

STATE REPORT CARD RATING, POVERTY AND BURNOUT:
SOUTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL PERSPECTIVES

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the following people:

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ABSTRACT

STATE REPORT CARD RATING, POVERTY AND BURNOUT: SOUTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL PERSPECTIVES

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This study analyzed the relationship between the South Carolina state report card rating and principal burnout, as well as the relationship between school poverty level and principal burnout using Maslach's three dimensions of burnout. No studies have been conducted on the perceived burnout level of principals as it relates to the state report card rating and the poverty index of schools since the implementation of NCLB and EAA. The study also examined the relationship between principal burnout and variables such as perceived ability to handle stress, principal race, total years in education, training in stress management, grade configuration of school, student demographics and school size. All secondary principals of public high schools in South Carolina were invited to participate in the survey using the MBI-ES. The results of this study indicate that the state report card ratings, poverty indices of their schools and state and national policies that impact education may impact the burnout levels of principals in the long term. As NCLB and EAA continue to be implemented, levels of Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization may continue to rise and Personal Accomplishment may decline.

CHAPTER ONE

NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Every sector of modern society has experienced some degree of stress and burnout. Stress and burnout have consequently been topics of research and study for decades (Gmelch, 1993). Studies on these subjects have focused mainly on human service professionals, such as employees in health and education fields. The terms “stress” and “burnout” have often been used interchangeably in research; however, stress and burnout are not the same. Stress is defined as “the nonspecific response of the body to any demand placed on it” (Seyle, 1974, p. 27). Stress can be pleasant or unpleasant, and unpleasant stress can lead to burnout. Burnout is the “discrepancy between workers’ investment in the job and . . . [the] feelings of satisfaction and gratification derived from the work” (Farber, 1991, p. 2). Brill (1984) determined that workers who suffered from symptoms of burnout would not recover without outside help.

Studies of stress and burnout in the education profession have been conducted on teachers, administrators, and guidance counselors; however, there have been few that focused specifically on South Carolina. Mandeville (1984) examined stress among school administrators and identified the specific tasks that principals considered to be the most stressful in their work. Kulkula (1987) studied reducing stress with effective staff development. In 1992, Cartee studied teacher stress in various school districts in South Carolina and found that stress levels were generally low, although high school teachers displayed more symptoms of stress when compared to elementary teachers. Bollman

studied guidance counselors in 1993 and found stress and burnout levels were low. Flynn (2000) studied stress and burnout among high school principals in South Carolina's public schools and reported low to moderate levels of burnout. In the years since these studies have been conducted, education in South Carolina has changed significantly. With the implementation of South Carolina's Education Improvement Act and a major national education law, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), school administrators are under more pressure than ever before.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceived burnout level of South Carolina secondary principals using Maslach's three dimensions of burnout (Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment) as a theoretical framework. More specifically, this study analyzed the relationship between the South Carolina state report card rating and principal burnout, as well as the relationship between school poverty level and principal burnout. The study also examined the relationship between burnout and the following variables: anticipated longevity as a principal, anticipated longevity in education, perceived ability to handle stress, principal age, principal race, total years in education, training in stress management, years at current position, years in current district, years of administrative experience, years certified as a principal, the grade configuration of the school, school size, and the racial makeup of students. In addition, an open-ended question provided the opportunity for principals to list the biggest contributors to their stress.

With these purposes in mind, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What is the relationship between the South Carolina state report card ratings and principal burnout as defined by Maslach's three dimensions: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels?
2. What is the relationship between the South Carolina state poverty index of the school and principal burnout as defined by Maslach's three dimensions: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels?
3. Is there a significant difference in the Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels as defined by Maslach of principals based on the poverty index of their school and the South Carolina state report card ratings?
4. What is the relationship between principal burnout as defined by Maslach's three dimensions (Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels) and the following variables: anticipated longevity as a principal, anticipated longevity in education, perceived ability to handle stress, principal age, principal race, total years in education, training in stress management, years at current position, years in current district, years of administrative experience, and years certified as a principal?
5. What is the relationship between principal burnout and the grade configuration of the school, school size, and the racial composition of students?
6. What factors do principals indicate are the biggest contributors to their stress?

To support a clear understanding of the study and the stressors that may lead to burnout, a list of common terms and acronyms associated with South Carolina's accountability system and Maslach's three dimensions of burnout follow.

Definition of Terms

Terms Related to the Accountability System

Absolute Rating. The Absolute Rating is the value given to school performance based on student success during the previous school year. The rating is determined by matching the school's performance data to rating criteria. Absolute Ratings are calculated on a weighted model based on the following criteria: performance on High School Assessment Program (HSAP) of students at the school taking the test for the first time, longitudinal High School Assessment Program (HSAP) performance, percentage of students passing end-of-course tests, and on-time graduation rate (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee Accountability Manual, 2007-2008).

Achievement gap. The achievement gap is the difference in academic performance among groups of students. These groups are differentiated by ethnicity, disability, and income level (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee Accountability Manual, 2007-2008).

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). AYP is the minimum level of performance that school districts and schools must achieve each year as determined under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee Accountability Manual, 2007-2008).

Cut scores. Cut scores are selected points on the score scale of a test. For the purpose of this research, cut scores are used to determine student performances on a test

and are organized into the following categories: below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee Accountability Manual, 2007-2008).

Education Accountability Act (EAA). The EAA is a piece of South Carolina legislation passed in 1998. The EAA set standards for improving the state's K-12 educational system (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee Accountability Manual, 2007-2008).

Education Oversight Committee (EOC). The EOC is a nonpartisan, legislative agency, which is composed of legislators, educators, and business professionals. The committee reviews the state's education improvement process, assesses how South Carolina schools are performing, and evaluates the school standards (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee Accountability Manual, 2007-2008).

End-of-course tests (EOC). EOC tests are assessments given to high school students in the following courses: Algebra I, English I, Biology I, United States History, and Physical Science (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee Accountability Manual, 2007-2008).

Growth Rating (formerly Improvement Rating). Growth Ratings are determined by using a mathematical formula that subtracts the school's prior year Absolute Rating from the school's current year Absolute Rating. Longitudinal data are not available at the high school level due to the configuration of curriculum and assessments; therefore, the Growth Rating examines improvement of students over time (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee, Accountability Manual 2007-2008).

High School Assessment Program (HSAP). The South Carolina HSAP is the state's high school exit exam and consists of English/Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics tests. Passage is required for graduation (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee Accountability Manual, 2007-2008).

High school. A high school is defined in accordance with the EOC 2008 Accountability Manual as containing grades 9-12 (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee Accountability Manual, 2007-2008). For this study, all schools containing any combinations of these grades were included.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB). No Child Left Behind is the most recent authorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee Accountability Manual, 2007-2008).

Performance ratings. Performance ratings are used to describe school performance and are based on the five following levels:

- Excellent – School performance substantially exceeds the standards for progress toward the 2010 SC Performance Goal.
- Good – School performance exceeds the standards for progress toward the 2010 SC Performance Goal.
- Average – School performance meets the standards for progress toward the 2010 SC Performance Goal.
- Below Average – School is in jeopardy of not meeting the standards for progress toward the 2010 SC Performance Goal.

- At Risk (formerly Unsatisfactory) – School performance fails to meet the standards for progress toward the 2010 SC Performance Goal (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee Accountability Manual, 2007-2008).

Poverty rating. Annually, the Office of Research and Statistics of the South Carolina Budget and Control Board calculates a poverty index for each school and district. The index is the percentage of students enrolled in the school/district who are eligible for the federal free or reduced-price lunch program (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee Accountability Manual, 2007-2008).

On-time graduation rate. On-time graduation rate is the percentage of all students who start in the ninth grade and go on to earn a standard high school diploma within four years. This percentage includes students with disabilities. When a student transfers to another diploma-granting school, the transferring school must receive a receipt of records before the student can be removed from the sending school's database. Students who meet state diploma requirements in the summer after their projected graduation date are also included in the graduation data (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee Accountability Manual, 2007-2008).

School Improvement Plan. The School Improvement Plan is the written improvement plan for each school that includes strategies for improving student performance in targeted goal areas. Each school improvement plan must be approved by the local school board (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee Accountability Manual, 2007-2008).

South Carolina Performance Goal – 2010 Goal. The South Carolina 2010 Performance Goal is used to establish expectations. The goal states, "South Carolina's

student achievement will be ranked in the top half of states nationally. To achieve this goal, we must become one of the five fastest improving systems in the country” (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee Accountability Manual, 2007-2008, para. 29).

Student subgroups. Student subgroups are disaggregated for AYP status into the following categories: racial/ethnicity, students with disabilities, Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and economically disadvantaged (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee Accountability Manual, 2007-2008).

Title I. Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act refers to a federal funding program aimed at students who are already behind academically or at risk of falling behind. Title I funding provides assistance to improve the quality of teaching for children in areas with high economic needs (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee Accountability Manual, 2007-2008, p. 66).

Maslach’s Burnout Terms

Burnout. Burnout is a type of stress response most commonly exhibited by individuals who have intense contact and involvement with others during the course of a normal workday. There are three phases of burnout: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment (Maslach, 1982).

Depersonalization. Depersonalization is the component of burnout that refers to the feelings of a professional who has become detached from the people with whom the professional works. Depersonalization also describes the tendency to treat people as objects rather than as individuals and is considered a coping mechanism (Maslach, 1982).

Emotional Exhaustion. Emotional Exhaustion is the first phase of burnout and is considered the most important of the three components of burnout. Common symptoms

include experiencing a lack of energy and feeling as if one's emotions have been depleted (Maslach, 1982).

Personal Accomplishment. The third component of burnout is reduced Personal Accomplishment. In this phase, professionals have developed a negative view of their ability to perform their jobs. They believe they can no longer make a difference through their work (Maslach, 1982).

Stress. Stress can be defined as “the nonspecific response of the body to any demands placed on it” (Selye, 1974, p. 7).

Delimitations of the Study

This study was limited to public high schools in South Carolina. A high school is defined in accordance with the EOC 2007 Accountability Manual as containing grades 9-12. For this study, all schools containing any combinations of these grades were included. Due to the nature of NCLB, South Carolina was able to implement the law based on the state's specific standards and interpretations; therefore, any stressors that are found only pertain to South Carolina principals (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee, 2007).

As declared in the NCLB law, each state has its own criteria with which to implement the requirements of No Child Left Behind; therefore, South Carolina regulations are particular to South Carolina schools alone. It is also important to note that private and charter schools were excluded from the study because of the dissimilarities between these schools and public schools. In addition, alternative, elementary, and middle schools were excluded; therefore, results cannot be applied to alternative, elementary, and middle school principals. Additional limitations are related to the nature

of survey research. This research took place during one consecutive period of time. However, burnout is not a constant and may vary depending on external factors, such as the time of the school year in which the survey is administered. Furthermore, the response rate was 50%; therefore, the information from the principals who did not respond may be critical to understanding additional effects of burnout on South Carolina principals.

Research Design

All principals of public high schools in South Carolina had access to the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey (MBI-ES) (Appendix A) and were surveyed online. The original Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was developed by Maslach and Jackson to measure burnout in human service professionals. A second edition, the MBI-ES, includes a survey instrument specifically for educators. It has been used for over 16 years to measure burnout in service professionals. The MBI-ES measures three components of burnout: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment. Subscale scores are produced for each of the three components. According to Byrne (1993), “Each subscale has demonstrated strong evidence of (a) internal consistency and test retest reliability, (b) convergent validity with external criteria including personal experience (observation), dimensions of job experience, and personal outcomes, and (c) discriminate validity” (p. 652). The MBI-ES was chosen for its reliability and ease of administration. Studies by Iwanicki and Schwab (1981) and Gold (1984) uphold the validity of the three-factor structure of the MBI-ES. Iwanicki and Schwab (1981) found Cronbach’s alpha estimate of .90 for Emotional Exhaustion .76 for Depersonalization, and .76 for Personal Accomplishment. Gold (1984) reported estimates

of .88 for Emotional Exhaustion, .74 for Depersonalization, and .72 for Personal Accomplishment. The significance of the Maslach model is that it places the burnout experience in the social context of the workplace and involves the worker's perception of self and others (Maslach & Leiter, 2008).

The MBI-ES consists of 22 statements describing the feelings an individual might have as a result of burnout. Respondents were asked to indicate the frequency at which they had experienced these feelings by selecting from a list of six response choices. Because the MBI-ES measures burnout on three subscales, raw scores were interpreted as follows: Emotional Exhaustion is characterized by feelings of emotional overextension and chronic fatigue; Depersonalization is indicated when one's attitude towards the people served is uncaring, indifferent, or negative; and reduced Personal Accomplishment is the feeling that one is not as successful as before.

It is important to note that the response scale for Personal Accomplishment is different from the other two subscales because the scoring is reversed. For example, a score of less than 32 on the Personal Accomplishment subscale means a high degree of personal accomplishment. The response categories and their corresponding values for Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment on the MBI-ES (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996) are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Response Categories for the MBI – ES

Response category	Emotional Exhaustion	Depersonalization	Personal Accomplishment
High	27 or over	13 or over	0-31
Moderate	17-26	7-12	32-38
Low	0-16	0-6	39 or over

Data Collection

After obtaining email addresses from the South Carolina State Department, all public high school principals in the state were contacted via an introductory email (Appendix C) of invitation to participate in the study. The short introductory email was sent to the principals of all 202 South Carolina public high schools two days in advance of the actual survey email. The survey email (Appendix D) with the MBI-ES (Appendix A) and a short demographic survey (Appendix B) were sent within the following two days on June 11, 2009. Reminder emails were sent on June 15, June 22, and June 25, 2009. Only this researcher had access to the master list of participant codes, and all information was kept confidential. The projected length of time to complete the surveys was estimated at 30 minutes and was based on sample tests given to five middle school teachers. The informed consent statement was sent as an attachment to the survey email. Finally, an expression of appreciation was included in a closing email (Appendix C). A follow-up email (Appendix D) was sent to those who did not respond to the initial email.

There were also six respondents who answered with paper surveys that were distributed at the Business Summit in Greenville, South Carolina on June 22, 2009.

Significance of the Study

Many studies have viewed burnout as a result of, or a response to, stress (Cherniss, 1980; Farber, 1991; Freudenberger, 1980). It is clear that principals are under constant stress in their work environments (Whan & Thomas, 1996). Time demands, strict accountability standards, and the overall nature of the role a principal fulfills makes it very difficult to find qualified individuals who are willing to fill the job, especially at the high school level (Howley & Pendaravis, 2004; Whitaker, 2001). Multiple studies have been conducted on the influence of principals on learning and accountability, high-stakes testing and its impact on stress, teacher burnout, and principal burnout in general (Ellis, 2004; Elmore, Abelman & Fuhrman, 1996; Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). Additionally, these studies have focused on the changing role of the principal as a manager to an instructional leader; however, no studies have been conducted on the perceived burnout level of principals as it relates to the South Carolina state report card rating and the poverty index of their respective schools.

NCLB has created major changes in South Carolina schools. As the implementation of NCLB continues to develop, principals must increasingly follow regulations of the NCLB law as they are interpreted by the state, creating situations that are different for administrators. These situations may add new stressors to the job and responsibilities held by principals and, in turn, could lead to more principal shortages as the job becomes less desirable for applicants. As defined by the South Carolina State Department's principal evaluation instrument, the principal is "the educational leader

who fosters the success of all students” (*South Carolina Department of Education Principal Evaluation Instrument*, para.3). In accordance with both the South Carolina 1998 Education Accountability Act (EAA) and NCLB, for the schools in which the principals are unable to facilitate the instructional process to meet federal and state regulations, the consequences are clear. The principal is faced with increasingly stringent corrective actions, which may involve replacing school staff—including the principal.

South Carolina had already made changes in accountability before the full implementation of NCLB. In 1998, four years before NCLB was implemented, South Carolina’s General Assembly passed the EEA, which impacted schools in two basic ways. Firstly, statewide education standards were set for every grade level. Secondly, state law required schools and school districts to produce a report card that reflected a school performance rating. The EEA helped South Carolina meet the federal requirements of NCLB, but some adjustments had to be made to meet the federal law. As part of the EEA, school report cards had already been established; therefore, one of the major changes was to add a third performance measure, AYP, to the report card. In essence, South Carolina was implementing two accountability systems: one state system under the EEA and one federal system under NCLB.

The requirements for meeting AYP pose the greatest challenges to high-poverty schools, which enroll a large percentage of students who have traditionally scored poorly on standardized achievement tests. Consistent with the strong correlation between race and poverty (Orfield & Lee, 2005), many high-poverty schools also enroll large concentrations of African American and/or Latino students, whose average test scores tend to fall below the minimum proficiency level required to meet the requirements as

defined by AYP legislation. African American and Latino students often belong to other subgroup categories defined by NCLB, including subgroups for economically disadvantaged students and limited English proficient students. This may suggest that schools with minority subgroups will have to meet multiple targets, further increasing the school's chances of failing to make AYP (Kim & Sunderman, 2005).

The impact of poverty on the institution of education is particularly evident in South Carolina schools. According to a study conducted by the Southern Education Foundation (2002), almost 46% of all students in South Carolina are considered poor and receive either free or reduced-price lunch. The influence of poverty on state assessments is clear. The effect of poverty can be linked to performance on state testing in that the higher the percentage of students in poverty, the lower the percentage of students scoring on a proficient level (Hanushek, 2006).

The emphasis on accountability has resulted in additional pressures and recommendations for new roles for principals (Brewer, 2001; King, 2002; Tirozzi, 2001). Few other occupations involve more feelings of vast responsibility than that of a school administrator (Cedoline, 1982). Changes in society and school reform movements have only increased the pressure placed on public school administrators. Principals are still heavily engaged in traditional roles of the job, such as managing resources and safety; however, they also continue to become more heavily involved in school-community relationships and facilitating student learning (Cooley & Shen, 2003). The principal's emphasis on accountability has shifted from focusing on how money and other resources are used to having personal responsibility for student achievement (Elmore, Abelman & Fuhrman, 1996). The relationship between the administrator and the school may be

considered a precarious relationship in that a disconnect may exist between the high expectations of the administrator and the realistic outcomes of the occupation. Without adequate preparation for the reality of the principalship, the administrator enters a complicated world that demands quick responses to many different situations. At times, these demands may be in conflict with one another. Eventually, many principals learn that they may not live up to their own expectations as a principal, and as a result they may become frustrated, exhausted, unmotivated, and ultimately burned out (Friedman, 2002).

Results of the study helped reveal burnout indicators of secondary principals as they relate to South Carolina state report card rating, poverty index, and demographic factors. Commonalities among the variables were used to identify patterns that may indicate particular issues with burnout, which may prove helpful in the selection and retention of South Carolina high school principals.

This dissertation consists of five chapters. Chapter One outlines the nature and scope of the study. Chapter Two consists of a critical review of current literature about burnout, the South Carolina state report card for schools, and the poverty indices of South Carolina high schools. Chapter Three describes the methodology and procedures that were used to conduct the study. The data collection and analysis are presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Five presents the conclusions of the research and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review of related literature relevant to the concepts of burnout, the South Carolina report card, and the impact of poverty on schools in South Carolina. The chapter is organized into five sections. The first section provides definitions for burnout and stress. The second section describes factors that may influence burnout. The third section defines No Child Left Behind and its impact on school reform, specifically South Carolina school reform. Section four addresses the general impact of poverty on schools, and the impact of poverty on South Carolina schools. Section five looks at the influence of the building principal, particularly the stress of the job and principal turnover.

Definitions and Implications of Stress and Burnout

For over 30 years, America and its workers have been in what has been described as an age full of anxiety (Cedoline, 1982). Stress and burnout have been the focus of more than 100,000 books, articles, and journals (Gmelch, 1993). Much of the research concentrates on stress and burnout in the human service professions, mostly because professionals in this field seem to be more susceptible to them (Maslach, 1982). Cedoline (1982) stated that burnout is most common in two areas: helping professions, such as social work and teaching, and public service professions, such as policing. Burnout is particularly problematic for people in the former profession because their concern for the people they help is critical to obtaining successful outcomes in their work (Justice, Gold & Klein, 1981).

Definitions of Stress

While the symptoms of stress and burnout may be similar, the conditions that cause and characterize them are not the same. There is not one clear definition for stress; it is a concept that has different meanings and connotations across several disciplines. The fields of medicine, sociology, and engineering all use different definitions to describe stress. Even if a parallel definition of stress existed across several disciplines, the actual ways in which stress is manifested in contemporary daily life would still be inconsistent. For example, the businessman may think of stress as general frustration with others, whereas the air traffic controller may think of stress as a resulting lack of personal concentration. One aspect of stress that most professionals tend to agree on is that there is an inequality between the situation and the individual: “Stress occurs when there is a substantial imbalance between environmental demand and the response capability of the focal organism” (McGrath, 1970, p. 17).

For the purposes of this study, stress is defined as “the nonspecific response of the body to any demands placed on it” (Selye, 1974, p. 7), whereas burnout is described by Maslach (1982) as a “syndrome of Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and reduced Personal Achievement that can occur among individuals who do ‘people work’ of some kind” (p. 3). Maslach (1982) further refined the definition by describing burnout as a type of job stress that “has some of the same deleterious effects as other stress responses, but what is unique about burnout is that the stress arises from the social interactions between the helper and the recipient” (p. 3).

Definitions and Implications of Burnout

Freudenberger, often considered to be the pioneer researcher in the study of burnout, noted burnout in workers who, during times of pressure, overworked themselves until they collapsed. He also noted that these individuals underwent a slow-forming but steadily increasing state of emotional emptiness accompanied by low commitment and motivation. He used the term “burnout” to describe his patients who were unable to cope with the stress of their jobs and who were negatively affected by them over time (Jorde, 1982). In his own definition of burnout, Freudenberger (1980) stated that burnout is “a wearing down and wearing out of energy . . . an exhaustion born of excessive demands” (p. 9). He further defined burnout by using an analogy of a burned out building to describe burnout in an individual:

If you have ever seen a building that has been burned out, you know it is a devastating sight. What had once been a throbbing, vital structure is now deserted. Where there has once been activity, there are now only crumbling reminders of energy and life. Some bricks or concrete may be left, some outlines of windows. . . . Only if you venture inside will you be struck by the full force of the desolation. . . . I have come to realize that people, as well as buildings, sometimes burnout. Under the strain of living in our complex world, their inner resources are consumed as if by fire, leaving a great emptiness inside although their outer shells may be more or less unchanged. (p. xv)

Spaniol and Caputo (1979) defined burnout in stages. In the first stage, the symptoms of burnout are short lived. With rest and relaxation, the symptoms can be

reduced and a normal level of job satisfaction can resume. In the second stage, the symptoms are more regular, last longer, and are harder to overcome. The individual suffering burnout may also develop a cynical attitude toward leadership in the second stage. The third and final stage is characterized by a manifestation of these symptoms as negativity toward the self. The professional may consider a job or career change in this stage of burnout.

Other researchers have described burnout as the “discrepancy between workers’ investment in the job . . . and the feelings of satisfaction and gratification derived from the work” (Farber, 1991, p. 2). Byrne described burnout as the “inability to function effectively in one’s job as a consequence of prolonged and extensive job-related stress and the final step in a progression of unsuccessful attempts to cope with negative stress conditions” (Byrne, 1993, p. 1). Cherniss (1980) described burnout as a process that takes place when a dedicated professional becomes uninvolved with work as a result of job-related stress.

According to Maslach and Jackson (1981), professionals in the helping and human service professions work intensely with people who have problems that are not easily fixed and who often exhibit feelings of anger. Intense interaction with these kinds of people and problems leads to the three key elements associated with burnout: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and decreased Personal Accomplishment. Of the three dimensions of burnout (Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Achievement), exhaustion is the most reported and, in turn, the most analyzed.

Exhaustion is not simply a reaction caused by the elements of burnout. It promotes other behaviors as well, such as distancing oneself from work, which in turn

exacerbates the other two dimensions (Depersonalization and Personal Achievement). While there is a clear link between the onsets of exhaustion and depersonalization, the third dimension, Personal Accomplishment, is more complex as it may act in combination with the other two dimensions or manifest itself independently from them (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). According to Schaufeli, Maslach and Marek (1993), stress is more universal, whereas burnout can only be experienced by “people who entered their careers with high goals, expectations and motivation—people who expected to derive a sense of significance from their work” (p. 38). In a recent study, Bilge (2006) noted that academic professionals have to work harder to comply with the increasing expectations set both by themselves and their institutions. For academic professionals, lack of job satisfaction was the most significant predictor for the three dimensions of burnout. Therefore, professionals who find meaning and reward in their careers are more motivated to work and experience less burnout (Bilge, 2006).

Factors that May Influence Burnout

While the symptoms of burnout may be somewhat defined by Maslach’s three dimensions, there are other factors that may complicate or exacerbate the symptoms. Personality differences may help to explain the differences in the ways that people cope with burnout. In addition, specific organizational environment issues may exacerbate certain symptoms of burnout.

While the relationship between personality and burnout has been unclear in many studies (Bakker, Van Der Zee, Lewig & Dollard, 2006), research suggests that emotional and physical demands may be related to increased burnout (Bakker, Demerouti, Taris, Schaufeli & Schreuers, 2003; Houkes, Janssen, de Jonge & Bakker, 2003). For example,

several researchers (Beasley, Thompson & Davidson, 2003; Zellars, Perrewe & Hochwarter, 2000) reported that the lack of certain personality characteristics may lead to greater degrees of burnout. Persons with higher levels of agreeableness, extraversion, and openness seem to be less affected by burnout as compared to those who do not have these traits. Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) reported that “a tendency to experience negative, distressing emotions and to possess associated behavioral and cognitive traits characterize neuroticism” (p. 6), which is strongly associated with burnout. The indicators of neuroticism are fearfulness, social anxiety, and helplessness (Costa & McCrae, 1987). Individuals who experience high levels of neuroticism may undergo more emotional reactions when they are confronted with stressful situations (Van Heck, 1997) and may report higher levels of Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization (Buhler & Land, 2003). Additionally, these individuals seem to use avoidance and other coping strategies, such as denial and self-criticism (Bolger, 1990; Heppner, Cook, Wright & Johnson, 1995; McCrae & Costa, 1987). Ineffective coping with stressful situations in the work environment makes individuals who have high levels of neuroticism more vulnerable to the symptoms that are typically associated with burnout. They may tend to expect the worst and may experience frustration more than individuals who are low in neuroticism. On the other hand, persons low in neuroticism appear calm and composed when faced with stressful situations. They are often perceived as “unflappable” (Zellars, Perrewe & Hochwarter, 2000, p.1579).

In addition to the personality characteristics, certain organizational environments may influence burnout (Johns, 2006). One’s perception of disrespectful behavior from colleagues may lead to increased stress (Lim & Cortina, 2005). In general, workers judge

their self-worth based on the respect they obtain. If workers perceive disrespect in their work environments, their self-worth will decrease (Hodson, 2001). Furthermore, if employees feel disrespected, they may feel a need to mask their true emotional reactions regarding the ways their organization treats them while they are assisting their clients. This masking and suppression of emotional responses may lead to increased Emotional Exhaustion (Grandey, 2003). Additionally, if employees perceive disrespect, there is a possibility that the perception could lead to cynicism, which exacerbates burnout (Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003).

Recent research indicated that burnout may not be related only to the individual or the job. Autonomy may also impact burnout. For example, individuals who have autonomy over their tasks may suffer less burnout than individuals who have less autonomy over their tasks. Similarly, the less autonomy employees reported, the more vulnerable they were to the influence of organizational disrespect (Grandey, Fisk & Steiner, 2005). This research indicated that of all of the possible influences on burnout, organizational respect influenced burnout significantly more than the negative effects of job demands. However, it was noted that job demands may not lead to burnout if the work is considered rewarding. For example, if a human service worker believed they were helping another individual, it might counterbalance the other factors of burnout from the job (Ramarajan & Barsade, 2006).

Self-efficacy is also strongly related to the dimensions of burnout. Self-efficacy is generally defined as the belief that one is capable of organizing and carrying out actions that are required to produce the desired achievements or outcomes (Bandura, 1997). An individual's self-efficacy influences the direction that the individual may take, how

persistent the individual is in overcoming adversity, and the level of success that individual may attain. For example, low levels of self-efficacy in a task that is perceived to be important create stress, and low levels of self-efficacy involved in an outcome that is not valued or perceived to be important may foster feelings of apathy. Bandura (1997) suggested that self-efficacy is normally a sound predictor of behavior. To date, there has not been a large amount of research done on the self-efficacy of principals (DeMoulin, 1992; Hillman, 1984, 1986)

McCormick (2001) noted that a principal's sense of self-efficacy comes from the ability to create a course of action that will bring about a desired effect within the school. Successful leadership involves using social influence to organize, direct, and motivate the actions of others. It requires strategies for effective task completion (McCormick, 2001). In addition, the perceived levels of self-efficacy in leadership positions appear to be related to objective evaluations by peers and superiors (Chemers, Watson & May, 2000). Principals with a strong sense of self-efficacy are persistent in pursuing their goals and view change as a slow process. In addition, they do not persist in using ineffective strategies, and they do not see their inability to immediately solve problems as a personal failure (Osterman & Sullivan, 1996). On the other hand, low efficacy principals are less likely to identify strategies that are appropriate to the problem and when they fail, they continue to follow the original course of action even though it is ineffective. They also tend to blame others when challenged and they are quicker to demonstrate stress, anxiety and frustration. They are more reliant on coercive or reward power (Lyons & Murphy, 1994). Ultimately, with the role of the principal increasingly tied to student accountability

and high stakes assessment results, self efficacy may play an important role in meeting the expectations and demands of the job (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004).

No Child Left Behind and School Reform

In 2001, Congress passed NCLB with strong support from both Republicans and Democrats. The stated intent of the law was to raise academic achievement for all students and to close gaps in student subgroup achievement levels. Under NCLB, each subgroup must meet proficiency goals set by its respective state, and ninety-five percent of students in each school must be tested in order to determine these proficiency levels. By the year 2013-2014, all students, 100%, must be able to meet the proficiency goals as outlined by their state. Also, core academic teachers must be highly qualified as defined by their state (Peterson, 2005).

All public schools in the country are subject to NCLB goals and reporting requirements. Additionally, if a school receives Title I funds and does not meet the requirements for AYP, it is subject to penalties outlined by the NCLB law. There are four basic requirements of the law, two of which are especially pertinent to this study. One pertinent requirement states that each year, all students in Grade 3 and Grade 8 will be tested in reading and mathematics; each set of students will be tested again in the same two subjects in high school. Test scores are disaggregated into subgroups that consist of racial/ethnicity, students with disabilities, Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and economically disadvantaged. Test scores must improve each year in order for the school to meet AYP. Another pertinent requirement stipulates that if a school fails to make AYP for two or more years, the school is considered to be in need of improvement and is

subject to a variety of sanctions, most of which range from school choice to state takeovers (Peterson, 2005).

The effectiveness of NCLB has not yet been completely determined; however, studies have been conducted on the effects the law has had on teachers and administrators. A 2003 study released for the Spencer Foundation reported that state test scores and their analyses were a major source of stress for education workers, in part because educators did not understand precisely what they needed to do with their test analyses and felt that the testing system was unfair (Berry, Turchi, Johnson, Hare, Owens & Clements, 2003). Further, many educators believed that the results were out of their control because of the challenges that many students brought into the testing context with them, such as problematic family backgrounds and poor living conditions. For example, one principal noted that

Many [of those in Title I schools] are doing an excellent job and they are on level with their class. . . . They are doing exactly what they have been asked to do—take the child from where he is and move him forward. But their schools will never be where some schools are and that’s sad. Then they get marked as a poor school. (Berry, Turchi, Johnson, Hare, Owens & Clements, 2003, p. 25)

In lower-performing schools, administrators described an additional competition between educational institutions and the academic environment in which they have to exist. Competitiveness involved general “talk” within the schools on topics like punishment for low test scores and which teachers and schools were bringing down the larger school system. When describing the process a superintendent used to compare

individual teachers and scores across the district, a South Carolina teacher stated that “You don’t want to be that bottom teacher who gets assigned a Teacher Support Team” (p. 25). Another teacher remarked that there was a need to “run for cover” (p. 25) because the state analysis of test scores would expose the teachers (instead of the students or the system) as poor and uneducated. A single failing test score was powerful enough to produce fear in both teachers and administrators. However, the most powerful complaint about the accountability system was that results are not outcomes of education or ability, but indicators of students’ socioeconomic class (Berry, Turchi, Johnson, Hare, Owens & Clements, 2003).

According to Kaufman (2005), NCLB promotes more of the authoritarian or “dissonant” type of leader—one who operates with force and fear. Kaufman noted specifically that NCLB, “...through key provisions, encourages and in some places requires Dissonant Leadership practices” (p. 197) or other harsh practices. For example, Berry, Turchi, Johnson, Hare and Clements (2003) reported that in high-performing districts, superintendents had higher levels of education, received more resources, demonstrated more connections, and provided more meaningful staff development. In high-performing schools, administrators were more likely to be seen as transformative leaders, whereas in schools performing at lower levels, administrators were likely to be seen as more authoritarian. Teachers in low-performing schools felt threatened by their principals, who were known as “snoopervisors,” and believed these “snoopervisors” visited their classrooms not to help them but to find evidence that could be used against them (p. 37). Teachers in these schools felt that their schools’ poor ratings and low test scores were inevitable (Berry, Turchi, Johnson, Hare, Owens & Clements, 2003).

Kaufman (2005) also noted that NCLB disproportionately emphasizes sanctions rather than incentives. NCLB “expects” failure in that it mandates that schools make tremendous improvements without providing them with the necessary skills, resources, or support (Kaufman, 2005).

Elmore (2000) depicted a grim outlook for improving schools under the new school reform structure of standards. Elmore reported that schools are not equipped to handle the new reform because of the politics and the organization of the school system itself. If schools attempt to bend these standards, Elmore warned, they might be weakened and unrecognizable by the time they get to the classroom. The term “loose coupling” (Elmore, 2000, p. 2) is often used when describing the organization of education. Simply stated, loose coupling means that the people who manage the school system have very little to do with the technical supervision of teaching. Elmore (2000) reported that administrators do not manage instruction; instead, they manage the structures and processes that surround instruction, which is the real business of the educational system. The administrator serves as a buffer for outside scrutiny and assures the public of the quality of education. Teachers, who are often isolated, manage the classroom business of teaching as they see fit. This isolation creates a fragmented setting that makes change difficult to implement and inconsistent, even within the same building.

The organization of the education institution accounts for many of the problems in finding an administrator who is also an instructional leader. “Instructional leadership is the equivalent of the holy grail in educational administration”(Elmore, 2000, p. 4). Elmore (2000) stated that the programs that prepare leaders often fail to train them in the areas of school improvement. Elmore also stated that principals who do train their

faculties in instructional practices do so because this training is of personal interest to them. The politics and policies are often in place to protect the organization, not necessarily to improve teaching and learning. Standards-based reform is a problem for education in that the schools, not the district, are individually responsible for student achievement. Elmore warned that the “conflicts between standards-based reform and the current structure of public education may bode ill for public schools and the people who work in them” (p. 4).

Impact of No Child Left Behind in South Carolina

Under the NCLB law, principals must follow regulations of the NCLB law as they are interpreted by the state. The implementation of the NCLB law has created situations that are new to administrators and that have added new stressors to the job of principal. As defined by the South Carolina State Department’s principal evaluation instrument, the principal is “the educational leader who fosters the success of all students” (South Carolina Department of Education, para. 3). In accordance with both the South Carolina 1998 Education Accountability Act (EAA) and NCLB, for schools that are labeled at risk and where the principals were unable to facilitate the instructional process in order to improve to meet state and federal requirements, consequences are clear. The principal is faced with increasingly stringent corrective actions that may include replacing district and school staff.

State, district, and school accountability changes had already been made in South Carolina before the passage and implementation of NCLB. The EAA was passed by the General Assembly in 1998. The law specifically defines the state’s accountability system.

It reads:

The General Assembly finds that South Carolinians have a commitment to public education and a conviction that high expectations for all students are vital components for improving academic achievement. It is the purpose of the General Assembly in this chapter to establish a performance based accountability system for public education which focuses on improving teaching and learning so that students are equipped with a strong academic foundation. Accountability, as defined by this chapter, means acceptance of the responsibility for improving student performance and taking actions to improve classroom practice and school performance by the Governor, the General Assembly, the State Department of Education, colleges and universities, local school boards, administrators, teachers, parents, students, and the community. (South Carolina Code of Laws, n.d., p.1-2)

Objectives included the use of academic standards to increase the level of rigor with the intent of improving student performance. Furthermore, the objectives established a system so that the public would be provided with an annual report card presenting clear and detailed information on the school's academic performance. The NCLB law provides specific directions for dissemination of assessment results. The information must be in a format that teachers can easily understand, so they can use the information to improve teaching and learning. Longitudinal information, as well as the performance of subgroups, is a part of the report card information. In addition, the law charges districts with establishing accountability systems that ensure the quality of teaching and learning and that assist low-performing schools if needed. Finally, staff development is to be

provided to improve teaching within the district and to evaluate the effectiveness of academic improvement efforts. The law also defines grade-specific and content-specific standards.

To accomplish the various goals set down by NCLB, statewide South Carolina standards were set for every grade level. In addition, state law requires schools and school districts to produce a report card that reflects a school's performance rating. In the event that a school is deemed at risk, several steps must be taken, including informing the parents of children attending the school of both the rating and the plan to improve performance. An external review team will then review the improvement plan and identify areas where additional focus or improvement is needed. If the student academic performance has not improved within a given time period, the State Board of Education may declare a state of emergency and can replace the district's superintendent, change the school's principal, and assume management of the school.

In years since NCLB was passed, South Carolina has essentially implemented two accountability systems: one state system under the EAA and one federal system under NCLB. The EEA has helped South Carolina meet the federal requirements of NCLB, but adjustments had to be made to the state system in order to meet the new federal law. As part of the EAA, school report cards had already been established, but one change was the addition of a third performance measure, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), to the report card. The dual system that South Carolina adopted serves several purposes. These purposes, as described in the 2007-2008 accountability manual, are as follows:

- use academic standards to inspire schools and students to perform at higher levels

- provide a system by way of annual report card for the public to monitor school performance
- ensure quality of instruction and provide assistance to low performing schools
- provide a system that will reduce gaps in student performance
- support staff development that works to improve the school
- evaluate the effectiveness of academic improvement efforts. (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee, 2007, p. 1)

With the combination of the EAA and NCLB, the achievement bar had been raised substantially for South Carolina. It was one of five states that received an A or a B for its standards and a strong rating for its accountability system (Peterson, 2006). It was noted specifically that South Carolina had established clear, measurable, comprehensive, and rigorous standards. In fact, Princeton Review (2003) ranked South Carolina among the highest states for its testing and accountability program. One reason for the high ranking was that South Carolina uses a high cut score to determine proficiency.

Cut scores are selected points on the score scale of a test; essentially, cut scores differentiate the passing level from other levels. The points are used to determine whether a particular test score is sufficient for a very specific purpose. For example, on the basis of cut scores, student performance on a test may be classified into one of several categories, such as basic, proficient, or advanced. In a multi-stage process, the setting of cut scores requires the involvement and input of policy makers, educators, assessment professionals, and others. While cut scores should be based on a generally accepted methodology and reflect the judgments of qualified people, these elements alone do not set the categories for cut score variances. For example, the Northwest Evaluation

Association (NWEA) conducted a study that illustrates the inconsistencies of using cut score that vary from state to state (Finn & Petrilli, 2008). The study looked at three different areas concerning the use of cut scores on state tests: the difficulty of each state's test, whether the test has changed in difficulty since the enactment of NCLB, and the state's cut scores' consistency from grade to grade. The results were surprising. NWEA found that proficiency ratings varied widely from state to state with passing scores ranging from the 6th percentile to the 77th percentile. NWEA also reported that many state tests have become easier over the last several years, and very few states have consistent proficiency expectations across grade levels. Using South Carolina as an example for their article, Finn and Petrilli (2008) specifically pointed out the differences between states such as Colorado, which set its cut score at the 14th percentile, and South Carolina, which set its cut score at the 71st percentile. A student moving from Colorado to South Carolina would be unprepared for the testing expectations. With that example in mind, the cut score approach may be problematic when used for school accountability in that it creates an environment where the focus is on the student who is just below or just above the cut score, whereas most other students more than likely will remain within the same score range for the remainder of their education (Harris, 2006).

An important outcome of the EAA was the shift in the direction of interventions: rather than focusing on districts, state assistance focused on individual schools instead. One component in the assistance plan was the placement of external review teams (ERTs) within the school at risk. ERTs are assigned to all schools that receive an "unsatisfactory" academic performance rating, the lowest of the five categories on the EAA's school performance classification system. Additionally, schools that received a

“below average” performance rating (the next to the lowest category) could request an ERT visit.

A study completed on the improvement of an unsatisfactory school in South Carolina suggested all unsatisfactory schools were not the same, and as such, large-scale improvement efforts should not treat them as if they are (Dominguez, Nicholls, Storaandt, 2006). Although unsatisfactory schools may have appeared to share a common set of deficiencies, they did not react in the same ways to assistance. Some schools improved; others did not; and some schools fluctuated without apparent direction. These findings are consistent with an emerging body of research that relies on the analysis of student achievement data (Kannapel, Clements, Taylor & Hibpshman, 2005; Parrish, Merickel, Perez, Linqianti, Socias, & Spain, 2006). In addition, the data suggested that schools in need of improvement require time and results, some of which may not be visible for a year or more following the state assistance. Elmore (2003) also asserted that performance often lags behind practice and that schools can improve just as much when they are in the process of changing practices, even though no measurable effect may be visible. In addition, the mobility of school principals and good teachers can undermine school improvement. Widespread organizational instability reduces the schools’ ability to progress and should be addressed before instructional improvements.

According to the EAA, the state board has authority to replace the principal and assume management of the school if the school does not follow the ERT recommendations which often creates more instability in an unsatisfactory school. To avoid such measures, principals of low-performing schools are provided with a mentor. In addition, the principal, along with his or her faculty, must review the improvement

plan and revise it in collaboration with the school improvement council. The principal must also inform the parents of children attending the school of the steps that are in place to improve performance. This public notice must be published in a South Carolina newspaper and must identify the school district, the superintendent of the district, the specific school, and the principal of the school (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee, 2007).

Impact of Poverty on Schools

In addition to meeting the regulations of NCLB and EAA, public schools continue to battle factors that have influenced schools for years. One major issue that continues to impact schools is the socioeconomic status of students. Using a national sample, a 2001 study reported that poverty may account for up to 93% of the variance in twelfth grade mathematics scores (Hoxby, 2001). The general pattern involving socioeconomics and education is that students from economically disadvantaged homes usually miss school more often. The longer the child remains in an impoverished situation, the worse the child's situation becomes (Harris, 2006).

The requirements for meeting NCLB including the AYP component have posed the greatest challenges to high-poverty schools, which traditionally enroll a large percentage of students who score poorly on standardized achievement tests. Consistent with the strong correlation between race and poverty (Orfield & Lee, 2005), many high-poverty schools also enroll large concentrations of minority students, such as African American and Latino students, whose average test scores tend to fall below the minimum proficiency level necessary to meet AYP requirements. In addition, African American and Latino students often belong to other subgroup categories defined by NCLB,

including subgroups for economically disadvantaged students and limited English proficient students. Schools with minority subgroups have to meet multiple EAA and NCLB targets, further increasing the school's chances of failing to make South Carolina and national requirements (Kim & Sunderman, 2005).

There are several proposed ways to close the academic achievement gap between children of poverty and children who are not economically disadvantaged. One proposed way is to give more resources to designated schools, but some researchers say the effects of such practices are too small for the high cost (Harris, 2006). Another proposed way is to use higher standards and greater accountability. As with the debate on spending, there is some controversy as to the effectiveness of this approach, as some evidence suggests that it may undermine instruction (Harris, 2006). Obviously, there is no single solution to the poverty problem in schools.

Poverty in South Carolina

Poverty in the South is both extensive and persistent, and the rate of poverty in southern states consistently surpasses other regions of the country. In 2004, for example, residents at or below the federal poverty level (FPL) were calculated at 14.1% of the total population of the southeastern United States (Young, 2005). One study pointed out that 11 southern states are “home to 30% of all Americans—yet lay claim to 34% of the nation's poor” (Dunning, Ledbetter & Whorton, 2002). Specifically, South Carolina has a particularly high concentration of poverty. The average three year poverty rate for 2001-2003 in South Carolina was 14.0% (Young, 2005). The FPL for South Carolina in 2004 was 15.7% as compared to the overall rate of 14.1% in the southeastern states. As far as the impact of poverty on children, of the 563,000 South Carolinians living in poverty,

almost 34% are children under the age of 18 (Stevenson, 2005). Approximately 47% of working poor families with children are headed by someone with less than a high school diploma compared to only 4.4% who are headed by someone with a college diploma. Thirty-one percent of the state's working poor families are Caucasian, and 67.3% are African American (Stevenson, 2005).

The majority of impoverished families live in households where at least one person is employed; however, data compiled over the last few decades indicate a significant increase in the number of single parent families, especially those headed by women. Single female-headed households are more than twice as likely as single male-headed households to live below the poverty level. The percentage of single parent households rose from 14.5% in 1970, to 18.9% in 1980, and to 25.1% in 1990. In 2002, the percentage increased again to 30%. Increasingly, one of the biggest challenges facing single-parent families is supporting a family on one person's income. (Stevenson, 2005).

In addition to the 563,000 individuals and families living in poverty in South Carolina, more than 400,000 families fall below the federal poverty level, indicating that they are likely to remain in poverty (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002). There are also many families who struggle right at the poverty threshold. Statistics for South Carolina's low income population are important because they make evident the uncertain situation of families and individuals who are working but are close to the poverty threshold. These families are in constant danger of falling into poverty. In South Carolina, a total of 541,000 individuals live in working poor and low-income families (Stevenson, 2005). In addition to the 188,000 children living in poverty, more than 200,000 additional children live above the poverty level but can still be considered poor

(U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002). Nearly 96.7% of these families have a working parent and 86% have a full-time year-round worker (Stevenson, 2005).

The reasons for poverty in South Carolina are complex (Boston, 2008). One reason stems from the long history of poverty in the state, which in turn has created a sustained negative stigma associated with poor areas. The negative stigma discourages business from investing in the region, which in turn impacts the rise in unemployment. Rural areas have an additional issue in that their isolation leads to lack of information and lack of attention from politicians. For urban areas, the problems are slightly different in that the negative stigma of poor neighborhoods leads to increased crime, low paying jobs and negative attention from politicians. In both of these cases, poverty becomes a cycle that makes the problems of poverty continually worse and harder to escape (Boston, 2008).

The impact of poverty on schools is particularly a problem for South Carolina schools. According to a study conducted by the Southern Education Foundation (2002), almost 46% of all students in South Carolina are considered poor and receive either free or reduced priced lunch. The influence of poverty on state assessments is clear in that the higher the percentage of students in poverty, the lower the percentage of proficient students (Hanushek, 2006). In 2000, students who received free or reduced priced lunch scored much lower on the state accountability test, PACT. For example, in mathematics, only 46% of students who were considered as poor scored basic or above as compared to 77% of those who were not poor (Southern Education Foundation, 2008). In 2007, State Superintendent of Education, Jim Rex, reported that student poverty levels continued to increase. He stated, "Poverty is a grim fact of life in most South Carolina classrooms.

This year [2007] more than half our schools had at least 70 percent of their students living in poverty. One in every five schools has an enrollment with more than 90 percent of the students in poverty” (Pillow, 2007, para. 6). In 2007, 6% of schools with poverty indexes of 80% or above earned ratings of good or excellent, whereas in 2006 the percentage was 9% (Pillow, 2007). In a report published by the Southern Education Foundation (2008), Steve Suitts, program coordinator for Southern Education Foundation, warned:

Both policymakers and the public must understand more fully that today their future and their grandchildren's future are inextricably bound to the success or failure of low income students. If this new majority of students fails in school, an entire state, an entire region, and--sooner or later--an entire nation will fail simply because there will be inadequate human capital to build and sustain good jobs, an enjoyable quality of life, and a well-informed democracy. (p. 1)

Poverty affects the South Carolina state report card rankings as well. In a 2007 report released by the EOC, 13.7% of high schools with a poverty level of 80% or greater earned an Absolute Rating of *Excellent* or *Good*, which reflects a 0.9% decline from 14.6% in 2006. Only 6% of schools in South Carolina had less than one-third of their students living in poverty. Only 54 schools (5%) served a population of 30% poverty or less. In 2006 and 2007, over half (53%) of all South Carolina schools had at least 70% of their students living in poverty. This percentage increased from 2005, when 50% of all schools were affected. Slightly over one in five schools (20.5%) served a population of students in very high poverty, which is defined as 90% or more (South Carolina

Education Oversight Committee, 2007). In a 2008 report from the SC State Department of Education to the EOC, the authors stated that the impact of poverty on student achievement remains very strong and that poverty levels rose for all groups and subgroups (Suber, Siskind & Rex, 2008).

Influence of the Building Principal

Given the national focus on reforming public education and the impact of such factors as poverty, the role of the principal has changed dramatically. According to Gene Bottoms (2001), Senior Vice President of the Southern Regional Education Board, educational accountability recognized this change:

Superintendents and local school boards no longer can be satisfied with principals who simply place teachers in the classroom, provide textbooks and get students to attend school. Increasingly school and school leaders are being judged on their progress in teaching most students to the standards that only the best students were expected to meet in the past. This means that future school leaders must have an in-depth knowledge of curriculum, instruction and student achievement.
(p.1)

Effective leadership is essential to school improvement. For example, principals in high performing schools spend 81% more time practicing instructional management than those in average schools (Ellis, 2004). Much of the current literature on school administration noted that the job has changed from a manager's position to one of instructional leadership. Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) claimed that, of all the factors that contributed to what students learn at school, the influence of the principal is second only to the influence of classroom instruction.

One of the primary objectives of NCLB and EAA is continuous improvement until all children are academically successful. Several studies (Haberman, 1999; Jesse, Davis & Pokorny, 2004; McGee, 2004) have identified principal leadership as an important factor in maintaining high performance. Researchers (Haberman, 1999; Jesse et al., 2004, McGee, 2004) have consistently pointed to the principal as a key player in sustaining a culture that promotes success for all students. Carter (2000) asserted that the presence of a strong principal who holds to the highest standards is the most notable factor in creating a high-performing school. Kannapel, Clements, Taylor and Hibpshman (2005) concluded that in high-performing, high-poverty schools, the school climate is critical. Factors that had an impact on academic success focused on high expectations for students, collaborative decision-making between the teachers and administration, strong faculty morale and work ethic, and a strong academic and instructional focus.

Stress of the Job

The workload of a principal can be taxing with the average work week time totaling around 55-60 hours per week (Donaldson & Hausman, 1998; Torelli & Gmelch, 1992). Whitaker cited numerous researchers who reported the role of the public school principal as among the most stressful in education (Whitaker, 1996).

School administrators have extensive responsibilities (Cedoline, 1982). Changes in society and school reform movements have added responsibilities and continue to place pressure on public school administrators. While principals are still heavily engaged in traditional roles, they are also heavily involved in school-community relationships and facilitating effective teaching and student learning (Cooley & Shen, 2003). The emphasis on accountability has shifted from traditional tasks, such as how money and other

resources are used, to the newer tasks of accountability for student achievement (Elmore, Abelman, & Fuhrman, 1996). The emphasis on accountability has resulted in additional pressures and recommendations for new roles for principals (Brewer, 2001; King, 2002; Tirozzi, 2001).

Beck and Murphy (1993) have described historical changes in the role expectations of the principal: values adviser (1920s), scientific manager (1930s), democratic leader (1940s), theory-guided administrator (1950s), bureaucratic executive (1960s), humanistic facilitator (1970s), and instructional leader (1980s). The school reforms of the 1990s have made the role more complex by promoting the principal as a transformational leader who must be involved in shared decision making, decentralized leadership, and systemic change (Hallinger, 1992; Murphy, 1994; Murphy & Hallinger, 1992; Murphy & Louis, 1994). The high school principalship is one of the most complex and challenging jobs in the public education system (Murphy & Louis, 1994). Murphy (1994) stated that “While expectations are being added, little is being deleted from the principal’s role” (pp. 94-99). In addition, a high school principal must manage support services such as food services, custodial services, and grounds keeping, and other areas such as the athletic programs. In addition, institutional groups such as the district office, state office of education, and community groups such as Parent-Teacher-Student Associations require attention from the principal. In short, the world in which the principal must function is surrounded by an “external world that is becoming less predictable, less orderly, and more cluttered for principals,” creating “a much more complicated managerial context within the school as well” (Louis & Murphy, 1994, p. 266). To complicate an already complex job, managerial and political expectations often

limit the amount of time principals can give to instructional leadership. Lyons (1999) reported that “managing time demands and paperwork..... dealing with the bureaucracy, insensitive bureaucrats, red tape, politics, legislative demands and regulations are the principal’s greatest frustrations” (p. 21). Portin, Shen and Williams (1998) reported that these priorities that are created from the outside of school parameters are pressuring principals toward the role of manager. Successful school principals must be comfortable assuming multiple roles that have both managerial and instructional leadership elements and they must be able to make choices about where their time and attention are best spent.

Whitaker (1996) noted that burnout contributes to increased attrition, job change and difficulty in attracting qualified educators to fill positions, especially in the low salary low status area. According to Farkas, Johnson, Duffet and Foleno (2001), superintendents and principals reported that time overload as a significant factor in keeping good candidates away from principalships. The Maine Leadership Consortium reported that the “...major issues that surfaced (regarding administrative supply and demand) were long hours, stress, lack of suitable compensation and relationship issues” (p. 8). One principal stated that time was “her biggest enemy . . . Being a principal eats time like a black hole” (p. 1).

Principal Turnover

It is clear that principals are under constant stress, emotionally, cognitively and physically (Whan & Thomas, 1996). Time demands, stringent accountability standards, and the overall natures of the role and job of a principal make it very difficult to find qualified individuals who are willing to fill the job, especially at the high school level

(Howley & Pendaravis, 2004; Whitaker, 2001). The review of literature revealed that studies have been conducted on high stakes testing and the impact it has on teacher burnout and principal burnout in general (Ellis, 2004; Elmore, Abelman & Fuhrman, 1996; Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). Five major reasons were identified by the Principals' Leadership Summit in 2000 as to why fewer people wanted to become principals and included the changing demands of the job, salary, time, lack of parent and community support, negativity of the media and public towards schools, and lack of respect (Kennedy, 2000).

Increased job duties, responsibilities and demands have contributed to a principal shortage (Ediger, 2002). The shortage is further complicated by teacher shortages, changing demographics and pressure to raise test scores (Quinn, 2002; Schiff, 2002; Tirozzi, 2001). The demands of schools with poor-performing students increase the importance of hiring and retaining effective leaders (Partlow, 2007), and school culture at low-achieving schools can become so negative that principals may leave these schools to find other positions. Test scores have a particular impact on principals' turnover in light of NCLB. Partlow (2007) illustrated this point in a 2007 study reporting that as the percentage of students who passed reading and mathematics achievement tests increased, the frequency of principal turnover decreased. Partlow also reported principals tend to be attracted to schools serving higher income populations, more Caucasian students, and higher achieving students because such schools are easier to manage. Therefore, schools serving more disadvantaged populations tend to have first-year principals which generally are a negative factor for achievement (Partlow, 2007).

In 1998, a study of principals was conducted by the Educational Research Service in conjunction with the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals that cited reasons for concern. The basis for this concern came from district office administrators who reported a shortage of qualified candidates to fill principal's positions. District administration cited factors that included an inadequate level of compensation compared to the demands of the job, job related stress, and too much time required for the job. These reasons discouraged qualified applicants and were comparable for all three levels of schools--elementary, junior high/middle school, and senior high (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2003, p. 25). Similar findings in a survey for Public Agenda were reported a few years earlier by Farkas, Johnson, Duffett, and Foleno (2001). They reported the potential barriers as identified by superintendents and principals that might discourage qualified applicants to apply for administrative positions. Eighty-eight percent of superintendents and 92% of principals said that the "time and responsibilities demanded by the superintendency/principalship discourage many talented people from pursuing it as a career" (p. 42). Eighty-three percent of principals agreed with the statement that the enormous demands of the position had forced them to make serious compromises in terms of their family and personal life. In Michigan, the Educational Policy Center (Cusick, 2003) reported that increased demands, low salaries compared to teachers, and increased job stress led to increasing shortages of principals. Researchers found that 58% of Indiana principals identified the anticipated stress of the job as a "serious barrier" to those considering the principalship (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2003)

A minimum expectation for a principal to stay at one school is at least three years. In 2007, 52% of the principals left the job within a three-year period. Principal turnover was highest at the high school level, with 61% leaving within the three year period 2004-2007 (Fuller, Baker & Young, 2007). One superintendent stated, “The high school principalship is a very difficult job; in many cases, I think it is more difficult than mine. I think the demands are very, very high for time, expectations that are unreasonable of people--expectations from parents and staff” (Whitaker, 2001, p. 87).

The pressures under new accountability measures affect schools as well as their principals. According to Griffith (2004), ineffective schools are organizations under stress. Schools under stress experience more demands than their resources allow. In addition, schools having a higher number of students who traditionally score low on achievement tests, a higher percentage of minority students, and a high percentage of students having learning difficulties experience more stress than those with more academically successful student populations. Students who attend schools under stress often underperform on tests and require more resources for learning. Schools having greater numbers of minority and socioeconomically disadvantaged students reported having less positive school climate and more principal changes. In addition, these schools had more internal disruption and less parent involvement. Some schools may have experienced stress for long periods of time, which may impact organizational views toward leadership. For example, according to Griffith, when schools first experience stress, there is a rallying of the troops to support the leader. If the stress persists, there is a tendency to support leader replacement.

The idea that principal stability is connected to school improvement stems from the belief that for reform to be meaningful, it must take place at the school level (Fullan, 1991; Hall & Hord, 2001). Change at the school level involves a cultural shift (Deal & Peterson, 1990; Peterson & Deal, 1998; Stolp, 1994) and change in school culture takes time. Estimates of the time required for significant school reform at a given school are five to seven years (Deal & Peterson, 1998; Fullan, 2001). For these reasons, it is important to understand the impact of principal turnover. Emerging research has suggested that teacher turnover increases with principal turnover (Fuller, Baker, & Young, 2007). Related research showed that teacher turnover has a separate and negative impact on student achievement (Fuller, Baker, & Young, 2007; Levy, Fields, & Jablonski, 2006). Furthermore, current school reform strategies are highly reliant upon the development of small learning communities which increase the level of personalization in a school for both adults and children. It takes time, however, for principals to develop strong personal relationships in order to support small learning communities. Principal turnover hinders this community building. School improvement simply takes time and research on organizational change suggests that leaders need at least five years for successful implementation of large scale change. Therefore, keeping principal turnover low and retaining principals for at least five years is critical to quality school improvement (Fullan, 1991; McAdams, 1997).

Chapter Two has provided an overview of burnout, state and national laws that impact school reform, changes in the roles of the principal, poverty in South Carolina and principal turnover. Evidence from Chapter Two supports the premise that education and the role of the principal have changed since state and national accountability mandates.

Chapter Three will outline the study as it relates to the research literature provided in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Chapter Three presents the methodology used in the study. The chapter includes the population selection and description. It also describes the survey instrument as well as the data collection process including procedures and analysis. The purpose of this study was to determine the perceived burnout level of South Carolina secondary principals. Specifically, the research sought to determine the relationship between the South Carolina state report card rating and principal burnout as defined by Maslach's three dimensions of burnout (Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment) as well as analyze the relationship between the poverty rating and principal burnout. The study also examined the relationship between burnout and the following variables: anticipated longevity as a principal, anticipated longevity in education, perceived ability to handle stress, principal age, principal race, total years in education, training in stress management, years at current position, years in current district, years of administrative experience, and years certified as a principal. Other variables included grade configuration of the school, school size, and racial composition of students as well as the factors principals cited as the biggest contributors to their stress.

Specifically, the research questions that are addressed were as follows:

1. What is the relationship between the South Carolina state report card ratings and principal burnout as defined by Maslach's three dimensions: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels?

2. What is the relationship between the South Carolina state poverty index of the school and principal burnout as defined by Maslach's three dimensions: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels?
3. Is there a significant difference in the Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels as defined by Maslach of principals based on the poverty index of their school and the South Carolina state report card ratings?
4. What is the relationship between principal burnout as defined by Maslach's three dimensions (Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels) and the following variables: anticipated longevity as a principal, anticipated longevity in education, perceived ability to handle stress, principal age, principal race, total years in education, training in stress management, years at current position, years in current district, years of administrative experience, years certified as a principal?
5. What is the relationship between principal burnout and the grade configuration of the school, school size, and racial composition of students?
6. What factors do principals indicate are the biggest contributors to their stress?

Methodology

The basic procedures followed in this study were the following:

- Previous research studies related to burnout, national and state accountability and school poverty levels were located and examined.
- A review of the aforementioned studies was completed. The researcher determined that high school principals may be susceptible to high levels of

burnout due to the changes in accountability and the poverty levels of their schools. The last study of high school principals in South Carolina was done in 2000.

- South Carolina state level report card rating and state poverty indices were obtained and reviewed.
- The researcher averaged five years of scores for the Absolute Rating scores (the value of all public schools' level of performance associated with student success during the school year). The poverty indices were also averaged from the previous five years. An average for the report card rating and poverty index was used to account for any variances schools may have had from one particular year to the next. Both the report card rating and the poverty index were set using the South Carolina Department of Education definitions. Schools categorized as low poverty, low achievement schools had an average Absolute Rating below 3.0 and their average poverty index was below 60. Schools that were categorized as low poverty, high achieving schools had an average Absolute Rating of 3.0 or above and an average poverty index below 60. Schools that were categorized as high poverty, high achievement schools had an average Absolute Rating of 3.0 or above and an average poverty index was 60 or above. Schools that were categorized as high poverty, low achieving school had an average Absolute Rating of below 3.0 and an average poverty index of 60 or above.
- A list of high school principals was obtained from the South Carolina State Department of Education. All public high school principals in South Carolina were invited to participate in the study.

- The web-based survey company Qualtrics was used to generate the survey format and set up and manage the email system by which the survey was delivered. A demographic survey was also compiled based on previous studies. The demographic survey was reviewed by a panel of qualified educators experienced in educational leadership to ensure clarity.
- An introductory email explaining the purpose of the study was sent to all public high school principals in advance of the survey, requesting participation in the study.
- An email containing the MBI-ES survey and a demographic survey followed.
- Follow up emails were sent to those who did not respond to the survey within four days. Within four weeks, 102 of 202 responses were received. In addition, six paper surveys were completed and returned, providing a return rate of 50.4%. Due to significant incomplete data from six respondents, the total number of usable surveys numbered 96 which provided a return rate of 47.5%.
- Data were analyzed using SPSS software.
- Following the analysis of data, the master list was destroyed. The analyzed data provided the foundation for the conclusions and recommendations for this study.

Instrumentation

Instruments used in this study were the Maslach's Burnout Inventory-Education Survey (MBI-ES) (Appendix A) and a demographic survey designed by the researcher (Appendix B). All secondary principals of public high schools in South Carolina were invited to participate in the survey via the Internet using the MBI-ES. To reach a return rate of 50%, six were surveyed using a paper copy. The original Maslach Burnout

Inventory (MBI) was developed by Maslach and Jackson to measure burnout in human service professionals and includes three components of burnout: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment. The components are distinct in their characteristics but share common causes. Emotional Exhaustion is characterized by a lack of energy and may coexist with feelings of frustration as workers begin to feel that they are unable to be as responsible for their clients as they have been in the past.

Depersonalization is characterized by the worker becoming detached and treating clients like objects rather than as individuals. Workers may become cynical towards clients or the organization in general. Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization are highly correlated. Personal Accomplishment is characterized by feelings of decreased job competency or achievement. There may also be a perception of lack of progress.

The MBI-ES is the most widely used measure of burnout and has high retest reliabilities. Using a six-point scale, respondents indicate how often they experience each item. The three dimensions are examined separately. According to studies (Maslach & Jackson, 1984; Zellars, Perrewé & Hochwarter, 2000), there is a loss of information when the inventory is examined holistically because of the different patterns of correlations between the dimensions. The three dimensions are somewhat independent with low to moderate inter-correlations.

A demographic survey was developed by the researcher and reviewed by a panel of educators. Items were added to solicit answers to all research questions. Questions were designed to collect data on the following variables: anticipated longevity as a principal, anticipated longevity in education, perceived ability to handle stress, principal age, principal race, total years in education, training in stress management, years at

current position, years in current district, years of administrative experience, years certified as a principal, the grade configuration of the school, school size, and racial composition of students, and factors that principals indicate are the biggest contributors to their stress.

Sample Selection

All two hundred and two principals of South Carolina public high schools were invited to be a part of this study. One hundred and two responded. The return rate was 50.4%.

Variables

Personal variables in this study were: anticipated longevity as a principal, anticipated longevity in education, perceived ability to handle stress, principal age, principal race, total years in education, training in stress management, years at current position, years in current district, years of administrative experience, years certified as a principal (Appendix B). School variables included grade configuration of the school, size of school, racial composition of students, poverty index and South Carolina report card ratings and were provided by the South Carolina State Department of Education. In addition, there was a free response question that asked the respondents to identify the biggest contributors of stress to their job.

The dependent variable in this study was the level of burnout in South Carolina public high school principals as measured by the MBI-ES on each of the subscales of Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment (Appendix A). Because the MBI-ES measures burnout on three subscales, raw scores were interpreted as

follows: Emotional Exhaustion was characterized by feelings of emotional overextension and chronic fatigue; Depersonalization was indicated when one's attitude towards the people served was uncaring, indifferent or negative; and reduced Personal Accomplishment was the feeling that one was not as successful as before. The response categories and their corresponding values for Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment on the MBI-ES (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996) are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Response Categories for the MBI – ES

Response category	Emotional Exhaustion	Depersonalization	Personal Accomplishment
High	27 or over	13 or over	0-31
Moderate	17-26	7-12	32-38
Low	0-16	0-6	39 or over

The significance of the Maslach model is that it places the burnout experience in the social context of the workplace and involves the worker's perception of self and others (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). The MBI-ES was chosen for its reliability and ease of administration. Studies by Iwanicki and Schwab (1981) and Gold (1984) uphold the validity of the three-factor structure of the MBI-ES. Iwanicki and Schwab (1981) found Cronbach's alpha estimate of .90 for Emotional Exhaustion, .76 for Depersonalization, and .76 for Personal Accomplishment. Gold (1984) reported estimates of .88 for Emotional Exhaustion, .74 for Depersonalization, and .72 for Personal Accomplishment.

Data Collection

Permission was sought from the superintendents of the school districts in South Carolina. Once granted, secondary principals were contacted via email. Studies suggest that pre-notification and post-notification are important in email surveys (Mehta & Sivadas, 1995; Sheehan & Hoy, 1997). A short email of pre-notification was sent to principals of all 202 South Carolina public high schools two days in advance of the survey email (Appendix C). This researcher used the principals' email addresses as found on the South Carolina Department of Education website. The survey email (Appendix D) followed in two days with the MBI-ES (Appendix A) and a short demographic survey (Appendix B). The survey email provided a brief description of the purpose of the study, an explanation of the survey and its importance. The demographic survey and MBI-ES shared an identification number by which to identify school and participant. Only this researcher had access to the master list of participant codes, and all information was kept confidential. The projected time frame was also a part of the survey email which also included instructions on how to complete the surveys online. The projected length of time to complete the surveys was estimated at 30 minutes. The informed consent statement came as an attachment to the survey email. Finally, an expression of appreciation was included. A follow-up email (Appendix E) was sent to those who did not respond within four days. There were six paper surveys also completed.

Schonlau, Fricker and Elliott (2002) have noted that surveys completed via internet have more completeness and higher quality than those sent by regular postal mail. According to studies, email is also speedier and more cost efficient (Bachmann, Elfrink & Vazzana, 1999; Flaherty, Honeycutt & Powers, 1998; Sheehan & McMillan, 1999).

Sheehan and McMillan (1999) compared response time between mail and email and reported that, on average, mail surveys took 11.8 days to return, whereas email surveys took 7.6 days to return. According to Flaherty et al, (1998), email provides an easier, more immediate way of responding. Email also allows the researcher to more easily know the number of undelivered, unopened surveys. Finally, responses to email surveys tend to be more honest compared to mail or phone surveys (Bachmann, Elfrink & Vazzana, 1999). However, there is no concrete evidence that response rates for internet surveys are superior to paper and pencil surveys received by mail. Most of the studies report response rates between 35% and 68% (Crawford, Couper, & Lamas, 2001; Nichlos & Sediwi, 1998; Shermis & Lombard, 1999). For this study, a 50% return rate was considered acceptable.

According to Crawford, Couper and Lamis (2001), follow-up within four days of the initial survey was found to increase the return speed of the responses. Kittleson (1997) indicated that any type of follow-up doubles response rates of non-responders and also recommended that follow-up occur within four days. A follow-up email was sent to principals who do not respond within four days. If there was no response to the follow up email, additional emails were sent until this researcher achieved a 50% return.

Analysis of the Data

The study was designed to address each research question. The study included two types of variables, categorical and continuous. The categorical variables were the classification of schools (based on achievement and performance), school configuration, school size classification, perceived ability to handle stress, training in stress management, principal's race, principal's self rating of stress (less, about the same,

more). The continuous variables were school report card Absolute Rating index, school poverty index, principal's Emotional Exhaustion score, principal's Depersonalization score, principal's Personal Accomplishment score, principal's age, principal's total years of administrative experience, principal's years of administrative experience in current school, total years in current district, principal's total years of experience as an educator, anticipated longevity as a principal, anticipated longevity in education. For each categorical variable, frequency distributions were prepared and medians, modes, and ranges computed. For each continuous variable, means and standard deviations were computed.

For research question one (RQ1), three Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to examine the relationship between the state report card Absolute Rating indexes and principal's Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment scores. For research question two (RQ2), the same analyses were performed to examine the relationship between the South Carolina state poverty index rating and principal burnout as defined by Maslach's three dimensions: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels.

For research question three (RQ3), means and standard deviations were computed for principal's Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment for each of the four school classifications: high achieving, high poverty; high achieving, low poverty; low achieving, high poverty; and low achieving, low poverty. Subsequently, a univariate analysis of variance was used to test the significance of the differences among the groups on the principals' variables. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level; however, because three comparisons are being made, the alpha must be divided by three

to adjust for the Type I error rate. A significant correlation for RQ3 is .0167 for each comparison.

For research question four (RQ4) and research question five (RQ5), Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated, using principal's Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment as the dependent variables. The only exception is for research question four (RQ4) where a univariate analysis of variance was used to compare the categories of race. For research question six (RQ6), data from the open-ended question survey were categorized and frequencies reported. The first step was to make a list of answers respondents gave. The second step was to make rough categories of answers that belonged together and to code them with a key word. Finally, a separate list was made using the codes (Patton, 2002).

Chapter Three presented a description of the methodology and procedures used to conduct the study. The data and the analysis of the data are presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Five contains the conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER FOUR

STUDY RESULTS

In Chapter Three, the purpose and design of the study were described. In Chapter Four, the data to answer the research questions and the results of the statistical analyses are included.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceived burnout level of South Carolina secondary principals. Specifically, the research sought to determine the relationship between principal burnout as defined by Maslach's three dimensions of burnout (Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment) and two school variables: the South Carolina state report card and school poverty ratings. The study also examined the relationship between principal burnout and the following variables: anticipated longevity as a principal, anticipated longevity in education, perceived ability to handle stress, principal age, principal race, total years in education, training in stress management, years at current position, years in current district, years of administrative experience, years certified as a principal, grade configuration of school, student race and school size. Data were also collected to ascertain the perceived contributors of stress. The sample for this study consisted of South Carolina public high school principals.

With these purposes in mind, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What is the relationship between the South Carolina state report card ratings and principal burnout as defined by Maslach's three dimensions: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels?
2. What is the relationship between the South Carolina state poverty index of the school and principal burnout as defined by Maslach's three dimensions: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels?
3. Is there a significant difference in principals' Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels as defined by Maslach based on poverty index of their school and South Carolina state report card ratings?
4. What is the relationship between principal burnout as defined by Maslach's three dimensions (Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels) and the following personal variables: anticipated longevity as a principal, anticipated longevity in education, perceived ability to handle stress, principal age, principal race, total years in education, training in stress management, years at current position, years in current district, years of administrative experience, and years certified as a principal?
5. What is the relationship between principal burnout and the grade configuration of the school, school size, and racial composition of students?
6. What factors do principals indicate are the biggest contributors to their stress?

Summary of the Demographic Data and MBI Scores

All principals of public high schools in South Carolina were invited to participate in the study by completing the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Education Survey (MBI-ES) (Appendix A). One hundred two responded. Six surveys were rejected because of incomplete data. It should also be noted that missing data in applied research is a given; therefore, the number of responses to individual items may vary.

MBI-ES has three dimensions of burnout: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment. A score on the subscale of Emotional Exhaustion between 0 and 16 indicates low Emotional Exhaustion. A score of 17 to 26 is categorized as moderate, and scores of 27 and above are categorized as high. The subscale of depersonalization is categorized as low if the score falls between 0 and 6, moderate if the score is between 7 and 12, and high if the score is 13 or above. The subscale of personal accomplishment is categorized as a low degree of burnout if the score is above 39, moderate if the score is between 32 and 38, and high if the score is between 0-31.

A short demographic survey (Appendix B) was also given to the participants. The survey addressed personal and school variables. The personal variables consisted of the principal's age, total years of administrative experience, years of administrative experience in current school, total years in current district, total years of experience as an educator, anticipated longevity as a principal, and anticipated longevity in education. School variables consisted of grade configuration of the school, school size, and racial composition of students. There was an open-ended question that asked for the factors principals consider to be the biggest contributors to their stress.

Schools were placed in categories based on a five year average (2002 -2007) of their Absolute rating and poverty index. The four categories are: high poverty, high achievement (n = 24), high poverty, low achievement (n = 15), low poverty, low achievement (n = 2) and low poverty, high achievement (n = 55). The Absolute Ratings for high schools are calculated by the South Carolina Department of Education on a weighted model using the following criteria: performance on High School Assessment Program (HSAP) of students at the school taking the test for the first time, longitudinal HSAP performance, the percentage of end-of-course tests administered at schools that have scores of 70 or above, and on-time graduation rate. Scores for an Excellent Absolute rating must be at 3.8 or higher. For a school to receive an Absolute rating of Good, the scores must fall between 3.4 and 3.7. An Average Absolute rating consists of scores falling between 3.3 and 3.0, and a Below Average rating has scores ranging from 2.6 to 2.9. Any score below 2.6 is considered unsatisfactory (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee, 2007). Schools were categorized by a five-year average of the aforementioned Absolute Ratings. The schools were also categorized by poverty indices. Poverty levels were based on the percentage of students who received free and reduced-price lunch. According to the South Carolina State Department, most studies of poverty in the state begin with a poverty index of 60% free and reduced-priced lunch (South Carolina State Department, 2007). Schools were categorized by a five-year average score of the poverty indices. The schools with an average index of 60% and over were considered high poverty for this study; therefore, schools with an average of 59% and below were considered low poverty schools.

Based on the general data on the three dimensions, the majority of respondents reported moderate levels of Emotional Exhaustion ($m = 23.38$) and Depersonalization ($m = 9.56$) and a low range of burnout in Personal Accomplishment ($m = 47.91$). Thirty of the 96 (31.2%) respondents reported high levels of Emotional Exhaustion, 42 (43.7%) reported moderate levels, and 24 (25.0%) reported low levels. For the dimension of Depersonalization, twenty of 96 (20.8%) reported high levels, 54 (56.2%) reported moderate levels, and 22 (22.9%) reported low levels. For the dimension of Personal Accomplishment only two reported subscores below 30 which indicates a low level of Personal Achievement, whereas seven reported scores signifying moderate levels, and 87 reported subscores of 39 or higher, which indicates a high level of Personal Accomplishment. These data indicate that most principals have a low level of burnout in the Personal Accomplishment dimension.

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between the South Carolina state report card ratings and principal burnout as defined by Maslach's three dimensions: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels?

There was not a statistically significant relationship between Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, Personal Accomplishment, and state report card ratings. The Pearson correlation for Emotional Exhaustion and the South Carolina state report card rating is 0.152 with a significance level of .138. The Pearson correlation for Depersonalization and the South Carolina state report card rating is 0.085 with a significance level of .140. The Pearson correlation for Personal Accomplishment and the South Carolina State report card is -.007 with a significance level of .945.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between the South Carolina state poverty index of the school and principal burnout as defined by Maslach's three dimensions: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels?

There was not a significant relationship between poverty and the three dimensions of burnout. The Pearson correlation for Emotional Exhaustion and the poverty rating is .011 with a significance level of .914. The Pearson correlation for Depersonalization and the poverty rating is -.055 with a significance level of .597. The Pearson correlation for Personal Accomplishment and the poverty rating is .047 with a significance level of .647.

Research Question 3

Is there a significant difference in the Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels as defined by Maslach of principals based on the poverty index of their school and South Carolina state report card ratings?

No significant statistical differences were found in the Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels of principals based on the poverty index of their school and student achievement; however, there were differences in the Emotional Exhaustion when levels of burnout were defined using Maslach's levels of high, moderate and low burnout (Table 3). The Emotional Exhaustion subscale mean for the low poverty, low performance group is 28.5, which is in the high range. The subscale score mean for the low poverty, high performance group was 22.4, which is in the moderate range. The subscale mean for the high poverty, low performance group was 20.0, which is in the moderate range. The subscale mean for the high poverty, high performance group was 27.2, which is in the high range. All groups scored in the

moderate range for the Depersonalization dimension. Additionally, all groups scored high on the Personal Accomplishment dimension, which indicates low burnout.

Table 3

Performance Rating, Poverty Rating, and Maslach's Three Dimensions

Poverty / Performance	N	E Mean	DP Mean	PA Mean
Low / Low	2	28.5*	10.5	40.0
Low / High	55	22.4	9.3	48.1
High / Low	15	20.0	9.0	48.9
High / High	24	27.2*	10.4	47.3

Note: Range for EE of 27 or over is considered a high score for burnout; whereas 17-26 is considered moderate.

Three separate ANOVAs (Table 4) were run to adjust for a Type 1 error rate; therefore, the alpha must be divided by 3, which gives a .0167 alpha. While there is a slight difference in the means that places the low poverty, low performance and the high poverty, high performance groups in the high dimension for emotional exhaustion, these findings suggest that when individual principal scores on Maslach were used, there are no significant statistical differences in Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment on the basis of high verses low achievement levels and high verses low poverty levels, as well as the interaction between them.

Table 4

ANOVA Results for Maslach's Three Dimensions, Poverty Rating, and Performance Rating

Source	Df	f	p	H
EE/Poverty/Performance	1	3.26	.074	.034
DP/Poverty/Performance	1	0.675	.413	.007
PA/Poverty/Performance	1	3.92	.050	.041

Note. EE=Emotional Exhaustion. DP=Depersonalization, and PA=Personal Accomplishment.

Research Question 4

What is the relationship between principal burnout as defined by Maslach's three dimensions (Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels) and the following variables: anticipated longevity as a principal, anticipated longevity in education, perceived ability to handle stress, principal age, principal race, total years in education, training in stress management, years at current position, years in current district, years of administrative experience, years certified as a principal?

Table 5

Relationship between Principal Burnout and Study Variables

Variable		EE	DP	PA
Anticipated Longevity as Principal	Pearson Correlation	-.110	-.040	.095
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.311	.716	.385
	N	86	86	86
Anticipated Longevity in Education	Pearson Correlation	-.154	-.110	.111
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.152	.308	.303
	N	88	88	88
Ability to Handle Stress	Pearson Correlation	.232*	.223*	-.084
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.023	.030	.416
	N	95	95	95
Principal Age	Pearson Correlation	-.023	-.034	.064
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.826	.750	.545
	N	92	92	92
Years in Education	Pearson Correlation	-.040	.007	.026
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.706	.948	.801
	N	93	93	93
Stress Management	Pearson Correlation	.145	-.006	-.147
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.162	.958	.155
	N	95	95	95
Years in Current Position	Pearson Correlation	-.089	-.029	.056
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.415	.793	.606
	N	87	87	87
Years in Current District	Pearson Correlation	.079	-.024	-.103
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.452	.821	.324
	N	93	93	93
Years of Administrative Experience	Pearson Correlation	-.201	-.024	.113
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.053	.818	.279
	N	93	93	93
Years Certified as Principal	Pearson Correlation	-.073	.103	.050
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.484	.326	.632
	N	93	93	93

Note. Correlation is significant at 0.05. EE=Emotional Exhaustion. DP=Depersonalization, and PA=Personal Accomplishment.

There was a significant positive relationship between principals' perceived ability to handle stress and Emotional Exhaustion ($r = .232$) and Depersonalization ($r = .223$) (Table 5). No other significant relationships were found; however, there was weak but not statistically significant negative relationship between years in administration and Emotional Exhaustion ($r = -.201$).

Summary data from Table 6 represent subscores for each of the components of the MBI-ES as they relate to anticipated longevity as a principal, anticipated longevity in education, perceived ability to handle stress, principal age, total years in education, training in stress management, years at current position, years in current district, years of administrative experience, and years certified as a principal.

Fifty-nine percent ($n = 51$) of the principals who participated in the survey anticipated their longevity as a principal at five years or less. Another 23 principals expected to retire from the principalship in the next six to ten years for an estimate total of an 86% principal turnover rate within the next ten years. Compared to the responses about anticipated longevity as a principal, responses for anticipated longevity in education were strikingly different. Fifty-four percent ($n = 48$) responded that their longevity in education was estimated at 10 years or less. There were five (5.0%) respondents who had been in education for 10 years or less; however, 52.0% ($n = 49$) reported total years in education as 25 years or more. Three (3.2%) respondents reported having two years or less experience as a certified principal. In contrast, 16 (17.0%) respondents reported they had two years or less of administrative experience of some kind. The average for years as a certified principal was 14.97 years.

Forty-nine respondents (56.0%) reported they had held their current position for five years or less, whereas 10.0% ($n = 9$) of respondents reported holding their current position for 15 years or more. Principals on average had served nearly seven years in their current position. Of all respondents, 27% ($n = 27$) reported being in their current district for five years or less, and 18.2% ($n = 17$) reported being in their current district for 25 years or more. Years in current district had a mean of 14.74, while years of

administrative experience had a mean of 9.42. Fifty-one percent (n = 47) of respondents were aged 50 or older, and 6.5% (n = 6) were 35 or younger. The mean age was 49.14 years old. The mean years in education were 25.35. These results are detailed below.

Table 6

Ranges, Frequencies, and Means for Personal Variables

Variable	Range	N	Mean
Anticipated Longevity as Principal	0-20	86	6.37
Anticipated Longevity in Education	0-40	88	12.18
Longevity in Current Position	0-40	88	6.82
Years in Education	8-44	93	25.35
Years at Current Position	0-30	87	5.13
Years in Current District	1-42	93	14.74
Years of Administrative Experience	1-32	93	9.42
Age	29-66	93	49.14
Years Certified as Principal	0-37	93	14.97

Race

An ANOVA was used to test the significance of the categorical differences among the mean scores on the principal variable of race. These findings suggest that there were no significant differences in Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment on the basis of race.

Table 7

ANOVA Results for Maslach's Three Dimensions and Race

Source	Df	F	P	η^2
EE /Race	1	9.75	.326	.011
DP/Race	1	2.62	.109	.028
PA/Race	1	.667	.416	.007

Note. EE=Emotional Exhaustion. DP=Depersonalization, and PA=Personal Accomplishment.

Twenty (21.5%) respondents classified themselves as African American and 72 (77.4%) classified themselves as Caucasians. There were no Asian American or Hispanic respondents. African Americans had a slightly lower mean on the Emotional Exhaustion dimension ($m = 21.60$) as compared to Caucasians ($m = 23.95$). With respect to race and Depersonalization, African Americans also had a lower mean ($m = 8.25$) as compared to Caucasians ($m = 9.88$). Personal Accomplishment showed similar differences in that African Americans scored higher than Caucasians with mean scores of 48.90 and 47.59, respectively. While the subscores for African American respondents on all three dimensions showed slightly less burnout than for Caucasians respondents, there were no significant differences. Results are detailed below.

Table 8

E E, DP, and PA Subscores for Race
Emotional Exhaustion Subscore for Race

Race	Mean	Burnout
African American (n = 20)	21.60	Moderate
Caucasian (n = 72)	23.95	Moderate

Depersonalization Subscore for Race

Race	Mean	Burnout
African American (n = 20)	8.25	Moderate
Caucasian (n = 72)	9.88	Moderate

Personal Accomplishment Subscore for Race

Race	Mean	Burnout
African American (n =20)	48.90	Low
Caucasian (n =72)	47.59	Low

Stress and Stress Management

There were two areas of interest for principals' perceived ability to handle stress. Eighty-six percent (n = 82) believed that they had better than average skills for handling stress, whereas only 2.1% (n = 2) believed their ability to handle stress was less than average. Eleven respondents (11.6%) reported their ability to handle stress was average. More than 42% (n = 40) responded that they had received stress management training.

In conclusion, there was a significant positive relationship between the perceived ability to handle stress and Emotional Exhaustion ($r = .232$) and Depersonalization ($r = .223$). In addition, there was a weak though not statistically significant negative

relationship between years in administration and Emotional Exhaustion ($r = -.201$). No other significant relationships were found.

Research Question 5

What is the relationship between principal burnout and the grade configuration of the school, school size, and racial composition of students?

A t-test was used to compare school configuration and the three dimensions of the MBI-ES (Tables 9 and 10). Eighty-seven principals answered the questions about grade configuration. Grade configurations were divided into two groups, 9-12 and Other. Other consisted of any grade configuration of school other than 9-12. There were no significant differences for school configuration and the three dimensions of burnout.

Table 9

Mean, Standard Deviation and Standard Error of Mean for EE, DP, PA and School Configuration

	Grade Configuration	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean
EE	9-12	73	23.05	9.288	1.087
	Other	17	25.52	10.344	2.508
DP	9-12	73	9.32	3.633	.425
	Other	17	10.23	5.629	1.365
PA	9-12	73	48.09	6.071	.710
	Other	17	48.11	6.243	1.514

Table 10

T-test for EE, DP, PA and School Configuration

Grade Configuration	T	Df	sig	Mean
EE Assumed	-.970	88	.335	-2.47797
EE unassumed	-.906	22.397	.374	-2.47797
DP Assumed	-.829	88	.409	-.90912
DP unassumed	-.636	19.215	.532	-.90912
PA Assumed	-.013	88	.989	-.02176
PA unassumed	-.013	23.569	.990	-.02176

For the Emotional Exhaustion subscale score, the 9-12 group had a mean score of 23.05, which places it in the moderate level. Principals of Other schools had a mean subscale score of 25.52, a moderate level as well. The 9-12 group had a mean subscale score of 9.32 for Depersonalization, while the Other group had a subscore of 10.23; both scores in the moderate level. For the Personal Accomplishment subscale score, the 9-12 group had a mean score of 48.09, which places it in the low burnout level and principals of Other schools had a mean subscale score of 48.11, a low burnout level as well.

There was no significant relationship between either school size or racial composition and Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment. The Pearson correlation for Emotional Exhaustion and the school size rating was $-.120$ with a significance level of $.269$. Pearson correlation for Depersonalization and the school size rating was $-.099$ with a significance level of $.363$.

The Pearson correlation for Personal Accomplishment and the school size was .071 with a significance level of .512.

There was not a significant relationship between racial composition of students and the three dimensions of burnout. The Pearson correlation for Emotional Exhaustion and the racial composition was .104 with a significance level of .337. Pearson correlation for Depersonalization and the racial composition rating was -.095 with a significance level of .383. The Pearson correlation for Personal Accomplishment and the racial composition was .172 with a significance level of .111. Results are detailed in Table 11.

Table 11

School Size, Racial Composition, and EE, DP, and PA

Variable	EE	DP	PA
Size: Pearson Correlation	-.120	-.099	.071
Sig. (2-tailed)	.269	.363	.512
N	87	87	87
Racecomp: Pearson Correlation	.104	-.095	.172
Sig. (2-tailed)	.337	.383	.111
N	87	87	87

Note. EE=Emotional Exhaustion. DP=Depersonalization, and PA=Personal Accomplishment.

Research Question 6

What factors do principals indicate are the biggest contributors to their stress?

Research question 6 was a free response question in which there were 85 total responses. The responses ranged from national and state mandates, time constraints and

teacher/parent issues. National and state mandates were the focus of most of the responses. Nineteen principals reported state and national mandates as stressors. Five principals reported testing as a stressor. Because testing was identified as a separate category, the researcher did not consider it as part of the state and national mandates category; however, due to the nature of both state and national laws, testing could also have been considered by some of the respondents as part of the stressor of dealing with national and state mandates by some of the respondents. Twelve principals reported that parents were a major stressor of the job. Twelve principals reported that personnel contributed to their stress. Time and funding were considered to be a major stressor for fourteen principals, seven for each response. Six principals reported paperwork as a major stressor. Other various responses included: naysayers and people who do not support public education (n = 4), micromanagement (n = 2), workload (n = 2), not enough rest (n=1), problems out of one's control (n = 1), data (n=1), and unfortunate situations (n=1).

This study found that high school principals in South Carolina experience moderate levels of burnout and continue to feel Personal Accomplishment. This study, however, revealed little differences between principal burnout based on the poverty index and South Carolina state level report card rating of their school. Chapter 4 presented the researcher's interpretation of the data. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the findings, conclusion and recommendation for further study.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceived burnout level of South Carolina secondary principals. Specifically, the research sought to determine the relationship between the South Carolina state report card rating and principal burnout as defined by Maslach's three dimensions of burnout (Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment) as well as the relationship between the state poverty rating and principal burnout. In addition, the study also examined the relationship between principal burnout and the following personal variables: anticipated longevity as a principal, anticipated longevity in education, perceived ability to handle stress, principal's age, principal's race, total years in education, training in stress management, years at current position, years in current district, years of administrative experience and years certified as a principal. Other variables included in analysis were: the grade configuration of the school, school size, and racial composition of students as well as the factors principals cited as the biggest contributors to their stress. Results of the study may help illuminate burnout indicators of secondary principals as they relate to South Carolina state report card rating, poverty index, and demographic factors of surveyed administrators.

Review of Findings

In general, high school principals in South Carolina experience moderate levels of burnout; however, they continue to feel high levels of Personal Accomplishment. This

study revealed no significant differences between principal burnout based on the poverty index and South Carolina state level report card rating of their school.

Based on an analysis of general data on the three dimensions, principals reported a moderate level of burnout in Emotional Exhaustion ($m = 23.38$) and Depersonalization ($m = 9.56$), but a low level of burnout on Personal Accomplishment ($m = 47.91$). Thirty of 96 (31.2%) respondents reported high levels of Emotional Exhaustion, 42 (43.7%) reported moderate levels and 24 (25%) reported low levels. For the dimension of Depersonalization, 20 of 96 (20.8%) reported feeling high levels while 54 (56.2%) reported moderate and 22 (22.9%) reported low levels. It is important to note that Personal Accomplishment is scored differently from Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization in that the subscale for Personal Accomplishment is reversed. For example, a score of less than 32 on the Personal Accomplishment subscale means a high degree of burnout in the dimension of Personal Accomplishment. There were only two (2%) principals who reported subscores of less than 30; whereas, seven (7%) reported moderate levels and 87 (90.6%) reported subscores of 39 or higher which indicated a low burnout score on Personal Accomplishment. Results of this study indicated that even though principals have moderate levels of Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization levels, they feel a high sense of Personal Accomplishment which may indicate they believe they are doing a good job.

These results were based on 50% of the principals' population of South Carolina and may be skewed towards the responses of principals who participated in the study. In Flynn's study (2000), principals scored a moderate score for Emotional Exhaustion ($m = 21.48$). This researcher found that the exhaustion level of principals was still in the

moderate range ($m = 23.38$); however, the score of Emotional Exhaustion was slightly higher than that found by Flynn (2000).

Flynn (2000) reported that principals in his study ($n = 138$) scored in the moderate range for Depersonalization ($m = 6.81$), which is on the low end of the moderate range. While the Depersonalization burnout scores for both this study and Flynn's study were in the moderate range, the scores from this study were considerably higher than Flynn's (2000), with a mean score of 9.56. This researcher also found principals scored 47.91 on the Personal Accomplishment subscale, which indicated a low burnout range, whereas Flynn's research reported a 39.56 subscore for Personal Accomplishment, suggesting low burnout but less dramatically so. While a difference of 8.35 is noted, this difference might result from slight differences in respective sample sizes. Based on this study, it appears that contemporary principals are feeling more Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization but also more Personal Accomplishment. This increase is notable because South Carolina principals in Flynn's study (2000) were not working under the full implementation of EAA (SC legislation passes in 1998) or the federal existence of NCLB, state and federal legislation that has dramatically increased professional mandates for South Carolina high school principals.

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between the South Carolina state level report card ratings and principal burnout as defined by Maslach's three dimensions: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment levels?

For the first research question, three Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to examine the relationship between Absolute Ratings and principal Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment. There was a weak but not significant positive relationship between Emotional Exhaustion and South Carolina state report card rating with a Pearson correlation of .152. These results may indicate that principals are beginning to feel some burnout in the area of Emotional Exhaustion as a result of the implementation of the state report card ratings. The relationships between Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization and South Carolina state report card ratings are of interest because Emotional Exhaustion is one of the first and most common symptoms of burnout. In addition, there is a strong correlation between Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization (Zellars, Perrewé & Hochwarter, 2000). The Pearson's correlation for Personal Accomplishment was $-.007$ and for Depersonalization the Pearson's correlation was .085 which indicates no significant relationship between South Carolina state report card scores and these subscores.

Research has indicated that principals are under more pressure because of accountability issues (Brewer, 2001; King, 2002; Tirozzi, 2001). It is interesting to note that in this study there was no significant relationship between the state level report card ratings and the three dimensions of the MBI-ES. As stated previously, the weak correlation between Emotional Exhaustion and South Carolina state report rating may indicate that principals are beginning to feel the pressures of accountability as more schools move towards the sanctions that come with unsatisfactory schools. Consistent with this interpretation, the principals of the high performing, high poverty and low performing, low poverty schools scored higher than high performing, low poverty and

low performing, high poverty principals for Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization. The high poverty, high performing principals' scores may relate to the pressure they have in maintaining their high scores, whereas the principals of the low poverty, low performing schools may feel the pressure to increase low scores. The Personal Accomplishment score indicated a low level of burnout for the majority of the principals which indicates that while job pressure may be increasing, the sense of accomplishment remains strong.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between the South Carolina state poverty index of the school and principal burnout as defined by Maslach's three dimensions: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels?

The findings indicate there was no statistically significant relationship between poverty and the dimensions of burnout, which is surprising. Research indicated that there is a higher principal turnover rate in high poverty schools (Griffith, 2004). Research also has indicated that AYP poses the biggest problems for high poverty schools. In addition, research has indicated that poor schools have higher numbers of minority groups which may impact more than one subgroup, thereby making it more difficult to raise the overall achievement levels. South Carolina has a large proportion of its schools with high numbers of students with free and reduced priced lunch. Hanushek (2006) reported that the higher percentage of students in poverty, the lower the percentage of proficient students. Based on current research, levels of burnout should be high for high poverty schools (Partlow, 2007). According to this study, however, this dynamic does not exist for the South Carolina public high school principals who responded to the survey.

Research Question 3

Is there a significant difference in the Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels as defined by Maslach of principals based on the poverty index of their school and the South Carolina state level report card ratings?

While there were no significant differences noted, comparing the poverty indices and performance groups indicates that low poverty low achieving and high poverty high achievement groups feel more Emotional Exhaustion than either the low poverty, high achievement or the high poverty, low achieving groups. It would be of interest to examine this dynamic further using more extensive longitudinal data.

No significant statistical differences were found in the Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels of principals based on the poverty index of their school and student achievement; however, there were differences within the individual dimensions when levels of burnout were defined using Maslach's levels of high, moderate and low burnout (Table 3). The Emotional Exhaustion subscale mean for the low poverty, low performance group is 28.5, the highest of all groups and is slightly in the high range. The low poverty, low performance group also scored higher in the Depersonalization (10.5) dimension and significantly lower in the Personal Accomplishment dimension (40.0) indicating that this group reported higher dimensions of burnout compared to the other three groups. The subscale score mean for the low poverty, high performance group was 22.4, which is in the moderate range. The subscale score for Depersonalization for this group was the lowest only to the high poverty, low performance group with a subscore of 9.3. The subscale score mean for the low poverty, high performance group in the Personal Accomplishment dimension was 48.1, the second

highest for all groups. The subscale mean for the high poverty, low performance group on Emotional Exhaustion was 20.0, which is the lowest score for all four groups and in the moderate range. The high poverty, low performance group also scored lower for Depersonalization and higher for Personal Accomplishment which indicates that overall, this group felt the least amount of burnout. The subscale mean for the high poverty, high performance group on Emotional Exhaustion was 27.2, which is slightly in the high range. The subscore for Depersonalization and this group is 10.4, slightly below the low poverty low performance group while the subscore for Personal Accomplishment places this group in the high category, indicating low burnout. Based on the individual dimensions, the low poverty, low performing group reported the most burnout, followed by the high poverty, high performing; low poverty, low performing; and high poverty, high performing groups, respectively.

While all groups fell within the moderate range in the Depersonalization dimension, the subscale score of Personal Accomplishment (where a low score indicates high burnout) was notable in that all groups, regardless of their school's performance or poverty, scored in the high range which indicates a minimum level of burnout in this area. Ramarajan and Barsade (2006) reported that if workers believe that they are helping their clients, this strong feeling of Personal Accomplishment may counterbalance the effects of Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization on overall burnout. The findings in this study support Ramarajan and Barsade (2006), indicating that current South Carolina principals may feel that they are helping their teachers and students effectively.

Research Question 4

What is the relationship between principal burnout as defined by Maslach's three dimensions (Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment levels) and the following variables: anticipated longevity as a principal, anticipated longevity in education, perceived ability to handle stress, principal's age, principal's race, total years in education, training in stress management, years at current position, years in current district, years of administrative experience, years certified as a principal?

Flynn (2000) reported that the average South Carolina high school principal was a Caucasian male, approximately 50 years old with over 26 years of educational experience. This study reports that the average South Carolina high school principal is a Caucasian male approximately 49 years old with 25 years in education. Longitudinal trends indicate that the profiles of principals in South Carolina are the same as almost a decade ago.

Still, there were several interesting findings for question four. Slightly more than 59% of the principals anticipate their longevity as a principal at five years or less. Anticipated longevity as a principal at their current school had a mean score of 6.37 years; whereas, anticipated longevity in education had a mean of 12.18. This difference in mean scores indicates that some respondents intended on staying in education, but not necessarily as a principal.

The mean for total years in education was 25.35; whereas, 51 of the principals were aged 50 or older, suggesting a notable principal population is moving towards retirement. Based on research presented in this study (Howley & Pendaravis, 2004;

Whitaker, 2001), it may be difficult to find qualified educators who are interested in becoming a principal especially on the high school level.

There were two areas of interest for the perceived ability to handle stress. Of the 96 respondents, 85% believed that they had better than average skills for handling stress; only 2.1% believed their ability to handle stress was less than average. Over 40% responded that they had received stress management training. These numbers reflect that many principals feel confident in handling situations they may encounter. These figures match their Personal Accomplishment scores, indicating that they may feel confident in general of their capabilities as principals.

African Americans scored higher on the Personal Accomplishment subscale score with a mean of 48.90, whereas Caucasians scored 47.59. While these differences are not statistically significant, there is an indication that Caucasians feel slightly less personal accomplishment and more burnout than African Americans. African Americans had a slightly lower mean average on the Emotional Exhaustion dimension ($m = 21.60$) as compared to the Caucasians ($m = 23.95$). With respect to race and Depersonalization, again, African Americans had a lower average ($m = 8.25$) as compared to Caucasians ($m = 9.88$).

It is notable that African Americans scored much differently in 2009 than in 2000. In 2000, African Americans scored 12.80 for Emotional Exhaustion, which is low. In 2009, their score was 21.60 which are considerably higher and in the moderate range. Depersonalization subscores also varied. African Americans scored low ($m = 3.03$) for Depersonalization in 2000 which was vastly different in 2009 when they scored 8.25, which is in the moderate range. Personal Accomplishment scores increased for both

racers, more for Caucasians (from 42.32 in 2000 to 47.59 in 2009) and less for African American (from 48.34 in 2000 to 48.90 in 2009). These statistics indicate that African Americans in 2009 felt more Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization than in 2000; however, both races reported feeling more personal accomplishment than in 2000. The results are detailed in Table 12.

Table 12. Comparison of Maslach's Three Dimensions for EE, DP, PA, 2000 and 2009

Race	N	EE	DP	PA
African American	27	12.80	3.03	48.34
2000		(low)	(low)	(high)
African American	20	21.60	8.25	48.90
2009		(mod)	(mod)	(high)
Caucasian	104	19.02	6.34	42.32
2000		(mod)	(mod)	(high)
Caucasian	72	23.95	9.88	47.59
2009		(mod)	(mod)	(high)

While it may appear that the Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization dimensions are on the rise, the Personal Accomplishment is also rising albeit less dramatically for African Americans, whose 2000 PA score of 48.34 was already distinctly high. Principals of both races appear to feel good about the job they are doing; they feel confident in their ability to handle circumstances that arise as a part of their role as principal. Flynn reported in 2000 that African Americans had experienced lower burnout on all dimensions; as compared to Caucasians; however, this study indicates that

African American principals are experiencing higher levels of burnout in the dimensions of Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization than in the past indicated by the rise in respective scores from 12.80 to 21.60 (EE) and from 3.03 to 8.25 (DP).

Table 13

Summary of Categorical Data

	Race		Stress Last Year			Ability to Handle Stress			Grade Configuration		Stress Training	
	W	B	Less	Same	More	Better	Average	Less	9-12	O	Y	N
LL	2	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	2	0	1	1
LH	46	9	11	26	17	48	5	1	46	8	17	36
HH	18	6	0	13	8	21	2	1	14	7	11	13
HL	10	5	4	5	4	11	4	0	11	2	11	4
N	76	20	15	45	30	82	11	2	73	17	40	54

Note: Missing data on some items cause N's to vary

In this study, there were five categorical variables derived from the demographic survey: race, stress compared to the previous year, perceived ability to handle stress, grade configuration and stress training. The low poverty, high achieving was the largest group with 55 respondents. The high poverty, high performance groups numbered second with 24 respondents. The high poverty, low performance had 15 respondents and the low poverty, low performance group with two respondents reporting. Overall, 83.3% self-reported their race to be Caucasian, whereas 16.7% self-reported to be African American. The low poverty, high performing category had 83.3% who reported themselves to be Caucasian and 16.7% African American, whereas the high poverty, high

performing had 75% self-reported Caucasians and 25% African Americans. The high poverty, low performing group had a total of 58.3% Caucasian principals and 41.7% African Americans. In contrast, the low poverty, low performing was composed of 100% Caucasian; however, it is important to note that there are only two respondents in this category which may not be indicative of the group as a whole.

When asked to rate the amount of stress in the current school year as opposed to the previous year, the categories reported very similar results. Over 31% low poverty, high performing principals felt more stress compared to the year before. In comparison, over 33% of the high poverty, high achieving principals felt more stress when compared to the year before. Twenty six percent of the high poverty, low performing groups felt more stress that the year before. Fifty percent of the low poverty, low performing group reported more stress than in the previous year. The perceived ability to handle stress varied more among groups; however, 87.2% of the low poverty high performance group believed that they could handle stress better than average. The high poverty, high performance group reported 87.5% of the respondents perceived ability to handle stress was better than most. Of the 15 respondents in the high poverty, low performance category, 73.3% reported being able to handle stress better than average. Both respondents in the low poverty, low performing category felt they handled stress better than most. All respondents regardless of the category reported feeling more stress than the year before; however, those in the low poverty, high performing group reported they were better at handling stress. Overall, principals perceived that their ability to handle stress was better than average. While respondents believed that their ability to handle stress was better than most, training on stress management varied from group to group.

Slightly above 30% of principals in low poverty, high performing schools had formal training in stress management; whereas slightly over 45% of the high poverty, high performing had stress training. The highest category of principals with stress management training was the high poverty, low performing group which also reported the lowest perceived ability to handle stress. Slightly over 73% in this group had participated in some stress management training.

Research Question 5

For the category of grade configuration, the majority of the schools were the traditional grade configuration of 9-12. The high poverty, high performance group had more of its principals working in a grade configuration other than a 9-12 setting. Fifty eight percent of the high poverty, high performing principals worked at schools with the traditional 9-12 school configuration. In contrast, the low poverty, high performing principals reported slightly over 83% were principals in a traditional 9-12 setting as did the principals in the high poverty, low performing category. The low poverty low performance group reported 100% of its principals worked in a 9-12 grades school.

Research Question 6

Question six examined the biggest contributors to the principal's stress. The stressors included state and national mandates with 19 principals reporting these as stressors. Five principals reported testing as a stressor, and because it was mentioned specially it was not included in the state and national mandates category. However, because of both state and national laws, principals might have included testing within the more encompassing response of state and national mandates. Twelve principals reported that parents were a major stressor of the job. Twelve principals reported that personnel

contributed to their stress. Time and funding were considered to be major stressors to 14 principals; seven for each response. Six principals reported paperwork as a major stressor. Other responses included: unfortunate situations, naysayers and those who do not support public education, not enough rest, problems one cannot control, data, micromanagement and workload. Overall, the range of these responses are similar to Flynn (2000) with the exception that principals in this study specifically mentioned areas related to NCLB and state report card. Many of the specific comments below may reflect indicators of burnout:

- Unfunded mandates;
- Politicians and naysayers that don't understand and believe the power and importance of public school education;
- State department and district office demands;
- Accountability – “We are doing well, the pressure to stay there and to get the last 4 / 5 / 6 percentage points;”
- Accountability reports; state report cards, AYP budget constraints; testing;
- Those who do not value education;
- Department of Education irregularities;
- NCLB;
- Unrealistic expectations by political leaders who know nothing about public schools;
- Problems you can't control;

- Feeling as if we are in a no win situation with the demands of EEDA (Education and Economic Development Act) and No Child Left Behind, longitudinal graduation rates, drop out prevention and the list goes on, lack of support.

Implications from this study follow:

- Percentages of current principals as it relates to years in education and anticipated years left in education may have a bearing on future principal shortages for South Carolina as the current principal population nears retirement.
- The data suggest that some principals may intend to stay in public education within another capacity, rather than remaining in the principalship.
- Because it may be difficult to find qualified educators who are interested in becoming principals, especially on the high school level, South Carolina and local districts would benefit from developing programs to identify and train promising upcoming professionals for secondary principalships.
- There is a need for stress management training for current South Carolina high school principals.
- Successful high school principals may thrive on the stressors that accompany the job.

Recommendations for Further Research

- A study should be completed on the leadership styles of African American and Caucasians to examine differences that may contribute to the understanding of the differences in the Maslach burnout scores of each group. For example, why have African American scores changed in the Personal Accomplishment dimension? How have their leadership styles changed over the last decade?

- Studies examining the perceived levels of burnout among other types of high schools, such as alternative schools, charter schools, and virtual schools, should be conducted and compared to public high school principals.
- Further research needs to be conducted on the types and frequencies of stress management training the state of South Carolina and/or individual districts provide for principals and examine which worked and why.
- Further studies on principals' job satisfaction should be conducted.
- Research on the coping mechanisms of high school principals would expand this study.
- Surveys of principals who left their jobs in South Carolina high schools may help identify additional stressors that were not specified in this study.

While it appears that the Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization dimensions of South Carolina secondary principals are increasing, their Personal Accomplishment dimension are higher. These figures indicate that South Carolina principals feel good about the jobs they are doing; they feel confident in their ability to handle circumstances and stress that arise as a part of their roles as principals.

High school principals encounter possible burnout every day they go to work. The results of this study indicate that the state report card ratings, poverty indices of their schools and state and national policies that impact education may impact the burnout levels of principals in the long term. As NCLB and EAA continue to be implemented, levels of Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization may continue to rise and Personal Accomplishment may decline. With a principal population consisting of many principals

who anticipate remaining less than five years in education, South Carolina public education may struggle to attract qualified principals to their high schools.

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Appendices

Appendix A

SAMPLE ITEMS FOR THE
MASLACH BURNOUT INVENTORY
"Educators Survey"

by Christina Maslach, Susan E. Jackson, and Richard L. Schwab

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

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) 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.

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

I. Depersonalization

5. I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal objects.

II. Personal Accomplishment

9. I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work.

III. Emotional Exhaustion

20. I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.

From the *Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey* by Christina Maslach, Susan E. Jackson, and Richard L. Schwab. Copyright 1986 by CPP, Inc. All rights reserved. Further reproduction is prohibited without the Publisher's consent.

You may change the format of these items to fit your needs, but the wording may not be altered. Please do not present these items to your readers as any kind of "mini-test," but rather as an illustrative sample of items from this instrument. We have provided these items as samples so that we may maintain control over which items appear in published media. This avoids an entire instrument appearing at once or in segments which may be pieced together to form a working instrument, protecting the validity and reliability of the test. Thank you for your cooperation. CPP, Inc., Licensing Department.

Appendix B

General Information Survey

Please answer each question.

1. How would you rate your level of stress compared to the same time last year?
 - a. less
 - b. about the same
 - c. more
2. My ability to handle stress is:
 - a. better than average
 - b. average
 - c. less than average
3. Have you had training on handling stress associated with being a principal?
 - a. yes
 - b. no
4. How would you describe your race?
 - a. Black
 - b. White
 - c. Asian
 - d. Hispanic
 - e. Other
5. As of January 1, 2009, how old are you? _____
6. Including the current year, for how many years have you served as a principal?

7. Including the current year, for how many years have you served as the principal of this school? _____
8. Including the current year, for how many years have you worked in the field of education in any capacity (teacher, aide, administrator)? _____
9. Including the current year, how many years have you been certified as a principal? _____
12. Including the current year, how many years do you anticipate being the principal at your current school? _____
13. How many years do you anticipate continuing a career in education?

14. How many years do you anticipate continuing your career as a principal?

15. Including the current year, for how many years have you worked in your current district? _____
16. What is the grade configuration (k12, 9-12, etc.) of your school?
17. What are the biggest stressors of your job?

Appendix C

Introductory Email

Dear Colleague,

My name is Susan Vasquez and I have been an educator for over 20 years in Spartanburg County. I am currently working on a dissertation that I believe can have an impact on the administrators in South Carolina. As you know, administrators are becoming harder and harder to find. With the changing roles of the administrator and recent laws such as the Education Accountability Act (EAA) 1998 and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) 2001, the job has become more complicated than ever. Please help me in answering a short survey on the topic of administrator burnout. I know how busy you are especially this time of year; however, the survey will take no more than 30 minutes and the impact could be invaluable. The survey will come via email in two days. Simply click on the website listed in the email and answer the Maslach Burnout Survey for Educators and a short demographic survey. Your answers will remain confidential. If you would like to discuss this research or need more information concerning your participation in the research, you should contact me at 864-419-5663 or my advisor, Dr. Sandra Tonnsen, at (828) 227-3324. If you have any additional questions, you can reach the Chair of the Western Carolina University Institutional Review Board at (828) 227-7212.

Thank you so much in advance for your help and support in this study,

Susan Vasquez

Appendix D

Survey Request Email

Dear Colleague,

My name is Susan Vasquez and I am a doctoral student at Western Carolina University in the Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations. I hope that this email finds you well and that your year has closed out successfully. Two days ago you received an email asking for your help in a study on administrator burnout. As you are well aware, the role of the principal has changed greatly in South Carolina since the passage of the Education Accountability Act (EAA) 1998 and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) 2001. With the changing roles comes an additional stress that may lead to burnout. As the shortage of administrators continues to rise, studies like this one may give the foundation for change. Your input is invaluable.

I am conducting research to better understand the burnout level as perceived by South Carolina secondary principals. Specifically, my research seeks to determine the relationship between the state report card and poverty ratings, and principals' perceived level of burnout, the specific stressors of their job as they relate to higher accountability, and the relationship of burnout to variables such as age of principal, race, education levels, administrative years served at current school, total education experience and total administrative experience. I will survey all public high school principals in South Carolina.

Your involvement in this research involves answering two surveys: the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) and a short demographic survey. Both surveys are included in this email and can be completed online by clicking the following link, [\[link\]](#). If you prefer a paper copy of the survey, I will be happy to mail a copy to you. Total time for completing both surveys should be less than 30 minutes. Of course, while your participation is voluntary, the information you give is very valuable to the research. You may withdraw at any time or decline to answer any question you choose.

If you would like to discuss this research or need more information concerning your participation in the research, you should contact me at 864-419-5663 or my advisor, Dr. Sandra Tonnsen, at (828) 227-3324. If you have any additional questions, you can reach the Chair of the Western Carolina University Institutional Review Board at (828) 227-7212. You may request a copy of the research results by contacting me at the above number.

Your completion of your on line survey indicates your permission to the researcher to use your responses in her research. The information you submit will be used collectively with no individual identification. There are no risks involved in participating in the surveys.

Thank you in advance for your help in researching burnout in South Carolina secondary principals. The benefits of the study are great. Information gained from this research will help better understand principal burnout and the issues that surround it and add to the current body of knowledge about burnout levels specific to high school principals in South Carolina.

Sincerely,

Susan Vasquez

Appendix E

Follow Up Email

Dear Colleague,

Several days ago you received an email requesting your assistance in a study on Administrator Burnout. The email contained two short surveys that take very little time to fill out. I am requesting your consideration in helping me with a study I believe can give valuable information on reasons for burnout among administrators in South Carolina. Please take a few minutes by clicking on the website link and fill out the information requested. Your answers will remain confidential.

If you would like to discuss this research or need more information concerning your participation in the research, you should contact me at 864-419-5663 or my advisor, Dr. Sandra Tonnsen, at (828) 227-3324. If you have any additional questions, you can reach the Chair of the Western Carolina University Institutional Review Board at (828) 227-7212..

Thank you in advance for your help in researching burnout in secondary South Carolina principals. Information gained from this research will help better understand principal burnout and the issues that surround it.

Sincerely,

Susan Vasquez

Appendix F

Superintendent Email

Dear Superintendent,

My name is Susan Vasquez and I am a doctoral student at Western Carolina University in the Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations. I hope that this email finds you well and that your year has closed out successfully. As you are well aware, the role of the principal has changed greatly in South Carolina since the passage of the Education Accountability Act (EAA) 1998 and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) 2001. With the changing roles comes an additional stress that may lead to burnout. As the shortage of administrators continues to rise, studies like this one may give the foundation for change.

I am conducting research to better understand the burnout level as perceived by South Carolina secondary principals. I would like your permission to send two brief surveys to your principals: the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) and a short demographic survey. Of course, while their participation is voluntary, the information they provide will be very valuable to the research. No principal, school or district name will be used in the study.

If you would like to discuss this research or need more information concerning your participation in the research, you should contact me at (864) 419-5663 or my advisor, Dr. Sandra Tonnsen, at (828) 227-3324. If you have any

additional questions, you can reach the Chair of the Western Carolina University Institutional Review Board at (828) 227-7212.

Please email me at susan.vasquez@spart1.org with a statement indicating your permission. Thank you in advance for your help in researching burnout in South Carolina secondary principals. Information gained from this research will help better understand principal burnout and the issues that surround it.

Sincerely,

Susan Vasquez