

THE INFLUENCE OF ROLE-RELATED STRESSORS ON EDUCATOR BURNOUT.

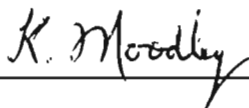
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**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
(Educational Psychology), University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg**

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DECLARATION

Unless otherwise indicated in the text, this dissertation represents my own work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "K. Moodley", written over a horizontal line.

Krishnan Moodley

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between select role-related stressors, as measured by the Teacher Stress Measure, as well as the background variables of gender, years of experience as aspects of educator burnout, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI).

From a sample of 104 educators from schools in the Pietermaritzburg region, it was found that burnout is exhibited largely through feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment.

While both males and females appear to be affected similarly, the less experienced educators appeared to be more susceptible to burnout than their more experienced counterparts. This study also indicated that stressors such as redeployment, promotion and salary correlated with burnout, although not significantly. Learner pressures, lack of support and recognition, poor interpersonal relationships, role ambiguity, role conflict, lack of decision-making and role insufficiency (which encapsulates the issue of Outcomes Based Education) were found to have a significant influence on educator burnout.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The current decade of an inflationary economy, mass retrenchments, rampant redeployment, enormous cutbacks in expenditure, dwindling opportunities for upward mobility, inter alia, has robbed workers in general and educators in particular of an ethos of growth, innovation and enthusiasm. The steady stream of circulars from the provincial education departments outlining the work ethic by which the educators have to abide and the curtailment of benefits they enjoyed previously have become restrictive and excruciatingly controlled. Consequently educator alienation, distrust and suspicion have torpedoed commitment, vitality and co-operation. It is apparent that productivity has been mothballed and thus possibly another spark of burnout has been ignited.

Farber (2000) states:

Burnout, dismissed by some as a faddish, 1960s-era concept, just will not go away. Despite its lack of official DSM-IV status, it continues to be studied empirically, described theoretically, and discussed extensively by mental-health professionals and the general public. Perhaps most importantly, it continues to be a defining focus for many patients, particularly those who work in the human service professions. These patients come to therapy complaining of work overload, 'time famine', resentment over innumerable and unrelenting demands in their lives, interpersonal problems, family difficulties, irritability, emotional and physical exhaustion, cynicism, and the belief that there is no way out of the situation. Many do well financially and feel that, although they barely can tolerate their work, coworkers and/or clients, and barely feel they have a life for themselves, they still cannot afford to leave and look elsewhere for employment. They are stuck, angry, and disillusioned...(p. 589).

"Social scientists are rushing to examine the 'living death' of today's teachers, and in keeping

with cool journalistic jargon have labeled the phenomenon teacher burnout” (Ricken, 1980, p. 21).

Burned out educators are prone to what Maslach and Jackson (1981) termed emotional exhaustion (the feeling of being emotionally overextended, by contact with other people), depersonalization (an unfeeling and callous response toward these people, as recipients of a service), low personal accomplishment (the decline in feelings of competence and achievement in one’s work).

From the above description it is clarion clear that burnout is a serious ailment that warrants increasing attention by the powers-that-be if they are to attain the educational standards for which they are striving. For instance, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department of Education’s Matriculation pass rate for 1999 which was barely above 50% is nothing to write home about and if it is to be raised, the well being of its educators needs to be taken seriously to heart.

1.2 PREVALENCE OF THE PROBLEM AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

In the following scenarios the writer explains some problems that educators often experience in their jobs.

Firstly, an educator at a high school, married with one child, returned to her school after a year's leave to complete a professional qualification. Upon her return, the most trivial of incidents seemed to annoy her. When the principal of her school asked to supervise her record books, she flew into a tirade, justified the work she was doing and claimed how little credit she was being given for it. At the end of the interview with her principal she declared that she was suffering from burnout.

This educator has had a history of transfers from one school to another without the opportunity of climbing the promotion ladder. Reports on her work by superintendents of education contained a mixture of commendation for tasks well done and a severe censure for gross dereliction of duty. This educator grabbed at the opportunity of taking early retirement and has since kept a very low profile.

Secondly, a 51 year old male educator, married with two children and holding a head of department's position at a secondary school reports being at the end of his tether both financially and occupationally. He had staved off taking the voluntary severance package that was offered four years ago in the hope that with the mass exodus of management personnel, his chances of obtaining a promotion would be virtually automatic.

His expectations hitherto have not been met and what has compounded his frustration is seeing his juniors, some even from his own department, pipping him at the post to not only positions to which he has aspired, but also to those much higher. He sees no way out of his present predicament and is languishing in the hope that another severance package will be offered.

A third candidate for burnout is a 56 year old male educator, married for the second time round with one child and still holding a head of department position in the primary school in which he acted principal for eighteen months. He is currently on sick leave after having been hospitalized periodically on a number of occasions. He reports that fate has dealt him a cruel blow, more especially since all his contemporaries have taken the voluntary severance package and his juniors have beaten him to all the available promotion posts.

His health has deteriorated to such an extent that he is virtually blind through glaucoma and unabated diabetes. He has become introspective, careless in his work and has lost the zest for life. It has very recently been learnt that he has been granted medical boarding on the grounds of ill health.

The number of educators applying to be boarded on account of ill-health precipitated by stress and burnout and the number of educators applying for early retirement has grown over the years as is apparent in Table 1 (Moodley, 1995). It was this in addition to the merging of the various education departments that prompted the writer to investigate the phenomenon of burnout among educators.

Year	No of Applicants for boarding	No. medically boarded	Normal Retirements 60/65 Years	Early Retirements
1990	52	41	78	Nil
1991	55	46	38	520
1992	102	93	32	550
1993	356	229	7	41
1994	277	130	10	Nil

TABLE 1 :Medical Boarding and Retirement Statistics: CS Educators: ex-Administration: House of Delegates.

There has been a plethora of research on stress and burnout among educators and in other professions worldwide. Abel & Sewell (1999), and Friedman (1996), inter alia, have conducted studies on educators. Local researchers in the field of burnout include Black (1991), Moodley (1995), Padayachee (1992), Jeena (1998), Rutsch (1995), to name a few. There are documented findings in the literature about the aversive effects of burnout on educators' psychological and physiological health. Cox and Brockley, Needle and Wahlund (as cited in Kyriacou, 1987) maintain that in comparison with other professions, educators have reported one of the highest and often *the* highest levels of occupational stress.

There is a dire need for more studies on burnout in educators in South Africa. The writer therefore considered it imperative to research this field among educators in Pietermaritzburg with the specific purpose of acquainting educators and educational authorities with the role-related nature of this syndrome.

The writer hopes that this study will have added to the existing knowledge of burnout, will have provided future researchers with some basis for further investigation into this field and will open the eyes and ears of all the important stakeholders in education so that its most valued asset, the learner, is not in any way compromised.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following were the research questions:

- Is burnout prevalent among educators in South Africa?
- Do educators who experience a greater incidence of role-related stressors experience burnout?
- Can the demographic variable of gender account for a significant amount of variance in educator burnout?
- Can the demographic variable of years of experience account for a significant amount of variance in teacher burnout?

1.4 DEFINITION OF TERMS

In this study the following terms have been used and clarification regarding their definitions is needed at the outset :

- **STRESSOR:** According to The World Book Dictionary (Barnath & Barnath, 1990 p.2072) stressor is “any stimulus that produces stress or strain.”

Fisher (1984) states:

Stressor refers to environment pressures or stimuli which are responsible for evoking the stress response. In regard to teaching, stressors occur from within the school organization as organizational stressors, or from outside the school setting as extra-organizational stressors. The former includes such things as time pressures and student relationship pressures, ever present within schools. The latter refers to pressures derived from the school-community and school-home links of the teacher (p.226).

- **BURNOUT:** extinction of energy, motivation, or incentive. “Burnout is a form of strain which can occur after different coping mechanisms have been attempted by the individual responding to stress” (Fisher, 1984).

Educator burnout is a psychological condition, produced by stress, that can result in anything from acute loss of will to suicidal tendencies.

- **EDUCATORS:** For the purpose of this study the term ‘educator’ will be taken to represent any member of the teaching profession irrespective of his/her rank, that is irrespective of whether he or she is a level one educator, a head of department, a deputy principal, a senior deputy principal or principal. The rationale for not limiting the term ‘educator’ to just level one educators is that every member of the teaching profession, irrespective of his/her administrative duties, is expected to stand before a class and instruct them in at least one subject in the curriculum in order to get to know his/her charges better.

1.5 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY BY CHAPTER

In chapter two the phenomenon of burnout in educators will be explored extensively with emphasis on those factors that exacerbate burnout in the workplace.

Chapter three will embody issues relating to the methodology employed, the research instruments used, the pilot study, the collection of data, the sample and sampling procedures and the statistical analyses undertaken..

Chapter four will detail the findings and results of the study.

Chapter five will include a discussion of the results of the study in relation to the aims of the study and to previous research.

In chapter six the writer will conclude this study with aspects pertaining to the implications of

the study, to limitations of the present study and recommendations for improvement as well as suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW: THE PHENOMENON OF BURNOUT IN EDUCATORS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Burnout has been conceived as a type of response to the protracted aversive effects of work stressors. As an occupational hazard for educators, it has been associated with educators' personal characteristics and with aspects of their work environments. Burned out educators are accustomed to undermining their pupils' capabilities, to reduce interaction with them to the barest minimum, to be less enthusiastic about positively influencing their lives and to withhold praise where it should be given (Beer & Beer, 1992, in Tatar & Yahav, 1999) . More clarity on this phenomenon is steadily being provided and this chapter serves to attain that objective.

2.2 THE BURNOUT SYNDROME

According to Maslach et al (as cited in Schwab & Iwanicki, 1982), the stress people experience through increasing interaction with others can result in a loss of the care and commitment which they originally possessed. Their feelings are manifested in three ways:

Firstly, feelings of emotional exhaustion and fatigue tend to plague those burning out. Rapid depletion of emotional resources is accompanied by rapid decrease in productivity. Emotionally exhausted educators, in describing their feelings, might say they feel drained or used up, that they are at the end of their rope and are physically fatigued. Secondly, the burned out individual begins to develop negative attitudes toward those with whom he is in contact. He distances himself from others, both co-workers and learners and feels calloused and detached towards others. These negative, sometimes cynical attitudes have been referred to as "depersonalization" by Maslach (1982). Thirdly, there is no longer the sense of accomplishment once enjoyed in the job. The burned out individual feels wholly inadequate about his ability to relate to others. Many an enthusiastic individual started his career with

enormous expectations of making a difference to his employer and society. But after a year or two, he saw those expectations crumbling quite rapidly.

The type of burnout that seems most prevalent today is characterised by individuals' complaints of varied obligations, burgeoning external pressures, insufficient financial rewards and sparse opportunities for personal advancement. There is a great difference between the 1960s Educator A who complained that it bothered him so much that, despite his efforts, many of his students still did not read well and the 1990s Educator B who complains that there's so much pressure on him from his principal to get all his learners performing above grade level on the next standardised test (Farber, 2000).

2.3 MODELS OF JOB BURNOUT

2.3.1 MODEL 1: COMBINED USEFULNESS OF ORGANIZATIONAL AND PERSONAL VARIABLES

This model by Schwab, Jackson and Schuler (Schwab et al., 1986, in Moodley, 1995) is embodied in existing research on job burnout and organizational behaviour. These authors found organizational and personal factors (such as role conflict and ambiguity, social support of colleagues, participation in decision making, contingent punishment, autonomy and the individual's expectations for the job) to correlate significantly with the burnout phenomenon. From the emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and/or personal accomplishment burnout are likely to arise some disturbing consequences such as, inter alia, intention to leave the job, absence from work, dehumanization of clients, fault finding, withdrawal, use of drugs and alcohol, conflicts with coworkers, decreased job efficiency, suicide, overeating, tardiness, difficulty in breathing, constant headaches and a lower quality of personal life. This model differed from that of other researchers like Malik, Mueller & Meinke (1991) which focused on isolated organizational and personal variables.

This model is illustrated in Figure A (p.10).

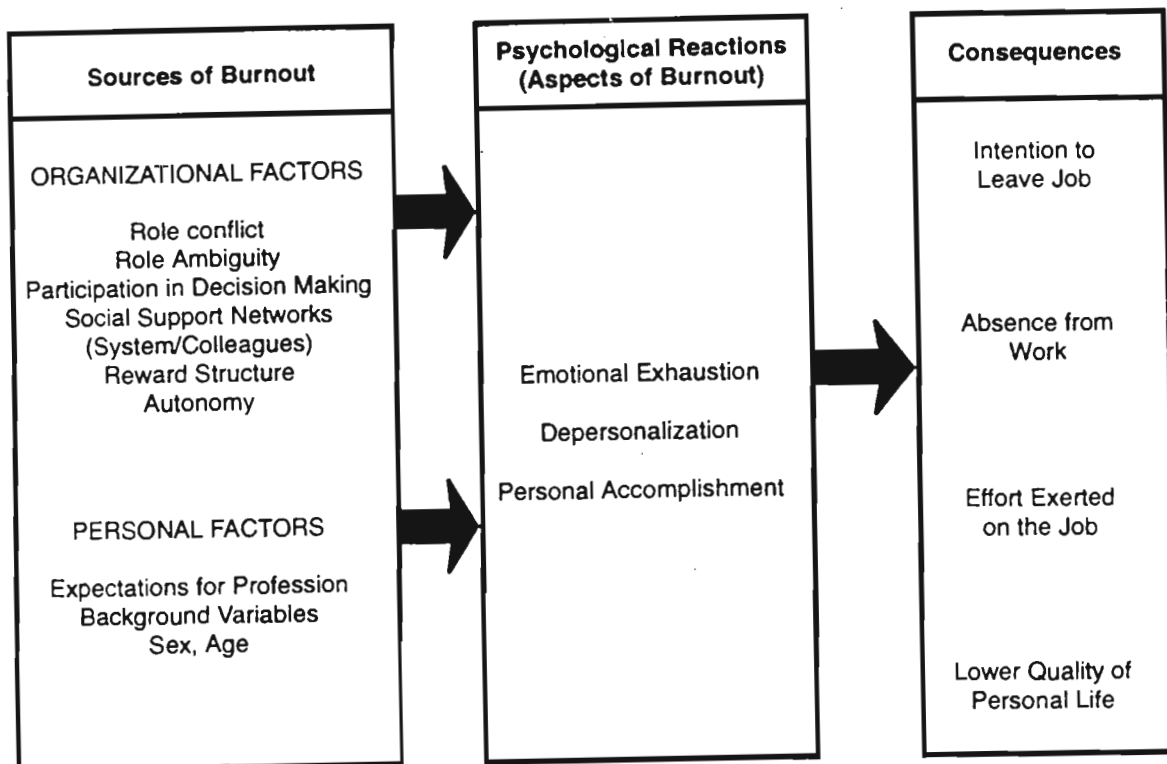


Figure A: Model of Job Burnout by Schwab, Jackson and Schuler (Schwab et al, 1986, p.19, in Moodley, 1995)

2.3.2 MODEL 2: BURNOUT AS A TRANSACTIONAL PROCESS OR A PHASE MODEL OF BURNOUT

Cherniss (1980, as cited in Niven, 1994) maintains that burnout should be viewed as a transactional process, that is, that burnout is a process consisting of three stages. (See Figure B, p.11).

The first stage is characterised by an imbalance between resources and demand which is referred to as *stress*. Secondly, an immediate short-term emotional response to this imbalance, characterized by feelings of anxiety, tension, fatigue and exhaustion, referred to as *strain*, arises and this is followed thirdly by attitudinal and behavioural changes, namely, detached and mechanical treatment of clients or cynicism, referred to as *defensive coping*.

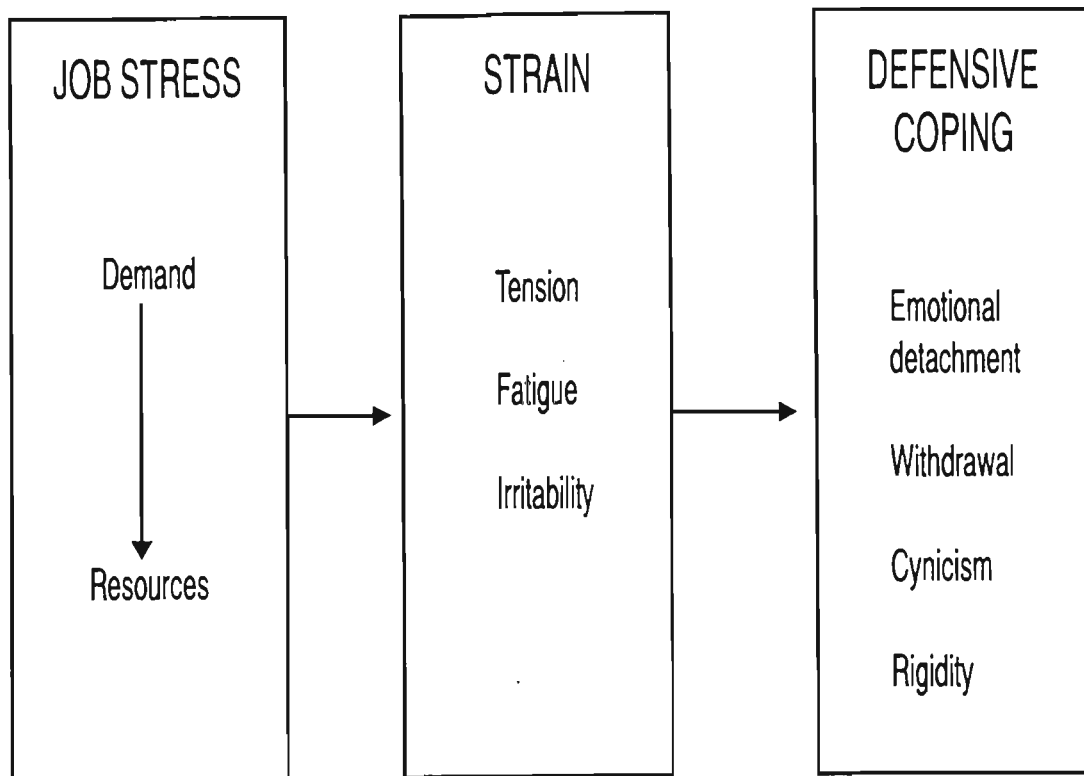


Figure B: A Phase Model of Burnout (Cherniss, 1980, p.18, in Niven, 1994)

2.3.3 MODEL 3: A MODEL OF JOB STRESS AND HEALTH - STRESS BEING A PRECURSOR TO BURNOUT

This model by Hurrell (as cited in Murphy and Schoenborn, 1989, p.33) sees job stress as a situation wherein some working condition (called a stressor) or a combination of conditions interacts with the worker and creates a critical psychological or behavioural imbalance. It is presumed that if these severe reactions are prolonged, they would lead to a host of illnesses. Figure C (p. 12) shows that the most commonly researched of these job stress-related illnesses have been hypertension, coronary heart disease, alcoholism and mental illness.

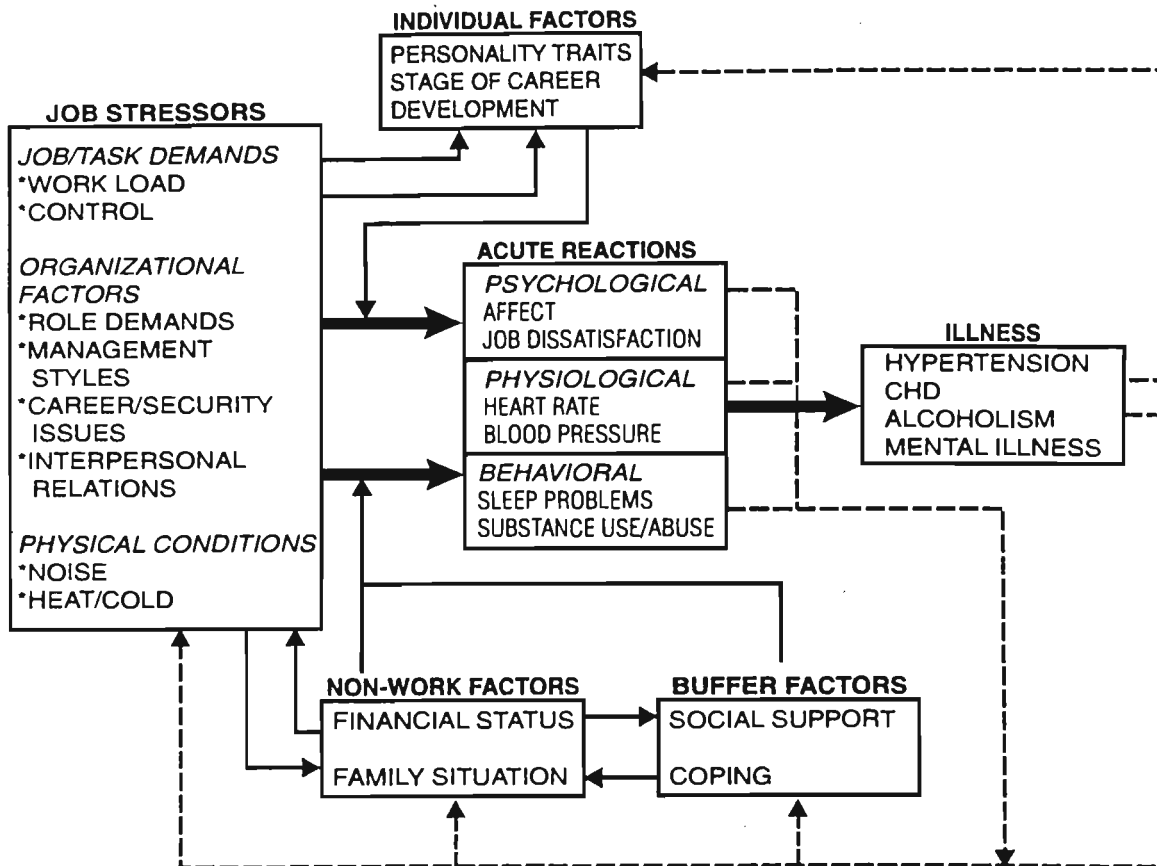


Figure C: Model of Job Stress and Health (Murphy and Schoenborn (1989, p.33)

2.4 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFORMANCE AND DEMANDS: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Figure D (p.13) illustrates a theory that examines the relationship between the performance of the educator's role and the job demands as experienced by educators.

This theory contends that work with fewer demands leads to boredom. More demands can be stimulating and energizing but if they are beyond the individual's capability, increased anxiety, poor concentration and diminished career effectiveness could arise. Continued demands minus coping resources may lead to fatigue, exhaustion and burnout (Dunham, 1984, in Moodley, 1995).

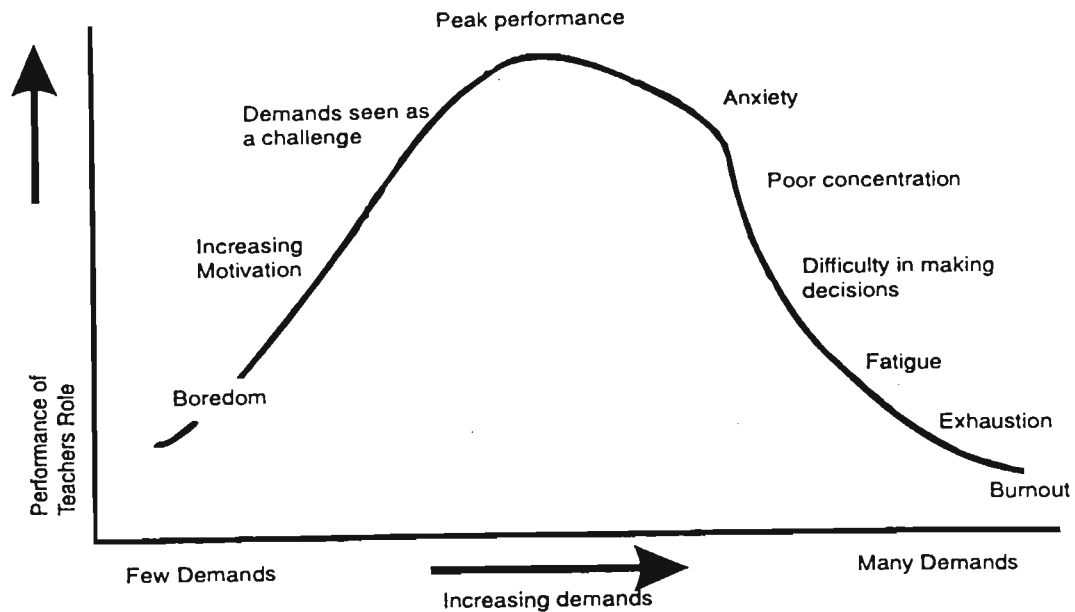


Figure D: The Relationship between the Teacher's Performance and the Job Demands Experienced (Dunham, 1984, p. 86, in Moodley, 1995)

2.5. STAGES OF EDUCATOR BURNOUT

According to Gillespie (1983), burnout can be traced through three stages: heating up, boiling and explosion. During the *heating up* stage, feelings of dissatisfaction are experienced. The individual begins to feel isolated and believes that the effort he/she has put in is not appreciated. In the *boiling* stage, the educator feels a sense of helplessness. He/She begins to question his/her usefulness, efficiency, style, content and particularly his/her impact on his/her learners. Other occupations begin to appear more attractive. The *explosion* that follows can be overt or covert. If it is overt, the educator turns into a robot who merely comes to work, teaches, uses notes that have not been updated for years, appears unaffected by the environment and has no desire to change it. He/She escapes the frustration and disillusionment by merely going through the motions of teaching. If the explosion is covert,

the educator attempts to change the disillusioning environment or to fight the disenchantment by quitting the profession.

2.6 OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND BURNOUT AMONG HELPING PROFESSIONALS

† The bulk of the studies on burnout was done on people working in the helping professions.

✧ For instance, a study conducted among educators by William McGuire (as cited in Cunningham, 1983) indicated that mental and physical stress was driving thousands of American educators out of the classrooms. Stress was found to lead to educator burnout and the problem “threatened to reach hurricane force if it isn’t checked soon”(p.38).

DeFrank & Stroup (1989) in their hypothesis that burnout may affect people in the helping professions, including educators, stated that high scores on measures of burnout have been linked with elevated levels of perceived role conflict and role ambiguity, lessened self-actualization concerns and lack of perceived support and success among educators. In addition, they associated burnout with increased reports of somatic complaints and illnesses. Their study indicated a strong correlation between job stress and physical and mental health among educators that is bound to affect their relationships with their colleagues, their behaviour in the classroom and their intention to remain in teaching.

*Sampson (1983, as cited in Hatchard and Barrington, 1986) found in a study of six schools that the most prevalent stressors emerged from the aspects of the work environment such as handling disruptive students, large classes, excessive paperwork and insufficient time for planning and preparation. Other stressors cited came from the organisational structure, role in the organisation and relationships at work. ✧

Meadow (1981) also found that educators of deaf learners were more likely to burn out than educators of non-handicapped learners. Educators of deaf learners scored significantly higher on the emotional exhaustion subscale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson,

1981) and indicated a greater tendency to depersonalize the children in the classrooms, to have a less sense of personal accomplishment, and a greater sense of personal involvement, when compared to the educators of non-handicapped learners.

Myles, Ormsbee, and Simpson (1991) also indicated that educators of learners with autism reported a high degree of stress relative to emotional exhaustion and low degrees of burnout relative to depersonalization and personal accomplishment; that is, educators maintained close relationships with learners and felt pride in their learners' accomplishments, but were overextended and exhausted because of instructional demands.

Among social workers, Jayaratne, Chess and Kunkel (1986) found that greater feelings of burnout were associated with depression, anxiety and irritability. Moreover, there were indications that social workers were likely to report lower marital satisfaction.

Eldridge, Blostein and Richardson (as cited in Adendorf, 1997) also found that burnout in child care workers was linked to administrative style. Staff relations, work role ambiguity, role conflict and work overload also featured among the major stressors.

A study conducted on nurses (Govender, 1995) found that a sample of 65 nurses suffered higher levels of burnout on emotional exhaustion and depersonalization on the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) than the other helping professions.

When compared with females in the USA sample, van der Merwe (1993) found that the mean of her student nurse sample was significantly higher on all three subscales of the Maslach Burnout Inventory, namely, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment.

Among psychologists, Ackerley, Burnell, Holder and Kurdek (1988) found that when comparing the mean levels of EE (Emotional Exhaustion), DP (Depersonalization), and PA (Personal Accomplishment) of the Maslach Burnout Inventory for their sample of licensed psychologists against those of mental health workers, they found that scores on all three

subscales were significantly higher for the licensed psychologists.

2.7 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BURNOUT AND THE VARIABLES OF GENDER, AGE, YEARS OF EXPERIENCE, MARITAL AND FAMILY STATUS, AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION.

In the following section the writer describes literature on the relationship between burnout and such variables as gender, age, years of experience, marital and family status, and level of education.

2.7.1 GENDER

While Maslach & Jackson (1981) and Fisher (1984) contended that there were significantly higher levels of emotional exhaustion for females than males across a wide spectrum of human service professionals, Anderson & Iwanicki (1984) found the reverse to be true for educators (Byrne, 1991). On the other hand, male educators have a greater tendency to depersonalize their learners than females (Maslach, 1982; Schwab et al., 1986)

2.7.2 AGE

Age of the educator has been linked to burnout. Young educators have been found to experience significantly higher levels of emotional exhaustion than their older counterparts (Anderson & Iwanicki, 1984, in Byrne, 1991). Maslach & Jackson (1981) maintained that their young respondents scored significantly higher on the depersonalization and lower on the personal accomplishment subscales of the MBI (Byrne, 1991).

2.7.3 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Capel (1991) found that educators who have taught fewer years experienced higher levels of burnout.

Byrne (1991) concurs in her finding that at least regarding emotional exhaustion, younger educators show significantly higher stress levels than their older colleagues. On the contrary, Borg & Falzon (1989, as cited in Tatar & Yahav, 1999) found that even though one might expect experienced educators to find their jobs less demanding, their findings suggest that with more experience educators become less tolerant of learners' misbehaviour and their expectations of schools become progressively higher.

2.7.4 MARITAL AND FAMILY STATUS

Maslach's 1982 study (as cited in Moodley, 1995) of the relationship between marital and family status with burnout indicated that unmarried helpers experience a higher degree of burnout than their married counterparts. Gold (1985) contended that there appeared to be a demonstrable association between marital status and perceived burnout.

2.7.5 LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Mor & Laliberte (1984, as cited in Paradis, 1987) found that a higher than average level of burnout existed for workers with higher education. This was corroborated by Smith, Birch and Marchant (as cited in Katz & Fraley, 1986). They attribute this to the possibility that more education may increase an individual's expectations beyond that which is plausible, thus increasing risk to burnout.

2.8 THE LINK BETWEEN PERSONALITY AND BURNOUT

Literature indicates that an individual's personality affects his responses to burnout and his methods of coping with it. Friedman & Rosenman (1974, as cited in Kahn & Cooper, 1993) isolated two main types of behaviour patterns, Type A and Type B. Type A individuals are typified as those who toil laboriously under constant deadline pressures and conditions for overload, constantly carry work home and are unable to relax; often compete with themselves with high standards of productivity; tend to become frustrated by the work situation, to be irritated with the work efforts of others, and feel misunderstood by superiors (Kahn &

Cooper, 1993).

Kahn et al. (as cited in Cedoline, 1982) identified some personality types that are prone to occupational stress:

- The neurotic type who wholly immerses himself/herself in his/her job, but because he/she is the anxious type, he/she worries needlessly and succumbs to stress.
- The introverted type who isolates himself/herself from others when stressed and this isolation in turn generates more stress.
- The flexible types with their open-minded and democratic outlook on life become more stressed by promising to accomplish more than they can deliver.
- The status seeker who is ambitious, independent, and highly wrapped up in his/her work reacts strongly to job conflicts and consequently becomes an easy prey to stress.

Locus of control is another aspect of personality that needs mention. It pertains to the “question of whether or not an individual believes that his own behaviour, skills or internal dispositions determine what reinforcements he receives” (Rotter et al., 1972, in McIntyre, 1984, p.235). Individuals are plotted along a continuum, with “internals” feeling competent to control their destiny and determine the occurrence of reinforcement, and “externals” believing that forces outside their control (e.g., fate, chance, luck, powerful others) determine the occurrence of specific events.

McIntyre’s 1984 study of 684 special education educators showed that significant positive correlations were found between locus of control and the frequency of feelings of emotional exhaustion and the intensity of depersonalization. A negative correlation was found between locus of control and feelings of personal accomplishment.

2.9 PERCEIVED STRESSORS IN THE EDUCATOR'S WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Leading researchers, according to Kasl (1981), have felt that the characteristics of the etiological processes of the disease outcomes that have arisen out of stressful work environmental conditions are among the following:

- the stress arousing conditions tend to be chronic rather than ephemeral or intermittent.
- adaptation to the chronic situation is difficult.
- the impact of the work role is felt in other areas of functioning (e.g., family, leisure) such that it becomes health-threatening.

Educator mental health is very likely to be compromised by a lack of job satisfaction. Some of the stressors in the educator's working environment are:

2.9.1 LACK OF FIT BETWEEN PERSON AND ENVIRONMENT

According to the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory of stress (Friedman, 2000) which was spawned by the Person-Environment Fit theory, psychological stress occurs under one of three conditions (1) when resources (i.e., objectives that one strives to attain) are lost, (2) when resources are diminished, and (3) when the individual fails to reap the anticipated return for the resources he invests.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990, as cited in Friedman, 2000) contended that the two salient features of experience - challenges and skills - may account for anxiety and stress in a person. A potent sense of professional inefficacy, which may be extremely stressful, may arise from a discrepancy between existing (or perceived) professional skills and high job challenges.

2.9.2 THE CLASSROOM

The classroom itself generates much stress and tension. It may hold between 30 and 40 learners or more, each with his/her own personality, each with his/ her own expectations, problems, preferences, clamouring for the educator's attention. In one year a thousand hours are spent trying to maintain control, daily teaching requirements, and catering for the needs of the learners even if they don't excel. The tension is compounded by poor equipment, overcrowding, extra teaching, curricular duties and dissatisfaction with one's own effort (Dewe, 1986, in Moodley, 1995).

Malanowski and Woods (1984, as cited in Moodley, 1995) believe that in high learner-educator ratio centres the stress level for educators is exacerbated. The problem was compounded when there was an influx of special learners into regular classrooms, particularly when regular classroom practitioners lacked the training for such learners.

The subject of class size has been one of the most controversial and long-standing issues in education. Maslach and Pines (as cited in Cedoline, 1982) found that the quality of professional interaction is greatly compromised by increased numbers and the result was cognitive, sensory and emotional overload. Pretorius (1994, as cited in Rutsch, 1995) in a study of educators at a South African University, found the number of students taught to be a significant predictor of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory).

2.9.3 SUPERVISION

Strained relations between supervisors and educators over unsatisfactory evaluations have often been regarded as significant educator stressors (Cedoline, 1982 in Moodley, 1995).

Sooful (1992) found that 74% of her sample perceived the system of educator evaluation to be very stressful.

Poor quality of supervision and out-of-touch administrators are often cited as significant stressors in teaching (Needle et al., in Rigby, 1989).

There was growing concern that administrators and supervisors who with their 'red pencil' mentality did not have the experience or professional skills to adequately judge teaching performance. In addition, it was contended that most supervisors or principals could not cope with the classroom situation in which educators found themselves daily (Eskridge & Coker, 1985, in Moodley, 1995).

2.9.4 TIME PRESSURES

McGrath (1976, as cited in Sarros, 1988) maintained that stress is exacerbated when a situation presents a demand which is construed as exceeding the person's resources and capabilities for meeting that demand.

The perceived shortage of time to dispense with tasks led to emotional exhaustion burnout. Feelings of depersonalization and personal accomplishment burnout also developed as a result of time constraints (Sarros, 1988).

Sooful (1992) found that the experience of moderate stress as a result of time pressures by the majority of educators in her sample are consistent with those of overseas researchers such as DeFrank and Stroup (1989); Blase (1982; 1986), Galloway et al. (1985) and Otto (1986). In his analysis of work stressors in the American school system, Blase (1986, as cited in Sooful, 1992) also states that those factors which are perceived as very stressful by educators are those which deprive them of time and interfere with instruction.

2.9.5 LEARNER DISCIPLINE

Some of the behaviours that learners manifest are considered to generate stress and burnout among their educators. Burke & Greenglass (1989, as cited in Tatar & Yahav, 1999) suggest that two important learner characteristics are related to burnout among educators: the number

of learners the educator has and the difficulty of the clients. Learners' misbehaviour including noisy learners, learners' discourteous behaviour, and learners' poor attitudes to schoolwork (Borg, Riding & Falzon, 1991), learners' discipline problems (McCormick, 1997), the lack of motivation (Burke & Greenglass, 1993), their apathy and/or their low achievements (Byrne, 1994) are the most common causes of educator stress (Tatar & Yahav, 1999).

Gultig and Hart (1990, as cited in Wynne-Potts, 1996) in their study on the effects of violence on schooling in Pietermaritzburg between 1987 and 1989, found that learners, parents and educators cited violence as the chief disruptor of schooling in Pietermaritzburg's townships.

Interestingly enough, Sooful (1992) found that dealing with learner discipline problems was not one of the prime sources of educator stress in her study.

2.9.6 THE SYSTEM OF PROMOTION

Sooful (1992) has contended that there is a higher probability of burnout among educators when their needs for self actualization and self-esteem are unfulfilled. Lowered self-esteem, greater job dissatisfaction and feelings of alienation and depression are engendered. Her study showed that the vast majority of Level 1 educators and heads of departments perceived the system of promotion as being a source of moderate or considerable stress. The reasons for their dissatisfaction related to the following: unfairness in the system of promotion; subjectivity; favouritism; nepotism; the constantly changing criteria used for deciding on promotions; lack of recognition of educators' efforts and sex discrimination.

Brooke (1973, as cited in Kahn & Cooper, 1993) has shown that underpromotion (along with overpromotion) results in mental illness. Underpromotion (when an individual has not been assigned responsibilities commensurate with his actual or self-perceived abilities) may result in minor psychological or major psychosomatic symptoms.

2.9.7 SALARY

Farber & Sakharov (1983) and Needle et al. (1980, as cited in Padayachee, 1992) found that educators were dissatisfied with the pay they received and this contributed a great deal to their burnout. This was concurred by Sooful (1992) who found that 97% of her sample saw themselves earning a salary that was disproportionate to the nature and amount of work they did.

2.9.8 LACK OF DECISION-MAKING

French and Caplan (1970, as cited in Sooful, 1992) found that greater opportunities for decision-making among professional workers and managers led to higher productivity, improved performance, lower staff turnover and lower levels of physical and mental illness. Jackson (1983, as cited in Sooful, 1992) found that decision-making is an important strategy for reducing the job-related strains of role conflict and role ambiguity.

In Sooful's 1992 study, 85% of educators in the total sample perceived insufficient opportunities available to them for decision-making as a source of moderate or considerable stress.

2.9.9 ROLE CONFLICT

Role conflict "exists when a person is torn by conflicting demands from other members in the organisation; doing tasks that are not perceived to be part of the job; or by being involved with a job that conflicts with personal beliefs. Stress is caused by the inability to meet various expectations or demands" (Chaka, 1998, p.17).

This is engendered from the very process of teaching where differing philosophies, expertise and policies of educators produce conflicts in perceptions of what is expected and what can be done. Interruptions to work, changing policies of schools and departments of education, administrative deadlines, and additional unexpected demands all contribute to role conflict.

French & Caplan (1970, as cited in Kahn & Cooper, 1993) found that role conflict is related to psychological stress.

To Sooful (1992), the most important source of role conflict for the majority of educators was being compelled to perform duties that, in their judgement, appeared to have little value.

2.9.10 ROLE AMBIGUITY

“Role ambiguity occurs when an individual is uncertain about his or her job role, for instance the latitude of their authority and responsibilities or the ways in which work performance is evaluated” (Khan & Cooper, 1993, p. 42). A number of studies indicated that role ambiguity does fairly consistently contribute to the experienced stress of the participants (e.g., Caplan & Jones, 1975; Margolis et al., 1974, in Kahn & Cooper, 1993).

Individuals in organizations are likely to become stressed if, "on the one hand, they feel they must achieve, and on the other hand, the success criteria which define and evaluate their achievements are ambiguous"(Gowler and Legge, 1975:64 in Sooful, 1992).

2.9.11. ROLE OVERLOAD

The term role overload is described among work stress researchers as a situation where there is too much work to do in the time available (Beehr et al., 1976). The psychological factors associated with having to work fast and hard, having a great deal to do, not having enough time, and having conflictual demands have been linked to psychological distress (Barnett & Brennan, 1995, in Wynne-Potts, 1996).

Educators exhaust their physical resources in their endeavours to cope with a demanding work load. An excessive work load was the cause of feelings of emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment burnout in administrators (Sarros, 1988). A similar finding was made by Ngwesi (1988) in his study of White, Black, Coloured and Indian educators from Pretoria (Wynne-Potts, 1996).

2.9.12 ROLE INSUFFICIENCY

This is when inadequate equipment, supplies, and/ or information make it difficult to do the job properly (Eskridge & Coker, 1985 in Moodley, 1995).

With the transformation of education in South Africa came a new curriculum called Curriculum 2005 (C2005) “which is an attempt by the state at creating a strategic plan to change the curriculum of schooling” (Hiralaal, 2000, p.1) via Outcomes Based Education (OBE).

However, there has been much tension and controversy dogging the introduction of this new Curriculum policy. “Three years after its launch, education authorities in KwaZulu-Natal have little idea whether the outcomes-base education(OBE) curriculum has been successfully implemented” (Bissetty, 2000).

There have been many complaints by educators that the training they eventually received for use in the classroom was “diluted” (Bissetty, 2000). And while some have called OBE a “ruinously expensive, left-wing education fad that has no record of success anywhere” (Mulholland, 2000, p.1), Kader Asmal, National Minister of Education in South Africa, has recently confirmed that Curriculum 2005 is far from being dumped; in fact it is in the process of being reviewed (Cameron, 2000).

While Mathfield (as cited in Cameron, 2000) was categoric about there being many positives to Curriculum 2005, “from preparation for life in an increasingly complex world and progress according to individual pace to an integration of a different type of knowledge” (p.2), he acknowledged that the 2005 document contained some inconsistencies and contradictions. He cited “insufficient funding, ineffective mechanisms and inconsistent communication ... which has contributed to misunderstanding and frustration among school communities” (Mathfield, as cited in Cameron, 2000). There is the possibility that faced with such a situation educators are very likely to become stressed out.

2.9.13 RESPONSIBILITY FOR OTHERS

“Responsibility for others may refer to ‘things’, e.g., buildings, machinery, money, but it is responsibility for ‘people’ which appears to carry the greater risk to health” (Cox, 1978 in Kahn & Cooper, 1993, p. 43). “Individuals who are responsible for others at work, and so must motivate, reward and admonish them, etc., generally experience higher levels of stress than those who have no such responsibilities” (McLean, 1980 in Kahn & Cooper, 1993, p.43).

2.9.14 CONTACT OVERLOAD

Some job structures tend to foster conflict between fellow workers rather than collegiality. Friction may arise over promotion to higher positions, recognition, bonuses and other privileges. Should this happen, other undesirable qualities such as backbiting, put-downs and threats to one’s person may follow (Maslach, 1982). Moreover, if a helper’s relationship with his supervisor is unsatisfactory, the ensuing tension and friction would aggravate the emotional overload of the job (Maslach, 1982, in Moodley, 1995)

“Vocations in the human services are characterised by several built-in sources of frustration that eventually lead many dedicated workers to become ineffective and apathetic” (Edelwich & Brodsky, 1980, in Moodley, 1995).

2.9.15 ATTITUDES OF PARENTS AND COMMUNITY

Negative and cynical attitudes were developed by administrators in response to demands from parents and the community at large. Both Cherniss (1980b) and Freudenberger (1977, as cited in Sarros, 1988) felt that cynicism and blame were typical burnout responses to stressful, unpredictable and uncontrolled interactions with co-workers, clients and various members of the public.

2.9.16 FREQUENT CLASHES WITH SUPERIORS

Relationships, that are marked by constant friction with one's superiors are a potent source of stress since these superiors could resort to certain means to get even with one's subordinates. These might include manipulating one's duties and working conditions, withhold promotion, lower one's status and fail to give credit where it has been earned (Fontana, 1990). Carter & Carter (1995) maintain that the experience of increased conflicts with one's superiors is one stress sign that should not be ignored.

2.9.17 REDUNDANCY, RETRENCHMENTS AND CUTBACKS

The problems that have bedeviled the economy nationally and internationally have caused many organisations to resort to drastic measures to become more financially sound (Kahn & Cooper, 1993) and teaching is certainly no exception. This process is achieved by budget cuts, mass retrenchments and redeployment, thinning of services or shutting down of valuable resource centres.

Jenkins et al (1982, as cited in Jeena, 1998) found in their study on the impact of the threat of redundancy on the mental health of a group of professionals that there was a remarkable reduction in minor symptomatology after redundancy notices were withdrawn.

There have been indications that educators who were redeployed have not had it easy. "A former Richmond school teacher who was redeployed to a school in Imbali in September last year has a temporary reprieve from his redeployment nightmare, after the principal of his new school told him last week that he was being moved again because the number of pupils had decreased" (ka'Madlala, 2000).

In another instance, a redeployed educator's first day at a primary school in Wartburg turned ugly when she was mugged and threatened. The terrified educator has vowed not to set foot in the school again after the ordeal she had undergone (ka'Madlala, 2000). Such incidents have the likelihood of generating stress and ultimately burnout in educators who are ill prepared for

them.

Chakravorty (1989, as cited in Sooful, 1992) has insinuated that reorganization may result in job losses or transfers, changes in teachers status and promotion prospects and these in turn for Sooful(1992) may become new stressors in South African education.

2.9.18 EDUCATOR STRIKES

Greenberg (1984, as cited in Moodley, 1995) asserted that a strike is a stressful period for all, those who strike, those who do not, those who cannot and for parents and learners.

Since 1993 when African, Indian and Coloured educators embarked initially on a chalkdown and subsequently on a two week strike, strike action has become a common response to intransigent and unilateral action on the part of the provincial and national departments of education.

Intimidation of those who were averse to the idea of making children bear the brunt of the concerted action against the Department of Education was one of the most pernicious aspects of the strike (Apdusa Views, 1993),

2. 10 SYMPTOMS OF BURNOUT

A burned out educator is confronted by a career crisis which is characterised by a reduction in teaching effectiveness, personality changes and often, some type of substance abuse, if not abandonment of the profession (Cardinell, 1980, in Eskridge & Coker, 1985).

Burnout is evidenced by a wide variety and intensity of physical symptoms such as abdominal pain, nausea, difficulty in breathing, constant headaches, dizziness, muscle tightening, loss of appetite, back pain, ulcers, gastrointestinal disturbances, etc. (Maples, 1980, in Eskridge & Coker, 1985; Farber, 1991).

In addition there are a host of behavioural symptoms such as dehumanization of clients, fault finding, withdrawal, absenteeism, use of drugs and alcohol, conflicts with coworkers, decreased job efficiency, suicide, overeating, tardiness, etc. (Kahill, 1988; Muldary, 1983).

Psychological symptoms include anger, boredom, frustration, apathy, helplessness, irritability, depression, inability to concentrate, suspiciousness, pessimism, despair, guilt, etc. (Nauratil, 1989; Truch, 1980).

2.11. SUMMARY

The review of the literature on the phenomenon of burnout not only in educators but also other professionals attests to the seriousness of this malady. Burnout can eventuate from stressors in the work environment and it is this environment that is primarily affected by the changes that burnout produces. It has been seen that the school system is a fertile ground for the seeds of burnout and the consequences for the embattled educator in terms of his physical and psychological health have indeed been very debilitating. Like the mythological Icarus who fashioned wings of feathers and wax, the enthusiastic educator flew too close to a symbolic sun and plummeted psychologically. This is burnout.

CHAPTER THREE

DESCRIPTION OF EMPIRICAL STUDY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the writer provides an in-depth account of the research methodology employed in this research study. The writer states the research problem, announces the hypotheses, poses related questions and describes the nature of the study with emphasis on surveys. The research instruments used in the study, the collection of data, the sample and sampling procedures together with the locale in which the study was conducted and the statistical analyses undertaken are also described in this chapter.

3.2 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

This study explores the prevalence of burnout and the influence of the role-related stressors on educator burnout.

3.3 HYPOTHESES

According to Fowler and Fowler (1984, as cited in Chaka, 1998, p. 26), “ a hypothesis is a proposition made from known facts as basis for reasoning or investigation.” The following hypotheses have been proposed :

- * Burnout is prevalent among educators in South Africa.
- * Educators who experience a greater incidence of role-related stressors experience burnout.
- * The selected demographic variable of gender would account for a significant amount of variance in educator burnout.

- * The selected demographic variable of years of experience would account for a significant amount of variance in educator burnout.

3.4. THE NATURE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study falls under the ambit of descriptive research. Behr (1973) distinguishes descriptive research from experimental studies. Lovell and Lawson (in Behr, 1973) define descriptive research as “concerned with conditions that exist, practices that prevail, beliefs and attitudes that are held, processes that are on-going, and trends that are developing”. For the purpose of this research the writer made use of surveys.

The survey is one of the most widely used types of descriptive research in the behavioural sciences. Data is gathered from a relatively large number of cases at a particular time and the focus is not on the characteristics of individual cases but on such over-all statistics from which abstractions and conclusions can be drawn (Behr, 1973).

Information for the survey could be extracted through the administration of various measuring instruments, namely tests, questionnaires, interviews, consultations, follow-up studies and case studies.

In the current study the writer made use of questionnaires only. The writer considered survey research to be very valuable for this study because of its relative simplicity and because it provided the opportunity of making personal contact with the principals of the schools that were selected for the research to be conducted.

It is not uncommon to receive a poor response, namely less than 40% or 50%, to mailed questionnaires. In the present study the writer endeavored to minimize this drawback by first making telephonic contact with the principals of the schools concerned and then visiting the schools to deliver the questionnaires.

3.5 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The only instrument which was used to facilitate the writer's research is:

A questionnaire consisting of the following three parts (See Appendix C):

3.5.1 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA SHEET

This section which made up the first part of the questionnaire embodied two items, pertaining to the respondents' gender and years of experience.

3.5.2 THE MASLACH BURNOUT INVENTORY (MBI)

The MBI is a 22-item self-report inventory. It is currently the most widely used instrument and a "valued tool in assessment of perceived burnout in human service professionals" (Green & Walkey, 1988:579). Devised by Maslach and Jackson (1981), the MBI comprises three subscales or components of burnout, namely Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment, each measured for frequency and intensity. However, the present study utilized the 1986 edition of the MBI which assesses only the frequency dimension (See Appendix C).

The MBI has a relatively high test-retest reliability as well as internal consistency and its convergent validity has been evidenced by the correlation between a respondent's MBI scores and behavioural ratings made independently by an individual well acquainted with the respondent (Maslach et al., in Green & Walkey, 1988).

The MBI assesses the three aspects of the burnout syndrome:

emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment, each of which is measured by a separate scale (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). Emotional exhaustion, which heralds the beginning of educator burnout, is the fatigued feeling that arises as emotional

energies are depleted. The chronicity of these feelings leads to a concomitant decrement in the quality of the educator's service to his students.

The second component of educator burnout, depersonalization, manifests itself in indifferent, negative attitudes, some of which are : use of derogatory labels (for example, "they are all animals"); exhibiting cold or distant attitudes; physically distancing oneself from learners etc.

The third component, a feeling of low personal accomplishment from the job, is evidenced when educators feel that nothing is being achieved in the job (Maslach & Jackson, 1986).

- A high degree of burnout is indicated by high scores on Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization and in low scores on the Personal Accomplishment subscale.
- An average or moderate degree of burnout is indicated by average scores on the three subscales.
- A low degree of burnout is reflected in low scores on the Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization subscales and in high scores on the Personal Accomplishment subscale.

The following cut-off points proposed by Maslach & Jackson (1986) were utilized to assess the scores of the sample of 104 subjects in the present study.

MBI SUBSCALE	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION (EE)	0-16	17-26	27 or over
DEPERSONALIZATION (DP)	0-6	7-12	13 or over
PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT (PA)	39 or over	32-38	0-31

TABLE 2: Cut-off points for low, moderate and high levels of experienced burnout with the three subscales of the MBI

Maslach and Jackson (1986) have provided substantial evidence corroborating the validity and reliability of the MBI when administered in the helping professions. Schwab and Iwanicki (1982) reaffirmed the validity and reliability of the MBI when used with classroom practitioners. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for these subscales were: .90 for Emotional Exhaustion, .76 for Depersonalization and .76 for Personal Accomplishment (Schwab & Iwanicki, 1982).

3.5.3 TEACHER STRESS MEASURE

The Teacher Stress Measure is a 40 item questionnaire, adapted by the writer to record what the sample population may identify as potential role-related stressors in the teaching environment. Items that were used were drawn from the literature study and mainly from the Occupational Stress Inventory (OSI) (Osipow & Spokane, 1998), the Teacher Stress Measures (Bennet, 1989) and the Teaching Environment Inventory (as cited in Padayachee, 1992). The 40 items were recorded as follows : Items 1, 2, 7, 8, 10 and 34 were computed and analysed as LEARNER PRESSURES; items 3, 4, 9, 14, 15, 22, 26, 28, 29 and 36 as TIME AND WORK LOAD PRESSURES; item 5 as PROMOTIONS; item 6 as SALARY; items 11, 12, 32, 37 and 40 as INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS; items 13, 23, 24, 25 and 31 as SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION; items 16 and 17 as ROLE AMBIGUITY; items 18, 19, 20, 30 and 38 as ROLE CONFLICT; items 21, 35 and 39 as DECISION-MAKING; item 33 as ROLE INSUFFICIENCY and item 27 as FISCAL AND AUSTERITY MANAGEMENT.

The frequency of each item experienced by the respondents was scored by using a five-point Likert-type response scale, ranging from rarely or never true (1) to true most of the time (5).

Cronbach's alpha model of reliability was computed for the 40 items and a reliability coefficient of alpha = .8646 was obtained.

The writer undertook a pilot study among a sample of fifteen teachers from all ranks from a local school. The aim of this study was to assess the merit of the TSM (Teacher Stress Measure) and if need be modify and refine it before it was used in the major study. Apart from a few minor changes to the semantics in each question, the questionnaire was considered to be suitable for use in the major study.

3.6 COLLECTION OF DATA IN DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH

In descriptive research "questions and interviews are usually used to collect information" (Mason et al., in Padayachee, 1992:51)

In the present study quantitative data was gathered from questionnaires that were hand delivered to 12 Secondary and Primary schools in the Pietermaritzburg region and collected personally by the researcher.

Permission to conduct the research was sought from the Director: KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department of Education (See Appendix D). After written approval had been received (See Appendix E), telephonic contact was made with the principals of the schools selected for the study.

When the requisite assurance was given by the said principals that the research could be conducted in their schools, a batch of 10 questionnaires was hand delivered to each of the schools selected for the study.

With each questionnaire the writer appended a cover letter (See Appendix B), explaining to

the respondents the purpose of the study and the procedure to be followed. The respondents were assured that the information given would be kept totally confidential.

3.7 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

“Sampling is taking any portion of a population, or universe, as representative of that population or universe” (Kerlinger, 1969:52). All the subjects that were selected for the present study were drawn from both primary and secondary schools under the control of the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department of Education.

The sample used in the present study was selected randomly by the principals of the schools concerned. A plea was made to the principals to select educators irrespective of their age group, sex, marital status, category of post, years of experience and qualification.

A total of 104 educators participated in this project.

3.8 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

3.8.1 PREPARING THE DATA

“Preparing the data for processing becomes less daunting if a routine sequence of operations is undertaken” (Silvey, 1975:14). This was ensured when each questionnaire was checked and numbered so that, if necessary, reference could be made to it later.

3.8.2 ANALYSING THE DATA

Kerlinger (1970, as cited in Moodley, 1995) defines an experiment as a scientific investigation in which one or more independent variables are manipulated and controlled by an investigator and observation is made of the dependent variable or variables for variation concomitant to the manipulation of the independent variables. “An independent variable is the presumed cause of the dependent variable, the presumed effect. The independent variable is the

antecedent; the dependent is the consequence” (Kerlinger, 1986:32). In the present study, the writer utilised two sets of variables, namely dependent variables and independent variables. The following measures were used to analyse the data:

- (a) Cronbach’s Alpha Model of Reliability was used to compute a reliability coefficient for the three subscales of the MBI as well as for the 40 items on the Teacher Stress Measure.
- (b) Means and Standard Deviations were obtained for each of the 40 items on the Teacher Stress Measure (See Appendix A).
- (c) The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to investigate whether there was any significant correlation between the 11 categories of the Teacher Stress Measure and each of the three subscales of the Maslach Burnout Inventory as well as the MBI (combined).
- (d) The t-test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference in the incidence of burnout between the two groups for gender.
- (e) The t-test was used to determine whether there was a significance between the under 4 years group and the 4+ years group in their experience of burnout.

3.9 SUMMARY

In this chapter the writer provided an in-depth account of the research methodology employed in this research study. The writer stated the problem, announced the hypotheses, posed related questions and described the nature of the study with emphasis on surveys. The research instruments used in the study, the collection of data, the sample and sampling procedures together with the locale in which the study was conducted and the statistical analyses undertaken were embodied in this chapter.

In chapter 4 the writer will present the findings and results of the empirical study with emphasis on quantitative analyses.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the writer provides a demographic description of the sample used in the study and provides an exposition of the results obtained from the data. The hypotheses and related questions set out in this chapter will systematically and logically be examined.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF THE SAMPLE

From the number of questionnaires that were handed out a response rate of 86.67% (n =104, out of a total number of 120) was obtained.

An analysis of the demographic distribution of the research sample presented the following picture (See Table 3):

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS		PERCENTAGE
ALL EDUCATORS	104	100
GENDER		
Male	32	30.77
Female	72	69.23
TEACHING EXPERIENCE		
Less than 4 Years	5	4.81
Greater than 4 Years	99	95.19

TABLE 3 : Demographic Distribution of the Sample.

Table 3 shows that of the 104 participants in this research sample, 32 (or 30.77%) were male while 72 or (69.23%) were female. In terms of years of experience, two groups were created, namely, the less than 4 years group (which comprised 5 participants or 4.81% of the sample)

and the greater than 4 years group (which comprised 99 participants or 95.19% of the sample).

4.3. THE PREVALENCE OF BURNOUT AMONG EDUCATORS

This hypothesis was stated for each of the three subscales of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) as well as for the Maslach Burnout Inventory (with the three subscales combined). In order to investigate the prevalence of burnout in the sample of educators, the various scores on the three MBI subscales were placed in the three categories proposed by Maslach and Jackson (1986).

For the current study Cronbach's alpha model of reliability was computed for the three subscales of the MBI and a reliability coefficient of $\alpha = .8886$ was obtained.

Table 4 outlines the low, moderate and high burnout figures for this sample of teachers when the three subscales of the MBI are combined.

MBI (with the 3 subscales combined)	RANGE					
	LOW		MODERATE		HIGH	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	45	43.3	48	46.1	11	10.6

TABLE 4 : Frequency Distribution of MBI Scores (Subscales combined)

- 45 subjects or 43.3% of the sample experienced low burnout.
- 48 subjects or 46.1% of the sample experienced moderate burnout.
- 11 subjects or 10.6% of the sample experienced high burnout.

The following picture regarding the prevalence of burnout among educators in this research study, as reflected in Table 5, emerged through an analysis of each subscale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory:

- 43.3% and 26.9% of the sample experienced a high and moderate frequency of burnout, respectively on the emotional exhaustion subscale
- 28.8% and 29.8% experienced a high and moderate degree of burnout, respectively on the depersonalization subscale.
- Since scoring on the personal accomplishment subscale is inversed, a high degree of burnout on this subscale was reported by 33.7% and a moderate level of burnout was experienced by another 30.8% of the sample

	RANGE					
	LOW		MODERATE		HIGH	
MBI SUBSCALES	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Emotional Exhaustion	31	29.8	28	26.9	45	43.3
Depersonalization	43	41.3	31	29.8	30	28.8
*Personal Accomplishment	37	35.6	32	30.8	35	33.7

TABLE 5 : Frequency Distribution of MBI Scores (Subscales taken separately)

*** Scoring on the Personal Accomplishment Subscale is reversed.**

Emotional exhaustion is the feeling that arises when one is overextended by contact with other people. Depersonalization is a cynical and/or callous response toward these people, as recipients of a service and low personal accomplishment which signals high burnout is the reduction in feelings of competence and achievement in one's work (Tatar & Yahav, 1999).

High scores on the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization subscales are reflective of high burnout on the said subscales, respectively, whereas a low score on the personal accomplishment subscale is reflective of high personal accomplishment burnout.

43.3% of this sample of educators who have been found to be experiencing high emotional exhaustion burnout appear to be at the end of the rope emotionally and to consider their jobs

to be excessively burdensome. 41.3% of this sample of educators who are exhibiting low depersonalization burnout are not as severe as their counterparts in adopting a cold, distant, depersonalized attitude toward their work and the people they interact with through work.

The degree of burnout experienced by the sample of educators was then compared to the normative data collected by Maslach and Jackson (1986). Table 6 presents a comparison of the incidences of burnout for the sample of educators in a South African context with that of their American counterparts.

	Normative (4163 Cases)			Present Study (104 Cases)		
	* E E	* D P	* P A	* E E	* D P	* P A
MEANS	21.25	11.00	33.54	24.33	8.92	34.84
STANDARD DEVIATION	11.01	6.19	6.89	12.22	6.76	8.14

TABLE 6 : Comparison of Means and Standard Deviations for the MBI Subscales: Present Study versus Normative Data.

*** E E = Emotional Exhaustion; D P = Depersonalization and P A = Personal Accomplishment.**

What is rather noticeable about this comparison is that the mean score on the Depersonalization Subscale (8.92) for the research sample is somewhat lower than that of the normative sample (11.00). For the emotional exhaustion subscale, the mean for the research sample exceeds that of the normative group whereas for the personal accomplishment subscale there appears to be quite a close overlap between the data of the research sample and that of the normative sample.

4.4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ROLE-RELATED STRESSORS AND BURNOUT

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to investigate whether there was any relationship between the 11 categories of the Teacher Stress Measure and each of the three subscales of the Maslach Burnout Inventory as well the MBI combined. (See Table 7)

In as far as the research question whether educators who experience a greater incidence of role-related stressors experience burnout, the present study indicated the following:

Categories of Stressors	E.E.	D.P.	P.A.	MBI combined
Learner Pressures	.463**	.237*	-.496**	.448**
Sig (2-tailed)	.000	.015	.000	.000
Time/Work Load Pressures	.638**	.331**	-.178	.508**
Sig (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.071	.000
Promotion	.028	.109	-.165	.075
Sig (2-tailed)	.779	.271	.094	.449
Salary	.074	.086	-.090	.117
Sig (2-tailed)	.455	.386	.361	.235
Interpersonal Relationships	.307**	.260**	-.165	.262**
Sig (2-tailed)	.002	.008	.094	.007
Support/Recognition	.662**	.374**	-.435**	.601**
Sig (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
Role Ambiguity	.229*	.187	-.230*	.235*
Sig (2-tailed)	.019	.057	.019	.016
Role Conflict	.393**	.093	-.101	.235*
Sig (2-tailed)	.000	.349	.308	.016
Decision-Making	.236*	.144	-.335**	.281**
Sig (2-tailed)	.016	.145	.001	.004
Role Insufficiency	.231*	-.023	-.239*	.153
Sig (2-tailed)	.019	.817	.015	.122
Fiscal/Austerity	-.001	-.033	-.071	.031
Sig (2-tailed)	.989	.739	.473	.754

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level(2-tailed).

**.. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level(2-tailed)

TABLE 7 : Pearson Product Moment Correlations between the 11 categories of stressors and each of the three subscales of the MBI, as well as the MBI combined.

- Whilst the role-related stressors **fiscal and austerity management** (which encompasses the issue of redeployment), **promotion** (upward mobility of educators from one rank to another) and **salary** do not show any correlation with burnout they appear first, second and fifth, respectively on the means table (See Appendix A).
- **learner pressures** (learner-educator ratio, pupils with varying abilities, learner violence, responsibility for and motivation of learners) have shown a significant positive correlation ($r=.463, p<.01$) with emotional exhaustion burnout, a significant positive correlation ($r=.237, p<.05$) with depersonalization burnout, a significant negative correlation ($r=-.496, p<.01$) with personal accomplishment burnout and a significant positive correlation ($r=.448, p<.01$) with the MBI combined (which is indicative of overall burnout with the three subscales taken together).
- **support and recognition** (support from superiors and community) have shown a significant positive correlation ($r=.662, p<.01$) with emotional exhaustion burnout, a significant positive correlation ($r=.374, p<.01$) with depersonalization burnout, a significant negative correlation ($r=-.435, p<.01$) with personal accomplishment burnout and a significant positive correlation ($r=.601, p<.01$) with the MBI combined.
- **time and work load pressures** (completing paperwork, non-teaching periods, responsibility for others, work load, extra-curricular activities, attendance at meetings) have shown a significant positive correlation ($r=.638, p<.01$) with emotional exhaustion burnout, a significant positive correlation ($r=.331, p<.01$) with depersonalization burnout and a significant positive correlation ($r=.508, p<.01$) with the MBI combined.
- **interpersonal relationships** (interaction with colleagues, superiors, victimization, atmosphere at school) have shown a significant positive correlation ($r=.307, p<.01$) with emotional exhaustion burnout, a significant positive correlation ($r=.260, p<.01$) with depersonalization burnout and a significant positive correlation ($r=.262, p<.01$) with the MBI combined.

- **role ambiguity** (lack of clarity about scope/responsibilities of job) has shown a significant positive correlation ($r = .229, p < .05$) with emotional exhaustion burnout, a significant negative correlation ($r = -.230, p < .05$) with personal accomplishment burnout and a significant positive correlation ($r = .235, p < .05$) with the MBI combined.
- **decision-making** (having influence over what goes on in school, opportunities for growth and making joint decisions) has shown a significant positive correlation ($r = .236, p < .01$) with emotional exhaustion burnout, a significant negative correlation ($r = -.335, p < .01$) with personal accomplishment burnout and a significant positive correlation ($r = .281, p < .01$) with the MBI combined.
- **role conflict** (being forced to do things, compliance with rules/policies, imposition of duties, supervision) has shown a significant positive correlation ($r = .393, p < .01$) with emotional exhaustion burnout and a significant positive correlation ($r = .235, p < .05$) with the MBI combined.
- **role insufficiency** (insufficient information that makes it difficult to do the job properly and which encapsulates the issue of Outcomes Based Education) has shown a significant positive correlation ($r = .231, p < .05$) with emotional exhaustion burnout and a significant negative correlation ($r = -.239, p < .05$) with personal accomplishment burnout.

4.5 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER AND BURNOUT

The t-test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference in the prevalence of burnout between males and females. The results appear in Table 8, p. 46).

Subscale	Males		Females		T Value	p(significance)
	Means	S.D.	Means	S.D.		
Emotional Exhaustion	23.50	11.12	25.15	13.32	-0.613	0.541
Depersonalization	9.19	6.50	8.64	7.02	0.376	0.708
Personal Accomplishment	35.59	7.75	34.08	8.53	0.856	0.394

TABLE 8 : T-Test Analysis of the Variable Gender

The results of the present study indicated no significant difference between males and females in their experiences of burnout.

The lowest means on the Depersonalization Subscale of the MBI for this sample of educators appears to indicate that these educators do not develop impersonal and inappropriate feelings toward other people to the extent that they become emotionally extended and drained by their contact with others. The high means on the Personal Accomplishment Subscale would appear to suggest that not all educators in this sample have feelings of ineffectiveness or a growing sense of inadequacy.

4.6 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AND BURNOUT

The t-test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between educators who taught for less than 4 years and those who taught for more than 4 years in their experience of burnout. The results appear in Table 9 (p. 47).

SUBSCALE	YEARS	MEAN	S.D	T	p(sig.)
Emotional Exhaustion	Less than 4 years	13.00	9.46	2.771	* .042
	Greater than 4 years	25.23	12.55	2.145	* .034
Depersonalisation	Less than 4 years	5.60	4.83	1.486	.199
	Greater than 4 years	8.97	6.90	1.076	.284
Personal Accomplishment	Less than 4 years	37.60	6.54	-1.053	.344
	Greater than 4 years	34.39	8.37	-.842	.402

TABLE 9 : T-Test Analysis of the Variable Years of Experience

* = $p > .05$ level.

The above table shows that there is a difference at the 0.05 level of significance in the experiences of emotional exhaustion between educators who have taught for less than 4 years (\bar{X} 13.00) and those who have taught for more than 4 years (\bar{X} 25.23) of teaching in these two groups on the emotional exhaustion subscale of the MBI.

4.6 SUMMARY

This study has shown that burnout is prevalent among educators in the Pietermaritzburg region. What is worthy of note is that almost half this sample is exhibiting feelings of being emotionally extended and drained from contact with others. While a little less than half this sample do not go overboard in their callous and cynical attitudes towards those with whom they come into contact, almost a third do so quite excessively. In addition almost a third of these educators harbour feelings of ineffectiveness or an increased sense of inadequacy.

While both male and female educators appear to be affected similarly by the aversive effects of burnout, the less experienced educators appeared to be more vulnerable than those who have been in the profession for a longer time. This study has also illustrated that educators who experience a greater incidence of role-related stressors do experience burnout.

In the next chapter the writer will discuss the results obtained in this research study in relation to previous research

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to investigate the prevalence of burnout in educators in South Africa as well as the influence of role-related stressors on educator burnout. In addition it set to examine the relationship of the demographic variables of gender and years of experience to the three dimensions of burnout, namely, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1986).

Burnout in this study was measured specifically in terms of the various stressors, as mentioned by Osipow & Spokane (1998), Bennett (1989) and Padayachee (1992), that lurk in the teaching environment. With a series of hypotheses formulated on the grounds of the available literature, this study has generated and analysed data applicable to a sample of educators in the Pietermaritzburg region. It is with regard to the aforementioned aims that a discussion follows. The discussion that ensues endeavours to account for the findings that have come up with reference to the aims of the study.

5.2 BURNOUT AMONG EDUCATORS

On the basis of the Maslach Burnout Inventory in which the three subscales of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment were combined and which was used to assess the level of burnout, approximately one tenth of the sample of educators were classified as high burnouts. This finding concurs with that of Pierce and Molloy (1990), Farber (1984) and Belcastro and Gold (1983) whose findings regarding the prevalence of high burnout were in the same region. The findings of the present study when compared with that of Moodley (1995) suggests that high burnout among educators in the Pietermaritzburg region, under the auspices of the KwaZulu-Natal

Provincial Department of Education is on the increase. There could be various reasons why this is so. One pressing matter could be the aspect of redeployment. When educators from various ranks with twenty or more years of experience had taken the voluntary severance package, a dire situation arose. Classes had to be combined and manned by those who were not on the lists of redeployment. Consequently, with such increased learner-educator ratios, stress levels among those ill-equipped to handle such change began to rise. Moreover, the problem may have been compounded by increased teaching loads, demands for greater accountability by the department of education, new strategies for the improvement of learner performance, closer surveillance by superintendents of education and stringent measures regarding leave taking, hours of duty, continuous assessments of learners and the threats of no work - no pay in times of strikes.

The frequency distribution of the MBI subscales (Table 5) has produced findings which merit more than a cursory glance. A high degree of emotional exhaustion burnout being experienced by close to half of this sample of educators appears to suggest that contact with others has become an ordeal, both physically and emotionally for these educators. Although Golembiewski (1989:88, as cited in Moodley, 1995) maintained that "depersonalization is considered to be the least virulent contributor to burnout and emotional exhaustion the most severe", almost a third of this sample is being singled by high depersonalization burnout. An educator who is frustrated by stressors that are not likely to be minimised is bound to vent his/her spleen on those who are least likely to offer much resistance. This concurs with what Friedman (2000) meant when he intimated that people are made to endure the cold, distant, depersonalized attitudes of those who feel cynical.

This high prevalence of emotional exhaustion burnout is indeed perturbing and alarm bells should be ringing to alert the authorities to the factors that could be the villains to this distressing state of affairs. Urgent intervention is imperative to avert what may be construed as a near catastrophe in the state of education in the province of KwaZulu-Natal currently.

Moreover, an equally high proportion of educators is suffering a high degree of personal accomplishment burnout. This tendency of educators to undervalue themselves and to lose confidence in their power to make a significant contribution to education bodes ill for the status of teaching in South Africa. The reason could very well be that educators do not feel that they count for much, that they are a mere number on their department's records, that they are undermined by petty bureaucracy and are held accountable for everything that goes wrong in their schools.

What was rather noticeable from the comparison of the means and standard deviations of the MBI subscales for the present study and the normative data is that the mean score on the depersonalization subscale for the present study is somewhat lower than that of the normative sample. For the other two subscales the data of the present study are higher than that of the normative sample. The higher and lower means on the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization subscales, respectively, tend to concur with that of Padayachee (1992). It has been noted from Maslach's overall sample of educators, post secondary educators, social service workers, medical workers, mental health workers, legal aid employees, attorneys, police officers, probation officers, ministers, librarians and agency administrators, that educators have slightly higher scores on the emotional exhaustion subscale (Maslach and Jackson, 1986). However, the lower mean for depersonalization in the current study like that of Padayachee (1992) would imply that educators in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, or South Africa in general, do not exhibit an unfeeling and callous response to their learners to the great extent that their American counterparts do.

5.3. EDUCATOR BURNOUT AND ROLE-RELATED STRESSORS

The findings of the 40 role-related items on the Teacher Stress Measure which were combined into 11 categories, namely, fiscal and austerity management, promotion, role insufficiency, salary, learner pressures, support and recognition, time and work load pressures, interpersonal relationships, role ambiguity, role conflict, and decision-making were quite revealing (See Appendix A).

One of the burning issues in South African education currently is redeployment. There have been indications that educators who were redeployed encountered bitter experiences in terms of ostracism and open confrontations with their new colleagues so much so that some of them had to relinquish their promotions and beg to be returned to their former schools (ka'Madlala, 2000). In line with Jenkins et al. (1982, as cited in Jeena, 1998) who intimated that the threat of redundancy may result in stress among educators, the present study has indicated that redeployment does result in educator burnout. This could very well be due to the fact that educators are not sufficiently and timeously prepared for the drawbacks that may accompany such redeployment.

Another veritable thorn in the flesh for most educators today is the aspect of promotion. With the drastic reduction in the number of promotion posts, most educators feel that they have reached a cul-de-sac in their careers and are likely to burn out. Concurrence with the fact that educators are unnerved by existing promotion channels which deny incentives that reinforce teaching as a career is to be found in Spanoil (as cited in Cunningham, 1983) who believes that the problem of burnout lies in a lack of career ladders. Kyriacou & Sutcliffe (1978a) and Wangberg (1984), as cited in Rigby (1989) cited poor promotion prospects as causes of stress. Padayachee (1992) found in interviews with the burned out sample of his educators that aside from being precluded from the process of determining the criteria for promotion, the inevitable changing of such criteria, almost annually, was extremely frustrating to educators.

Another stressor that this group of educators positively identified is salary. With inflation spiralling virtually by the minute, most educators find it hard to make ends meet on the salaries they earn. According to Samuels (1989, as cited in Padayachee, 1992), persons in the private sector with equivalent qualifications earned 30% more than educators. Lortie (1975), Galloway et al. (1985) and McGee & Oliver (1992, as cited in Manthei, Gilmore, Tuck & Adair, 1996) also reported salary as a major source of stress. Cunningham (1983) believes that there must be an improvement in the status of educators through salaries so that attention could be drawn to the importance of the teaching profession. Educators need to be rewarded through adequate professional wages

so that good educators are not pressurised into abandoning financially unrewarding work.

With increased learner-educator ratios consequent to the transformation in education, learner pressures have been found to contribute largely to educator burnout. The results of the present study indicate that educators who experience different kinds of pressures from their learners tend to be emotionally exhausted and also develop the tendency to distance themselves from and derogate their charges. This concurs with Borg, Riding & Falzon (1991), McCormick (1997), Burke & Greenglass (1993) and Byrne (1994, as cited in Tatar & Yahav (1991) who contend that learners' misbehaviour includes learners' impolite behaviour, poor attitude towards schoolwork, the discipline problems created by the learners, their lack of motivation, their apathy and/or their low achievements. Cunningham (1983) believes that the root of this problem lies in the differences in the value systems of the multi-racial, multi-cultural, and multi-ethnic children who attend public schools. This could also be due to overcrowding in the classrooms where educators found it difficult to give individual attention to their learners.

The present study also showed that learner pressures contributed significantly to personal accomplishment burnout and this concurs with the findings of Abel & Sewell (1999). This suggests that the more pressurised the educator is through contact with his/her pupils and is incompetent at handling them, the less he/she tends to value himself/herself.

Lack of support and recognition was also found to exacerbate educators' burnout levels. Without support from their superiors and the community, educators felt alienated and at great risk for burnout. This is consistent with the view of DeFrank & Stroup (1989) who assert that elevated scores on measures of burnout have been associated with lack of perceived support and success. Pines, Aronson & Kafry, (1981, as cited in Schwab et al., 1986) believe that an effective support group is inclusive of people who provide comfort,

confront in humane ways the individual whose behaviours are inappropriate, and provide technical support in work-related areas.

The present study also showed that lack of support and recognition contributed significantly to personal accomplishment burnout. This suggests that the less support and recognition an educator receives, the more he/she tends to devalue himself/herself. Hendrickson (1979, as cited in Cunningham, 1983) argued that if the teaching system were less regimented and more supportive, educators would have fewer problems. Punch & Tutteman (1996, as cited in Tatar & Yahav, 1999) maintained that receiving praise and performance recognition was an effective means for reducing educators' stress.

Lack of support from parents and society at large was considered to be a grave source of stress for New Zealand educators (Galloway et al., 1982a, in Manthei, Gilmore, Tuck & Adair, 1996).

Time and work load pressures were found to have a debilitating effect on educator welfare. This finding supports the views of Blase (1986); Cedoline (1982); Gmelch & Swent, (1984) and Ratsoy & Frieson (1985, as cited in Sarros, 1988) that an excessive work load contributes to feelings of emotional exhaustion burnout and is also consistent with the finding of Sarros, (1988) that the shortage of time to complete tasks led to feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment burnout. The multiple demands made on the educator daily, and which is compounded by strict deadlines, makes this aspect of teaching a major area of stress (Dunham, 1984; Laughlin, 1984 and Otto, 1986, as cited in Sooful, 1992). What must be remembered is that burdensome work loads with insufficient time to complete them create a pressure cooker situation in terms of burnout.

Poor or problematic interpersonal relationships have been found to compound educators' problems and make them feel burned out. This concurs with the findings of Pinneau (1976) and House (1981, as cited in Pierce & Molloy, 1990). Sarros (1988) reported that when interpersonal relationships became more frequent, feelings of

emotional exhaustion burnout developed in approximately 30% of the respondents of his study and that depersonalization burnout was the most likely outcome of stressed interpersonal relationships. Moreover, Maslach (1976, as cited in Cunningham, 1983) contended that there was a significant drop in burnout rates if professionals were able to actively express, analyse and share their personal feelings with their colleagues. “Interpersonal relationships have consistently predicted stress and burnout among school teachers and administrators” (Farber, 1984a,b; Jankovic, 1983; Nebgen, 1978, as cited in Sarros, 1988:185).

Another contentious issue in South African education currently is the aspect of role insufficiency. There are indications that role insufficiency (which encapsulates the issue of Outcomes Based Education) has caused educators so much of distress on account of its possible lack of clarity and the non-delivery or shortage of the materials that should be utilised in teaching it that it is becoming a bone of contention and elevating stress levels among educators. Researchers who tend to concur with these findings are Dewe (1986) who contended that unrealistic syllabus requirements for the children one taught generated stress and Fimian & Santoro (1983, as cited in Rigby, 1989) who were adamant that poor physical conditions such as lack of teaching aids, materials and supplies did exacerbate stress in educators. Moreover, Sarros (1988) stressed that resource unavailability contributed largely to feelings of depersonalization burnout.

In addition role insufficiency was found to contribute significantly to personal accomplishment burnout. It would appear that educators who lack the resources and information needed to meet the requirements of the syllabus would take out their frustrations on those most vulnerable to them, namely their charges.

The results of the present study indicate that educators who are unclear about various matters such as their rights, responsibilities, methods or goals tend to experience emotional exhaustion burnout. This is consistent with the findings of Capel (1991) who found that those suffering an increase in burnout experienced more role ambiguity. DeFrank & Stroup (1989) also found that an escalation in burnout has been associated

with raised levels of role ambiguity. Role ambiguity is also manifested when educators are psychologically ignorant of ways of coping with the insecurity that may emanate from the unpredictability and contradictions of their job (Dunham, 1981).

Moreover, role ambiguity which also contributed significantly to personal accomplishment burnout in the present study showed that in the absence of clarity regarding their roles, educators tended to experience a sense of internal disappointment at not being able to meet the goals of work. This concurs with the findings of Farber (2000). Sarros (1988) felt that the dearth of positive feedback and the negative attitudes of parents and the community resulted in a decreased sense of personal accomplishment in administrators. Principals who fall prey to role ambiguity detach themselves from it through self-doubt and cynicism.

A further pressing matter in South African education presently is that of role conflict. The results of the present study support the views of Dewe (1986) who found that conforming to the standards of others (taking instructions that one is opposed to), conflicting directives about managing one's class, trying to adhere to other educators' and the schools' expectations of one can compound one's stress levels. This is also in line with the work of Schwab & Iwanicki (1982) who found that role conflict surfaces when one is forced to teach outside one's speciality in areas for which one lacks the desire or skill. Woods (1989, as cited in Sooful, 1992) holds the view that inexperienced educators run the risk of becoming burned out on account of their inability to cope with their conflicting roles.

Lack of participation in decision-making proved to be quite a crucial issue for educators in the present study and a major contributor to emotional exhaustion burnout. This concurs with the findings of Spanoil & Caputo (1979, as cited in Cunningham, 1983) who identified one of the sources of burnout as excluding staff from policy-making procedures. Cook (1979, as cited in Cunningham, 1983) ascribes dwindling educator morale and educator burnout to a denial of opportunities for decision-making and for participation in professional growth activities. Cherniss (1980, as cited in Padayachee,

1992) maintains that a bureaucratic approach which leads to a sense of alienation and helplessness among educators can culminate in burnout. Barad (1977, as cited in Padayachee, 1992) found an association between low autonomy and high scores on both the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization scores of the MBI.

5.4 EDUCATORS' GENDER AND BURNOUT

The results of the present study indicate that males and females do not differ in their experience of burnout. This finding concurs with that of Pierce & Molloy (1990), Padayachee (1992), Rutsch (1997) and Moodley (1995). Rutsch (1997:57) attributes this lack of difference to "the changing roles of men and women in society with women becoming more career-oriented and determined" whereas Padayachee (1992) avers that burned out educators express very similar sentiments about job-related circumstances irrespective of their sex.

These findings, however, differ from those of Maslach (1982) who suggests that because women tend to become more emotionally involved in their jobs, they experience emotional exhaustion. Schwab & Iwanicki (1982) found that men in comparison with women had more frequent negative feelings towards their learners and Johnson, Gold & Knepper (1984:265) reported that "male teachers perceived themselves to be depersonalized by their professional responsibilities more often than did females. They were more often than not expected to act the role of 'strong-armed disciplinarian' which may or may not be contrary to their perceived roles."

Now that gender discrimination in South African education is being eliminated, it would appear that both male and female educators are more likely to react similarly to the various stressors in their work environments.

5.5 EDUCATORS' YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AND BURNOUT

The groupings for this variable appeared to be rather skewed in terms of the great

disparity in the numbers in both groups (See Table 9). Nevertheless there was a significant difference between the less than 4 years experience group and the greater than 4 years group. This finding concurs with that of Byrne (1991) who stated that younger educators show significantly higher stress levels than their counterparts. Morehead & Blumhagen (1983) have attributed this phenomenon to the fact that after having spent 4 or 5 years in a university setting, these new educators find themselves emotionally overwhelmed by the significant role change that is required.

Cherniss, Egnatios & Wacker (1976, as cited in Schwab & Iwanicki, 1982) have identified 4 factors which could contribute to raised levels of burnout among younger educators: (1) the individual's sublime social change goals; (2) poor coping skills; (3) inadequate training in practical matters and (4) ignorance and lack of insight of the phenomenon of burnout. However, years of experience did not account for a significant variance in the level of burnout among educators in the studies of Schwab & Iwanicki (1982). This was supported by Borg & Falzon (1989, as cited in Tatar & Yahav, 1999) who found that even though one would expect experienced educators to find their jobs to be less demanding, the findings suggest that with advancing age educators become less tolerant of learners' undesirable ways.

5.6 SUMMARY

The prevalence of burnout in schools in the Pietermaritzburg region and by implication in the province of KwaZulu-Natal is relatively high and necessitates urgent attention if it is not to reach alarming proportions. It has been found that burnout does not discriminate between the sexes and that although inexperienced educators suffer its impact more, more experienced educators as well are not immune to its aversive effects. There were also indications that burnout has no single cause and can be triggered by anything from learner pressures, lack of support and recognition, lack of participation in decision-making to role ambiguity or role conflict. It depends on the manner in which one's stress reactor responds to the precipitants in one's work environments.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study was to investigate the influence of role-related stressors on educator burnout. With the dismantling of apartheid in 1994 and transformation in education following the abolition of race-based departments of education, problems that were not immediately envisaged began to manifest themselves.

The removal of quadruplicating positions in separate departments of education and inequitable quotas in terms of resources and per capita funding heralded a change that was bound to unseat the so-called privileged and unleash the tide of reconstruction and redevelopment.

The voluntary severance packages (alias retrenchments), which were granted to senior personnel to reduce the bloated status characteristic of apartheid education, ushered in a difficult era in education, marked by increased teaching loads, relegation of heads of departments to class educator roles, notifications of redundant positions, redeployment of those declared in excess of the number of staff schools are entitled to, and retraining of existing staff members. Consequently other evils began to rear their ugly heads. With schools acquiring a multi-cultural ethos, racism in the form of subtle or blatant attempts to bar learners of different races, inter-racial flare ups and ostracism of educators promoted to schools predominantly or solely segregated became common occurrences. The inevitable offshoot of this crisis situation would most likely be stress and ultimately burnout. This study has come up with levels of burnout that are threatening to reach near alarming proportions.

6.2 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Of the 104 educators who participated in this research study, approximately one tenth and almost half are experiencing high and moderate levels of burnout, respectively.

An application of the three subscales of the MBI has produced statistics that have serious implications for education in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Almost half and approximately a third of the educators in the Pietermaritzburg region are currently experiencing a high and moderate level of emotional exhaustion, respectively. In view of this distressing evidence of the mental capacity of such a large proportion of educators, one can very well imagine what the quality of service to the learners they teach may be. That may very probably explain why the percentage of matriculation passes in the province of KwaZulu-Natal in the recent past was so low.

A cardinal feature of the burnout syndrome is a shift in the educators' attitudes towards their learners. Burned out educators are likely to lower their opinion about their learners' capabilities and to provide less positive feedback. There is the very strong possibility that their behaviours and perceptions would bring about a mismatch between educators' and learners' expectations of each other (Maslach, 1982, in Tatar & Yahav, 1999). The relatively high and moderate levels of depersonalization in this sample of educators would very likely lead to this mismatch.

Moreover, a large proportion of this sample of educators who are experiencing high personal accomplishment burnout do not have much confidence in their capabilities. Consequently the cost to the child in view of such negative self-evaluation would be enormous.

In terms of the role-related stressors that this sample of educators have identified as being the antecedents to their levels of burnout, the evidence is overwhelming and quite conclusive.

Redeployment has proved to be a very thorny issue in South African education currently and the findings have shown that when educators are informed quite suddenly without prior notification or preparation, their stress levels are bound to rise. Uncertainty regarding the manner in which they are going to be received by staff, parents and learners, in addition to their anxieties in terms of adjustment and whether they will make it at their new teaching sites as well as what they will be given to teach are some of the factors that are likely to exacerbate educator stress levels. In fact this was one of the stressors that Sooful (1992) envisaged as occurring with the looming transformation in education. It is imperative that more conciliatory efforts be undertaken in addressing this issue.

Reduced opportunities for promotion and insufficient salary increases to curb the ill effects of inflation have been found to be potential predictors of burnout. The reason could very well be that senior educators are still languishing in level one positions whilst their junior counterparts have superseded them. On the other hand, educators, like other professionals, probably prefer to live comfortably and have been banking on their salary increases to pay off their housing loans. Thus these issues necessitate more urgent intervention on the part of the Department of Education. Educators who have nothing to show for years of ceaseless toiling in terms of tangible rewards would look elsewhere to have these needs met.

It is quite apparent that the stress generated by learner pressures cannot be ignored. The high learner-educator ratios, learner violence, responsibilities attached to motivation of learners with varying abilities, inter alia, are bound to tax the educators' rapidly dwindling resources, emotionally and physically.

Evidence garnered from this study points to a strong need for support from superiors and parents. Educators need to be supported through what is being construed as an ordeal for them and to be given the requisite recognition for their concerted and hard earned efforts. Without these, the beleaguered educators, who are bombarded from all sides, would become burned out husks.

This study has shown that time and work load pressures such as completing piles of paperwork, the reduction of non-teaching periods, constant responsibility for others, extra-curricular activities and attendance at meetings, inter alia, have taken their toll on educators' energy levels and increased their vulnerability to burnout. A job in which there is very little respite will most definitely breed stress and aggravate the problem of burnout. It seems that what has already been written on burnout is being overlooked and that expenditure is being cut back at the expense of educator welfare. This state of affairs needs to be remedied urgently.

Good interpersonal relationships are crucial to an educator's psychological well being and would increase his/her productivity in the classroom. Poor interpersonal relationships with colleagues and superiors, a stifling atmosphere at school and a climate of victimization have impacted on this sample's levels of burnout. It is imperative that educators work in an environment in which fellow professionals take the initiative to foster a collegial spirit and a strong support system. Such an atmosphere must be cultivated.

Role ambiguity or a lack of clarity regarding the scope and responsibilities of their jobs has paved the way to burnout for these educators who may have entered the profession with a zeal and enthusiasm that would enable them to make a go of it. That, sadly, is disappearing rapidly from their educational horizons.

An educator who is bereft of the opportunity of making a meaningful contribution to the decision-making policy of the school feels inconsequential and insignificant. The likelihood of festering stress and burnout is immense and that appears to be the obstacle to these educators' well being.

Role conflict, that is, being forced to do things one does not agree with, compliance with rules and policies and having duties arbitrarily imposed on one, is another aspect of teaching that needs to be addressed if harmony is to prevail and if the educator is expected to give of his/her best.

And finally, role insufficiency or insufficient information and resources which make it difficult to do the job properly and which in this instance encompasses the issue of Outcomes Based Education, has made their job very stressful for these educators and exacerbated their burnout levels. If a curriculum is to be successful, all the agents need to be put in place, both promptly and efficiently. Educators and schools need to be equipped timeously and workshopping should be an ongoing process. Then the question of delivery would not be raised.

Burnout has been found in this study to affect both males and females alike, thus proving that its virulent effects are all pervasive and extra care and vigilance need to be exercised in eliminating them in order to attain successful outcomes in teaching.

This study has also shown that burnout stalks the very young educator who has been teaching for less than four years. The implication is that these educators lack the experience and the hardiness that their senior colleagues have to counter the corrosive influence of the stressors in their environment and so are likely to have their defences against burnout weakened.

With deference to the model proposed by Schwab, Jackson and Schuler (1986) which linked sources of burnout to psychological reactions and possible consequences, this study has proved that the organizational and personal factors (such as role conflict and role ambiguity, collegial support, participation in decision-making, inter alia) that it espouses, have correlated significantly with the burnout phenomenon.

What has become abundantly clear in this study which was conducted with African, White, Indian and Coloured educators is that educators today from different backgrounds and cultures appear to be united by a burgeoning common problem. It is a serious malady which if left unchecked could reach startling proportions and destroy the very fabric of education in South Africa. Many a sensitive, thoughtful and dedicated educator would be lost to the profession for ever.

The psychological reactions and possible consequences that are an essential feature of the Model of Burnout proposed by Schwab, Jackson and Schuler (1986) would be the inevitable offshoots of this unmediated malady and the costs to education would be incalculable. This aspect of the burnout syndrome, however, falls outside the parameters of this study.

This study has shown that the realities which educators face daily create many situations which can generate stress and burnout. The school environment with its crowded classrooms of between 40 to 50 learners, with its overwhelming demands and lack of support and recognition, with very few rewards and incentives for growth and upward mobility, with unreasonable expectations and insufficient resources, with lack of clarity on the tasks assigned to its members of staff, its poor interpersonal relationships and denial of participation in decision-making, can be a hothouse of stress and burnout.

6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are some immediately apparent limitations to this study and they support caution when interpreting the results and suggest further research.

Firstly, as it was difficult to find an instrument that was suitable for the writer's purpose and since those that were worthy of being perused were unavailable locally, the Teacher Stress Measure was adapted from the Occupational Stress Inventory (Osipow & Arnold, 1998) and the studies of Padayachee (1992) and Bennett (1989).

Secondly, an impassioned plea was made to principals to recruit educators who would be willing to participate in this study on account of their experience of burnout. There is the possibility that in some cases sampling error could have arisen. That could have accounted for the skewing that was apparent in the two groupings in terms of years of experience

Thirdly, as the literature is quite explicit about the fact that men tend to depersonalize their charges more than women ever do, more males should have been co-opted into this study to verify this finding.

Fourthly, as this was a cross-cultural study, it would have been useful to have had the instruments translated into Zulu for those participants who may have had difficulties with the English language.

And lastly, some items on the Teacher Stress Measure, namely, fiscal and austerity management, promotion and salary, which were quite crucial to this study, should have had more items on them in order to investigate their possible significant correlations with burnout.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of the present study have brought forth several potential avenues for future research.

Firstly the study looked at the background variables of gender and years of experience, but did not examine the link between the educator's personality and burnout as well as the impact of family life on burnout. The literature is quite explicit about the link between personality and burnout as well as the contribution that family life makes to burnout.

Most studies on burnout have been conducted within a brief period of time. It would be useful to examine the impact of burnout over a longer period of time. A longitudinal study would provide valuable information in this area.

It would be interesting to investigate whether burnout impacts differently on primary and secondary school educators and the possible factors for such a difference.

And lastly, an investigation not only into the impact of educator burnout on learners but also into learners' perceptions of burnout among educators would be invaluable.

6.5 CONCLUSION

What this study has shown is that burnout is certainly no fad or no myth. It is alive and kicking even in the new South Africa. It lurks within the work environment, waiting to attack the most dedicated and committed of workers. Its stressors are many and varied and these must be addressed if the quality and productivity of South African education is not to drop considerably. Educational authorities and school governing bodies will be confronted by an ever increasing number of internal disturbances. One such disturbance is educator burnout. However, such a calamity can be reduced or even averted because most of its causes are extant not solely in the personality traits of educators but in particular role-related factors within school systems that can be changed.

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APPENDIX A

**ROLE-RELATED STRESSORS IN TEACHER STRESS MEASURE: MEAN
RATING IN RANK ORDER**

Rank Order	Item	ROLE RELATED STRESSORS	Mean Rating	Std. Dev.
1	27	I don't mind being redeployed to any school in the district.	4.375	1.224
2	5	I am satisfied with manner in which promotions are being handled.	4.144	1.250
3	33	I feel that O.B.E. is best thing that.....happened to education.	3.885	1.317
4	4	I am satisfied with number of non-teaching periods per week.	3.817	1.406
5	6	I find that my salary in relation to work I do is insufficient.	3.779	1.533
6	35	I have influence over what goes on in my school.	3.587	1.196
7	1	I am able to cope with the present teacher-pupil ratio.	3.442	1.454
8	31	I feel that as a teacher I am being held in high regard by community	3.337	1.348
9	13	I receive right kind of support and recognition for my efforts.	3.317	1.264
10	20	There is a lot of stress just keeping up with professional standards.	3.269	1.264
11	39	I am given ample opportunities to grow in my school.	3.260	1.239
12	19	Complying with provincial, national policies and rules....stressful.	3.250	1.336
13	21	I am given ample opportunities for joint decision-making...school.	3.240	1.203
14	7	I find dealing with student discipline problems puts stress on me.	3.231	1.463
15	36	I find that staff meetings at my school are very beneficial.	3.183	1.221
16	30	I approve of the quality of supervision being conducted at school.	3.144	1.186
17	3	Trying to complete reports.....on time puts a lot of stress on me.	3.087	1.387
18	25	If I were given the opportunity to retire early, I'd gladly jump at it.	3.087	1.583
19	24	Knowing what I know..... this job, I would definitely do so	2.952	1.503
20	2	I find teaching pupils with a wide range of abilities satisfying.	2.904	1.311
21	22	Having to participate in activities outside of schoolstressful.	2.827	1.303
22	17	I receive enough information to carry out my job effectively.	2.712	1.297
23	8	Motivating pupils to perform well is easy for me.	2.683	1.168
24	28	My work load interferes with my family life.	2.664	1.405
25	26	I find that I am overwhelmed by the number of meetings I...attend.	2.558	1.276
26	9	Constant responsibility for others is a matter I find hard to handle.	2.529	1.214
27	18	I often find that I am forced to do things that I don't agree with.	2.529	1.206
28	14	I find on account of work load I have insufficient time.....teaching.	2.404	1.203

29	23	When I have conflicts with parents or students I am given support.	2.356	1.214
30	15	Constant interaction with others leaves me drained.	2.183	1.022
31	34	The degree of violence at my school frightens me.	2.173	1.311
32	40	I find the atmosphere in my school stifling.	2.164	1.247
33	12	My relationship with my superiors is satisfying.	2.067	1.017
34	38	I find that duties are arbitrarily imposed on me.	2.029	1.136
35	16	I am unclear what the scope and responsibilities of my job are.	1.971	1.210
36	37	Victimization at my school has affected me deeply.	1.817	1.147
37	11	My interaction with my colleagues is good.	1.673	.875
38	10	I enjoy a good relationship with my pupils.	1.654	.922
39	32	I experience great difficulties communicating with my colleagues.	1.654	1.031
40	29	I feel that I am not adequately prepared for my job.	1.625	.827

APPENDIX B

THE COVER LETTER

Tel.: 3916876 (h)

11 Himalaya Road
Belfort
Pietermaritzburg
3201
25 May 2000

Dear Colleague

I would appreciate your help in a research project I am involved with at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. I am trying to assess teacher opinions on the influence of role-related stressors on teacher burnout.

You can help by filling out the enclosed questionnaire. Completing the questionnaire will take about 15 minutes of your time, but to be valid for research purposes, the survey must be returned with every question answered.

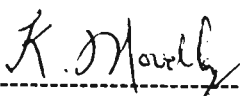
Permission is being obtained from the Department to conduct the survey. Please note that participating in this survey is purely on a voluntary basis and information will be kept totally confidential. You will not be identified in any way.

When you have completed the questionnaire, please hand it to your principal who will then forward it to me or alternatively, if you so desire it, kindly place it in a sealed envelope obtained from the principal and hand it over to him/her.

The results of this survey will be made available to you should you desire it.

I assure you that your co-operation will be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Moodley', written over a horizontal dashed line.

K. Moodley

APPENDIX C

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRES

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA SHEET

MASLACH BURNOUT INVENTORY

TEACHER STRESS MEASURE

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA SHEET

Kindly complete the details below:

GENDER

1. MALE

2 FEMALE

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Educators Survey

The purpose of this survey is to discover how educators view their job and the people with whom they work closely.

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 the space 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. An example is shown below.

Example:

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

HOW OFTEN

0 - 6

Statement:

_____ I feel depressed at work.

If you *never* feel depressed at work, you would write the number "0" (zero) under the heading "HOW OFTEN." If you *rarely* feel depressed at work (a few times a year or less), you would write the number "1." If your feelings of depression are fairly frequent (a few times a week, but not daily) you would write a "5."



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TEACHER STRESS MEASURE

There are 40 statements of job-related stressors of burnout. Please read each statement carefully and by examining the scale below, establish your degree of severity for each item.

1	2	3	4	5
Rarely or never true	Occasionally true	Often true	Usually true	True most of the time

1. I am able to cope with the present teacher-pupil ratio.
2. I find teaching pupils with a wide range of abilities satisfying.
3. Trying to complete reports and paperwork on time causes me a lot of stress.
4. I am satisfied with the number of non-teaching periods allowed per week.
5. I am satisfied with the manner in which the current system of promotions is being handled.
6. I find that my salary in relation to the work I do is insufficient.
7. I find that dealing with student discipline problems puts a lot of stress on me.
8. Motivating pupils to perform well is easy for me.

9. Constant responsibility for others is a matter that I find hard to handle.
10. I enjoy a good relationship with my pupils.
11. My interaction with my colleagues is good.
12. My relationship with my superiors is satisfying.
13. I receive the right kind of support and recognition for my efforts.
14. I find that on account of my work load I have insufficient time for teaching.
15. Constant interaction with others leaves me drained.
16. I am unclear what the scope and responsibilities of my job are.
17. I receive enough information to carry out my job effectively.
18. I often find that I am forced to do things that I don't agree with.
19. Complying with provincial, national policies and school rules is very stressful.
20. There is a lot of stress just keeping up with changing professional standards.

21. I am given ample opportunities for joint decision making in my school.
22. Having to participate in school activities outside of the normal working hours is very stressful for me.
23. When I have conflicts with parents or students I am given the support I need.
24. Knowing what I know now, if I had to decide all over again whether to take this job, I would definitely do so.
25. If I were given the opportunity to retire early, I would gladly jump at it.
26. I find that I am overwhelmed by the number of meetings I have to attend.
27. I don't mind being redeployed to any school in the district.
28. My work load interferes with my family life.
29. I feel that I am not adequately prepared for my job.
30. I approve of the quality of supervision being conducted at my school.
31. I feel that as a teacher I am being held in high regard by the community.
32. I experience great difficulties in communicating with my colleagues.

33. I feel that Outcomes Based Education is the best thing that could have happened to education.
34. The degree of violence at my school frightens me.
35. I have influence over what goes on in my school.
36. I find that the staff meetings at my school are very beneficial.
37. Victimization at my school has affected me deeply.
38. I find that duties are arbitrarily imposed on me.
39. I am given ample opportunities to grow in my school.
40. I find the atmosphere in my school stifling.

APPENDIX D

LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

School of Psychology

Private Bag X01 Scottsville
Pietermaritzburg 3209 South Africa
Telephone (033) 260 5853 Fax (033) 260 5809

12 June 2000

Mr Shamase
Department of Education
ULUNDI

Fax. : 0358743678


Sir

RESEARCH FOR MASTERS DEGREE IN PSYCHOLOGY

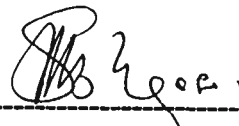
I wrote a letter to Mr D.M.Ngidi on 17 April 2000 requesting permission to conduct research with teachers in Pietermaritzburg and this letter was faxed to you on 3 May 2000 from Mr Ngidi's office to which there has been no reply to date.

I am a Masters student in the Department of Psychology at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg. My research topic for this degree is 'THE INFLUENCE OF ROLE-RELATED STRESSORS ON TEACHER BURNOUT'. I intend using a sample of 100 teachers from the Pietermaritzburg region and preferably from 10 schools. I humbly request permission to conduct this research.

Yours faithfully



MR KRISHNAN MOODLEY
(M1 Educational Psychologist)



MR S. NTSHANGASE
(Supervising Psychologist)

APPENDIX E

PERMISSION FROM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



HEAD OFFICE

INHLOKO HHOVISI

HOOFKANTOOR

Address: 2nd Floor
Ikheli: Administration Building
Adres: King Dinizulu Highway
Ulundi
3838
Dr M. J. Lötter

Private Bag: Private Bag X04
Isikhwama Seposi: Ulundi
Privaatsak: 3838

Telephone:
Ucingo: 035-8743678
Telefoon:
Fax:

035-8743671

2000-07-12

Enquiries:
Imibuzo:
Navrae: Mr K. Moodley
11 Himalaya Road
Belfort
PIETERMARITZBURG
3201

Reference:
Inkomba:
Verwysing:

Date:
Usuku:
Datum:

Dear Mr Moodley

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH TOWARDS A MASTERS DEGREE

Your letter re the above dated 17 April 2000, refers.

Permission is hereby granted to you to conduct the research on the following conditions:

1. Access to schools may only be allowed by the principal and the governing body of the school.
2. Your research findings may not be used to embarrass the Department or any institution of the Department.
3. A copy of the final dissertation must be made available to the Department for accessing in the central library.

We wish you success in your studies.


.....
DR M.J. LÖTTER
CHIEF DIRECTOR
Wp\kmoodley\mn