To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Gary L. Aebischer entitled "An Analysis of Locus-of-Control and Burnout in Teachers at the Elementary, Junior High, and High School Levels." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Specialist in Education with a major in Educational Psychology and Guidance.

L. M. DeRidder, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:

The Graduate School

# AN ANALYSIS OF LOCUS-OF-CONTROL AND BURNOUT IN TEACHERS AT THE ELEMENTARY, JUNIOR HIGH, AND HIGH SCHOOL LEVELS

A Thesis

Presented for the

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Degree

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I hereby acknowledge with thanks the permission granted by Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc. for reproduction of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (1981).

# ABSTRACT

The variables locus-of-control and burnout have been systematically related in previous research studies. External locus-of-control individuals have generally reported a higher degree of personal burnout than Internals. Educational level has also been related to different degrees of self-reported burnout. In previous studies secondary teachers have reported significantly higher levels of personal burnout than elementary grade teachers. The present study investigates whether locus-of-control or educational level is more of a determinant in teachers' self-reported levels of personal burnout. Data were collected from 101 teachers who comprised the staffs of three elementary schools, two junior high schools, and two senior high schools. The Levenson Internal/External Locus-of-Control Scales and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) were used as research measures. The data from teachers at the three educational levels was then compared with an analysis of variance to determine if significant differences existed on levels of self-reported burnout on the three scales of the MBI (Depersonalization, Personal Accomplishment, and Emotional Exhaustion). Teachers were then split into High External L-C and High Internal L-C and again compared with cohorts from the different educational levels on the MBI variables.

The initial results showed that teachers' perceived sense of personal burnout does significantly increase from the elementary to the high school levels. The additional analyses of differences between High Externals and High Internals indicated that educational level appears to be more of a determinant than locus-of-control in defining a sense of personal burnout. Both High Externals and High Internals reported higher levels of personal burnout than their cohorts at the elementary and junior high school grades. The results

are discussed relative to burnout prevention information for administrators as well as the implications for pre-service and inservice training of teachers. Suggestions for future research are also discussed.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# LIST OF TABLES

TABLE PAGE

# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

## Statement of the Problem

Burnout has been coined as the term to define the collective physiological, psychological, and social reaction which results from an individual's negative adaptation to perceived stressors. Over the past ten years job stress and burnout have evolved to become areas of major concern in many professions. The helping professions of teaching, counseling, and nursing have been identified as high-risk professions for burnout (Perlman and Hartman, 1982; Helliwell, 1981). Burnout in various professions has also been a topic in popular literature (Time, 1983). Many variables have been isolated which appear to relate to burnout in the teaching profession. These include: excessive work demands; lack of administrative support; low sense of personal accomplishment; and student-teacher conflicts (Johnson, Gold, and Vickers, 1982; Olson and Matuskey, 1982; Zabel and Zabel, 1982; Kryiacou and Sutcliffe, 1977). Additional studies have been undertaken to identify which teachers are most susceptible to job stress and burnout (Belcastro, 1982; Schwab and Iwanicki, 1982; Weiskopf, 1980). These include younger teachers, secondary level teachers, teachers of behavior problem children.

Recent research (McIntyre, 1982; Fielding and Gall, 1982) indicates that a strong relationship exists between a teacher's locus-of-control and susceptibility to environmental stressors and burnout. Individuals who have an external locus-of-control are those oriented toward powerful others and outside events to define their level of self-worth. People with internal locus-of-controls turn inward for establishment and reinforcement of their self-worth.

Preliminary research findings point strongly toward externals being significantly more burnout prone.

Utilizing self-report survey instruments the present study will attempt to define if there is a significant difference between teachers' degree of burnout at the elementary, junior high school, and high school levels. The study will also replicate previous research in determining if teachers' locus-of-control predisposes them to be more or less susceptible to burnout at the various educational levels (elementary, junior high, and high school).

## Hypotheses

The specific null hypotheses tested will be:

Null Hypothesis #1: There is no difference between degrees of self-reported burnout at the elementary, junior high school, or high school levels by teachers currently working in those grades.

Null Hypothesis #2: There is no difference on measures of personal burnout between elementary, junior high school, or high school teachers who report themselves as controlled by powerful others (Externals) vs. those who report themselves as internally controlled (Internals) on a locus-of-control scale.

## Definition of Terms

Burnout. A syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who work with people. It is the end result of the helping professional's gradual breakdown due to chronic stressors inherent to the working environment.

Externals/External locus-of-control/powerful others control. The individual's state of believing that dominant or powerful others are in control of the variables which control his/her existence. Also synonymous with powerful others external control of reinforcers.

Fate/Chance locus-of-control. The belief by the individual that control of externally occuring events is totally at the whim of fated or chance circumstances.

Internals/Internal locus-of-control. The individual's state of being which focuses on internal control of variables which control his/her existence. Synonymous with internal control of reinforcers.

Organizational strategies. Those procedures or programs initiated by an organization (hospital, school, business, etc.) that increase the individual's control over his/her working environment. These include changing jobs, role expectations, level of participation in decision-making, physical fitness programs, mental health counseling etc.

Personal strategies. Those procedures initiated by the individual to counteract the effects of job stress. These include meditation, adopting healthy philosophy of life, biofeedback, behavior modification, developing social support system, physical fitness programs, etc.

## Significance of the Study

Stress management training has become a necessity in many professional fields where the work environment fosters burnout. The school system is a typical people-oriented organization where helping professionals work directly with clients (students) and are highly susceptible to burnout. The approach to

managing work stressors has taken dual avenues in attempting to define and alleviate the debilitating effects of job stress. Both personal and organizational strategies have been recommended for dealing with the cumulative effects of job stress and increasing the individual's ability to cope. Personal strategies have emphasized changing the person's psychological condition, physical condition, and behavior patterns. These strategies could include meditation, jogging, and behavior modification, respectively. Organizational strategies for handling job stress have been aimed at changing some aspect of the organization-policies, processes, structures, programs, roles, tasks, jobs, etc. These changes could include changing role and job variables, incorporating participative decision making processes, and developing a company sponsored physical health or counseling program (Newman and Beehr, 1979).

In the present investigation an attempt is made to determine if a predominant mode of Internal or External locus-of-control predisposes a teacher to burnout at a particular educational level. Recommendations useful for diminishing the effects of burnout could be effected by significant differences between groups. If a predominant mode of External/Powerful Others locus-of-control is prevalent at a specific educational level then organizational variables may require changing to effectively diminish the impact of environmental stressors. If a predominant mode of Internal locus-of-control is delineated then personal strategies, by the teachers themselves, may have to be initiated to diminish the effects of job stress.

Given that the anticipated relationship between External/Powerful Others-Internal locus-of-control and burnout is upheld during the present investigation the results could prove of value for school boards, superintendents, and building administrators. The climate at different educational levels does appear to be

qualitatively different. The Elementary school, with students still eager for joining in the learning experience, appears to demand more child orientation to its teaching positions. The Junior high school, with students in transition between childhood and adolescence, requires that teachers still interact as significant others to the child while emphasizing academic subject matter. At the Senior high school level a more academic orientation appears to draw teachers who need to foster acceptance of adult responsibilities by their students. If a relationship of burnout to locus-of-control is clearly defined at any one educational level then school systems (where burnout is costly in terms of increased sick leave, poor staff morale, and loss of qualified professionals) may institute appropriate strategies to bolster staff coping skills and enhance productivity. At the present time the most prevalent recommendations advanced at stress management workshops emphasize the individual or personal strategy approach to alleviating job stress (i.e. jogging, swimming, meditation etc.). However, if the organization of the schools at a particular level fosters burnout by the professional staff, and the staff in turn feels helpless due to powerful others controlling their work environment, individual strategies for coping with burnout may constitute a band-aid approach to solving the problem. Organizational strategies for diminishing job stressors such as participative committees for changing the school environment or group counseling sessions for defining and alleviating stressful variables within the school environment may be more efficacious.

Whether by design or necessity the administrations of individual school buildings generally evolve into benevolent dictatorships. If the present study defines data that points toward participative democratic processes as potentially more healthy and stress reducing then support groups with a dual purpose could

develop. Teacher support groups could serve the purpose of diminishing the stressors within the school environment by supporting the administration to make necessary changes and also could provide a non-threatening group experience for ventilating frustrations as well as sharing potentially effective solutions to stress inducing situations. Perhaps there would be implications for teacher education and in-service regarding the alerting of both new and experienced teachers to the burnout syndrome. Administrators may also need to be sensitized to the symptoms and support needs of burned out staff members.

This chapter presented an introduction to the problem, the specific hypotheses to be tested, definition of terms to be used, and the significance of the present study.

Chapter two will present a review of the literature pertaining to both locus-of-control as well as stress and burnout.

# CHAPTER II

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter is a presentation of the literature. Locus-of-control is discussed in the first section and stress and burnout are reviewed in the second.

### Locus-of-Control

The personality construct locus-of-control (LC) was originally investigated and defined by Rotter in the 1950's and 1960's. Rotter's Social Learning Theory incorporated as an integral component the individual's expectancy that a certain act would be reinforced based upon previous experiences. Individual behavioral responses varied due to previous learning experiences and were predicted by Rotter to be based upon the individual's generalized expectancies for reinforcement and non-reinforcement from one situation to another. Rotter theorized that a causal relationship between an individual's own behavior and the reward obtained for a certain behavior developed over time and was generalized to different situations. In 1966 he published an extensive monograph outlining his research and reviewing others' research which was directly related to the locus-of-control construct. Rotter contended that the LC construct was similar to alienation as related to powerlessness; competence to attempt to explore and master one's environment; the need for achievement; and the individual's perception of causal relationships. Rotter further theorized that tests of individual differences in a generalized belief in locus-of-control could be divided into two variables: Internal control described individuals who viewed expectancies for reinforcement (both positive and negative) as contingent upon his/her own behavior or relatively permanent characteristics while External

control individuals placed the locus-of-control for reinforcers on luck, chance, fate, or powerful others.

During the same period Lefcourt (1966) reviewed the research findings pertaining to the locus-of-control construct and concluded that the internal and external variables were "predictive to different social behaviors, learning performances, and to more and less achievement-related activities" (p. 206). He defined Internal control as the perception of positive and/or negative events as being a consequence of one's own actions and thereby under personal control while External control is the perception of positive or negative events as being unrelated to one's own behaviors in certain situations and therefore beyond personal control (Lefcourt, 1966). E.J. Phares (1957) was credited by Lefcourt for first attempting to measure Internal vs. External control as a personality variable in research conducted on individual's expectancy changes in both skill oriented and chance oriented situations.

The next comprehensive review of the locus-of-control personality variable was undertaken by Joe (1971) who concluded that significant evidence continued to be present in the research that supported Rotter's contention of a generalized expectancy (External or Internal) operating across situations. However, he also concluded that further refinements in the scale appeared warranted to enable finer discriminations of belief in internal-external control. Lefcourt (1972) concurred in his review at about the same time that to be a valid instrument the I-E scale should undergo further refinements.

In 1974 a revision of Rotter's I-E instrument was introduced which emphasized a tripartite division in the locus-of-control variable. The revised instrument was developed by Levinson (1974) and resulted in locus-of-control being divided into Internal, Powerful Others, and Chance scales. The revised

I-E instrument clarified previous inconsistent research findings which had grouped External control beliefs in luck, chance, and fate together with the influence of powerful others who exert control over the individual.

A belief in Internal-External control has been consistently related to different approaches initiated to cope with health problems. A major finding of a recent review (Strickland, 1978) was that

> . . .congruence of expectancies and situations appears to enhance behavior change. Practical implications are that change agents such as health personnel will be most effective when techniques are tailored to individual expectancies. External individuals evidently respond more easily to conditions in which structure is imposed from outside. Internals prefer situations in which they can assume responsibility and work independently (p. 1205).

Locus-of-control specifically related to teacher stress and burnout has been researched extensively within the last few years (Fielding and Gall, 1982; Linville and Belt, 1982; McIntyre, 1982; Knoop, 1981). The results with teachers generally support the relationship delineated by researchers with other groups. Teachers who have reported an External locus-of-control have also reported a higher degree of perceived burnout. Teachers with an Internal locus-of-control have reported less susceptibility to burnout. Strategies for coping with the effects of stress have generally been recommended which emphasize a personal adaptation by the individual which could diminish the effects of environmental stressors. As previously outlined these strategies appear oriented more toward Internal LC individuals.

## Stress and Burnout

Hans Selye, who began his investigations in the 1930's, is generally recognized as the father of stress research due to his formulation of stress-related diseases as the cumulative effect of repeated physiological adaptation. Selye, an endocrinologist who focused his research on the biochemical changes

that accompany stress-induced diseases, investigated the body's repetitious fight or flight response as a reaction to perceived environmental stressors. Over the course of time a chemical imbalance develops (general adaptation syndrome) which predisposes the individual to serious illnesses including hypertension, heart disease, ulcers etc. Selye's research focused on the wear-and-tear effect that stressors have upon the body's natural immune system which, according to his theory, breaks down, collapses, and subsequently cannot protect the individual from serious illness (Selye, 1976; McQuade and Aikman, 1974). His research and theoretical model defining the biochemical changes which are fostered by stress have been upheld by recent investigations into the hormonal and neurochemical changes which take place within individuals who are suffering from stress-related diseases. Selye's research, however, did not focus on the types of personalities which are predisposed to stress related illnesses nor did he attempt to categorize which environmental stressors foster the most injurious reactions.

During the 1950's Friedman and Rosenman, cardiologists who worked extensively with coronary heart disease patients, began research into the personality types who were either highly predisposed to coronary heart disease (Type A) or minimally at-risk for developing this stress induced malady (Type B). Type A personalities are intensely driven, aggressive, ambitious, competitive, constantly feel pressured to get things done, and are in the habit of pitting themselves against the clock. Type B's by contrast are more genuinely easy going, open, not preoccupied with time constraints or deadlines, not driven to achieve, less competitive, and generally speak in a more modulated, relaxed manner. Rosenman and Friedman's (1974) investigations have resulted in a qualitative evaluation of an individual's behavioral routines

which can forewarn physicians as well as therapists to the danger signals which pervade a Type A personality's everyday life style.

The domain of assessing environmental stressors which predispose individuals to stress-related diseases has been most thoroughly investigated by Holmes and Rahe (1967). During the 1960's they developed a scale which rated the number of social adjustments an individual had been forced to make during the recent past. The Holmes-Rahe scale presupposes that stress is induced by major life events. Psychological stress, fostered by social events, triggers the physiological wear-and-tear on the body. The scale rates life events, relative to their impact on the individual, by assigning Life Change Units (LCU's) to each event (i.e. Death of Spouse = 100 LCU's; Loss of Job = 80 LCU's). If the individual experiences over 200 LCU experiences in one year's period the Holmes/Rahe research indicates they are considered high-risk for a stress-related illness within the next two years.

Most recently Lazarus (1981) has conducted research which suggests that everyday problems may have a greater cumulative effect upon the individual than major life events or crises. His studies are investigating the stress that arises from chronic or repeated conditions of daily living which he has labeled hassles (i.e. boredom, continual tensions in a family relationship, lack of occupational progress) and the misfortunes that accompany these conditions (i.e. feelings of listlessness, petty arguments, work role disputes). It is Lazarus' major contention that chronic problems experienced on a daily basis can foster stress-related illnesses in much the same way as Holmes/Rahe's acute life events changes.

The end result of an individual's mental, physical, and emotional exhaustion due to the progressive wear-and-tear of environmental stressors is a state

which has been labeled burnout. Whether the culmination of Type A behavior patterns, acute life events changes, or chronically stressful day-to-day life circumstances the individual does reach a stage of severe depletion of reserve energies for adapting to stress (analogous to Selye's general adaptation syndrome).

The identification of the variables which induce stress-related illnesses has also prompted the investigation of different occupations which have high rates of worker burnout (i.e. nursing, law enforcement, and teaching). Teacher stress and burnout has been extensively researched (Zabel and Zabel, 1982; Olson and Matuskey, 1982; Johnson, Gold and Vickers, 1982; Kryiacou and Sutcliffe, 1977) and factors repeatedly identified include non-supportive administrators, overloaded classrooms, hostile/combative students, and the need to perform additional non-teaching duties. Further investigations have attempted to identify which teachers are most susceptible to burnout (Schwab and Iwanicki, 1982; Belcastro, 1982; Weiskopf, 1980). Variables that have been repeatedly identified include younger teachers being more susceptible than older teachers, the secondary level being more burnout-prone than elementary, and that teachers of special populations (i.e. emotionally disturbed students) generally burn out quicker than regular classroom teachers.

Further study has been called for on which types of preventative methods would be most effective since both group-oriented and personal strategies have been recommended. Stress management workshops for teachers have emphasized the personal strategies for coping with job stress but have also begun to recognize the importance of support groups as an avenue to foster prevention of burnout (Forman, 1982; Moracco and McFadden, 1982).

This chapter contained a research of literature focusing on the use of locus-of-control and its development as well as current literature about stress and burnout in helping professions.

Chapter three presents an explanation of the methods and procedures used to collect the data for hypothesis testing. This includes a review of the subjects who participated in the study, instruments administered, and the procedures used for each step in the execution of the research by the investigator.

# CHAPTER III

# METHODS AND PROCEDURES

## Restatement of the Problem

The purposes of this study were as follows: a) To determine if there exists a difference between levels of self-reported burnout of teachers presently employed in elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school placements; b) To determine if there exists a difference in self-reported burnout between teachers at either the elementary school, junior high school, or senior high school placements who define themselves as controlled by powerful others (Externals) vs. those who report themselves to be internally controlled (Internals) on a Locus-of-Control measure.

## Subjects

The subjects were 101 teachers employed in a mixed rural/urban Appalachian school district. Thirty one subjects were teaching at the elementary school level. Thirty two subjects were teaching at the junior high school level. Thirty eight subjects were teaching at the high school level. All were certified teachers. Participants were the faculty members of three elementary, two junior high, and two senior high schools. Principals, guidance counselors, and student teachers were excluded from participation in the study. The instruments were presented to teachers by the researcher as a survey of professional attitudes during the weekly staff meetings held at each school. Participation was voluntary and 95% of the teachers participated. The surveys were filled out and collected on the same day with all data collection completed during the months of April and May.

Instrumentation

Two self-report survey instruments were administered to the participants.

The Levenson Internal-External Locus-of-Control (1974) is a twenty four item paper and pencil assessment which requires between five and 10 minutes to complete. The three scales are constructed in order to measure belief in chance, control by powerful others (external), and perceived mastery over one's personal life (internal). The scales are a revision of Rotter's (1966) Internal-External measure. Levenson's I-E instrument has been extensively utilized for research purposes in the social sciences. The instrument consists of a Likert six point scale (-3 to +3) with eight questions exclusively designed to assess each locus-of-control condition. The questions are worded to assess the degree to which an individual believes he or she has control over what happens to them personally, not what they feel is the case for people in general. The three scales yield scores which identify an individual's perception of locus-of-control as based on Chance: belief in chance, fate, or luck as a controlling influence, External/Powerful Others: the world is ordered but powerful others are in control, and Internal: perceived mastery over one's personal life.

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) attempts to measure burnout which the authors describe as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among members of the helping professions (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). The MBI consists of 22 items and three subscales: Depersonalization, Personal Accomplishment, and Emotional Exhaustion. The Depersonalization subscale measures an unfeeling and impersonal response toward recipients of one's service, care, treatment, or instruction. The Personal Accomplishment subscale assesses feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work with people. The Emotional Exhaustion subscale

measures feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work. Each subscale has two dimensions: frequency (how often people have these feelings) and intensity (the strength of these feelings). The instrument is a self-administered paper and pencil survey which requires about 10-15 minutes to fill out. Complete instructions in the form of an introductory paragraph and sample items are provided for respondents. For the purposes of this study the MBI label of recipient, to denote the service receiver, was changed to student. This slight modification coincides with the item changes made by previous research studies which were initiated to document the reliability and validity of the MBI with teachers (Iwanicki and Schwab, 1981). The MBI has proven to be both a valid and reliable measure to utilize in research with the teaching profession.

This chapter has outlined for the reader how the study was conducted including the subjects utilized, procedure for administering the instruments, and a description of the instruments used for data collection. A complete assessment package including the demographic data sheet and a copy of each research instrument is included in the Appendix.

The next chapter will present a summary of the data collected and the researcher's statistical treatment of the data.

# CHAPTER IV

# RESULTS

In this chapter the results of the investigation are reported. An overview of the population characteristics will be followed by a summary of the data collected and the researcher's statistical analysis of the data pertaining to each null hypothesis.

## Population Characteristics

The elementary teachers consisted of 25 females and 6 males with a mean age of 36.2. Their average years teaching was 11.1. The junior high teachers consisted of 18 females and 14 males with a mean age of 35.4. Their average years teaching was 10.6. The senior high teachers consisted of 19 females and 19 males with a mean age of 37.9. Their average years teaching was 13.4 years.

## Analysis of Data

The first analysis of the data was initiated to test the null hypothesis that there is no difference between teachers at the various educational levels on a measure of self-reported burnout. In order to test for significant differences between groups in degrees of self-reported burnout the Maslach Burnout Inventory scores were computed to derive a mean, standard deviation, and variance. These group scores on the MBI were computed by utilizing the responses marked in the frequency column with the intensity scores being disregarded. Iwanicki and Schwab (1981) pointed out during a discussion of their research with the MBI on teachers that scores derived from the frequency

column would be sufficient due to the high intercorrelations between the frequency and intensity scales.

The Depersonalization scales computations resulted in the following descriptive statistics (higher scores indicate higher levels of depersonalization). Elementary school teachers had a mean score of 5.03, standard deviation of 4.63, and a variance of 21.43. Junior high school teachers had a mean score of 6.44, standard deviation of 5.94 and a variance of 35.22. Senior high school teachers had a 9.68 mean score, 6.86 standard deviation, and a variance of 47.09.

On the Personal Accomplishment scale (higher scores indicate higher levels of personal accomplishment) the following descriptive statistics were computed. Elementary school teachers had a mean score of 39.81, standard deviation of 5.84 and a variance of 34.09. Junior high school teachers had a mean score of 37.69, standard deviation of 6.90 and a variance of 47.64. Senior high school teachers had a mean score of 34.55, a standard deviation of 8.24 and a variance of 67.88.

On the Emotional Exhaustion scale (higher scores indicate higher levels of emotional exhaustion) the following descriptive statistics were computed. Elementary school teachers obtained a mean score of 19.29, a standard deviation of 8.49 and a variance of 72.08. Junior high school teachers had a mean score of 19.16, a standard deviation of 11.35 and a variance of 128.85. Senior high school teachers had a mean score of 22.17, a standard deviation of 12.36 and a variance of 152.85.

Components of the preceding sets of statistics along with the raw scores from each group were utilized by the researcher in computing whether a significant difference was indicated between any of the groups on each of the three variables. Teachers from the elementary, junior high and high school

levels were grouped and their scores on each scale of the MBI were then statistically analyzed. The multigroup comparison was performed by computing a one-way analysis of variance on the data obtained from teachers' scores on the scales of depersonalization, personal accomplishment, and emotional exhaustion respectively. After the ANOVA F ratio was computed on each variable it was then evaluated to determine if it suggested a significant difference at the .01 or .05 level of probability. Each F ratio that indicated a significant difference between group means at the .01 or .05 level was subsequently subjected to a Tukey's HSD (honestly significant difference) test. The Tukey's results were then compared to the differences between means of the three groups (elementary, junior high, high school) and a level of significance was either established or the determination was made that no significant difference existed. The results of the data analysis are summarized in tables 4.1 and 4.2 (Depersonalization scores), 4.3 and 4.4 (Personal Accomplishment scores) and 4.5 (Emotional Exhaustion scores).

The results confirm that high school teachers report significantly higher levels of depersonalization and significantly lower levels of personal accomplishment than do teachers at the elementary school grades. Junior high school teachers did not significantly differ from their teaching counterparts at the higher grades or lower grades in levels of self-reported depersonalization or personal accomplishment. On the Emotional Exhaustion scale there was no significant difference between any of the three groups. All groups reported what the MBI manual categorizes as moderate levels of emotional exhaustion.

These results partially uphold the null hypothesis: a) no difference on the emotional exhaustion scale b) no difference between junior high teachers

Table 4.1. Analysis of Variance of Maslach Burnout Inventory Depersonalization Scores of the Elementary, Junior High, and High School Teachers

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | df | Variance Estimate | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 403 | 2 | 201.5 | 5.70** |
| Within groups | 3467 | 98 | 35.38 | |
| Total | 3870 | 100 | | |

**Significant at the .01 level.

Table 4.2. Differences Among Means — MBI Depersonalization Scores of the Elementary, Junior High, and High School Teachers

| | $\bar{X}_{El}$ | $\bar{X}_{Jr}$ | $\bar{X}_{Hs}$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| $\bar{X}_{El}$ = 5.03 | — | — | 4.65** |
| $\bar{X}_{Jr}$ = 6.44 | — | — | 3.24 |
| $\bar{X}_{Hs}$ = 9.68 | — | — | — |

**Significant at the .01 level.

Tukey's HSD results: Required for significance = 3.47 at the .05; 4.36 at the .01 level.

Table 4.3. Analysis of Variance of Maslach Burnout Inventory Personal Accomplishment Scores of the Elementary, Junior High, and High School Teachers

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | df | Variance Estimate | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 484 | 2 | 242 | 4.73* |
| Within groups | 5009 | 98 | 51.11 | |
| Total | 5493 | 100 | | |

*Significant at the .05 level.

Table 4.4. Differences Among Means -- MBI Personal Accomplishment Scores of the Elementary, Junior High, and High School Teachers

| | $\bar{X}_{El}$ | $\bar{X}_{Jr}$ | $\bar{X}_{Hs}$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| $\bar{X}_{El}$ = 39.81 | — | 2.12 | 5.26** |
| $\bar{X}_{Jr}$ = 37.69 | — | — | 3.16 |
| $\bar{X}_{Hs}$ = 34.55 | — | — | — |

**Significant at the .01 level.

Tukey's HSD results: Required for significance = 3.38 at the .05; 4.25 at the .01 level.

Table 4.5. Analysis of Variance of Maslach Burnout Inventory Emotional Exhaustion Scores of the Elementary, Junior High, and High School Teachers

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | df | Variance Estimate | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 251 | 2 | 125.50 | 1.07 |
| Within group | 11488 | 98 | 117.22 | |
| Total | 11739 | 100 | | |

F ratio not significant.

and colleagues. The results also reject the null hypothesis in certain areas: a) there is a significant difference between elementary school and high school teachers on a measure of depersonalization (higher at the high school level), b) there is a significant difference between high school teachers and elementary teachers on the degree of personal accomplishment (higher at the elementary level).

The testing of the second null hypothesis required separating the participants at each educational level into those who reported themselves as high external vs. high internal on the locus-of-control scales. The specific null hypothesis stated that there is no difference on measures of personal burnout between elementary, junior high, or high school teachers who report themselves as controlled by powerful others vs. those who report themselves to be internally controlled on a locus-of-control scale. A population mean for the total sample was tabulated for both the Internal scale ($\bar{m}$ = 34.81 = 35) and External scale ($\bar{m}$ = 21.29 = 21). Scores which were above either of the population means were designated as high and resulted in the subject being placed in the pool of either high internal or high external. Scores on each scale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory were then tabulated for the Internals and Externals. Subjects' scores remained pooled into groups by educational level. Elementary, junior high, and high school educational levels remained segregated in order to determine if, for example, an External at the elementary school level would report a significantly different level of personal burnout (Depersonalization or Personal Accomplishment or Emotional Exhuastion) than an External at the junior high and/or high school levels.

An analysis of variance and Tukey's HSD (if appropriate) were performed on each of the separate conditions. The results of the data analyses are

summarized in Tables 4.6 through 4.15. Significant differences were again exhibited between high school teachers and elementary school teachers on the scales of depersonalization and personal accomplishment (Tables 4.6 and 4.7; 4.8 and 4.9; 4.10 and 4.11; 4.12 and 4.13). However, the present analysis did not document a difference between Internals and Externals on the burnout scales. Both Internal and External high school teachers were significantly higher on depersonalization and lower on the scale of personal accomplishment than their respective elementary school cohorts. In addition Internal high school teachers were significantly higher on the depersonalization scale than their junior high school cohorts (Table 4.6 and 4.7). There was no significant difference between Internals and Externals over the three educational levels on the Emotional Exhaustion scale (Tables 4.14 and 4.15).

The present analysis of data upholds the null hypothesis. There was no significant difference on the scales of burnout between teachers at the three educational levels who had identified themselves as either Internal or External on a locus-of-control measure.

This chapter presented a review of the data collected and the researcher's statistical analyses of the data. The concluding chapter will summarize the findings of the study and relate the findings to relevant recommendations.

Table 4.6. Analysis of Variance of MBI Depersonalization Scores for Self-Reported Internals at the Elementary, Junior High, and High School Levels

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | df | Variance Estimate | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 341 | 2 | 107.5 | 6.99** |
| Within groups | 1439 | 59 | 24.39 | |
| Total | 1781 | 61 | | |

**Significant at the 0.1 level.

Table 4.7. Differences Among Means — MBI Depersonalization Scores for Self-Reported Internals at the Elementary, Junior High, and High School Levels

| | $\bar{X}_{El}$ | $\bar{X}_{Jr}$ | $\bar{X}_{HS}$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| $\bar{X}_{El}$ = 4.33 | — | 1.19 | 5.49** |
| $\bar{X}_{Jr}$ = 5.52 | — | — | 4.34* |
| $\bar{X}_{HS}$ = 9.86 | — | — | — |

**significant at the .01 level; *significant at the .05 level.

Tukey's HSD results: Required for significance = 3.72 at the 0.5 level; 4.68 at the 0.1 level.

Table 4.8. Analysis of Variance of MBI Depersonalization Scores for Self-Reported Externals at the Elementary, Junior High and High School Levels

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | df | Variance Estimate | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 359 | 2 | 179.5 | 6.13** |
| Within groups | 1580 | 54 | 29.26 | |
| Total | 1939 | 56 | | |

**Significant at the .01 level.

Table 4.9. Difference Among Means — MBI Depersonalization Scores for Externals at the Elementary, Junior High, and High School Levels

| | $\bar{X}_{El}$ | $\bar{X}_{Jr}$ | $\bar{X}_{Hs}$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| $\bar{X}_{El}$ = 5.06 | — | 3.63 | 6.03** |
| $\bar{X}_{Jr}$ = 8.69 | — | — | 2.40 |
| $\bar{X}_{Hs}$ = 11.09 | — | — | — |

**Significant at the .01 level.

Tukey's HSD results: Required for significance = 4.30 at the .05; 5.46 at the .01 level.

Table 4.10. Analysis of Variance of MBI Personal Accomplishment Scores for Self-Reported Internals at the Elementary, Junior High, and High School Levels

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | df | Variance Estimate | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 301 | 2 | 150.5 | 4.39* |
| Within groups | -2022 | 59 | 34.27 | |
| Total | -1722 | 71 | | |

*Significant at the .05 level.

Table 4.11. Difference Among Means — Personal Accomplishment Scores for Self-Reported Internals at the Elementary, Junior High, and High School Levels

| | $\bar{X}_{El}$ | $\bar{X}_{Jr}$ | $\bar{X}_{Hs}$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| $\bar{X}_{El}$ = 40.44 | — | 2.09 | 5.77* |
| $\bar{X}_{Jr}$ = 38.35 | — | — | 3.68 |
| $\bar{X}_{Hs}$ = 34.67 | — | — | — |

*Significant at the .05 level.

Tukey's HSD results: Required for significance = 4.41 at the .05 level.

Table 4.12. Analysis of Variance of MBI Personal Accomplishment Scores for Self-Reported Externals at the Elementary, Junior High, and High School Levels

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | df | Variance Estimate | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 390 | 2 | 195 | 4.38* |
| Within groups | 2407 | 54 | 44.57 | |
| Total | 2797 | 56 | | |

*Significant at the .05 level.

Table 4.13. Difference Among Means — Personal Accomplishment Scores for Self-Reported Externals at the Elementary, Junior High, and High School Levels

| | $\bar{X}_{El}$ | $\bar{X}_{Jr}$ | $\bar{X}_{Hs}$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| $\bar{X}_{El}$ = 40.22 | — | 2.78 | 6.44* |
| $\bar{X}_{Jr}$ = 37.44 | — | — | 3.66 |
| $\bar{X}_{Hs}$ = 33.78 | — | — | — |

*Significant at the .05 level.

Tukey's HSD results: Required for significance = 5.29 at the .05 level.

Table 4.14 Analysis of Variance of MBI Emotional Exhaustion Scores of Self-Reported Internals at the Elementary, Junior High, and High School Levels

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | df | Variance Estimate | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 67 | 2 | 33.5 | .31 |
| Within groups | 6421 | 59 | 108.83 | |
| Total | 6488 | 61 | | |

No significant difference indicated.

Table 4.15. Analysis of Variance of MBI Emotional Exhaustion Scores of Self-Reported Externals at the Elementary, Junior High, and High School Levels

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | df | Variance Estimate | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 327 | 2 | 164 | 1.55 |
| Within groups | 5720 | 54 | 106 | |
| Total | 6047 | 56 | | |

No significant difference indicated.

# CHAPTER V

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The concluding chapter will review the results of the investigation and address the major implications for program planning, teacher education, and further research which the researcher believes is warranted.

### Summary of Results

The results of the present investigation further clarify the relationship between locus-of-control and burnout within the educational setting. Previous research had documented that burnout was more prevalent at the secondary level. Research using the locus-of-control measure had also indicated that Externals were more burnout prone than Internals. The present investigation partially supports the previous findings while also providing some interesting new perspectives of the problem. On the basis of the present investigation high school teachers appear to be more at-risk for suffering the severest form of burnout. While their level of emotional exhaustion does not significantly vary from their teaching colleagues at the elementary and junior high grades, high school teachers' significantly higher levels of depersonalization and lower levels of personal accomplishment appear to be potentially more problematic. The situation also does not diminish or alter with changes in an individual's sense of personal control over his/her life circumstances. High school Internals and Externals did not differ from their teaching colleagues in degree of burnout as previous research findings had suggested they would. The combined effects of moderate to high levels of both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization coupled with low levels of personal accomplishment appear to be most markedly

prevalent at the high school level. These findings point directly toward the high school educational environment as fostering a significantly higher degree of burnout in teachers.

## Implications for Administration and In Service

Based on the present research findings a program designed to sensitize administrators (school superintendents, principals, and assistant principals) to the warning signals of burnout and the variety of stress reducing strategies available appears warranted. Such a program could easily be justified to school boards for its potential in diminishing sick leave and absenteeism, as well as losses of both new and experienced teachers due to burnout. Training emphasis should be placed on both individual approaches to coping with stress and the organizational procedures and processes that may require analysis and adjustment. Due to the varied incidence of burnout at each educational level separate programs designed for the elementary, junior high and high school teacher populations also appear warranted with the latter receiving top priority as well as the opportunity for ongoing involvement. Both pre-service and in-service programs which would address the problem with both new and experienced teachers would have the most potential for success. The most comprehensive program this investigator has encountered is Survival of Stressed Teachers (Muse, 1980). This program effectively introduces participants to the full array of stress inducing variables including stress-prone personality types, stressful life circumstances, and organizational circumstances that foster stress in individuals. Plans for ongoing support group development are also included in the program.

## Expanded Research Implications

Additional research should focus on ways in which secondary teachers could become more sensitive to the unique needs of adolescents and problems inherent in working with them. The state of depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment which increases from the elementary through the high school level may be directly related to the secondary teacher's minimal interaction (one-hour-per-day) with most students. Training in recognizing the types of behaviors which are developmentally normal for adolescents (i.e. labile emotional states, strong peer group identification, formulating a unique personal identity) may diminish teachers' sense of alienation and stress. Research also should be initiated which measures the effects of the upgrading of teachers' skills in dealing with problem behavior children. If today's children are more difficult to cope with than preceding generations then teachers who seek new skills in dealing with the difficult child may also diminish their sensitivity to burnout.

## Implications for Teacher Education

Two suggestions have implications for teacher training programs for new and experienced teachers. By providing training in what is to be expected in normal childhood development as well as how to effectively cope with and manage the problem child, teacher training programs may effectively assist teachers to deal with the most highly prevalent stressors within the educational setting—the uncertainty of children's behavior.

## Further Research Implications

Finally, additional research is needed in the area of types of leisure time activities that most effectively work to reduce teachers' stress. This research

could also be coupled with the locus-of-control variable to determine if Internals or Externals choose similar activities for alleviating the effects of stress. This investigator encountered no research article which addressed the question of leisure time pursuits by teachers being utilized as rejuvenating endeavors. Since the organizational structure of schools changes so slowly, the teacher who is coping with stress induced by powerful others may be forced to alleviate stress by exploring therapeutic recreation as an alternative. The internally oriented teacher could also benefit by being assisted to choose the most appropriate option from a wide variety of suggested activities. In either case burned out teachers need support to assist them to cope with the stressors that are causing too many of them to give up or get out.

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# APPENDIX

## LEVENSON LOCUS-OF-CONTROL SCALES

## AND

## MASLACH BURNOUT INVENTORY

Enclosed are three short surveys of professional attitudes. The surveys require approximately 15 minutes to complete. Individual responses are completely confidential and only group data will be computed for results. I appreciate your cooperation. If you would like a summary of the survey results, which I am using for my Ed.S. thesis, please contact me at 457-5400, ext. 292.

Thank you,

Gary L. Aebischer
School Psychologist

Demographic Data Sheet

Sex: F_____ M _____

Age:

Years in Teaching: Type: Regular Education _____ Special Education _____

Level of Teaching: Primary (K-6) _____
Junior H.S. (7-9) _____
Senior H.S. (10-12) _____

Size of Class: 10-20 _____; 20-25 _____; 25-30 _____; 30+ _____

Degree Level: Bachelors _____ Masters _____ Masters Plus _____

NOTE: Please complete the surveys as you would after a typical work day. Your responses should reflect how you would normally feel on an average day.

# LEVENSON SCALE

Using the scale -3,-2,-1,+1,+2,+3, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following items. Let -3 represent complete disagreement and +3, complete agreement. Put the number representing the degree of your agreement or disagreement by each item.

_____1. Whether or not I get to be a leader depends mostly on my ability.

_____2. To a great extent my life is controlled by accidental happenings.

_____3. I feel like what happens in my life is mostly determined by powerful people.

_____4. Whether or not I get into a car accident depends mostly on how good a driver I am.

_____5. When I make plans, I am almost certain to make them work.

_____6. Often there is no chance of protecting my personal interests from bad-luck happenings.

_____7. When I get what I want, it's usually because I'm lucky.

_____8. Although I might have good ability, I will not be given leadership responsibilities without appealing to those in positions of power.

_____9. How many friends I have depends on how nice a person I am.

_____10. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.

_____11. My life is chiefly controlled by powerful others.

_____12. Whether or not I get into a car accident is mostly a matter of luck.

_____13. People like myself have very little chance of protecting our personal interests when they conflict with those of strong pressure groups.

_____14. It's not always wise for me to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune.

_____15. Getting what I want requires pleasing those people above me.

_____16. Whether or not I get to be a leader depends on whether I'm lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time.

_____17. If important people were to decide they didn't like me, I probably wouldn't make any friends.

_____18. I can pretty much determine what will happen in my life.

_____19. I am usually able to protect my personal interests.

_____20. Whether or not I get into a car accident depends mostly on the other driver.

_____21. When I get what I want, it's usually because I worked hard for it.

_____22. In order to have my plans work, I make sure that they fit in with the desires of people who have power over me.

_____23. My life is determined by my own actions.

_____24. It's chiefly a matter of fate whether or not I have a few friends or many friends.

# Human Services Survey

Christina Maslach and Susan E. Jackson

The purpose of this survey is to discover how various persons in the human services or helping professions view their jobs and the people with whom they work closely. Because persons in a wide variety of occupations will answer this survey, it uses the term *recipients* to refer to the people for whom you provide your service, care, treatment, or instruction. When answering this survey please think of these people as recipients of the service you provide, even though you may use another term in your work.
NOTE: "Recipients" is changed to "students" on reverse side.
On the following page there are 22 statements of job-related feelings. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way *about your job*. If you have *never* had this feeling, write a "0" (zero) in both the "HOW OFTEN" and "HOW STRONG" columns before the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate *how often* you feel it by writing the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way. Then decide *how strong* the feeling is when you experience it by writing the number (from 1 to 7) that best describes how strongly you feel it. An example is shown below.

Example:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| HOW OFTEN: | 0<br>Never | 1<br>A few times a year or less | 2<br>Once a month or less | 3<br>A few times a month | 4<br>Once a week | 5<br>A few times a week | 6<br>Every day | |
| HOW STRONG: | 0<br>Never | 1<br>Very mild, barely noticeable | 2 | 3 | 4<br>Moderate | 5 | 6 | 7<br>Major, very strong |

| HOW OFTEN | HOW STRONG | |
|---|---|---|
| 0-6 | 0-7 | Statement: |
| _____ | _____ | I feel depressed at work. |

If you *never* feel depressed at work, you would write the number "0" (zero) on both lines. If you *rarely* feel depressed at work (a few times a year or less), you would write the number "1" on the line under the heading "HOW OFTEN." If your feelings of depression are *fairly* strong, but not as strong as you can imagine, you would write a "6" under the heading "HOW STRONG." If your feelings of depression are very mild, you would write a "1."

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# Human Services Survey

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| HOW OFTEN: | 0<br>Never | 1<br>A few times a year or less | 2<br>Once a month or less | 3<br>A few times a month | 4<br>Once a week | 5<br>A few times a week | 6<br>Every day | |
| HOW STRONG: | 0<br>Never | 1<br>Very mild, barely noticeable | 2 | 3 | 4<br>Moderate | 5 | 6 | 7<br>Major, very strong |

| HOW OFTEN 0–6 | HOW STRONG 0–7 | Statements: |
|---|---|---|
| 1. _____ | _____ | I feel emotionally drained from my work. |
| 2. _____ | _____ | I feel used up at the end of the workday. |
| 3. _____ | _____ | I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job. |
| 4. _____ | _____ | I can easily understand how my students feel about things. |
| 5. _____ | _____ | I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal objects. |
| 6. _____ | _____ | Working with people all day is really a strain for me. |
| 7. _____ | _____ | I deal very effectively with the problems of my students. |
| 8. _____ | _____ | I feel burned out from my work. |
| 9. _____ | _____ | I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work. |
| 10. _____ | _____ | I've become more callous toward people since I took this job. |
| 11. _____ | _____ | I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally. |
| 12. _____ | _____ | I feel very energetic. |
| 13. _____ | _____ | I feel frustrated by my job. |
| 14. _____ | _____ | I feel I'm working too hard on my job. |
| 15. _____ | _____ | I don't really care what happens to some students |
| 16. _____ | _____ | Working with people directly puts too much stress on me. |
| 17. _____ | _____ | I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my students. |
| 18. _____ | _____ | I feel exhilarated after working closely with my students. |
| 19. _____ | _____ | I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job. |
| 20. _____ | _____ | I feel like I'm at the end of my rope. |
| 21. _____ | _____ | In my work, I deal with emotional problems very calmly. |
| 22. _____ | _____ | I feel students blame me for some of their problems. |



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# VITA

Gary Lynne Aebischer was born in Green Bay, Wisconsin on April 20, 1942. He attended Annunciation Grade School and was graduated from West High School in June 1960. From 1960 to 1964 he completed two years of his undergraduate degree work at the University of Wisconsin Extension Center. From 1968 to 1976 he was employed as a machine operator and journeyman electrical lineman.

In March 1976, Mr. Aebischer returned to the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in June 1978. He began attending the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in September 1978 and received a Master of Science Degree in Educational Psychology in December 1979. In June 1980, he completed his internship and was certified as a School Psychologist by the Tennessee Dept. of Education. Throughout this educational experience Mr. Aebischer was employed by residential treatment facilities and a state mental health institute as a counselor working with emotionally disturbed adolescents and their families.

The author has been a member of the Tennessee Association of School Psychologists, National Association of School Psychologists, and the Tennessee Association of Behavior Therapists. He is presently employed by the Anderson County Schools, Clinton, Tennessee, as a School Psychologist.