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Experience of Burnout Among Educational Leadership Doctoral Candidates

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EXPERIENCE OF BURNOUT AMONG EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP DOCTORAL CANDIDATES

By

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Abstract

EXPERIENCE OF BURNOUT AMONG EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP DOCTORAL CANDIDATES

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In this era of high accountability, standardized based instructions, and public debates over teacher quality, performance, and evaluation, education administrators across the country have come under intense pressures (Boccio, Weisz, & Lefkowitz, 2016; Carey, 2011; Ravitch, 2010). Due to the high incentives and intense pressures on school leaders, and the wide-ranging impact these positions have on communities, it is crucial to understand those who are seeking greater leadership roles in education. The purpose of this study was to determine if candidates pursing doctorate degrees in educational leadership are experiencing burnout. The dissertation addresses the phenomenon of job burnout, which is a response to prolonged chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors at the work environment (Maslach, 2003). Doctoral candidates are prime candidates for experiencing life stressors and burnout. The dissertation addresses the questions: (1) What levels of burnout do educational leadership doctoral candidates experience? (2) How do levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishments vary among doctoral candidates experience? And (3) Does educational work role impact self-perceptions of burnout by educational leadership doctoral

candidates? Participants for this study were comprised of educational leadership doctoral program candidates and those who graduated from the program within a 24 month time period prior to the administration of the survey. The program takes place at a university in eastern Nebraska. The findings indicated that a majority of participants in this study had a low to moderate degree of burnout across two components of burnout through emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Participants self-reported moderate to high degree of personal accomplishment, indicating low degrees of burnout. This study was intended to provide information for post-secondary institutions, local and state education agencies and policy makers. Educational leadership doctoral program faculty may follow up and choose to review and modify professional preparation course content and engage aspiring educational leaders in meaningful dialogue about burnout and its impact on individuals and organizations. These findings are discussed along with limitations, directions for future research, and implications of these findings.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Background of the Study

Changes in the educational landscape, alongside broader economic, social, and political shifts, have raised the stakes for the field of education administration (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2009; Goldring & Schuermann, 2009). In this era of high accountability, standardized based instructions, and public debates over teacher quality, performance, and evaluation, education administrators across the country have come under intense pressures (Boccio, Weisz, & Lefkowitz, 2016; Carey, 2011; Ravitch, 2010). Examining the possible effects of burnout on candidates for these positions is critical, as they will be gaining expertise and responsibilities while potentially supervising more individuals after graduation.

Education leadership doctoral degree programs are intended to train practitioners "for managerial and administrative leadership," (Shulman, Golde, Bueschel, & Garabedian, p.26, 2006). Most of the students who enroll in this type of graduate study are mid-career and, consequently, doctoral candidates in educational leadership often hold dual, full-time roles in a job and a doctoral graduate program (Goldring & Schuermann, 2009). While in doctoral programs, candidates balance theory, research and a connection to practice. These potential future leaders of educational systems must continuously meet both the doctoral program and their own job's expectations while also promoting cultures centered on collaboration and communication. Because of the high incentives and intense pressures on school leaders, and the wide-ranging impact these positions have on communities, it is crucial to understand those who are seeking greater leadership roles in education (Goldring & Schuermann, 2009).

Education administrators must exhibit strong instructional leadership skills and data-driven decision making. Individuals taking on these roles are expected to engage a greater community of stakeholders and are held accountable to increasingly higher standards, a wider range of stakeholders, and community engagement expectations (Goldring & Schuermann, 2009). Furthermore, administrators must express both positive and negative emotions at varying intensities. There is a consensus that leaders display and regulate emotions and that these emotional demands may be stressful for some leaders (Arnold, Connelly, Ginis & Walsh, 2015).

Professionals pursing doctorate degrees in educational leadership are likely to be passionate and dedicated. They are either currently leading school buildings, are holding leadership roles within districts, or are central office administrators who are likely to remain in the field of education until retirement (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2009). These candidates must navigate ways to advocate and sustain a school/district culture, collaborate and respond to community interests and needs, and understand and respond to the larger political, social and cultural context in which they work (Earl & Fullan, 2003; Fullan, 2003).

Problem Statement

Doctoral students are prime candidates for experiencing life stressors and burnout. The stress associated with the balancing of work, life and the pursuit of a doctoral degree can lead to a psychological outcome known as burnout. The definition of burnout that will be used throughout this paper comprises three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishments (Maslach, 2003). Burnout may cause doctorate candidates to exit the profession due to emotional exhaustion,

depersonalization, or lack of efficacy, as has been documented in many other service professions (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2009; Maslach 2003; Maslach and Leiter, 1997).

Suffering from burnout can have profound effects on an administrator's ability to hold responsibilities on the job, be emotionally and physically present for colleagues and stakeholders, have job satisfaction, and remain in the profession. Burnout can impact an administrator's decision to remain in the profession, as well as present a model to others who may decline the opportunity to become administrators (Levin, 2005; Goldring & Schuermann, 2009; Darling-Hammond, Lapointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007). It is crucial for educational leadership programs and education policies to pay close attention to the emotional and psychological wellbeing of educators and administrators. Doing so can potentially address underlying issues and causes for attrition and burnout among educational leaders and administrators (Goldring & Taie, 2018).

Purpose of the Study

The pursuit of a doctoral degree in educational leadership is often done in conjunction with a full time professional role. Given the significance of the professional positions or roles graduates of these programs can qualify for, it is important to consider the mental and emotional well being of doctoral candidates and recent graduates of educational leadership doctoral programs. The purpose of the study is to determine if candidates pursing doctorate degrees in educational leadership are experiencing burnout.

Research Questions

The following Research Questions were developed:

Research Question 1: What levels of burnout do educational leadership doctoral candidates experience?

Research Question 2: How do levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishments vary among doctoral candidates' experience?

Research Question 3: Does educational work role impact self-perceptions of burnout by educational leadership doctoral candidates?

Assumptions

There are several assumptions in this study. First, it is assumed that due to the dual, and quite stressful, roles doctoral candidates take on as practitioners and students, this population will be experiencing some type of burnout. Second, it is also assumed that demographic factors such as age and years of experience will lead to higher levels of burnout. Finally, it is assumed that burnout is correlated with administrative attrition in the field of education.

This study has several strong features. All study participants will be enrolled, or have graduated within the two years prior to the administration of the survey, in the Doctorate in Educational Administration graduate program offered by the University of Nebraska-Omaha.

Study participants completed the survey online; no grade or other incentives were given for participating. Surveys was completed anonymously, so it was assumed study participants supplied candid, honest responses.

Limitations of the Study

There are potential limitations to this study. These include a small sample size that may not be sufficient for generalization across the administrative field. The survey will be administered to candidates for, and recent graduates of, the Doctorate in Educational Administration graduate program. Responses will be solicited only from those individuals who have made the commitment to pursue a doctoral degree.

Also, many factors that may or may not be related to work can and often do impact how an individual experiences and deals with burnout and this study will only focus on a few of these factors. Lastly, this study will not measure when or where the experience of burnout began or is manifested.

Operational Definitions

- **Doctoral Candidates** (N = 117) included those currently enrolled in the Doctorate in Educational Administration graduate program by in the fall of 2019 and those who graduated within the two years prior.
- **Burnout** encompasses three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach, 2003).
- **Emotional Exhaustion** measures feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work. The 9-item Emotional Exhaustion (EE) scale assesses feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work. Higher scores correspond to greater experienced burnout.
- **Depersonalization** measures an unfeeling and impersonal response to those served by one’s work. The 5-item Depersonalization (DP) scale measures an unfeeling and impersonal response toward recipients of one's service, care,

treatment, or instruction. Higher scores correspond to greater degrees of experienced burnout.

- **Personal Accomplishment** measures feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work. The 8-item Personal Accomplishment (PA) scale assesses feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work with people. Lower scores correspond to greater experienced burnout.
- **Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey** (MBI-ES) The MBI-ES is a multi-dimensional continuous burnout inventory survey measuring emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 2016). Development of the MBI was grounded in a theoretical perspective that views burnout as a psychological response to aspects of one's daily experiences. The MBI – ES was created for use with educators, including teachers, administrators, other staff members, and volunteers working in any educational setting (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 2016).

Delimitations of the Study

The study findings, results, and discussion were delimited to students enrolled in the Doctorate in Educational Administration graduate program at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. This research is limited to candidates in the state of Nebraska who hold current Administrative Certificates.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to research, practice, and policy. The study will be of significant interest to Doctorate in Educational Administration graduate programs faculty and administration as it will add to better understandings of the variables associated with

burnout that education administrators seeking doctoral degrees may be at risk of experiencing. The study can provide information about burnout, and the subscale that make up the phenomenon, while helping faculty and administrators of doctoral programs design intervention programs. as well as amass resources, for at-risk doctoral students.

Contribution to research. A review of professional literature suggest that more research is needed regarding the perceived variables associated with burnout that candidates pursing doctorate degrees in educational leadership may be at risk of experiencing.

Contribution to practice. A post-secondary educational administration doctoral degree granting institution faculty and administration may benefit from considering strategies to address and support factors and variables associated with the psychological phenomenon known as burnout. This will help aide in the recommendations that will be offered to prevent, recognize and/or alleviate conditions that may contribute to burnout.

Contribution to policy. The results of this study may offer insight into the levels of burnout experienced by those seeking doctoral degrees in the field of educational leadership and administration. Pursuant to study outcomes, post-secondary institutions may choose to review and modify professional preparation course content and engage aspiring educational leaders in meaningful dialogue about burnout and its impact on individuals and organizations.

CHAPTER 2: Review of Literature

A Crisis in Higher Education

Studies investigating burnout among doctoral candidates continuously find that students have higher levels of burnout as the program progresses (Chang, Eddins-Folensbee, & Coverdale, 2012; Clark, Murdock, & Koetting, 2009; Hunter & Devine, 2016; Parker, 2018). Candidates seeking doctoral degrees are likely to experience psychological distress, and one in three are at risk of a common psychiatric disorder. Studies note that the prevalence of mental health challenges among doctoral candidates is higher than that of the highly educated general population, and much higher than in the general population (Evans, Bira, Gastelum Betlran, Weiss & Vanderfort, 2018; Okahana and Zhou, 2017; Saunders & Balinsky, 1993).

Stress and anxiety are psychological distresses that working individuals learn to navigate in all professions. When the doctoral program demands are added to an individual's work-life balance, graduate students experience increases in the measurable quantity of stress (McManus, Keeling, & Paice, 2004). In their study of graduate students mental health, Evans et al. (2018) report that 39% of their participants, mostly doctoral candidates, fell into the moderate-to-severe depression range. Golembiewski and Munzenrider (1988) indicate that burnout is an assemblage of different stressors with the ability to cause such extensive strain that an individual's coping skills will not suffice.

Clark, Murdock, and Koetting (2009) investigated burnout among counseling psychology doctoral students and reported that lack of advisor support was the greatest predictor of burnout. Hunter and Devine (2016) believed that faculty should receive explicit training in the areas of social support (i.e., mentoring) and argued that doctoral

students might have lower levels of burnout as a result. Pavalakis and Kaitelidou (2012) hypothesized that burnout levels increased because graduate programs add additional stress to students, many of who are working professionals.

The Background of Burnout

Burnout is a psychological phenomenon that develops when a person lacks the necessary resources to effectively deal with real or perceived stressors (i.e., personal, professional and/or environmental) encountered over a prolonged period of time (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). People used the term to describe an experience before scientific psychology identified it as a phenomenon worthy of study. Burnout among working professionals has been studied extensively since the 1970's (Freudenberger, 1974; Maslach, 2003). The phenomenon of job burnout is a response to prolonged chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors at the work environment (Maslach, 2003). Burnout is a serious concern in all workplaces, specifically the human service sector such as education, social work, and health care. These high touch fields require extensive amounts of contact with people in need of aid, and were the first to be studied with regards to the phenomenon of burnout (Maslach and Leiter, 1997).

In 2018, the World Health Organization (WHO) added burnout to its International Classification of Diseases manual (ICD-11). The WHO characterized burnout by three dimensions: 1) feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion; 2) increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and 3) reduced professional efficacy. The WHO emphasized that burnout refers "specifically to phenomena in the occupational context and should not be applied to describe experiences in other areas of life" (World Health Organization, 2018).

There is a general consensus that burnout is a negative experience for the individual and the organization (Schaufeli, Leiter, & Maslach, 2009). The phenomenon of burnout has been linked to the high rates of turnover in schools, social services, and across health professions (Kahili, 1988; Loyd & Sullivan, 2012; Sadler, 2014). The costs associated with burnout are well documented and the perspectives from which the phenomenon of burnout has been described range from across the disciplines (Maslach, 1998; Maslach, 2003; Jackson, Schwab, & Schuler, 1986).

Maslach (1998) defined burnout as a process that begins slowly and becomes progressively worse, rather than being a fixed state. As the level of burnout increases, an individual could trigger a host of negative outcomes. Burnout has three dimensions: the *individual* dimension of burnout manifested through emotional exhaustion, the *interpersonal* dimension exhibited by a sense of depersonalization, and finally, a *self-evaluation* dimension marked by significant reductions in feelings of personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion is at the core of burnout, and depersonalization is a subsequent negative interpersonal outcome of emotional exhaustion, which consequently leads to a professional's declined subjective sense of accomplishment.

Burnout has predominantly been conceptualized as a form of stress-related health hardships, a manifestation of work-related psychological distress. Although burnout can vary greatly depending on the individual and the work setting where such distress occurs, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced efficacy are the multidimensional factors associated with burnout (Maslach, 1998; Ola, Igor, & Saboonchi, 2018). The multidimensional framework theory established the complexities involved in the loss of idealism and passion for one’s job (Maslach, 2003).

The Multidimensional Framework Theory of Burnout

The burnout model is a tripartite model consisting of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishments (Maslach and Leiter, 1997). The multidimensional framework theory of burnout explains the impact of burnout on an individual in the workplace (Maslach, 1998). The multidimensional theory conceptualizes burnout in terms of three core components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Burnout can cause emotional and physical health concerns for the burned-out individual and financial losses for the organizations where they work. In their research, Maslach and Jackson (1981) observed that staff-client interactions in a mental health setting can cause staff members to suffer from chronic stress. They noted that chronic stress is often "emotionally draining and poses the risk of burnout" (Maslach & Jackson, p. 99, 1981). A common tool researchers have used to measure burnout is the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 2016). The survey was developed in 1981 to guide theory and empirical research on the impact of burnout on individuals. There are several version of the survey as it has been recognized that burnout is a phenomenon found in a wide range of work settings and across populations (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 2016).

The Maslach Burnout Inventory is a multi-dimensional continuous burnout inventory survey measuring emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion manifests itself as an individual becomes overly emotionally involved in the work they do and then feels overwhelmed by the emotional demands imposed by those around them. Emotional exhaustion can lead to chronic fatigue and drainage of energy to complete the demands and obligations at work. Burnout

theory posits that as stressors at work become overbearing, emotional exhaustion can lead to detachment from the work and resentful feelings towards colleagues, clients, and self.

One particular study (Bakker, 2009) used 220 couples as participants and the Maslach Burnout Inventory and a self-rated health questionnaire as measures to establish burnout and it's correlation with partner burnout and overall health. The study then examined four variables: employee burnout, employee health, partner burnout, and partner health (Bakker, 2009). In addition a second study was conducted with 209 teachers and their partners utilizing the Maslach Burnout Inventory and Radloff s Depression Scale to establish burnout and it's correlation with partner burnout and symptoms of depression. The study then examined four variables: teacher burnout, teacher depression, partner burnout, and partner depression. Within the two studies, the researchers found that employee burnout had a negative effect on a partner's health through partner burnout and teacher burnout had a positive effect on a partner's symptoms of depression through partner burnout (Bakker, 2009).

Individuals who are emotionally exhausted at work will also experience depersonalization from the work setting, the second factor in the model of burnout. Maslach and Leiter **(**1997) argue that depersonalization develops as a coping response to work overload. This factor is especially impactful to the workplace as emotionally exhausted employees will begin treating people like objects, describe feeling of callousness and cynicism towards those around them, including individuals served by these organizations (Jackson, Schwab, & Schuler, 1986). As feelings of cynicism and detachment from responsibilities occur, the interpersonal relationships between themselves and others in the workplace deteriorate and can become contagious. The

impact can affect other employees to also begin to feel drained by having to interact with a burned out colleague, leading to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization in others (Maslach, 1998).

In a study conducted by Jackson, Schwab, and Schuler (1986), the authors examined if experiencing burnout produces the progression of changing jobs. The authors hypothesized that by using the components of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment) the following will be true: 1) Emotional exhaustion will be associated with unmet organizational expectations. 2) Depersonalization will be associated with unmet organizational expectations and job conditions that place heavy demands on emotional reserves, and 3) Feelings of low personal accomplishment will be associated with unmet organizational expectations and job conditions that imply one's efforts are ineffective and/or unappreciated (Jackson, Schwab, and Schuler, 1986).

The study used 277 teachers from the New Hampshire chapter of the National Education Association (NEA). The teachers were sent a survey by mail at two time periods. The first was a survey that asked about their current job conditions, the match between the current conditions and prior expectation of the job, and feelings of burnout. One year later the second follow-up survey was sent to address these concerns again and to determine how many of these teachers remained in their position. The hypotheses were tested using a hierarchical regression analysis. The results showed that unmet expectations about the job appeared not to be associated with burnout and that emotional exhaustion was most strongly associated with role conflict. The study found that in

strongly supportive environments, feelings of personal accomplishment were highest (Jackson, Schwab, and Schuler, 1986).

Contrary to their hypotheses (Jackson et al., 1986), lack of support from one's principal was the only condition associated with depersonalization. Although the results showed that emotional exhaustion predicts subsequent turnover, the authors noted that teachers often stay in their teaching positions even though they are experiencing significant burnout and turnover rates may actually be low among teachers. However, feelings of burnout are likely to impact and cause negative consequences for the teachers, students, and the educational institution (Jackson et al., 1986).

Emotional exhaustion and depersonalization are directly linked to an overwhelming sense of reduced personal accomplishments. The sense of inefficacy can occur when a person feels distressed and guilt associated with their emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and their interactions with colleagues and clients. The individual no longer believes their actions can or do make a difference where efforts repeatedly fail to produce positive results and the individual develops symptoms of stress and depression (Maslach, 2003; Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

In a study by Boccio, Lefkowitz, and Weisz (2016), 291 school psychology practitioners were surveyed to determine if a relationship between administrative pressures to practice unethically and impaired occupational health, as manifested by burnout, job dissatisfaction and intent to leave the profession, exists. The authors developed a questionnaire comprised of the Maslach Burnout Inventory - Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS), perceptions of administrative pressures to behave unethically, turnover intentions, and demographic information. The study found that

almost one third of participating school psychologists were enduring administrative pressures to behave unethically and receiving threats to theirs jobs for failure to comply. Nearly half reported being instructed by administrators to avoid recommending support services due to cost, or agree to restrictive special education settings (Boccio et.al., 2016). The results of the study suggest that exposure to administrative pressures result in an array of adverse outcomes, such as high levels of burnout and a greater desire to leave the profession by school psychologists.

Many factors lead to attrition rates among educators including, but not limited to, high levels of stress, quality of support received from colleagues and administrators, personality traits, salary, and job satisfaction (Billingsley, 2004). The education profession includes daycare workers, teachers, principals, child psychologists, pediatricians, and child psychiatrists, to name a few. Working with children and youth as a career is among the most difficult and emotionally draining occupations in the human service industry (Krueger, 2002). Burnout has a significant high cost to education settings and the public as measured by absenteeism, reduced productivity, healthcare costs, as well as high job turnover in short periods of time (Maslach, 1998; Schaufeli, Leiter, & Maslach, 2009).

Doctoral Programs of Educational Leadership/Administration

From 2000 to 2014, approximately half a million (426,410) individuals graduated with degrees in educational leadership. "Overall, there was a 72% increase in the number of institutions (451 in 2000 and 775 in 2014) offering educational leadership programs at one or more levels and there were twice as many educational leadership graduates (32,614) produced in 2014 as compared with graduates in 2000 (16,154)" (Perrone &

Tucker, 2019, p.278). One explanation for these dramatic increases in supply would suggest a greater demand for educators who are certified as principals. According to the National Science Foundation (2018) 11,829 doctoral degrees in the filed of education were awarded in 2016. Perrone and Tucker (2019), in an exploratory study of which institutions were preparing principal candidates and how many candidates have graduated across these institution, examined national datasets to track changes in educational administration degree production at the national, state, and university level from 2000 to 2014. They observed that in 2014, 623 institutions graduated 22,206 educational leadership master's degree students while 301 institutions granted 4,385 doctoral degrees (Perrone & Tucker, 2019).

Graduate educational leadership preparation program resources and design features are integral to well-prepared graduates who make a difference in schools and the lives of students (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2009). The field of education leadership and administration necessitates advanced degrees and significant time commitments. According to a report from the Education Commission of the States (2017), nearly all of the states require a Master's degree in school administration as a minimum for certification or licensure. In an overview of the path to leadership in education, the most common state policy requirements for principal licensure are teaching experience, passing a licensure exam, and a master's degree (Anderson & Reynolds, 2015). After all, administrators are responsible for screening and hiring staff, training and developing goals and professional development opportunities for staff, supervising instruction and assessments as well as reporting progress to colleagues, supervisors and the public, and ensuring the education of children and young adults

(Darling-Hammond, Lapointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Fullan, 2003; Goldring & Taie, 2018).

Increased demands for student learning and outcome accountability renewed focus on instruction and standards. This shift focuses attention on leaders at all levels of the system to have a deep understanding of and engagement with teaching and learning (Goldring & Schuermann, 2009). Education leaders and administrators (such as building principals, district superintendents, and university faculty) work in intense and on-going personal and emotional contacts with others. These relationships can be engaging and rewarding, and can also be extremely stressful, leading to burnout and exit from the field.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to determine if candidates pursing doctorate degrees in educational leadership experience burnout. This study utilized quantitative data obtained by collecting descriptive and inferential data through a cross-sectional survey (Creswell, 2015) to determine the self-perceptions of burnout experienced by doctoral candidates and recent graduates of an educational leadership doctoral program. The stress associated with burnout can have serious consequences on candidates of doctorates of educational leadership physical and psychological wellbeing (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2009). Burnout may cause doctorate candidates to exit the profession due to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, or lack of efficacy, as has been documented in many other service professions (Maslach 2003; Maslach and Leiter, 1997).

Research Design

This research study utilizes quantitative data. Utilizing quantitative data was chosen in order to more efficiently obtain the experience of burnout among doctoral candidates of educational leadership programs and to increase the sample size. This research study was cross-sectional, descriptive, and nonexperimental in design (Creswell, 2015). The purpose of cross-sectional research is to gather data at a single point in time. Descriptive statistics meaningfully summarize data to determine if patterns are present (Creswell, 2015). The study includes a description of the sample, description of study variables, statistical analyses and results, and summary of the results. The dependent variable is the level of burnout experienced by doctoral candidates. The independent

variables are the factors that may lead to burnout. These variables include: demographics such as gender, current position and whether or not the position requires a state administration certification.

Research Questions

The following questions were examined:

Research Question 1: What levels of burnout do educational leadership doctoral candidates experience?

Research Question 2: How do levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishments vary among doctoral candidates' experience?

Research Question 3: Does educational work role impact self-perceptions of burnout by educational leadership doctoral candidates?

Selection of Participants

One hundred and seventeen (N = 117) Doctoral candidates and graduates of the Educational Leadership Doctoral program offered by a post secondary institution in the Midwest were invited to participate in this study. Graduates of the program were limited to those within the previous 24 months from the delivery of the survey.

According to the Educational Leadership Doctoral program 2018 annual report, the doctoral program is designed for candidates seeking and holding leadership positions (such as superintendent, building principal, etc.). Students enrolled in the doctoral program are full–time classroom teachers or administrators who have between five and twenty years of professional experience. At the time of this study, there were seventy-eight candidates (n=78) enrolled in the doctoral program. They were represented by the following gender distribution: Female (n=50), Male (n=28).

The doctoral program department chair provided a list of one hundred and seventeen individuals who fit the parameters set for this study. Twenty-two individuals were listed as having graduated within the 24 months prior to the delivery of the survey. Ninety-five candidates who have yet to graduate made up the rest of the participants. Students who participated in the survey had the following gender distribution: Women (n=27), Men (n=9). Of the 36 responses, 20 individuals identified as working in a position or role that requires a state administrative certificate or license (Female n=13, Men n=7).

Instrumentation

The data collected in this study was obtained through the use of a survey (see Appendix A) distributed electronically to candidates and recent graduates of an educational leadership doctoral program survey. The questionnaire was web-based, and data collected was self-reported. Data consisted of demographic information regarding participant's gender, professional position or role, and whether the role requires a state administrative license or certification. Additionally, the questionnaire contained the Maslach Burnout Inventory Education Survey (MBI – ES) and an open question asking participants to write the strategies they use, or recommend for use, to alleviate and counter work related stress and burnout.

A paragraph at the beginning of the online survey consisted of the following: a brief description of the research study's importance to an educational community, an acknowledgement of participant's rights and assurance of privacy regarding their information, and acknowledgment that participants provide consent as contributors to data in the study.

Maslach Burnout Inventory Education Survey (MBI – ES)

The Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey (MBI – ES) was an adaptation of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Development of the MBI was grounded in a theoretical perspective that views burnout as a psychological response to aspects of one's daily experiences (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 2016). The MBI – ES was created for use with educators, including teachers, administrators, other staff members, and volunteers working in any educational setting.

Structurally, burnout in the MBI - ES is comprised of three components. The three components are: emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP), and personal accomplishment (PA). The frequency with which the respondent experiences feelings related to each scale is assessed using a seven-point, fully anchored response format. The survey scale uses a 7-item scaling method that describes how often the participant feels they experience each question. The following is an itemization of the scale: 0=Never, 1=A few times a year or less, 2=Once a month or less, 3=A few times a month, 4= Once a week, 5= A few times a week, 6= Everyday. It is important to note that the mean scores correspond with the scale (for example, if the mean=2 then it refers to "once a month or less" being the average answer). Items are written as statements about personal feelings or attitudes that characterize burnout (see Appendix A).

The 9-item Emotional Exhaustion (EE) scale assesses feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work. The 5-item Depersonalization (DP) scale measures an unfeeling and impersonal response toward recipients of one's service, care, treatment, or instruction. A score of 0 to 2.00 indicates low levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. A score of 2.20 – 3.00 indicates a moderate

amount of exhaustion. A score of 3.20 or higher indicates a high level of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. The 8-item Personal Accomplishment (PA) scale assesses feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work with people. Lower scores correspond to greater experienced burnout. In contrast to both EE and DP, a mean score of 0 to 2.00 on subscale personal accomplishment (PA) correspond to higher degrees of burnout. A score of 3.2 or higher on personal accomplishment indicates a low degree of burnout experienced (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

The MBI – ES consists of 22-items but with modification to the wording of some items, adapted to be worded for educational administration candidates.. Specifically, in the MBI-ES used in this study (Appendix A), the word “students/staff/colleagues” is used in place of the word "student." This change was made to insure clarity and consistency in the interpretation of the items.

Burnout is considered a continuous variable, ranging from low to moderate to high degrees of experienced feeling. Burnout is not viewed as a dichotomous variable, which is either present or absent (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 2016). A high degree of burnout is reflected in high scores on the Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization subscales and in low scores on the Personal Accomplishment subscale. A moderate/average degree of burnout is reflected in average scores on the three subscales. Furthermore, a low degree of burnout is reflected in low scores on the Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization subscales and in high scores on the Personal Accomplishment subscale (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 2016).

The three MBI-ES scales generally show good internal reliability and some stability over time. Internal Reliability using Cronbach alpha estimates have been

reported of: .90 for Emotional Exhaustion, .76 for Depersonalization, and .76 for Personal Accomplishment (Iwanicki & Schwab, 1981). An analysis of 84 published studies that reported sample-specific reliability estimates for the three MBI scales (Wheeler, Vassar, Worley & Barnes, 2011) found that the reliability estimates for the Emotional Exhaustion scale average in the high .80s; for Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment, average reliability estimates are in the mid- .70s.

Data Collection and Analysis

All enrolled and recent graduates (up to 24 months prior to survey distribution) of the educational leadership doctoral program received an email invitation with support from the program chair. Before the email was sent, an announcement was made about the study on the program group announcements. The announcement alerted students about program updates and upcoming opportunities. The mention of a forthcoming email was anticipated to increase response rate in completion of the survey. There were a total of 26 questions contained in the survey. There were 3 demographic questions, 22 questions of the MBI – ES, and 1 open ended question.

The questionnaire was hosted on University of Nebraska at Omaha Qualtric's website. Having the data collected by a university-sponsored software program helped in providing participants with reduced levels of anxiety regarding the confidentiality of their responses, because the researcher did not track IP addresses which allowed participants to remain anonymous. An online questionnaire provided the opportunity to opt-out of the survey. When participants first accessed the questionnaire, they encountered a page that contained the informed consent form. Participants were asked to read the consent form and click "next" if they wished to participate. If they chose not to participate they could

click an opt-out button. There were no incentives for participating in this study and participation was voluntary. Survey recipients had 14 days to complete the survey and, after 7 days, a reminder email was sent to encourage completion.

The MBI – ES has 22 statements that asked participants to specify "to what extent" they agreed with statements. Responses were based on a 7-point rating scale, ranging from "never" (0) to "always" (6). The subscale *Exhaustion* is comprised of items 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16, and 20; *Depersonalization* subscale consists of items 5, 10, 11, 15, and 22; finally, the *Personal Accomplishment* subscale consists of the items 4, 7, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19, and 21. Regardless of subscale, literature typically reports average scores (Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach, & Jackson, 1996). To obtain average scores, various subscale questions are summed and divided by the number of items.

The data collected helped the researcher to identify the extent doctoral candidates and recent graduates of the educational leadership doctoral program experience burnout. By using descriptive statistical measures, means and standard deviations were found for survey items, individually and by subscale. Once the survey responses were received in the time line allocated, the author tabulated all instruments' scores using Microsoft Excel. In the dataset, each participant received their own unique identification number to ensure confidentiality (e.g., 1, 2, 3).

Variables

The independent variables were identified as factors that may lead to burnout including employment in a position that requires a state administrative license or certification and gender. The dependent variables were the overall scores of the MBI –

ES as experienced by participants. The demographic questionnaire variables were used to further examine the self-reported experiences of burnout based on these variables.

Summary

There were one hundred and seventeen candidates and recent graduates of the educational leadership doctoral program who were invited to participate in this cross-sectional, descriptive, and nonexperimental study that examines burnout. The Maslach Burnout Inventory survey was selected, as it is the leading measure of the burnout syndrome (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 2016).

CHAPTER 4: Results

The purpose of the study was to determine if candidates pursing doctorate degrees in educational leadership experience burnout. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used to describe self-perceptions of burnout experienced by doctoral candidates and recent graduates of an educational leadership doctoral program. Discussion of this study was divided into the following sections: (a) research questions, (b) data analysis procedures, (c) results, and (d) summary.

Data Analysis Procedures

Descriptive statistics were used to determine the mean and standard deviation of each response and the three subscales on the MBI-ES measure. Descriptive statistics summarize data in a meaningful way to determine if any patterns are present. Means and standard deviations for each item on the MBI-ES were calculated first. Next, the means and standard deviations for the three subscales were calculated. Since the responses for the MBI-ES are on an ordinal scale, the minimum and maximum numbers for each question were also presented.

Survey participants' demographic information is shown in Table 1. There were 36 completed surveys. Out of the 41 responses, 5 surveys were rejected due to participants starting but failing to complete the survey in the two weeks allocated for the survey, as well as during the extension of another week. In response to the question about gender, there were 27 women and 9 males who participated in the survey (Female = 75%, Male = 25%). The positions participants occupied were diverse and included superintendents, principals, lead teachers, and administrators in a university, amongst others. The third demographic question asked if the position or role participants occupied required a state

education administration license or certification. There were 13 Females and 7 males currently working in positions that required a state administrative license or certification.

Table 1: Participant Demographic Information

	n	%	Position/Role requires State Administrative License/Certification	Position/Role does not require State Administrative License/Certification
Gender				
Female	27	75	13	14
Male	9	25	7	2

Research Question 1. What levels of burnout do educational leadership doctoral candidates experience?

Participant responses were analyzed to identify the mean and standard deviation comprising burnout levels. First, the minimum and maximum response numbers were recorded, then the means and the standard deviations for each Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey statement were recorded. Table 2 features the responses to each number corresponding to the statements comprising each of the three subscales, although it does not include the statements themselves due to licensing request from the publishing company (Appendix A).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics MBI-ES sorted by subscale

Statements (Item Number)	Min.	Max.	M	SD
Emotional Exhaustion (EE)				
1.	1	6	3.03	1.58
2.	0	6	3.22	1.59
3.	0	6	2.47	1.65
6.	0	6	1.44	1.52
8.	0	6	2.33	1.69
13.	1	6	2.89	1.60
14.	0	6	3.25	1.81
16.	0	6	1.33	1.53
20.	0	6	1.25	1.34
Depersonalization (DP)				
5.	0	3	0.78	0.99
10.	0	6	1.72	1.78
11.	0	6	2.03	2.10
15.	0	5	0.47	1.06
22.	0	6	1.44	1.50
Personal Accomplishment (PA)				
4.	2	6	5.31	1.01
7.	3	6	5.36	0.76
9.	3	6	5.11	0.85
12.	3	6	4.75	1.02
17.	3	6	4.94	0.86
18.	1	6	4.69	1.21
19.	3	6	4.86	0.93
21.	3	6	5.28	0.78

The following is an itemization of the scale: 0=Never, 1=A few times a year or less, 2=Once a month or less, 3=A few times a month, 4= Once a week, 5= A few times a week, 6= Everyday

The responses indicate that participants feel emotionally exhausted more than once a month but not consistently as once a week. On average, participants reported experiencing moderate levels of emotional exhaustion (M = 2.35, SD = 1.59). The responses indicate that on average, participants were experiencing feelings of depersonalization a few times a year but not as often as more than once a month. The results indicate that participants were experiencing low levels of depersonalization (M = 1.26, SD = 1.49). The responses indicated that participants experienced feelings of personal accomplishments a few times a week or more. Participants responded with high mean levels of personal accomplishment (M = 5.04, SD = 0.93), indicating a positive self-assessment of their effectiveness and accomplishments.

Research Question 2. How do levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishments vary among doctoral candidates' experience?

The results in Table 3 indicate a significant range between experiences of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment amongst participants. The responses indicated that participants fluctuated in their feelings of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization between *Never (0)* and *Every day (6)*, and between *A few times a year (1)* and *Every day (6)* for feelings of personal accomplishment.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for each MBI-ES subscale

Item	M average	SD average
Emotional Exhaustion	2.43	1.63
Depersonalization	1.26	1.33

Personal Accomplishment	4.94	0.93

The following is an itemization of the scale: 0=Never, 1=A few times a year or less, 2=Once a month or less, 3=A few times a month, 4= Once a week, 5= A few times a week, 6= Everyday

Emotional Exhaustion

On average, educational leadership doctoral candidates and recent graduates vary in the degree of experienced emotional exhaustion as often as everyday to never (M = 2.35, SD = 1.59). The statements under subscale emotional exhaustion indicate a participants self-report experiencing moderate degree of emotional exhaustion, a few times a month or less but not as often as a few times a week. Emotional exhaustion is also described as loss of energy, depletion, and fatigue.

For example, statement number 8, "I feel burned out from my job" (M = 2.33, SD = 1.69), indicated participants experienced this statement once a month to a few times a month on average. Likewise, statement number 1, "I feel I'm emotionally drained from my work" (M = 3.03, SD = 1.58), indicated participants experienced this statement in a varying degree between a few times a month to once a week, on average.

Depersonalization

On average, educational leadership doctoral candidates and recent graduates vary in the degree of experienced depersonalization as often as everyday to never (M = 1.26, SD = 1.49). The statements under subscale depersonalization indicate that on average, participants self-reported experiencing a low degree of depersonalization, a few times a year or less, but not as often as once a month. Depersonalization is also described as feelings of cynicism, loss of idealism, and withdrawal.

For example, statement number 15, " I don't really care what happens to some students/staff/colleagues" (M = 0.47, SD = 1.06), indicated that participants on average never experience this statement or do, but only a few times a year.

Personal Accomplishment

On average, educational leadership doctoral candidates and recent graduates vary in the degree of experienced personal accomplishment as often as everyday to a few times a year (M = 5.04, SD = 0.93). The statements under subscale personal accomplishment indicate that on average, participants self-report experiencing high levels of personal accomplishment, a few times a week or more. Personal Accomplishment is also described as professional efficacy, or the ability to cope and be productive.

For example, statement number 19, " I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job" (M = 4.86, SD = 0.93), indicated that participants experience this statement between once a week and a few times a week.

Research Question 3. Does educational work role impact self-perceptions of burnout by educational leadership doctoral candidates?

The results presented in Table 4 show results for participants who are currently working in positions or roles that require a state administrative certificate or license and each of the subscales of the MBI-ES.

Table 4: Professional roles requiring a state administrative certificate or license and each MBI-ES subscale comparison (n=20)

Item	M average	SD average
Emotional Exhaustion	2.31	1.56

Depersonalization	1.31	1.61
Personal Accomplishment	5.12	0.85

The following is an itemization of the scale: 0=Never, 1=A few times a year or less, 2=Once a month or less, 3=A few times a month, 4= Once a week, 5= A few times a week, 6= Everyday

Participants working in positions that require a state administrative license (n=20) reported experiencing Emotional Exhaustion a few times a month or less on average (M = 2.31, SD = 1.56). They reported feeling statements relating to Depersonalization a few times a year or less on average (M = 1.31, SD = 1.61). They indicated that, on average, Personal Accomplishment statements are experienced daily or a few times a week (M = 5.12, SD = 0.85).

The results in Table 5 show each subscale of the MBI-ES for participants who are currently working in positions or roles that do not require a state administrative certificate or license.

Table 5: Professional roles <u>not</u> requiring a state administrative certificate or license and each MBI-ES subscale comparison (n=16)

Item	M average	SD average
Emotional Exhaustion	2.43	1.63
Depersonalization	1.26	1.33
Personal Accomplishment	4.94	0.93

The following is an itemization of the scale: 0=Never, 1=A few times a year or less, 2=Once a month or less, 3=A few times a month, 4= Once a week, 5= A few times a week, 6= Everyday

Participants working in positions that did not require a state administrative license (n=16) also reported experiencing Emotional Exhaustion on average a few times a month or less (M = 2.43, SD = 1.63). They reported feeling statements relating to Depersonalization a few times a year or less (M = 1.26, SD = 1.33). Finally, participants indicated feeling personal accomplishment statements a few times a week or less (M = 4.94, SD = 0.93).

Summary

The purpose of this cross-sectional, descriptive, and non-experimental quantitative study was to determine if candidates pursing doctorate degrees in educational leadership experience burnout. The results show that on average, participants feel emotionally exhausted from their work and studies several times a month or less. They indicate feelings of depersonalization once a month or less. Finally, on average, participants reported a sense of personal accomplishment a few times a week or more. The findings indicated that a majority of participants in this study had a low to moderate degree of burnout across two components of burnout through emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Participants had moderate to high degree of personal accomplishment, indicating low degrees of burnout.

CHAPTER 5: Conclusion and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine if candidates pursing doctoral degrees in educational leadership experience burnout. Given the important role of education leaders in cultivating strong relationships with colleagues, community stakeholders and students, this study fills a crucial gap in the literature, as it examines the potential balancing of work, life and the pursuit of a doctoral degree and the psychological outcome known as burnout. This chapter includes a summary and interpretation of the findings, the limitations of the study, ideas for future practice and implications, and conclusion.

Summary and Interpretation of the Findings

Research question 1 asked, "What levels of burnout do educational leadership doctoral candidates experience?" This study found that educational leadership doctoral candidates experience low to moderate degrees of burnout, on average, when examining the three components of burnout; emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishments. Specifically, the results indicate that more than half of the participants experienced being emotionally exhausted a few times a year or more (M=2.35). These findings indicate a different result from previous research on burnout in similar leadership capacity in the health and human services professions (Boccio, Lefkowitz, & Weisz 2016; Evans, Bira, Gastelum Betlran, Weiss & Vanderfort, 2018;), where the experience of burnout among doctors, social workers, nurses and school psychologists (to name a few professions) indicate experiences of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization daily or a few times a week (McManus, Keeling, & Paice, 2004).

Research question 2 asked, “How do levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishments vary among doctoral candidates’ experience?” The study found that educational leadership doctoral candidates on average reported experiencing emotional exhaustion a few times a month (M = 2.35, SD = 1.59). The emotional exhaustion dimension captures the problem of lacking sufficient energy to make a useful and enduring contribution at work. Participants reported experiencing low levels of depersonalization (M = 1.26, SD = 1.49). The depersonalization dimension, also known as cynicism, captures the difficulty in dealing with other people and activities at work. The responses indicate that on average, participants were experiencing feelings of depersonalization a few times a year but not as often as more than once a month. Participants responded with high mean levels of personal accomplishment (M = 5.04, SD = 0.93), also known as professional efficacy, indicating a positive self-assessment of their effectiveness and accomplishments. This subscale captures the self-evaluation people make regarding the value of their work and the quality of their contribution.

Research Question 3 asked, “Does educational work role impact self-perceptions of burnout by educational leadership doctoral candidates?” When comparing the means of the subscale components of burnout between the group (n=20) whose current positions requires a state administration license or certification and the group (n=16) whose current position or role do not require such licensure, all three subscales are found to be closely aligned. For example, the means of those whose positions require certification appear, on average, to have a high score on the subscale of personal accomplishments (M = 5.12), indicating they self report to experience these feelings a few times a week *or more*, as

compared to the group whose current roles do not (M = 4.94), indicating a sense of personal accomplishment a few times a week *or less*.

The findings indicate that a majority of participants in this study had a low to moderate degree of burnout across two components of burnout through emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Participants had moderate to high degree of personal accomplishment, indicating low degrees of burnout on this component as well.

Limitation of the Study

There were several limitations to the study. First, the web-based Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey is a self-report measure. The three subscales that measure levels of burnout include Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment. These scales measure the degree of burnout experienced, which participants may have been over or under reporting to make profiles more socially acceptable.

Second, the time provided to complete the survey was 14 days, and an email reminder was sent out after 7 days for those who have not completed the survey yet. There were 41 individuals who started the survey, but 36 completed it and were considered for this present study. Perhaps with more time, and at varying points during the academic year, more participants would take the survey. This would give a better context to the degrees of burnout experienced by educational leadership doctoral candidates.

Finally, the intention of the study was to be able to find the levels of burnout for doctoral candidates *and* recent graduates. However, due to the anonymity of responses, it was impossible to determine how these two groups compared. Further research would

benefit from conducting this type of survey with the two groups separately, as well as consider adding those candidates who have completed coursework but not their thesis, considered to be ABD. Such future research may generate a list of common factors, which might be shared to help administrators and faculty anticipate students who might be more likely to suffer from burnout.

Ideas for future practice and Implications

This study was intended to assist education leaders, doctoral program faculty, and those pursuing educational leadership roles and positions. It is the hope that this study will open up the lines of communication for more research to be conducted. Burnout is an important psychological phenomenon that the field of educational leadership must be cognizant of, and proactive about. The multidimensional framework theory of burnout guided this study. The theory consists of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach and Leiter, 1997). The theory argues that burnout can cause a tremendous psychological and physical health concerns for individuals and huge financial losses for organizations (Levin, 2005; Goldring & Schuermann, 2009; Darling-Hammond, Lapointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007). There is strong research that documents that the phenomenon has negative effects on other people (Maslach, 1997). The potential existence of burnout is important to measure and understand, especially in fields such as educational leadership that work closely with people who must interact with other people on a daily basis.

Specifically, the idea of emotional contagion and burnout has been explored in the medical profession and would be recommended to investigate further in the educational leadership field as well. Emotional contagion (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994)

theorizes that there is a tendency to automatically mimic and absorb other's emotions, where positive emotions, such as joy, broaden and expand interactions at work, and negative emotions, such as anger, narrow and deplete psychological and social interactions, both for individuals and the organization, leading to burnout (WHO, 2018; Schaufeli, Leiter, & Maslach, 2009; Petitta, Jiang, & Härtel, 2016). Some negative outcomes associated with burnout that impact the educational leaders can be increased absenteeism, frequent turnovers, and decreased productivity. The coping skills required to deal with burnout can have impactful consequences for individual leaders and the organization they work in and/or lead.

Educational leaders and doctoral candidates in educational leadership can benefit from practicing healthy coping skills under duress, such as recognizing and holding negative emotions without reacting to them. These skills can buffer the impact of burnout and help leaders be cognizant of oneself and others' potential for becoming emotionally overextended and exhausted, cynical and impersonal, and experiencing reduced personal efficacy. There is a consensus that educational leaders must display and regulate emotions and that these emotional demands may be stressful for some leaders (Arnold, Connelly, Ginis & Walsh, 2015). Educational organizations and leaders may encourage engaging and constructive emotional exchanges between and among educators (Petitta, Jiang, & Härtel, 2016). Self-awareness can be the first step in recognizing how one's own social interactions can contribute to the contagious nature of positive and negative emotions. Intervention programs may enhance the awareness and management of the emotional contagion effects and influences on colleagues and stakeholders and their impact on burnout and engagement.

In a report regarding mental health issues at work (Greenwood, Bapat, & Maughan, 2019), the authors found that the most common resource employees want from their organizations was a more open and supportive culture that provides clarity, training, and a culture of psychological safety and acceptance. Educational leadership doctoral candidates are well situated to learn more about burnout as a mental health problem. As part of their academic studies, candidates can, and should, be made aware of their potential role in modeling disclosure and vulnerability as strengths, as well as view the issue of burnout and mental health in their organizations as part of their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) issues. Educational leaders should have a baseline knowledge of resources and tools at their disposal that they can use during difficult conversations with employees and colleagues. They should especially be familiar with the prevalence and impact of burnout on educators and employees and with ways to recognize and respond to those who may be struggling with emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment.

In particular, educational leaders must be made comfortable in discussing their own potential for burnout, as well as appreciate the various experiences individuals may have in responding to and coping with burnout. Candidates pursuing educational leadership doctorate degrees can begin this work by sharing and discussing coping strategies, setbacks, and struggles while completing their academic work. With the support of program chairs, dissertation advisors and faculty members, candidates can learn how to move towards reducing the stigma and setting transparency regarding the negative outcomes associated with burnout at work.

Findings from this study may lead to an intervention program that will help future doctoral students. Multiple researchers (e.g., Oltman, Surface, & Keiser, 2019; Foss & Waters, 2016) have discussed the role of the dissertation advisor, program chairs, and faculty in guiding and supporting candidates through the stressful and difficult journey towards graduation. Doctoral programs faculty and administrators could design intervention programs and have resources and support staff made available for doctoral candidates and recent graduates who are at risk of experiencing extreme stress and high levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and a negative self-assessment of their professional and academic accomplishments and abilities. In working together, universities, districts and state department of educations can further support those struggling to complete the doctoral program in educational leadership. With information on occurrences of burnout during a doctoral program, faculty and administrators could develop an intervention program for doctoral students who might be at-risk of leaving the program. Additionally, doctoral programs faculty and administrators could derive information that burnout is a potential occurrence for doctoral candidates from their professional roles intensified by their academic work, and vice versa.

In this study, participants reported experiencing low levels of burnout, perhaps due to supportive faculty and peers. Although mentorship was not a focus of the current study, further study in the area of faculty mentorship and doctoral student burnout might be warranted. It is also important to note the role supportive faculty has in helping alleviate the impact of burnout on doctoral candidates. Programs that are set up to support, mentor, and intervene when doctoral candidates are struggling can be instrumental in helping candidates complete the program.

Conclusion

The psychological phenomenon known as burnout can act as an important leverage for improving the experiences of educational leaders and the people who work with them in educational organizations. Schools and districts are successful *because* of the collective effort of all individuals who work there. The results of this study provide an initial insight into the extent to which educational leadership doctoral candidates experience burnout, and they suggest several areas doctoral program faculty, school leaders and policy makers should consider when examining how to recruit, retain and support educational leaders. Although participants in this study did not report high levels of burnout experienced, it does raise serious concerns about the extent educational leaders are expected to enact complex systemic and instructional changes and responsibilities for a population of children, youth and communities, in relative isolation, while supervising and leading other educators, who themselves may be emotionally exhausted, feel overextended at work, exhibit impersonal responses to students or families, or who are experiencing feelings of low personal accomplishments.

It is the hope that this study will provide information that can assist schools with developing and implementing effective interventions to help education leaders feel more connected and reduce their potential exposure and experiences that may lead to burnout. Studies that examine the effectiveness of stress management and mindful interventions, of both individual strategies and organizational interventions, would be useful as well. Future longitudinal research designs perhaps can shed light on how burnout develops and fluctuates over time, and how different usages of intervention tools and resources can be

used to impede the development of burnout and mitigate its potential negative consequences.

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APPENDIX A: IRB Approval Letter

University of Nebraska Medical Center
NEBRASKA'S HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER

Office of Regulatory Affairs (ORA)
Institutional Review Board (IRB)

October 2, 2019

Ron Azoulay, M.S
Education
UNO - VIA COURIER

IRB # 699-19-EX

TITLE OF PROPOSAL: Experience of Burnout among Educational Leadership Doctoral Candidates

The Office of Regulatory Affairs (ORA) has reviewed your application for *Exempt Educational, Behavioral, and Social Science Research* on the above-titled research project. According to the information provided, this project is exempt under 45 CFR 46:104(d), category 2. You are therefore authorized to begin the research.

It is understood this project will be conducted in full accordance with all applicable HRPP Policies. It is also understood that the ORA will be immediately notified of any proposed changes for your research project that
A. affect the risk-benefit relationship of the research
B. pose new risks which are greater than minimal
C. constitute a new risk to privacy or confidentiality
D. involve sensitive topics (including but not limited to personal aspects of the subject s behavior, life experiences or attitudes)
E. involve deception
F. target a vulnerable population
G. include prisoners or children
H. otherwise suggest loss of the exempt status of the research.

You are encouraged to contact the ORA to discuss whether changes to exempt research requires review by ORA.

Please be advised you will be asked to update the status of your research yearly by responding to an email from the Office of Regulatory Affairs. If you do not respond, your project will be considered completed.

Sincerely,

Signed on: 2019-10-02 09:48:00.000

Gail Kotulak, BS, CIP
IRB Administrator III
Office of Regulatory Affairs

APPENDIX B: Mind Garden Remote Online Survey License

Approval for Remote Online Use of a Mind Garden Instrument

Effective date is September 7, 2019 for:

RON AZOULAY

You submitted your Application for Remote Online Use at 4:53 pm EDT on August 22, 2019.

RON AZOULAY

Remote online use of the Mind Garden instrument stated below is approved for the person on the title page of this document.

Your name:

RON AZOULAY

Email address:

razoulay@unomaha.edu

Company/institution:

University of Nebraska Omaha

Mind Garden Sales Order or Invoice number for your license purchase:

29290

The name of the Mind Garden instrument you will be using:

Maslach Burnout Inventory

Please specify the name of and web address for the remote online survey website you will be using and describe how you will be putting this instrument online:

For my thesis, I will be using Qualtrics Research Suite - https://www.unomaha.edu/faculty-support/faculty-resources/qualtrics.php The MBI questions will be retyped into Qualtrics and added to a three part survey which will include demographic questions and a narrative part (one question).

Please include any other comments or explanations you would like to provide about your remote online use of a Mind Garden instrument:

I plan to administer the survey to educational leadership doctoral candidates at the University of Nebraska Omaha. It was determined with my advisor that hosting the survey on the Qualtrics site of the university would be cost effective and a possible leverage to increase response rates by candidates.

added 13 September 2018

RON AZOULAY

Conditions of Use

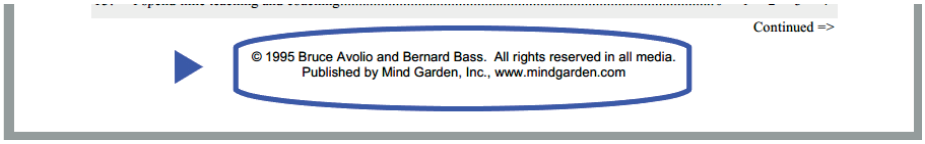
Question	Answer
I will administer this Mind Garden instrument for research purposes only.	I agree to this condition.
I will **not** send Mind Garden instruments in the text of an email or as a PDF file to survey participants.	I agree to this condition.
I will put the instrument copyright statement (from the footer of my license document; includes the copyright date, copyright holder, and publisher details) on every page containing questions/items from this instrument.	I agree to this condition.
I will send screenshots of my online survey to info@mindgarden.com so that Mind Garden can verify that the copyright statement appears.	I agree to this condition.
I will compensate Mind Garden, Inc. for each license use; one license is used when a participant first accesses the online survey.	I agree to this condition.
I will track my license use.	I agree to this condition.
Once the number of administrations reaches the number purchased, I will purchase additional licenses or the survey will be closed to use.	I agree to this condition.
I will remove this online survey at the conclusion of my data collection and I will personally confirm that it cannot be accessed.	I agree to this condition.

I agree to abide by each of the conditions stated above

Your name (as electronic signature): Ron M Azoulay
Date: 8/22/2019

FAQ: Where do I find the copyright statement?

The copyright statement is in the footer of your license document. An example is shown below from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ).



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