ways to complete the survey. The survey data was entered into SPSS data analysis software (IBM Corporation, 2016).

Data Analysis

The three research hypotheses were analyzed using three separate one-way analysis of variances (ANOVAs) at a 95% confidence level. To control for a Type I error, a Bonferroni correction was used, and each null hypothesis was tested using a .02 alpha level (.05 alpha/3, $k =$ .0167). This type of analysis fit this study because ANOVAs are used when the researcher wants to compare the dependent variable across two or more groups (Warner, 2013). This study attempted to determine the differences between three groups on three separate dependent variables. Data screening included creating a box-and-whisker plot for each group on each variable to determine outliers. Assumptions were tested for the ANOVA tests. First, Shapiro-Wilk was used to test for normality. Next, Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variance was used to test the assumption of equal variance. If a significant result was found, the Bonferroni procedure was used as a multiple comparison procedure. Effect size was calculated using Partial Eta-Squared.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this causal-comparative study was to determine any differences in rural educators' burnout scores, dependent on the grade level taught, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey. The researcher collected data from 126 rural educators in a single school district. The ANOVA model was used to test the three hypotheses relating to burnout scores.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were:

RQ1: Is there a difference in the *emotional exhaustion* burnout scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey?

RQ2: Is there a difference in the *depersonalization* burnout scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey?

RQ3: Is there a difference in the *personal accomplishment* burnout scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey?

Null Hypotheses

The null hypotheses for this study were:

H₀1: There is no statistically significant difference in the *emotional exhaustion* burnout scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey.

H₀2: There is no statistically significant difference in the *depersonalization* burnout scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey.

H₀3: There is no statistically significant difference in the *personal accomplishment* burnout scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey.

Descriptive Statistics

A total of 126 participants were included in the data analysis. There were 53 (42.1%) who identified as an elementary school level teacher (grades kindergarten to fifth grade), 31 (24.6%) who identified as a middle school level teacher (sixth to eighth grade), and 42 (33.3%) who identified as a high school level teacher (ninth to twelfth grade). The level of students taught served as the independent variable for the study and determined the groups used for analysis. Group 1 was identified as those that teach elementary school ($n = 53$), Group 2 was identified as those that teach middle school ($n = 31$), and Group 3 was identified as those that teach high school ($n = 42$).

The dependent variables were measured using the MBI-ES. Emotional exhaustion scores ($n = 126$) ranged from 3 to 42, with $M = 22.67$ and $SD = 8.63$. Depersonalization scores ($n = 126$) ranged from 0 to 10, with $M = 4.16$ and $SD = 2.59$. Personal accomplishment scores ($n = 126$) ranged from 15 to 48, with $M = 31.71$ and $SD = 8.28$. Each of the three scores were grouped according to the independent variable. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for all scores for all groups.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Group Burnout Scores

Null Hypothesis	Group	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
Emotional Exhaustion	Group 1	53	22.19	8.67
	Group 2	31	25.84	9.05
	Group 3	42	20.93	7.80
	Total	126	22.67	8.63
Depersonalization	Group 1	53	3.87	2.36
	Group2	31	4.58	2.94
	Group 3	42	4.21	2.60
	Total	126	4.16	2.59
Personal Accomplishment	Group 1	53	31.00	8.75
	Group 2	31	32.45	7.78
	Group 3	42	32.07	8.14
	Total	126	31.71	8.28

Results

Null Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis asked whether or not there was a statistically significant difference between the emotional exhaustion burnout scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers.

Data Screening

Data screening was conducted on each group's dependent variables (elementary, middle, and high school) regarding data inconsistencies and outliers. The researcher sorted the data on each variable and scanned for inconsistencies. No data errors of inconsistencies were identified. Box and whisker plots were used to detect outliers on each dependent variable. No outliers were

identified. Therefore, no scores were adjusted or removed. See Figure 1 for box and whisker plots.
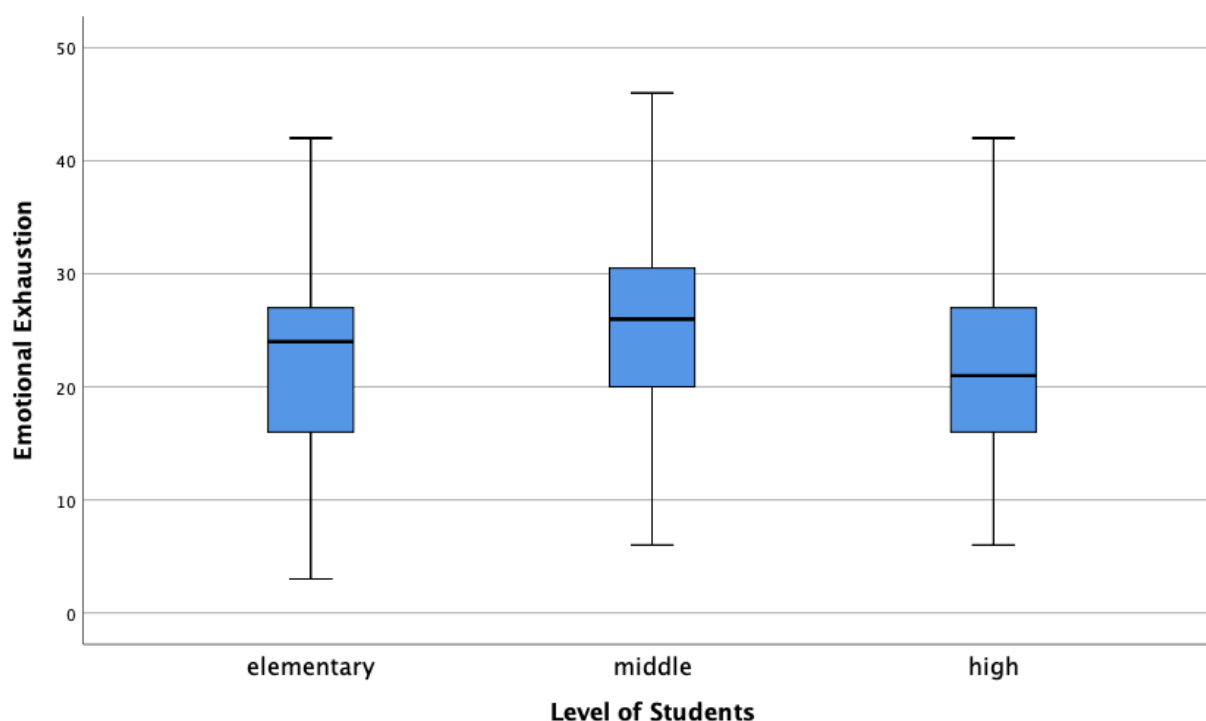
Figure 1. Box and whisker plot for emotional exhaustion of elementary, middle, and high school teachers.

Assumptions

Assumption tests were run for the purpose of ensuring validity of the ANOVA (Warner, 2013). The Shapiro-Wilk Test was used to test the assumption of normality of the emotional exhaustion scores for each group. The findings for all three groups were not significant, indicating a normal distribution for each group. Table 2 presents the findings of the Shapiro-Wilk tests for all three groups.

Table 2

Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality for Emotional Exhaustion

Group	Shapiro-Wilk Test Statistic	*p*
Group 1 - Elementary School	.982	.580
Group 2 - Middle School	.986	.954
Group 3 - High School	.983	.782

The assumption of homogeneity of variance was determined using the Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variance. The Levene test was not significant, where $F(2, 123) = .44$, $p = .65$. Equal variances of the ANOVA test were assumed. See Table 3 for Levene's Test.

Table 3

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variance for Emotional Exhaustion

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Emotional Exhaustion	Based on Mean	.436	2	123	.648
	Based on Median	.296	2	123	.744
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.296	2	120.889	.744
	Based on trimmed mean	.434	2	123	.649

Results for Null Hypothesis One

An ANOVA was used to test the null hypothesis of the differences of emotional exhaustion scores among rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers. The null hypothesis failed to be rejected using a .02 alpha level, where $F(2, 123) = 3.13$, $p = .05$, $\eta_2 = .05$. According to Warner (2013), this test yielded a medium effect size. There is no significant difference in emotional exhaustion scores among rural elementary, middle, and high school

teachers. Because the null hypothesis was not rejected, post hoc analysis was not conducted.

See Table 4 for Tests of Between-Subjects Effects.

Table 4

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Emotional Exhaustion

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	450.908a	2	225.454	3.129	.047	.048
Intercept	63453.552	1	63453.552	880.594	.000	.877
Level Taught	450.908	2	225.454	3.129	.047	.048
Error	8863.092	123	72.058			
Total	74050.000	126				
Corrected Total	9314.000	125				

Null Hypothesis Two

The second hypothesis asked whether or not there was a statistically significant difference between the depersonalization burnout scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers.

Data Screening

Data screening was conducted on each group's dependent variables (elementary, middle, and high school) regarding data inconsistencies and outliers. The researcher sorted the data on each variable and scanned for inconsistencies. No data errors of inconsistencies were identified. Box and whisker plots were used to detect outliers on each dependent variable. No outliers were identified. Therefore, no scores were adjusted or removed. See Figure 2 for box and whisker plots.
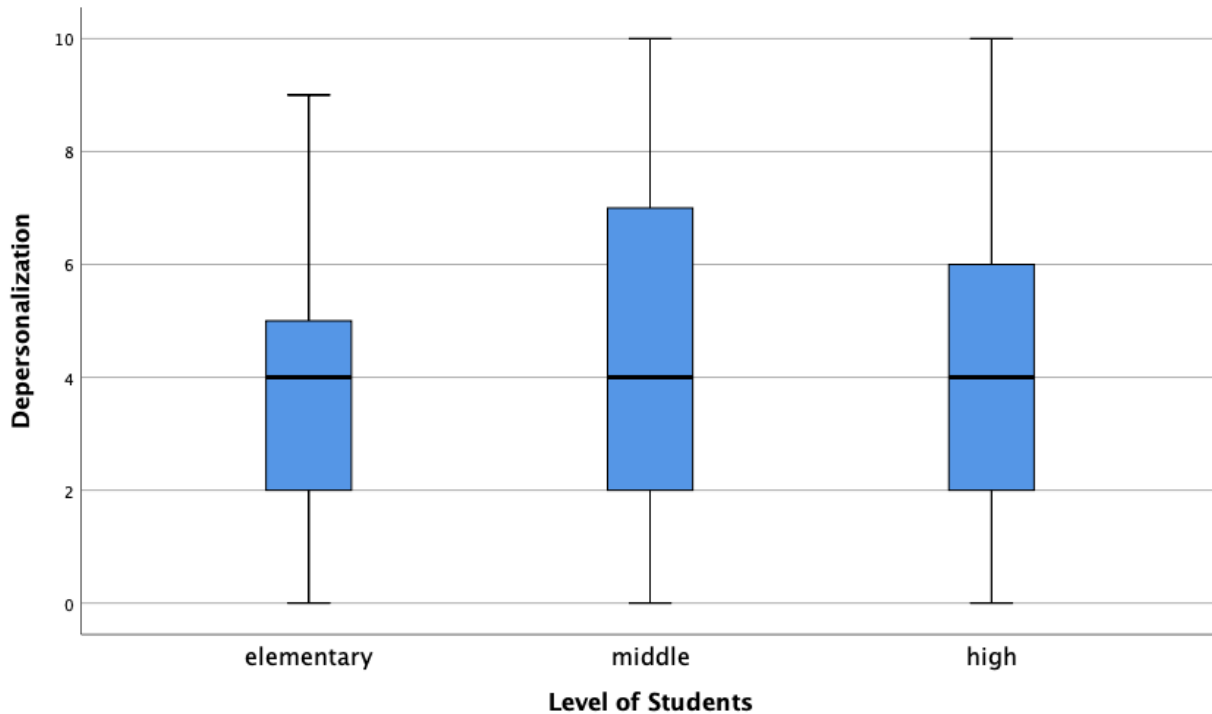
Figure 2. Box and whisker plot for depersonalization of elementary, middle, and high school teachers.

Assumptions

Assumption tests were run for the purpose of ensuring validity of the ANOVA (Warner, 2013). The Shapiro-Wilk Test was used to test the assumption of normality of the depersonalization scores for each group. The findings for all three groups were not significant, indicating a normal distribution for each group. Table 5 presents the findings of the Shapiro-Wilk tests for all three groups.

Table 5

Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality for Depersonalization

Group	Shapiro-Wilk Test Statistic	p
Group 1 - Elementary School	.963	.098
Group 2 - Middle School	.937	.067
Group 3 - High School	.958	.129

The assumption of homogeneity of variance was determined using the Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variance. The Levene test was not significant, where $F(2, 123) = 1.50$, $p = .23$. Equal variances of the ANOVA test were assumed. See Table 6 for Levene's Test.

Table 6

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variance for Depersonalization

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Based on Mean	1.495	2	123	.228
Based on Median	.960	2	123	.386
Based on Median and with adjusted df	.960	2	118.131	.386
Based on trimmed mean	1.408	2	123	.248

Results for Null Hypothesis Two

An ANOVA was used to test the null hypothesis of the differences of depersonalization scores among rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers. The null hypothesis failed to be rejected using a .02 alpha level, where $F(2, 123) = .75$, $p = .47$, $\eta^2 = .01$. According to Warner (2013), this test yielded a small effect size. There is no significant difference in depersonalization scores among rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers. Because the

null hypothesis was not rejected, post hoc analysis was not conducted. See Table 7 for Tests of Between-Subjects Effects.

Table 7

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Depersonalization

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	10.130a	2	5.065	.754	.473	.012
Intercept	2139.812	1	2139.812	318.372	.000	.721
Level Taught	10.130	2	5.065	.754	.473	.012
Error	826.695	123	6.721			
Total	3016.000	126				
Corrected Total	836.825	125				

Null Hypothesis Three

The third hypothesis asked whether or not there was a statistically significant difference between the personal accomplishment burnout scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers.

Data Screening

Data screening was conducted on each group's dependent variables (elementary, middle, and high school) regarding data inconsistencies and outliers. The researcher sorted the data on each variable and scanned for inconsistencies. No data errors of inconsistencies were identified. Box and whisker plots were used to detect outliers on each dependent variable. No outliers were identified. Therefore, no scores were adjusted or removed. See Figure 3 for box and whisker plots.
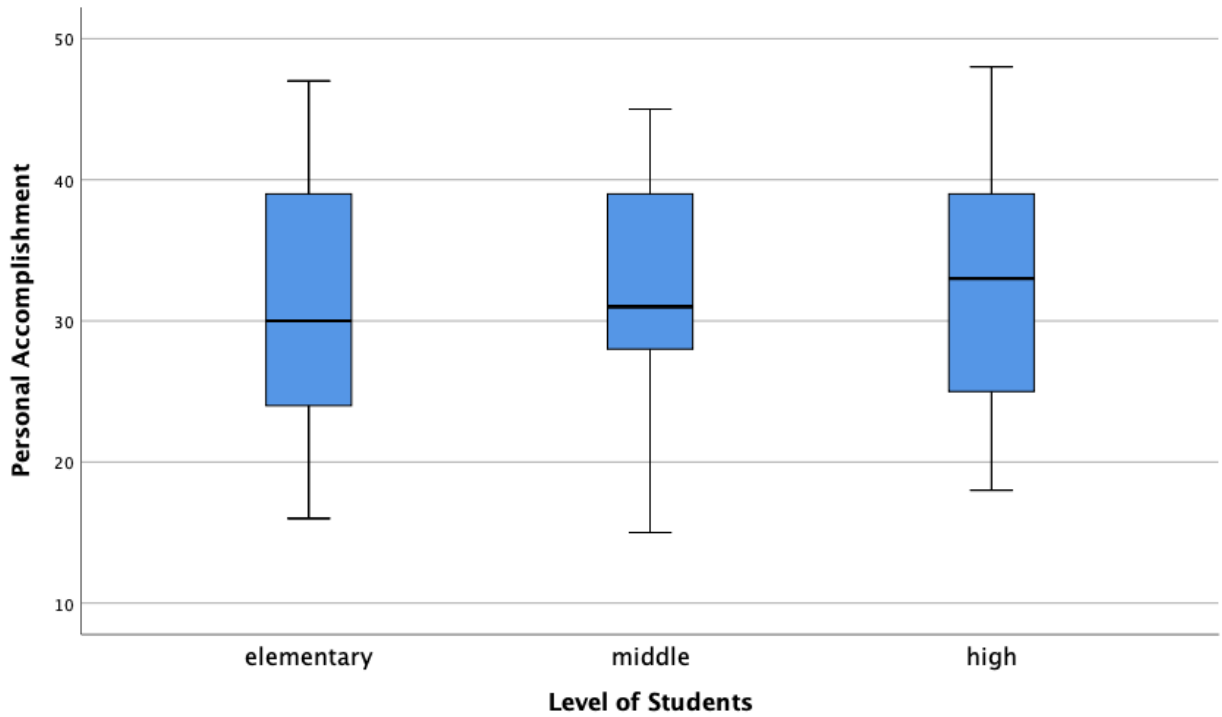
Figure 3. Box and whisker plot for personal accomplishment of elementary, middle, and high school teachers.

Assumptions

Assumption tests were run for the purpose of ensuring validity of the ANOVA (Warner, 2013). The Shapiro-Wilk Test was used to test the assumption of normality of the personal accomplishment scores for each group. The findings for all three groups were not significant, indicating a normal distribution for each group. Table 8 presents the findings of the Shapiro-Wilk tests for all three groups.

Table 8

Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality for Personal Accomplishment

Group	Shapiro-Wilk Test Statistic	p
Group 1- Elementary School	.948	.055
Group 2- Middle School	.955	.218
Group 3- High School	.963	.185

The assumption of homogeneity of variance was determined using the Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variance. The Levene test was not significant, where $F(2, 123) = .58$, $p = .56$. Equal variances of the ANOVA test were assumed. See Table 9 for Levene's Test.

Table 9

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variance for Personal Accomplishment

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Based on Mean	.579	2	123	.562
Based on Median	.670	2	123	.514
Based on Median and with adjusted df	.670	2	122.491	.514
Based on trimmed mean	.546	2	123	.581

Results for Null Hypothesis Three

An ANOVA was used to test the null hypothesis of the differences of personal accomplishment scores among rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers. The null hypothesis failed to be rejected using a .02 alpha level, where $F(2, 123) = .36$, $p = .70$, $\eta_2 = .01$. According to Warner (2013), this test yielded a small effect size. There is no significant difference in personal accomplishment scores among rural elementary, middle, and high school

teachers. Because the null hypothesis was not rejected, post hoc analysis was not conducted.

See Table 10 for Tests of Between-Subjects Effects.

Table 10

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Personal Accomplishment

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	49.251[a]	2	24.626	.356	.701	.006
Intercept	121766.718	1	121766.718	1759.043	.000	.935
Level Taught	49.251	2	24.626	.356	.701	.006
Error	8514.463	123	69.223			
Total	135294.000	126				
Corrected Total	8563.714	125				

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

This chapter contains a discussion of the results for each research question.   The implications of the results to the body of knowledge are examined, as well as limitations of this study. The recommendations for future research are also addressed.

Discussion

The purpose of this causal-comparative study was to determine if there were statistically significant differences of burnout among elementary, middle, and high school teachers in a rural school district in Southeast Tennessee. The potential differences were examined by analyzing data collected from the MBI-ES. The survey yielded burnout scores for emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment for each participant. This study examined the following research questions:

Research Question One

Is there a difference in the emotional exhaustion burnout score of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey?

The purpose of this question was to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the emotional exhaustion scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers. Emotional exhaustion is the feelings of being emotionally overworked and exhausted by one's work (Maslach et al., 1996). The researcher was limited to one rural school district, including three elementary, one middle, and two high schools. The participants completed the MBI-ES. This yielded 53 elementary, 31 middle, and 42 high school level surveys.

The results of the one-way ANOVA indicated that there was not a significant difference in emotional exhaustion among rural elementary, middle, and high teachers. The null hypothesis failed to be rejected for Research Question One.

As concluded by this study, educators in this rural area do not differ in emotional exhaustion scores when discussing burnout. This would imply that educators, no matter the level of students taught, experience statistically the same level of emotional exhaustion. This study did not search to find if emotional exhaustion was present in these teachers, but only if there was a difference based on the grade level taught.

Research Question Two

Is there a difference in the depersonalization burnout scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey?

The purpose of this question was to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the depersonalization scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers. Maslach et al. (1996) describes depersonalization as an unfeeling and impersonal response toward those in one's work environment. As with Research Question One, the researcher was limited to one rural school district, including three elementary, one middle, and two high schools. The participants completed the MBI-ES. This yielded the same 53 elementary, 31 middle, and 42 high school level surveys as for research question one.

The results of the one-way ANOVA indicated that there was not a significant difference in depersonalization among rural elementary, middle, and high teachers. The null hypothesis failed to be rejected for Research Question Two.

As concluded by this study, educators in this rural area do not differ in depersonalization scores when discussing burnout. This would imply that educators, no matter the level of students

taught, experience statistically the same level of depersonalization, even though teachers in different grade levels have different experiences. This study did not search to find if depersonalization was present in these teachers, but only if there was a difference based on the grade level taught.

Research Question Three

Is there a difference in the personal accomplishment burnout scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey?

The purpose of this question was to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the personal accomplishment scores of rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers. Reduced personal accomplishment refers to a tendency that teachers evaluate themselves negatively as well as a general feeling that they are no longer doing a meaningful and important job. The data for Research Question Three came from the same surveys as the other research questions. Rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers completed a survey that provided the researcher with a personal accomplishment score for each participant. Those scores were then compared using a one-way ANOVA.

The results of the one-way ANOVA indicated that there was not a significant difference in personal accomplishment among rural elementary, middle, and high teachers. The null hypothesis failed to be rejected for Research Question Three.

As concluded by this study, educators in this rural area do not differ in personal accomplishment scores when discussing burnout. This would imply that educators, no matter the level of students taught, experience statistically the same level of personal accomplishment, even though teachers in different grade levels have different experiences. This study did not search to

find if personal accomplishment was high or low in these teachers, but only if there was a

difference based on the grade level taught.

Summary of Discussion

The results of this study, while not significantly significant, add to the body of knowledge

concerning burnout of rural educators. The researcher found that no statistically significant

differences could be found in emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal

accomplishment in rural elementary, middle, and high school teachers. This study was not

designed to determine if burnout existed in these teachers, but this could be a discussion that

comes from the collected data.

The researcher could conclude that finding no difference among burnout levels should be

consistent among all three dimensions of burnout. The issues and feelings of dealing with

poverty-stricken students may led to emotional exhaustion and low personal accomplishment

(Sipple & Brent, 2009). The educators surveyed in this study were in the same Title 1 school

district, with many poverty-stricken students. All of the teachers surveyed may experience the

same difficulties on a daily basis, provided no difference in their personal accomplishment and

emotional exhaustion scores.

Educators have different types of stressors based on their level of students. For example,

elementary level teachers experience negativity with school climate and family factors (Stauffer

& Mason, 2013). Secondary educators experience stress from behavior problems and feeling

connected to students (O'Brennan et al., 2017). While these educators experience different types

of stressors, their levels of personal accomplishment, depersonalization, and emotional

exhaustion were not statistically different. This could mean that no matter what the stressor is, it

impacts educators in the same way.

In a study by Provasnik et al. (2007), it was concluded that rural teachers are less likely to hold master's degrees. This study disputed that by finding 76% of the rural educators in this study held a master's degree or higher. These educators advance their knowledge of teaching practice, which could mean that they enjoy their jobs. This could also be due to a large salary increase from the district when an additional degree is obtained or could be a result of the teachers making themselves as marketable as possible when looking for new jobs.

Implications

This study was meant to close a gap in literature surrounding the burnout levels of teachers in rural school districts across all grade levels. This provided insight into how teachers in different grade levels experience burnout. Existing literature illustrates that special education teachers and teachers in STEM programs experience teacher burnout, leading to teacher shortages (Goldhaber et al., 2015). Current research also identifies differences in burnout levels among teachers in different settings, such as rural versus suburban (Rumschlag, 2017).

The results of this study should be shared with the administrator of the school district where the participants taught. While not significant, the administrator should be made aware of burnout levels present among grade levels. For future purposes, the administrator may want a study that determines if burnout exists and in which grade levels.

Limitations

Several limitations were considered for this study. First, this study was limited to one rural school district in a specific region in Southeast Tennessee. This generalized the study to one area. The population was limited to those teachers in one school district. Receiving survey data from more educators in other rural school districts would be needed before assumptions could be made about rural school educators. The sample size was a limiting factor for this study.

The sample size met the minimum requirements for statistical testing, but a larger sample size could have improved the effect size and validity of the study. The use of convenience sampling was a limitation in this study. Warner (2013) stated that convenience sampling is "not representative of any real-world population" (p. 75).

This study used a casual comparative design, which would indicate weak internal validity and should not be used as grounds for causation (Warner, 2013). Other factors could have greater effect than the independent variable (Gall et al., 2007). This study was used to measure educator burnout scores at one point in time. The survey was administered at the beginning of a school year, possibly before burnout symptoms could begin after having the summer off. More information could be gathered by completing the study at another point in time.

Self-reporting can cause several issues for a study. Participants could have scored themselves in a particular way, answering based on what they believe the researcher is expecting. There could be issues in responses when a participant selected the wrong reporting category or did not understand the answering options. As an online survey instrument, the researcher could not verify the accuracy of the provided data.

Recommendations for Future Research

More study opportunities are available that would continue to advance the body of knowledge related to burnout levels of educators. Some areas for future study may include:

1. Expand the size of this study to more rural school districts.

2. Expand the scope of this study by comparing burnout among rural, urban, and suburban school districts.

3. Expand the scope of this study to include private and online school settings, rather than only public schools.

4. Expand the scope of this study to include higher education educators in the public and private sector.

5. Consider a longitudinal study that measures burnout scores at different times during the school year.

6. Conduct a study that measures burnout scores dependent on teaching experience.

7. Conduct a study that measures burnout scores dependent on educators' age.

8. Conduct a study in order to examine the correlation between burnout scores and degree type.

9. Conduct a qualitative study that would include interviews with educators to determine common themes surrounding burnout.

10. Consider a mixed methods study to determine if burnout correlates to a dependent variable of educators.

Valuable insight pertaining to burnout could be gained by these recommended areas of future study.

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APPENDIX A: Survey Demographic Questions

Screening and Demographic Questions for the beginning of survey:

All questions are mandatory, multiple choice, and answer choices should be one choice per row.

1. Are you a certified, licensed teacher in a rural area?
    a. Answer choices: yes, no
2. Please indicate your age range.
    a. Range options: 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, over 65
3. Please indicate your years of teaching experience.
    a. Range options: 1-10 years, 11-20 years, 21-30 years, over 30 years
4. Please indicate your highest degree attained.
    a. Options: Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, Specialist's Degree, Doctorate Degree
5. Which level of students do you teach?
    a. Options: Elementary (Kindergarten through Fifth Grade), Middle (Sixth through Eighth Grade), High School (Ninth through Twelfth Grade)

APPENDIX B: Permission for Use of Survey

mind garden
www.mindgarden.com

To Whom It May Concern,

The above-named person has made a license purchase from Mind Garden, Inc. and has permission to administer the following copyrighted instrument up to that quantity purchased:

Maslach Burnout Inventory forms: Educators Survey

The three sample items only from this instrument as specified below may be included in your thesis or dissertation. Any other use must receive prior written permission from Mind Garden. The entire instrument form may not be included or reproduced at any time in any other published material. Please understand that disclosing more than we have authorized will compromise the integrity and value of the test.

Citation of the instrument must include the applicable copyright statement listed below. Sample Items:

MBI - Educators Survey - MBI-ES:
I feel emotionally drained from my work.
I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.
I don't really care what happens to some students.

Sincerely,

Mind Garden, Inc.
www.mindgarden.com

APPENDIX C: School District Recruitment Consent

Study Consent and Recruitment

Hamby, Keisha N

Wed 6/5/2019 10:16 AM

To: ██████████████████████████████

Hello ████████! I sent this to you once before, but I am officially working on IRB approval and made some adjustments, so I need another consent. Thank you so much!

Dear ████████:

As a doctoral candidate at Liberty University's School of Education, I am requesting your approval for a dissertation research study, using the teachers in your school district. The title of my research study is A CAUSAL COMPARATIVE STUDY OF BURNOUT AMONG RURAL ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, AND HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS. This study will examine if any dimensions of occupational burnout are present in rural teachers, and if so, are there any significant differences based on the grade level taught. I would provide you with a survey link through email to the Maslach Burnout Inventory, and I would ask you, or someone on your staff, to send this out to your teachers as recruitment. This way, the study is completely anonymous to me as the researcher. Your district will not be named in my study. This is anonymous information.

If you wish to help me by recruiting rural teachers for my study, please provide a consent statement in reply to this email. This will help me obtain final IRB approval for my study. If you do not wish for this study to occur in your district, please reply to this email with your response. Please contact me with any questions you may have, or feel free to contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Sarah Hutter, at ██████████████. Thank you for your consideration. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Keisha Hamby

Request for Data Collection and Teacher Recruitment

Hamby, Keisha N
Fri 6/7/2019 2:44 PM
To: Hamby, Keisha N ████████████

Sounds exciting!
I approve this request and look forward to being a part of your studies.

████████████
Director of Schools
████ County

APPENDIX D: IRB Study Exemption

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

June 28, 2019

Keisha Hamby
IRB Exemption ██████████: A Causal Comparative Study of Burnout among Rural
Elementary, Middle, and High School Teachers

Dear Keisha Hamby,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance
with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration
(FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you
may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved
application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in
which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

> (2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude,
> achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual
> or auditory recording) if . . . the following criteria is met:
>
> > (i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of
> > the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the
> > subjects;

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any
changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued
exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a
new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether
possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at
irb@liberty.edu.

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

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APPENDIX E: Participant Recruitment Statement

Dear educator,

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education degree (Ed.D). The purpose of my research is to measure levels of occupational burnout among groups of rural educators, and I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

If you are a certified, licensed educator in a rural area, and are willing to participate, you will be asked to complete an online survey. It should take approximately 10 minutes for you to complete the survey. Your participation will be completely anonymous, as no identifiable information will be linked to the data collection.

After you click on the survey link below, you will see the consent page. The consent document contains additional information about my research. Please select 'Next" at the end of the consent document to indicate that you have read the information and would like to take part in the survey.

To participate, click on this survey link:

█████████████████████████████

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Keisha Hamby, Ed.S
Researcher

APPENDIX F: Participant Consent Form

CONSENT FORM
A Causal Comparative Study of Burnout Among Rural
Elementary, Middle, and High School Teachers
Keisha Hamby
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of the burnout levels of rural educators. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a certified kindergarten to twelfth grade educator in a rural area. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Keisha Hamby, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to determine if differences exist in burnout among elementary, middle, and high school educators in a rural area.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:
1. Complete an online survey that consists of demographic questions and the Maslach Burnout Inventory. The Maslach Burnout Inventory will be used to determine the educators' level of burnout. This survey includes 22 questions that are answered using a seven-point Likert scale. Out of the 22 items, nine questions pertain to emotional exhaustion, five questions pertain to depersonalization, and eight questions pertain to personal accomplishment. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher and the researcher's dissertation committee will have access to the records. When the online survey is completed and submitted, the survey will be confidentially and electronically submitted to Mind Garden, Inc. for scoring. Mind Garden will strip the survey data of all identifying information before providing the data to the researcher. Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

Conflicts of Interest Disclosure: The researcher serves as teacher for ███████████. To limit potential conflicts, the study will be anonymous to the researcher, so the researcher will not know who participated. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate in this study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time, prior to submitting the survey, without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Keisha Hamby. If you have questions, **you are encouraged** to contact her at ███████████. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Sarah Hutter, at ███████████.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, ███ ███████████████████████████ or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. By clicking "Next", I consent to participate in the study.