

Lindenwood University

Digital Commons@Lindenwood University

Theses

Theses & Dissertations

8-2000

Relationship Between Academic Burnout and Employment Status in Graduate Counseling Students

Teresa L. Ray

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/theses>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC BURNOUT AND
EMPLOYMENT STATUS IN GRADUATE COUNSELING STUDENTS**

Teresa L. Ray, B.A.

Lindenwood University

**An Abstract Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Lindenwood
University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Art August 2000**

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between academic burnout among graduate counseling students and employment status. Students surveyed were employed full-time, part-time, or not at all. A correlational design was used to relate burnout scores as determined by the Meier Burnout Assessment to students' employment status. No correlation was found. It was concluded that based on this research that no correlation exists between academic burnout and employment status for graduate counseling students.

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC BURNOUT AND
EMPLOYMENT STATUS IN GRADUATE COUNSELING STUDENTS**

Teresa L. Ray, B.A.

Lindenwood University

**A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Lindenwood
University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Art August 2000**

Committee Members

Dr. Pam Nickels, Associate Professor, Chair
Dr. Marilyn Patterson, Associate Professor
Anita Sankar, Assistant Professor

Dedication Page

This thesis is dedicated to my friend Stephanie, without whom I would never have completed my degree. Thank you!

Acknowledgements page

Special thanks are due to my husband David, and my parents Robert and Nina.
Without your support I could never have done it.

Table of Contents

		Page
Chapter I	Introduction	1
	Statement of the Problem	5
Chapter II	Review of Related Literature	6
	Social Psychological Theory	9
	Existential Theory	11
	Social Cognitive Theory	15
	Academic Burnout	17
	Factors Related to Burnout	19
	Statement of the Hypothesis	22
Chapter III	Method	24
	Subjects	24
	Instrument	25
	Procedure	26
Chapter IV	Results	28
Chapter V	Discussion	29
	Appendix A	31
	Appendix B	32
	Appendix C	33
	References	34

List of Table and Figures

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. Demographic Statistics	24
2. Meier Burnout Assessment Scores	28

Figures

1. The Burnout Symptom Cycle	8
2. Existential Model of Burnout	13

Chapter I

Introduction

The late teens and early twenties are considered by many a time of experimentation, a time when people can try new things and test out new ideas. When young adults in this age group enter college, "...competencies, skills, and knowledge undergo profound changes..."(Welch, Medeiros, & Tate, 1985, p.59). There are, however, inherent pressures associated with college life. New responsibilities are undertaken upon entering college, such as finding new friends, mastering new knowledge and skills, and maintaining time lines. Also, students may experience feelings of isolation as they move away from family and friends. In addition, they may experience financial trouble, struggling to cover the expenses of tuition, books, food, and shelter. Some students may experience difficulty in being independent, since others may support them financially. Finally, students may have difficulty due to the academic expectations placed on them by self and others (Welch, Medeiros, & Tate, 1985).

Graduate students may experience these same pressures, along with additional external pressures. Outside forces, such as employment and caring for a family, may increase the amount of stress experienced, as little time may remain to care for self. Greater monetary problems may arise as the student must not only pay for school, but also pay rent, utilities, and all the other expenses associated with living in this society. All of these pressures may build up over

time and produce physical, emotional, intellectual, and social symptoms known as burnout (Welch, Medeiros, & Tate, 1985).

Burnout was previously defined as "...to fail, wear out, or become exhausted by making excessive demands on energy, strength, or resources..." (H. Freudenberger, 1980, p.9). More recently, Pines and Aronson (1980) have referred to burnout as "...physical, emotional, and mental (i.e. attitudinal) exhaustion" (p.202).

Traditionally, research has viewed burnout as a "...situationally induced stress reaction"(Piedmont, 1993, p.458). However, some have examined the effects of individual difference variables, or personality factors, within burnout. Research has indicated that "...individuals may vary in their sensitivity to stress..."(Piedmont, 1993, p.458) which would make potentially problematic situations worse for some and not for others.

A great deal of research and discussion has been generated over the concept of burnout among people in the workforce. Researchers have focused primarily on employee burnout and ways to avoid and cure it. Certain occupations have received special attention, such as counseling, medicine, and social work.

Burnout has received enormous publicity within the popular press as well, showing up in magazines, newspapers, and self-help books, which offer burnout "tests" to determine if a person should change jobs or careers. Most research and discussion on burnout has focused on burnout within occupational fields; with

job-specific factors as the cause of burnout (Garden, 1991; Greenglass, 1998; Lowe & Northcott, 1990).

Within modern research, burnout is most commonly conceptualized as a stress reaction brought about by a particular situation within the environment. However, it has also been noted that “individuals suffering burnout are characterized by their emotional lability, cognitive rigidity, and interpersonal cynicism” (Piedmont, 1993, p.458).

Personality factors have been examined to determine if a link exists with burnout. Studies have shown locus of control to be highly related to burnout. People with internal locus of control were less likely to experience burnout than those with external locus of control. The reasoning associated with these results is that individuals with internal locus of control believe that any results of rewards which occur are due to the individuals' own behavior (Glogow, 1986; Spector & O'Connell, 1994).

Another important personality factor related to burnout is trait anxiety. When an individual becomes anxious over a situation, burnout is more likely to occur (Turnipseed, 1998). Conversely, when an individual perceives a situation as non-threatening or non-anxiety producing, burnout is less likely to occur.

Studies have shown that job stress and low coping abilities often lead to burnout within the workplace (Lowe & Northcott, 1998; Huebner, 1963). Also, when individuals are unable to attain a high degree of effectiveness in work, there is a greater likelihood of burnout occurring (Harrison, 1983). Pines (1993) noted

that a person's expectations of work must be realistic, or there is a greater likelihood of burnout.

While some research has been conducted investigating the contribution of these individual personality factors relating to or causing burnout in the workplace (Glogow, 1986; Spector & O'Connell, 1994; Turnipseed, 1998), little research has focused on burnout within the student academic environment of higher education.

A few researchers shifted their focus from workplace burnout to academic burnout. Pines (1980) determined that college students do experience burnout, perhaps more often than working adults do. The reasoning behind this is that students believe they have less variety, and less influence on decisions affecting their lives (Pines, 1980; Meier, 1985). Further, financial concerns combined with academic pressures result in higher levels of stress, which leads to burnout (Welch, Medeiros, & Tate, 1985). Research has shown that multiple roles, such as work, family, and school life promote increased stress and anxiety, which produces a greater chance of burnout. Thus, the graduate student who also has the demands of employment and family placed on them may face a greater risk of burnout as they may be unable to devote their full energies to the academic program. For those individuals who are by necessity forced to give increasing amounts of time and energy to financial and family concerns, they may experience frustration and thus experience burnout over their inability to achieve their academic goals.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between academic burnout among graduate counseling students and the employment status of the student in order to determine whether employed students experience greater levels of academic burnout. Academic burnout was defined as "...a state in which individuals expect little reward and considerable punishment...because of a lack of valued reinforcement, controllable outcomes, or personal competence" (Meier, 1983, p.899). Employment status was defined as whether a student is not employed outside of the home, employed part-time (zero to thirty hours per week), or full-time (thirty-one to forty plus hours per week).

Chapter II

Review of Related Literature

Burnout originally emerged as a social problem among members of the work force. Workers who were originally driven and motivated to succeed were leaving their positions for other work or were becoming unproductive. Burned out workers have been characterized as being irritable, stressed out, or depressed, and have been associated with the usage of alcohol or drugs (Matthews, 1990; Ross, Altmaier, & Russell, 1989). Over the past two decades, burnout has become a readily recognizable term within the work force, and efforts have been made to head off and cure burnout.

According to Maslach and Schaufeli (1983), there are two main phases to development of burnout as an important psychological construct. The Pioneer phase began in the mid 1970's with the first descriptions of burnout, and with the label burnout being given to the problem. Herbert Freudenberger and Christina Maslach were both key players within this early stage, with the important task of shedding light on the fact that a problem existed. The Empirical phase, which began in the 1980's, was a "...more focused, constructive, and empirical period..." (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993, p.6). During this time, numerous books and articles were written giving proposed models of burnout, intervention ideas, and various data from standardized measures. As a result, precise definitions of burnout were developed (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993). This empirical research has focused primarily on job related factors, although some research has examined personality, locus of control, social support, and individual values

(Costa & McCrae, 1989; Spector & O'Connell, 1994; Glogow, 1986). The majority of these studies completed during the Empirical phase were correlational in nature, and have collected self-report data from samples which may have been non-representative (Costa & McCrae, 1989; Spector & O'Connell, 1994; Glogow, 1986).

Herbert Freudenberger first coined the term burnout in 1974 when he began to study a condition which manifested itself somatically and behaviorally with symptoms such as exhaustion, irritability, chronic frustration and anger, and a marked lack of satisfaction with career choice. Freudenberger defined "Burn-out" as "...someone in a state of fatigue or frustration brought about by devotion to a cause, way of life, or relationship that failed to produce the expected rewards"(Freudenberger & Richelson, 1980, p.13). He believed that burnout was a chronic condition which occurs gradually and builds up over time, and that burnout occurred primarily in "...goal oriented, dynamic, charismatic men and women or to determined idealists"(Freudenberger & Richelson, 1980, p.19). Freudenberger postulated that trouble resulted from over-commitment or over-dedication, and that burnout occurred in twelve recognizable stages, which he calls the Burnout Symptom Cycle Stages as shown in Figure 1. These stages may often blend together with each other, and more than one stage may be experienced at a time. Individual circumstances determine the length of time and degree of intensity which one may experience within each stage (Freudenberger & North, 1985).

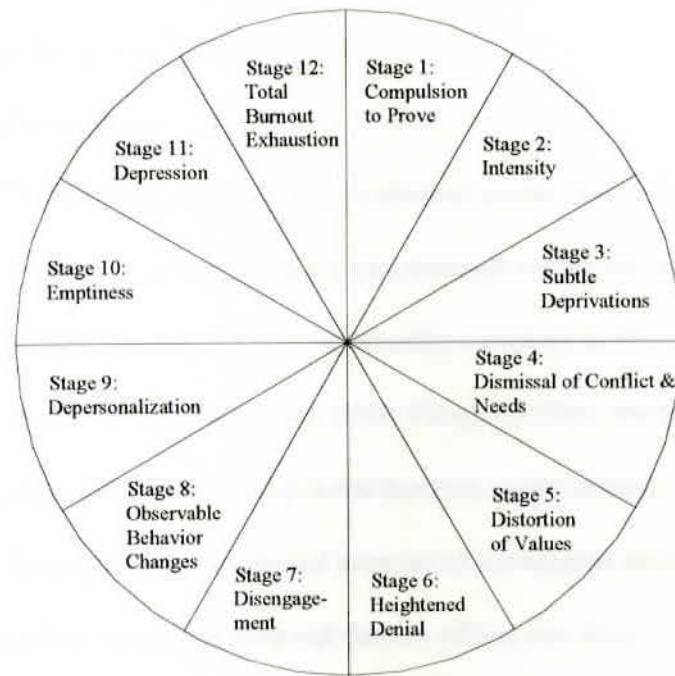


Figure 1

The Burnout Symptom Cycle

Note: From Women's Burnout: How to Spot it, How to Reverse it, How to Prevent it. (p.152), by H. Freudenberger and Gail North, 1985, Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc.

Freudenberger believed that burnout occurs more frequently in members of the helping professions such as counselors, doctors, and social workers. He believed that "...helpers are exposed almost exclusively to the negative sides of the people they work with..." which makes for a less than satisfactory work environment (Freudenberger & Richelson, 1980,p.152). Freudenberger suggested that the rewards in the helping environment are few, there is constant pressure to make things better, and the helping professional receives little tangible evidence he or she is making a difference. Over the past two decades, new theory and

research has been conducted on burnout. In order to better understand burnout, several theories are discussed.

Social Psychological Theory

Christina Maslach has been a pioneer in the study of burnout. For twenty years she has studied and written about burnout within the work setting. While many theorists have focused on personality variables as the causal factor in burnout (Costa & McCrae, 1980, 1989; Glogow, 1986; Piedmont, 1993; Turnipseed, 1998), Maslach believed burnout could be best understood "...in terms of the social and situational sources of job-related stress"(Maslach, 1982, p. 233). In other words, the external factors which one faces at work such as dealing with people, successes and failures, degree of control over outcomes, and ambiguity or uncertainty over roles, are all precipitating factors of burnout. Much of Maslach's work has focused on burnout within the helping professions such as counseling, nursing, and other helping professions. The most widely used definition of burnout comes from Maslach and is defined as "...a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do 'people work' of some kind"(Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993, p.15).

Further, Maslach (1993) developed a burnout measure which has been adopted widely by researchers and has led to increased research within the field. This measure was called the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) and was designed to assess the three components comprising burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach & Schaufeli,

1993). Maslach believed that a multidimensional model examining these three components was better supported by empirical evidence than a unidimensional model which postulated that burnout is either experienced, or not.

Maslach's three component model was developed on the basis of years of research. The Emotional Exhaustion component was described as having feelings of being emotionally overextended and empty of all emotional resources. The Depersonalization component refers to "... a negative, callous, or excessively detached response to other people, who are usually the recipients of one's services or care"(Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993, p.21). The Reduced Personal Accomplishment component is exactly how it sounds, meaning that one experiences a decline in feelings of competency and achievement in one's work.

Maslach & Schaufeli (1993) believed burnout to be a response to chronic or continual sources of stress, rather than acute situations. An example within the helping profession would be the emotional pressure of closely working with people on a daily basis. As a result of this continual stress, tolerance levels wear down, and problems begin to occur within the relationship. Also problematic may be the helper's tendency to deny any unprofessional thoughts or feelings toward the clients, but instead behave as if he or she was in control of the situation and handling it well.

Other interactional models have been proposed to account for the development of burnout. Within these models, "...individual differences in burnout reactions emerge as a function of the complex interplay of environmental variables and individual difference variables"(Huebner, 1993, p.41).

Interpersonal factors such as supervision, positive feedback, and low levels of peer support may contribute significantly to burnout (Huebner, 1993). Further, intrapersonal factors, such as inadequate job preparation, are a crucial variable in the burnout process (Harrison, 1983; Huebner, 1993). Job stress, measured by negative health symptoms, often results from the imbalance between job demands and an individual's coping abilities (Lowe & Northcott, 1988). Lowe and Northcott (1988) determined that job stress is more often caused by the underuse of skills and abilities, lack of complexity on the job, lack of participation in making decisions, unclear work roles, role conflict, too much work, long hours, and little social support from coworkers.

Existential Theory

Victor Frankl, one of the founders of existentialism, believed that "...the striving to find meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in man"(Frankl, 1963,p.154). Hence, when people try to find meaning in life through work and experience feelings of failure, the result will be burnout. This corresponds strongly to modern burnout theory, in that people need to feel challenged and needed or burnout may become eminent.

Harrison (1983) proposed another existential model of burnout to explain the phenomenon in people who work in the helping profession. Harrison states that social competence is the primary motivation that characterizes people who enter the social services. When people are able to achieve high effectiveness in work, there is further motivation to help. However, when barriers constantly

interfere with effectiveness, burnout occurs and reduces the original motivation to help.

Ayala Pines' existential theory of burnout was described as "... a negative state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion that is the result of a gradual process of disillusionment"(Pines, 1993, p.51). According to this existential model of burnout, people with strong motivation enter fields with high goals and expectations of what the career choice will provide.

Pines described three main ideals of work motivation. First, there are the universally shared work motivations, which "...include such goals and expectations as to have significant impact, to be successful, and to be appreciated" (Pines, 1993, p.42). Second are profession-specific work motivations that are reflective of the people who choose to work in a particular field. In other words, each profession has a unique set of values, goals, and expectations with particular areas of motivation. Lastly, personal work motivations are those which the individual prizes, such as being like an important mentor or admired character. These three types of motivations combine to produce an expectation of work which will have a significant impact and which will allow the individual to feel successful. (See Figure 2, Existential Model of Burnout.)

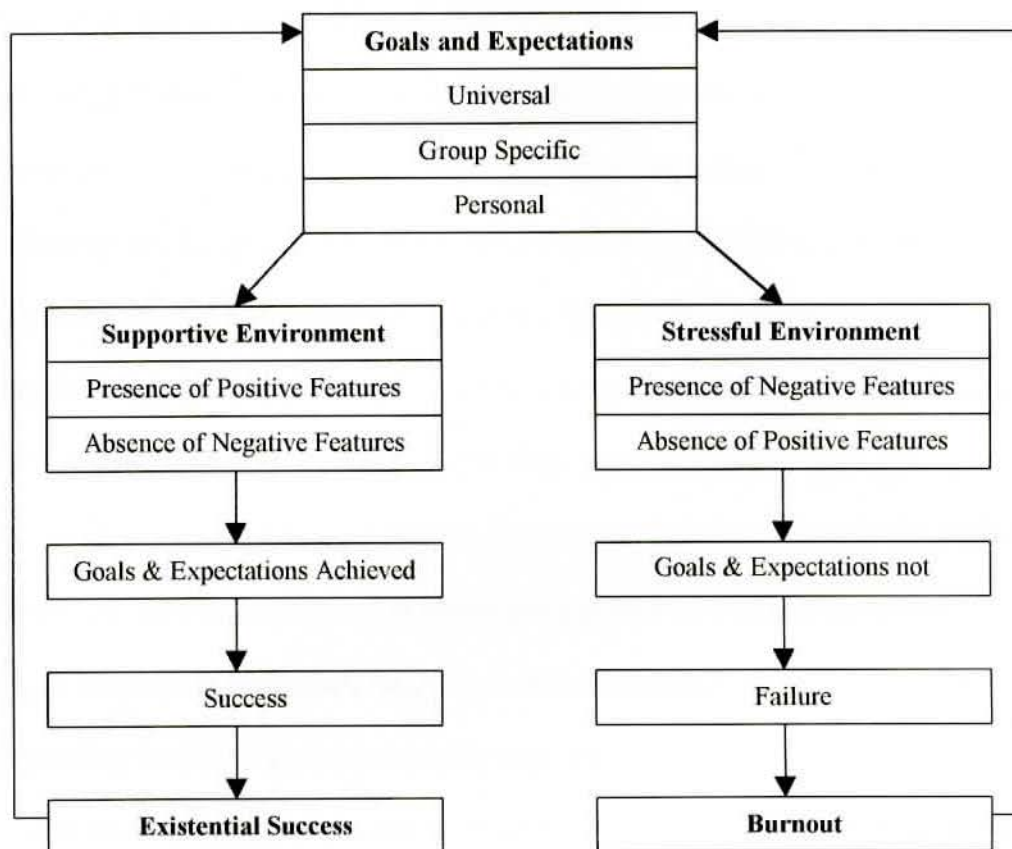


Figure 2

Existential Model of Burnout

Note: From Professional Burnout: Recent Development in Theory and Research, (p.42),
by Ayala Pines, (Eds.) W. Schaufeli, C.
Maslach, & T. Marek, 1993, New York: Taylor
and Francis

The main assumption within this theory is that only those individuals who are highly motivated can burn out. Within the initial phase of high motivation, a person may experience stress, alienation, depression, and fatigue, but not burnout.

Pines (1993) believed that if a person had a supportive work environment, the highly motivated person could often achieve his or her goals and expectations. This success, in turn, provides the individual with "...a sense of existential significance that in turn reinforces these individuals' original motivation for the

work”(Pines, 1993, p.44). Pines further believed that it is not necessarily a failure that causes burnout, but instead may be the feeling that regardless of how hard one works, he or she will never make a significant impact in his work. Once an individual reaches the burnout stage, the individual’s motivation to do the work is reduced or diminished. This results in what Pines (1993) referred to as a “negative loop” in which the levels of burnout increase and the individuals may attempt to escape the emotionally demanding work altogether.

According to Pines (1993), the most crucial deciding factor in determining if the motivated individual will burnout is the perceived work environment. While in some environments, people can feel successful in stressful situations; others may feel like failures in a highly supportive situation. For most cases, environmental conditions are crucial in determining feelings of meaningfulness and success. Those individuals with highly unrealistic expectations are more likely to experience feelings of failure and eventually burnout.

Importantly, Pines (1993) noted that within the existential model of burnout, people may move from one stage to another at any time. A person at some point may experience some failure in achieving a goal and experience the first signs of burnout or achieve an important goal and experience a sense of existential significance. Also, even in the midst of a cycle of burnout, the cycle can be interrupted.

While the majority of Pines’ work focused on burnout among the professional workforce, some research was conducted to determine the degree of burnout and tedium experienced by college students. Young adulthood is

generally a romanticized period in which people are viewed as having freedom to follow their hopes and dreams to full potential. However, numerous studies have suggested that the college years are highly stressful for young adults (Pines, 1980, 1993; McCarthy, Pretty, & Catano, 1990). Pines (1980) conducted a study, hypothesizing that young adult college students do not experience the same pressures or stresses associated with working adults and would not be perceived as chronic burnouts. The results of this study showed opposite results, however. Students felt they had less variety and freedom, and that their work was less significant and that they had less influence on decisions affecting their lives than did working adults (Pines, 1980, p.172). This work by Pines was one of the first in which researchers began to look at burnout in college students rather than working adults.

Social Cognitive Theory

According to G. Terence Wilson (1995), the social-cognitive approach to human behavior is based on three factors: external stimulus, external reinforcement, and cognitive mediational processes. "The influence of environmental events on behavior is largely determined by cognitive processes governing how environmental influences are perceived and how the individual interprets them"(Wilson, 1995,p.198). Within this theory, the person is thought to be the agent of change and an emphasis is placed on the "...human capacity for self-directed behavior change"(Wilson, 1995,p.198).

Albert Bandura and Walter Mischel were the founders of social cognitive theory. This theory views all interactions between people and their environment

as being highly complex and individualistic (Hergenhahn, 1994). Within this theory, human behavior is regulated, and, when an individual performs up to his or her expectations, the person will feel good about himself or herself.

People also learn by observing the consequences of behavior. This includes observing self and others. This theory suggests that people learn through direct or vicarious reinforcement and punishment, and then transpose the learning into action when there is an incentive to do so. A major factor within this theory is self-efficacy. If a person feels he or she is capable of performing a task or learning a behavior, he or she will try harder, persist longer, and generally experience less anxiety than those with low perceived self-efficacy (Hergenhahn, 1994).

Scott Meier (1983), in an effort to relate this theory with burnout, has proposed an expanded model of burnout based on the work of Bandura. In this model, burnout is defined as being a state which resulted from repeated work experience in which individuals possess: “(a) low expectations regarding the presence of positive reinforcement and high expectations regarding the presence of punishment in the work environment, (b) low expectations regarding ways of controlling the reinforcers that are present, or (c) low expectations for personal competence in performing the behaviors necessary to control the reinforcement” (Meier, 1983, pp.900-901). People who have low expectations may experience feelings of fear and anxiety, and behave in a manner which is deleterious like skipping work or lacking persistence. This model of burnout describes emotional exhaustion as a signal of burnout instead of its definition of burnout. According

to Meier, "...this burnout model predicts that reinforcement expectations, outcome expectations, and efficacy expectations directly influence the subjective experience of burnout"(Meier, 1983, p.907). Further, these expectations may result from experiences the person may have had repeatedly in the workplace.

While numerous studies have examined the relationship of burnout to employment, only a handful of researchers have examined the existence of academic burnout (McCarthy, Pretty, & Catano, 1990; Meier, 1983; Pines, 1980). Academic burnout is gradually becoming an important topic as society focuses more on education. Within the last twenty years, some researchers have turned a focus on burnout in the schools, why it occurs, and how it effects the student. Researchers such as Meier and Schmeck (1985), Pines, Aronson, and Kafry (1980), and McCarthy, Pretty, and Catano (1990) have placed a special emphasis on academic burnout.

Academic Burnout

Meier is one of the few researchers to have performed burnout studies on college students. Academic burnout, as defined by Meier, is the experience of diminished expectations for rewards, while accompanied by physical and emotional exhaustion. According to Meier, students have ranked in the middle to upper levels on burnout when compared to counselors, nurses, and educators (Meier, 1985).

In order to measure academic burnout, Meier developed the Meier Burnout Assessment (MBA). The MBA measured burnout for college students, and results showed that "...burnout...was related to individual variables such as

self-esteem, learning style, and vocational self-concept”(McCarthy, Pretty, & Catano, 1990, p.212). Meier studied 120 undergraduate students enrolled in introductory and advanced psychology courses. The average age of Meier’s subjects was 21 and 63% were male. Meier studied the relationship of burnout to such factors as memory performance, self-esteem, learning styles, sensation seeking, and vocational self-concept (Meier, 1985). The results of Meier’s study on burned out college students showed interesting results. Students who score high on burnout measures showed a tendency for less variety within their environment. Also, those who scored high on burnout experienced lower self-esteem. Those students who had no clear cut ideas about their vocational decisions were less likely to experience burnout, and more likely to explore options than those who knew precisely where they were going in life.

McCarthy, Pretty, and Catano (1990) also studied academic burnout among undergraduate students, as it related to psychological sense of community. The purpose of the study was to determine if psychological sense of community was a factor in student burnout. Within this study, 360 undergraduate students, half male and half female, participated. The average age of the participants was 21.5 years and 94.8% were full time students. This study found that psychological sense of community is related to burnout.

Pines, Aronson, and Kafry (1980) completed a study of 84 undergraduate students and 205 professionals to compare the two groups in terms of tedium. The students were chosen from general academic courses and the professionals consisted of business people, scientists, human service workers, and artists.

Students scored higher on tedium, which is closely related to burnout, than did the professionals. The students perceived their lives as having less variety and less influence on decisions affecting them, and fewer opportunities for self-expression. The conclusion from these results was that school related activities were a large source of pressure.

Factors Related To Burnout

There are numerous factors that have been found to relate to burnout. For members of the helping profession, it has been suggested that client factors, such as severe mental illness, ability to effect change within the client, amount of time spent and number of clients in caseload are potential stress producing factors which contribute to burnout (Ursprung, 1986). In addition, the amount of personal involvement experienced, whether too much or too little, may contribute to burnout. Work life and personal life may merge into one, or work life may rule or ruin personal life. This may be more damaging as "... a fulfilling personal life could provide a person with important psychological resources for coping with work-related stress, and simultaneously provide an alternative source of affirmation and fulfillment" (Ursprung, 1986, p.193). Lacking relationships with significant others in the workplace may increase stress and feelings of isolation. Formal supervision may help alleviate some pressures in this area. Finally, feedback from supervisors, the ability to influence one's job, and intellectual challenge and variety all tend to lessen the degree of burnout.

In a longitudinal study by Jackson, Schwab, and Schuler (1986) examining qualities of the individual and qualities of the job predisposing one to emotional

burnout, the research showed that environmental factors may be pertinent only to the degree that they assist individuals in expressing their own levels of distress (Piedmont, 1993). A similar study using longitudinal research showed that temperamental dispositions are stronger predictors than environmental factors on psychological distress (Ormel & Wohlfarth, 1991).

Further studies have shown that some individuals are better able to successfully adapt to stress situations and bounce back to his or her original state, while others who lack or have lower capacities for coping are not as resilient and may remain distressed (Costa, McCrae, & Zonderman, 1987; McCrae & Costa, 1988). Studies showed that the degree of subjective well being is strongly linked to specific personality dispositions, whereas environmental influence has a miniscule role (Costa & McCrae, 1980, 1989; Piedmont, 1993).

“Burnout has long been thought of as the result of chronic stress, and people vary a great deal in their responses to stressors” (Turnipseed, 1998, p.628). Trait anxiety is the stable personality characteristic in which individuals perceive stressful situations as being threatening. This perception of stress determines the situations’ anxiety proneness for the individual. Research has shown that individuals with high scores on trait anxiety perceive situations in such a way that an anxious state develops and eventually leads to burnout (Turnipseed, 1998).

Locus of control has also been shown to relate to burnout (Glogow, 1986). Locus of control, a personality construct developed by J.B. Rotter, suggests that individuals have either an internal or external locus of personal control. Internals have the belief that results or rewards are determined by his or her own behavior,

while externals believe that chance, fate, or luck controls all outcomes (Spector & O'Connell, 1994). In a study of burnout and locus of control, Eli Glogow (1986) determined that frequently, those persons who were not burned out had an internal locus of control and accepted responsibility for his or her own well being. Alternately, those individuals with external locus of control felt the institution or organization was responsible for the burnout (Glogow, 1986).

Lowe and Northcott (1988) examined multiple roles in relation to job stress. This model of job stress examined the "...multiple demands of domestic and work roles and is used to account for distress experienced by employed women" (Lowe & Northcott, 1988, p.56). Several studies have been conducted to determine if a relationship exists between multiple roles such as gender, domestic work, and paid employment outside the home (Haw, 1982; Gore & Mangione, 1983; Haynes & Feinlab, 1980). It has been theorized that the "...double burden of a job and family may create additional stresses..." (Lowe & Northcott, 1988, p.56). Further evidence has suggested that the combined effects of family responsibilities and employment may create considerable distress, particularly for women (Nathanson, 1975; Cleary & Mechanic, 1983). Haynes and Feinlab (1980) suggested that for women who must work and care for the family, a greater level of stress is experienced.

As it has been shown that multiple roles of job and families creates additional stress (Lowe & Northcott, 1988), it would seem that for graduate college students, the addition of multiple stressors would increase the likelihood of academic burnout. The student may be required to prioritize between work,

family, and school and will not be able to devote their full attention to studies. This inability to focus on succeeding in the academic environment may lead to frustration, loss of motivation, and eventually burnout (Lowe & Northcott, 1988; Pines, 1993; Ursprung, 1986).

In conclusion, the previously established literature has shown that those individuals who are highly motivated to succeed and know what their goals are may be more likely to experience burnout. It is theorized within this paper that the field of professional counseling attracts motivated, goal-oriented people who wish to make a significant impact in the lives of others. In addition, it is believed that those students who are employed full-time outside of the home while attending classes simultaneously are at a greater risk for burnout.

It would seem reasonable that the full-time employed student would feel less able to accomplish goals within the academic environment, and thus experience higher levels of burnout. The results of this study could prove helpful to new and current students within the program by identifying those at greatest risk. This could enable advisors to better prepare the students and advise them of what can be expected throughout the program, and could serve to assist in reducing the number of dropouts due to burnout.

Statement of the Hypothesis

While a great deal of research has focused on burnout as it relates to employment, little has been done to distinguish a relationship between academic burnout and employment status. In an effort to establish a relationship, it was hypothesized that graduate counseling students experience greater academic

burnout when they are concurrently employed full-time compared with those working part-time or not at all.

Chapter III

Methodology

Subjects

Fifty upper level graduate students from Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri were recruited as subjects for the present study. All students were enrolled in Professional and School Counseling program. All subjects were chosen on a voluntary basis.

All students participating in this study completed a demographic questionnaire (Appendix B). The study examined two groups of students: (i) those employed full-time and (ii) those employed part-time. Full-time employed students were defined as those working outside the home thirty-one hours or more per week. Part-time employed students were defined as those employed less than thirty hours per week outside the home. Table 1 gives demographic information regarding gender, ethnicity, employment status, and burnout.

Table 1: Demographic Statistics of Sample

Demographic Variable		n	%
Gender	Male	8	16
	Female	42	84
Race	Caucasian	46	92
	African American	4	8
Children	Yes	27	54
	No	23	46
Marital Status	Married	28	56
	Single	16	32
	Divorced	6	12
Employment Status	Full-time	36	72
	Part-time	14	28

The mean age for the sample population was 35.04 years of age. The sample (n=50) consisted of Caucasian 92% (n=46) and African American 8% (n=4). Fifty-four percent (n=27) were married, while 46% (n=23) were single or divorced. Likewise, 54% (n=27) had children, while 46% (n=23) had no children. The mean number of hours worked was 37 hours per week.

The mean age of full-time employed students was 34.88 years, while the part-time employed group mean age was 35.21 years. The full-time employed group was 89% (n=32) Caucasian and 11% (n=4) African-American. No other ethnic groups were represented. The part-time employed group consisted of 100% Caucasian subjects (n=14). The mean number of hours worked for the full-time group was 39.8 hours per week and for the part-time employed group the mean number of hours worked was 22.2 hours per week.

Instrument

The Meier Burnout Assessment (MBA) is an individual or group administered written assessment designed to measure student burnout within college students (Meier & Schmeck, 1985). It is a paper and pencil assessment requiring no training to administer or score. This assessment was designed to take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Consisting of 27 items, the MBA is a true-false assessment. The higher the total score, the greater the degree of burnout according to Scott Meier (personal communication, May 16, 2000).

The 27 item MBA was designed using D. Jackson's (1970), cited in Meier and Schmeck (1985), sequential system for personality scale development which emphasized the importance of "... psychological theory, scale homogeneity,

suppression of response style variance, and scale-convergent and discriminant validity”(p.64). The MBA was designed to measure the three dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment (McCarthy, Pretty, & Catano, 1990). It also provides the three dimensions, combined into one burnout score.

The internal consistency of the MBA was .82, which demonstrated satisfactory reliability for the burnout measure (Meier & Schmeck, 1985). The Cronbach alpha as reported by the authors was .83 (Meier & Schmeck, 1985). Further studies have provided evidence of concurrent validity, as well as construct validity by using the MBA with another well known, often used measure, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (McCarthy, Pretty, & Catano, 1990; Meier & Schmeck, 1985). The correlation of the MBA with the student version of the MBI was $r = .58$ ($p < .001$) (Meier, 1991). The MBA was normed using undergraduate psychology students in a university setting.

Procedure

Drawing from the spring trimester graduate students in upper level graduate courses, 50 students were sought through cluster sampling. These students were drawn from five classes in the Professional and School Counseling program at Lindenwood University. Both males and females were surveyed.

This questionnaire was designed to take 5 to 10 minutes to administer. Subjects received survey packets before class with the approval of all instructors. Volunteer subjects were given the Meier Burnout Assessment (MBA), a consent form and confidentiality statement, and a demographic survey to complete

(Appendix A, B, & C). The demographic survey was utilized to determine employment status and other individual characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, and ethnicity. Students were informed the questionnaire was to be answered in true/false format, and all results were placed into envelopes with other completed surveys to the researcher.

Chapter IV

Results

The two groups of full-time employed and part-time employed students were compared on their burnout scores as assessed by the Meier Burnout Assessment. Higher burnout scores indicated greater levels of burnout, while lower scores indicated lesser levels of burnout. The mean burnout score for the full-time employed student was 12.86, while the mean score for part-time employed student was 12.42. Compared to the norms in the original study using this instrument, where the mean burnout score was 11.01, these scores are slightly higher. Descriptive statistics for two groups in terms of burnout scores appear in Table 2.

Table 2: Meier Burnout Assessment Scores

Group	N	M	SD	t	p
Full-time	36	12.86	.023	-1.020	.313
Part-time	14	12.42	.033		

It was hypothesized that there might be a correlation between number of hours worked per week and level of burnout. It was also hypothesized that the full-time employed graduate student would have significantly higher burnout scores than the part-time employed student. For the first hypothesis, the Pearson r correlation test indicated no correlation between number of hours worked per week and level of burnout ($r=-0.063$, $p=0.063$). For the second hypothesis, independent samples t-test was run comparing burnout averages between the two groups. No significant difference was found.

Chapter V

Discussion

The results of this study failed to support the original hypothesis that graduate counseling students experience greater academic burnout when they are concurrently employed full-time compared with those working part-time or not at all. The results also showed no correlation between burnout and employment hours. It must be noted that the standard deviation for the burnout scores was very small, and hence represents a restricted range. Since there was a very small range on the burnout scores reported, the results may not be reflective of a true relationship. Further, the results of this study may have been affected negatively by the small sample size.

According to a study by Meier and Schmeck (1985) university students do experience burnout. Ayala Pines (1980) also demonstrated the existence of burnout within the student population, and suggested that the college years are "...a period of tremendous stress for young adults"(Pines, Aronson, & Kafry, 1980,p.170). Research has demonstrated that multiple roles such as outside employment and domestic work, increases the level of distress experienced (Haw, 1982). However, some studies have shown that multiple roles can have beneficial outcomes rather than detrimental ones, such as outside employment, marriage, and domestic work having a positive effect on distress (Gore & Mangione, 1983; Rosenfield, 1980).

Several limitations are apparent with this study. The first relates to the sample of predominantly white, female graduate students. A study conducted

with a more diverse sample may provide different results. Also, the graduate students surveyed were in the final part of the counseling program, which may have effected the results. It is possible that students completing the counseling program had developed stronger coping skills to combat burnout as they have had more experience and education regarding burnout than did undergraduates in previous research (Meier, 1985). Further, as these students were nearing completion of the program, they may have felt a greater sense of accomplishment. A third limitation of this study concerns the use of graduate college students within one university only. Utilizing graduate college students as subjects greatly reduces the generalizability of the results to other university populations, particularly when only one university was sampled and only one field of study. Also, the part-time group sample size was very small which could have affected the results. Further, there was no examination of the possible impact parenting may play in the role of burnout for the graduate student.

In summary, this study has illustrated the need, within the burnout field, for development of a scale that more adequately measures burnout for graduate students. It has indicated also the need for further validation of the link between burnout and individual personality and lifestyle factors. Another possible area for future study is the relationship between age of older students and development of coping skills as compared to younger students. Also, an examination into whether life experience may assist in combating burnout could be useful in future research. Burnout within the academic environment will continue to be an important area of study, as it will assist advisors and school counselors in

lowering drop out rates, and possibly will assist students in maintaining a healthy academic career.

Appendix A

Meier Burnout Assessment

Instructions: Please answer each of the following questions with True or False as it relates to you.

1. If I'm not getting what I want from a class, I won't put any effort into it. _____
2. People I associate with at school help me be self-confident. _____
3. I can do all the tasks required to be a successful student. _____
4. School was once very enjoyable for me, but as time goes on, I enjoy it less. _____
5. My previous schoolwork causes me to doubt what I can do now. _____
6. I resent it when teachers give me extra work to do. _____
7. One must be very Competent, adequate, and an achiever to consider oneself worthwhile. _____
8. I worry a lot about situations in which I am being tested. _____
9. When I start to get bored with schoolwork, I know what to do next. _____
10. I find school intellectually stimulating, challenging, and full of variety. _____
11. I tend to worry a lot about new classes and material. _____
12. People who do not achieve competency in at least one area should feel bad about themselves. _____
13. Many of the activities I once found enjoyable in school are no longer much fun. _____
14. If I were to do badly one year at school, I would feel that I would never do well. _____
15. I can't wait for the end of the semester to arrive. _____
16. Whenever I experience failure at school, I start to feel as if I am a failure at everything. _____
17. My only motivation for doing schoolwork is that I know I have to do it. _____
18. The best color to describe school for me right now is gray. _____
19. I watch other people to learn how to do schoolwork and to figure out if I can do it too. _____
20. I won't do schoolwork before I feel in complete control of the situation. _____
21. I'd be very upset if I had to leave school, because it's enjoyable to me. _____
22. I have a lot of self-doubt about school. _____
23. I often long for excitement while I am doing schoolwork. _____
24. There's really no way to alter who controls the "goodies" in school. _____
25. Concerning the important matters that affect my schoolwork, I have considerable control. _____
26. I have considerable talent for schoolwork. _____
27. Teachers are the real power about whether school is enjoyable. _____

Appendix B
Demographic Survey

Age _____

Gender _____

Ethnicity _____

How many graduate credit hours have you completed? _____

Paid employment status: (hours below are weekly)

Not at all=0 _____ Part-time=1-30 _____ Full-time=31-40 _____

If employed part-time, average number of hours per week _____

If employed full-time, average number of hours per week _____

Do you have children: yes no

If so, how many _____ Ages of children _____

Do your children live in your home with you: yes no

Marital Status _____

Appendix C

Consent and Confidentiality Statement

I agree _____, do not agree _____ to participate in this study of academic burnout with the understanding that I will remain anonymous, and all data collected will be used for the sole purpose of research. Further, I understand this study will take approximately 5 to 10 minutes of my time, and no restitution or payment will be made to me.

References

Cleary, P.D. & Mechanic, D. (1983). Sex differences in psychological distress among married people. Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 24, 111-121.

Costa, P.T. & McCrae, R.R. (1980). Influence of extraversion and neuroticism on subjective well being: Happy and unhappy people. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 38, 668-678.

Costa, P.T. & McCrae, R. R. (1989). Personality, stress, and coping: Some lessons from a decade of research. In K.S. Markides & C.L. Cooper (Eds.), Aging, stress, and health (pp. 267-283). New York: Wiley.

Costa, P.T., McCrae, R. R., & Zonderman, A.B. (1987). Environmental and dispositional influences on well being: Longitudinal follow-up of an American National Sample. British Journal of Psychology, 78, 299-306.

Fahs-Beck, D. (1987). Counselor burnout in family service agencies. Social Casework: The Journal of Contemporary Social Work, Jan. 1987,3-15.

Frankl, V. (1963). Man's search for meaning: An introduction to logotherapy. New York: Pocket Books.

Freudenberger, H. & North, G. (1985). Women's burnout: How to spot it, how to reverse it, and how to prevent it. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company.

Freudenberger, H. & Richelson, G. (1980). Burnout: The high cost of achievement-what it is-and how to survive it. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company .

- Garden, A. (1991). Relationship between burnout and performance. Psychological Reports, 68, 963-977.
- Glogow, E. (1986). Research note: Burnout and locus of control. Public Personnel Management, 15, 79-83.
- Gore, S. & Mangione, T.W. (1983). Social roles, sex roles, and psychological distress: Additive and interactive models of sex differences. Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 24, 300-312.
- Greenglass, E. R., Burke, R. J., & Konarski, R. (1998). Components of burnout, resources, and gender-related differences. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 28, 12, 1088-1106.
- Harrison, W.D. (1983). A social competence model of burnout. In B.A. Farber (Eds.), Stress and burnout in the human services professions (pp.29-39), New York: Pergamon Press.
- Haw, M. A. (1982). Women, work, and stress: A review and agenda for the future. Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 23, 132-144.
- Haynes, S.G. & Feinlab, M. (1980). Women, work and coronary heart disease: Prospective findings from the Framingham heart study. American Journal of Public Health, 70, 133-144.
- Hergenhahn, B.R. (1994). An introduction to theories of personality. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Huebner, E. S. (1993). Professionals under stress: A review of burnout among the helping professions with implications for school psychologists. Psychology in the Schools, 30, 40-49.

Kahill, S. (1986). Relationship among professional psychologist to professional expectations and social support. Psychological Reports, 59, 1043-1051.

Kesler, K. D. (1990). Burnout: A multimodal approach to assessment and resolution. Elementary School Guidance and Counseling, 24, 303-311.

Lowe, G. S. & Northcott, H. C. (1988) The impact of working conditions, social roles, and personal characteristics on gender differences in distress. Work and Occupations, 15 (1), 55-77.

Maslach, C. (1993) Burnout: A multidimensional perspective. In Schaufeli, Wilmar, Maslach, Christina, & Marek, Tadeusz (Eds.), Professional Burnout: Recent Developments in Theory and Research (pp.19-32) Taylor and Francis.

Maslach, C. & Jackson, S. (1982) Burnout in health professions: A social psychological analysis. In Glenn S. Sanders & Jerry Suls (Eds.), Social Psychology of Health and Illness. (pp. 227-251). Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Maslach, C. & Schaufeli, W. (1993) Historical and conceptual development of burnout. In Schaufeli, Maslach, and Marek (Eds.), Professional Burnout. Recent Developments in Theory and Research (pp. 1-16). Taylor and Francis.

Matthews, D. (1990) A comparison of burnout in selected occupational fields. The Career Development Quarterly, 38, 230-239.

McCarthy, M. E., Pretty, G.M.H., & Catano, V. (1990). Psychological sense of community and student burnout. Journal of College Student Development, 31, 211-215.

McCrae, R.R. & Costa, P.T. (1988). Psychological resilience among widowed men and women: A 10-year follow-up of a national sample. Journal of Social Issues, 44, 129-142.

Meier, S. & Schmeck, R. R. (1985). The burned-out college student: A descriptive profile. Journal of College Student Personnel, 25, 63-69.

Meier, S.T. (1984). The construct validity of burnout. Journal of Occupational Psychology, 57, 211-219.

Meier, S.T. (1983). Toward a theory of burnout. Human Relations, 36, 10, 899-910.

Nagy, S. & Davis, L.G. (1985). Burnout: A comparative analysis of personality and environmental variables. Psychological Reports, 57, 1319-1326.

Nathanson, C. A. (1975). Illness and the feminine role: A theatrical review. Social Science and Medicine, 9, 57-62.

Newton, A. E. (1985). Students. In Welch, I. David, Medeiros, Donald C., & Tate, George A. (Eds.), Beyond burnout: How to enjoy your job again when you've just about had enough (pp.59-70).

Ormel, J. & Wohlfarth, T. (1991). How neuroticism, long-term difficulties, and life situation change influence psychological distress: A longitudinal model. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 60, 744-755.

Piedmont, R. (1993). A longitudinal analysis of burnout in the health care setting: The role of personal dispositions. Journal of Personality Assessment, 61(3), 457-473.

Pines, A.M. (1993). Burnout: An existential perspective. In Schaufeli, Wilmar, Maslach, Christina, & Marek, Tadeusz (Eds.), Professional burnout: Recent developments in theory and research (pp.33-51) Taylor and Francis.

Pines, A.M., Aronson, E., & Kafry, D. (1980). Burnout from tedium to personal growth. New York: The Free Press.

Rosenfield, S. (1980). Sex differences in depression: Do women always have higher rates? Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 21, 33-42.

Ross, R., Altmaier, E.M., & Russell, D. (1989). Job stress, social support, and burnout among counseling center staff. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 36 (4), 464-470.

Schaufeli, W.B. & VanDierendonck, D. (1993). The construct validity of two burnout measures. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 14, 631-647.

Spector, P.E. & O'Connell, B.J. (1994). The contribution of personality traits, negative affectivity, locus of control, and type a to the subsequent reports of job stressors and job strains. Journal of Occupation and Organizational Psychology, 67, 1-11.

Turnipseed, D.L. (1998). Anxiety and burnout in the health care work environment. Psychological Reports, 82, 627-642.

Ursprung, A.W. (1986). Burnout in the human services: A review of the literature. Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin, March, 190-199.

Welch, D.I., Medeiros, D.C., & Tate, G.A. (1985). Beyond burnout: How to enjoy your job again when you've just about had enough. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Wilson, G. T. (1995). Behavior therapy. In Corsini, Raymond & Wedding, Danny (Eds.), Current Psychotherapies (pp.197-228). Itasca, Illinois: F.E. Peacock Publishers.