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Individual and Work Related Factors of Burnout Among Direct Care Staff

Jamie Roberts
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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Jamie Roberts

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Walden University
2015

Abstract

Individual and Work Related Factors of Burnout Among Direct Care Staff

by

Jamie Roberts

MS, Walden University, 2009

BS, Southern Arkansas University, 2002

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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General Educational Psychology

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Abstract

Burnout is the response to prolonged emotional, situational, and interpersonal stress of one's job. Direct care staff, who work with challenging populations, are at increased risk for burnout. Maslach's and Leiter's multidimensional model of burnout posits that the relationship between an individual and his or her occupation leads to either engagement or burnout. This study aimed to determine if the associations between the 6 areas of worklife (workload, control, community, reward, fairness, and values) and the 3 aspects of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) identified in this model are moderated by age and gender. The study included 117 direct care staff who completed self-administered online questionnaires. Linear regression analyses indicated that workload was positively and reward negatively associated with emotional exhaustion. Age moderated the association between workload and emotional exhaustion. An increase in workload was associated with increased emotional exhaustion more so for older than younger employees. Values and reward were negatively associated with depersonalization and community and values were positively associated with personal accomplishment. Age and gender did not moderate any of these associations. These findings suggest that burnout is highly complex, but age and gender do not seem to change the association between work areas and burnout to a large degree. Additional research is needed to determine the role of other demographic factors in burnout. The social change implications include the significance of understanding ways to reduce burnout, increase engagement, and provide support and training for employees based on individual characteristics.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The concept of burnout has received a great deal of attention in research over the past 35 years due to the enormity of the problems caused by burnout. Researchers have sought to discover all the contributing factors of burnout (Maslach, 2003; Maslach, Leiter, & Jackson, 2012; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). The term *burnout* first appeared in the 1970s when referring to individuals doing caregiver work and experiencing symptoms of detachment and exhaustion due to disproportionate work demands and resources (Freudenberger, 1974). Researchers have examined different aspects of burnout, including interpersonal predictors of personality or situational predictors of the work environment as well as in a variety of different professions, such as teachers, military, and nurses (Ahola et al., 2006; Kokkinos, 2007; Maslach, 2003;; Rodgeron & Piedmont, 1998; Sprang, Clark, & Whit-Woosley 2007).

Burnout is a response to prolonged emotional, situational, and interpersonal stresses of one's job that can occur in any occupation (Maslach et al., 2001). Furthermore, researchers have discovered through years of research that burnout is the result of a poor fit between a person and his or her job (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). The research into these "organizational risk factors" has led to the conceptual framework of a *job-person fit model* termed *areas of worklife* (Leiter & Maslach, 2011, p. 2). *Areas of worklife* consists of six domains (workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values) in which an individual's perceived fit leads to engagement with his or her job and incongruence or a poor fit in turn leads to burnout (Leiter & Maslach, 2011).

It is important to study burnout because it has widespread consequences. Burnout is linked to poor job outcomes, such as absenteeism and turnover, as well as poor health outcomes, such as stress-related illnesses, substance abuse, and mental illness (Maslach et al., 2001). The costs to individuals as well as organizations are a strong reason to research contributing factors. Additionally, it is important to develop ways to reduce burnout, increase engagement, and provide support and training for employees.

In the current study, I took a unique approach in burnout research. First, the population that I used was a direct care staff at a human services organization. This population was diverse not only in terms of demographic variables but also in terms of the clients, as this organization services all aspects of client needs. This group is at particular risk for burnout because of the emotional involvement in this type of work, the demands placed on the individual from those he or she is caring for and the demands placed on individuals from employers to do more with less (Maslach, 2003; Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

The work environment of today is much different than it was 30 years ago (Maslach, 2003; Maslach & Leiter, 1997, Leiter & Maslach, 2001). For example, companies are downsizing and individuals are working longer hours to compensate for staff shortage (Maslach, 2003; Maslach & Leiter, 1997, Leiter & Maslach, 2001). Therefore, the population for this study was unique in that the direct care staff provided services to high-risk populations with a variety of diagnoses and/or physical impairments.

This population encompassed all levels of care providers from receptionists, assertive case managers, intensive case managers, supportive case managers, community

support service case managers, adult protective case managers, residential case managers, Medicaid service coordinators, vocational case managers, community service workers, team leaders, and supervisors. The diversity of this population was different from past research that typically takes one or two areas of providers to study such as nurses or case managers (e.g., Kim, Ji, & Kao, 2011; Koeske, Kirk, & Koeske, 1993; Ramarajan, Barsade, & Burack, 2008). Secondly, the demographic variables of age and gender were used as moderating variables in this research study, as age and gender have been previously shown to have an effect on burnout. Lastly, I used the six areas of worklife, moderated by age and gender, to determine if any effect on burnout occurs. Researchers have never used all six areas of worklife in one study before, much less used any moderating variables on all six areas of worklife.

In this chapter, I will focus on the background of problem, specifically addressing previous research on burnout and the importance of this study. Additionally, I will discuss the problem statement as well as the purpose of the study. Lastly, the research questions, hypotheses, and nature of the study are explored.

Background

Previous researchers have indicated that burnout is a significant problem associated with providing care to other individuals (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). One such occupation is that of direct care staff who are often the first ones contacted by people in need. Individuals in the field of providing services to others have a significant involvement with those in their care (Maslach, 2003). Because of such intense involvement, individuals begin to experience negative consequences of the demands

placed on them such as a shift in the way they view others, an inability to see the positive side of individuals suffering from problems, and an increase in emotional detachment (Maslach, 2003). The other side of the problem lies at the institutional level in which organizations are placing more and more demands on employees, and employees have fewer resources to deal with these demands (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). As Maslach and Leiter (1997, p. 9) pointed out, burnout occurs due to “a major mismatch between the nature of the job and the nature of the person who does the job.”

The cost to individuals experiencing burnout is immense. Burnout manifests in a variety of ways. Individuals may experience physical symptoms such as fatigue, exhaustion, insomnia, and muscle tension (Kahill, 1988). Individuals may also experience emotional symptoms such as feeling overwhelmed, anxiety, cynicism, helplessness, moodiness, and lack of empathy (Kahill, 1988). Furthermore, individuals may experience cognitive symptoms such as a negative attitude, decreased concentration, difficulties with memory, and thinking pessimistically (Kahill, 1988). Lastly, individuals may experience interpersonal symptoms such as withdrawal from coworkers, peers, friends, and family (Kahill, 1988). There is also a link between burnout and use of alcohol, drugs, and caffeine (Angerer, 2003; Kahill, 1988). Moreover, organizations bear the burden of the cost of burnout as well. Burnout has been linked to employee turnover, absenteeism, employee theft, a reduction in quality of work, tardiness, and disengagement in work (Kahill, 1988; Maslach & Leiter, 1997). With the consequences of burnout so high, it is imperative to obtain a greater understanding of the concept of burnout as well as to determine the predictors of burnout.

Statement of the Problem

Individuals often go into human service work due to a desire to help others; however, this helping relationship leads to a variety of potential stressors and conflicts (Maslach, 2003). Burnout is the response to these prolonged conflicts and stressors (Maslach et al., 2001). The consequence of burnout is detrimental to employees, costly to organizations, and damaging to clients (Shinn, Rosario, Mørch, & Chestnut, 1984).

Researchers have explored numerous factors related to predictors and progression of burnout. One of the predictors is individual differences such as gender, age, marital status, socioeconomic status, and education level (Ballenger-Browning et al., 2011; Zaidi, Wajid, & Zaidi, 2011). For example, it has been reported that older employees experience less burnout than younger employees (Maslach, 2003a), and females experience more burnout than males (Lau et al., 2005). However, opposite results have also been found, for example, Shirom, Gilboa, Fried, and Cooper (2008) could not find gender differences in stress and job performance.

Age and gender may not only be predictors of burnout, they may be factors that interact with other risk factors for burnout. For example, in a study conducted by Shropshire and Kadlec (2012), age moderated the relationship between stress, insecurity, burnout, and intention to leave the job with older employees being less stressed, insecure, and with less intention to leave the job. In research conducted by Boles, Wood, and Johnson (2003), gender was found to moderate the effects of job satisfaction on work related role stress. For example, men's role conflict or role ambiguity was negatively related to their satisfaction with work, their company's policy and promotion

opportunities, their supervisors, and their coworkers (Boles et al., 2003). However, role conflict for women was not related to satisfaction with coworkers (Boles et al., 2003). Moreover with role ambiguity, women experienced more satisfaction with their supervisors (Boles et al., 2003). Thus, gender and age appear to be associated with burn-out and risk factors for burnout. However, negative results have also been reported in the research literature regarding age and gender (Shinn et al., 1984; Zaidi et al., 2011).

Researchers have explored age and gender as predictors of burnout and have previously used organizational risk factors as predictors of burnout. Researchers have also previously explored burnout among helping occupations. However, past research has not explored how gender and age affects the strength of the relationship between all six areas of worklife (workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values) and burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and inefficacy) in one study with one population. Organizational risk factors have been explored independently in past research as predictors of burnout; however, the collective six areas of worklife have not been explored in depth as predictors of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Moreover, the population in this study is unique and diverse. The combination of these unexplored avenues makes this research study viable and will contribute to the gap in the past research into burnout.

Another research area that has been explored quite frequently is workload such as client needs and demands and sense of community such as coworker support and supervisor support (Ballenger-Browning et al., 2011; Bourassa, 2009; Ducharme, Knudsen, & Roman, 2008; Onyett, 2011). Researchers have found that overly demanding

clients, clients with severe mental illness, inexperience in dealing with clients' severe trauma as well as poor job descriptions, lack of support for new ideas and rules and regulations that are constrictive have been linked to higher levels of burnout (Acker, 1999; Bourassa, 2009; Ballenger-Browning et al., 2011; Savicki & Cooley, 1987). Conversely, individuals who perceived support from coworkers and supervisors experienced lower levels of burnout (Baruch-Feldman, Brondolo, Ben-Dayana, & Schwartz, 2002; Ducharme et al., 2008). Moreover, researchers have found that individuals who have some control over their work and individuals who feel a sense of community with coworkers and supervisors as well as those who believe that they are treated fairly experience a greater fit with work which in turn leads to lower levels of burnout (Leiter & Maslach, 2011).

Researchers have focused a great deal of attention on certain aspects of the work environment as predictors of burnout, for example, organizational characteristics such as workload, hours worked, paperwork, and regulations. These organizational characteristics represent the areas of worklife, workload and control. Specifically, hours providing services to mental health clients have been linked to higher levels of burnout (Ballenger-Browning et al., 2011). Other contributors of burnout include caseload size and the perceived inequity in the services the individual feels he or she provides versus what the individual feels he or she is getting in return from peers, clients, and supervisors (Ballenger-Browning et al., 2011; Rose, Madurai, Thomas, Duffy, & Oyebode, 2010). Burnout research has evolved and has led to the development of one theoretical lens that addresses how the individual and the organization fit where a poor fit leads to burnout.

The areas of work life is a model that posits that the relationship between an individual and his or her occupation leads to either engagement or burnout (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). For individuals providing care to others, engagement could mean deriving joy from helping others or it could lead to burnout due to absorbing others problems continuously on a day to day basis. According to Maslach et al. (2001), a job-person fit model takes into consideration individual and interpersonal aspects as predictors of burnout. Moreover, according to Maslach and Leiter (1997), individuals respond in various ways to burnout as a result of their individual characteristics. This response supports the individuals' perceived fit with their work environment despite the presence of organizational characteristics that are stress inducing (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). The six areas of work life (workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values) describe the continuum between the relationship with areas of work and the individual (Leiter & Maslach, 2005). For example, the gradual transition from a good fit to a poor fit in the area of workload can lead to exhaustion, which is the "root of burnout" (Leiter & Maslach, 2005, p. 14). This relationship can be one that fits or is out of synch for the individual (Leiter & Maslach, 2005). The six areas of worklife will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

For this study, I anticipated that age and gender would moderate the association between the areas of worklife and the development of burnout. It was predicted that age and gender would affect the strength of the relationship between each area of worklife and the variables of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and inefficacy). According to Maslach (2003b), the phenomenon of burnout is experienced similarly in

men and women; however, women and men differ in which aspect of burnout he or she experiences. For instance, women tend to report more emotional exhaustion whereas men report more callous feelings and depersonalization (Maslach, 2003b). These variations are possibly due to gender roles (i.e., women are considered more nurturing while men are expected to be tough and unemotional), different occupations (i.e., male occupations versus female occupations), and specific personal qualities (Maslach, 2003b). However, it was anticipated the association between the worklife variables and burnout to be stronger for males than for females. This assumption was based on findings from previous studies which indicated males, compared to females, were more likely to experience depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and negative feelings with regard to fairness, job satisfaction, clarity of job-role, and supervisor and coworker satisfaction, which falls in line with the dimensions of the areas of worklife (workload, control, fairness, values, community, and reward; e.g. Adebayo et al., 2008; Boles et al., 2003). In addition to research into the influence of gender on the areas of worklife, gender has also been studied directly in relation to burnout. As stated previously, research into gender has been contradictory with some studies showing women experience more burnout than men, while other studies suggest men experience burnout more than women and still others that find no significant differences in burnout due to gender (Maslach et al., 2001). This is additionally true for the moderating effect of gender on organizational risk factors and burnout. The discord between previous studies in determining if one gender or another has a stronger effect on the burnout was one impetus for this study.

Additionally, it was predicted that the association between the worklife variables and burnout would be stronger for younger employees than older employees. Maslach (2003b) stated age and burnout have a clear connection with younger workers experiencing more burnout than older employees. In addition, Maslach stated that due to the higher levels of burnout among younger workers, often these younger workers leave the job and the remaining workers are the ones researchers have gathered data on. Moreover, research into the moderating effects of age on the work environment and burnout also shows older employees experiencing less burnout, which also falls in line that the hardy workers are the ones who are around to survey (Turnipseed, 1994).

As noted earlier, the age and gender influence of the occurrence of burnout also moderate the association between certain organizational variables and burnout (Adebayo et al., 2008; Shirom et al., 2008). Due to this previous linkage of these characteristics and burnout, it is practical to anticipate that the strength of the relationship between areas of worklife and burnout will increase due to the moderating effects of age. As age and gender has not been studied as moderators between all six areas of worklife and burnout, it is unclear if the above assumptions will hold; however, due to the lack of research in this area, it is important to ascertain all predictors of burnout.

The mixed results of past research on age and gender could be due to researchers measuring a single area of work life, for example workload. Moreover, age and gender have been studied in one aspect of organizational life in numerous populations. However, no study has addressed age and gender in all six areas of worklife in one study with one population. I intended to fill this gap with the current study.

Purpose of Current Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to ascertain whether or not age and gender moderated the association between areas of worklife and burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and inefficacy) for individuals who work with demanding clients with a variety of illnesses. I examined the relationship of age, gender, workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values to determine the impact on the manifestation of burnout.

By examining the relationship between these characteristics and burnout, results may indicate which characteristic is a stronger predictor or what combination of predictors are most influential, thereby providing further insight into the concept of burnout. A thorough analysis of each predictor is necessary to contribute to the field of burnout research. By contributing to the area of burnout research, possible interventions can be ascertained, depending on the burnout predictor that is most significant. Moreover, identifying predictors is essential in promoting employee and overall organizational health so that both know how to respond to the stressors in the work place.

Study Significance

The significance of this research study was to develop a better understanding of how individual characteristics moderated the relationship between areas of worklife and burnout for individuals providing services to a very challenging population. By gaining an understanding of these influences, employers can develop better interventions for current employees. For example, for individuals struggling with lack of control, employers could develop ways to let employees have more say over their work

assignments. Employers could also use prescreen testing for perspective employees, use tools of engagement to promote healthier, happier employees, and adjust work assignments for those already struggling with burnout. The significance for employees in knowing his or her stressors has the propensity to foster education on coping strategies, to learn the balance between giving of oneself and giving to oneself, and to employ detached concern in dealing with difficult and demanding clients (Maslach, 2003). As Maslach et al. (2012, p. 299) reported, there is a future in burnout research specifically in “explorations of psychological connections of people with their work from both positive and negative perspectives.”

Moreover, I aimed to fill a gap in the existing literature to address burnout from a unique perspective of individual differences moderating the relationship between the six areas of worklife and burnout. The social change implications of this research are to advance the understanding of the individual differences, areas of worklife, and burnout, which are imperative in the implementation of preventative measures to address employee burnout, turnover, and retention. It is also important to bridge the gap between academia and real world situations so that individuals make informed decisions based on age and gender in pursuing high-stress occupations. The purpose of this study aims to inform not only employers but educators as well so that efficacious interventions can be developed based on individual needs that ultimately promote better quality of service delivery for the clients. As Leiter and Maslach (1999, p. 486) stated, continued research into burnout is necessary due to the complexities and changing qualities of the work environment to “further the development of theory and of interventions.”

Research Study Questions

The research questions that I developed for this study were based on the gap in the existing literature in burnout research as well as the specific characteristics this study aims to explore (See Tables 1, 2, and 3). A more thorough investigation into the research methodology will be explored in Chapter 3.

Table 1

Summary of Research Questions and Related Hypotheses for Emotional Exhaustion

Research Questions	Hypotheses
RQ1a. Does age moderate the association between workload and of emotional exhaustion?	<p><i>H1a₁</i>: Age is a moderator in the association between workload and emotional exhaustion.</p> <p><i>H1a₀</i>: Age is not a moderator in the association between workload and emotional exhaustion.</p>
RQ1b. Does age moderate the association between control and emotional exhaustion?	<p><i>H1b₁</i>: Age is a moderator in the association between control and emotional exhaustion.</p> <p><i>H1b₀</i>: Age is not a moderator in the association between control and emotional exhaustion.</p>
RQ1c. Does age moderate the association between reward and emotional exhaustion?	<p><i>H1c₁</i>: Age is a moderator in the association between reward and emotional exhaustion.</p> <p><i>H1c₀</i>: Age is not a moderator in the association between reward and emotional exhaustion.</p>
RQ1d. Does age moderate the association between community and emotional exhaustion?	<p><i>H1d₁</i>: Age is a moderator in the association between community and emotional exhaustion.</p> <p><i>H1d₀</i>: Age is not a moderator in the association between community and emotional exhaustion.</p>
RQ1e. Does age moderate the association between fairness and emotional exhaustion?	<p><i>H1e₁</i>: Age is a moderator in the association between fairness and emotional exhaustion.</p> <p><i>H1e₀</i>: Age is not a moderator in the association between fairness and emotional exhaustion.</p>

(table continues)

	Research Questions	Hypotheses
RQ1f.	Does age moderate the association between values and emotional exhaustion?	<p><i>H1f1</i>: Age is a moderator in the association between values and emotional exhaustion.</p> <p><i>H1f0</i>: Age is not a moderator in the association between values and emotional exhaustion.</p>
RQ1g.	Does gender moderate the association between workload and emotional exhaustion?	<p><i>H1g1</i>: Gender is a moderator in the association between workload and emotional exhaustion.</p> <p><i>H1g0</i>: Gender is not a moderator in the association between workload and emotional exhaustion.</p>
RQ1h.	Does gender moderate the association between control and emotional exhaustion?	<p><i>H1h1</i>: Gender is a moderator in the association between control and emotional exhaustion.</p> <p><i>H1h0</i>: Gender is not a moderator in the association between control and emotional exhaustion.</p>
RQ1i.	Does gender moderate the association between reward and emotional exhaustion?	<p><i>H1i1</i>: Gender is a moderator in the association between reward and emotional exhaustion.</p> <p><i>H1i0</i>: Gender is not a moderator in the association between reward and emotional exhaustion.</p>
RQ1j.	Does gender moderate the association between community and emotional exhaustion?	<p><i>H1j1</i>: Gender is a moderator in the association between community and emotional exhaustion.</p> <p><i>H1j0</i>: Gender is not a moderator in the association between community and emotional exhaustion.</p>
RQ1k.	Does gender moderate the association between fairness and emotional exhaustion?	<p><i>H1k1</i>: Gender is a moderator in the association between fairness and emotional exhaustion.</p> <p><i>H1k0</i>: Gender is not a moderator in the association between fairness and emotional exhaustion.</p>
RQ1l.	Does gender moderate the association between values and emotional exhaustion?	<p><i>H1l1</i>: Gender is a moderator in the association between values and emotional exhaustion.</p> <p><i>H1l0</i>: Gender is not a moderator in the association between values and emotional exhaustion.</p>

Table 2

Summary of Research Questions and Related Hypotheses for Depersonalization

	Research Questions	Hypotheses
RQ2a.	Does age moderate the association between workload and depersonalization?	<i>H2a1</i> : Age is a moderator in the association between workload and depersonalization. <i>H2a0</i> : Age is not a moderator in the association between workload and depersonalization.
RQ2b.	Does age moderate the association between control and depersonalization?	<i>H2b1</i> : Age is a moderator in the association between control and depersonalization. <i>H2b0</i> : Age is not a moderator in the association between control and depersonalization.
RQ2c.	Does age moderate the association between reward and depersonalization?	<i>H2c1</i> : Age is a moderator in the association between reward and depersonalization. <i>H2c0</i> : Age is not a moderator in the association between reward and depersonalization.
RQ2d.	Does age moderate the association between community and depersonalization?	<i>H2d1</i> : Age is a moderator in the association between community and depersonalization. <i>H2d0</i> : Age is not a moderator in the association between community and depersonalization.
RQ2e.	Does age moderate the association between fairness and depersonalization?	<i>H2e1</i> : Age is a moderator in the association between fairness and depersonalization. <i>H2e0</i> : Age is not a moderator in the association between fairness and depersonalization.
RQ2f.	Does age moderate the association between values and depersonalization?	<i>H2f1</i> : Age is a moderator in the association between values and depersonalization. <i>H2f0</i> : Age is not a moderator in the association between values and Depersonalization.
RQ2g.	Does gender moderate the association between workload and Depersonalization?	<i>H2g1</i> : Gender is a moderator in the association between workload and Depersonalization. <i>H2g0</i> : Gender is not a moderator in the association between workload and Depersonalization.
RQ2h.	Does gender moderate the association between control and Depersonalization?	<i>H2h1</i> : Gender is a moderator in the association between control and Depersonalization. <i>H2h0</i> : Gender is not a moderator in the association between control and Depersonalization.

(table continues)

	Research Questions	Hypotheses
RQ2i.	Does gender moderate the association between reward and Depersonalization?	$H2i1$: Gender is a moderator in the association between reward and Depersonalization. $H2i0$: Gender is not a moderator in the association between reward and Depersonalization.
RQ2j.	Does gender moderate the association between community and Depersonalization?	$H2j1$: Gender is a moderator in the association between community and Depersonalization. $H2j0$: Gender is not a moderator in the association between community and Depersonalization.
RQ2k.	Does gender moderate the association between fairness and Depersonalization?	$H2k1$: Gender is a moderator in the association between fairness and Depersonalization. $H2k0$: Gender is not a moderator in the association between fairness and Depersonalization.
RQ2l.	Does gender moderate the association between values and Depersonalization?	$H2l1$: Gender is a moderator in the association between values and Depersonalization. $H2l0$: Gender is not a moderator in the association between values and Depersonalization.

Table 3

Summary of Research Questions and Related Hypotheses for Personal Accomplishment

	Research Questions	Hypotheses
RQ3a.	Does age moderate the association between workload and personal accomplishment?	$H3a1$: Age is a moderator in the association between workload and personal accomplishment. $H3a0$: Age is not a moderator in the association between workload and personal accomplishment.
RQ3b.	Does age moderate the association between control and personal accomplishment?	$H3b1$: Age is a moderator in the association between control and personal accomplishment. $H3b0$: Age is not a moderator in the association between control and personal accomplishment.
RQ3c.	Does age moderate the association between reward and personal accomplishment?	$H3c1$: Age is a moderator in the association between reward and personal accomplishment. $H3c0$: Age is not a moderator in the association between reward and personal accomplishment.

(table continues)

	Research Questions	Hypotheses
RQ3d.	Does age moderate the association between community and personal accomplishment?	<p><i>H3d1</i>: Age is a moderator in the association between community and personal accomplishment.</p> <p><i>H3d0</i>: Age is not a moderator in the association between community and personal accomplishment.</p>
RQ3e.	Does age moderate the association between fairness and personal accomplishment?	<p><i>H3e1</i>: Age is a moderator in the association between fairness and personal accomplishment.</p> <p><i>H3e0</i>: Age is not a moderator in the association between fairness and personal accomplishment.</p>
RQ3f.	Does age moderate the association between values and personal accomplishment?	<p><i>H3f1</i>: Age is a moderator in the association between values and personal accomplishment.</p> <p><i>H3f0</i>: Age is not a moderator in the association between values and personal accomplishment.</p>
RQ3g.	Does gender moderate the association between workload and personal accomplishment?	<p><i>H3g1</i>: Gender is a moderator in the association between workload and personal accomplishment.</p> <p><i>H3g0</i>: Gender is not a moderator in the association between workload and personal accomplishment.</p>
RQ3h.	Does gender moderate the association between control and personal accomplishment?	<p><i>H3h1</i>: Gender is a moderator in the association between control and personal accomplishment.</p> <p><i>H3h0</i>: Gender is not a moderator in the association between control and personal accomplishment.</p>
RQ3i.	Does gender moderate the association between reward and personal accomplishment?	<p><i>H3i1</i>: Gender is a moderator in the association between reward and personal accomplishment.</p> <p><i>H3i0</i>: Gender is not a moderator in the association between reward and personal accomplishment.</p>
RQ3j.	Does gender moderate the association between community and personal accomplishment?	<p><i>H3j1</i>: Gender is a moderator in the association between community and personal accomplishment.</p> <p><i>H3j0</i>: Gender is not a moderator in the association between community and personal accomplishment.</p>
RQ3k.	Does gender moderate the association between fairness and personal accomplishment?	<p><i>H3k1</i>: Gender is a moderator in the association between fairness and personal accomplishment.</p> <p><i>H3k0</i>: Gender is not a moderator in the association between fairness and personal accomplishment.</p>

(table continues)

	Research Questions	Hypotheses
RQ31.	Does gender moderate the association between values and personal accomplishment?	<p><i>H31₁</i>: Gender is a moderator in the association between values and personal accomplishment.</p> <p><i>H31₀</i>: Gender is not a moderator in the association between values and personal accomplishment.</p>

Foundation for Current Research

There was one guiding theoretical framework used in this study. This theory was the multidimensional model, proposed by Maslach and Leiter (1997), that posits that burnout is a product of the mismatch between individuals and six characteristics of the individual's work setting: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values (Maslach, 2003; Maslach et al., 2001). According to Maslach et al., (2001) a job-person fit model takes into consideration individual, interpersonal, and organizational aspects in the development of burnout. Moreover, according to Maslach and Leiter (1997), individuals respond in various ways to burnout as a result of their individual differences, which aides with their perceived fit with their work environment despite the presence of organizational characteristics that are stress inducing.

This guiding theory was used to determine if individual differences led to a mismatch between the individual and his or her job that in turn led to burnout. Specifically, burnout is considered a response to stresses in one's occupation that occurs over a period of time (Maslach et al., 2001; Leiter & Maslach, 2005). Therefore, it was important to look at how workload, lack of control over one's work environment, lack of sufficient reward for the work one does, relationships with coworkers and supervisors, an inequitable distribution of trust, respect, and honesty between the individual and his or

her organization as well as an incongruence between individual values and those of the organization ultimately led to burnout for the individual (Maslach et al., 2001; Leiter & Maslach, 2005). A more thorough description of the conceptual framework will be discussed in Chapter 2 with specific attention given to the six components of the theoretical framework.

Nature of the Study

For this quantitative research study, I used survey research. The surveys were cross-sectional with data collected at one point in time using self-administered questionnaires. Specifically, I employed the use of the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS), the Areas of Worklife Survey (AWS), and a demographic questionnaire. Burnout was assessed by using the MBI-HSS (Maslach, 2001). The AWS was developed as a companion to the MBI-HSS, which assesses an individual's perception of the fit to organizational characteristics to determine burnout or engagement (Leiter & Maslach, 2005). The demographic questionnaire ascertained age, gender, race, and ethnicity, and the demographic question answer categories were multiple-choice. The surveys will be described in detail in Chapter 3.

Types and Sources of Information or Data

For this study, I collected data using survey instruments (MBI-HSS and the AWS). The research population that I used was the direct care staff employed at a non-profit outpatient mental health organization in upstate New York. This human service agency employed 410 individuals of whom 340 were considered direct care staff. The direct care staff provided services to at risk individuals with a variety of challenges and

needs such as mental illness, dually diagnosed, developmental issues or delays, physical impairments, criminal histories, elderly, or a combination of these characteristics. From direct care staff, I aimed to recruit 150 participants.

Analytical Strategies

I used linear regression analyses in this study to determine how age and gender moderated the relationship between the six areas of worklife and burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and inefficacy). The data analysis plan will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Definitions

Burnout: A response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stress at work that leads to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduction in personal accomplishment. Burnout is a response to the emotional strain of providing direct services to others in need, feeling a detachment due to the emotional strain, and ultimately leading to feelings of inefficacy (Maslach, 2003).

Depersonalization: A component of the burnout syndrome that refers to an individual's reaction of distancing oneself from his or her work and coworkers to prevent emotional exhaustion and discontent with oneself (Angerer, 2003).

Detached concern: The concept that an individual providing care to others can have psychological distance from the client's problems, which then allows for objective concern for the client. The individual has a balance between too little and too much emotional involvement (Maslach, 2003).

Direct care staff: Staff who work directly with high risk clients at a human service agency in Binghamton, New York. These individuals are front line workers and are composed of receptionists, assertive case managers, intensive case managers, supportive case managers, community support service case managers, adult protective case managers, residential case managers, Medicaid service coordinators, vocational case managers, community service workers, team leaders, and supervisors who have direct contact with clients.

Emotional exhaustion: Another component of the burnout syndrome that refers to a reaction to job stress that leaves the individual feeling strained both emotionally and physically. Additionally, a conflict in an individual's occupational role, such as in human service work in which one must exhibit emotions inconsistent with felt emotion or perform additional tasks in addition to his or her daily tasks, is a key component in the development of emotional exhaustion (Angerer, 2003; Leiter & Maslach, 1999).

Individual differences: Specific characteristics of the individual such as his or her age, gender, and years of employment in human services (Maslach, 2003).

Moderator variable: A qualitative or quantitative variable that affects the strength of the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Personal accomplishment: An individual's perception of his or her effectiveness in meeting the demands of work and clients. In regards to the burnout syndrome, a reduction in this area leads to feelings of ineffectiveness and feelings of inadequacy that

in turn leads to feeling less accomplished and more overwhelmed with the demands of work (Angerer, 2003).

Assumptions

The participants who I surveyed in this study were drawn from a convenience sample from a human service agency in Binghamton, New York. Upon selection, a web link to the survey instruments was emailed to each of the respondents. This method proved to be both efficient and confidential. I assumed that this population would be diverse in terms of age, gender, race, and ethnicity. It was also assumed given the nature of the study and the use of self-report measures that respondents would answer truthfully. It was further assumed that the individuals who the study most actively sought, those experiencing burnout, would respond. The use of the MBI-HSS and AWS are both valid and reliable measures for the study of burnout, and it was assumed that this would continue to be the case in this current study with this population.

Limitations

One challenge to this study was the use of the self-report measures. Self-report measures, although convenient and cost effective, rely solely on the individual to report his or her behaviors truthfully. Because of this key component in the use of self-report measures, a social desirability bias can occur in which individuals can be more apt to give socially acceptable answers rather than truthful answers to items on the scales and report less burnout than actually felt. Distortions in self-report measures such as response bias can limit the validity of a study. Other challenges included a possible low response rate, the inability to control for other factors that may influence burnout (family/home life), the

use of a convenience sample, and cross-sectional design. These were challenges as they may influence the reliability and validity of this research study. Another possible challenge was the ability of this study to generalize to the population as a whole since it is focused only on one organization in one state. Moreover, I focused on one type of occupational level (direct care staff); therefore, the results may not generalize across occupations.

Summary

Since its theoretical beginnings in the 1970s, burnout has been a unique and varied area of interest for researchers and still remains a significant problem for individuals and organizations. Burnout most succinctly explained arises due to a poor relationship between an individual and his or her work environment (Maslach et al., 2001). One such environment is the human service industry in which individuals must care for the many needs of others (Maslach, 2003b). The intense emotional interactions with others coupled with organizational risk factors ultimately leads to burnout for individuals (Maslach, 2003b; Leiter & Maslach, 2011). Direct care staff is one example of those who provide services to others and to the community as well. The manifestation of burnout in this population not only harms the individual and the organization but also does a disservice to those in their care. Identifying the relationship between individual differences and the areas of worklife on burnout can lead to more efficacious interventions and promote overall organizational health, which ultimately benefits the clients served.

In this research, I focused on the relationship the individual perceives he or she has with his or her occupation by identifying how individual differences moderates the areas of worklife as predictors of burnout as described by Maslach and Leiter's (1997) conceptual areas of worklife framework. The relationship between burnout, the individual, and the areas of worklife were explored with this research study to determine if burnout occurs due to the moderating effect of gender and age on the six areas of worklife.

Chapter 2 will contain the literature review on the topic of burnout as well as the conceptual framework of this study. Chapter 3 will contain the research design for this study as well as the survey instruments used for this study and the statistical analysis plan. Chapter 4 will contain a discussion of the results and the data analyses. Chapter 5 will cover the discussion, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Burnout is a serious problem that has been estimated to cost the United States economy \$300 billion dollars annually due to job turnover, leave due to sickness, and disability claims (Leiter & Maslach, 2005). Moreover, those most susceptible to becoming burnout are those responsible for the care of others such as human services workers (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Specifically, research by Farber and Heifetz (1982) found that burnout was prevalent in the human service field as 71% of psychologists, 43% of psychiatrists, and 73% of social workers were found to be burned out. In a follow-up study by Farber (1985), results indicated that 36% of mental health professionals were found to have burnout levels in the moderate range and 6.3% reported high levels of burnout.

Burnout has also been associated with negative outcomes for individuals that manifests in a variety of ways. Individuals may develop physical symptoms such as fatigue, insomnia, and muscle tension (e.g., Kahill, 1988; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Taka, 2008). Individuals may develop psychological symptoms, such as depression, anger, cynicism as well as anxiety (e.g., Kahill, 1988; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Taka, 2008). Moreover, individuals may manifest cognitive symptoms such as poor concentration, pessimistic thinking, and negative thinking (e.g., Kahill, 1988; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Taka, 2008). Additionally, individuals may experience interpersonal symptoms such as withdrawal from peers and family as well as isolation (e.g., Kahill, 1988; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Taka, 2008). Furthermore, individuals may experience negative quality of

work symptoms such as absenteeism, lateness, decreased quality of work, and stealing from work to name a few (e.g., Kahill, 1988; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Taka, 2008).

The strength of research focusing on the concept of burnout is to delineate ways individuals and organizations can recognize the symptoms of burnout. Additionally, research such as this helps to find the causes of burnout among individual differences and areas of worklife. Most importantly, research into the predictors of burnout is important to find ways to increase worker retention and decrease absenteeism and turnover. The focus of this literature review is to define the construct of burnout, to define the dimensions of burnout, to define the predictors of burnout, and to explore the relevance of research that takes a unique approach to the study of burnout.

A literature search using behavioral studies, psychology, and medical online databases such as CINAHL, MEDLINE, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, and SocINDEX as well as through the internet search engine Google Scholar was completed for this literature review. The literature search was conducted using the search terms: *burnout, reward, control, fairness, social support, values, gender, client demands, demographic characteristics, organizational characteristics, and interpersonal characteristics*. Articles were collected either through print version or electronic version. Books used for this literature review were purchased.

Independent searches for burnout yielded a vast amount of past research. In the databases listed above, without using Google Scholar, the term burnout yielded 6,157 results. However, combining burnout with either individual characteristics, interpersonal characteristics, or institutional characteristics, the results decrease dramatically. To obtain

resources for this literature review, I combined *burnout* with each construct (*individual characteristics, interpersonal characteristics, and institutional characteristics*) independently. Furthermore, a combination of all characteristics with *burnout* yielded only two results. Moreover, burnout was combined with areas of worklife and 14 results were obtained. Lastly, *burnout* and areas of worklife were combined with *age* and *gender* and no results were obtained. Due to the limited scope of past research in regards to burnout and the moderating effect of age and gender on the areas of worklife, further research in this area is needed.

I will focus this literature review on the previous research on the subject of burnout, specifically how past research has concentrated on individual differences, interpersonal characteristics, and institutional characteristics. Moreover, the six areas of work life (workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values) have evolved from previous burnout research as the most current theoretical framework in of the study of burnout. This theoretical framework will be discussed as well as how this conceptual framework will be used in this current research project.

Historical Foundations of Burnout Research

The concept of burnout was first brought to the forefront when Freudenberger, in the mid-1970s, began writing to describe the lack of motivation and the loss of emotional connection displayed by individuals providing care to others in healthcare and the human services field (Freudenberger, 1974). Maslach followed, also in the mid-1970s, by focusing on the emotional stressors of individuals working in human services (Maslach et al., 2001). This interpersonal prospective in early research explored the relationship

between an individual's emotional reaction to his or her work and the underlying motivation to work in human services. Early burnout research also explored the symptomology and mental health aspects of burnout. The foundation for future burnout research began as an attempt to understand the intricacies of the relationship between a caregiver and recipient (Maslach et al., 2001). Specifically, Maslach (1978) found that the difficult relationship between client and staff that led to burnout for the caregiver was a result of the severity of client symptoms, client's prognosis for change or cure, organizational rules that governed the relationship between staff and client, and the way in which clients reacted to staff. Research such as this was important as an impetus to change the quality of services provided to clients. Burnout research has evolved into numerous occupations, among a variety of populations in an attempt to bring coherence and meaning to the concept.

Burnout research has expanded tremendously over the past 35 years. Major findings have included developing more systematic approaches to studying burnout by relying heavily upon collecting quantitative data with the use of surveys and questionnaires as well as extending the populations studied (Maslach et al., 2001). However, the most significant accomplishment was the development of the most commonly used survey instrument in burnout research, The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) that is used to measure burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Several versions of the MBI are available today, such as the MBI-GS, a general survey for use in any occupation, the MBI-HSS, for use in human service occupations, and the MBI-Educators survey, to assess teachers (Angerer, 2003; Maslach 2003a). The development of the MBI

allowed for widespread quantitative data collection in multiple languages with an instrument that has been deemed reliable and valid (Aguayo, Vargas, de la Fuente, & Lozano, 2011).

Other significant contributions in burnout research have included delineating predictors of burnout to include job demands, client characteristics, personality, workload, and interactions with supervisors and coworkers, organizational characteristics, and demographic characteristics, to name a few (e.g., Leiter & Maslach, 1988; Savicki & Cooley, 1987; Schultz, Greenly, & Brown, 1995). These characteristics will be discussed in depth in the proceeding pages. By developing an understanding of individual differences and situational characteristics in the manifestation of burnout, researchers have found significant correlates of the burnout syndrome and have moved toward developing a comprehensive theoretical framework.

The current directions in burnout research focuses on a multidimensional model that posits that burnout is a product of a poor fit between individuals and six characteristics of the individual's work setting: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values (Maslach, 2003a, Maslach et al., 2001). This model posits a burnout/engagement continuum (Leiter & Maslach, 2001). Mismatches in any one of the six areas leads to burnout whereas matches lead to engagement with work (Leiter & Maslach, 2001). Furthermore, research has shown that burnout is not singularly a personal flaw in individuals but a combination of individual, interpersonal, and institutional characteristics (Maslach, 2003b; Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Specifically, if individual differences, such as age and gender, lead to a mismatch between the individual

and any of the areas of work life; if interpersonal characteristics, such as client demands and demands from coworkers lead to mismatch between the individual and any area of work life; and if institutional characteristics, such as workload and regulations, lead to a mismatch between the individual and any of the areas of work life. An understanding of the mismatch between individuals and his or her work environment has many implications for interventions, retention, and productivity.

Defining Burnout

There is no dictionary definition related to the construct of occupational burnout. The layperson's conventional definition of burnout usually lies at the individual level, meaning that the person's own differences leads him or her to burnout, for example, the person who strives too hard or takes on too much (Maslach, 2003a). Once one develops burnout, it leads to mental and physical health deterioration as well as adverse results in one's personal and work environment (Aguayo et al., 2011). However, researchers have suggested that the concept of burnout is much more complex than any singular individual, interpersonal, or institutional characteristic (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

The most common characterization of burnout used in research is as a condition composed of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and inefficacy or lack of personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 2001). The progression through these three domains leads to the burnout (Angerer, 2003). The demands of one's occupation lead to emotional exhaustion (Maslach, 2003a). The emotional exhaustion component of the burnout syndrome refers to an individual feeling strained both emotionally and physically (Angerer, 2003; Leiter & Maslach, 1999). Additionally, a conflict in an individual's

occupational role, such as in human service work in which one must exhibit emotions inconsistent with felt emotion, is a key component in the development of exhaustion (Leiter & Maslach, 1999). According to Maslach and Leiter (1997), emotional exhaustion is the initial response to the stressors of one's job. Researchers have shown that individuals report more emotional exhaustion than the other two dimensions; thus, making this domain the most analyzed of the three (Maslach et al., 2001). Moreover, researchers have indicated that emotional exhaustion is the core component of the burnout syndrome (Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007). However, this does not conclude that this one domain could define the whole concept of burnout; this domain only describes the work strain aspect of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001).

Emotional exhaustion in turn leads to becoming detached from one's personal identity due to the stresses and strain from one's work (Maslach, 2003a). The result of detachment leads to a reduction in one's felt personal accomplishment (Maslach, 2003a). This second dimension of burnout, depersonalization or cynicism, refers to an individual's reaction of distancing oneself from his or her work and coworkers to prevent further emotional exhaustion and discontent with oneself (Angerer, 2003). Researchers have found a strong link between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Maslach et al., 2001). Those more emotionally exhausted display more depersonalization in their day to day job duties (Maslach et al., 2001). The individual who portrays this negative attitude often finds it easier to be indifferent than to have his or her hopes let down (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). The consequences of depersonalization towards one's work effects not only one's personal well-being but also his or her ability to carry out the

requirements of the job effectively (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). As an individual develops depersonalization, he or she will be less able to engage in the emotional demands of his or her job, less willing to help others to whom he or she feels indifferent to, and will distance themselves from coworkers as well as clients (Maslach et al., 2001).

The third dimension of burnout is inefficacy or lack of personal accomplishment (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). The growing discontent with one's work leaves the individual feeling inadequate, which in turn leads to feeling less accomplished and more overwhelmed with the demands of work (Angerer, 2003). This loss of confidence in one's own ability leads to the loss of confidence in them by others as well (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Researchers have suggested that the relationship between inefficacy to the other domains of burnout is a complex one (Maslach et al., 2001). In some instances, inefficacy arises due to emotional exhaustion and cynicism; however, in other work situations, inefficacy arises in conjunction with emotional exhaustion and cynicism (Maslach et al., 2001). For instance, a chronic, over-demanding work environment contributes to exhaustion and cynicism which, in turn, will leave an individual feeling less effective (Maslach et al., 2001). All three components need to be present in order to speak of burnout. Thus, exhaustion by itself is not burnout.

The three fundamental domains that I previously described—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment—lay at the heart of an individual's progression towards burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). These three domains are the components of the stress response that ultimately lead to the burnout syndrome (Maslach, 2003a). Inefficacy results from an individual's inability to access resources to

assist with his or her personal needs to feel effective whereas emotional exhaustion and cynicism result from the demands of one's work and conflicts with one's social environment (Maslach et al., 2001).

Burnout appears to overlap with other concepts such as stress and anxiety. Delineation between stress and burnout is most succinctly put as stress is the feeling of being overly consumed with responsibilities while burnout is the feeling of being completely drained (Rakovec-Felser, 2011). Moreover, stress typically occurs when an individual is overly engaged while burnout is characterized by disengagement (Rakovec-Felser, 2011). Burnout has also been described as a response to an individual's psychological anxiety or worry from reoccurring stressful working conditions (Halbesleben, 2006). Unlike stress, which can have serious consequences and results from real life pressures, anxiety is an excessive fear with few serious effects (Halbesleben, 2006; Weiten, 2005). The resulting burnout response is due to the stressors not the anxiety; anxiety is the response to the stressors (Halbesleben, 2006).

Consequences of burnout. The burnout syndrome has been linked to numerous mental and physical health related outcomes such as anxiety, decreases in self-esteem, depression, feelings of vulnerability, irritability, headaches, backaches, lethargy, insomnia as well as gastrointestinal difficulties (Kahill, 1988). Moreover, behavioral symptoms emerge in response to burnout such as absenteeism, poor work performance, turnover, tardiness, misappropriation of break time, and stealing from work (Kahill, 1988). There is also a link between burnout and use of alcohol, drugs, and caffeine (Angerer, 2003; Kahill, 1988). Research has indicated that the use of substances to cope

with burnout may actually increase the problem for the individual (Angerer, 2003).

Individual responses to burnout include displaying negative emotions and withdrawal from family and friends (Kahill, 1988). Negative attitudes are often displayed toward clients, life in general, and towards the individual themselves (Kahill, 1988). Coworkers' perceptions of individuals who are experiencing burnout indicated that some of the signs that the coworker was suffering were a distancing of themselves from their clients, isolating themselves from their coworkers, and withdrawing from work (Ericson-Lidman & Strandberg, 2007).

The cost for organizations as a result of burnout, including employee turnover, advertising new positions, training for new hires, worker's compensation benefits, sick leave, loss due to one the job mistakes, employee theft and fraud as well as health-related expenses has been estimated annually to exceed billions of dollars (Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Taka, 2008). For individuals, researchers have indicated that stress is linked to between 60 to 90% of all medical problems (Lee, 1997). Job stress is a mediating factor in the manifestation of the burnout syndrome (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH, 2009), recent surveys have indicated 40% of workers felt his or her job was *very* or *extremely stressful*, and 26% reported being *burned out* by their jobs. These three domains have been researched extensively and have been the foundation for the concept of burnout most studied to date (Maslach et al., 2001).

Research into the development of burnout is important due to the many consequences linked to burnout for individuals, colleagues, and the organization. It is

important to ascertain the predictors of burnout so that efficacious interventions can be implemented.

Research Into the Predictors of Burnout

Individual Differences

Research on burnout has been extensive over the past 3 decades with burnout being linked to situational factors such as characteristics of one's job, occupational characteristics, and organizational characteristics as well as individual factors such as demographic characteristics, personality characteristics, and individual attitudes (Maslach et al., 2001). Moreover, burnout research began in human service occupations; however, research over the past 30 years has extended to various occupations from teachers, nurses, clergy, clerical, and military to name a few (Angerer, 2003; Maslach et al., 2001).

Research data have been contradictory regarding individual differences and burnout; specifically, researchers have concluded some demographic variables, such as marital status, age, and gender tend to be associated with burnout while other research data have not found similar associations. For example, Zaidi et al. (2011) used multiple regression analysis to determine that the three dimensions of burnout were not affected by demographic characteristics among university teachers in Lahore. However, other researchers have indicated that married individuals experience less burnout than single individuals with unmarried men being more susceptible to burnout than married individuals (Maslach, 2003a; Maslach et al., 2001). This is supported by research done by Lau, Yuen, and Chan (2005) in which unmarried individuals were found to be more frequently burned out than married individuals.

Additionally, an individual difference that has been consistently linked to burnout is age (Maslach et al., 2001). For example, researchers have indicated that older employees experience less burnout than younger employees (Maslach, 2003a). However research done by Ahola, Honkonen, Isometsä, Kalimo, Nykyri, Aromaa and Lönnqvist (2006) found that in the general population small increases in burnout were detected in older workers. Yan and Tang (2003) also found that elderly volunteers experienced increased levels of burnout in regards to number of years volunteering; thus, the number of years working is confounded by age. Additionally, research by Ballenger-Browning et al., (2011) found that higher levels of burnout were reported by individuals who have worked longer than 16 years. Thus, it is feasible to posit that the longer one works in a stressful occupation, the higher degree of burnout he or she will experience.

Another individual difference that has been studied extensively in regards to burnout is gender, but there have not been consistent results indicating that gender is a predictor of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). However, some researchers have found that males are more cynical in their work dimensions than women while women express more emotional exhaustion than men (Maslach, 2003a). Research by Bekker, Croon, & Bressers (2005) found there were only slight differences among males and females in reported emotional exhaustion; specifically, it was found that regardless of gender, sickness absences were a result of reported emotional exhaustion for both genders. Moreover, sickness absences were not higher for women as a result of emotional exhaustion (Bekker et al., 2005). In research conducted by Shinn, Rosario, Mørch, and Chestnut (1984), gender differences were not found among human service workers in the

ability to cope with the everyday stresses of their occupations. Other researchers have found that females experience more burnout than their male counterparts. Specifically, research conducted by Lau et al. (2005) indicates gender differences do occur among teachers in Hong Kong with men showing more depersonalization than their female counterparts.

The complexities of gender as a predictor of burnout can be the result of a variety of factors. Specifically, gender roles and gender stereotypes may play a part in the development of burnout. For example, men may feel more pressure to provide for the family, whereas women may feel more pressure due to role conflict between work and family life (Greenglass, 1991). Thus, individual responses to burnout may be a result of societal factors that influence the way a particular gender responds to the stressors of the work environment.

Gender as a moderator variable. Research into the moderating effects of gender and age on the development of burnout has been limited but contradictory as well. Some researchers have discovered a positive effect between gender and burnout. For example, in a study conducted by Adebayo, Sunmola, and Udegbe (2008), gender was shown to moderate the relationship between perceived workplace fairness and emotional exhaustion among Nigerian police with gender being a stronger predictor of emotional exhaustion for males than for females. Gender was also shown to moderate the effect of job satisfaction, satisfaction with coworkers, and supervisors on work-related stress. In research conducted by Boles, Wood, and Johnson (2003), gender was found to moderate the effects of job satisfaction between work related role stresses. For example, men's role

conflict or role ambiguity was negatively related to their satisfaction with work, their company's policy and promotion opportunities, their supervisors, and their coworkers (Boles et al., 2003). However, role conflict for women was not related to satisfaction with coworkers (Boles et al., 2003). Moreover with role ambiguity, women experienced more satisfaction with their supervisors (Boles et al., 2003). Research conducted by Johnson and Spector (2007) found significant differences in the moderating effect of gender on emotional exhaustion, personal well-being, and job satisfaction with females experiencing more negative consequences than males.

However, other studies have shown no moderating effect of gender. For example, in a meta-analysis conducted by Purvanova and Muros (2010) which examined the moderating effects of gender on male-typed versus female typed occupations, no significant differences in burnout among males and females were found; however, males were slightly more depersonalized than females, and females were slightly more emotionally exhausted than males. In a study by Shirom, Gilboa, Fried, and Cooper (2008) which explored the moderating effects of gender, age, and tenure on work related stress and job performance, results indicated no gender differences between stress and job performance.

Age as a moderator variable. Research into the moderating effect of age on the development of burnout has also had contradictory results. In research conducted by Shirom et al. (2008) which explored age as a moderator on work related stress and job performance found that the mean age of participants showed a moderating effect on role ambiguity and job performance with a negative correlation that decreased with increases

in age. Shirom et al. (2008) also found that as the percentage of women in the study and the participants' age increased coupled with increases in mean sample tenure and age, there was a reduction in the relationship between performance and role ambiguity.

However, other studies have not shown a positive effect of age on job outcomes. Specifically, research conducted by Mauno, Ruokolainen, & Kinnunen (2012) found that age moderated the effect of negative outcomes in relation to job insecurity for younger employees more so than older employees. Moreover, older age moderated the effect between job satisfaction and workload (Mauno et al., 2012). In a study conducted by Shropshire and Kadlec (2012), age was a moderating variable between the independent variables (stress, insecurity, and burnout) and the dependent variable of intention to leave the job. Results indicated that age did not have a moderating effect on individual stress, insecurity, burnout in worker's intention to leave the company (Shropshire & Kadlec, 2012). Research conducted by Matin, Kalali, and Anvari (2012) examined the moderating effect of age, gender, educational level, and marital status on job burnout, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and intention to leave among Iranian public sector workers. Results indicated no moderating effect of the demographic variables on the outcomes of job burnout, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, or intention to leave the job (Matin et al., 2012).

The findings of these studies are indicative of past research which has had contradictory results in regards to demographic variables having a moderating effect on burnout. However, the moderating effect of gender and age on the relationship between all six areas of worklife and burnout in one study has yet to be explored which creates a

new viable research avenue. In addition, personality has been explored quite frequently in burnout research. Of the personality traits studied, results indicate that lower hardiness levels are linked to increases in burnout scores (Maslach et al., 2001). Moreover, individuals with an external locus of control exhibit higher levels of burnout than individuals with an internal locus of control (Maslach et al., 2001). Research conducted by Alarcon, Eschleman, and Bowling (2009) also found that burnout was linked to negative affectivity, and type A personality. In addition, in research conducted on the Big Five personality traits, neuroticism has been the one characteristic most strongly linked with burnout (Bakker, Van der Zee, Lewig, Dollard, 2006; Maslach et al., 2001). Research conducted by Swider & Zimmerman (2010) also found that individuals experienced higher levels of burnout when he or she had a higher score of neuroticism and lower scores on extraversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness. In research conducted by Hudek-Knezević, Kalebić Maglica, and Krapić (2011) a reduction in personal efficacy was lower for individuals who scored high on agreeableness and openness. According to Maslach (2003b), although personality has been shown in research to have some effects on burnout, the majority of research supports an *occupational and interpersonal stress model* more than an individual differences.

The contradictory nature of the demographic variables in the research literature indicates the complexity of individual differences alone in explaining the concept of burnout. As Maslach et al., (2001) points out the contradictory nature of individual differences leads researchers to believe that burnout consists of more than individual differences. However, the contradictory results may also be due to mediators or

confounding variables. For example, younger adults may burnout early and leave hardier workers behind who are less susceptible to burnout, so as workers age only those with a certain personality will be found in the workplace (Maslach et al., 2001). In addition, gender roles and stereotypes may influence gender differences in burnout (Greenglass, 1991). Nonetheless, some suggestive trends have been found amongst demographic variables and continuing to research this area among a new population in a new context is a viable avenue. In addition to individual differences, researchers have linked interpersonal characteristics, such as the influence of clients, peers, and supervisor roles in developing burnout for individuals (Maslach et al., 2001).

Interpersonal Characteristics

Burnout research initially began with looking at professionals in the human services and health care fields specifically because of the emotionally demanding work associated with providing services to individuals in need (Maslach et al., 2001). Initially researchers looked at interpersonal stressors specifically the demands and needs of clients as well as the support or lack thereof from supervisors and co-workers (Maslach et al., 2001). The client's role in the development of burnout for an individual involves a complicated mix of the severity of the client's needs coupled with the emotional aspect of the interactions as well as the detached working relationship that an individual must undertake when working with a client (Maslach, 1978). Unfortunately, the clients' demands drain a lot out of individuals who are providing care. One way individuals protect themselves from the emotional demands of the client is to exhibit *detached concern* (Maslach, 2003b). *Detached concern* is a concept that an individual providing

care to others can have psychological distance from the client's problems which then allows for objective concern for the client (Maslach, 2003b). The individual has to balance between too little and too much emotional involvement (Maslach, 2003b).

Researchers have indicated that clients' psychiatric diagnoses have been linked to higher levels of burnout for providers (Ballenger-Browning et al., 2011). Thus, clients with more severe problems created higher levels of burnout for those providing services to them. Research conducted by Acker (1999) found that social workers providing services to severely mentally ill clients experienced increased emotional exhaustion and detachment as well as decreased job satisfaction and feelings of efficacy. Specifically, clients with schizophrenic spectrum disorders were linked to more emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and higher levels of efficacy for social workers than for clients diagnosed with other mental illnesses (Acker, 1999). Research by Borritz, Rugulies, Bjorner, Villadsen, Mikkelsen, & Kristensen (2006) found that client demands were related to an increase in burnout for midwives and home health care workers. Bourassa (2009) proposed several avenues when working with clients that lead to compassion fatigue and ultimately burnout for social workers, specifically Adult Protective Service social workers. These include a history of trauma for the social worker, the social workers' emotional engagement with a client, degree of exposure to traumatic events in the current work place, length of time spent with clients who have experienced trauma, being in the field rather than being in the office, level of empathy felt by workers, and inexperience working with clients who have suffered trauma (Bourassa, 2009).

For social workers working with clients with severe mental illness, researchers have shown that lack of support from supervisors and peers was linked to poorer perceptions of overall support and resources (Acker, 1999). Moreover, researchers have shown that emotional exhaustion is linked to disagreeable contacts with one's supervisors (Leiter & Maslach, 1988). Conversely, researchers have indicated that individuals who received social support experienced less burnout and more productivity and satisfaction in their work (Baruch-Feldman, Brondolo, Ben-Dayan, & Schwartz, 2002). In addition, support from an individual's immediate supervisor has been linked to higher satisfaction and increased productivity (Baruch-Feldman et al., 2002). Similar results were found among elderly Chinese volunteers in that higher levels of personal accomplishment were felt when individuals were satisfied with their job and felt personal reward for the work they were doing (Yan & Tang, 2003). Positive relationships with one's co-workers facilitated emotional support for individuals which in turn helped fend off the daily stressors which occurred when working in high stress occupations (Leiter & Maslach, 1988). Moreover, individuals who perceived that they have their coworkers' support experienced less emotional exhaustion as well as a decrease in intent to leave the job (Ducharme, Knudsen, & Roman, 2008). Research by Janssen et al., (1999) also found less emotional exhaustion among nurses who felt they received support from coworkers or supervisors. Research by Savicki & Cooley (1987) also found that work environments in which individuals felt committed to his or her work, had good relationships with peers, and support from supervisors were associated with a reduction in burnout levels. Ramarajan, Barsad, and Burack (2008) also noted that employees stated a reduction in

levels of emotional exhaustion when they felt they were respected by the organization they worked for. In a review of the published literature from 1997 to 2010, Onyett (2011) found that cohesive teams and effective leadership in terms of support and management were found to shield mental health employees from the stresses associated with their work. Social support in the workplace is a moderator between job stress and burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). For example, when social support from colleagues and especially supervisors was high, burnout levels were low; however, less support was linked to higher levels of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001).

Thus, burnout risks are increased by both more difficult interactions with clients as well as the people in the organization in which one works. Apart from individual and interpersonal characteristics, research has expanded greatly in recent years to determine the institutions' role in the development of burnout; specifically, how organizations can decrease burnout by increasing engagement and supporting employees (Maslach et al., 2001).

Institutional Characteristics

Work demands have changed dramatically since burnout research first began in the early 1970s. Employment trends over the past 15 years of downsizing and organizational changes have increased workloads for many employees (Leiter & Maslach 2005). The increase in work demands leads individuals more easily through the first stage of burnout which is emotional exhaustion. Research conducted by Janssen, Schaufeli, & Houkes (1999) found a robust association among emotional exhaustion and work overload among Dutch nurses providing care at a general hospital in the Netherlands.

Research by Jayaratne & Chess (1984) explored job characteristics by child protective, community mental health, and family service workers to determine the characteristics of the job that led to stress and burnout. The researchers found that work setting was linked to higher levels of stress for child protective workers than for community mental health or family service workers (Jayaratne & Chess, 1984). Moreover, child protective workers attributed caseload size as a contributor of stress (Jayaratne & Chess, 1984). Koeske & Koeske (1989) also found similar results indicating challenging caseloads, little social support, and self-perceptions of ineffectiveness when dealing with clients as being a contributor to burnout among social workers. Male and May (1998) found similar results among learning support coordinators (LSC's) in that LSC's experienced higher stress due to workload and longer hours. Also associated with higher caseloads is the individual's negative feelings not only towards his or her organization but also to the clients he or she works with (Pines & Kafry, 1978).

Another aspect of the changing organizational environment is that individuals must deal with a higher intensity work environment (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). In other words, organizations are employing fewer individuals to do more work to increase productivity (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). This aspect includes working longer hours to perform more tasks with fewer resources (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). In research conducted by Ballenger-Browning et al., (2011), caseloads, working longer hours, and treating more patients per week were contributors to the development of burnout among military mental health providers which was found to be comparable to civilian scores on

burnout. Research by Ahola et al., (2006) also found that working more hours had significant effects on burnout for both men and women.

In research conducted by Schulz, Greenley, and Brown (1995), when employee and client characteristics were controlled, organizational and management characteristics were shown to have a significant effect on employee work satisfaction and on the work environment which in turn led to an indirect burnout experience by employees. Similar results were found in direct care staff working in a residential setting caring for children, individuals with intellectual disabilities, and with older persons in which direct care staff felt they were investing more in the care for these individuals, in their co-workers, and in their organization without a feeling of a reciprocal investment (Rose, Madurai, Thomas, Duffy, & Oyebode, 2010). Feelings of inequity between what an individual invests in work and what he or she gains from work has been linked to increased levels of burnout (Taris, Schreurs, Peeters, Le Blanc, & Schaufeli, 2001). Higher levels of burnout were also found in individuals who were given vague or unclear job expectations, where rules and regulations were imposed in an effort to constrain individuals, and where support and praise for new ideas and techniques were low (Savicki & Cooley, 1987). Conversely, commitment to one's organization and positive interactions with supervisors and coworkers has been linked to increased perceptions of personal accomplishment, and less feelings of emotional exhaustion (Leiter & Maslach, 1988). The work demands placed on an individual not only distresses the individual but affects all levels of the organization. Larger caseloads lead to less client contact; less client contact leads to a reduction in services to the client; less follow-up care; and ultimately a deterioration in the quality of

services provided (Maslach, 2003b). These can be serious issues when an individual is responsible for the care of another individual.

The seriousness of burnout for individuals, as well as organizations, calls for an integrated approach to determine the influences in the development of the burnout syndrome. Previous research has discovered a variety of influences, for example, personality and work load, in the development of the burnout syndrome; however, prior researchers have neglected to look at how individual differences moderate the fit a person has with his or her occupation. For instance, questions still remain such as how does gender lead to incongruence in the areas of work life? Previous researchers have indicated that consistency is lacking in this area. Additionally, workload has been established as a contributor to burnout; however, is workload moderated by individual differences which lead to a mismatch in job-person fit? Moreover, is one area of worklife more influential in the development of burnout when moderated by age or gender? These questions still remain despite a vast amount of burnout research. It is in this area where continued research into burnout predictors is needed.

Foundation for Current Research

There was one guiding theoretical framework used in this study. This theory was the multidimensional model, proposed by Maslach & Leiter (1997), that posits that burnout is a product of the mismatch between individuals and six characteristics of the individual's perceived fit to the work setting: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values (Maslach, 2003b; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Maslach & Leiter proposed this theory in an attempt to answer how an individual fits with his or her

occupation. In efforts to establish a theoretical model that most succinctly describes the relationship individuals have with his or her work environment, Maslach & Leiter (2011) first reviewed the enormity of research done on burnout and organizational correlates. This review led to six distinct domains that an individual struggles with: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). According to Leiter & Maslach (2010, p. 3) workload and control “are reflected in the Demand-Control model of job stress”. Additionally, the aspect of reward “refers to the power of reinforcements to shape behavior” (Leiter & Maslach, 2011, p 3). The area of community “captures all of the work on social support and interpersonal conflict” and the area of fairness is reflected by research on “equity and social justice” (Leiter & Maslach, 2011, p. 3). Lastly, values represent “the cognitive-emotional power of job goals and expectations” (Leiter & Maslach, 2011, p. 3). Additionally, Maslach & Leiter (2010) conducted surveys and interviews of over 10,000 individuals in numerous different countries, among a variety of occupations to obtain their normative sample for the AWS. The researchers discovered a model that describes how an individual matches to his or her job; thus mismatches lead to burnout, whereas matches lead to engagement (Maslach et al., 2001). Due to the complexities in the development of the burnout syndrome, this theoretical model explores the six domains of the work environment and the perceived fit the individual has with his or her work environment (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Moreover, this framework has implications for practical interventions as both organizations and individuals can assess which area of work life to improve upon (Maslach & Leiter, 2010).

For example, an individual struggling with workload can distribute the workload to others or employers can reassign staff to assist with increasing job demands.

This guiding theory was utilized to determine if individual differences moderate the areas of worklife which in turn leads to a poor fit between individuals and their occupation which ultimately leads to burnout. According to Maslach et al., (2001) a *job-person fit model* takes into consideration individual and interpersonal aspects in the development of burnout. Moreover, according to Maslach and Leiter (1997) individuals respond in various ways to burnout as a result of their individual differences which supports their fit with their work environment despite the presence of organizational characteristics that is stress inducing.

The following six areas of work life describe the continuum between the relationship with areas of work and the individual (Leiter & Maslach, 2005). This relationship can be one that fits or is out of synch for the individual (Leiter & Maslach, 2005).

Work overload. A balanced work life is important not only to individuals but to the organizations in which they work. Working longer hours, multitasking, and taking on additional responsibilities collectively creates exhaustion and overload (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Work overload also occurs when an individual is doing the wrong type of work such as when an individual lacks the required skills or disposition to perform certain types of tasks (Maslach et al., 2001). Work overload also occurs in individuals who must work a second job in an effort to meet his or her needs or wants (Angerer, 2003). Moreover, providing care for others has the propensity to contribute to overload

due to the emotional aspect of the job which results in individuals having to “display emotions inconsistent with their feelings” (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 414). Additionally, individuals in human service work, due to the emotional nature of their occupation, have difficulty separating work and their personal lives in that it is often difficult for the individual to leave the emotionally charged exchanges once the work day is over (Leiter & Maslach, 1999). In relation to the three dimensions of burnout, workload is linked most evidently to emotional exhaustion (Maslach et al., 2001). The contradiction in work life is that organizations view workload as productivity; whereas, for individuals workload means expending energy and amount of time consumed doing a job (Angerer, 2003). The key for individuals is to find a balance between what the organization wants and the individuals own needs (Angerer, 2003). Paris and Hoge (2010) reviewed the relevant research done over a 19 year span (1990-2009) among mental health employees and burnout and found that work load was a contributing factor in the development of emotional exhaustion in several studies. Research done by Janssen, Schaufeli, and Hokes (1999, p. 81) also found that work load was “significantly and most strongly associated with” emotional exhaustion for 176 nurses.

Control. A reduction in personal accomplishment and inefficacy dimensions of burnout are affected by an individual’s mismatch in control which results from insufficient resources or authority to effectively carry out the job (Maslach et al., 2001). It is impossible for an individual to expect to have complete control over every facet of his or her work; however, the opposite, having little to no control, can be damaging to a person being productive in his or her work (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Individuals want to

have some control over the resources available to them to do their job effectively as well as some authority to do the job the way they believe the job most effectively should be done (Maslach et al., 2001). Control is also affected by individuals losing a sense of autonomy with work (Leiter & Maslach, 2001). This loss of autonomy has been linked to an increase in exhaustion for individuals; conversely, increased autonomy has been linked to increased personal accomplishment (Leiter & Maslach, 1999). Additionally, individuals feel a loss of control when organizations take away his or her ability to problem-solve (Angerer, 2003). In a study of 9,503 participants in 28 different occupations (however, all of them in the human service field) in the Netherlands, results indicated that the amount of job control was linked to higher levels of burnout across occupations (Taris, Stoffelsen, Bakker, Schaufeli, & van Dierendonck, 2005).

Reward. Insufficient reward refers to the lack of compensation an individual receives for the job they do (Maslach et al., 2001). Reward can refer to extrinsic rewards such as financial compensation or intrinsic rewards such as recognition (Angerer, 2003; Maslach et al., 2001). The reward element is closely associated to a reduction in personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 2001). Due to the trying economic times, organizations have been struggling to reward individuals in monetary ways; thus, individuals are doing more work and receiving less reward as a result (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). For individuals already struggling due to insufficient extrinsic rewards, there are the added obstacles in that individuals are working less as teams, there are less problem-solving and creativity which makes work enjoyable intrinsically (Angerer, 2003). Individuals begin to feel that his or her hard work is unappreciated or ignored (Maslach et al., 2001). A

mismatch in this aspect of work life is associated with all three of the dimensions of burnout (Leiter & Maslach, 1999). Research conducted by Bennett, Ross, and Sunderland (1996) in 174 AIDS volunteers, utilizing the MBI, indicated that the frequency of burnout was “independently associated” with the “presence of stress and absence of reward” (para. 14).

Breakdown of community. The time has passed when individuals graduate from high school, become employed, and stay with an organization until retirement (Angerer, 2003). Loyalty towards organizations is decreasing as employees frequently change jobs to increase benefits and pay, jobs are lost due to downsizing, or jobs get outsourced (Angerer, 2003). Today’s work environment has lost its sense of community by the ever changing workforce, the lack of job security, and the short-lived aspects of employment (Angerer, 2003). Individuals lose their sense of belonging if he or she does not feel connected with his or her coworkers, supervisors, or clients (Angerer, 2003). Individuals succeed in work environments that foster a sense of community (Maslach et al., 2001). However, a loss of community occurs when individuals have enduring and unsettled struggles with others at work or through a sense of isolation as employees interact less with people and interact more with technology (Angerer, 2003; Maslach et al., 2001). An incongruence between what individuals’ expectations are in regard to social supports in the organization and the actual social supports available to him or her is directly related to burnout (Leiter & Maslach, 1999). Specifically, support from a supervisor has been linked to exhaustion in regards to assigned workload; conversely, peer support has been linked to personal accomplishment and efficacy (Leiter & Maslach, 1999). Cropanzano,

Howes, Grandey, and Toth (1997) found that there is a direct link between organizational support and the ability to cope with every day work stressors. Conversely, perceived organizational politics was predictive of higher levels of stress and anxiety (Cropanzano et al., 1997).

Fairness. Fairness in an organization refers to the respect, trust, and openness an employee perceives to contribute to a fair work environment (Angerer, 2003). If an individual does not feel like he or she is being treated fairly by the organization, he or she experiences distrust and associated stress (Angerer, 2003). Inequitable pay or workload, cheating, or favoritism given in evaluations or promotions are all examples of an unfair work environment (Maslach et al., 2001). Moreover, ineffective procedures to resolve grievances and disputes also lead to unfairness (Maslach et al., 2001). On the other hand, a fair organization is one in which individuals show consideration for each other; there is mutual trust among employees as well as upper management; and individuals feel that they are treated equally and respectfully (Leiter & Maslach, 1999). Research conducted by Ramarajan, et al., (2008) of Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) in which data was collected at two separate points in time (16 months apart) indicated that CNAs experiencing greater organizational respect during the first round of data collection experienced less emotional exhaustion at the second round of data collection. Similar results were obtained by Janssen (2004) where 118 participants employed at nursing homes, elderly homes, or as home health aides were able to engage in innovative behaviors to improve his or her work life and felt less stressed about the change if fairness was equally distributed and procedures were fair as well. Burnout occurs for

individuals due to the emotionally draining and distressing nature of unfair treatment as well as contributing to cynicism about the organization (Maslach et al., 2001).

Alternatively, individuals who perceive their supervisors to be supportive and fair are more willing to accept organizational change and are less vulnerable to burnout (Leiter & Maslach, 1999).

Values. A contradiction in what an organization does and an employee's ethical values often leads to disparities amongst the individual and the job (Maslach et al., 2001). For instance, an organization's actual work practices may differ greatly from their mission statements or customer service is neglected to increase profits which leads to a conflict for the employees (Angerer, 2003; Maslach et al., 2001). Increased productivity is often the goal regardless of what the fundamental values are of the organization (Angerer, 2003). Oftentimes, the employee's values and work ethic are compromised by the "short-term survival-and-profit value system" organizations employ (Maslach & Leiter, 1997, p. 55). Conflicting values between employee and organization leads work to be inapt (Leiter & Maslach, 1999). This contradiction leads to exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced personal accomplishment (Leiter & Maslach, 1999). Research conducted by Leiter, Frank, and Matheson (2009) indicated that a congruence of values between 3,213 physicians and the organization in which they worked led to higher levels of personal accomplishment for both men and women; conversely, a crisis between values and the values of the organization contributed to emotional exhaustion, increased cynicism, and lower efficacy. Previous research conducted by Leiter (2008) among 725 nurses found similar results between value incongruence and reported burnout on all three dimensions.

Implications of the six areas of work life. Researchers have indicated that of the six areas of work life, the area of values plays an important mediating part in the other five areas (Maslach et al., 2001). For example, researchers have indicated that a value conflict is associated with all three dimensions of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Thus, a conflict in values may lead to conflicts in other areas of work life. However, the difference in individual values and organizational values could be attributed to individual differences as individuals may find importance in areas the organization may not (Maslach et al., 2001). Moreover, the individual's fit or mismatch in specific areas of work life could be due to the influences of the intricacies of institutions (Leiter & Maslach, 1999). In longitudinal research conducted by Maslach & Leiter (2008), individuals who displayed inconsistent scores on the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey and The Areas of Worklife Survey at Time 1 experienced more burnout at Time 2; moreover, in the six areas of work life, incongruence in perceived fairness in the organization was found to move individuals toward burnout instead of engagement.

Additionally, it may not be feasible to expect a “perfect fit between person and job” in all areas of work life; however, a “balance between mismatches is what's most critical” (Maslach & Leiter, 1997, p. 151-152). Research conducted by Leiter, Jackson, and Shaughnessy (2009) examined the role of values between two generations of 667 nurses (Baby boomers and Generation X) and found that value incongruence was felt most strongly by Generation X nurses, and they exhibited more signs of job burnout than Baby boomers which indicated that personal values and organizational values are divergent for different generations. This research falls in line with the current study in

that age may be a predictor of incongruence between individuals and the value aspect of work life.

Intervention Research

Efficacious interventions need to be employed to address the many aspects of work life that burnout effects. Research into the effectiveness of burnout interventions has been lacking (Maslach, 2003a; Paris & Hoge, 2010). Typically interventions focus on the individual suffering from burnout and consist of educating the individual and teaching coping strategies (Maslach et al., 2001). Practical strategies have been recommended by researchers to decrease burnout such as salaries that are competitive, incentives both financial and non-financial, promotion opportunities and career development, increase staff, staff training in self-care, supervision and monitoring, creating job descriptions and expectations that are clear, assess staff routinely for burnout, flexibility in one's work schedule, informal support, in-service training, and having an open door policy with supervisors and management (Paris & Hoge, 2010).

In a study conducted by Salyers, Hudson, Morse, Rollins, Monroe-Devita, Wilson, and Freeland (2011) in which mental health professionals were given a one-day workshop in an effort to reduce burnout that included burnout prevention ideas, skill building, and exercises in meditation for example, results indicated that six weeks after the training individuals reported substantial reductions in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization as well as substantial increases in positive interactions with clients. Research conducted by Żołnierczyk-Zreda (2005) in which teachers were given a two day workshop which utilized cognitive behavioral methods in an effort to counteract

workload and enhance efficacy, results indicated that these interventions decreased emotional exhaustion and perceived workload as well as led to a reduction in somatic complaints. In a qualitative study conducted by Reid, Johnson, Morant, Kuipers, Szmukler, Bebbington, Thornicroft, and Prosser (1999), participants indicated that coping strategies and interventions employed most helpful to them in dealing with the stress of the job were informal contacts with colleagues, using time management techniques, staff support groups, and individual supervision. However, researchers have indicated that the situational and organizational factors are stronger contributors of burnout; therefore it is more advantageous to look at interventions from an organizational standpoint (Maslach, 2003a; Paris & Hoge, 2010).

Current trends in interventions are based at the organizational level in which engagement is the key (Maslach, 2003a). Engagement is the antithesis of burnout and refers to energy, involvement, and efficacy one brings to his or her work (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Organizations support engagement by developing work settings that are supportive, open, honest, understanding, and so forth (Maslach et al., 2001). Interventions include changing the way managers interact with employees such as conducting weekly group meetings to discuss felt inequalities in work (Maslach et al., 2001). In research conducted by Yip and Rowlinson (2009) among construction workers who were found to be experiencing burnout due to working longer hours, work overload, conflict in job role, ambiguity in job role, lack of independence and fear over job security, an intervention employed was a job redesign among the company. This job redesign included alternating work schedules so employees enjoyed an extra day off, as well as changing the morning

start time from 8:00 am to 8:30 am (Yip & Rowlinson, 2009). Additionally, managers were advised to discourage overtime, training courses were offered to develop coping skills, time management, and communication skills, updated organizational charts were developed as well as specific job roles were outlined encouraging more autonomy (Yip & Rowlinson, 2009). Results obtained a year later indicated significantly lower levels of job burnout due to the restructuring of the work environment (Yip & Rowlinson, 2009). Although, results were impressive, job redesign requires a lot of cooperation at the organizational level and may not be cost effective for every organization (Yip & Rowlinson, 2009).

Research conducted by Bond and Bunce (2001) in which individuals were given choice and preference in their work assignments in the context of job reorganization showed that individuals at the one year follow-up had a reduction in absences due to sickness, an improvement in mental health, and enhancement of self-reported job performance. However, this type of intervention may not be beneficial for all organizations as work assignments may not always be favorable. Another type of intervention being utilized is an organizational check-up process (Maslach, Leiter, & Jackson, 2011). This process involves redesigning recognition programs for staff, improving internal communication, and providing new supervisors with leadership training (Maslach, Leiter, & Jackson, 2011).

However, truly effective interventions can only succeed if both individual and organization act in concert to employ changes (Maslach et al., 2001). The development of truly successful interventions requires continued research into the construct of burnout.

Summary

The research over the past 35 years has brought great attention to the predictors and mediators of the burnout syndrome. This literature review explored predictors such as age, gender, personality, workload, and coworker support. The vast amount of literature available in burnout research attests what an important and complex topic burnout is. Although, researchers have explored the various pathways burnout occurs, researchers have yet to apply the approach in which individual characteristics moderate the six areas of work life in one study. Thus, the theoretical foundation used for this study was an integrated approach and needed to be tested to determine if the predictors selected truly led to incongruence between a person and his or her job which in turn leads to burnout.

It is important to extend burnout research that looks at individuals' perceptions of his or her work environment which either fits or leads to mismatches for the individual. The distinct perceptions of fit or mismatch when moderated by age and gender would contribute greatly to the plethora of research done on burnout as this avenue has yet to be explored. Moreover, the individual perception of fit or mismatch could also explain how some individuals are able to ward off burnout. Additionally, little evidence has been collected that determines if these predictors under this theoretical lens interact to produce burnout collectively or independently. The intricacies of how these predictors interact to aide in the development or protect against the development of burnout is an area that still needs to be explored. For example, it is hypothesized that gender will moderate a relationship on several areas of work life, such as values and fairness; thus, if this is true,

it would be important to develop gender specific interventions to decrease burnout. Moreover, research that examines burnout from this direction has the propensity to change the way organizations recognize its part in the development of burnout as well as lead to organizational changes in the way organizations manage employees. For example, for individuals struggling with a poor fit, such as work overload, employers can shift work assignments to other employees.

Ultimately, I aim to develop a deeper understanding of the predictors of burnout, so that individuals and organizations can employ effective strategies to increase engagement and productivity while decreasing burnout and overload. In addition, researchers have shown that those providing care for others are highly susceptible to developing burnout; therefore, it is important to look at how occupational stress in direct care staff develops and possibly leads to burnout. As the previous researchers have suggested, turnover and retention among those providing care for others are important consequences of burnout. Thus, in order to increase retention and decrease turnover, it is imperative that all of the predictors of burnout are known. By ascertaining the predictors, effective interventions are developed at the individual as well as organizational level that addresses the specific areas of work life in which the individual is struggling.

Burnout has been described as facilitator of other significant consequences; specifically, occupational outcomes such as retention, turnover, and absenteeism as well as individual outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and substance abuse to name a few (Angerer, 2003; Kahill, 1988; Maslach, 2001). These consequences implore researchers to continue the efforts in ascertaining more knowledge about the burnout syndrome.

The methodology and design of this research study will be addressed in Chapter 3. Specifically, the rationale for the study, the population utilized for the study, the research questions to be addressed by the study, the instruments used, as well as the statistical analysis will be detailed for the reader.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the construct of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and inefficacy) and the influences of individual differences and the areas of worklife among direct care staff employed at a human service agency that provides services to at-risk individuals. The instruments used in this study, sample characteristics, sample size, the process in which the data were collected as well as the analysis used will be addressed in this chapter. Lastly, ethical considerations and a discussion of participant rights will be addressed in the conclusion of the chapter.

Burnout has been linked to occupations that involve caring for the needs of others, such as direct care staff in human service agencies (Maslach et al., 2001). This population is at particular jeopardy of developing burnout due to the high level of involvement with at-risk individuals with a variety of challenges and needs. Therefore, research on the development of burnout is imperative to ascertain who is at a greater risk for developing burnout. Research done on the construct of burnout increases knowledge and provides opportunities for individuals as well as organizations to maintain overall health and engagement in the workplace. Engagement is essential for individuals to provide better quality of service delivery to clients.

The focus of this research was different than past efforts in developing an understanding of the burnout syndrome. In this study, I looked at the moderating role of age and gender in the areas of worklife in the development of burnout. Researchers have

suggested that some individuals have a mismatch in their work environment, named areas of worklife, and environmental factors that play a role in the development of burnout (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). Areas of worklife are considered “organizational risk factors” that leave an individual feeling burned out (Leiter & Maslach, 2011, p. 2). These organizational risk factors include workload, control, reward, a sense of community, a sense of fairness, and values (Leiter & Maslach, 2011, p. 2). Specifically, burnout is the result of the interaction between the individual and his or her work environment where incongruence leads to burnout and congruence leads to job satisfaction (Leiter & Maslach, 2011).

Scholars have mostly focused on single predictors of burnout, such as workload (e.g., Leiter & Maslach, 1988). In this study, the areas of work life was used to determine if the individual was more susceptible to developing burnout, not only through organizational predictors but moderated by individual predictors (i.e., gender influence incongruence with values). In this study, the multidimensional approach was conducted amongst a diverse population who has various duties, titles, and roles, but who ultimately interacts with challenging clients on a daily basis. Although past researchers have explored the demands of challenging clients, this research population is unique in its diversity, which leads to a wider generalizability of the results. Therefore, the significance of this study was not only an effort to fill a gap in the literature but also an effort to allow for efficacious interventions to be developed based on the predictors in the development of burnout.

Restatement of Study Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the construct of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and inefficacy) and the various risk factors including individual differences and areas of worklife to determine how these characteristics interact and/or contribute to burnout for individuals who work in human services. Researchers have previously looked at burnout from a variety of angles and amongst different populations, but I took a multidimensional approach to the construct of burnout. The moderating variables of individual differences (age and gender) and independent variables of areas of worklife (workload, control, reward, sense of community, sense of fairness, and values) were evaluated to address any contribution each independently or collectively may have had to the dependent variables of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and inefficacy) among direct care staff. These variables were chosen independently, as each has been studied previously and inferences have been made indicating that these variables influence the development of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). Specifically, researchers have shown that work load, years of employment, and lack of support from coworkers and supervisors were predictors of burnout (Acker, 1999; Ballenger-Browning et al., 2011; Male & May, 1998).

The interactions between the variables are conceptualized in Figure 1.

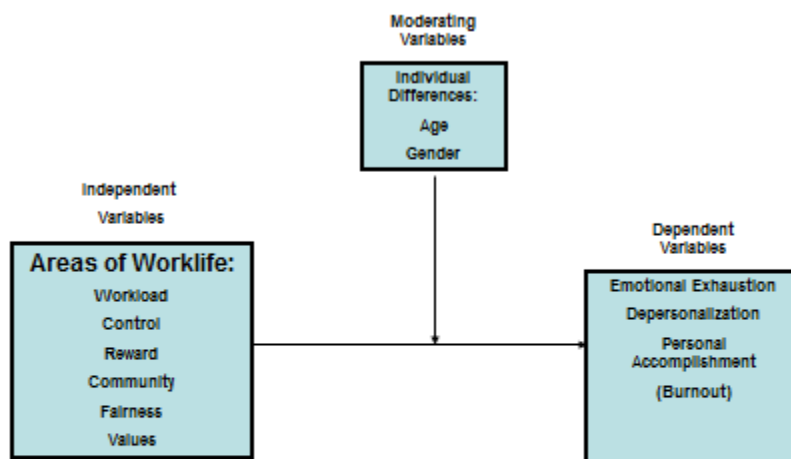


Figure 1: Interactions between variables.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions and hypotheses for this research study are presented in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3 in Chapter 1.

Research Design

In this study, I sought to ascertain the predictor variables of burnout. I examined the possible association between individual differences and areas of worklife and burnout for direct care staff working with high risk populations in Upstate, New York.

Researchers have shown that burnout results from a “problematic relationship” among the individual and his or her work environment; thus, from this research, six key areas of work life were identified as predictors of poor job-person fit (Leiter & Maslach, 2011, p. 2).

In this study, I used survey research. The surveys were cross-sectional with data collected at one point in time using self-administered questionnaires (See Table 4).

Table 4

Overview of Quantitative Research Design

Purpose	Questionnaire
To ascertain the level of burnout experienced by direct care staff	Administered the MBI-HSS
To ascertain the organizational risk factors of burnout in direct care staff	Administered the AWS
To ascertain the individual differences that may contribute to burnout.	Administered a demographic questionnaire

Participants

Direct care staff who worked at a nonprofit human service agency in upstate New York were the focus of this research study. This human service agency employed 410 individuals, of whom 340 were considered direct care staff. The demographic characteristics of direct care staff were diverse with educational levels from high school graduates up to master's level education. However, the majority of direct care staff (case managers and others) must have a minimum of a bachelor's degree. The majority of staff was Caucasian; however, all ethnicities and races are represented. This population was diverse in terms of age with employees ranging from 18 to over 60 years of age. The majority of direct care staff was female; however, the representation of males at this agency was adequate for this study. Lastly, the socioeconomic status of direct care staff was best represented as middle class.

The participants were chosen from this occupation because the job duties made this population more susceptible to stressors that ultimately lead to burnout. The participants were chosen through convenience sampling as I sent out a companywide e-mail asking for participants to volunteer until a minimum of 150 participants were recruited. A convenience sample was chosen due to the accessibility of participants as well as the diversity of direct care staff employed at this agency. This allowed for generalizability to a large group of care workers.

This population was selected because researchers have shown that human service staff is susceptible to burnout, due to the high stress work environment (Farber & Heifetz, 1982). Direct care staff is defined as individuals who are frontline workers composed of receptionists, assertive case managers, intensive case managers, supportive case managers, community support service case managers, adult protective case managers, residential case managers, Medicaid service coordinators, vocational case managers, community service workers, team leaders, and supervisors who have direct contact with clients. The majority of these positions require a minimum of a 4-year degree. This agency employs participants with a variety of degrees (psychology, sociology, English, business, accounting, and theology to name a few).

Participants were recruited via agency e-mail that targeted all employees. Participants who were included were those individuals who had direct contact with clients and who worked full time. Individuals excluded were those who did not have direct contact with clients and who only worked part time. These individuals were excluded as I aimed to look at the predictor variables of client needs and demands as well

as extensive work hours that this group was not susceptible to. Participants were of age to give consent, and only participants were enrolled who were able to read and comprehend the self-report measures of this research study.

Survey Instruments

The Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Survey. The MBI-HSS was used to assess burnout in the study participants (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). This instrument is the most commonly used instrument in burnout research among human service occupations (Angerer, 2003). Moreover, the MBI-HSS is considered the “measure of choice” in burnout studies as it has proven to be a reliable and valid measure (Aguayo et al., 2011; Angerer, 2003, Maslach, 2001).

The MBI-HSS is a 22-item scale that is used to assess the three dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion (nine items), depersonalization (five items), and personal accomplishment (eight items; Aguayo et al., 2011). Participants responded to these three subscales on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 0 *never* to 6 *every day* (Maslach, 2001). The emotional exhaustion subscale is used to measure participants’ feelings of being overly extended by his or her work and their level of emotional exhaustion (Maslach et al., 1996). An example of the survey item measuring emotional exhaustion is *I feel emotionally drained from my work* (Maslach et al., 1996). The depersonalization subscale is used to measure participants’ feelings of detachment towards recipients in the care, treatment, or services extended toward the recipient (Maslach et al., 1996). An example of the survey item measuring depersonalization is *working with people all day is really a strain for me* (Maslach et al., 1996). The personal accomplishment subscale is used to

measure participants' feelings of accomplishment and competence in participants' work with others (Maslach et al., 1996). An example of the survey item measuring personal accomplishment is *I feel exhilarated after working closely with my recipients* (Maslach et al., 1996).

The subscales are interpreted as individual scores on each subscale and are not combined to obtain a total burnout score (Maslach et al., 1996). High levels of burnout are reflected by high scores on the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization subscales (≥ 27 and ≥ 13 respectively) and low scores on the personal accomplishment subscales (≤ 31 ; Maslach et al., 1996). Average scores on each of the three subscales are indicative of average levels of burnout (17-26; 7-12; 38-32 respectively; Maslach et al., 1996). Low scores on the subscales emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (≤ 16 and ≤ 6 respectively) and high scores on the personal accomplishment subscale (≥ 39) are indicative of low levels of burnout (Maslach et al., 1996). The normative sample used to obtain these scores included 4,163 teachers, 635 college educators, 1,538 human service workers, 1,104 doctors and nurses, 730 mental health workers, and 2,897 others (librarians, police, ministers, and others; Maslach et al., 1996).

The MBI-HSS is a self-administered survey and takes approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete (Maslach et al., 1996). Response bias can be guarded against by informing participants that all answers should be given honestly and all data will be held strictly confidential (Maslach et al., 1996).

Reliability and validity of the MBI-HSS. The MBI-HSS is considered a reliable and valid instrument in assessing burnout (Maslach et al., 1996). In a sample of 1,316,

Cronbach's coefficient alpha was moderate to excellent for emotional exhaustion (.90), depersonalization (.79), and personal accomplishment (.71; Maslach et al., 1996). The standard error of measurement for the subscales was 3.80 for emotional exhaustion, 3.16 for depersonalization, and 3.73 for personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 1996). In longitudinal studies, researchers have also noted that the MBI-HSS has been found to have a "high degree of consistency" among each of the subscales, which does not differ significantly in time from a month to a year (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 12). Test-retest reliability over a 2-week period for 53 graduate students and health agency administrators was .82 for emotional exhaustion, .60 for depersonalization, and .80 for personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 1996). For a sample of 248 teachers tested 1 year apart, the test-retest reliability was .60 for emotional exhaustion, .54 for depersonalization, and .57 for personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 1996).

Discriminant validity of the MBI-HSS was obtained by researchers who distinguished the MBI-HSS from other measures of various psychological domains that might confound with experienced burnout (Maslach et al., 1996). For example, the MBI-HSS was used in conjunction with the Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) for 91 human service workers, and measures on the item "general job satisfaction" of the JDS showed a moderate negative correlation with emotional exhaustion ($r = -.23, p < .05$) and depersonalization ($r = -.22, p < .02$) and a slightly positive correlation with personal accomplishment ($r = .17, p < .06$; Maslach et al., 1996, p. 15). Discriminant validity for response bias was also conducted using the MBI-HSS and the Social Desirability Scale (SD), and Maslach et al. (1996) indicated that there was no significant correlation of the

subscales with the SD scale ($p < .05$). Researchers who have used the MBI-HSS have shown that it is an informative instrument. The ability of this instrument to assess the construct of burnout, coupled with the established reliability and validity, was the reason this instrument was chosen for this study.

The Areas of Worklife Survey. The AWS was used to evaluate participants' perceptions regarding the qualities of the occupational setting that play a role in determining whether participants experience burnout or engagement with work (Leiter & Maslach, 2012). The AWS was used in conjunction with the MBI-HSS to assess the six areas of the work environment that influence burnout or its antithesis, engagement (Leiter & Maslach, 2012). The AWS is a short survey instrument with confirmed reliability and validity among various work-related settings (Leiter & Maslach, 2012).

The AWS contains 28 items making up six separate subscales: workload (five), control (four), reward (four), community (five), fairness (six), and values (four; Leiter & Maslach, 2011). The AWS consists of a 5-item Likert scale from *strongly disagree* (1), 3 (*hard to decide*) to *strongly agree* (5; Leiter & Maslach, 2011). Items on each scale have positively worded items and negatively worded items (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). Scoring is reversed for negatively worded items; thus, items marked 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 are scored 5, 4, 3, 2, or 1 (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). A high score, which denotes a good job person fit, on the AWS is considered greater than 3.00; whereas, a mismatch in job person fit is a score lower than 3.00 (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). A score of 1 is considered a strong mismatch between the participant and his or her work; whereas, a score of 5 denotes a strong match between the participant and his or her work (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). The

scores on the AWS are not combined for an overall score (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). Because scores cannot be combined to get an overall score, scores were calculated for each subscale to obtain an overall average score for each subscale (Leiter & Maslach, 2011).

The AWS is often used in conjunction with the MBI to assess the job-person fit, where a poor job-person fit is a risk factor that leads to burnout. The AWS is consistently highly correlated with the three burnout domains of the MBI-General Survey (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). Scores on the AWS that are positive are negatively correlated with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). Positive scores on the AWS are positively correlated with personal accomplishment (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). Moreover, emotional exhaustion is more narrowly correlated with workload than depersonalization or personal accomplishment, and emotional exhaustion is more significantly correlated to workload than any other subscale on the AWS (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). This ability shows that the AWS is a valid instrument in describing the demand and resource aspects of an individual's perceptions of his or her work environment (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). Example survey items include: *I do not have time to do the work that must be done* and *my values and the organization's values are alike* (Leiter & Maslach, 2011).

The AWS is also a self-administered survey. The AWS is also a useful instrument for organizations to utilize as it allows organizations to ascertain the problem areas in the occupational setting which allows for interventions geared toward enhancing engagement (Leiter & Maslach, 2012).

Reliability and validity of the AWS. The AWS has been shown to be both a reliable and valid measures of job-person fit (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). Correlations of test-retest reliability have shown that there is a “strong level of consistency” of the AWS subscales “over time” (Leiter & Maslach, 2011, p. 17). Correlation results range in size from .51 to .62 (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). The test-retest correlations remain high if the relationship with one’s occupation does not differ between testing; however, there is room for variations if the participant’s relationship with his or her work changes between testing (Leiter & Maslach, 2011).

The validity of the AWS was ascertained through qualitative analysis utilizing 1,443 participants’ written comments and comparing those comments with items on the AWS (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). Strong correlations existed between the comments and the items on the scale to which the comments were most directly related (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). For example, workload on the ward (participant comment) was negatively associated with workload (-.14; Leiter & Maslach, 2011).

The use of the AWS is conceptualized in Figure 1. The AWS was selected as it takes into account the six components of the organizational setting which individuals may struggle with consequently leading to burnout. Burnout research over the past 30 plus years have determined organizational characteristics to be a significant predictor of burnout; thus, determining the extent an individual matches or mismatches to areas of his or her work life is the impetus of utilizing the AWS in this study (Leiter & Maslach, 2011).

Demographic questionnaire. A demographic questionnaire was given to study participants to determine individual characteristics. The following questions were included: age (in what year were you born?), gender (male, female), race (American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, Other), and ethnicity (Hispanic or non-Hispanic). The demographic question answer categories were multiple-choice.

Collection of Data Procedure

Upon approval by the Walden IRB (Approval number: 06-20-13-0101149) and the non-profit outpatient mental health organization director, data packets including a cover letter, a web link to the MBI-HSS the AWS, and the demographic questionnaire, and consent forms were sent via e-mail to all the direct care staff. Participants were reminded that they could withdraw at any time, that confidentiality would be ensured at all times by anonymous return of surveys and by keeping all data locked up, and that nonparticipation would not have any negative consequences for the participants. Participants were also encouraged not to place names on any research materials. Two weeks after the initial delivery of the surveys via e-mail link, a follow-up e-mail was sent encouraging participation and completion of the surveys. Data collection lasted approximately one month with reminders sent after two weeks. The MBI-HS, the AWS, and the demographic surveys were transformed and scored by Mind Garden, the distributor of the surveys. Moreover, data was delivered to this researcher in raw scores by respondent from Mind Garden. At the end of the one month data collection period when a minimum of 150 participants was not obtained, this researcher again sent out a

companywide e-mail asking for participation until a minimum of 117 participants was obtained.

Data Analysis

Data for this study was analyzed utilizing SPSS 21. Data screening was done to assess quality of data, missing values, and the like. Data was screened to determine if any data was entered incorrectly (George & Mallory, 2012). Due to the method of electronic data collection which required participants to answer all questions, there were no missing data. A scatterplot was utilized to determine outliers, and no outliers were found.

Three separate linear regression analyses were conducted with each of the six areas of work life as the independent variable (workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values). In these regressions, burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) were the dependent variables and age and gender were added as moderators in the model (including the main effects as well as the area of work life by gender and area of work life by age interactions). Additionally, the predictor variables were mean-centered in the interaction analyses.

Estimated sample size was obtained using Statistics Calculators (Version 3 - Beta) using A-priori sample size calculator for multiple regression analysis in which alpha was set at .05, power was set at 80%, and effect size was medium (.15). Results of the power analysis with six predictor variables (workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values), and age and gender and interactions indicated that a sample size of 97 would be sufficient. However, to ensure enough responses are returned, a minimum of 150 participants were actively sought. The six predictor variables are the independent

variables of this study and were moderated by age and gender. The dependent variables in this study are emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment (the components of the burnout syndrome).

Ethical Considerations and Participant Rights

There was minimal risk in ethical considerations for this study. The research was fully voluntary and anonymous, and participant responses to questionnaires were considered to be consent. A letter to participants contained my identification, an explanation of the purpose of the research, an explanation of the involvement required by participants, a promise of confidentiality and anonymity, and my contact information. Participants were instructed not to place their names on any forms or questionnaires submitted to insure confidentiality. Surveys were identified by an identification number. No link between name and identification number was maintained. Participants were also informed that they can choose whether or not they wish to complete the survey. Nonparticipation would have no negative consequences for participants. However, there may be minimal effect of coercion as the participants of this study were my co-workers. To guard against this, I informed participants of the separate role of coworker and researcher. There was minimal anticipated harm in this study as participants did not engage in any interventions or experimentations. The only anticipated harm may be psychological distress from some of the questions of the surveys. Participants were encouraged to skip any questions they did not wish to answer and to contact me. Participants who wished to seek help for their burnout symptoms were referred to Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Summary

This chapter described the research methodology of this study. The research questions and hypotheses were presented as well as the research design, survey instruments used, and a discussion into ethical considerations and participant rights. This research was an attempt to explore the predictor variables of burnout for direct care staff working in the human services field. The data collection procedure was discussed, specifically how surveys were delivered, scored, and analyzed. Upon completion of the packets, data was analyzed using SPSS software and results and corresponding tables will be presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine if individual differences (age and gender) moderated the association between the areas of worklife (workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values) and the dependent variable of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment) for individuals who work with a high-risk population. In this chapter, I summarize the findings of this study as well as offer an analysis of the data and description of the study participants.

Sample Demographics

Data were collected over a 6-week period from direct care staff at a human services agency in upstate NY. A total of 150 people were contacted and 117 completed the surveys via the online survey system, which represents a 78% return rate. Sample size estimation included in Chapter 3 indicated that a total of 97 participants would be needed for the sample to have statistical power.

Of the 117 participants, the sample was predominately female, all age ranges were represented and the majority of respondents were white (See Table 5). Gender was coded for analyses as Male = 1, Female = 2. Variable descriptives are also shown below in Table 6. On the areas of worklife scores, a high score, which denotes a good job person fit, is considered greater than 3.00; whereas, a mismatch in job person fit is a score lower than 3.00 (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). A score of 1 is considered a strong mismatch between the participant and his or her work; whereas, a score of 5 denotes a strong match between the participant and his or her work (Leiter & Maslach, 2011).

Table 5

Participants' Demographics

	<i>N</i>	%
Gender		
Male (1)	28	23.9
Female (2)	89	76.1
Age		
18-25	10	8.5
26-40	43	36.8
41-55	47	40.2
56+	17	14.5
Race		
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2	1.7
Black/African American	5	4.3
White	110	94.0
Ethnicity		
Hispanic	1	.9
Non-Hispanic	116	99.1

Table 6

Variables' Descriptives

Variable	Means by age 18-44	Means by age 45+	Standard deviations by age 18-44	Standard deviations by age 45+	Means by males (1)	Means by females (2)	Standard deviations for males (1)	Standard deviations for females (2)
Workload	3.20	3.14	.93	.73	2.94	3.31	.85	.72
Control	3.32	3.30	.97	1.08	2.93	3.35	1.12	.84
Reward	3.28	3.12	1.07	1.26	2.86	3.21	1.14	1.02
Community	3.45	3.56	.95	.82	3.24	3.54	.90	.89
Fairness	2.60	2.87	.93	1.08	2.51	2.64	1.05	.97
Values	3.53	3.65	.78	.62	3.25	3.53	.77	.68
Emotional Exhaustion	22.00	20.71	12.35	11.07	29.36	21.91	13.70	12.10
Depersonalization	8.21	5.06	8.42	4.32	11.36	8.30	8.79	8.13
Personal accomplishment	34.36	39.41	10.64	5.91	34.57	35.07	9.48	8.93

Areas of Worklife and Emotional Exhaustion

The primary hypotheses tested in this dissertation (Hypotheses #1a-11; See Table 1) determined if age and gender moderated the association between the six areas of worklife and emotional exhaustion.

Linear regression analysis was used to test these hypotheses, with each of the six areas of work life (workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values) and age and gender as the independent variables and emotional exhaustion as the dependent variable (see Table 8). Next, the age by areas of work life interactions were added to the model and in a separate analysis the gender by areas of worklife interaction were added to the model (see Table 9). Pearson correlations between all variables in the study are depicted in Table 7. The linear regression analysis of the main effects model of age, gender, the six areas of worklife and emotional exhaustion was significant: $F(8, 116) = 15.1, p < .01; R^2 = .52$ (See Table 9 for additional R^2). The only two areas of worklife that predicted emotional exhaustion was workload and reward (see Table 8). Only reward and age by workload were significant (see Table 9) and thus Alternative Hypotheses 1a-11 were not supported as the data did not indicate that age and gender were moderators of the association between the six areas of worklife and emotional exhaustion.

Table 7

Pearson's Correlations

Variables	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.
1. Age	–										
2. Gender	.02**	–									
3. Workload	-.09	.21	–								
4. Control	.04**	.20	.17	–							
5. Reward	.03**	.15	.36	.63	–						
6. Community	.01***	.14	.26	.55	.61	–					
7. Fairness	.06	.06	.21	.64	.74	.67	–				
8. Values	.15	.17	.11	.55	.50	.48	.65	–			
9. EE	-.10	-.30	-.40	-.56	-.64	-.54	-.58	-.47	–		
10. Dp	-.20	-.16	-.07	-.39	-.50	-.41	-.52	-.52	.72	–	
11. PA	.12	.02**	.09	.43	.41	.53	.52	.53	-.53	-.65	–

Note. *EE (Emotional Exhaustion), Dp (Depersonalization), PA (Personal Accomplishment)

** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

Table 8

Linear Regression Analyses of the Main Effects Model of Age and Gender and the Six Areas of Work Life Predicting Emotional Exhaustion

Variable	Beta	SE	B	t	p	R ²
Age	-.08	1.0	-1.2	-1.1	.25	.52
Gender	-.10	2.1	-3.0	-1.4	.16	
Workload	-.19	1.2	-3.2	-2.6	.01	
Control	-.16	1.3	-2.2	-1.7	.10	
Reward	-.29	1.3	-3.5	-2.7	.01	
Community	-.11	1.3	-1.6	-1.2	.23	
Fairness	-.08	1.6	-1.1	-.66	.51	
Values	-.08	1.7	-1.5	-.91	.37	

Table 9

Linear Regression Analyses of the Association between Age and Gender and the Six Areas of Work Life Predicting Emotional Exhaustion

Variable:	Beta	SE	B	t	p	R ²
Age	.71	7.2	10.7	1.5	.14	.58
Gender	-.44	12.9	-13.2	-1.0	.31	
Workload	.87	9.0	14.4	1.6	.11	
Control	.21	6.8	2.9	.42	.67	
Reward	-1.3	7.1	-15.8	-2.2	.03	
Community	-.55	7.7	-7.8	-1.0	.31	
Fairness	-.09	7.7	-1.1	-.15	.88	
Values	-.06	8.4	-1.1	-.13	.90	
Age*workload	-1.2	1.8	-4.5	-2.5	.01	
Age*control	.11	2.0	.35	.17	.86	
Age*reward	.83	1.9	2.6	1.3	.19	
Age*community	.45	2.1	1.5	.71	.48	
Age*fairness	.07	2.3	.30	.11	.91	
Age*values	-1.0	2.6	-3.5	-1.3	.19	
Gender*workload	-.38	3.6	-2.3	-.65	.52	
Gender*control	-.64	3.2	-3.7	-1.1	.26	
Gender*reward	.51	3.4	2.7	.80	.43	
Gender*community	.23	3.8	1.3	.33	.74	
Gender*fairness	-.09	3.8	-.54	-.14	.89	
Gender*values	.83	4.0	5.2	1.3	.20	

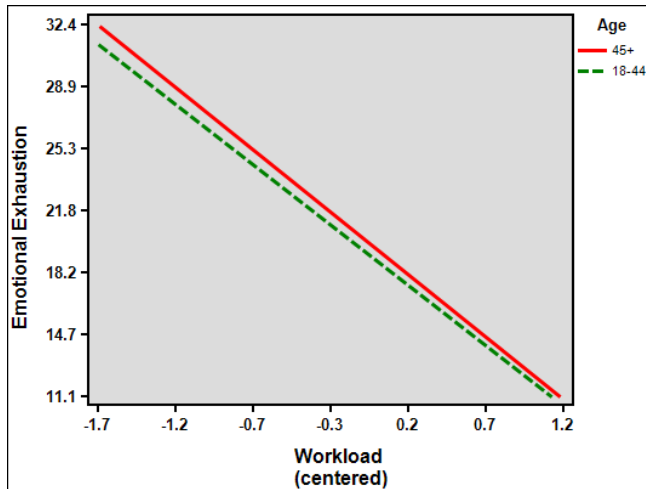


Figure 2. Emotional exhaustion and workload/age interaction.

Age was dichotomized (18-44, and 45+) only for the interpretation of the interaction analyses in subsequent sections for the purpose of comparing older and younger employees in emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Age 45 was chosen as the starting point for the older group as 45 is generally considered middle age. For the above interaction graph, even though the slopes in the graphs do not appear that much different, the interaction analyses showed that as workload increased so did emotional exhaustion for both younger and older employees with older employees experiencing slightly more emotional exhaustion with higher workload. A higher workload score indicates difficulty in that area of work life. Thus, with higher workloads an increase in emotional exhaustion occurs. The scales for workload are reversed in the above interaction graph. In the area of workload on the

AWS “1” is considered a strong mismatch between the individual and the area of worklife.

Areas of Worklife and Depersonalization

A secondary aim was to conduct a preliminary examination of the association between areas of worklife and depersonalization as well as personal accomplishment. Research Questions 2a through 2l tested the relationship between age, gender, the six areas of worklife and the development of depersonalization. The association with personal accomplishment will be described in the next subsection.

Linear regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses in Table 2, with each of the six areas of work life (workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values), age, and gender as the independent variables and depersonalization as the dependent variable (see Table 10). Next, the age by areas of work life interactions and gender by areas of worklife were added to the model (see Table 10). Only two areas of worklife, reward and values, predicted depersonalization (see Table 10). None of the age by worklife and gender by worklife interactions were statistically significant (see Table 11).

Table 10

Linear Regression Analyses of the Main Effects Model of Age and Gender and the Six Areas of Work Life Predicting Depersonalization

Variable	Beta	SE	B	t	p	R ²
Age	-.13	.76	-1.3	-1.7	.09	.39
Gender	-.08	1.6	-1.6	-1.1	.29	
Workload	.11	.91	1.2	1.3	.20	
Control	.07	.97	.63	.64	.52	
Reward	-.29	.98	-2.3	-2.4	.02	
Community	-.07	1.0	-.65	-.65	.52	
Fairness	-.14	1.2	-1.2	-.97	.33	
Values	-.27	1.2	-3.1	-2.6	.01	

Table 11

Linear Regression Analyses of the Association between Age and Gender and the Six Areas of Work Life Predicting Depersonalization

Variable	Beta	SE	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> ²
Age	.17	5.1	1.6	.32	.75	.51
Gender	-.84	9.1	-16.4	-1.8	.08	
Workload	.30	6.3	3.2	.51	.61	
Control	.34	4.8	3.0	.64	.53	
Reward	-1.9	5.0	-14.8	-3.0	<.01	
Community	-.83	5.4	-7.8	-1.4	.16	
Fairness	.42	5.4	3.6	.67	.51	
Values	.25	5.9	2.9	.50	.62	
Age*workload	-.98	1.3	-2.4	-1.9	.06	
Age*control	.29	1.4	.62	.44	.66	
Age*reward	.87	1.4	1.8	1.3	.20	
Age*community	.97	1.5	2.1	1.4	.15	
Age*fairness	.14	1.6	.32	.20	.85	
Age*values	-1.4	1.9	-3.2	-1.7	.09	
Gender*workload	.72	2.6	2.9	1.2	.26	
Gender*control	-.76	2.2	-2.8	-1.3	.22	
Gender*reward	1.2	2.4	4.2	1.8	.08	
Gender*community	.32	2.7	1.1	.43	.67	
Gender*fairness	-.81	2.7	-3.2	-1.1	.24	
Gender*values	.44	2.8	1.8	.63	.53	

Areas of Worklife and Personal Accomplishment

Research Questions 3a through 3l tested the association between age, gender, and the six areas of worklife in the development of personal accomplishment (See Table 3).

Linear regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses in Table 3, with each of the six areas of work life (workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values), age, and gender as the independent variables, and personal accomplishment as the dependent variable (see Table 12). Next, the age by areas of work life and gender by areas of

worklife interactions were added to the model (see Table 13). Only two areas of worklife, community and values, predicted personal accomplishment (see Table 12). None of the age by worklife and gender by worklife interactions was statistically significant (see Table 13).

Table 12: Linear Regression Analyses of the Main Effects Model of Age and Gender and the Six Areas of Work Life predicting Personal Accomplishment

Variable	Beta	SE	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	R^2
Age	.06	.81	.67	.82	.41	.40
Gender	-.09	1.7	-1.8	-1.1	.29	
Workload	-.03	.97	-.36	-.37	.71	
Control	.07	1.0	.64	.61	.54	
Reward	-.02	1.0	-.19	-.18	.86	
Community	.32	1.1	3.2	3.1	<.01	
Fairness	.09	1.3	.81	.64	.53	
Values	.31	1.3	3.9	3.0	<.01	

Table 13: Linear Regression Analyses of the Association between Age and Gender and the Six Areas of Work Life predicting Personal Accomplishment

Variable	Beta	SE	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> ²
Age	-.55	5.7	-5.9	-1.0	.30	.48
Gender	.11	10.1	2.2	.22	.83	
Workload	.26	7.1	3.0	.43	.67	
Control	-.18	5.3	-1.7	-.33	.75	
Reward	.94	5.6	8.1	1.5	.15	
Community	.13	6.1	1.3	.22	.83	
Fairness	-.24	6.0	-2.2	-.37	.71	
Values	-.22	6.6	-2.8	-.42	.68	
Age*workload	.43	1.4	1.2	.82	.42	
Age*control	-.55	1.6	-1.3	-.80	.43	
Age*reward	-.15	1.5	-.32	-.21	.83	
Age*community	-.59	1.6	-1.4	-.85	.40	
Age*fairness	.43	1.8	1.0	.58	.57	
Age*values	1.2	2.1	2.9	1.0	.17	
Gender*workload	-.81	2.8	-3.5	-1.3	.22	
Gender*control	.88	2.5	3.5	1.4	.17	
Gender*reward	-1.2	2.7	-4.3	-1.6	.11	
Gender*community	.80	3.0	3.2	1.1	.30	
Gender*fairness	.02	3.0	.10	.03	.97	
Gender*values	-.12	3.1	-.54	-.17	.86	

Summary

The statistical analyses of the data suggest partial support for the hypotheses presented in this study. First, only the age by workload interaction was significant in the development of emotional exhaustion. Thus, the primary hypotheses in this study, that age and gender would moderate the association between the six areas of worklife and the development of emotional exhaustion, were rejected. Additionally, the secondary hypotheses of the study that age and gender would moderate the association between the

six areas of worklife and the development of depersonalization and personal accomplishment were not supported. The main effect findings showed that workload and reward predicted emotional exhaustion and reward and values predicted depersonalization. Additionally, community and values predicted personal accomplishment. These findings indicate that demographic variables are not as influential in the development of burnout as previously thought. The limitations and conclusions will be discussed more in depth in Chapter 5. Chapter 5 will also discuss the social change implications of this research as well as discuss recommendations for future research into the study of burnout.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This research was conducted to examine the relationship between the six areas of worklife (workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values) and the development of the three components of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) when moderated by age and gender for individuals who work with high-risk populations at an outpatient human services organization. Previous researchers have indicated that individuals working with challenging populations are often more susceptible to experience the symptoms of the burnout syndrome (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Moreover, previous researchers have indicated that gender and age have a regulating effect on the development of burnout (Boles et al., 2003; Maslach, 2003b). The focus of this study was to address specific contributors in the development of burnout with the goal of informing the development of age and gender specific interventions that employers can use to assist employees who may develop or who are already struggling with the burnout syndrome. An additional goal was to promote educational strategies for those going into the human services field. This study specifically took a new approach in that the six areas of worklife were examined with age and gender to determine if the moderating effect made a difference in burnout.

The hypotheses of this study that age and gender by worklife interactions were significant on the three aspects of the burnout syndrome were not supported. Additionally, the primary hypotheses of this research study, that all age and gender by

worklife interactions were associated with emotional exhaustion, was rejected. However, the age by workload interaction on emotional exhaustion was found to be significant. Furthermore, the secondary hypotheses that all age and gender by worklife interactions were associated with depersonalization and personal accomplishment was not supported either.

Interpretation of Findings

The primary hypotheses that age and gender would moderate the relationship between the six areas of worklife and emotional exhaustion were not supported. However, the age by workload interaction in the development of emotional exhaustion was significant (see Table 14). The secondary hypotheses that age and gender would moderate the relationship between the six areas of worklife on depersonalization were not supported. However, reward and values were significant in predicting depersonalization (see Table 14). The third hypotheses that age and gender would moderate the relationship between the six areas of worklife on personal accomplishment were not supported. However, community and values were significant in predicting personal accomplishment (See Table 14). In addition, the areas of work life predicted more than half of the variance of emotional exhaustion ($R^2=.52$) which indicates how important these results were.

Table 14: Significant Associations Found Among Variables

Dependent Variables	Main Effects		Interactions
Emotional Exhaustion	Workload	Reward	Age*Workload
Depersonalization	Reward	Values	No Interactions
Personal Accomplishment	Community	Values	No Interactions

These results both contradict and support previous research studies. For example, previous studies have indicated that age and gender were linked to the development of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment (Ahola et al., 2006; Boles et al., 2003; Lau et al., 2005; Maslach, 2003; Shirom et al., 2008). The results of this study indicated that age and gender did not moderate the association between the six areas of worklife on emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, or personal accomplishment. Previous research also indicated that age and gender do have a moderating effect perceived fairness, job satisfaction, and job performance on the three dimensions of burnout (Adebayo et al., 2008; Shirom et al., 2008). The contradictory nature of this study with previous research could be explained by a variety of factors. First, there were only 28 males in this study. It could be quite possible that the males in this study were different than males in the general population; therefore, the results would not indicate any effects on emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, or personal accomplishment. Thus, sample bias could explain why the results of this study did not indicate any significant findings. Additionally, the lack of support for the hypotheses may be due to mediators or confounding variables. For example, younger adults may burnout early and leave hardier workers behind who are less susceptible to burnout, so as workers age, only those with a certain personality will be found in the workplace (Maslach et al., 2001). In addition, gender roles and stereotypes may have influenced the results as both men and women may not have been honest about their struggles. This could also be due to the self-report measures in which respondents reflect social desirability bias.

The results of this study did indicate that workload was a significant predictor of emotional exhaustion. The aspect of workload predicting emotional exhaustion is in line with previous research that indicates that in relation to the three dimensions of burnout, workload is linked most evidently to emotional exhaustion (Maslach et al., 2001). For the population studied, this is not surprising as caseloads have consistently increased over the years. Additionally, working longer hours, dealing with extremely difficult clients, and additional responsibilities most evidently leads to emotional exhaustion (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). This is in keeping with the downsizing trend in which organizations are asking employees to do more often times with fewer resources (Maslach & Leiter, 2005).

Reward, or lack of reward, was also linked to increased emotional exhaustion and depersonalization for the population studied. Previous research has indicated that a mismatch in this aspect of work life is associated with all three of the dimensions of burnout (Leiter & Maslach, 1999). However, previous research has indicated that the reward element is most closely associated to a reduction in personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 2001). This study found the opposite in that reward was not associated with personal accomplishment. The fact that this aspect was most closely linked to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization in this study could be due to the fact that the population studied places greater emphasis on internal and external reward. Therefore, lack of reward for this population leads to feelings of emotional exhaustion in addition to callous and negative feelings instead of a sense of accomplishment or failure.

Additionally, the aspect of values was linked to depersonalization and personal accomplishment in this study. Previous research has indicated that a conflict in values

between the individual and the organization is linked to emotional exhaustion, increased cynicism, and decreased personal accomplishment (Leiter & Maslach, 1999). Although the aspect of values was not linked to emotional exhaustion this study, the feelings of callousness and lack of personal accomplishment could be a result of the personal qualities of the population studied. For example, individuals in this study may be callous in their work life in order for them to justify the discrepancy between their values and the values of the organization. Moreover, an individual's sense of personal accomplishment is affected when his or her values conflict with the organizations (Maslach & Leiter, 2005).

Lastly, the area of work life represented by community was a significant predictor of personal accomplishment. Previous research has indicated that an incongruence between what individuals' expectations are in regard to social supports in the organization and the actual social supports available to him or her is directly related to burnout (Leiter & Maslach, 1999). Specifically, peer support has been linked to personal accomplishment and efficacy (Leiter & Maslach, 1999). The aspect of community, the support of coworkers, and positive associations with coworkers all lead to individuals feeling accomplished (Maslach & Leiter, 2005). The support of this study with previous research indicates that feelings of personal accomplishment are highly dependent on the positive connections between others in the work environment.

The only interaction found to be significant in this study was the age by workload interaction in emotional exhaustion. Age and gender and the other five areas of worklife were not found to be significant predictors of depersonalization or personal

accomplishment. The interaction of age and workload showed that as workload increased so did emotional exhaustion for both younger and older employees with older employees experiencing more emotional exhaustion with higher workload. This signifies that as employees age their perception of how they experience overload changes how they react to stressful situations. This could mean that as employees age they develop different ways to cope with changing work environments and that their perceptions change as well. Furthermore, younger employees may have more energy and ability to withstand increasing levels of workload whereas older employees do not adjust as well to changes in their workload. In addition, the aspect of workload is most significantly related to emotional exhaustion and not to depersonalization or personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 2001). Furthermore, the domain of emotional exhaustion is the first step in the burnout process (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Perhaps the population studied, over time, may report higher levels of depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment with increasing workload, but because this study was only taken in one moment in time the progression was not yet evident.

The lack of interaction results for the other areas of worklife and emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment can be attributed to a variety of factors such as mediating or confounding variables, self-report bias, the probability that the demographic variables alone cannot negate other personal qualities, and that the population studied may not be experiencing difficulties in the other areas of worklife.

The results of this study would lead one to believe that the population examined was not having as much difficulty in the experience of emotional exhaustion or with

depersonalization. Additionally, the experience of personal accomplishment, which is the opposite of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, may have offset the experience of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization for the population studied. Moreover, there could be some response bias in this study explaining the effect such social desirability in which individuals present themselves more favorably than they may be actually feeling. For instance, participants may not want to admit that they are experiencing symptoms of burnout; therefore, they report more positive feelings than they are actually experiencing.

Additionally, the only area of work life, workload, was more strongly positive for older employees than younger employees. For example, an increase in workload for older employees led to increased emotional exhaustion more so than for younger employees. This could be that as employees age the demands of work overload weigh more heavily on older employees than it does for younger employees to feel emotionally exhausted. I cannot determine this from this study as subjects were not followed over time. Future longitudinal studies are needed to examine at what age employees begin to struggle with emotional exhaustion. Additional recommendations for future studies would be to examine multiple agencies across various occupations to control bias and to have greater diversity in population size and demographic variables. Additionally, it would be beneficial to look at ways in which individuals not struggling with burnout use coping strategies as a way to implement interventions for those individuals who are struggling with burnout.

The results of this research suggest that the development of burnout is highly complex and is a result of many factors. Some of those factors are what an individual brings to his or her occupation and not necessarily what the occupation brings out in the individual.

Implications for Social Change

The social change implications of this research are to advance the understanding of the multifaceted aspects between individual and organizational characteristics and burnout. Specifically, researchers and organizations should use these results to lead to the development of age specific treatments and/or interventions. It is imperative to implement preventative measures to address employee burnout, turnover, and retention. Employers can develop better interventions for current employees, employ prescreen testing for perspective employees, use tools of engagement to promote healthier, happier employees, and adjust work assignments for those already struggling with burnout. It is also important to bridge the gap between academia and real world situations so that individuals can make informed decisions based on individual qualities in pursuing high-stress occupations. The significance for employees in knowing his or her stressors has the propensity to foster education on coping strategies, to learn the balance between giving of oneself and giving to oneself, and to employ detached concern in dealing with difficult and demanding clients (Maslach, 2003).

Recommendations for Interventions/Dissemination of Results

The results of this study can be used by direct care staff to explore which area of worklife he or she is more apt to experience difficulties in. Moreover, human service

organizations can use the results of this study to develop training programs that encompass the six areas of worklife with age and gender appropriate interventions. Results of this study should be disseminated to study participants, human service organizations, academia, and other high-stress occupations.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study was the use of the self-report measures including the MBI-HSS and the AWS. Self-report measures, although convenient and cost effective, but rely solely on the individual to report his or her behaviors truthfully. Individuals may be more apt to give socially acceptable answers rather than truthful answers to items on the scales and report less or more burnout than they actually felt. In addition, self-report measures have issues with recall such as individuals “forget” how they felt about a particular situation that may have occurred in the past. Individuals may also overestimate how they felt, for example. Response bias and recall issues may have limited the validity of this study. However, the measures used in this study have been widely validated and found to be a good measure of burn-out.

Another possible limitation of my study is the use of a convenience sample. It is possible that those who were experiencing burnout did not take part in the study due to the effects of the burnout syndrome such as feeling overwhelmed and being too fatigued to participate. However, my response rate was much higher than is usual for unsolicited questionnaires (Hamilton, 2009). The study sample was extracted from one organization in one state and limited to one type of occupational level (direct care staff). This limits to the ability to generalize to the population as a whole. Furthermore, delimitations of my

study were not controlling for other factors, besides age and gender, which may influence burnout (such as stressors at home or in the family), and using a retrospective design, which does not provide insight in cause and effect and development of burnout over time with changes in work area levels.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should take in to consideration the use of a more generalizable population so that results can be more inclusive of all occupations in different regions. It would be worthwhile to look at occupations in which individuals do not necessarily care for others or are responsible for others such as computer technicians or data entry staff. Alternate areas for follow-up studies should include other areas of an individual's life that may lead him or her to be more or less susceptible to burnout such as home life, religious involvement, children, school, and debt to name a few. Another area that should be considered is a longitudinal study in which young employees are followed over their career with an organization to determine if changes in work area affect burnout and what factors aid them in preventing the development of the burnout syndrome.

More importantly, future research should examine the areas of worklife as an engagement model and not just as the negative component of burnout. Specifically, researchers can examine if individuals are more engaged in one area of worklife over another in helping occupations. If so, analysis of this area of worklife across occupations would be a relevant avenue of study. Additionally, how are organizations maintaining a sustainable workload? How are organizations giving employees control and choice over work assignments? How are employees being recognized and rewarded? How are

organizations fostering a sense of community? How are organizations and individuals experiencing a sense of fairness, respect, and justice? Lastly, how do individuals perceive they are involved in meaningful and valued work? All of these questions address engagement with one's occupation and offer insight into burnout from a different angle.

Summary

Understanding the many influences in the development of burnout is extremely advantageous to individuals and the organizations in which they work. Burnout continues to be a major factor in loss of productivity, absenteeism, turnover, poor health outcomes, substance abuse, and mental illness (Maslach et al., 2001). The costs to individuals as well as organizations were the impetus of this research study. Specifically, I sought to find out how age and gender contributed to the development of burnout when combined with the six areas of worklife. The results of this study indicated that age and workload is a significant predictor of emotional exhaustion. Additionally, reward, values, and community predicted emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Therefore, it is beneficial to employees to develop intervention strategies that focus on those characteristics to promote healthier, happier employees. The findings of the current study may aid in understanding ways to reduce burnout, increase engagement, and provide support and training for employees based on individual characteristics. Lastly, this study has added to the research on the causes and outcomes of burnout and has given important insight into how individual characteristics influence each area of worklife in the development of burnout.

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Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire

1. What is your age:
 - a. 18-25
 - b. 26-40
 - c. 41-55
 - d. 56 or older
2. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
3. What is your race?
 - a. American Indian/Alaskan Native
 - b. Asian
 - c. Black or African American
 - d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - e. White
 - f. Other
4. What is your ethnicity?
 - a. Hispanic
 - b. Non-Hispanic

Appendix B: Letter to Participants

Walden University
Graduate School of Psychology
100 Washington Avenue South, Suite 900
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Dear Staff,

My name is Jamie Roberts. I am a graduate student in Walden University's Educational Psychology Program. I am kindly requesting your participation in a doctoral research study that I am conducting titled: Developing a better relationship with work: How individual characteristics and Areas of Worklife contribute to the development of burnout. The purpose of this research is to ascertain the influences of burnout for direct care staff working with a high risk population. Overseeing this dissertation research is Dr. Maria van Tilburg, Professor of Psychology at Walden University.

Please find the enclosed web link <http://www.mindgarden.com/survey/12520> to questionnaires online. The time frame needed to complete these measures should not take longer than 30 minutes. The surveys are completely anonymous. This researcher will have no way of knowing who participated in this research. As this research is fully voluntary and anonymous, your responses will be considered consent to take part in this dissertation research.

If you have any questions regarding this research study, please feel free to contact the supervisor of the research, Dr. Maria van Tilburg or myself, Jamie Roberts.

Your participation in this research will help in the understanding of the predictors of burnout among direct care staff which ultimately can lead to better individual and organizational interventions.

Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Jamie Roberts, MS
Doctoral Student
Walden University

Dr. Maria van Tilburg
Professor of Psychology
Walden University

Appendix C: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study of organizational risk factors, individual characteristics, and the development of burnout. The researcher is inviting employees who have direct contact with clients and who are employed full-time to be in the study. This study was selected because it is important to maintain employee and organizational health. This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Jamie Roberts, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You may already know the researcher as a Team Leader for Protective Services for Adults, but this study is separate from that role.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to determine if age and gender have an effect on the areas of worklife (workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values) in the development of burnout for employees who provide services to clients.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Complete two questionnaires which will take approximately 25 minutes to complete as well as a demographic questionnaire that will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. The questionnaires will assess your experienced burnout and your perceptions of the quality of your work setting. The demographic questionnaire will ask your age, gender, race, and ethnicity.
- Data will be collected at one point and time.

Here are some sample questions:

- ___ In my opinion, I am good at my job.
- ___ I feel Depressed at work.
- ___ I do not have time to do the work that must be done.
- ___ I have control over how I do my work.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at Catholic Charities of Broome County will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as psychological distress from some of the survey questions. Should you need assistance, please feel free to contact the Employee

Assistance Program at (607) 798-5519. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

The benefits of this research include educating individuals of key areas of strengths and weaknesses in their organizational settings. By gaining an understanding of these influences, employers can develop better interventions for current employees, employ pre-screen testing for perspective employees, utilize tools of engagement to promote healthier, happier employees, and adjust work assignments for those already struggling with burnout. The significance for employees in knowing his or her stressors has the propensity to foster education on coping strategies, to learn the balance between giving of oneself and giving to oneself, and to employ detached concern in dealing with difficult and demanding clients.

Payment:

None.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept anonymous. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by keeping data files password protected. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210.

Please print or save this consent form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By clicking the link below, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Appendix D: Maslach Burnout Inventory

Due to Copyright Laws, the reader is asked to contact:

Mindgarden, Inc.
855 Oak Grove Avenue, Suite 215
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(650) 322-6300

To access and examine the
Maslach Burnout Inventory
Human Services Survey

Appendix E: Areas of Worklife Survey

Due to Copyright Laws, the reader is asked to contact:

Mindgarden, Inc.
855 Oak Grove Avenue, Suite 215
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(650) 322-6300

To access and examine the
Areas of Worklife Survey