

The Relationship Between Elementary School Teachers' Perceptions of  
Principals' Leadership Effectiveness and Teacher Burnout

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## **Abstract of Dissertation**

### **The Relationship Between Teachers' Perceptions of Principals' Leadership Effectiveness and Teacher Burnout**

Burnout, an ever-present concern in the teaching profession, is arguably related to principals' leadership effectiveness. The purpose of this study was to investigate relationships between elementary school teachers' levels of burnout and their perceptions of their principals' leadership effectiveness. Data were gathered using the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey (MBI-ES) (Maslach & Jackson, 1981a) and the Leadership Effectiveness and Adaptability Description (LEAD) Other Survey (Hersey & Blanchard, 1976). The MBI measures aspects of burnout using three dimensions: (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) depersonalization, and (c) personal accomplishment. The LEAD Other Survey measures leadership effectiveness using situational leadership theory (SLT), in which leaders have a primary (most used) leadership style and often a secondary (backup) leadership style.

The research questions that guided this study were the following: What are the levels of burnout as reported by the elementary teachers in a suburban school division in the Mid-Atlantic region? What are teachers' perceptions of their principals' leadership effectiveness? To what extent is there a relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and burnout? A correlational research design was used.

It was found that the 127 teachers in the sample felt a moderate degree of emotional exhaustion, a low degree of depersonalization, and a high degree of personal accomplishment. In addition, most teachers (70.17%) perceived their principals as

having a low to moderate level of leadership effectiveness. Teachers perceived that principals' leadership effectiveness was significantly negatively correlated with one of the burnout scales: depersonalization ( $r = -.205, p < .02$ ). As teachers perceived their principals as less effective, they experienced more depersonalization.

The results of the current study, the moderate levels of emotional exhaustion, low levels of depersonalization, and high levels of personal accomplishment revealed by the results of the current study were encouraging. Although some researchers consider emotional exhaustion to be of great concern among professionals (Maslach et al., 1996), a troubling possibility is that the issue of decreasing reliability of the instrument is of greater interest. The finding that teachers, overall, perceived their principals to have moderate levels of leadership effectiveness is also cause for concern.

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## **List of Acronyms**

LEAD: Leadership Effectiveness and Adaptability Description

SLT: Situational leadership theory

MBI: Maslach Burnout Inventory

MBI-ES: Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey

NCLB: No Child Left Behind

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

In American public schools teachers and principals play critical roles in students' lives. Teachers are responsible for providing students with an education that enables them to participate more fully in life, to prepare to enter the workforce, and to become productive members of society. Nevertheless, Maslach and Leiter (1997) stated that daily demands of teaching, poor leadership, and challenges in the school setting may lead to teacher burnout. Burnout is a condition theorized to disproportionately affect those who work in human services professions; however, for the purpose of the current study, the discussion is restricted to teachers. Maslach and Leiter described burnout as an erosion of the human spirit and as an occupational hazard experienced by human services professionals such as counselors, physicians, nurses, and teachers. They also asserted that teachers experience burnout due to occupational demands that exceed human limits.

Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter (1996) described burnout as “the syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that may occur in individuals who work with people in some capacity” (p. 4). The researchers discovered that teachers may exhibit the burnout phenomena of overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of detachment, and lack of achievement. Burnout may impact relationships as well.

Teacher burnout has been defined as an accumulation of work demands accompanied by unsuccessful attempts to resolve those demands, often resulting from perceptions of the school environment (Dworkin, Saha, & Hill, 2003). According to Farber (1983), teachers perceive burnout as feeling insignificant in the workplace. As explained by Farber (1991), teachers may perceive their work as not meaningful.

Weisberg and Sagie (1999) wrote that burned-out teachers who experience continuous feelings of emotional stress because of bureaucratic demands may experience discontentment and withdraw psychologically from their students. Ingersoll (2001) opined that burnout could influence teachers' feelings of workplace dissatisfaction. Dworkin et al. (2003) and Pare (1995) noted how job dissatisfaction may evolve from teachers' daily interactions with ineffective principals. Pare asserted that school leaders who provide ineffective leadership may negatively influence teacher performance. Natale (1993) wrote that ineffective principals may be "more detrimental than helpful to the business of teaching" (p. 15). Both Natale's and Pare's studies provided conclusions supportive of a claim by Dworkin et al. that a relationship may exist between principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout. Other research also has suggested that a relationship may exist between principals' leadership (Lancaster, 2001) and levels of burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1986) in teachers. This study specifically examined relationships between teachers' reports of their perceptions of the principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout.

Chapter 1 introduces problems in public education today that provide the context for burnout as studied by Maslach et al. (1996) and leadership effectiveness as studied by Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (2008). Information in this chapter supports a quantitative study with an overarching research question and subquestions that address the relationship between elementary school teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout. This chapter is divided into nine sections: (a) the statement of the problem, (b) the purpose of the study, (c) the research question and subquestions, (d) the significance of the study, (e) the conceptual framework, (f) the



overview of the methodology, (g) the delimitations and limitations, (h) the assumptions, and (i) the introduction for the literature review.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Burnout is a prevalent problem among educators today (Van Tonder & Williams, 2009). Schaufeli and Van Dierendonck (1993) noted that the important roles teachers play in the lives of students may be affected by daily obstacles that influence burnout. Burnout affects teachers' health (Maslach & Leiter, 1997), their students' achievement (Capel, 1987), and teachers' ability to attain educational or career goals (Farber, 2000). Teachers who have experienced burnout may rethink their career choices (Ingersoll, 2001). Johnson (2001) stated that teachers who experience burnout may flee to safe work havens by transferring to other schools or by leaving the teaching vocation altogether. Johnson asserted that teachers leave teaching at different stages in their careers for various reasons and reported that 30% of new teachers exit the profession prior to their 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Marvel, Kyter, Peltola, and Morton (2007) reported that during the 2004-2005 school year, 8.4% of working teachers left the profession. The Alliance for Excellent Education (2005) confirmed that thousands of teaching positions become vacant annually. Efforts to isolate reasons for teacher vacancies have included research on teacher burnout.

Hanson (2006) stated that teachers who become burned out may do so as a result of bureaucratic demands. Hanson asserted that bureaucratic demands relating to teacher accountability influence burnout in teachers. Bureaucratic demands may have been influenced by the leadership practices of the principal (Mabry, 2005). Lancaster (2001)

wrote that principals not using the appropriate leadership styles may contribute to stress and thus burnout in teachers.

More research is needed to examine a possible correlation between effective leadership by principals and teachers' levels of burnout. A substantial amount of literature related to principals' leadership *styles* and teacher burnout was examined, but it provided limited empirical research specific to principals' leadership *effectiveness* and teacher burnout. For example, Lancaster (2001) and Harris (1999) examined principal leadership styles and stress that may lead to teacher burnout; however, they did not examine leadership effectiveness as much as leadership style. Lancaster's (2001) study suggested that teachers whose principals provide appropriate leadership experience low levels of burnout. Researchers have studied principals' leadership and suggested that their practices and effectiveness may influence teacher burnout (Harris, 1999, Lancaster, 2001). To date, there has been limited empirical evidence to fully document an existing relationship between principal leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout; additional research was needed.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether a relationship exists between elementary school teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout in the selected suburban school division in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Specifically, this study examined principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout.

The intent was to provide substantive, empirically based research for the selected school division regarding principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout. Due

to the limited empirical evidence on principals' leadership effectiveness as perceived by teachers and teacher burnout, this research adds to the body of knowledge specific to the research topic.

Studies by Harris (1999) and Lancaster (2001) have examined relationships between principals' leadership styles and stress as it impacts teacher burnout. This study investigated whether or not a relationship exists between teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout in a suburban school division, using the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey (MBI-ES) (Maslach et al., 1996). Teachers' perceptions of their principals' leadership effectiveness, as measured by the LEAD Other Survey (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998), also were gathered and used to determine any relationship between these perceptions and teachers' levels of (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) depersonalization, and (c) personal accomplishment.

### **Research Question and Subquestions**

This study presents an examination of the relationship between elementary school teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and burnout in teachers as practitioners in the classroom. Specifically, this research attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What are the levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment of elementary school teachers in the chosen school division?
2. What is the level of leadership effectiveness of principals as perceived by elementary school teachers in the chosen school division?
3. Is there a relationship between elementary school teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness (as measured by the LEAD Other Survey)

and teachers' levels of burnout (as measured by the MBI-ES)? The research hypotheses for Question 3 are the following:

Hypothesis 3.1: There is a negative relationship between elementary school teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teachers' levels of emotional exhaustion.

Hypothesis 3.2: There is a negative relationship between elementary school teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teachers' levels of depersonalization.

Hypothesis 3.3: There is a positive relationship between elementary school teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teachers' personal accomplishment.

### **Significance of the Study**

According to the National Association of State Boards of Education (2002), burnout continues to be an important concern as school administrators and educational leaders hold high expectations of teachers to deliver quality education. The literature has suggested the need of an examination of the relationship between leadership and burnout (Mabry, 2005). Lancaster (2001) studied teacher burnout and concluded that as burnout increases, leadership must be changed to appropriately fit the need of the teachers. The current study extended the research through examination of the specific relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and burnout in teachers.

Although burnout has been studied for more than four decades (Maslach & Leiter, 2005), the literature provides limited research on the relationship between principals'

leadership effectiveness (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998) and levels of burnout in teachers. This study has filled a gap in the limited research and provides empirical evidence in the leadership and burnout domains. This study also provides information for the chosen school division and administrators regarding the relationship between teachers' perceived effectiveness of principals' leadership and teacher burnout. The failure to detect a correlation between teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout may prompt further research into the etiology of teacher burnout.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The current investigation of teacher burnout and principal leadership effectiveness was grounded in two theories: burnout theory by Maslach and Jackson (1986) and the situational leadership theory (SLT) by Hersey and Blanchard (1998). This section first presents a discussion of the burnout theory.

Maslach and Jackson's (1986) theoretical framework of burnout was developed using a grounded theory approach. This process refers to labeling factors that emerged from the ranges of perceptions, behaviors, and attitudes of human services professionals. Burnout involves a continuum ranging from complete work engagement to total occupational burnout. Engagement is described as an active condition whereby workers are dedicated to their work and confident in their effectiveness in the job. Burnout is described as a state of exhaustion that results from workers' experiencing disenchantment and lack of success in their jobs. The burnout phenomenon includes three dimensions: (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) depersonalization, and (c) sense of personal accomplishment; each burnout aspect is distinct (Maslach et al., 1996).

Emotional exhaustion is presented as the first dimension of the burnout theory. The emotional exhaustion dimension represents feelings of fatigue, overextension, and lack of enthusiasm about one's work. Emotional exhaustion is different than mental and physical fatigue in that it reflects the depletion of emotional resources (Enzmann, 1994). As exhaustion increases, workers become unable to give of themselves to their recipients. Emotional exhaustion causes workers to lose their desire to work with the recipients and to become emotionally detached from them.

Depersonalization is presented as the second dimension of the burnout theory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981a). Depersonalization refers to one's ability to cope in the workplace, by withdrawing from recipients. The depersonalization scale is described as the development of unfeeling and impersonal responses to recipients in one's care or instruction. Such dehumanizing and callous perceptions of others may lead workers to view recipients as the cause of their problems (Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2002). The effect of depersonalization indicates individuals experience feelings of isolation, manifesting as "cold, negative, or excessive disengaging responses" to recipients (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 10). Individuals who experience depersonalization report feeling less motivation on the job, which suggests minimum interaction with colleagues (Maslach et al., 1996) as well as diminished feelings of success.

Personal accomplishment is the third dimension in the burnout theory. A sense of loss of personal accomplishment indicates individuals' tendency to negatively evaluate their work with the recipients. Such individuals might lose faith in their ability to achieve positive results in the job (Schaufeli & Buunk, 2003). The sense of loss of personal accomplishment refers to a "decline in one's feelings of competence and successful

achievement” in one’s work (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 10). Research by Maslach et al. confirmed workers’ who experience a high sense of personal accomplishment may have feelings of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Thus, personal accomplishment serves as protection from extreme levels of fatigue and detachment (Maslach et al., 1996).

Burnout increases as a result of personal demands or organizational factors. The incessant feelings of being burned out might result from persistent mismatches between workers’ perceptions of their job expectations and actual job performance (Maslach et al., 1996). Unfortunately, once burnout is apparent, intervention requires assistance from the organization. According to Maslach and Leiter (1997), burnout can be reversed with intervention that involves changes in job assignments and perceptions of the work environment.

Leadership effectiveness was explored based on a theoretical framework by Hersey and Blanchard (1998). Hersey and Blanchard (1969) introduced the SLT, which was originally called the lifecycle theory. The SLT provided the theoretical foundation for the leadership construct used in this study. The theorists posited that the leader’s effectiveness in leading an organization depends on workers’ readiness and the situation in the organization. Leaders use effective leadership styles to fit worker readiness to perform successfully, and to meet the needs of the organization in a specific situation. Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (1996) described leadership style as “behavior patterns used to influence the worker with and through others as perceived by these people” (p. 166). Leadership styles can be developed “over time to accommodate worker readiness and the needs of the organizational situation” (Hersey et al., 1996, p. 300).

Hersey and Blanchard (1998) explained that SLT includes the telling, selling, participating, and delegating leadership styles to influence worker job performance. Leaders who use the telling leadership style provide workers with thorough directions to complete specific tasks. The selling leadership style is used with workers who are gaining experience yet need additional clarification in the directions to perform the tasks. Leaders who employ the participating leadership style encourage workers to take part in decision making but retain control in the work environment. Leaders who use the delegating style empower workers with limited directions to complete specific tasks. Leaders' most effective leadership styles fit the readiness of the workers and situations in the organization. An effective leader selects a leadership style that is appropriate for the worker to accomplish a specific task in the situation.

According to Hersey et al. (1996), leaders use "no one best leadership style to increase worker productivity" in the organization (p. 190). The SLT has been cited in numerous studies as it provides understanding of relationships between the leader's style and worker readiness. Gill (2006) noted that SLT theory is used extensively with widespread recognition. The current study utilized SLT to determine principals' leadership effectiveness, as perceived by teachers.

## **Methodology**

The current study used a quantitative approach with a nonexperimental correlational research method. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007), the correlational method allows an examination of relationships, such as a relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout. As indicated by Wiersma and Jurs (2004), the correlational design is appropriate in



determining whether or not a relationship exists, thereby making the design appropriate for the current study. There was no intent to investigate a causal relationship.

This study's participants were a sample of full-time regular and special education elementary school teachers employed in the selected suburban school division in the Mid-Atlantic region. Data were collected using the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey, its accompanying MBI Demographic Data Profile Sheet, and the Leadership Effectiveness Adaptability Description - Other Survey. Maslach et al. (1996) wrote that the MBI-ES measures the three dimensions of burnout to assess educators' behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions. The MBI Demographic Data Profile Sheet was used to collect information related to the respondents' ages, genders, and number of years of teaching experience (Galanakis, Stalikas, Kallia, Karagianni, & Karela, 2009). Hersey and Blanchard (1998) developed the LEAD Other Survey to gather data related to leaders' behaviors, as perceived by coworkers in the organization. The current study used the LEAD Other Survey to measure principals' leadership styles and effectiveness as perceived by elementary school teachers. Previous evidence suggests that both instruments provide reliable and valid data for the constructs of the study.

Correlational statistics, specifically the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient, were used to analyze the relationships between perceived principals' leadership effectiveness and teachers' levels of burnout. In addition to descriptive statistics used to report the levels of burnout and perceived principal effectiveness, the MBI-ES normative scores were used as a comparison for the three scale scores, thus indicating relative levels of burnout among teachers in this school division. Descriptive

statistics were generated for demographic information as well as the level of effectiveness and burnout dimensions. The methodology is explained fully in Chapter 3.

### **Delimitations**

This study was delimited to responses from a randomly selected teacher sample from a suburban school division in the Mid-Atlantic region. All sample participants were employed as full-time elementary regular education and special education teachers for the 2010-2011 school year. Data were collected using self-reports.

### **Limitations**

These study results are valid only to the extent that respondents provided honest responses to explain behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions of the principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout. It can be argued that a teacher's perception may not be the most valid representation of a school leader's effectiveness. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this study, the perception is arguably of greater importance, as it is the perception that is hypothesized to be related to burnout. A second limitation is that the research was conducted at one specific point in time, which might not be reflective of the level of principal effectiveness or burnout at other times.

The research design included a major limitation in that it did not allow for the determination of causal relationships, but rather it allowed only the observation and description of relationships between variables. Finally, as the current study was conducted with a sample of elementary teachers in a suburban school division, results may not be generalized to different grade levels or geographical areas. Limitations are further discussed in Chapter 3.

## **Assumptions**

Burnout is different from simple stress in individuals who work with people in an organization. The MBI norm scores were developed using a sample of human services professionals, including teachers, to indicate the severity of burnout in workers with regard to each dimension. Each burnout score was coded as low, moderate, or high in relation to the normative sample. Although the norm scores were based on surveys completed more than two decades ago, it is assumed the norm scores are still valid.

## **Definition of Key Terms**

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

**Burnout.** The term burnout is defined as a state of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and loss of personal accomplishment resulting from the conditions of individuals who work in human service occupations (Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Maslach et al.1996).

**Leadership.** The term leadership is defined as the behavior of an individual who directs the activities of a group toward the achievement of a particular goal (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969).

**Stress.** The term stress is defined as a reaction to nonspecific demands or disruptions in the work environment as individuals attempt to meet the situation with focus, strength, and stamina (Selye, 1974).

**Teacher burnout.** The term teacher burnout is defined as the concept of three distinct dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and sense of loss of personal accomplishment (Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Maslach et al., 1996).

## **Summary**

Dworkin et al. (2003) voiced concerns about education and called for an examination of relationships between principals' effectiveness and their ability to decrease teacher burnout. The current study investigated the potential relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and burnout in teachers in the Mid-Atlantic region. This research relied on the theoretical foundations of the burnout theory of Maslach and Jackson (1981a, 1981b) and the SLT by Hersey and Blanchard (1998).

Chapter 1 has included an introduction of the research study, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the research question and subquestions, the significance of the study, and the conceptual framework. It also highlighted the methodology, delimitations, limitations, and assumptions in the study.

Chapter 2 presents a review of current literature related to leadership effectiveness and burnout. The chapter presents a more detailed discussion of Maslach's burnout theory and Hersey and Blanchard's (1998) SLT. It includes an examination of research that supports hypotheses that a relationship may exist between teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology section, which includes the design of the research, population studied, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data management, and data analysis. The need for ethical considerations and protection for human participants is detailed. Chapter 4 reports results of the study, followed by the summary. The interpretation of findings, limitations, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further research are reported in Chapter 5.

## **Chapter 2: Review of the Literature**

This chapter presents a review of the literature, including a framework for the examination of teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and burnout in elementary school teachers. The literature review presents information about burnout, including (a) the definition of burnout; (b) identification of factors that contribute to the development of burnout in human services workers, particularly teachers; (c) research leading to the development of Maslach's burnout theory and the MBI; and (d) discussion of the MBI-ES and the MBI Demographic Data Profile Sheet. The review also includes research examining (a) leadership, leadership effectiveness, and leadership style (as measured by the LEAD Other Survey; Hersey & Blanchard, 1998) and (b) principal leadership (Harris, 1999; Lancaster, 2001; Pare, 1995). The literature relating to leadership effectiveness includes research relevant to SLT and its relationship to leadership, leadership styles and leadership effectiveness, and teacher burnout.

### **Search for Relevant Literature**

The reviewed literature presents research relating to leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout. The current literature was identified and collected through computer searches in the areas of education, healthcare, business, and psychology, including the following databases: Academic Research Premier, Adult Learning Documentation and Information Network, Dissertations and Theses Online, Education Abstracts, Educator's Reference Desk, Education Resources Information Center, Elton B. Stephens Company Host Online, LEXIS-NEXIS Academic Universe, Library of Education School (E-Journals), National Center for Education Statistics, ProQuest Digital Dissertations, Social Science Citation Index, University Microfilm Incorporated, the U.S. Department of

Education, and the Virginia Department of Education. To gain a broad understanding of burnout and leadership associated with teachers and principals, several search terms and key word combinations were used: (a) *stress*, (b) *burnout*, (c) *teacher burnout*, (d) *leadership*, (e) *leadership effectiveness*, and (f) *leadership styles*. The literature review included 102 dissertations, 310 journal articles, 14 books, 6 news articles, and 10 unpublished documents. With the abundance of literature on both topics, it was necessary to prioritize the literature to examine leadership and burnout. Given first priority was research that incorporated peer-reviewed research articles, books, and dissertations relating to leadership styles, leadership effectiveness, and burnout specific to school leaders and teachers. All research documents included in the present study were dated within the past two decades.

There was an array of literature on principals' leadership styles and burnout; however, there was limited research on principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout (Harris, 2001; Lancaster, 2001; Pare, 1995). Although numerous published studies and reports related to burnout have highlighted the effects of burnout, studies specific to teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness as related to teacher burnout were especially limited. Studies were selected to include samples consisting of both regular education teachers and special education teachers, consistent with the population for the current study (Lancaster, 2001). The search for additional studies ceased once an ample body of literature was identified to guide the research and offer a context for understanding this study. After careful review of the literature, relevant research questions were developed. The following section presents a discussion of burnout in general, teacher burnout, and the MBI.

## **Burnout**

Burnout has been labeled as “the disease of modern life” (Maslach, 1982, p. 2). Earning little scholarly consideration and described as “pop psychology” (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001), burnout has been referred to as a mere “fad” that occurs in human services professionals who work with people (Farber, 2000). Burnout represents neither a fad nor the study of psychobabble (Schwab, 1983) but a real phenomenon due to the early work of Freudenberger (1974). In the early literature on the phenomenon, “burnout” described workers’ experiences in the workplace; it has been the topic of substantial research. An early researcher wrote that “burned out individuals experience a state of fatigue brought on by a devotion to a relationship that has not produced an expected reward” (Freudenberger, 1974, p. 13). Such burned-out individuals do not perceive themselves as angry but believe they work harder than others without being appreciated for their work. Freudenberger (1983) later described burnout as “a chronic condition that extends over a period of weeks, months, and even years” (p. 13). This malady suggests feelings of chronic fatigue, excessive strain, and disenchantment in the workplace. Burnout is a process that extends over time due to an imbalance in the work environment. Burned-out, idealistic individuals experience feelings similar to hitting a brick wall, indicating depression and isolation. Such individuals experience doubt and lack of enthusiasm for work that may lead to job dissatisfaction in the attempt to attain an expectation that opposes reality (Greenglass, Burke, & Fiksenbaum, 2001; Maslach et al., 1996; Maslach & Jackson, 1997).

**The historical perspective of burnout.** As early as 1599, Shakespeare produced a collection of poems consisting of 14 contiguous sonnets entitled *The Passionate Pilgrim*

in which he described the love of a woman: “She burn’d with love, as straw with fire flameth. She burn’d out love, soon as straw out-burneth” (Sonnet VII, lines 13-14, as cited in Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998, p. 2). The poem presents a description of an individual’s overinvesting in a relationship, in this case, love, which depleted the original energy or passion in the relationship. Individuals’ feelings of burnout can occur in the workplace in much the same way they occur in the romantic relationship described in the poem.

An early, modern description of burnout was noted in a 1953 case study conducted by Schwartz and Will (as cited in Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998), which involved a psychiatric nurse. The nurse who was the object of the case study “exhibit[ed] practically all the symptoms identified as the usual characteristics of burnout: emotional fatigue, indifferent and callous attitudes toward patients, and feelings of diminished behaviors” (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998, p. 2).

In the mid-1970s, burnout was an exploratory topic, based on information retrieved through interviews, observations, and case studies. During this time little or no attention was given to developing a theory of burnout, and no conceptual framework was identified to assess findings. In the early 1980s, however, interest in the study of burnout gained momentum and empirically based research increased. The need to develop a theoretical foundation that included a universally accepted definition for burnout emerged (Maslach, 1982).

**Burnout research as empirical.** Burnout has been examined in numerous studies providing evidence of its authenticity as a real phenomenon. In the 1980s, burnout studies shifted from anecdotal stories to case studies and field observations and



then to larger scale research involving surveys (Maslach et al., 2001). In the late 1990s, longitudinal studies on employee burnout were completed. The Social Science Citation Index (2009) identified more than 1200 articles on the general topic of burnout that had been published between 1981 and 1989. The research was primarily quantitative and included self-report methodology with large samples. Empirical research was used to generate several measures to assess burnout in professionals working in human services occupations, from which the MBI has emerged as the dominant measure (Maslach et al., 2001).

Throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s, studies on the phenomenon of burnout almost doubled in number. The Social Science Citation Index (2009) reported that 2,124 journal articles that focused on burnout in different fields had been published during the period from 1990 to 2005. With the new century came a vast amount of research relating to the phenomenon in nonhealthcare services. According to the Social Science Citation Index (2012), more than 3,500 books, journal articles, dissertations, and electronic media related to burnout were published between 2001 and 2012. Burnout continues to be a topic of concern in various disciplines, including education.

**The origin of burnout.** The concept of burnout was first introduced to the scientific community to assess social behaviors. Freudenberger (1974), a psychologist, is recognized as the first to use the term burnout to describe individuals' losses in enthusiasm in the job due to stress. Freudenberger (1981) later described burnout as excessively striving to reach unrealistic values in individuals or society. The psychologist's early clinical writings noted that passionate mental health workers gradually experienced emotional and physical fatigue as they strived to reach unlikely

goals. Freudenberger portrayed these workers as dedicated and eager, giving their best in the jobs they perform, but susceptible to burnout. The initial burnout research was exploratory, based on case studies and field observations of workers who provided care or service to people in need due to emotional and personal stress. The results of Freudenberger's early work provided specific accounts of the burnout process, indicating that the workers experience loss in their emotional resources, motivation, and commitment. His early research examined burnout in mental health workers who worked with drug abusers (Freudenberger, 1974). Freudenberger's seminal work, which received widespread recognition, provided the basis for Maslach's (1982) empirical study on burnout.

Maslach (1982) studied burnout and found stress to be its precursor. Although stress and burnout are related, stress is a psychological response that can be either positive or negative; whereas, burnout has a constant, negative impact (Starrin, Larson, & Styrborn, 1990). Stress that indicates conflict between individuals' values can be manifested as a negative physical feeling that leads to burnout (Farber, 1983; Freudenberger, 1974; Maslach, 1981b). Farber (1984) noted that burnout results not from simple stress, but from "unmediated strain which has no buffer or support system" (p. 324). Speck (1993) argued that stress is an essential part of living but asserted that malignant stress is the "self-destructive condition caused by a person's inability to mediate" (p. 35). As a result, stress emerges from conflict due to individuals' values, and failure to arbitrate such stress leads to burnout (Maslach et al., 1996).

**The burnout phenomenon.** Maslach's (1982) early theory was descriptive, having evolved from data collected from interviews, case studies, and field observations

to reveal several themes related to human services professionals. Maslach (1982) was the first to describe burnout as a phenomenon. The burnout phenomenon to which Maslach referred reflected individuals' inability to perform effectively in health services professions. The early literature included clinical reports that identified themes addressing the burnout phenomenon. These burnout themes represented explanations of stress experienced by medical professionals. The first theme described emotional stress experienced in working with difficult patients, dealing with patient deaths, or experiencing conflicts with coworkers. Such emotional strain might be the root of overwhelming exhaustion. The second theme was related to workers' disconnection, specifically referring to the medical profession's notion of blending compassion with emotional distance. Professional workers are concerned about the recipients' wellbeing; they acknowledge the need to avoid over-involvement and to maintain more distant positions. Another concept was referred to as "dehumanization in self-defense"—labeling coworkers and recipients as objects rather than persons. For example, human services workers who provide services to recipients whose conditions are troubling find it easier to think of the recipients as objects rather than suffering people. The third theme was related to human services workers' self-assessments of their professional competence. Professional workers' experiencing emotional confusion was interpreted as a failure to be professional (i.e., unemotional, objective), which led people to question their ability to work in professional health services jobs. Maslach stated that the themes shed theoretical light on how people cope with emotional overstimulation. She and her colleagues used these guiding themes as the basis for developing the concept of the new phenomenon of burnout.

In the early 1980s, Maslach (1982) began to study the coping capabilities of workers in healthcare occupations; she interviewed physicians, psychiatrists, nurses, and hospice counselors. The results of her work identified emotional disturbances caused by chronic job-related anxieties and emotional strain between professional health and human services workers and recipients (Maslach, 1982). Over time, however, burnout was found to be a potential problem in all occupations, especially for workers who “provide care to people” (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 6). Maslach’s early work uncovered situations requiring “staff to spend considerable time in tense involvement with other people” (Maslach, 1982, p. 2), in which the workers’ enthusiasm for work was affected. Health and human services professionals often enter their careers with service-oriented, idealistic goals. The professionals who experience job-related burnout indicate (a) extreme fatigue, (b) stressful interactions with supervisors and coworkers, and (c) negative perceptions about work success that influence burnout. Such burned-out individuals become ineffective and, thus, become liabilities on the job (Maslach & Leiter, 2005).

To chronicle the historical perspective of burnout, it should be noted that Maslach and Freudenberger investigated burnout simultaneously more than 40 years ago. The burnout research first emerged as clinical study by practitioners and moved to an empirical approach by academics using quantitative research methods (Maslach, 1982; Meier, 1984).

**Burnout as a process.** Burnout emerges from affective reactions to continuing stress and results in a gradual depletion of individuals’ energy, idealism, and emotional and physical strength (Webber, 2004). Burnout is a gradual process (Brock & Grady, 2002), which extends for weeks, months, or years (Freudenberger, 1981). Early research

by Cherniss (1980) noted that “burnout is a process in which professionals’ attitude and behaviors change in negative ways in response to job strain” (p. 5). Some burned-out individuals experience fatigue; others experience feelings of withdrawal, callousness, and loss of satisfaction in the job.

According to Pines (1993), burnout occurs not as the result of one or two traumatic events, but gradually through an erosion of the spirit, making its onset difficult to recognize. The burnout process impacts individuals’ effectiveness in the workplace (Cherniss, 1980). This process involves burned-out individuals’ feeling overextended and disconnected from colleagues and experiencing a loss of emotional stamina; the process affects individuals’ resources, described as knowledge and skills needed to perform in the jobs (Brock & Grady, 2002). Edelwich and Brodsky (1980) wrote that burnout is relentless, causing “progressive losses of idealism, energy, purpose, and concern as a result of conditions at work” (p. 13).

Maslach and Leiter (1997) reported in *The Truth About Burnout* that burnout need not be permanent; its reversal is possible. Once burnout occurs, self-improvement alone is not enough. Solutions to prevent or stop burnout need to be sought within the organization. Burnout first impacts individuals, but as it continues, it affects others in the organization. The duration of burnout depends on the strength of the organization’s commitment to correct situations causing burnout (Maslach et al., 1996).

### **The Maslach Burnout Theory**

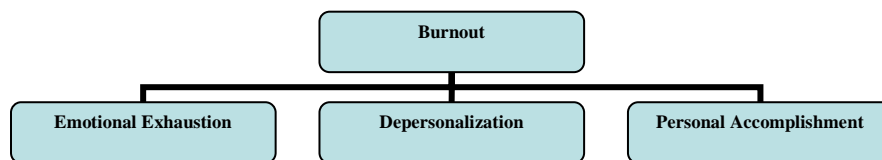
The seminal work by theorists Maslach and Jackson (1981a) acknowledged a large amount of interest in the phenomenon of burnout but little attention to a guiding theory. Although both Maslach and Jackson are credited as recognizing the need for a

theory to identify experiences in burnout, the newly developed theory would be called the Maslach burnout theory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981a). Maslach and Jackson's burnout theory posits that there is a gap between expectation and reality of observed professional effectiveness. The phenomenon of burnout should be examined within an exchange between human services workers and recipients. Burnout explains how dedicated human services workers might achieve job success while their sacrifices and devotion for their work might lead to exhaustion. As descriptions of the new phenomenon emerged, the theorists argued there was a need to develop "a general consensus of the role of the burnout theory" (Maslach & Jackson, 1981a, p. 40).

Maslach's (1982) theory describes burnout as a phenomenon indicating a continuum of complete work engagement to occupational burnout. Her theory indicates that "to burn out a person needs to be on fire at one time, at some point in his or her employment" (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 405), thereby suggesting that the most dedicated individuals can experience burnout at any stage in their careers. Such committed workers end up "doing too much to support their ideals" (p. 405), thus experiencing exhaustion. The theorists further described burnout as a wearing away of work engagement in which energy turns into exhaustion, involvement turns into distrust, and efficiency becomes ineffectiveness. Work engagement has been described as an energetic state in which workers achieve through excellent job performances (Maslach & Jackson, 1984), whereas occupational burnout refers to individuals' chronic exhaustion and lack of confidence in their job performances. The burnout phenomenon is a mismatch in work engagement indicating an imbalance between workers' expectations and job performance. This imbalance is reflected in the importance and meaning of work, which becomes

unfulfilling, and results in a decline in job performance, ultimately leading to burnout. Burnout represents “a malady that spreads gradually and continuously over time, putting people into a downward spiral from which it may be hard to recover” (Maslach & Leiter, 1997, p. 17).

Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter (1996) offered the burnout theory as a framework that describes burnout as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a sense of loss of personal accomplishment that occurs in individuals who do “people work of some kind” (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 4). Each dimension is distinct yet correlated with the others (Maslach et al., 2001). The burned-out individual may experience one burnout dimension or all three dimensions (Maslach & Jackson, 1981b; Maslach et al., 1996; Maslach & Leiter, 2005). The burnout theory describes burnout as “[high] levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization combined with [low] levels of personal accomplishment” (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 5). Although the burnout theory is multidimensional, each dimension is different, representing a different perspective of the burnout phenomenon (Enzmann, Schaufeli, & Girault, 1995; Maslach, 2011; Maslach et al., 1996; Maslach & Leiter, 2005), while sharing an emphasis on human services relationships. Figure 1 depicts the three dimensions of burnout.



*Figure 1.* The three burnout dimensions feature emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and sense of personal accomplishment.

**The multidimensional syndrome of burnout.** Several scholars have provided comparisons between burnout and stress (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Freudenberger, 1974; Maslach, 1981; Maslach & Jackson, 1986; Maslach et al., 2001). Maslach et al. (2001) argued that the three dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment distinguish burnout from stress.

***Emotional exhaustion.*** The emotional exhaustion dimension refers to feelings of being overextended and depleted of emotional resources in the workplace (Maslach et al., 2001). According to Maslach et al. (1996), emotional exhaustion is “a clear signal of distress in emotionally demanding work” (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 20). Characteristics linked to emotional exhaustion include feelings of fatigue, being emotionally overwhelmed and depleted of emotional resources (Farber, 1991). Burned-out individuals describe burnout as loss of motivation and capability to effectively perform on the job. Such losses may result as individuals withdraw from the recipients. Burnout has been described as “unmediated stress, having no buffer or support” (Farber, 1984, p. 324).

Although stress differs from burnout, excessive stress causes individuals to experience fatigue; such stress might be the basis for some individuals’ being unable “to give of themselves as they once did” (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 28). Emotional exhaustion is called the cornerstone and most frequently observed scale of burnout (Maslach et al., 1996). As the presence of emotional exhaustion intensifies, it may spread to the other scales, impacting workers’ job proficiency. Emotional exhaustion begins with one teacher and spreads to others, possibly affecting all teachers. Such a spread of emotional



exhaustion impacts both “personal and organizational setting [schools]” (Maslach & Leiter, 2005, p. 403).

***Depersonalization.*** Depersonalization refers to negative or excessive impersonal detachment in what workers feel for others. As indicated by Maslach et al. (1996), depersonalized individuals experience feelings that indicate uncaring attitudes, causing them to develop ways to cope at work as they assist recipients and perform their jobs. Individuals who experience depersonalization indicate feelings of “negative cynical attitudes for clients [recipients]” (p. 4). Teachers who experience depersonalization discard qualities that portray them as engaging educators. Such burned-out teachers perceive students as objects that are deserving of their problems. As teachers grow more depersonalized, work demands appear more manageable when students are considered to be impersonal objects rather than humans (Maslach et al., 1996). According to Maslach et al., “depersonalization is related to the experience of emotional exhaustion and the two dimensions are correlated” (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 304).

***Personal accomplishment.*** Personal accomplishment refers to individuals’ feelings of competence and success in their job performance (Maslach, 2011). The loss of personal accomplishment can cause individuals to negatively self-evaluate, to feel incompetent and unsuccessful in the job. Individuals experiencing loss of personal accomplishment have feelings of discontent, unhappiness, dissatisfaction with recipients, and ineffectiveness in the job. Teachers experience burnout when they feel “no longer...able to contribute to the students’ development [or] endure disappointment” (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 28).

This section has presented readers with an understanding of the burnout phenomenon. Whether cited as passionate love in romance or stress in a work relationship, described as symptoms experienced by exhausted workers (Schwartz & Will, as cited in Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998), or labeled as “psychobabble,” burnout has emerged as a serious psychological syndrome in the research (Freudenberger, 1974; Maslach, 1981a; Maslach et al. 1996; Maslach & Leiter, 2005).

The theoretical literature described burnout as “a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment which may occur in individuals who work with people in some capacity” (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 4). Burnout is described as a process; although continuous, its reversal is possible as it is often more situational than personal. Solutions to the burnout problem need to be sought within the organization (Maslach & Leiter, 2005). Maslach and Jackson (1981a) recognized the need for a standardized measure of burnout and developed the MBI (Maslach et al., 1996). The MBI measure has been used extensively to examine burnout among human services workers and nonhuman services workers around the world. The following section describes the development of the MBI (Maslach et al., 1996) and its variations, including the adaptation of the original MBI measure for educators.

### **The MBI Survey**

Maslach and Jackson (1986) created the MBI to measure the burnout syndrome. Prior to developing the MBI, they reviewed massive amounts of literature related to burnout. This review included careful consideration of many scales that had been used to assess burnout. One such scale is the Hassles Uplift Scale, which provided the framework for the development of the MBI. Lazarus and Folkman (1989) developed the

Hassles Uplift Scale to measure the frequency and severity of individuals' stress-filled interactions in the work environment. Drawing from their work, Maslach and Jackson created the MBI (Maslach & Jackson, 1981a; 1982; 1986) to assess individuals' levels of burnout in terms of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The original copyrighted version of the MBI asked participants to indicate the intensity and frequency of their feelings in response to 47 statements. The preliminary MBI version was given to a sample of 605 people who worked in healthcare services jobs (Maslach & Jackson, 1981a). A selection criterion was applied to the items, and the MBI was reduced from 47 items to 25 by dropping the ratings of intensity. Of the 25 items, 3 items were similar in both frequency and intensity and thus deleted from the MBI survey. This change resulted in the MBI's being used to assess "how often" participants experience the symptoms of burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981a).

The current and revised versions of the MBI include 22 items for which respondents rate their choices on a 7-point frequency response scale that spans from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*everyday*) (see Appendix A). Each burnout scale is reported as a low, moderate, or high level of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, or personal accomplishment; combined scores indicate an overall level of burnout.

**Variations of the MBI.** Over the past 40 years, each MBI variation was included in various aspects of the burnout literature. The MBI was modified to include three alternate surveys: the MBI Human Services Survey (MBI-HS), the MBI General Survey (MBI-GS), and the MBI-Educators Survey (MBI-ES). The MBI-HS assesses burnout in human services workers who have numerous interactions with workers (e.g., physicians, clinical psychologists, and nurses). The MBI-GS assesses burnout in workers who rarely

interact with workers (e.g., aviators). The MBI-ES was modified from the original MBI, specifically to assess burnout in educators, including teachers (Maslach et al., 1996). All three variants reflect only minimal differences and are administered in the same manner as the original MBI. The MBI-ES is presented with one modification: The word “*recipient*” was changed to *student*.” The wording was modified to increase “consistency and clarity” for the participants (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 29).

**The MBI and normative data.** Maslach et al. (1996) collected data to show the validity and reliability of the MBI using a sample of 11,067 health and human services professionals, including 4,163 teachers. Maslach et al. concluded that there was adequate evidence for use of the instrument, and norm scores were created to indicate spreads representing burnout according to the emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment dimensions. The MBI has been used extensively in national and international studies (Maslach et al., 1996). It has been translated into several languages as well (Winnubst, 1993). Galanakis, Moraitou, Garivaldis, and Stalikas (2009) reported that the MBI has “the strongest psychometric properties” (p. 54) to assess emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment scales. Schaufeli, Bakker, Hoogduin, Schaap, and Kladler (2001) provided support for the vast amounts of research, indicating that the MBI had been “used in 91% of the journals, books and dissertations” about the topic of burnout (Schaufeli et al., 2001, p. 566). A more thorough description of the MBI is presented in Chapter 3. The following section provides discussion of teacher burnout, as well as the hypothesized causes and effects of teacher burnout.

## **Teacher Burnout**

Historically, the teaching profession has been viewed as a labor of love (Walsh, 2000). Unfortunately, the realities of the teaching profession include factors that may impact teacher burnout (Kokkinos, 2006). Teacher burnout is evidenced in the form of frustration, impaired job performance, and ruptured interpersonal relationships in the school (Wood & McCarthy, 2002). Burnout among teachers can result from prolonged stress when fulfilling teaching duties, which in turn may affect teachers' health and wellbeing (Pines, 2002). Such burnout presents an imbalance between the challenges that teachers experience and the skills used to cope with those challenges. Teachers at risk of burnout view their "work as inconsistent with their goals" to achieve job success (Wood & McCarthy, 2002, p. 3).

Since burnout was first introduced to the research community in the 1970s, teacher burnout has received widespread attention (Van Tonder & Williams, 2009). Although the early burnout literature was primarily nonempirical and highly criticized (Maslach & Jackson, 1982), the phenomenon has been studied with increased rigor (Friedman, 2000). Early study of the phenomenon was conducted to examine the frequency of burnout, and almost 22% of the studies included teacher samples, thus making education the most observed occupational group.

### **Factors Associated With Teacher Burnout**

**Causes of teacher burnout.** Brock and Grady (2000) stated that the higher the teacher's level of emotional exhaustion, the greater the level of personal accomplishment. Teachers' demographic and background variables—age, gender, years of experience, class size, level of education, and grade level—have affected teacher burnout. The

coauthors stated that “burnout is an increasing serious and commonplace concern among educators” (Brock & Grady, 2000, p. ix). Understanding the causes of burnout is one method of identifying individuals prone to teacher burnout. To better ascertain the causes of burnout, it is necessary to point one in other directions and encourage attention to the organization in which burned-out teachers work. According to Maslach et al. (1996), organizational variables such as the school organization influence burnout in teachers.

Schwab, Jackson, and Schuler (1986) conducted a study with a sample of elementary teachers ( $N = 339$ ) from New Hampshire. The study was designed to investigate organizational variables specific to teachers’ job expectations (e.g., role conflict, role ambiguity, and participant decision making) combined with the three MBI burnout scales. The MBI-ES was utilized to assess teachers’ levels of burnout and gather background information. The results indicated an overall moderate level for burnout

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to examine relationships between specific organizational variables and the three burnout scales. The design of the study did not allow for establishing causal relationships. The results revealed role conflict to be a significant predictor for emotional exhaustion ( $r = .48, p = .01$ ) and depersonalization ( $r = .25, p = .01$ ). Role ambiguity was a significant negative predictor for emotional exhaustion ( $r = -.40, p = .01$ ), and teachers’ participation in decision making was a significant negative predictor of emotional exhaustion ( $r = -.33, p = .01$ ) and depersonalization ( $r = -.21, p = .01$ ) but a positive predictor for personal accomplishment ( $r = .20, p = .01$ ). The results revealed that each organizational variable was identified as a predictor for at least one MBI scale, providing support for the predictive relationship between organizational roles and teacher burnout. The organizational variables explained

33% of the variance in emotional exhaustion, 17% of the variance in depersonalization, and 13% of the variance in personal accomplishment.

**Effects of teacher burnout.** Traditionally, teacher burnout has been examined in terms of physical or psychological symptoms that emerge as effects of teacher burnout (Gaitan, 2009). Over time, symptoms of burnout emerge as subtle responses to excessive stress, which leads to exhaustion (Maslach & Leiter, 2005). The effects of teacher burnout are reflected in declines in job performance (Brock & Grady, 2000), often mirroring physical ailments. Physical symptoms might include somatic flare-ups of preexisting illnesses such as diabetes, cardiac problems, asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, gastrointestinal problems, or hypertension (Brock & Grady, 2000).

Burned-out individuals who experience psychological conditions report feelings of disillusionment in their jobs. Psychological conditions that are theoretically related to teacher burnout include feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, and depression (Brock & Grady, 2000). Other effects of burnout include job dissatisfaction, which refers to individuals' lack of motivation to attain job success (Maslach, 1982).

**Demographics.** As stated by Zabel and Zabel (2001), teachers' demographic and background variables are related to teacher burnout. The current study collected several demographic variables to examine how they related to teacher burnout.

**Gender.** The literature has reported differences between men's and women's levels of burnout for each aspect of burnout, yet the results are conflicting. The literature that examined relationships between gender and teacher burnout is substantial (Boe, Bobbitt, & Cook, 1997). Maslach and Jackson (1984) reported that among social services administration workers, men and women experience burnout differently

and that these differences are specific to gender roles.

Hawkins (2008) conducted a study to investigate whether or not certain factors (i.e., age, gender, level of completed degrees, and number of years of experience as educators) influence teachers' levels of burnout. The study included a sample of elementary teachers ( $N = 136$ ) in North Carolina. The MBI-E was used to assess teachers' levels of burnout and to collect participants' background information. The COPE was used to assess teachers' strategies for coping in the classroom, that is, their coping mechanisms. Collectively, the women ( $n = 266$ ) and men ( $n = 41$ ) participants reported low scores for emotional exhaustion but high scores for personal accomplishment, reflecting overall low levels of burnout. The Pearson product moment correlation revealed a significant negative relationship between gender and personal accomplishment.

An earlier 2003 study by Sunbul (2003), however, investigated relationships between gender and teacher burnout produced conflicting results. The study included a sample ( $N = 290$ ) consisting of 56% ( $n = 164$ ) men and 44% ( $n = 126$ ) women from Turkey. The MBI-ES was used to assess teachers' levels of burnout and to collect the participants' background information. The women and men participants reported low scores for emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, but moderate scores for personal accomplishment, reflecting low levels of burnout. Women teachers reported greater levels of emotional exhaustion than did men. Due to gendered cultural differences it is difficult to speculate how these results might generalize to an American population.

*Age.* Research investigating the relationship between age and burnout has been equivocal. Age has been found to be related to teacher burnout (Sunbul, 2003). Sunbul's



( $N = 290$ ) study found a significant difference between age and personal accomplishment only. Other literature indicated that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization are high in younger aged teachers, low in the middle-aged teachers, and higher again as teachers grow older (Friedman, 1991).

Zabel and Zabel (2001) replicated a study that was conducted 20 years earlier with a sample of special education teachers from Kansas ( $N = 301$ ). The 2001 study was conducted to examine changes that might have occurred as a result of differences in the teaching profession. The study examined the relationships between participants' ages, years of regular education and special education teaching experience, amount of preparation (level of education), and teacher burnout. The MBI-ES was used to assess teachers' levels of burnout and to collect demographic data. Contrary to the earlier study, the Pearson product moment correlation revealed a nonsignificant relationship between age and the three dimensions of burnout.

Farber (2001) conducted a study with a sample ( $N = 398$ ) of teachers from New York. He examined the extent to which age was related to teacher burnout as measured by the MBI-ES. Teachers' perceptions of their jobs and demographic information were collected with the Teacher Attitude Survey. The Tukey test revealed significant differences between age and both emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment. The results revealed that younger teachers perceived themselves as more burned out than did older teachers.

Chenevey, Ewing, and Whittington (2008) conducted a study with a sample of agricultural teachers in Ohio ( $N = 145$ ). They examined the extent to which age was related to teacher burnout as measured by the MBI-ES. The Pearson product moment

correlation revealed significant negative relationships between age and emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and a positive relationship with personal accomplishment. Similar to Farber (2001), the results indicated that older teachers experienced less burnout than younger teachers.

***Years of teaching experience.*** Years of teaching experience have been found to influence burnout in teachers (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Goddard and Goddard (2006) reported that beginning teachers are at great risk for burnout, and Brock and Grady (2002) claimed that years of teaching experience are related to levels of burnout.

A study by Luk, Chan, Cheong, and Ko (2010) was conducted to examine teacher burnout and demographic variables (i.e., age, gender, and years of teaching) with a sample ( $N = 138$ ) of elementary teachers. The participants reported from 1 to more than 30 years of experience. The study utilized the MBI-ES to measure participants' levels of burnout and to gather background information. The results revealed that teachers with 10 years or less teaching experience had greater levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization than did teachers with 20 or more years of experience.

***Level of education.*** According to Schwab and Iwanicki (1982), teachers' levels of education are described as the academic degrees that teachers earn. Teachers' levels of education were found to be related to teacher burnout (Dennis, 2008). Dennis conducted a study with a sample of middle school teachers in Georgia ( $N = 108$ ). She examined whether relationships existed between teachers' ages, levels of education, and teacher burnout. The participants who possessed graduate or postgraduate degrees indicated greater levels of burnout than teachers with undergraduate degrees only (Dennis, 2008).

Comerchero (2008) conducted a study with a sample of elementary teachers ( $N = 285$ ) from New Jersey, in which she examined relationships between teachers' age, gender, perfectionism, degree status (levels of education), and teacher burnout. The participants' MBI-ES scores reflected an overall low level of burnout. The Pearson product moment correlation revealed a significant relationship between teachers' levels of education and emotional exhaustion; as teachers' levels of education increase so do levels of burnout.

**Teacher accountability.** Teacher accountability describes teachers' responsibilities in preparing and performing duties associated with the job (Linn, 2004); such accountability is influenced by educational policy that governs the profession (Bruschi & Coley, 1999). Since the inception of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, public school teacher accountability demands have changed considerably (NCLB, 2002). Inman and Marlow (2004) asserted that test-related reforms such as the NCLB legislation have increased workload demands and burnout in teachers.

Hanson (2006) conducted a study with a sample of 291 elementary teachers from an urban school district in Arizona. The study examined the extent to which teaching in high-stakes subject areas or low-stakes subject areas was related to teacher burnout. The MBI-ES was used to assess teachers' levels of burnout. The results revealed that both high-stakes subject area teachers ( $n = 257$ ) and low-stakes subject area teachers ( $n = 34$ ) experienced moderate to low levels of burnout, respectively on each scale, indicating an overall low level of burnout, in their attempts to achieve adequate progress in student achievement as required by NCLB (Hanson, 2006). The Pearson product moment correlation was computed and revealed a significant relationship between high-

stakes/low-stakes subject area teachers and emotional exhaustion only. The author concluded that the high-stakes subject area teachers were more emotionally exhausted than the low-stakes subject area teachers.

### **Situational Leadership Theory**

Hersey and Blanchard's (1998) leadership theory was first called the lifecycle theory and later renamed the situational leadership theory (SLT). According to Hersey et al. (2008), SLT refers to effective leadership behaviors that are appropriate for workers' readiness to complete a specific job in a specific situation. Hersey and Blanchard (1998) developed two surveys to assess leadership effectiveness. For their study, principals' leadership effectiveness was determined by the LEAD Other Survey. The principals' leadership effectiveness depended on their capability to diagnose teachers' readiness and to select the most appropriate leadership style to fit teachers' readiness for any situation. According to Blanchard, Zigarmi, and Nelson (1993), SLT is used to explain leadership effectiveness in various fields, including education (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998). The following section presents a discussion of SLT.

**SLT, task behavior, relationship behavior, and worker readiness.** Hersey and Blanchard (1998) stated that SLT describes an interaction among task behavior, relationship behavior, and worker readiness. Task behavior refers to directions leaders provide workers to complete a task; relationship behavior refers to support and guidance leaders give workers to complete a task. Readiness refers to the workers' ability, confidence, and willingness to complete any tasks. The workers' readiness levels are described as (a) unable and unwilling; (b) unable, but willing; (c) able, but unwilling; or (d) able and willing to perform a task. Leaders identify workers' readiness levels to

determine the most effective styles needed to complete any tasks. As shown in Figure 2, SLT, as noted in Hersey and Blanchard's work, involves four leadership styles:

1. The telling leadership style is appropriate for leaders who use one-way communication to give workers directions to complete particular tasks.
2. The selling leadership style is appropriate for leaders that provide leadership for workers who are gaining experience yet need guidance as confidence and motivation increase in the job.
3. The participating leadership style leaders allow workers to share ideas and contribute to decision making.
4. The delegating leadership style leaders empower self-motivated workers who require minimal input to perform a task.

Figure 2 provides an illustration of Hersey and Blanchard's different leadership styles.

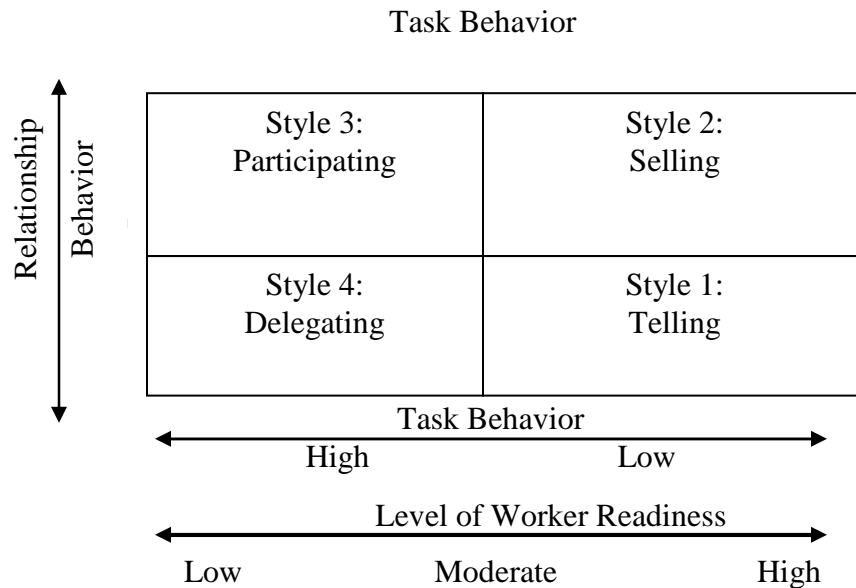


Figure 2. The situational leadership theory features four leadership styles and corresponding levels for relationship behaviors, task behaviors, and worker readiness (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998).

**Leadership effectiveness.** According to Hersey and Blanchard (1998), leadership effectiveness is described as the foundation for leadership success. Leaders' effectiveness is indicated by their use of the most appropriate styles to fit workers' readiness and specific situations in the organization. Leadership effectiveness is determined by matching the workers' levels of readiness to the most appropriate leadership style for a specific situation; it is presented as an intersection between task behaviors, relationship behaviors, workers' readiness, and the situation. Leadership effectiveness depends on how effective the leaders' styles are with regard to the workers' levels of readiness and the situation in the organization. One method of assessing

leadership effectiveness is the LEAD Other Survey. The following section provides a discussion related to the LEAD Other Survey.

### **The LEAD Other Survey**

Hersey and Blanchard (1998) developed the LEAD Other Survey and the LEAD Self Survey based on SLT to assess leaders in management training programs. The LEAD Other survey assesses leaders' effectiveness as perceived by supervisors or colleagues. Hersey and Blanchard's (1998) conjoined instrument, the LEAD Self Survey, is used to measure leaders' own perceptions of leadership effectiveness and leadership styles. The LEAD Other Survey has received widespread acceptance for assessing leadership effectiveness as perceived by coworkers and subordinates (Gumpert & Hambleton, 1979).

In the current study, the LEAD Other Survey assesses principals' leadership effectiveness as perceived by elementary school teachers (Hersey et al. (2008). The LEAD Other Survey provides teachers with opportunities to review 12 hypothetical leadership situations (scenarios) using four possible alternatives in each scenario (See Appendix B):

- Three situations indicate worker readiness as workers' being unable and unwilling to complete a specific task.
- Three situations indicate worker readiness as workers' being unable but willing to complete a specific task.
- Three situations indicate worker readiness as workers' being able but unwilling to complete a specific task.

- Three situations indicate worker readiness as workers' being able and willing to complete a specific task.

Hersey and Blanchard (1998) noted that leadership effectiveness is assessed by the workers' selecting the most appropriate alternative to match the leaders' styles in fitting particular situations. Leadership styles are determined by the workers' perceptions of what the leaders would do in particular situations. The most effective leadership style is indicated by determining how often leaders' perceived styles are selected by the workers in relation to each style (S1), telling, (S2), selling, (S3), participating, (S4), delegating).

As noted by Hersey et al. (2001), all leaders have a primary leadership style and most have a secondary leadership style. The leader's primary leadership style is described as the most frequently used style. The secondary or back-up style is described as the leader's style used on occasion.

Hersey and Blanchard (1998) presented the LEAD Other Survey with a conjoined instrument, the LEAD Self Survey (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998). The LEAD Self Survey is used to measure the leaders' own perceptions of their most effective leadership styles. "The LEAD Other Survey has received widespread acceptance to assess leadership effectiveness" as perceived by colleagues and subordinates (Gumpert & Hambleton, 1979, p. 11). The current study utilized the LEAD Other Survey to measure principals' leadership effectiveness in addressing teachers' levels of readiness and school organizations' specific situations as perceived by the teachers.



## **Principal Leadership**

School principal leadership has evolved over time. Early American schools existed without principals (Hallinger, 2006). Prior to 1900, school principals performed duties similar to those of the teachers (Foster, 1988). The early days of public education included schools that had only one or two teachers. As schools grew larger, so did duties, resulting in one teacher's accepting the appointment of principal and full accountability for the position (Hallinger, 2006). The new principal completed responsibilities such as supervising school staff, enrolling and disciplining students, and providing leadership (Campbell, Fleming, Newell, & Bennion, 1987).

**Principal leadership styles: studies using the Lead Other Survey.** Harris (1999) conducted a study with a sample of elementary teachers ( $N = 55$ ) from three low-socioeconomic urban elementary schools; she investigated relationships between teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership styles (as measured by the LEAD Other Survey) and teachers' stress (as measured by The Wilson Stress Profile for Teachers Survey).

The causal comparative research design was used to assess the effects of leadership styles on stress. The Tukey's HSD posthoc analysis was performed and revealed that teachers who perceived principals to use the (S2) selling style had lower stress than teachers who perceived the principals to use the (S1) telling and the (S1) delegating styles. For the sample, the results revealed a difference between the effects of leadership styles and teacher stress, which may lead to burnout.

Pare (1995) conducted a study with a sample of elementary teachers ( $N = 71$ ); she examined the relationships among teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership

adaptability (i.e., effectiveness), teachers' irrational beliefs systems, principal leadership styles, class size, years of experience, and teacher burnout. The Pearson product moment correlation revealed significant relationships between leadership adaptability and emotional exhaustion and with personal accomplishment.

Lancaster (2001) conducted a study that examined the relationships among principals' leadership styles, job satisfaction, and teacher burnout as perceived by a sample ( $N = 265$ ) including regular education teachers (62%,  $n = 165$ ) and special education teachers (38%,  $n = 100$ ) in Georgia and South Carolina. The study utilized the LEAD Other Survey to assess teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership styles. The Matthews Burnout Scale for Employees (Matthews, 1986) was used to determine the participants' levels of burnout, whereas the Educators' Demographic Data Sheet was used to collect background information.

The LEAD Other Survey was used to establish the principals' primary leadership styles and secondary leadership styles. Of the sample, 39% ( $n = 64$ ) perceived the principal's primary style to be the (S2) selling style and 27% ( $n = 70$ ) perceived the principal's secondary style to be the participating style.

The Matthews Burnout Scale-Revised (MBSE) was used to measure teachers' levels of stress along a continuum that increases in the direction of burnout. The MBSE yields a single score indicating a level of stress that increases toward burnout. The MBSE scores range from 0 to 30; a score of 0 indicates the least possible evidence of burnout and a score of 30 indicates the most possible evidence of teacher burnout. The participants reported a total mean score of 7.51, indicating a moderate level burnout. A statistically significant difference was found between regular education teachers ( $M =$

8.33,  $n = 165$ ) and special education teachers ( $M = 6.15$ ,  $n = 100$ ) with regard to their levels of burnout. The relatively moderate levels of burnout are credited to the surveys having been distributed at the beginning of the school year, in October (when the school year is new and job duties are few), rather than in the latter part of the school year, in May or June (when duties tend to increase due to standardized testing).

### **Summary**

The literature reviewed for this study included two main topics that collectively were intended to justify the call for a quantitative, nonexperimental correlational study of teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout. The first section of the review presented a discussion of burnout, the psychological syndrome that includes three dimensions—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 1996)—which, when present, hinder job performance (Friedman, 1991; Maslach et al., 1996) in school organizations (Jackson et al., 1986). Several of the reviewed studies included investigation of burnout as measured by the MBI-ES (Maslach et al., 1996).

The second section of the literature review included examination of principals' leadership effectiveness (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998) with regard to leadership styles (Harris, 1999; Hersey & Blanchard, 1998; Lancaster, 2001). Leadership effectiveness has been described as the foundation for success in an organization (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998). The principal's leadership effectiveness depends on how appropriate the leadership styles are for the workers' readiness and the situations in the organization.

The present study was built upon two theoretical foundations: Maslach and Jackson's burnout theory (Maslach et al., 1996) and Hersey and Blanchard's situational

leadership theory (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998). The literature review focused on the phenomenon of burnout, development and use of the MBI and SLT, and principal leadership effectiveness. The available literature consistently indicated the relationship of the dimensions of burnout to organizational as well as demographic variables. Unfortunately, even with the abundance of literature, no clear relationships emerged. Literature specifically relevant to the relationship between teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of principals' leadership and teacher burnout was limited.

Chapter 3 provides a substantive description of the methodology used in this quantitative, nonexperimental correlational study investigating the extent to which principals' leadership effectiveness, as perceived by teachers, is related to teacher burnout, as manifested by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and sense of loss of personal accomplishment.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

Chapter 3 presents the methods and procedures that were used in this study. The chapter includes the research question and subquestions; research design; population; instrumentation; data collection, management, and analysis; and ethical considerations. The study's primary purpose was to examine the relationship between elementary school teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teachers' levels of burnout in a suburban school division.

The study used a quantitative, nonexperimental, correlational research design. Correlational research is used to explore relationships among variables. Therefore, it is the most appropriate design to address the research questions and subquestions. The correlational design is not intended to evaluate a causal relationship, but rather to observe and describe the strength and direction of the relationships among variables.

#### **Research Questions, Research Subquestions and Research Subhypotheses**

This study provided insight as to whether or not a relationship exists between principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout. The specific purpose of the study was to examine relationships between elementary school teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and levels of teacher burnout. The following research questions, along with the hypotheses, guided the study:

1. What are the levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment of elementary school teachers in the chosen school division?
2. What is the level of leadership effectiveness for principals as perceived by elementary school teachers in the chosen school division?

3. Is there a relationship between elementary school teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness (as measured by the LEAD Other Survey) and teachers' levels of burnout (as measured by the MBI-ES)?

3.1: Is there a relationship between elementary school teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teachers' levels of emotional exhaustion?

Research Question 3.1: There is a negative relationship between elementary school teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teachers' levels of emotional exhaustion.

3.2: Is there a relationship between elementary school teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teachers' levels of depersonalization?

Research Question 3.2: There is a negative relationship between elementary school teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teachers' levels of depersonalization.

3.3: Is there a relationship between elementary school teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teachers' personal accomplishment?

Research Question 3.3: There is a positive relationship between elementary school teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teachers' personal accomplishment.

This quantitative study used a correlational research design. It was not intended to evaluate causal relationships but to discover the extent of the relationships among the

variables. Surveys delivered to the school sites were used to collect data from a random sample of the larger population of teachers. Descriptive and inferential statistics (the Pearson product moment correlation) were used to summarize the data and answer the research questions. The medians, means, and standard deviations for each of the three burnout dimensions were compared with MBI group norm scores using  $z$ -tests.

### **Limitations**

Although the use of self-report is a poor proxy for performance, self-report was appropriate as study participants' perceptions, rather than behaviors, were being assessed (Wiersma & Jurs, 2004). Self-report was used to determine respondents' perceptions of their principals' leadership effectiveness as well as their indications of teacher burnout. Burnout refers to an individual's perceptions and, as such, self-report was the appropriate means to measure teachers' perceptions concerning the workplace (Maslach et al., 1996).

Teachers' perceptions of leadership effectiveness might not present accurate reflections of the principal's actual level of effectiveness. It is possible that the use of the LEAD Other Survey results as the measure of the perception of the principal's effectiveness is substantially different from other measures of effectiveness (e.g., achievement measures such as test scores or self-report measures of effectiveness) (Hersey et al., 1996). The ability of the LEAD Other Survey to accurately measure effectiveness is subject to the limitation of reliance on an indirect measure (e.g., the respondent's having the knowledge and willingness to respond candidly). Theoretically, how teachers perceive principals' effectiveness is vital in the relationship to burnout. The LEAD Other and the MBI have been used to assess leadership effectiveness (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998) and burnout (Maslach et al., 1996).

Finally, the nonexperimental nature of the design limits the study's ability to define causal relationships. The influences of other variables are not controlled by this design. Consequently, it should not be concluded that poor leadership effectiveness causes burnout in teachers or vice versa. Evidence for such a conclusion is beyond the scope of this design.

### **Description of Sample**

The sample consisted of elementary teachers from a suburban school division in the Mid-Atlantic region representing a population of 1,719 full-time teachers. A total of 181 surveys were distributed to teachers in 28 elementary schools, with each school receiving between 2 and 11 surveys. Of the surveys distributed, 129 were returned. Two of the surveys were incomplete and thus deemed unusable, thereby creating a sample that included 127 respondents. The sample consisted of 22% ( $n = 28$ ) male teachers and 78% ( $n = 99$ ) female teachers.

The chosen school division served an elementary school student population of approximately 11,800 students. The average annual salary for beginning teachers for the 2011-2012 school year was \$39,600 ( $SD = \$5,000$ ). The mean annual salary for all teachers was \$50,633 ( $SD$  not available) (Director of Human Resources and School Services, personal communication, February 11, 2012). The selected suburban school division's teacher-to-student ratio was 1:20 for all grade levels. The actual annual per-pupil cost was \$7,724 ( $SD$  not available) (Director of Human Resources and School Services, personal communication, February 11, 2012). The selected school division's student population included 27% who received free or reduced-priced lunch (Director of Human Resources and School Services, personal communication, February 11, 2012).



A random sample was selected from the total population of 1,719 full-time teachers who represent 28 elementary schools in the chosen school division. The sample was chosen using the selected school division's personnel database. The desired sample size was computed using the Power and Precision Program, Version 3.2, as recommended by Borenstein, Rothstein, Cohen, and Schoenfeld (2007). The Power and Precision Program calculations indicated that a sample size of 44 per bivariate correlation was desired, using standard social science values of alpha level of .05, power .80, and a minimum effect size in the population. The current study included three bivariate correlations. Thus, a sample size of 132 ( $44 \times 3 = 132$ ) was acceptable. To achieve the targeted sample size for a minimum of 132 sample participants, assuming a 60% response rate, I oversampled, randomly selected the teacher's mailbox for delivery of a survey packet, and distributed surveys to the 181 randomly selected teachers. I sampled each school's population using 10% of that school's full-time teacher population. Sample participants were informed that all data collected would be used solely for the intended purpose of the study. Data were kept in a locked file cabinet. All sample participants' responses remained confidential. The data collection did not include respondents' identifying information.

### **Instrumentation**

This study included three surveys: (a) Maslach and Jackson's (1981a) Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey (MBI-ES), (b) the MBI Demographic Data Profile Sheet, and (c) Hersey and Blanchard's (1998) Leadership Effectiveness Adaptability Descriptive Other Survey (LEAD Other Survey). Maslach and Jackson developed the MBI to measure emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and sense of loss of personal

accomplishment among educators. The MBI Demographic Data Profile Sheet was used to gather participants' information. The LEAD Other Survey was used to assess teachers' perceptions of the principals' effectiveness. The copyright holders granted permission for the use of the MBI-ES (see Appendix C) and the LEAD Other Survey (see Appendix D) in this study.

**The MBI.** The MBI-ES variation of the MBI was used to assess the hypothetical aspects of the burnout syndrome: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and sense of loss of personal accomplishment in educators. The MBI includes 22 items that assess burnout. Nine items measure emotional exhaustion (i.e., emotionally overextended, feeling as though one has nothing left to offer others psychologically or emotionally), five items measure depersonalization (i.e., the extent to which individuals become socially distant from their recipients), and eight items measure sense of loss of personal accomplishment (i.e., an individual's tendency to experience feelings of no longer being effective at work). Each scale is measured separately and presented as an individual score, but the individual items for these scales are intermixed throughout the MBI. Emotional exhaustion and depersonalization are interpreted in the opposite direction of personal accomplishment. High scores on emotional exhaustion and depersonalization indicate high levels of burnout, whereas higher levels of burnout on the personal accomplishment scale are indicated by lower scores. The original MBI survey (Maslach & Jackson, 1981a) included response scales for both frequency and intensity ratings. It was determined that the inclusion of both ratings produced redundancy; the intensity rating was deleted from subsequent versions. The MBI uses a 7-point frequency rating

with frequency anchors indicating burnout levels from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*everyday*). Data from the MBI, although ordinal, were treated as interval (Harwell & Gatti, 2001).

Maslach et al. (1996) determined that scores on each scale are considered high on the MBI if they fall within the upper third of the distribution, average if they fall within the middle third and low if they fall within the lower third in each scale. Each MBI scale is considered individually rather than combined for a single score.

The *Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual* (Maslach et al., 1996) indicates that individuals who score high on emotional exhaustion (> 27) or depersonalization (> 13) are theoretically at risk for burnout. Scoring high on sense of personal accomplishment (> 38) corresponds to a low level of burnout. Individuals who score high on either emotional exhaustion or depersonalization only are not as at risk of burnout as those who score high on both dimensions.

**Reliability and validity.** To better understand the value of the MBI, it was important to consider the instrument's reliability and validity. The MBI instrument has been supported by strong evidence for reliability and validity (Gold, 1984; Maslach et al., 1996). The MBI-ES variation is the same as the MBI with one modification: the term *recipient* was changed to *student*. The change allows for clarity and consistency in the interpretation of the respondents. Studies conducted by Schwab and Iwanicki (1982), with a sample of 469 teachers, and Gold (1984), with a sample of 462 teachers, provided support for the terminology change. The MBI-ES manifests the same psychometric properties as the MBI (Maslach et al., 1996). The reliability and validity information in the literature for the two instruments does not differentiate one measure from the other except for the change in terminology. Schwab and Iwanicki (1982) and Gold (1984)

deemed the MBI to be a reliable instrument, with appropriate attention to validation criteria.

**Reliability.** Maslach and Jackson (1984) reported the MBI to be reliable with appropriate attention to validation criteria. Reliability was established for each MBI scale with data collected from a diverse sample of human services professionals ( $N = 1,316$ ). Cronbach's reliability coefficients were reported as .90 for emotional exhaustion, .79 for depersonalization, and .71 for personal accomplishment (see Table 2), thereby indicating the MBI to be a reliable instrument.

Maslach et al. (1996) reported the reliability for the three-scale structure in the *MBI Manual*. Schwab and Iwanicki (1982) provided evidence of reliability through a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for the MBI-ES using a sample ( $N = 469$ ). Gold (1984) also conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the MBI with a sample of 462 teachers. The findings of the CFA supported the three-factor structure of the MBI. Both of these studies supported the construct validity, as well as the reliability, of the MBI-ES with the change in the term from *recipient* to *student* (Maslach et al., 1996). Table 1 provides an illustration of evidence for the MBI.

Table 1

*Evidence for Internal Consistency Reliability of the Maslach Burnout Inventory*

Study	Year	N	Cronbach's alpha		
			EE	DEP	PA
Schwab & Iwanicki	1981	469	.90	.76	.76
Maslach	1982	1,316	.90	.79	.71
Gold	1984	462	.88	.74	.72
Jackson et al.	1986	248	.60	.54	.57
Maslach et al.	1996	11,067	.90	.79	.76
Chenevey et al.	2003	145	.79	.59	.90
Comerchero	2006	285	.85	.78	.79
Gates	2007	307	.90	.60	.80
Hawkins	2008	136	.92	.65	.70
Luk et al.	2010	138	.85	.76	.83

Each dimension is denoted by an abbreviation: EE (emotional exhaustion), DEP (depersonalization), and PA (personal accomplishment) (Maslach et al., 1996, pp. 6, 11).

**Validity.** Construct validity indicates the extent to which inferences from a test's scores accurately reflect the construct the test claims to measure (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). A factor analysis implemented with teachers using the MBI supports the three-factor structure. Gold (1984) also conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the MBI with a sample of 462 teachers. The findings of the CFA supported the three-factor structure of the MBI. Both of these studies supported the construct validity, as well as

the reliability, of the MBI-ES with the change in the term from *recipient* to *student* (Maslach et al., 1996).

The discriminant validity of the MBI has been presented with “further evidence of the MBI by distinguishing it from measures of other psychological constructs that might be presumed to be confounded with burnout” (Maslach & Jackson, 1993, p. 13). Using a sample of 91, Maslach and Jackson compared scores on the MBI to responses to the Job Diagnostic Survey, which measures (a) the characteristics of jobs (specifically, the level to which jobs are designed to allow for internal motivation and job satisfaction for workers), (b) affective reactions of individuals to the job settings and duties, and (c) the tendency of workers to positively respond to their jobs (jobs that measure potential for increasing internal work motivation). Job satisfaction was found to have a moderate negative correlation to emotional exhaustion ( $r = -.23$ ) and depersonalization ( $r = -.22$ ), as well as a minimal positive correlation with a sense of personal accomplishment ( $r = .17$ ), which requires inverse interpretation of scores. The evidence of discriminant validity of the MBI was obtained by distinguishing it from other psychological constructs that might be presumed to be bemused to burnout. Some researchers suggest that burnout is related to lowering feelings of job satisfaction, indicating “that burnout and job satisfaction were not correlated as the same thing” (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 15). The link between the MBI and Job Diagnostic Survey indicate that burnout is similar, but not synonymous to job satisfaction.

The MBI-ES was selected for this study because it has acceptable reliability and validity support for measuring burnout in teachers. The MBI-ES was used to measure the

same constructs with a similar population; thus, similar validity and reliability findings were anticipated.

**MBI normative scores and scale scores.** The current study used MBI normative means to assess the levels of burnout in elementary teachers. Maslach and Jackson (1986) conducted the largest validation study using responses from a sample of 11,067 participants: 4,163 were teachers of kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, 635 were postsecondary educators, 1,538 were social workers, 1,104 were physicians or nurses, 730 were mental health workers, and 2,897 were legal aid workers. The MBI normative mean for educators including teachers was reported for emotional exhaustion as 21.25 ( $SD = 11.01, n = 4,163$ ), for depersonalization as 11.00 ( $SD = 6.19, n = 4,163$ ), and for sense of loss of personal accomplishment as 33.54 ( $SD = 6.89, n = 4,163$ ). The MBI educator sample ( $n = 4,167$ ) was drawn from a population of various human services workers ( $N = 11,067$ ). The normative scores were printed in the third edition of the *Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual* in 1996. Behavioral scale scores are presented in a low, moderate, or high range (see Table 2). The sense of personal accomplishment dimension is interpreted inversely. Scoring high on sense of personal accomplishment ( $> 39$ ) indicates a low level of burnout. Teachers scoring high on either emotional exhaustion or depersonalization but not both are not as much at risk of experiencing burnout as those who score high on both dimensions. Table 2 shows the cutoff scores for the MBI scale scores for the low, moderate, and high levels.

Table 2

*Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey Behavioral Scale Scores*

Scale	Low	Moderate	High
Emotional exhaustion	< 16	17-26	27-54
Depersonalization	< 6	7-12	13-30
Personal accomplishment	> 38	37-32	< 31

Source: Maslach et al., 1996, p. 6 (Reproduction granted by copyright holder)

**MBI Demographics Data Profile Sheet.** Elementary school teacher respondents' demographic information was collected using the MBI Demographic Data Profile Sheet (see Appendix A). The sociodemographic variables of age, gender, number of years of teaching, level of education, class assignment, and grade assignment were used to provide additional information relative to the sample participants. Age and years of teaching were reported as ratio variables; whereas, gender was reported as a nominal variable.

**The LEAD Other Survey.** Hersey and Blanchard (1998) developed the LEAD Other and the LEAD Self Surveys. The LEAD Self Survey measures leaders' self-perceptions of leadership behaviors; whereas the LEAD Other Survey measures workers' leadership behaviors as perceived by supervisors or coworkers. The present study used the LEAD Other Survey to assess teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness (see Appendix B).

According to Hersey et al. (1996), the LEAD Other Survey focuses on three key elements in any situation: (a) the amount of direction provided by leaders to workers, (b)



the social support provided by leaders to workers, and (c) the leaders' knowledge of the level of readiness workers need in the work situation to complete a specific task. The LEAD Other Survey was used to assess teachers' perceptions of principals' ability to effectively use different leadership styles to address teacher readiness and needs of the workplace situation.

Hersey and Blanchard (1969) designed the LEAD Other Survey and the LEAD Self Survey to assess the use of situational leadership in an organization. The information used to develop the LEAD Other Survey was generated from an international sample of 500 middle management business and education leaders who represented 14 cultures (Hersey et al., 2001). The LEAD Other Survey has "received widespread acceptance to assess leadership effectiveness as perceived by workers and subordinates" (Gumpert & Hambleton, 1979, p. 11).

*Leadership styles.* A leader's leadership style, according to Hersey and Blanchard (1998), is the consistent pattern of behaviors as perceived by others in the attempt to influence workers to complete specific tasks in the work situation. Leaders' use of task behavior and relationship behavior to assess the readiness of workers to complete a task in a specific workplace situation can be defined with four leadership styles: (a) (S1) telling, (b) (S2) selling, (c) (S3) participating, and (d) (S4) delegating (Hersey et al., 1996). Task behavior refers to the extent to which leaders use leadership practices to explain directions to workers to complete a task. Relationship behavior refers to the extent to which leaders develop supportive relationships with the workers, using interactive means of communication. Readiness refers to the extent to which the worker is able and willing to complete a specific task. Hersey et al. (2008) wrote that

effective leaders may use any or all leadership styles to promote worker job productivity. Most leaders have a primary leadership style, and some have a secondary or supporting leadership style, which is used only on occasion.

***Leadership effectiveness.*** Leadership effectiveness has been described as a leader's appropriate style, which includes a specific quantity of task and relationship behaviors that facilitate workers' levels of readiness in a situation in the organization (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998). Leadership effectiveness represents a combination of a leader's task behaviors, relationship behaviors, and capability to assess workers' readiness to complete a task in a specific situation. The leader's most effective leadership style is the style that successfully meets the workers' readiness and the needs of the organization for a certain situation (Hersey et al., 1996).

Some leaders use only one leadership style and seldom adapt their leadership to fit the workers' readiness or the needs of the situation in the organization; such a leader is a rigid leader. A rigid leader uses only one leadership style for all workers' levels of readiness and situations in an organization. Such a leader is effective only when his or her leadership style is compatible with a worker's particular level of readiness and specific needs of the situation. Leaders who use several leadership styles effectively are considered flexible. Flexible leaders use effective leadership styles to select the "right style, at the right time, for the right situation" (Hersey et al., 1996, p. 302).

***The LEAD Other Survey description.*** Hersey and Blanchard's (1998) LEAD Other Survey includes 12 situations. Each situation contains four alternatives, which represent each of the four leadership styles. In each situation, one leadership style is scored as most appropriate for the described worker readiness and organizational needs

for the situation. The LEAD Other Survey situations are categorized as (a) four leadership situations describing low levels of readiness, (b) four leadership situations describing moderate levels of readiness, and (c) four leadership situations describing high levels of readiness. Each respondent chooses the one of four alternatives (ranging from Style 1 to Style 4) that best reflects the worker's perception of what the leader would do in that particular situation.

**Reliability and validity of the LEAD Other Survey.**

**Reliability.** Hersey and Blanchard (1976) conducted a study to examine the stability of the LEAD Other Survey. The study included a sample ( $N = 264$ ) of middle-level managers. The LEAD Other Survey was administered twice in a 6-week period, revealing a stability score of .69. Greene (1980) conducted a study to confirm the stability of the LEAD Other instrument with a sample of 140 managers over a 6-week period. Although the stability of the LEAD Other Survey has been reported to be satisfactory, evidence of the study is not available.

**Validity.** Hersey and Blanchard (1998) published *The LEAD Other Survey Manual* (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998), which provides significant information on the development and use of the LEAD Other Survey. Greene (1980) presented evidence for content validity and face validity found in *The LEAD Other Manual*. Face validity for the LEAD Other Survey was based on a review of the instrument's 12 items by midlevel business managers ( $N = 248$ ) (Greene, 1980). *The LEAD Manual Summary* is vague, however, as to how content validity was established other than to state that "content validity emanated from the procedures employed to create the original set of response items" (as cited in Greene, 1980, p. 2).

The current study used the LEAD Other Survey to assess teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness in identifying their levels of readiness to complete particular situational tasks in the school. Other research has presented limitations regarding the strength of the LEAD Other instrument to accurately measure the school leaders' (principals') effectiveness in assessing workers' (teachers') readiness to complete specific tasks (Fernandez & Vecchio, 1997; Yukl, 2006).

***LEAD Other Survey scoring.*** The LEAD Other Survey includes 12 situations; each situation includes a most preferred solution, a more preferred solution, a less preferred solution, and a least preferred alternative answer choice. The LEAD Other Survey scoring is indicated using a selection of scores ranging from 3 to 0. The maximum possible respondent score for each item is 3, indicating a high level of leadership effectiveness; a score of 0 indicates a low level of leadership effectiveness (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998). Leadership effectiveness is expressed as a single score at the ratio level of measurement. Hersey and Blanchard's LEAD Other Survey (1998) provided cut scores indicating teachers' perceptions of principals' levels of leadership effectiveness. The LEAD Other Survey total scores indicate low (0 to 23), moderate (24 to 30), and high (31 to 36) levels of leadership effectiveness (Hersey et al., 2008).

Based upon survey responses, the item scores identify school leaders' leadership styles as perceived by teachers. A school leader's primary style is determined by the quadrant that receives the highest number of responses for the 12 situations. The leader's secondary leadership style is determined by the quadrant that receives the second highest number of responses (Hersey et al., 1996).

*Additional information about the LEAD Other Survey.* The LEAD Other Survey was originally designed by Hersey in 1976 as a training tool but has been used in numerous business and education studies. Although the LEAD Other Survey has received strong reviews, limitations suggest that it focuses too exclusively on leaders rather than the readiness of workers (Yukl, 2006). Fernandez and Vecchio (1997) described the instrument as weak and lacking the theoretical strength to be included in the empirical literature.

In support of the LEAD Other Survey, Northouse (2007) described the survey as an excellent instrument for assessing leadership effectiveness. Northouse noted that the LEAD Other Survey scores continue to provide support for the instrument's stability, suggesting researchers may rely on it as a reliable tool. In summary, despite mixed views, the LEAD Other Survey continues to be used to assess the effectiveness of leaders in a variety of organizations, including principals in school organizations.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Approval of the request to conduct the research was first granted by The George Washington University and the chosen Mid-Atlantic school division (see Appendix E). The present study included a random sampling of full-time elementary teachers employed in a suburban school division. The initial surveys were personally distributed at one point in time to each school. The initial survey distribution was delivered to each school prior to the start of the school day between November 3 and November 10, 2010. For teacher participation, I requested each school's front office staff to randomly place survey packets in teachers' mailboxes in the mailroom or sign-in room (see Appendix E). These locations provided respondents with familiar and secured locations to retrieve the

surveys. Each school's principal had minimal involvement in the study. I distributed a specific number of surveys to each school. The specific number of surveys distributed represented 10% of each school's overall teacher population. Each school received between 2 and 11 surveys. A total of 181 surveys were distributed to 28 elementary schools from November 3, 2010 to November 10, 2010.

Each participant was given the following items: (a) a statement of purpose and explanation of the study, (b) the three surveys, (c) an information sheet, (d) instructions for completing the surveys, (e) a stamped self-preaddressed envelope for returning the completed surveys, (f) and a candy bar with an attached inspirational statement to serve as a token of appreciation for the teacher's participation in the study. Teacher participants were requested to return the completed surveys to me using the United States Postal Service.

After the survey packets were distributed, follow-up letters were distributed weekly for 3 weeks. The follow-up letters were intended to invite nonresponders to participate in the study. To assure all nonresponders received follow-up letters, all full-time employed teachers in each participating school received four separate follow-up letters. Each follow-up letter contained statements expressing my appreciation of the teacher's participation in the study, requesting that the survey be promptly returned, if the teacher had not already done so, and suggesting that he or she disregard additional follow-up letters if the survey had already been returned. The delivery dates for the follow-up letters were November 21, December 5, December 12, and December 18, 2010.

According to the instructions, study participants completed the MBI-ES, the Demographic Data Profile Sheet, and the LEAD Other Survey. Participants were given a research information sheet informing them that their participation was voluntary, explaining that they might withdraw from the study at any time. Surveys were returned to me between November 12, 2010 and January 8, 2011 via the United States Postal Service.

A procedure was designed to track each school's number of returned surveys. The procedure included two assigned codes. Each assigned code included the letters "S" for school and "Q" for questionnaire; each survey was assigned two four-digit numbers that were printed on each envelope. The first code identified one of the 28 elementary schools (e.g., S0001 - S0028) and the second code identified one of the surveys (e.g., Q0001- Q0181). The codes were used to track survey responses. Data were secured on three thumb drives as well as a backup file to be accessible if needed. Data collection included a record of the number of surveys distributed and returned. The response rate was determined by the number of thoroughly completed surveys. An acceptable sample size was achieved through oversampling and sending repeated reminders (Alreck & Settle, 1995).

## **Data Management**

**Procedures for storing and logging responses.** Data from respondents who completed the MBI-ES, the Demographic Data Profile Sheet, and the LEAD Other Survey for this study were stored in a secured location. All survey item statements were recorded onto an Excel spreadsheet. The assigned school codes and survey codes were listed on the Excel spreadsheet so that the response rates for each school could be

identified and tracked. Data entered were saved on three thumb drives, in addition to a hard drive, to ensure that data were not lost. All thumb drives were kept in a file cabinet in a secured location. No identifying information was obtained; therefore, no special storage was required.

**Data processing.** At the beginning of the study, it was decided that a survey with 25% or more of the responses missing would be excluded from the data analysis. There were two surveys with 25% or more missing responses; the remaining 127 surveys were either complete or missing less than 25% of the data. Those 127 surveys were included in the data analysis. For surveys with one or more but fewer than 25% missing responses, it was planned for the item's modal responses to be imputed, but as there were no missing responses, this process was found to be unnecessary. Prior to entering item responses into Excel, the data were reviewed. To identify data entry errors, the data were read aloud by a colleague as I confirmed the accuracy of each entry.

**Transformation.** Teacher participants indicated the extent to which burnout occurred by selecting from a response scale with values ranging from 0 to 6, with 0 indicating *never* and 6 indicating *everyday*. According to the scoring procedure in the MBI manual (Maslach et al., 1996), item response scores were summed for each of the individual scales. The emotional exhaustion scale generates possible scores from 0 to 54. The depersonalization scale generates possible scores from 0 to 30, and the sense of personal accomplishment scale generates possible scores from 0 to 48. The sense of loss of personal accomplishment scale is interpreted inversely from the way in which emotional exhaustion and depersonalization are interpreted.



After the data entry was complete, the surveys were placed in an envelope and stored in a safe place until the completion of the study. Using SPSS, responses on the MBI-ES were summed for Questions 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16, and 20 to form the emotional exhaustion dimension. The MBI-ES responses for Questions 5, 10, 11, 15, and 22 were summed to form the depersonalization dimension. The MBI-ES responses for Questions 4, 7, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19, and 21 were totaled to form the sense of loss of personal accomplishment scale.

All demographic data were gathered using the MBI Demographic Data Profile Sheet. Each respondent provided information related to age, gender, years of teaching, and level of education. Each participant's gender was coded as either 1 for male (22%,  $n = 28$ ) or 2 for female (78%,  $n = 99$ ). Missing values within the demographic data were treated as missing.

The LEAD Other Survey was used to ascertain the teachers' perceptions of the principals' leadership effectiveness. The LEAD Other Survey presents 12 situations. The survey scoring sheet offers 3 possible scores for each item response. The LEAD Other Survey total scores are presented as low (0 to 23), moderate (24 to 30), or high (31 to 36) to indicate levels of leadership effectiveness. The respondent's perception of the leader's effectiveness level is determined by a score that indicates how closely his or her choice matches the most preferred solution for the situation (Hersey et al., 2008).

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

Data analysis proceeded in three steps. In Step 1, the response rate was determined according to the number of returned surveys. Also in Step 1, descriptive statistics were calculated using SPSS - Version 16 (SPSS, 2007) to present demographic

information regarding the respondents' age, and gender, and background information relating to years of experience and level of education.

Steps 2 and 3 of the data analysis were accomplished using SPSS - Version 16. Step 2 of the data analysis included calculating scale scores from the raw data of the MBI-ES and the LEAD Other Survey. To assess the reliability of the data, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for the MBI-ES. Step 3 of the data analysis was used to answer the overarching research questions and related specific questions.

The Pearson product moment coefficient was calculated to answer the research question pertaining to the relationships between principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout. The assumptions of independence for the Pearson product moment correlation were met using a random sample selected from the teacher population. The assumptions of normality were met having a sufficient number of observations in each group. Data derived from the MBI-ES, although ordinal, were treated as interval data (Harwell & Gatti, 2001). All assumptions required for the use of the Pearson product moment correlation were met.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Data were collected from teacher participants, whose participation was voluntary; employment status was not in any way affected. If potential participants chose not to participate or decided to withdraw from the study, they did not incur any penalties. A strict code of ethics guided the study and included (a) permissions to use the instruments, (b) maintenance of respondent and response anonymity, (c) assurance that data were managed appropriately, and (d) assertions that the data were used for the intended purposes. Each survey packet contained an ethical statement that provided participants

information about procedures to complete the study. Prior to data collection, approval to complete the study was obtained from The George Washington University Institutional Review Board and chosen school division. Research participants did not incur any risks or expenses for their contribution. I handled the results with the most stringent care. All data were stored on backup files and held in a locked file cabinet; no identifying information was collected or stored with the data. I used every effort to report the data accurately.

### **Summary**

The purpose of the current study in a suburban school division was to determine the extent of any relationship between full-time elementary school teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and those teachers' levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Chapter 3 has detailed the methodology of this study. The study used a sample drawn from a population of 1,719 general education and special education elementary school teachers employed in a suburban school division. The study used correlational research to examine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout. The first survey, the MBI-ES, assessed teachers' levels of burnout using three scales: (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) depersonalization, and (c) personal accomplishment. A component of the MBI-ES, the MBI Demographics Data Profile Sheet, was used to gather information related to the respondent's age, gender, years of teaching, and level of education. A second survey, the LEAD Other Survey, was used to measure principals' leadership effectiveness as perceived by teachers. Each survey is supported by evidence the instrument is valid and reliable and accepted in the literature.

The MBI-ES and the LEAD Other Survey have been used with previous populations similar to those in the current study. Chapter 4 presents results of the specific analyses that describe the sample and address the research question and subquestions.

## **Chapter 4: Results of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether or not a relationship existed between elementary school teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout in the chosen suburban school division in the Mid-Atlantic region. The findings, based upon quantitative correlational methodology, revealed a relationship between elementary school teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and only one of the three dimensions of burnout. This study involved use of the MBI-ES (Maslach et al., 1996), which measured burnout constructs (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) in teachers, and the LEAD Other Survey (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998), which measured teachers' perceptions of principals' effectiveness.

### **Response Rates for Individual Schools**

This study's population included 1,719 teachers who taught kindergarten through Grade 5 in 28 elementary schools. Permission was requested and granted to survey teachers in the chosen school division. I sampled 10% of each school's full-time teacher population, delivering from 2 to 11 surveys to each school. In the initial sampling, 181 surveys were distributed, of which 129 were returned. Of the 129 surveys returned, 2 surveys contained 25% or more missing data and were, therefore, excluded from the data analysis. The total number of usable surveys was 127, representing a 70% response. The respondents from each school replied in a timely manner. Thus, each school was represented in the study. The overall response rate exceeded the 60% expected response rate. All respondents were employed as full-time elementary teachers. The sample consisted of 22% ( $n = 28$ ) men teachers and 78% ( $n = 99$ ) women teachers. The sample

included all 28 elementary schools of the chosen school division. Each of the participating elementary schools was assigned a school code. Table 3 depicts the number of responses per school. The response rates varied between 22% and 100%.

Table 3

*The Number of Participating Schools and Teachers*

School code	Response rate per school	School code	Response rate per school
1	83% (5/6)	15	80% (4/5)
2	88% (7/8)	16	89% (8/9)
3	100% (5/5)	17	60% (3/5)
4	75% (6/8)	18	55% (6/11)
5	22% (2/9)	19	67% (4/6)
6	75% (6/8)	20	80% (4/5)
7	67% (4/6)	21	50% (1/2)
8	83% (5/6)	22	67% (4/6)
9	67% (4/6)	23	38% (3/8)
10	71% (5/7)	24	75% (3/4)
11	25% (1/4)	25	86% (6/7)
12	50% (3/6)	26	100% (5/5)
13	100% (9/9)	27	100% (7/7)
14	57% (3/7)	28	71% (5/7)

**Preliminary Results**

**Reliability.** Internal consistency reliability was calculated for the MBI-ES and compared to coefficients of previous studies. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the burnout dimensions emotional exhaustion ( $\alpha = .80$ ) and personal accomplishment

( $\alpha = .67$ ) were lower when compared to earlier published studies, as shown in Table 4. Depersonalization ( $\alpha = .51$ ) was found to be inconsistent and considerably lower than previous studies. Current coefficients were substantially lower than those in previous studies with the exception of the coefficients in the study by Jackson et al. (1986). Table 4 presents reliability coefficients for each burnout scale in several studies.

Table 4

*Internal Reliability Coefficients for Burnout Research*

Researcher	N	Year	EE	DEP	PA
Schwab & Iwanicki	469	1981	.90	.76	.76
Maslach	1,316	1982	.90	.79	.71
Gold	462	1984	.88	.74	.72
Jackson et al.	248	1986	.60	.54	.57
Maslach et al.	11,067	1996	.90	.79	.76
Chenevey et al.	145	2003	.79	.59	.90
Hawkins	136	2008	.92	.65	.70
Luk et al.	138	2010	.85	.76	.83
<b>Owens</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>.51</b>	<b>.67</b>

Note: Emotional Exhaustion, EE; Depersonalization, DP; Personal Accomplishment, PA

## **Descriptive Analyses**

Frequencies and percents, or medians, means, and standard deviations for the demographic variables were computed with the SPSS (Version 16) for Windows Software. Table 5 displays statistics regarding the respondents' ages and years of experience. The sample ( $N = 127$ ) included elementary regular education teachers and special education teachers in kindergarten through Grade 5. To identify respondents' characteristics, data reported in the demographic section of the survey were analyzed.

**Age.** The respondents varied in age. The respondents had an age spread of 23 to 69 years with a mean of 41.60 ( $SD = 9.96$ ,  $N = 127$ ) years and a median age of 41 years. Of the respondents, 10% ( $n = 13$ ) were between the ages of 23 and 29 years and 70% ( $n = 88$ ) were aged 30 to 49 years. A small group of teachers, reflecting 5% ( $n = 6$ ) of the sample, were age 60 or over.

**Gender.** This sample consisted of men and women who taught kindergarten through Grade 5. Of the sample ( $N = 127$ ), 22% ( $n = 28$ ) were men and 78% ( $n = 99$ ,  $n = 127$ ) were women. The men respondents had a mean age of 37.43 ( $SD = 9.81$ ,  $n = 28$ ) years and the women had a mean age of 42.79 ( $SD = 9.72$ ,  $n = 99$ ).

**Years of teaching experience.** The respondents reported years of teaching experience between 1 and 39 years. Of the respondents, 41.99% ( $n = 52$ ) reported between 11 and 20 years of experience, with a mean of 14.99 ( $SD = 9.23$ ) years of experience.

**Class assignment.** This sample included regular education teachers and special education teachers. Of the respondents, 76% ( $n = 96$ ) were assigned to regular education classes and 24% ( $n = 31$ ) to special education classes (see Table 5).



**Grade level.** Of the respondents, 20.2% ( $n = 25$ ) taught Grade 3 and 18% ( $n = 23$ ) taught Grade 5, both of which are high-stakes testing grades. Demographic data are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5

*Distribution of Teachers' Age, Gender, Years of Teaching Experience, and Level of Education*

<b>Variable</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Age		
23-29	13	10%
30-39	44	35%
40-49	44	35%
50-59	20	15%
60-69	6	5%
Gender		
Men	28	22%
Women	99	78%
Years of teaching		
1-5	16	12%
6-10	23	18%
11-20	52	41%
21-30	24	19%
31 or more	12	10%
Levels of education		
Bachelor's degree	127	100%
Master's degree	57	45%
Class assignment		
Regular education	96	76%
Special education	31	24%
Grade level assignment		
Kindergarten	7	5%
Grade 1	12	10%
Grade 2	30	24%
Grade 3	26	20%
Grade 4	29	23%
Grade 5	23	18%

## **Primary Results**

The primary results of this study are organized by research questions, subquestions, and hypotheses. All research questions were based on the previous literature.

### **Research Question 1: Level of Teacher Burnout**

Research Question 1 asked, “What are the levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment for elementary teachers in the chosen school division?” To answer this research question, the three aspects of burnout were examined using descriptive statistics (see Table 6). Table 6 presents the current scores for each scale, as well as the MBI normative scores, indicating levels of burnout. The current sample ( $N = 127$ ) scores were compared to the MBI-ES educators’ group norms ( $n = 4,163$ ), which were derived from a population ( $N = 11,067$ ) of human services workers. The respondents generated a moderate mean for emotional exhaustion ( $M = 20.17$ ,  $SD = 8.69$ ,  $N = 127$ ), a low mean for depersonalization ( $M = 2.88$ ,  $SD = 3.04$ ,  $N = 127$ ), and a high mean for sense of loss personal accomplishment ( $M = 38.53$ ,  $SD = 5.72$ ,  $N = 127$ ). The results of this study revealed a moderate mean for emotional exhaustion, a low mean for depersonalization, and a high mean for sense of personal accomplishment, indicating an overall low level of burnout (Maslach et al., 1996). Table 6 provides a comparison of the current means, standard deviations, and medians to the MBI-ES norms.

Table 6

*Comparison of the Current Burnout Scale Means and Medians with Group Norms in the Study by Maslach et al. (1996)*

<b>Burnout scale</b>	<b>Owens mean</b>	<b>Owens SD</b>	<b>MBI Mean</b>	<b>MBI Norm SD</b>	<b>Owens Median</b>
EE	20.17	8.69	21.25	11.01	19.00
DEP	2.88	3.04	11.00	6.19	2.00
PA	38.53	5.72	33.54	6.89	40.00

Note: Owens,  $N = 127$ ; Maslach et al.,  $n = 4,163$

**Emotional exhaustion.** The emotional exhaustion scale is composed of 9 items with each item rated on a 0 to 6 response scale. A score of 0 indicates *never* having a feeling of emotional exhaustion and 6 indicates experiencing it *everyday*. A respondent's total score has a theoretical spread of 0 to 54. Emotional exhaustion is presented in low, moderate, and high levels (Maslach et al., 1996). The respondents generated a median of 19.00 and a mean of 20.17 ( $SD = 8.69$ ,  $N = 127$ ). The current participants (41.5%,  $n = 56$ ) reported a moderate level for emotional exhaustion. Of this sample, 25.2 % ( $n = 26$ ) reported scores that reflect a high level of emotional exhaustion, and 33.3% ( $n = 45$ ) reported scores that indicate a low level of emotional exhaustion.

The current emotional exhaustion mean was compared to the MBI-ES group norm. To compare the current sample mean to the established MBI-ES group norm, the one-sample z-test was chosen as the statistical test. The current emotional exhaustion mean ( $M = 20.17$ ,  $SD = 8.69$ ,  $N = 127$ ) was compared to the MBI-ES group norm ( $M = 21.25$ ,  $SD = 11.01$ ,  $N = 4,163$ ), and no significant difference was found ( $z = -1.08$ ,  $p =$

17). Table 7 illustrates the difference in the current scale and the MBI group norm for emotional exhaustion.

Table 7

*Levels of Emotional Exhaustion*

<b>Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Low (0-16)	45	33.3%
Moderate (17-26)	56	41.5%
High (27-54)	26	25.2%

*Note.* Median = 19.00, Mean = 20.17, *SD* = 8.69, *N* = 127.

**Depersonalization.** The depersonalization scale is presented with 5 items (Items 5, 10, 11, 15, and 22). Each item response was rated by participants on a scale ranging from 0 to 6, with 0 indicating *never* feeling cold or distant and 6 indicating feeling cold or distant *everyday*. The respondents' total depersonalization scores had a theoretical spread between of 0 and 30. The teachers reported low scores for depersonalization ( $M = 2.88$ ,  $SD = 3.04$ ,  $N = 127$ ) with a median of 2.00. Of the current sample, 88% of the respondents ( $n = 112$ ) generated low scores on the depersonalization scale, thereby indicating a low level of depersonalization (Maslach et al., 1996). Table 8 illustrates the levels of depersonalization.

The current depersonalization mean was compared to the MBI-ES group norm. To compare the current sample scores to the established MBI group norms, the one sample  $z$ -test was chosen as the statistical test. The depersonalization mean ( $M = 2.88$ ,  $SD = 3.04$ ,  $N = 127$ ) was compared to the MBI group norm ( $M = 11.00$ ,  $SD = 6.19$ ,  $N =$

4,163) and was found to be significantly less. A significant negative difference was found between the MBI normative group and the current depersonalization mean ( $z = -28.36, p = .001$ ).

Table 8

*Levels of Depersonalization*

<b>Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Low (0-6)	112	88%
Moderate (7-12)	14	11%
High (13-30)	1	1%

*Note.* Median = 2.00,  $M = 2.88, SD = 3.04, N = 127$

**Personal accomplishment.** The personal accomplishment scale is presented in 8 items (4, 7, 9, 12, 17 18, 19, and 21). Each item response is rated from 0 to 6, with 0 indicating *never* experiencing personal accomplishment and 6 indicating experiencing achievement *everyday* with a theoretical spread of 0 to 48. The participants reported high scores for personal accomplishment ( $M = 38.53, SD = 5.72, N = 127$ ), with a median of 40.00. In contrast to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, personal accomplishment is interpreted in the opposite direction. Almost two thirds (62%,  $n = 84$ ) of the participants revealed high scores on personal accomplishment, indicating a low level of burnout (Maslach et al., 1996) (see Table 9).

To compare the current sample means to the established MBI-ES group norms, the one sample  $z$ -test was chosen as the statistical test. The personal accomplishment mean ( $M = 38.53, SD = 5.72, N = 127$ ) was compared to the MBI norm ( $M = 33.54, SD = 6.89, N = 4,163$ ) and was found to be significantly more. A significant difference was

found between the MBI group norm and the current personal accomplishment mean ( $z = 9.62, p = .001$ ). The current mean was found to be significantly higher than the norm

Table 9 shows the levels of personal accomplishment.

Table 9

*Levels of Personal Accomplishment*

<b>Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Low (39-48)	84	62%
Moderate (32-38)	34	27%
High (0-31)	9	11%

*Note. Median = 40.00, Mean = 38.53, SD = 5.72, N = 127*

Table 10 shows comparisons between current means and MBI norms with each scale's  $z$ -value (Maslach et al., 1996).

Table 10

*Comparison of the Current Burnout Scale Means with Norm Group Means in the Study by Maslach et al. (1996)*

<b>Burnout scale</b>	<b>Owens mean<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Owens SD</b>	<b>MBI Mean<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Norm SD</b>	<b><math>z</math>-value</b>	<b><math>p</math></b>
EE	20.17	8.69	21.25	11.01	-1.08	.171
DEP	2.88	3.04	11.00	6.19	-28.36	.001*
PA	38.53	5.72	33.54	6.89	9.62	.001*

<sup>1</sup> $N = 127$

<sup>2</sup> $n = 4,163,$

Significant  $\alpha = .05$

## Research Question 2: Teachers' Perceptions of Principals' Leadership Effectiveness

Research Question 2 asked, "What is the level of leadership effectiveness for the principals as perceived by elementary school teachers in the chosen school division?"

Leadership effectiveness was measured using the LEAD Other Survey.

Teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness were determined using the 12-item LEAD Other Survey response scale. In the LEAD Other Survey, each item is scored between 0 and 3. The 12-item LEAD Other Survey presents an effectiveness score that is determined by how closely the respondent's choice regarding how his or her leader will respond matches the most preferred solution for a situation. The effectiveness scores were summed to present a total score that indicates a low (0 to 23), moderate (24 to 29), or high (30 to 36) level of leadership effectiveness (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998). The mean of 24.57 ( $SD = 4.44$ ,  $N = 127$ ), median of 25, and mode of 27 all indicated the school leaders to be moderately effective (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998). Table 11 illustrates levels of leadership effectiveness indicated by teachers' perceptions.

Table 11

### *Levels of Leadership Effectiveness as Indicated by Teachers' Perceptions*

<b>Effectiveness level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Low (0-23)	40	32%
Moderate (24-29)	73	56%
High (30-36)	14	12.0%

*Note.* Median = 25.00, Mean = 24.57,  $SD = 4.44$ ,  $N = 127$



**Teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership styles.** The LEAD Other Survey was used to examine teachers' perceptions of principals' array of leadership styles. Hersey and Blanchard (1998) noted that all leaders have a primary leadership style, which is the most used style, and a secondary leadership style that is used on occasion or as a back-up style. Using the sample responses, the item scores identified school leaders' leadership styles as denoted by the teachers' perceptions. The LEAD Other Survey is presented in four leadership styles (see Table 12). The school leader's primary style was determined by the quadrant that received the highest number of responses for the 12 situations. The school leader's secondary or back-up style was determined by the quadrant that received the second highest number of responses (Hersey et al., 1996). Of the 127 participants, 43% ( $n = 55$ ) reported the school leaders' primary or most used style to be the participating leadership style. Subsequently, 41% ( $n = 52$ ) of the teachers perceived the principals' secondary leadership style to be the selling style. Table 12 illustrates a distribution of the teachers' perceptions of the principals' primary and secondary styles.

Table 12

*Distribution of Teachers' Perceptions of Principals' Primary and Secondary Leadership Styles*

Leadership style	Primary		Secondary	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Participating	55	43%	42	33%
Selling	39	31%	52	41%
Delegating	22	17%	17	13%
Telling	11	9%	16	13%

Note:  $N = 127$

### **Research Question 3: Relationships Between Teachers' Perceptions of Principals' Leadership Effectiveness and Burnout**

Research Question 3 asked, "Is there a relationship between elementary teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness (as measured by the LEAD Other Survey) and teachers' levels of burnout (as measured by the MBI-ES)?" Leadership effectiveness scores refer to school leaders' appropriate styles, which include specific qualities of the tasks and relationship behaviors that facilitate workers' levels of readiness in the school organization (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998).

Research Question 3 was answered by examining teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout. Research Question 3 was further divided into three subquestions to test the relationships between teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teachers' levels of emotional

exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The Pearson product moment correlation was used to test these bivariate relationships.

**Research Subquestion 3.1.** Research Subquestion 3.1 asked, “Is there a relationship between elementary school teachers’ perceptions of principals’ leadership effectiveness (as measured by the LEAD Other Survey) and teachers’ levels of emotional exhaustion (as measured by the MBI-ES)?”

To answer Research Subquestion 3.1, it was hypothesized that there is a negative correlation between elementary teachers’ perceptions of principals’ leadership effectiveness and emotional exhaustion. Findings showed that teachers’ perceptions of principal’s leadership effectiveness had a nonsignificant negative correlation to emotional exhaustion ( $r = -.11, p = .20$ ). Cronbach’s alpha of .80, although generally accepted as evidence of strong reliability, was substantially lower than found in previous studies. Using Cohen’s (1988) convention, a weak effect size was determined by the coefficient of determination ( $r^2 = .01$ ).

**Research Subquestion 3.2.** Research Subquestion 3.2 asked, “Is there a relationship between elementary teachers’ perceptions of principals’ leadership effectiveness (as measured by the LEAD Other Survey) and teachers’ levels of depersonalization (as measured by the MBI-ES)?”

To answer Research Subquestion 3.2, it was hypothesized that there is a negative relationship between elementary teachers’ perceptions of principals’ leadership effectiveness and depersonalization. Findings showed teachers’ perceptions of principals’ leadership effectiveness had a significant negative relationship to

depersonalization ( $r = -.21, p = .02$ ). A weak effect size was denoted by the coefficient of determination ( $r^2 = .04$ ) (Cohen, 1998). Cronbach's alpha coefficient ( $\alpha = .51$ ) suggests low reliability for depersonalization and again was lower than previous studies.

**Research Subquestion 3.3.** Research Subquestion 3.3 asked, "Is there a relationship between elementary school teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness (as measured by the LEAD Other Survey) and teachers' levels of personal accomplishment (as measured by the MBI-ES)?"

To answer Research Subquestion 3.3, it was hypothesized that there is a positive relationship between elementary teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teachers' levels of personal accomplishment. Findings showed teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness had a nonsignificant negative relationship to personal accomplishment ( $r = -.01, p = .90, N = 127$ ) (see Table 13). Cronbach's coefficient ( $\alpha = .67$ ) indicated marginal reliability, yet only slightly lower than previous studies.

Table 13 shows intercorrelations between leadership effectiveness and the three MBI scales.

Table 13

*Correlations Between Leadership Effectiveness and the MBI Burnout Scales*

Scale	EE	DEP	PA	LEFF
EE	-----	.534*	-.370*	-.112
DEP		-----	-.293*	-.205*
PA			-----	-.011
LEFF				-----

Note. Emotional exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DEP), Personal Accomplishment (PA), Leadership Effectiveness (LEFF),  $N = 127$ ,  $*p < .05$

**Summary**

Chapter 4 includes findings of the analyses of data generated by the LEAD Other Survey (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998) and the MBI-ES (Maslach et al., 1996). The surveys were originally administered to 181 full-time employed elementary teachers in a suburban school division in the Mid-Atlantic region. Of the 181 surveys distributed, 127 were returned thoroughly completed, representing a 70% response rate. The completed LEAD Other Survey and MBI-ES revealed data representing teachers' perceptions of leadership effectiveness and their levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and sense of loss of personal accomplishment. Of the 127 respondents, 78% ( $n = 99$ ) were women and 24% ( $n = 28$ ) were men, with a mean age of 41.60 ( $SD = 9.95$ ,  $N = 127$ ).

Respondents had been in education from 1 to 39 years, with a mean of 14.99 ( $SD = 9.23$ ,  $N = 127$ ) years of experience as full time-time elementary teachers.

The present study used the MBI-ES to measure burnout in terms of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and sense of loss of personal accomplishment. The emotional exhaustion mean was presented as 20.17 ( $SD = 8.68$ ); depersonalization had a mean of 2.88 ( $SD = 3.04$ ), and personal accomplishment was reported with a mean of 38.53 ( $SD = 5.72$ ). The one-sample  $z$ -test was conducted to compare the current moderate score for emotional exhaustion, low score for depersonalization, and high score for personal accomplishment to the MBI group norms. The sample reflected significant differences, indicating significantly less depersonalization ( $z = -28.36$ ,  $p = .001$ ) and higher personal accomplishment ( $z = 9.62$ ,  $p = .001$ ).

The study included a second survey, the LEAD Other Survey, which indicated teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness. Of the current sample, 56% ( $n = 73$ ) of the participants perceived the principals' leadership effectiveness as moderate, ( $M = 24.57$ ,  $SD = 4.44$ ,  $N = 127$ ) and a median of 25.00. Teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness fell in the moderate range.

The LEAD Other Survey was utilized in the study also to test relationships between elementary teachers' perceptions of principals' levels of leadership effectiveness and the teachers' levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment (as measured by the MBI-ES). Findings related to Research Question 3 show that teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness had a significant negative correlation to depersonalization ( $r = -.21$ ,  $p = .02$ ) albeit small; and,

nonsignificant correlations to emotional exhaustion ( $r = -.11, p = .20$ ) and personal accomplishment ( $r = -.01, p = .90$ ).

## **Chapter 5: Interpretations, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

This study examined the relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teachers' levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment in the selected suburban school division in the Mid-Atlantic region. Specifically, this study examined leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout. The study included background variables (age, gender, years of experience, and level of education) that provided information about the sample of elementary teachers of kindergarten through Grade 5 in the chosen Mid-Atlantic suburban school division.

The results were derived through the use of quantitative correlational methodology. Descriptive statistics were calculated to analyze teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and the three aspects of burnout. The Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were used to test the correlations between leadership effectiveness and the three aspects of burnout. The intent of this study was to provide substantive, empirically based research for the selected school division regarding principals' leadership effectiveness as related to teacher burnout.

Chapter 5 first presents the research questions and subquestions and a brief summary of the problems relating to principals' leadership effectiveness and teachers' levels of burnout. Next, interpretations, conclusions, and implications of the research are presented. Limitations of the study are then discussed. Recommendations for further study relating to the research topic are offered, as well as practical recommendations for the target school division. The results of this study broaden the context of the literature for future research.



## **Summary of the Problem**

According to Van Tonder and Williams (2009), burnout for certain teachers is a constant problem, which affects them in different ways. For some teachers, it is a slow process and for others it is an acute crisis. Burnout is described as a progression that is debilitating (Brock & Grady, 2002). Teachers who experience burnout indicate that it impedes job performance and deters professional growth and accomplishment of career goals (Hanson, 2006). Some burned-out teachers have entertained decisions of whether to remain in or leave the teaching profession (Ingersoll, 2001). Such a quandary can occur at any time in a teacher's career (Johnson, 2001).

Burnout is more prevalent in the profession of teaching than in any other profession (Van Tonder & Williams, 2009). Teachers can experience burnout due to various reasons, including workloads and practical or technical demands (Hanson, 2009). Some teachers experience burnout as a result of stringent demands that stem from bureaucratic mandates related to teacher accountability (Hanson) and principals' leadership styles (Mabry, 2005).

Several studies have been conducted to examine the impact of principals' leadership styles and the effects of stress upon levels of burnout (Lancaster, 2001; Pare, 1995). Lancaster ( $N = 265$ ) conducted a quantitative study that examined principals' leadership styles and stress leading to teacher burnout. The study examined whether or not a relationship existed between principals' leadership styles and teacher burnout. Additional research was needed to examine possible correlations between the perceived effective leadership styles by principals and teachers' levels of burnout. A substantial amount of literature related to principals' leadership *styles* and teacher burnout was

examined, but it provided limited empirical research specific to principals' leadership *effectiveness* and teacher burnout. To date, there had been limited empirical evidence to fully document an existing relationship between principal leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout; additional research was needed.

The primary goal of this study was to add knowledge about the relationships between leadership effectiveness and teachers' levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and sense of personal accomplishment. The second goal of the study was to provide information to the participating school division regarding teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout. Three research questions, subquestions, and research hypotheses were used to guide this study.

### **Research Questions: Subquestions and Research Hypotheses**

**Research Question 1.** Research question 1 asked: "What are the levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment for elementary school teachers in the chosen school division?" The findings in the current study indicated that the teachers experienced a moderate level for emotional exhaustion, a low level for depersonalization, and a high level for personal accomplishment.

***Emotional exhaustion.*** Van Tonder and Williams (2009) boldly asserted that burnout is a prevalent problem among teachers. The results of the current study, however, did not provide evidence to support that argument. The participants reported moderate levels of emotional exhaustion. When the current mean ( $M = 20.17$ ,  $SD = 8.69$ ,  $N = 127$ ) was compared to the MBI normative group mean ( $M = 21.25$ ,  $SD = 11.01$ ,  $n = 4,163$ ), the results failed to show a significant difference. Emotional exhaustion is presented in 9 scale items (Items 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16, and 20). The MBI manual

offers a scoring key with prescribed cut-off scores that indicate low (0-16), moderate (17 to 26), and high levels of burnout (27 or greater). The emotional exhaustion scores presented a spread of 2 to 47 with a mean of 20.17 ( $SD = 8.69$ ), indicating a moderate level of burnout

According to Maslach et al. (1996), emotionally exhausted teachers are extremely tired and depleted of their emotional resources. The burned-out individuals are discouraged and disillusioned with their profession. Using the mean scores, the results revealed that the current teachers reported overall low levels for burnout suggesting that the current teachers may be exhausted rather than burned out. The participants' reporting such a moderate level of exhaustion may not signal an alarm for immediate attention by the principal to reduce the feelings of fatigue but rather consider adjustment to teachers' workloads and potential for collaboration with coworkers.

Although the participants reported overall moderate levels of emotional exhaustion, additional research could provide further exploration regarding the distribution of emotional exhaustion scores, as it was noted that 25.2% ( $n = 26$ ) of the participants ( $N = 127$ ) reported high scores for emotional exhaustion. Such a finding is not alarming in itself; however, some researchers have viewed emotional exhaustion as the first step to teacher burnout (Maslach et al., 1996; Maslach & Leiter, 2005; Schwab, 1983). School leaders (principals) should be sensitive to the potential for teachers to experience emotional exhaustion and attempt to reduce those levels by improving the work environment (Friedman 1991) and providing more effective principal leadership styles (Pare, 1995). Principals could provide leadership to control, reduce, and prevent further feelings of burnout among the suburban elementary teachers.

***Depersonalization.*** Depersonalization is a strategy by which teachers attempt to cope with feelings of stress by detaching themselves from coworkers, students, principals, and situations in the organization. The depersonalized teacher may develop callous attitudes and dissolve relationships with coworkers. For the current participants, a low mean ( $M = 2.88$ ,  $SD = 3.04$ ,  $N = 127$ ) was reported for depersonalization, indicating a low level of burnout. Depersonalization is presented in 5 scale items (Items 5, 10, 11, 15, and 22). The current depersonalization mean was compared to the MBI group normative score ( $M = 11.00$ ,  $SD = 6.19$ ,  $n = 4.163$ ) and was determined to be significantly lower. The MBI manual offers a scoring key with prescribed cut-off scores ranging from 0 to 30 that indicate low levels of burnout (0-6), moderate levels of burnout (7 to 13), and high levels of burnout (14 to 30). The depersonalization scores had a spread of 0 to 22 and a mean of 2.88 ( $SD = 3.04$ ), indicating a low level of depersonalization. The participants' low depersonalization scores indicated their capability to cope and not feel the need to withdraw from coworkers and principals. Teachers who experience low levels of depersonalization are able to work without feeling the need to distance themselves from colleagues and recipients to self-protect.

There is another possible, perhaps less charitable, explanation for the current low depersonalization scores. Teachers' scores could possibly represent responses based upon political correctness. In the current climate with a focus on the value of diversity, teachers may be overly sensitive to any response that might endorse a callous, uncaring attitude toward colleagues and students. Social desirability suggests that teachers may be responding in a politically correct manner to avoid expressions or actions that exclude or

offend individuals who may be disadvantaged or victims of discrimination (McAlaney, Bewick, & Bauerle, 2010).

Although 16 years have passed since Maslach et al. (1996) published their latest normative mean score for depersonalization ( $M = 11.00$ ,  $SD = 6.19$ ,  $n = 4,163$ ), the current mean is significantly lower; however, it is comparable to the data from Gates (2006) ( $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = 4.14$ ,  $N = 307$ ), Hanson (2006) ( $M = 5.31$ ,  $SD = 5.32$ ,  $N = 291$ ), Hawkins (2008) ( $M = 2.52$ ,  $SD = 3.00$ ,  $N = 136$ ), and Durr (2008) ( $M = 4.37$ ,  $SD = 4.06$ ,  $N = 165$ ). The result from these more current studies might indicate that depersonalization is not as large a concern for current teachers as it was in 1996. The results show a decline in the mean scores for the depersonalization scale, possibly indicating political correctness in teachers' providing the most likely desirable response relating to job conditions, rather than the most accurate response. Additional research is needed in the area of depersonalization and elementary teachers. Such an investigation of burnout, specifically depersonalization, could provide new perspectives for analyzing job conditions that nurture rather than stifle the growth of teachers. To justify the need for burnout prevention, control, or decrease in programs and measures, the MBI group norms may need to be reevaluated.

***Personal accomplishment.*** Personal accomplishment refers to individuals' beliefs in their capability to achieve positive outcomes on the job (Maslach, 1982). The current participants reported a high mean of 38.53 ( $SD = 5.72$ ,  $N = 127$ ) for the personal accomplishment scale. The personal accomplishment scores ranged from 2 to 47; high scores are interpreted as low levels of burnout. The personal accomplishment dimension is presented in 8 items (Items 4, 7, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19, and 21). According to the MBI

manual, personal accomplishment scores of 0 to 30 indicate a high level of burnout, scores of 31 to 36 indicate a moderate level of burnout, and scores of 37 or greater indicate a low level of burnout (Maslach et al., 1996). The personal accomplishment scale is scored inversely from the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization scales. The current participants' high mean for personal accomplishment ( $M = 38.53$ ,  $SD = 5.72$ ),  $N = 127$  indicated low levels of burnout.

The current personal accomplishment mean was compared to the MBI group normative score ( $M = 33.54$ ,  $SD = 6.90$ ,  $n = 4.163$ ) and was found to be significantly higher. Although personal accomplishment scores have trended upward, these results suggest that reduced personal accomplishment is not as significant for the current teachers as it was for teachers in 1996 (Comerchero, 2006; Gates, 2007; Hawkins, 2008). Additional research is needed to determine future trends for personal accomplishment scores. The high score for personal accomplishment generated by the current participants indicates their capability to recognize the meaning and importance of their work. Teachers who experience low levels of burnout indicate more coworker interaction, better support from principals, and greater job satisfaction (Maslach et al., 1996).

The current elementary teachers reported high scores for personal accomplishment, which when considered with the low scores for depersonalization may offset the moderate scores for emotional exhaustion (Maslach et al., 1996), indicating an overall low level of burnout.

Interpretation of the current results is made difficult by the reliability estimates for the study data. The current Cronbach's reliability coefficient ( $\alpha = .80$ ) for emotional exhaustion was found to be sufficient but lower than that of earlier studies; however, due

to the low Cronbach's coefficients for the other two MBI scales, an examination of recent reliability estimates appeared to be warranted. With the exception of the study by Jackson et al. (1986;  $\alpha = .60$ ,  $N = 307$ ), the coefficients for emotional exhaustion remained strong (see Table 14).

The measure of depersonalization for the current study had a low Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The current participants' data resulted in a lower coefficient than did the national MBI normative group of educators. As there was a great difference between the current Cronbach's alpha coefficient ( $\alpha = .51$ ) and the 1996 MBI group norm for depersonalization ( $\alpha = .76$ ,  $N = 4,163$ ), the current depersonalization reliability coefficient was compared with other coefficients. The current coefficient for the depersonalization scale was found to be closer to the coefficient in an earlier study by Jackson et al. (1986) ( $\alpha = .54$ ,  $N = 248$ ) and a more recent study by Gates (2007) ( $\alpha = .60$ ,  $N = 307$ ) than to the coefficient in an earlier study by Maslach (1981) ( $\alpha = .90$ ,  $N = 1,316$ ). The unacceptably low coefficient for depersonalization suggests that conclusions related to this dimension should be advanced cautiously.

The inconsistency between the previous Cronbach's alpha coefficients and the current coefficient suggest that the MBI scale may no longer be a reliable measure to assess depersonalization. Table 14 depicts differences in coefficients for depersonalization.

The current Cronbach's alpha coefficient for personal accomplishment is .67, which is lower than coefficients in earlier studies by Jackson et al., (1986,  $\alpha = .57$ ,  $N = 248$ ) and Maslach et al. (1996,  $\alpha = .76$ ,  $N = 4, 163$ ) but comparable to those of the studies by Hawkins (2008) ( $\alpha = .70$ ,  $N = 136$ ) and Hanson (2006) ( $\alpha = .71$ ,  $N = 291$ ). Again, the

inconsistency in the Cronbach's coefficients from the MBI suggests that the MBI scale may no longer be a reliable measure to assess personal accomplishment. Table 14 presents differences in the coefficients for personal accomplishment.

A second possible explanation for such a difference in the Cronbach's alpha coefficients is that the current study's setting represented a typical suburban community that included small urban and rural pockets with a total population under 225,000. The setting for the study by Maslach et al. (1996) represented a national landscape including rural, urban, and suburban regions across the United States. It is important to note that the sample ( $N = 4,163$ ) for that study included educators, representing administrators and teachers in kindergarten through Grade 12, whereas the current sample ( $N = 127$ ) included only elementary teachers of kindergarten through Grade 5, thereby indicating that the values of the two samples are different. The coefficients are possibly different due to one or more factors, including trends, socioeconomics, and/or perceptions of the workplace. The MBI may still be reliable for more diverse populations of teachers but not so for this more homogeneous group (see Table 14).



Table 14

*Internal Reliability Coefficients for Previous and Current Research*

Researcher	Sample descriptor	N	Year	EE	DEP	PA
Maslach	Urban	420	1981	.89	.74	.76
Maslach	Entire U.S	1,316	1982	.90	.79	.71
Schwab & Iwanicki	Massachusetts	469	1982	.90	.76	.76
Gold	California	462	1984	.88	.74	.72
Jackson et al.	Suburban	248	1986	.60	.54	.57
Maslach et al.	Entire U.S.	11,067	1996	.90	.79	.76
Chenevey et al.	Ohio	145	2003	.79	.59	.90
Goddard & Goddard	[Australia]	112	2006	.90	.71	.74
Hanson	Arizona	291	2006	.90	.74	.72
Comerchero	Suburban	285	2008	.85	.78	.74
Hawkins	Suburban	136	2008	.92	.65	.70
Luk et al.	[China]	138	2010	.85	.76	.83
<b>Owens</b>	<b>Suburban</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>.51</b>	<b>.67</b>

**Research Question 2.** Research Question 2 asked, “What is the level of leadership effectiveness of principals as perceived by elementary school teachers in the chosen school division?” The findings in the current study indicate that the teachers perceived the principals to have a moderate level of leadership effectiveness.

*Leadership effectiveness.* The LEAD Other Survey has been used extensively to analyze teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness (Hersey & Blanchard, 1996). Leadership effectiveness is a blend of the principal's (leader's) task behavior and relationship behavior and the teacher's (worker's) readiness to perform a task in the situation (school). Leadership effectiveness is described as a leader's capability to select the appropriate style to address workers' readiness in any situation in the organization (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998). In the current sample ( $N = 127$ ), 56% ( $n = 73$ ) of the participants perceived the principal to use a moderate level of leadership effectiveness ( $M = 24.57$ ,  $SD = 4.44$ ).

In keeping with the theory, the results suggest that the participants perceived the principals as being capable of diagnosing the teachers' readiness, adapting to the readiness by selecting the most appropriate leadership style, and thereby effectively influencing teacher productivity in the classroom. They perceived the principals as demonstrating flexibility in leadership to attain the desired outcome in the school. The current participants perceived the principals as using moderate levels of effectiveness, thereby suggesting that the principals provide structured environments in which to work (Hersey et al., 1996).

Of the 127 participants, 32% ( $n = 40$ ) perceived the principals as exhibiting low levels of leadership effectiveness. Principals using low levels of leadership effectiveness may neither diagnose appropriately the teachers' levels of readiness nor select the appropriate style for the situation (Hersey et al., 2001). Of the participants, 12% ( $n = 14$ ) perceived the principals as exhibiting high levels of leadership effectiveness. Principals

perceived to use high levels of leadership effectiveness accurately diagnose teachers' readiness and select the appropriate style to fit each situation.

*Leadership styles.* According to Hersey and Blanchard (1998), leaders use one or more leadership styles: (S1) telling, (S2) selling, (S3) participating, (S4) delegating); these styles indicate high or low levels of principal (leader) task behavior or relationship behavior. Principals using task behaviors provide one-way communication to teachers; principals using relationship behaviors provide teachers with leadership that allows open communication. The current participants perceived that the respective school leaders used both a primary style and a secondary style.

*Primary leadership style.* Of the current sample of 127 suburban elementary teachers, 43% ( $n = 55$ ) perceived the principals' primary style to be the (S3) participating style. School leaders who use the participating style exhibit low task behaviors and high relationship behaviors. They provide teachers with the least amount of direction and the most support to complete tasks in the schools. Theoretically, the participating leaders pass the day-to-day decision making to teachers and invite them to share ideas relating to the operational duties of the school (Hersey & Blanchard, 2001). It appears that the current participants perceived their principals as using high-relationship behavior, suggesting much principal–teacher interaction.

The (S3) participating style is appropriate for workers who have the knowledge and skill (needing little or no direction) and collaborate often (needing much socioemotional support) to promote productivity in the situation (school) (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998). This style, as indicated by its name, involves a more collaborative, participatory environment for teachers (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998).

The (S3) participating style is appropriate for teachers who have moderate levels of readiness. These teachers are masters in their profession and work independently of the principal's directions. Current teachers who perceived the principals to use the participating style indicated that the principals provided leadership that encouraged teachers to share ideas in open discussion (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998).

Another possible interpretation of the data relies on the observation that the current model for highly effective school leaders is one best exemplified by the (S3) participating style. It is possible that in responding to the LEAD Other survey the teachers were more focused on conveying that their principals used this style rather than on selecting the style needed to achieve the highest scores from the scenarios to calculate the level of effectiveness. In other words, the conclusion that the principals were only moderately effective may be a result of how effectiveness was measured.

*Secondary leadership style.* The Mid-Atlantic participating teachers perceived the principals' secondary leadership style, or back-up style, to be the selling style. Of the current participants, 41% ( $n = 52$ ) perceived the selling leadership style to be appropriate for the secondary (or back-up) style. The (S2) selling style indicates that leaders provide much direction and explanation of duties (high task) with minimal interaction (low relationship) (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998); the (S2) selling style offers strong influence but gentle authority.

Hersey and Blanchard's LEAD Other Survey provided the current educators with a vehicle to show that different styles of leadership can be used in one school organization. The current data provide support for Hersey and Blanchard's research

indicating that the participating style and the selling style are used extensively in the United States and other industrialized nations that lead in education (Hersey et al., 2008).

Additional information on the (S1) telling and (S4) delegating leadership styles. The literature indicated that each of the four “leadership styles is effective at some time in some situation” (Johansen, 1991, p. 81). Hersey and Blanchard (1998) described the styles of leaders who use the (S1) telling leadership style as providing the teachers with specific directions (high task) to complete the task, but with the least amount of interaction with the teachers. Of the current participants, 9% ( $n = 11$ ) reported their principals to use (S1) the telling style as their primary style of leadership and 13% ( $n = 16$ ) as their secondary style of leadership (see Table 12). This style is appropriate for teachers who exhibit low levels of readiness, demonstrating total dependence on the principals’ directions to complete the task.

The (S4) delegating style of leadership allows the leader to empower the workers who have high levels of readiness, demonstrating that they are able to work independently of the principal and coworkers with minimal directions (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998). Of the current participants, 17% ( $n = 22$ ) perceived the (S4) delegating style to be the principals’ primary style and 13% ( $n = 17$ ) perceived it as the leaders’ secondary style. Principals who use the (S4) delegating style provide teachers with minimal directions (task) but maximum guidance (relationship) behaviors. Delegating principals use hand-off leadership styles to empower teachers using small amounts of instruction with little interaction. Participants who perceived the principals as using the (S4) delegating style suggested that this style may not be appropriate in

educational settings, as teachers need open communication and daily interaction with principals and coworkers (Hersey et al., 2008).

The current participants generated results similar to those of the participants in Lancaster's (2001) study. Lancaster's sample ( $N = 265$ ) consisted of 62% special education teachers and 38% ( $n = 100$ ) special education teachers in South Carolina and Georgia. The current sample included 75.9% ( $n = 96$ ) regular education teachers and 24.1% ( $n = 31$ ) special education teachers. The current participants' class assignments were compared to those of Lancaster's participants. The findings revealed that the current sample, as was the case in Lancaster's study, included a noticeably large number of special education teachers.

A second interesting finding revealed that the participants for both samples perceived the principals' primary and secondary styles to be the participating style and the selling style, but in reverse order. Of the current participants, 43% ( $n = 55$ ) perceived the participating style to be the principals' primary style and, 41% ( $n = 52$ ) perceived the selling style to be the principals' secondary style. In Lancaster's study, the participants perceived the principals' primary style to be the selling style (38%,  $n = 100$ ) and the secondary style to be the participating style (27%,  $n = 70$ ). It was interesting to note that both samples perceived the principals as using styles involving high-task behaviors. The current participants perceived the principals to use much collaboration and interaction, indicating open communicating between teachers and principal. The use of such dialogue provides clarification between the teachers and the principals (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998). The current participants perceived that such oral exchanges indicated

that the principals' leadership styles were effectively addressing the teachers' levels of readiness and that productivity flourished in the workplace.

In exploring the results of the teachers' perceptions of the principals' primary and secondary styles, several general conclusions are made. The teachers in the current study were older, indicating moderate levels of readiness to do their jobs; such teachers need only minimal directions and should be allowed opportunities to share ideas and participate in the decision making of the school.

A majority of the teachers' responses indicated perceptions that the participating style and the selling style are the most appropriate styles for teachers who demonstrate moderate levels of readiness (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998). Hersey and Blanchard's LEAD Other Survey provided the current educators with a vehicle to utilize different styles of leadership within one school division. The current data provide support for Hersey and Blanchard's (1998) research indicating that the participating style and the selling style are used extensively in the United States and other industrialized nations that lead in education.

The literature has suggested that each of the four "leadership styles is effective at some time in some situation" (Johansen, 1991, p. 81). The delegating style is most appropriate for leaders who provide minimal direction but maximum interaction with workers (Hersey et al., 2001). Principals using the delegating style provide minimal directions and guidance to teachers, indicating that the principal empowers teachers by releasing all decision making, responsibilities, and duties to them (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998). The delegating style is appropriate for teachers who have high levels of readiness, demonstrating that they are able to work independently of the principal and coworkers

(Hersey & Blanchard, 1998). The delegating style is used only in one-way communication, thereby limiting the opportunity for open communication and teacher and principal interaction (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998).

Of the current participants, 17% ( $n = 22$ ), perceived the delegating style to be the principal's primary style and 13% ( $n = 17$ ) perceived it to be the secondary style. Although some of the current participants perceived the principals as using the delegating style, principals who use this style could be perceived as "lack of leadership, as not accepting responsibility" for the role in leadership (Walter, Caldwell, & Marshall, 1980, p. 621). Teachers who perceive their principals to use low task behaviors and low relationship behaviors, may discover their principals to be empowering and trusting them to perform their duties. The delegating style leaders provide teachers freedom to work independently of them without directions or instructions. Such a hands-off approach may limit principal-teacher communication, influencing breakdowns in interaction (Walter et al., 1980). Thus the delegating style may not be appropriate in educational settings, as teachers need open communication and daily interaction with principals and coworkers (Graeff, 1983).

The literature has provided varying views on the SLT and its widely used leadership instrument. The LEAD Other Survey (Fernandez & Vecchio, 1987) continues to be questioned with regard to its academic authenticity as a leadership model for educators. The literature has offered partial support for the SLT.

**Research Question 3.** Research Question 3 asked, "Is there a relationship between elementary teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness (as



measured by the LEAD Other Survey) and teachers' levels of burnout (as measured by the MBI-ES)?”

*Research Subquestion 3.1* hypothesized that there is a negative relationship between elementary teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and emotional exhaustion. The statistical test failed to reject the null hypothesis.

*Research Subquestion 3.2* hypothesized that there is a negative relationship between elementary teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and depersonalization. The statistical test failed to reject the null hypothesis.

*Research Subquestion 3.3* hypothesized that there is a positive relationship between elementary teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and sense of personal accomplishment. The statistical test provided support for a negative correlation between teachers' perception of principals' leadership effectiveness and personal accomplishment. The results revealed that leadership effectiveness had a small but significant negative correlation to personal accomplishment, with an extremely weak effect size.

### **Limitations of Study**

Although carefully conducted, the current research has several possible limitations, which are discussed in this section. The results of this study are specific to the chosen school division, which is primarily a suburban area. The results may not be generalizable to other regions in the United States or to other countries.

The study is limited in that self-report surveys measure how individuals feel at a given period during the school year. The instruments were administered to respondents in the fall, at the beginning of the school year. This factor might have affected teachers'

ratings of both leadership effectiveness scores and burnout scores. With regard to burnout, job workload at the beginning of the school year might be less than at other times of the school year, thereby leading to lower burnout scores. Also, at the beginning of the school year, a new principal's leadership patterns might not yet be established or might not yet be known to the teachers. The LEAD Other involves judging decisions the school leader might make in particular school situations. Teachers might have made their judgments based on sparse information about the principals' leadership practices.

Teachers may perceive the principals' leadership differently at different times of the school year. Teacher burnout could be lower at the beginning of the school year. An explanation for such a conclusion could be that teachers and principals are well rested at the beginning of the school year and that teachers have not made conclusions regarding the principals' effectiveness as school leaders. Teacher burnout may be higher near the end of the school year due to the administration of standardized testing and other end-of-year duties. It must be reiterated that the measure of principal effectiveness was from teachers' perceptions, and these may have little correlation to other, less subjective, measures of the effectiveness of the principal.

Finally, although confidentiality was maintained throughout the data collection process, respondents might have hesitated to answer honestly with regard to their perceptions of the principals' leadership and levels of burnout, fearing that their answers might be exposed to the principal or other staff.

An important limitation for the current study is the low reliability coefficients for depersonalization and for personal accomplishment. The substantial discrepancy from previous studies raises questions about the validity of the current results.

Substantial research exists indicating the prevalence of burnout among teachers. Nevertheless, this study failed to produce convincing evidence of prominent burnout among the teachers from the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States who took part in this study. Of course, this study relied entirely upon teachers' self-reporting with regard to principals' leadership effectiveness and their levels of burnout. The very nature of self-report is limiting; uncontrollable factors can contribute to teachers' reasons for their responses. The study's results do not necessarily indicate the existence of moderate effectiveness on the part of principals, only that teachers perceived this to be the case.

Low instrument reliability contributes to the lack of convincing evidence for a relationship between principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout. It has been suggested that reevaluation of instrument reliability be conducted. Nevertheless, it is suggested that practicing educators consider the implications of these findings with regard to lessening teacher burnout.

### **Implications of the Study**

Through this study I attempted to determine whether or not a relationship existed between teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teachers' levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Although not every aspect of the study's data was conclusive, some implications may be ascertained

The current study produced implications that additional research relating to burnout among elementary, middle, or high school teachers should be conducted. A reevaluation should be conducted to determine (a) whether the MBI is sufficiently robust in terms of its psychometric properties, and (b) whether or not the current MBI norms are still relevant. According to recent results, teachers have reported moderate levels for

emotional exhaustion low levels for depersonalization, and high levels of personal accomplishment, suggesting that they might not be burned out, but only exhausted such results warrant additional research.

The literature has suggested that burned-out teachers are less effective in fulfilling their contractual obligations, making teacher burnout a veritable crisis in this age of accountability (Buhler & Land, 2003). Surely, teachers are expected to perform at optimal levels to meet principals' expectations. The responsibility for accountability is more critical than ever; the No Child Left Behind testing mandates should alert education leaders to develop and implement plans to (a) determine if teachers are experiencing high levels of burnout and (b) address the needs of those identified with burnout issues.

The results of this study on leadership effectiveness and levels of burnout advance the importance of investigating burnout in those charged with making a difference in the lives of the nation's youth. The current study revealed evidence that indicates the participants experienced moderate levels of emotional exhaustion, low levels for depersonalization, and high levels of personal accomplishment. With such low levels of burnout, a call for action on the part of these teachers would not be necessary, as they experienced mere exhaustion, not burnout. A call to action is imperative when a burnout crisis in education is confirmed by the three aspects for burnout that were established 16 years ago; such a result demands attention.

## **Conclusions**

The results in this study indicate that elementary regular education teachers and special education teachers in kindergarten through Grade 5 in a suburban school division

experienced moderate levels of emotional exhaustion, low levels of depersonalization, and low levels of personal accomplishment.

Teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness were found to have a significant, albeit weak, correlation to depersonalization only. The current study contributes to the body of literature in education research by providing educators with knowledge that can be used to more thoroughly understand the multidimensional factors of teacher burnout.

Based upon the overwhelming amount of previous research regarding the problem of teacher burnout in this country, it is necessary that recent research be examined to identify whether exhaustion or burnout in teachers is the issue at hand. Such conclusions suggest there is a need to examine the LEAD Other Survey and the MBI- ES through an in-depth investigation with teachers and administrators in elementary schools.

The relatively weak link between leadership effectiveness and teacher levels of burnout indicated by the results of this study, coupled with the inconsistency of reliability coefficients for the MBI and the speculation that the Lead Other Survey may not be adequate to capture teachers' evaluation of their principals' effectiveness, mandate further analysis of the instruments and attempts to improve their usefulness in important research of this nature.

### **Generalizations**

The current study was conducted to examine the relationship between elementary teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout. The sample for this study consisted of full-time elementary teachers from a suburban school division; therefore, caution should be used in generalizing findings from this study. The

results are not generalizable to teachers assigned to middle schools or high schools, as this study was conducted with K-5 elementary teachers only. As this research was conducted at the beginning of the school year, generalizability of this study to other times of the year with varying teachers' duties, requirements, and levels of burnout should be considered with caution. The low Cronbach's alpha coefficients also diminished the findings' generalizability.

### **Recommendations**

There are currently no other published studies that have examined the relationship between elementary teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teachers' levels of burnout in a suburban school division. Additional burnout studies, therefore, should be conducted regarding principals' leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout to extend this study's results:

1. Based on the results of the study, additional research is needed, not just within the state, but in schools around the world to continue to determine new norms for all three dimensions of the MBI Burnout Scale. Studies should be conducted to examine the reliability and the validity of each dimension.
2. The chosen school division should implement programs to reduce levels of exhaustion. To measure the success of any new burnout program, valid norms for emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and sense of personal accomplishment should be established to provide a baseline against which to measure success or failure.

## Summary

This study involved an examination of teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and levels of burnout for kindergarten through Grade 5 teachers in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The results revealed teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness to have a significant negative relationship to depersonalization ( $r = -.21, p = .02, N = 127$ ) and nonsignificant negative relationships with emotional exhaustion ( $r = -.11, p = .20, N = 127$ ) and personal accomplishment ( $r = -.01, p = .90, N = 127$ ). When the three burnout variables were examined individually, a moderate level of emotional exhaustion, low levels for depersonalization, and high levels of personal accomplishment were revealed, indicating a low level of burnout. The suburban elementary teachers of this study perceived the principals to have a moderate level of leadership effectiveness; these teachers perceived the principals to have a primary leadership style indicated as the (S3) participating style and a secondary style, indicated as the (S2) selling style.

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## **Appendix A: The MBI-ES**

The Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educator Survey is a copyrighted publication of the Mind Garden Corporation and because of copyright cannot be included in this document.

Dorothy Campbell, Vice President

Mind Garden Corp.

855 Oak Grove Ave.

Menlo Park, CA 94025

USA

Tel: 1-650-322-6300

Fax: 1-650-322-6398

## **Appendix B: The Leadership Effectiveness Adaptability Description Other Survey**

The Leadership Effectiveness Adaptability Description is a copyrighted publication of the Center for Leadership Studies, Inc. The LEAD other instrument may be reproduced by obtaining a license by contacting the Center for Leadership Studies, Inc. at 230 West Third Avenue; Escondido, CA 92025.

## **Appendix C: Consent to Use the MBI-ES**

To Whom It May Concern:

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1986) is published and distributed by Consulting Psychologists Press, which holds the copyright. Available publications include the MBI Manual, the test form and scoring key for the original MBI, the test form and scoring key for the MBI for educators, and demographic data sheets. All inquiries related to the MBI-ES should be directed to the Consulting Psychologists Press.

Permission to use the MBI-ES for research purposes was granted to the researcher on December 18, 2007. Permission was granted to the researcher to reproduce three or fewer full item responses and partial item responses for the remaining item responses.

Dorothy Campbell, Vice President

Mind Garden, Corp.

855 Oak Grove Ave.

Menlo Park, CA 94025

USA

Tel: 1-650-322-6300

Fax: 1-650-322-6398



**Appendix D: Letter of Approval to Use the LEAD Other Survey**

Sallye A. Owens

815 South Lake Circle

Chesapeake, Virginia 23322

Tel: 757-312-8172

[Sao\\_0330@yahoo.com](mailto:Sao_0330@yahoo.com)

December 8, 2009

Sallye,

Permission to use the LEAD Other survey and LEAD Directions for Scoring and Analysis has been granted. You may purchase them at the educational discount price. You may place your order via email with Angie Napolitano. She will get you the instruments you need as well as honor the educational discount.

Julene Burton

Contracts, Copyrights, & Permissions

Center for Leadership Studies

## **Appendix E: Letter Requesting Permission to Survey Teachers**

October 11, 2009

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am a doctoral candidate pursuing a degree in Educational Administration & Policy Studies at The George Washington University. This semester, I am engaged in conducting research as part of my doctoral requirements. I am conducting a research project that examines the relationship between elementary teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teachers' levels of burnout.

This study will survey full-time employed, elementary school teachers in a suburban school division in the Mid-Atlantic region. Participants are requested to complete the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey (MBI-ES), the Maslach Burnout Inventory Demographic Data Profile Sheet (Maslach & Jackson, 1996), and the Leadership Effectiveness Adaptability Description–Other (LEAD Other) Survey by Hersey and Blanchard (1998). Completion of the surveys will take a minimum of approximately 40 minutes.

All information obtained will be used solely for the purpose of the study; all respondents and responses will remain confidential. Office staff are requested to randomly place survey packets in every third teacher's mailbox. Teacher participation is strictly voluntary, and employment status will not in any way be affected if you choose not to participate or if you decide to withdraw from the study at any time. There are no direct benefits for participation in this study. The expected benefits include an opportunity for teachers to participate and include input about perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and levels of burnout in teachers. No survey will contain identifying information. All data will be kept in a locked file cabinet. Your records will not be disclosed in any publication or report related to the findings of this study. Participants will not experience any risks in completing the surveys. Self-addressed return envelopes and copies of documents are provided at no costs to the participants. I will serve as the study's point of contact for all communication and retrieval of documents.

The study results may be used to better understand principals' leadership effectiveness as perceived by teachers as well as levels of teacher burnout. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact the principal investigator, Dr. Sharon Dannels, at The George Washington University (757-269-4949) or me at 757-312-8257 or through email at Sao\_0330@yahoo.com

Sincerely,

Sallye A. Owens, Ed.S

## Appendix F: Approval from the Selected School Division to Conduct the Study



Chesapeake Public Schools  
School Administration Building  
Post Office Box 16496  
Chesapeake, Virginia 23328

*Student Services*

October 7, 2009

Sallye Owens  
815 South Lake Circle  
Chesapeake, VA 23320

Dear Ms. Owens:

Your request to conduct research using a teacher survey entitled, the Leadership Effectiveness and Adaptability Description and the Maslach Burnout Inventory in order to complete requirements for your doctoral degree from George Washington University was approved. The approval was granted with the understanding that the following conditions will apply:

- Participation of principals, teachers, parents, and students, is strictly **voluntary**.
- Names of individuals, school names or the name of the school division cannot be used in the reporting of the results of your findings without prior permission from the Department of Student Services.
- All contacts, copies, distribution, and retrieval of materials will be your responsibility.
- Questions must be limited to those detailed in your prospectus.

You may use this letter as a cover letter when contacting principals. Should you have further questions, please feel free to contact me at 547-0153, Ext. 170.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sabrina Richards". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.

Sabrina Richards  
Supervisor

The Chesapeake Public School System is an equal educational opportunity school system.  
The School Board of the City of Chesapeake also adheres to the principles of equal opportunity in employment and, therefore, prohibits discrimination in terms and conditions of employment on the basis of race, sex, national origin, color, religion, age, or disability.

## Appendix G: Letter to Principals

October 11, 2010  
School Name Elementary School  
Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Principal:

As a fellow colleague and a doctoral candidate, I am writing to invite your school's teachers to participate in a study as part of my doctoral requirements for The George Washington University in Washington, DC. This study examines the relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and teachers' levels of burnout. Study results will contribute to the understanding of principals' leadership behavior and burnout in teachers.

Please find enclosed the approval letter provided by the Chesapeake City Public Schools division to conduct the study. I wish to invite the full-time employed elementary teachers in your school to participate in the research. The teachers are requested to complete the following surveys: *The Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey (MBI-ES)*, the *MBI Demographic Data Profile Sheet*, and the *Leadership Effectiveness and Adaptability Description–Other Survey*. The surveys will take a minimum of approximately 40 minutes to complete. Teacher participation will be voluntary. Teacher employment status will not, in any way, be affected should he or she choose not to participate or decide to withdraw from the study at any time. There are no direct benefits for participation in the study. The expected benefits associated with this study include an opportunity for teachers to participate in the study. Also, expected benefits include teachers' input about the principals' leadership effectiveness and levels of burnout in teachers. Teachers' names will not be associated with the research findings in any way, nor included in any professional publication. Your school's code will be known only to the researcher. Confidentiality will be maintained for respondents and responses. Teacher participants' responses and demographic data will be kept separately in a locked file cabinet. All teacher participants are requested to complete and return the surveys with the enclosed preaddressed stamped envelopes.

Study results will be reported collectively. Principal involvement will be minimal in this study. Specifically, I am asking that your office staff place one survey packet in every third full-time employed teacher's mailbox. The subsequent teacher recruitment procedures will be conducted by the researcher. All teachers who represent your faculty will receive follow-up letters (for 4 weeks). The follow-up letter is used to invite nonresponding teachers to contribute to the study and also to provide the researcher with the status of your school's teacher response rates. If you agree or do not agree with this request, please respond via email. My email is [owenssap@cps.k12.va.us](mailto:owenssap@cps.k12.va.us).

Your time, commitment, and contribution to this research are appreciated. If you have questions relating to this research, please contact the principal investigator, Dr. Sharon A. Dannels, at 757-269-4949 or me at 757-312-8257 or through the e-mail address provided. Please accept my sincere thanks for your participation.

Sincerely,

Sallye A. Owens, Ed.S.

## Appendix H: Letter to Teachers

October 11, 2010

School Name Elementary School

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Colleague:

As a fellow educator and doctoral candidate at The George Washington University, I am writing to ask you to participate in a study that examines the relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and levels of teacher burnout. The sample for this study will be taken from the population of teachers in the selected Mid-Atlantic school division. I am deeply appreciative of the cooperation of the school division for allowing me to contact you concerning this study. As a participant, you will receive a survey packet containing a cover letter that outlines the procedures, directions, and ethical requirements for the study. Your contribution is very valuable.

Please take a few minutes to share how you perceive your principal's leadership practices and your levels of burnout. I invite you to complete each questionnaire completely. In the first survey (MBI-ES), you will describe the extent to which the statements describe your feelings related to burnout. The second component of the MBI-ES asks that you provide additional demographic information that will help me to identify possible patterns in the responses to the other surveys. In the third instrument (LEAD Other), you will describe how you perceive your principal's leadership behavior. Your honesty when completing the surveys will be greatly appreciated and important to the results of the study.

I believe this study will provide information that promotes discussion related to principal leadership effectiveness and teacher burnout. I have provided you with the opportunity to complete the surveys using paper versions, which will take approximately 40 minutes to complete. For confidentiality purposes, your school has been assigned a number that will be used to track returns. For your convenience, please return the survey using the envelope provided, which includes your school code. All information will be treated as aggregate data, and only collective data will be used in reporting the results. There are no direct benefits for participation in the study. The expected benefits associated with this study include an opportunity to participate in the study and include your input about principals' leadership effectiveness and levels of burnout. The study will not include any references that relate to school or individual names. If you choose to participate in this study, your participation will be voluntary. Your employment status will not in any way be affected should you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time. Your records (e.g., name) will be confidential and will not be identified in any

report or publication of this study. Your name will not be associated with the research findings in any way, and your school's code will be known only to the researcher. For your time and support, I am giving you a candy bar and an inspirational statement. It is my hope that you will accept this token as appreciation for your contribution to this study. The expected benefit associated with your participation is the opportunity to participate in the study and to share your opinion about leadership and burnout.

If you have questions, please contact me by telephone at 757-312-8257 or through e-mail at Sao\_0330@Yahoo.com. If you would like to receive a summary of the study results, please complete the enclosed preaddressed postcard and return it to me. Please accept my sincere thanks for your collegial support and participation.

Sincerely,

Sallye A. Owens, Ed.S.  
Doctoral Candidate, The George Washington University

Request for Study Results Form

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I would like to receive results of the study. Please send study results

to the following address:

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I would not like to receive results of this study.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





## Appendix J: Research Information Sheet

**Principal Investigator:** Sharon A. Dannels

**Telephone:** 757-269-4949

**Research Investigator:** Sallye A. Owens

**GWU IRB Number:** 091047

**I. Introduction:** I wish to invite you to participate in an educational study. Prior to deciding to take part in this study, you need to understand the risks and benefits. This consent form provides information about the research. The return of the completed survey packet will be considered your consent to participate. This process of the research involves explanation of the study.

**II. Purpose:** The Department of Educational Leadership of The George Washington University and Sallye Owens are conducting quantitative research. The purpose of this study is to assess the relationship between teachers' perceived leadership effectiveness and levels of teacher burnout. This stage in the research process involves full-time elementary school teachers who are given the opportunity to share how they perceive their principals' leadership effectiveness and levels of burnout.

**III. Procedures:** The study will be conducted in a selected school division in the Mid-Atlantic region. The data collection will consist of three completed surveys: the MBI-ES, the MBI Demographic Data Profile Sheet, and the LEAD Other survey. Completion of the study will take a minimum of approximately 40 minutes. The researcher will distribute 225 surveys with an approximate expected response rate of 132. Please use the preaddressed stamped envelope to return the three surveys.

**IV. Possible Risks and Benefits:** There are no known risks associated with this study. There are no direct benefits for participation in this study. The expected benefits include an opportunity for teachers to participate in the quantitative study and provide input about teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness and levels of burnout in teachers.

**V. Costs and Compensation:** There is no cost associated with taking part in the study. You will receive no compensation for your participation in this study.

**VI. Right to Withdraw From the Study:** Your participation is voluntary; your employment status will not, in any way, be affected by your participation in this study. You may opt not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time.

**VII. Confidentiality of Research Records:** Your records in this study will be confidential. You will not be identified (e.g., name) in any publications or reports of this study. Your name will not be identified with any research findings in any way, and your school's assigned code will be known only to the researcher.

**VIII. Questions:** If you have questions about the Research Information Sheet or your rights as a research subject, please contact Dr. Sharon Dannels, the Principal Investigator (the person in charge of the study) at 757-269-2213. If you have questions about the study procedures, please contact me (Sallye Owens) at 757-312-8257.

## Appendix K: Follow-up Letters to Teachers

### First Follow-Up Letter to Teachers

Dear Colleagues:

Recently, the teachers of your school were distributed surveys related to my research topic entitled *The Relationship Between Teachers' Perceptions of Principals' Leadership Effectiveness and Teacher Burnout*. All teachers from your school will receive follow-up letters requesting their participation in the study. The purpose of the follow-up is to ask nonresponding teachers to contribute to the research. If you received a survey packet, please return it using the preaddressed stamped envelope. Confidentiality will be maintained for respondents and responses. Your decision to take part in this study is voluntary; your employment status will not be affected should you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time. There are no costs or benefits associated with taking part in this study.

The returned surveys will provide your views as an educator about the topic and assist others who may have an interest in principal leadership and teacher burnout. The results of this study may promote discussions on the related topic. Each returned survey will contribute to the school's teacher response rates. If you did not receive a survey packet, please disregard this letter.

If you have questions related to this study, please contact Dr. Sharon Dannels, the principal investigator (the person in charge of the study), at 757-269-2213 or me at 757-312-8257 or through e-mail: Sao\_0330@yahoo.com). Again, thank you for your assistance and consideration.

Please return your completed survey **within one week** of the date of this letter. I look forward to receiving your response and collectively adding this information to the body of knowledge about the relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership and levels of burnout in teachers. Your participation in this study is sincerely appreciated.

Sincerely,

Sallye A. Owens, Ed.S.

Dr. Sharon A. Dannels, Dissertation Chairperson  
Dr. Patricia L. Johnson, Dissertation Committee Member  
Dr. Mary B. Gamble, Dissertation Committee Member

## Second Follow-up Letter to Teachers

Dear Colleague:

All teachers who represent your school's faculty will receive follow-up letters. The purpose of the follow-up letter is to request nonresponding teachers to contribute to the study. If you completed and returned the survey, please disregard this request. If not, and if possible, please take approximately 40 minutes to complete the survey today. Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated.

Confidentiality will be maintained for all respondents and responses. Your decision to take part in this study is voluntary; your employment status will not be affected should you choose not to participate or decide to withdraw from the study at any time. There are no costs associated with taking part in this study nor will you receive compensation for your participation.

Your records will remain confidential and will not be used in any professional publication or journal. As an educator, your responses are very important and will be useful in the discussion on burnout between teachers and principals. I invite you to complete the surveys and return them to me, using the preaddressed stamped envelopes.

If you have questions related to this study, please contact Dr. Sharon Dannels, the principal investigator (the person in charge of the study) at 757-269-2213) or me at 757-312-8257 or through e-mail at Sao\_0330@yahoo.com. Again, thank you for your assistance and consideration.

Please return your completed survey **within one week** of the date of this letter. I look forward to receiving your response and collectively adding this information to the body of knowledge about the relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership and levels of burnout in teachers. Your contribution to this study is sincerely appreciated.

Sincerely,

Sallye A. Owens, Doctoral Candidate

Dr. Sharon A. Dannels, Proposal Dissertation Chairperson  
Dr. Patricia L. Johnson, Dissertation Committee Member  
Dr. Mary B. Gamble, Dissertation Committee Member

Note: \_\_\_\_\_ If you no longer wish to participate in the study, please check the blank provided and return this letter to me using the stamped preaddressed envelope.

### Third Follow-Up Letter to Teachers

Dear Colleague,

Recently, I invited you and other educational colleagues to participate in a study. This follow-up letter has been sent to all full-time employed teachers from your school, who may not have returned the surveys. Specifically, if you have not returned the surveys, please complete and return them using the preaddressed stamped envelope.

Confidentiality will be maintained for all respondents and responses. There will be no cost to you for your participation. Your decision to take part in this study is voluntary; your employment status will not be affected should you choose not to participate or decide to withdraw from the study at any time. If you returned the surveys or did not receive the initial survey packet from the principal, please disregard this letter. If you have any questions about the survey, please call Dr. Sharon Dannels at 757 - 269-2213 or me (Sallye Owens) at 757-312-8257. If I am not available at the time of your call, please leave a message.

Please return your completed survey **within one week** of the date of this letter. I look forward to receiving your response and collectively adding this information to the body of knowledge about the relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership and levels of burnout in teachers. I sincerely appreciate your contribution to this study.

Sincerely,

Sallye A. Owens, Doctoral Candidate

Dr. Sharon A. Dannels, Proposal Dissertation Chairperson  
Dr. Patricia L. Johnson, Dissertation Committee Member  
Dr. Mary B. Gamble, Dissertation Committee Member

Note: \_\_\_\_\_ If you no longer wish to participate in the study, please check the blank provided and return it to me using the stamped preaddressed envelope.

## Final Follow-Up Letter to Teachers

Dear Colleague,

I would like to take this opportunity to ask for your participation in this study. Your input is valuable to the completion of the research. The purpose of the final follow-up letter is to ask all teachers at your school, specifically the nonresponding teachers, to contribute to this study. If you have not completed the surveys, please complete and return them to me using the preaddressed stamped envelope. If you returned or did not receive the initial surveys from the principal, please disregard this letter.

All teacher participation is confidential and voluntary; your employment status will not, in any way, be affected should you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time. There will not be any compensation or benefit for your participation. Your records will remain confidential; your name or other identifiable information will not be included in any professional publication or journal. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Sharon Dannels, the principal investigator (the person in charge of the study), at 757-269-2213 or me at 757-312-8257.

Please return your completed survey **within one week** of the date of this letter. I look forward to receiving your response and collectively adding this information to the body of knowledge about the relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership and levels of burnout in teachers. I sincerely appreciate your participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Sallye A. Owens, Ed.S.

Dr. Sharon A. Dannels, Proposal Dissertation Chairperson  
Dr. Patricia L. Johnson, Proposal Dissertation Committee Member  
Dr. Mary B. Gamble, Proposal Dissertation Committee Member

Note: \_\_\_\_\_ If you no longer wish to participate in the study, please check the blank provided and return this letter to me using the stamped preaddressed envelop.