

BURNOUT AMONG HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELLORS

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Abstract

The psychological well-being of those who counsel adolescents is an important issue, but there has been little research on the topic. Burnout from job-related stress in the helping professions has been shown to influence negatively the professionals' job satisfaction and performance by eroding their benevolence and commitment. Three aspects of burnout — emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and impaired personal accomplishment — were measured in this study. The High School Counsellor Questionnaire, designed for this investigation, was mailed to 265 members of the British Columbia School Counsellors Association who were working in high schools. The return rate was 61.51%; the usable N was 157. The questionnaire measured the extent of counsellors' burnout and their perception of their own social support (from family, friends and others) and administrative support (defined as support from the principal). The questionnaire also gathered information on selected personal and job characteristics of the counsellor: age, gender, counselling experience, level of education, school size, and proportion of work time devoted to counselling.

Burnout levels were shown by *t*-tests to be low in relation to Maslach Burnout Inventory norms for mental health professionals except on the emotional exhaustion scale, where counsellors' scores were significantly higher ($t=4.26$; $p<.001$). This result may reflect the ambiguity of the counsellors' role, and ever-increasing demands on their time and energy.

The association of burnout with the independent variables was explored by correlation, multiple regression analysis, *t*-tests, and one-way ANOVA. As expected, burnout was generally negatively correlated with perceived social and administrative support. Gender, age, education, counselling experience, and school size were not significantly associated with burnout. Percentage of work time designated for counselling was significantly ($r=.26$; $p<.01$) correlated with feelings of personal accomplishment.

Future research might consider the principal's gender, and counsellors' specific work duties, case loads, paperwork burden, role ambiguity, collegial support, marital status, caregiver role at home, and coping strategies for dealing with stress.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Tables	vi
List of Figures	vii
Foreword	viii
 Chapter I	
The Problem	1
Introduction to the Problem	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Rationale for the Study	2
Definitions	3
Delimitations	5
Limitations	5
 Chapter II	
Review of the Literature	8
Burnout	8
Perceived Social Support	14
Perceived Administrative Support	17
Article Review	21
 Chapter III	
Hypotheses and Methodology	28
Hypotheses	28
Methodology	31
Design	31
Data Collection and Procedures	31
Population and Sample	31
Procedures	32
Measures	33
Data Analysis, Organization and Interpretation	38

Chapter IV	
Results	41
Participants	41
Overview of the Data	46
Levels of Burnout	46
Multivariate Tests	49
Regression	49
Burnout and Exploratory Variables	53
Relationships among Independent Variables	56
Chapter V	
Discussion	59
Summary and Implications	59
Social and Administrative Support	59
Other Relevant Variables	61
Regression	64
Exploratory Variables	67
Relationships among Independent Variables	69
Levels of Burnout	73
Further Discussion	75
Recommendations for Future Research	79
References	85
Appendix	
A. Notes on Returns and Scoring	90
B. Covering Letter	92
C. High School Counsellor Questionnaire	94

List of Tables

1. Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations among All Variables	47
2. Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) Means and Standard Deviations	48
3. Correlations between Burnout and Independent Variables Employed in the Multiple Regression Analysis	50
4. Stepwise Multiple Regression of Independent Variables on Emotional Exhaustion	51
5. Stepwise Multiple Regression of Independent Variables on Depersonalization	52
6. Stepwise Multiple Regression of Independent Variables on Personal Accomplishment	53
7. Means, Standard Deviations, and <i>F</i> Values of Burnout Scores by Level of Education	54
8. Means, Standard Deviations, and <i>F</i> Values of Burnout Scores by School Size	55
9. Means, Standard Deviations, and <i>F</i> Values of Administrative Support and Percentage Counselling by School Size	57
10. Means, Standard Deviations, and <i>t</i> Values of Administrative Support and Social Support by Gender	58

List of Figures

1. Participants by Age	42
2. Participants by Gender	42
3. Participants by Experience	43
4. Participants by Education	44
5. Participants by School Size	44
6. Participants by Percentage of Time Counselling	45

Foreword

For their help with this research, I thank my thesis committee: my supervisor, Dr. Bill Borgen; Dr. Beth Haverkamp; and Dr. Frank Echols, of the Department of Educational Studies. Thanks also to Dr. Chris Lovato, then of the Institute for Health Promotion Research, in whose Counselling Psychology 579 class this research was envisaged; the British Columbia School Counsellors Association for their co-operation; and the many high school counsellors who helped me with suggestions and in the piloting of my questionnaire.

Chapter I

The Problem

Introduction to the Problem

"Who will care for the caregivers?" By the time the expression *burnout* first appeared in the psychological literature in the mid-1970s, this compelling question was decades old, perhaps centuries. But the concept of burnout focused anew the attention of theorists and researchers on the often intense personal strain suffered by counsellors, priests, doctors, nurses, social workers and others who deal regularly with people who are in physical or emotional pain.

Stress has been shown in a myriad of studies to have an adverse effect on physical and mental health (Phillips, 1982; Long & Kahn, 1993; Capner & Caltabiano, 1993; Dryden, 1995). It is ironic but understandable that although counsellors have devised programs to help persons manage stress, many counsellors themselves have trouble handling stress, particularly job-related stress. Workers, including counsellors, in person-oriented occupations have been shown to be particularly at risk for burnout, which has been shown to have a negative influence on job satisfaction and performance (Brady, Healy, Norcross & Guy, 1995, pp. 8-10).

Burnout has been shown to rob human service workers of their idealism and benevolence and thus of much of their effectiveness. "When helping professionals become less caring and compassionate, the quality of care

declines" (Cherniss, 1995, p. 197). The toll on workers and organizations in terms of health problems, absenteeism, and inefficiency is considerable, and the importance of finding solutions is widely acknowledged.

Statement of the Problem

Although considerable research has been done in several separate, and sometimes linked, areas — work stress, social support, burnout, supervisory behaviour, counsellor attitudes, and characteristics of the counsellor and of the job — the relationships among some of these elements have not been established. In particular, little is known about burnout in high school counsellors. A recent, comprehensive book presenting research findings about stress in counselling (Dryden, 1995) has chapters on just about every conceivable counselling setting except the school.

Interventions for burnout in counselling and other helping professions have been designed, but their effectiveness is often hampered by lacunae in the research (for a review, see Kahill, 1988). Counsellor self-care is another potential remedy, but its methods and effectiveness are subjects of controversy (for a review, see Williams, 1995).

Rationale for the Study

Before meaningful action can be taken to combat burnout and its negative consequences on high school counsellors, factors that have an impact on burnout need to be identified.

As no article on burnout among high school professionals in Canada —

or high school counsellors anywhere — was found in the literature, this is a pioneering study. It aims to offer researchers some information on which future investigations and interventions can be based.

Counsellors themselves also need to know about elements of their personal and work situations that are related to burnout. The results of this study will, it is hoped, be disseminated among British Columbia high school counsellors through their professional association, the British Columbia School Counsellors Association, and perhaps more widely through publication of the results. Such information will aid them in understanding burnout and may reduce the feelings of isolation experienced by many counsellors, especially those affected by burnout.

This study focuses on two major potential influences on burnout among these counsellors: perceived social support and perceived administrative support. The influence on burnout of counsellors' gender, age, counselling experience, level of education, school size, and percentage of work time designated for counselling will be considered as well. Three aspects of burnout — emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and impaired personal accomplishment — will be measured.

Definitions

This investigation's three key concepts are *burnout*, *perceived social support*, and *perceived administrative support*. These terms are defined succinctly in this section according to the respective models chosen for use in the study. Elaborations on the three terms will be found in the review of the literature in the next chapter.

Burnout: One of the leading theoreticians and researchers in the burnout field is the American social psychologist Christina Maslach. Her definition of the burnout phenomenon is adopted for this study:

Burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do "people work" . . . It is a response to the chronic emotional strain of dealing extensively with other human beings, particularly when they are troubled or having problems . . . the stress arises from the *social* interaction between helper and recipient (Maslach, 1982, p. 3).

Emotional exhaustion is defined as feelings of depletion, overextension, fatigue — a sense that one can no longer give at a psychological level.

Depersonalization refers to unfeeling, impersonal and sometimes cynical responses to other people and their problems.

Reduced personal accomplishment denotes a tendency to evaluate one's own job performance negatively, and to be dissatisfied and unfulfilled in one's work with others (Maslach & Jackson, 1981, p. 1).

Perceived social support: Cobb (1976), in a seminal article on the subject, defined perceived social support as information leading people to one or more of three beliefs: that they are cared for and loved, that they are esteemed and valued, and that they belong to a network of communication and social obligation. This conceptualization, as developed by later researchers including Cutrona and Russell (1987) and Vaux, Phillips, Holly, Thomson, Williams and Stewart (1986), is used in the present investigation.

Perceived administrative support: According to Arends (1982), whose model of administrative support is employed in this inquiry, the principal's support is crucial to the work of the other professionals in the school. Arends describes perceived administrative support as teachers' and counsellors' belief that their principal offers them the professional, material and emotional support they need to do their jobs in an effective and fulfilling way. Such support includes, for instance, the principal's explicit statements of support for programs and workers, smoothing the way for workers to clarify their work roles and to resolve conflict, defending employees from criticism, giving them something of value (such as money, time, comfortable office space), and offering time and attention to employees' work and concerns.

Delimitations

This study will make no attempt to investigate counsellors in any setting other than the high school. Similarly, it will measure burnout only, not neurotic symptoms, depression, physical problems, absenteeism, or other manifestations of stress. Moreover, the significant issue of identifying specific sources of counsellor stress must be left to other researchers (for reviews of this work, see Cohen, 1988; Wessells, 1989).

Limitations

Conclusions derived from this inquiry will of course be limited by the sample. There is a need for caution in generalizing beyond the province where the research was conducted, and beyond the participants' constellation of

personal and job characteristics. Additionally, the participants were volunteers; it is difficult to know how this self-selection influenced the data. Findings are also limited by the written format of the survey. Moreover, they need to be interpreted in the light of validity concerns associated with self-report measures. Observations, record searches, and peer and supervisory ratings could be employed in later studies to develop further both our understanding of counsellor burnout and the validity of its measurement.

There are a number of specific limitations.

One is the study's use of the Administrative Support Measure, which was devised for the purposes of this research and which, although piloted, does not benefit from documented evidence of its reliability or validity. Unfortunately, there was no valid instrument available to measure administrative support in the sense it is defined for this investigation.

A second limitation is that there may be some overlap between social support and administrative support as measured, respectively, by the Social Support Appraisals Scale and the Administrative Support Measure. This multicollinearity may arise because the Social Support Appraisals Scale does not restrict respondents from considering their principal as a friend while responding to the survey; some respondents may, indeed, think of their principals as friends and think of them when considering the support of friends and "other people". However, this is likely to be only a minor problem. The same difficulty would arise from using any of the instruments evaluating social support that were considered for use in the present research. The Social Support Appraisals Scale was chosen for its ease of use and because considerable information about its properties is available.

A third limitation of the study is that some high school counsellors are not

members of their provincial specialist association, the B. C. School Counsellors Association, and thus, for reasons to be explained, were far less likely than were members to participate in the study. It is impossible to know the effect of this difference on the results. Perhaps being a member of the association would heighten a counsellor's perceived social support; however, it is possible too that counsellors who feel well supported socially would be less inclined to join the association.

A fourth limitation is the possibility that a few counsellors might have been reluctant to respond in a way that seemed negative to some items on administrative support. This reluctance, if indeed it did exist, might have stemmed from loyalty to the principal or from hesitation about making an unfavourable appraisal of a principal's performance when the two had not discussed the counsellor's discontent. However, this problem is not likely to be major, and in any case is inherent in this type of research.

A fifth, and more important, limitation of the study is similarly present in all other research using correlational methods: No inference about causation may be drawn. Although terms such as *predict* and *explain* may be used to link the independent variables to the dependent ones, the word *cause* must be avoided because the direction of influence among the variables cannot be proven.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

In this chapter, there is further information about this study's three key concepts. Then, there is a review of the literature on researchers' various attempts to link two or more of the variables explored in the present investigation.

Burnout

Sisyphus, the mythical ancient Greek condemned to a dreadful eternity of repeatedly pushing a stone up a mountain only to have it roll all the way down again, is the archetypal candidate for a modern syndrome. His frustrating, futile, hopeless and unaided labour would quickly induce in him the emotional, spiritual and physical depletion that has come to be known as *burnout*.

This word has long been used popularly to describe fatigue or mild depression, but the term entered the literature of psychology in 1974. Herbert Freudenberger, an American psychoanalyst who had worked alongside strained colleagues in the free-clinic movement, conceived of burnout as the exhaustion of the energy and resources of social service workers and helping professionals as a result of the incessant pressures of working with demanding and needy individuals. He described burnout as physical or emotional depletion, apathy, disillusionment, or low morale caused by the stress of work (Freudenberger, 1974).

Various conceptualizations of the phenomenon developed, with the

result that present-day dictionaries give diverse but interlocking definitions of burnout. For example: "extinction of energy, motivation or incentive" (Third Barnhart Dictionary of New English); "a total loss of energy and interest and an inability to function effectively, experienced as a result of excessive demands upon one's resources or chronic overwork" (Collins English Dictionary); and "emotional exhaustion, sometimes accompanied by depression, caused by attempting to help mentally disordered people or others under severe stress" (The International Dictionary of Psychology). The last definition encapsulates the two most prominent and enduring conceptualizations of burnout and those on which the most research is based — those of three social psychologists working in the United States.

Christina Maslach defines burnout as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do 'people work' . . . a response to the chronic emotional strain of dealing extensively with other human beings, particularly when they are troubled or having problems . . . the stress arises from the *social* interaction between helper and recipient" (Maslach, 1982, p. 3).

Ayala Pines and Elliot Aronson say burnout is "subjectively experienced as a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding" (Pines & Aronson, 1988, p. 9).

These are the two predominant definitions, but there is a welter of other ones, and they vary in style as well as in content. Some definitions include causes, some mention consequences, and some give only symptoms. Partly as a result of this variation, the borderline separating burnout from such disorders as depression and anxiety is sometimes blurred. While an understanding of

depression, anxiety and related problems may be very helpful to burnout researchers, a specific emphasis on burnout is desirable.

There appears to be a gap between the theoretical work on burnout and the various anti-burnout programs that have been implemented. In reviewing interventions designed to forestall or reduce burnout, one is struck by how tentative and piecemeal they are and how their developers appear to be grasping to make connections to the theory rather than, as one might expect, to be lifting the interventions from a theoretical base (e.g. Pines & Maslach, 1980; Corcoran & Bryce, 1983; Carrilio & Eisenberg, 1984; Pines & Aronson, 1988; Hyman, 1993). Often it appears they are trying to devise something that works, and theory is an afterthought. There is an unmistakeable air of, "Let's see what works" and even of the twisted adage, "It may work in practice, but it will never work in theory." Two noted psychotherapists put it more eloquently:

Unfortunately, much of the advice [about dealing with burnout] seems fragmented, pointing to theoretical frames of reference that are incomplete and underdeveloped in the literature. We believe that in order to deal with the problem of professional exhaustion, an integrated theory must be constructed which encompasses the various underlying causes. Only after such an integrated paradigm is developed can valid and effective solutions for prevention and treatment of burnout be formulated (Grosch & Olsen, 1994, p. xii).

Although the word *burnout* is occasionally extended, in popular and even professional writing, to describe psychological strain unrelated to work, the original, job-related sense of the term is used here. Also, our attention is on research on counsellors, therapists, social workers and the like rather than on medical or other personnel.

Burnout is absent as a diagnosis from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders — Fourth Edition (DSM-IV), the bible of many of the mental health professionals who design research into, and treatment for, stress-related difficulties. Burnout was likewise absent from previous versions of the manual. The social psychologists' burnout research seems not to have permeated the world view of the psychiatrists who determine the contents of the DSM. Perhaps the psychiatrists see burnout as a set of troublesome work-related attitudes rather than as a clinical syndrome. In DSM-IV the closest category to burnout is V62.2 — Occupational Problem; two examples given are job dissatisfaction and uncertainty about career choices (American Psychiatric Association, 1994, p. 685). In devising research and interventions, professionals may want to base their work explicitly on categories in the DSM for any number of reasons: Possibly they find it easier to get funding, or burnout somehow seems an unofficial or casual diagnosis, or psychiatrists don't want to hear about a syndrome if it is not in "the book", or other factors are involved. Whatever the case, the absence of burnout from the DSM may be one reason for (or one consequence of) the lack of an integrated view of the syndrome across various disciplines.

Burnout has been recognized, though, in the latest edition of the international diagnostic manual, the International Classification of Diseases — Tenth Edition (ICD-10). Burnout is a new diagnosis, coded Z73.0, in a section called Supplementary Classification of Factors Influencing Health Status and Contact with Health Services. No criteria are given, but at least the inclusion of burnout represents a change from previous editions, where burnout was not mentioned. In ICD-9, for instance, "adverse effects of work environment" and "other occupational circumstances or maladjustment" were the categories

closest to burnout. The recent inclusion of burnout in the ICD-10 may be a significant step toward specific measures to fight the syndrome. (World Health Organization, 1992, p. 310; Grosch & Olsen, 1994, p. 136).

At all events, much of the scholarly literature on burnout is devoted to the conceptualization, prevalence, prevention and treatment of burnout rather than to its etiology. Most articles, both the descriptive and the prescriptive ones, are either impressionistic, personal, anecdotal, philosophical, or small-scale, or some combination of these. Empirical studies are scarce.

A glance at the elements found to be associated with burnout provides a useful context for our discussion. In a meta-analysis, Soderfeldt, Soderfeldt, and Warg (1995, p. 642) summarize factors shown by various researchers to be related to the three scales of the Maslach Burnout Inventory, the most commonly used measure. Factors related to emotional exhaustion scores included role conflict, boredom, low job satisfaction, intention to change jobs, and working with chronically ill patients. Related to depersonalization scores were value conflict, high education level, caseload, and lack of supervisory support. Factors related to personal accomplishment scores included role ambiguity, bad working conditions, unfair promotional practices, public sector work, Type A personality, and a dearth of team support.

Other perspectives include that of Freudenberger, who is a psychoanalyst. He sees burnout mainly as an internal, personal matter, a result of the dichotomy between a person's expectations and reality, although he does not entirely rule out the importance of organizational factors in creating or preventing burnout (Freudenberger, 1983, p. 27). By contrast, some behaviour-oriented stress consultants see burnout as a type of strain lodged in the body, though they are not clear about how the process works; they sometimes favour

treatments such as systematic desensitization, biofeedback and yoga (Farber, 1983, p. 15).

A more philosophical approach is taken by certain community psychologists, who see burnout resulting from a weak commitment to socially relevant work rather than from excessive commitment to a job. "Burnout is not a problem of individual coping or adaptation. . . Burnout results from the loss of moral purpose and commitment in work" (Cherniss & Krantz, 1983, p. 211). They say the cure is on a social level and call for formation of "ideological communities" of like-minded persons working toward common goals. Cherniss and Krantz give the examples of Montessori workers and nuns, who work long hours but have a mission; however, the authors claim that the concept can be extended widely into the work world. In a similar vein, counsellor educator J. M. Day asserts that the motivation that made someone into a counsellor in the first place must be maintained and continually refreshed if both well-being and effectiveness are to endure (Day, 1994).

On the other hand, a number of family systems theorists (e.g. Ulrich & Dunne, 1986) see burnout as an effect of unresolved conflict in a person's current family or family of origin. Some organizational consultants favour yet another approach: "Since we believe that continuous and prolonged uncertainty is the basis for burnout, the most effective interventions are those that are directed at reducing uncertainty" (Selder & Paustian, 1989, p. 79).

It is important to note that with burnout, the cure may come from a different direction than the cause. To explain: When one's shoulder is separated, the way to fix it is to put it back into place — that is, simply to reverse the dislocation. In the case of burnout, the problem may not be reversible; the cause may be in the environment and absolutely unalterable. Therefore,

burned-out people may have to take compensatory action which apparently has nothing to do with the cause of their distress but which may build them up so they may handle job stress better.

In fact the burnout literature, and particularly the research on treatment approaches, tends to be based on the extensive research by social psychologists on coping strategies. This tendency is not surprising, as social psychologists focus on the relationship between personal and environmental factors; moreover, their research forms the basis of treatment programs designed by counsellors and others. Coping strategies can be conceptualized in several ways, but the most useful distinction seems to be tripartite: 1. individual strategies, things that can be done on one's own; 2. social strategies, things that need the co-operation of several people, typically co-workers, family and friends; and 3. organizational strategies, related to administrative policies and actions. From the second category emerges the theme of social support, which is the touchstone of much burnout research and the cornerstone of some interventions. From the third category above emerges the theme of administrative support, which is also seen as a key element in the research. These themes are now considered in turn.

Perceived Social Support

While helping professionals generally agree that social support is an important element in promoting health, there is less agreement about exactly what such support is, how it works, and how it can be evaluated. The literature that has developed in the last quarter-century on social support is vast, and it is made complicated by the fact there are several fundamentally different ways of

conceptualizing the phenomenon, and, in consequence, many different ways of measuring it.

Social support has been variously defined, for example, as support available to a person through social ties to other individuals, groups, and the community; an interpersonal transaction in which concern, aid and information about oneself and the environment are transmitted; an internal state of met needs; and the availability of psychosocial resources.

In empirical studies, social support has been evaluated, for instance, by the number of people offering it, by various classifications of sources, by its frequency and intensity, and by satisfaction with it. Diverse researchers have measured social networks, social bonds, meaningful social contacts, and the number of persons in whom one can confide.

Most important for this investigation is the distinction between enacted social support (specific support-giving events) and perceived social support (the belief that one is or will be supported). The latter concept, as formulated by Cobb (1976) in a seminal article on the subject and developed by others including Cutrona and Russell (1987) and Vaux, Phillips, Holly, Thomson, Williams and Stewart (1986), is adopted in this study for the following reason.

Cobb's thesis, that perception of social support — i.e., information leading a person to believe he or she is cared for, valued, or part of a network of social obligation — is the crucial variable, seems particularly powerful in an investigation of counsellors. Such persons often work in relative isolation and with troubled individuals; to maintain their perspective and their effectiveness, it may be they need to know they have social support available. If they in fact have such support but are not fully aware of having it, its allegedly helpful effect may be lost on them. Cobb's concept of social support emphasizes the degree

of confidence a person has in being valued, cared for, and / or able to count on others in time of need. According to Barrera:

[K]nowledge of people's subjective appraisals of the adequacy of support is more critical to the prediction of their well-being than simply collecting information about the number of supporters or the quantity of supportive behaviours to which they have access (Barrera, 1981, p. 85).

This phenomenological view prompted much further research.

Cutrona and Russell (1987), working on the basis of Cobb's model, conceived of six "provisions" or classes of perceived support that may be obtained from relationships with others. All six are viewed as important and even essential to individuals if they are to feel properly supported and avoid isolation. More than one provision may be obtained from the same person. The provisions are divided into two categories, assistance-related and non-assistance-related.

The assistance-related category includes two provisions, *guidance* (advice or information) and *reliable alliance* (the belief that others can be counted on for tangible assistance).

The non-assistance-related category comprises the other four provisions: *reassurance of worth* (acknowledgment of one's abilities and value by others), *opportunity for nurturance* (the sense that others depend on one for their well-being), *attachment* (emotional closeness providing a sense of security), and *social integration* (a sense of belonging to a group that shares interests and recreational activities).

These provisions capture (albeit sometimes in different words) the major forms of social support as delineated by several leading theorists.

Vaux, Phillips, Holly, Thomson, Williams and Stewart (1986) see social

support as a meta-construct comprising several constructs: 1. support network resources (the size, structure and characteristics of networks); 2. supportive acts (e.g. listening, advising, comforting, lending money, assisting with tasks); and 3. subjective appraisals of support (i.e. beliefs that one is cared for, respected, and having one's needs met). Like Cobb and Cutrona and Russell, they see perceptions of support as the most important of the three aspects:

Subjective appraisals of support appear to be especially important in regard to psychological well-being. In several studies, for instance, satisfaction with support or perceived adequacy of support has shown a stronger relationship to distress or well-being than did social support network measures (Vaux et al., 1986, p. 197).

Perceived Administrative Support

Support within the school system for counsellors and teachers is widely perceived as a crucial element in developing a healthy school climate— an atmosphere that allows adults to work effectively and that promotes student learning and growth — as well as in maintaining professional morale. There are several approaches to evaluating such support. Some researchers (e.g. Donaldson & Coladarci, 1987) emphasize the importance of school climate in general and endeavour to devise ways of measuring it. Others (e.g. Sutton & Fall, 1995) make a distinction between supervisory support and collegial support. In a number of longitudinal studies of burnout (in school settings, among others), lack of supervisory support was shown to be an antecedent of burnout (for a review, see Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993, p. 8). Other investigators have approached the matter in a wide-ranging way, attempting to consider the

whole social and political context, including the influence of governmental attitudes to education, the role of school boards and their officials, and the effect of parental involvement in the school.

Because this broad approach is beyond the scope of this study, because there is considerable overlap between social support and collegial support, and because the school's principal is seen to set the tone in the school, a model of administrative support focusing on the principal was selected for this study. The model is that of Arends (1982). Much of his work was focused on efforts at educational change and improvement in schools and colleges, but the principles he developed can be applied more widely.

After studying the development and maintenance of educational programs and analyzing many other reports of school climate and the administration's role in developing it, Arends did extensive interviewing of school staff members. In developing a model of administrative support, he relied on the perceptions of the interviewees as to what behaviours were and were not supportive rather than on signs of program success or on other external measures. Arends did not arrive at a concise definition of *administrative support* but isolated several factors that together represent the concept:

1. Using verbal statements to support programs and workers. Arends says this strategy finds support in research in social psychology showing that ideas suggested by persons in positions of authority get a different, more attentive hearing than do ideas coming from other persons within the system or from outsiders. The principal's letting people know that he or she thinks a project or course of action is worthwhile is highly salutary. Arends describes a supportive principal in these terms: "He actively supported the project by

speaking out on its virtues at faculty meetings and in front of parent groups. He would explain the new program in 'glowing terms' and in ways that showed 'he was really concerned about the kids'" (Arends, 1982, p. 83).

2. Providing workers with a sense of *role clarity* and *steadiness*.

Structural changes, new ideas, and different behavioural expectations can all be difficult to handle, particularly at a time of rapid and incessant change in schools. New programs "introduce noise into a system and unsettle the steadiness that comes to be expected" (Arends, 1982, p. 83). *Role clarity* means that the principal distinguishes the work roles of teachers, counsellors, administrators and others from one another so as to reduce uncertainty and increase confidence in all staff members. *Steadiness* in this context means keeping projects and procedures on track by meeting with staff for such reasons as reviewing budgets and progress, developing objectives and timelines, and setting policy. In sum, Arends found that supportive administrators smoothe the way for school workers to clarify their own roles, resolve conflicts, and create consistency for themselves and for their students.

3. Defending activities from dissenting voices and opposition.

Counsellors and teachers need this kind of support in the face of an increasingly critical public. Working with children can be particularly onerous because the responsibility for helping them grow and learn is divided among home, school, and others. Administrators must make courageous decisions in order to avoid undermining staff. In addition, "[s]ometimes this meant quelling or facing squarely resistance and hostility from other members of the administration or from faculty members" who opposed some work done in the school (Arends, 1982, p. 85). This form of support might also mean cutting through "red tape" for school professionals, or hiring the best qualified people to

promote the school's goals despite competing interests.

4. Giving something of value to workers. Specific, valued gestures of support may involve time, money, status, space, recognition, professional growth opportunities, or personal affection. Two examples would be a principal's attending an in-service workshop along with his or her counsellors, and providing some extra money so counsellors could plan a retreat aimed at developing collegiality and cohesiveness. This style of support may be especially relevant for counsellors, who often find themselves working in isolation because, for example, there is only one counsellor in the school, or the personal problems being dealt with are so overwhelming as to make him or her withdraw from others.

5. Clearing his or her schedule to deal with workers' projects and concerns. Arends says that this, for many school workers, is the essence of perceived administrative support. Comments about principals such as "he left our meeting early" and "she was unwilling to come to staff development events" indicate lack of support. On the other hand, principals who supervise activities personally rather than delegate them to someone else are likely to be seen as supportive. Generosity of time and attention provides staff members with a good example of help-giving behaviour. Such gestures of support "not only satisfy socio-emotional needs of faculty and staff, but also enhance the status and influence of the recipient in the eyes of other organizational members" (Arends, 1982, p. 87).

According to Arends, understanding perceived administrative support is important in two ways.

First, administrators themselves can benefit from it. Learning what teachers, counsellors and others see as supportive is a first step in developing

ways of interacting more effectively with faculty. This is particularly helpful for beginning administrators, who might not otherwise attend carefully to seemingly minor matters such as room allocation and "pats on the back". Additionally, principals can use their knowledge of administrative support to withhold supportive gestures from programs or from staff actions that principals see as detrimental to the school.

Second, an enhanced knowledge of administrative support can be applied to the development of training programs for administrators. Arends notes that such programs have traditionally focused either on administrators as educational leaders (performing such tasks as inservice training, instructional consultation, and curriculum development) or on their role as simple managers or functionaries working out the details of daily life in schools. Arends believes that both roles are important and that a greater knowledge of supportive behaviour can enhance administrators' performance in both of them.

Article Review

No major article focusing on burnout among high school counsellors was found in the research literature, but there are many reports each dealing with two or more of the variables explored in the present study. These articles, which deal with burnout or related phenomena among teachers, college counsellors, psychologists, social workers, and counsellors in other settings, suggest aspects of the problem worth investigating.

Although the research of Blase (1982) focused on burnout among teachers, not counsellors, it highlighted a path toward burnout that may also be taken by counsellors. Many stressful elements are common to the work of

counsellors and teachers: for example, student indifference, disciplinary problems, unsupportive or critical parents, financial pressures on education, overcrowding, unproductive paperwork, and inadequate administrative support. Blase developed a social-psychological grounded theory of teacher stress and burnout. He found that a lack of social, administrative and other support in dealing with job-related stressors may initially incite teachers to "go it alone" and attempt to make up for the deficits by increasing their involvement with students. However, in the continuing absence of valued and satisfying outcomes, teachers may disengage somewhat from their students. As teachers "give less" to their work, the likelihood of future ineffective and unsatisfying encounters with students increases. Thus, despite what the teacher may see as a protective lowering of involvement, a degenerative cycle leads to burnout (Blase, 1982, p. 109). Blase's theory is based on extensive qualitative research and seems well developed, but he does not report the data in a way that allows the reader to see how the theory derived from it.

Nagy and Davis (1985) studied teachers in an unidentified urban community in the northwest U.S. They found strong environmental influences on burnout, such as the specific grade or subject taught. There was no evidence of a relationship between years of experience and burnout. Type A personality and high work-orientation predicted burnout. The authors emphasize the importance of the person-environment fit, but are unable to draw strong conclusions about how a better fit can be developed. They considered some school climate factors but not administrative or social support; this omission is startling in view of the widely acknowledged significance of these influences.

Russell, Altmaier and Van Velzen (1987) led a wide-scale study of

burnout among teachers in the state of Iowa using the Maslach Burnout Inventory and measures of social and administrative support. Support from a supervisor, reassurance of worth, and reliable alliance (the sense that others can be counted on for help) were negatively related to burnout. "Teachers who indicated that other people respected their skills and abilities reported less emotional exhaustion, more positive attitudes toward students, and greater personal accomplishment" (p. 272). This suggests that acknowledging an employee's skills and offering assistance are important interventions for principals and others to make. Russell et al. say their results support the suggestion that intervention programs against burnout should be aimed at supervisors, who should be taught to reassure teachers of their worth. The researchers also found that friendship and family relationships also play a significant role in forestalling burnout, especially the depersonalization type. As to personal and job characteristics, male teachers reported higher levels of depersonalization than did females; younger teachers reported greater emotional exhaustion than did older ones; married teachers reported greater feelings of personal accomplishment.

Ross, Altmaier and Russell (1989) surveyed 169 doctoral-level counsellors who were working at least half-time in U.S. university counselling centres. Ross et al. note that earlier research on people in general had found a positive impact of social support on health; however, they state that this connection called out for further investigation in the case of counsellors, particularly in view of conflicting evidence about the buffering hypothesis, i.e. the idea that the Stress X Social Support interaction predicts physical and mental health. Ross et al. gathered data on personal and job-setting characteristics, burnout, stressful job-related incidents, and social support (with

supervisory support being a subcategory of this last variable). The researchers produced, by multiple regression procedures, three sets of statistical analyses: (a) descriptive information on job-related stress and burnout; (b) prediction of job-related stress and burnout by personal and job-setting characteristics; and (c) prediction of job-related stress and burnout by social support (with supervisory support as a subcategory). Among the more significant findings are the following: 1. Counsellors showed moderate levels of burnout on two scales of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (depersonalization and personal accomplishment) and low levels of burnout on the third scale, emotional exhaustion; 2. counsellors who had fewer years of post-doctoral experience reported a greater number of stressful events and higher emotional exhaustion; 3. supervisory support was significantly related to burnout on all three Maslach scales; 4. the predicted relationship of social support to burnout was absent; 5. supervising another counsellor was positively related to emotional exhaustion; 6. married counsellors reported greater emotional exhaustion than unmarried ones. On the last two points, Ross et al. speculate that playing multiple roles may be related to greater burnout. As to supervisory support, they note that the strong relationship found between it and the three classes of burnout is in accordance with many other studies. Overall, the results suggest the usefulness of the three categories of burnout provided by the Maslach Burnout Inventory. The researchers did not study counsellors who have a lower level of education than the doctorate, and they state that studying less-educated and/or less-experienced counsellors might provide very different results. In its thoroughness, well-formed methodological structure, and careful analysis, this study is indispensable to the literature on burnout in the helping professions.

A study of counsellors at junior colleges in New South Wales, Australia,

found that longer employment in the colleges predicted a higher degree of burnout; this finding was "consistent with the proposition that burnout results from an accumulation of stress associated with interpersonal professional contact . . . rather than that it occurs early in this kind of employment and then declines over time" (Jupp & Shaul, 1991, p. 163). Female counsellors reported somewhat more support than did males from family and friends and from the bureaucracy, but women and men registered similar burnout levels. The researchers suggest that men got their support needs met in other ways, but these are not specified. Although the authors state that job security may be a crucial element in the study of counsellor burnout, they did not measure this variable or its influence.

In her study of psychologists in Ontario, Kahill (1986) found a strong relationship between low degrees of perceived social support and burnout, but made tentative conclusions only: "It may be that the harmful effects of stress are reduced by the presence of a supportive social network. It is also possible that individuals who are burned out perceive the world more negatively and thus do not see or seek out available social support or perhaps they drive away supporters because they are negative or make excessive demands for support" (p. 1048).

A study of social workers in a community mental health clinic in the U.S. (Beemsterboer & Baum, 1984) found that a group of highly experienced workers appeared immune to any of the effects of burnout although there was a high turnover rate of employees. This suggests experience as an important factor. However, the research is reported without enough evidence of scientific rigour to permit firm conclusions. One is left to speculate whether experience, age, or another factor might be the most relevant one.

Investigating social support and burnout among counsellors at a residential centre for emotionally disturbed children and adolescents, Kruger, Botman and Goodenow (1991) found that high levels of co-worker support (team cohesion and perceived quality of friendships) were positively related to higher personal accomplishment scores (an indication of low burnout) on the Maslach Burnout Inventory. Emotional exhaustion decreased as staff gained more experience. However, women counsellors experienced higher levels of emotional exhaustion than did the men. No significant relationship was found between supervisor support and burnout; the authors suggest this is because the supervisors were all hired from that type of environment and thus could be expected to be especially knowledgeable and supportive (Kruger et al., 1991, p. 347).

One influential study of coping strategies (Shinn, Rosario, Morch, & Chestnut, 1984) examined the relationship of burnout in group workers to such elements as focusing on family and friends, building one's competence, taking more breaks from work, and improving communication within the agency. A multiple regression analysis showed that individual and agency-level coping mechanisms were not related to burnout. However, social support activities were closely related to burnout; a plethora of other studies confirmed this latter conclusion.

Sowa, May and Niles (1994) surveyed counsellors working in various settings in the state of Virginia. They discovered that counsellors reporting high occupational stress had lower levels of recreation, self-care, and social support. They recommended that counsellor education programs include stress-management courses providing training in physical and psychological coping skills. However, Sowa et al. did not propose content for such courses, and they

did not offer support for their contention that such teaching would have the desired effects.

In an investigation of school counsellors in Maine, Sutton and Fall (1995) considered the influence of school climate on counsellors' self-efficacy — the belief that one has certain skills and knowledge, as well as the ability to take action and to succeed amid the stresses of life. They found that supportive staff and administrators predicted both high efficacy expectancy and high outcome expectancy (i.e. the possibility of good results) among counsellors. As to administrators, "[P]erhaps when principals act as supportive resources for the exchange of ideas and material resources, counselors gain a sense of empowerment and efficacy" and the school's counselling program is enhanced (Sutton et al., 1995, p. 335). In addition, the level of non-counselling-related activities performed by the counsellors predicted outcome expectancy; counsellors who performed duties outside the area of their specialty and training had lower expectancy for the outcome of their counselling-related behaviour. Sutton and Fall assert the importance of considering environmental variables, such as size of school and education level of counsellors, in future research. Sutton and Fall did not consider burnout, but one may speculate whether lack of self-efficacy might lead to burnout or at least be related to it.

Chapter III

Hypotheses and Methodology

This chapter presents the study's hypotheses and methods, the latter including a description of the research design, population and sample, data-gathering procedures, instruments, and data analysis, organization and interpretation.

Hypotheses

The major goal of this study was to identify relationships between several variables and burnout. Because little or no research on high school counsellor burnout had previously been undertaken, a great variety of relationships among variables targeted were considered in the analysis. However, the major questions are simply stated: What is the relationship of perceived social support to burnout among high school counsellors? What is the relationship of perceived administrative support to burnout among these counsellors?

On theoretical grounds, an inverse relationship was expected as an answer to both these questions; in other words, stronger perceived social and administrative support would be associated with lower burnout levels. The next step was to extract, from the literature, some characteristics of the counsellors' personal life and job situation, and to see whether these variables added anything to the expected relationship between social and/or administrative support and burnout. Some variables worth exploring were raised in the article

review in the previous chapter. Further ideas about variables worth investigating are outlined here, along with a brief explanation of why the questions suggested themselves. Each of the three variables discussed here was found three times in the literature — in each case, either confirmed as an important element of burnout studies or mentioned as a variable that called out for further investigation.

In a study of teacher burnout, Schwab and Iwanicki (1982) found that role conflict and role ambiguity explained a statistically significant amount of variance in two aspects of burnout measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory, namely depersonalization and emotional exhaustion. They found that teachers whose role in the school was ambiguous or mixed (for example, a mixed teacher/counsellor or teacher/administrator role) were more subject to burnout. Sutton and Fall (1995) found that school counsellors who performed roles outside their specialty and training as counsellors had lower outcome expectancy for their counselling-related behaviour. Therefore, the present study asked counsellors for information about their role in the school. The question: Does the percentage of work time spent on counselling predict burnout?

There is evidence of gender-related differences in both the need for social support and the forms of social support that are most helpful. Greenglass (1993) raised a number of pertinent gender-difference issues, including whether families alleviate work-related strain for working women as much as they do for working men. The question: Does gender predict burnout?

Studies including that of Jupp and Shaul (1991), cited in the article review in Chapter II, point to the significance of length of time employed as a counsellor. The question: Does counselling experience predict burnout?

In addition to these three variables, three further predictors were chosen

as exploratory variables. Although not well established in the literature, they all appear there as potentially fruitful areas of inquiry. They are the counsellors' age, the level of education they have obtained, and the size of their schools. The question: Are age, education level and school size related to burnout?

This study also considered some ancillary issues — relationships between non-burnout variables. As this study covers new ground, it was considered worthwhile to examine relationships between certain pairs of independent variables. These selected relationships were chosen before the data was entered; they were identified partly by mentions in the literature, and partly by the researcher and his supervisors, as being of potential interest.

For example, one issue is whether male and female counsellors feel different degrees of administrative support. Heaney (1993) studied how perceived control at work affects men's and women's psychological health. Her results were ambiguous but suggested there may be a significant gender difference in how counsellors perceive administrative support. An additional factor is that the vast majority of high school principals are men, and therefore the support they offer may be more easily seen or accepted by one gender than the other. The question: Do male and female counsellors perceive different levels of administrative support?

Also chosen for analysis were:

- The relationships of administrative support with social support, with school size and with percentage of time counselling.
- The relationships of social support with gender and with age.
- The relationship between school size and percentage of time counselling.

Methodology

Design

This is a cross-sectional, non-experimental, descriptive field study. Based as it is on correlational analysis, it does not permit conclusions to be drawn about causation. However, it allows us to examine associations found among variables and to consider the meaning of these relationships.

The objective was to develop a picture of elements related to burnout in high school counsellors in British Columbia. To this end, a diversified sample of such counsellors was surveyed for information on their perceived social and administrative support, gender, age, counselling experience, education, school size, percentage of work time designated for counselling, and degree of burnout.

Data Collection and Procedures

Population and Sample: The precise number of high school counsellors in British Columbia at any given time is unknown. The number varies from school year to school year and is estimated to be several hundred. The British Columbia School Counsellors Association, the professional association representing both elementary and high school counsellors, has a membership ranging roughly from 400 to 750, depending on the season, on membership renewal dates, and on when counsellors renew their memberships (often they do so at the time of conferences). The majority of members counsel in high schools. Some school counsellors are not members of the association, while some individuals who are members may not be counselling in any given

school year.

The sample of 265 potential participants was drawn from the membership rolls of the British Columbia School Counsellors Association. All current members listed as working in high schools (about 200 counsellors) were selected. The remaining 65 or so participants were high school counsellors who were still on the membership lists although they had not renewed their membership when it expired during the preceding five months (since September 1997); these participants were deemed likely to be counselling still. A large initial sample was selected to ensure adequate returns and to improve the likelihood of obtaining a representative sample.

Procedures: This study's proposed procedures were approved by the Behavioural Research Ethics Board of the University of British Columbia.

The 265 potential participants were sent a mailing including the following: a covering letter explaining in general terms the purpose of the study and including information about anonymity and confidentiality, a four-part questionnaire, and a stamped return envelope addressed to the researcher in his department. His phone number and e-mail address were provided in case participants had questions. The questionnaires were given no identifying number or mark; it was believed that complete anonymity would encourage some counsellors to respond to the survey who might not if there was an identifier. No reminder was sent, and there was no other follow-up with participants.

Counsellors who were sent the survey but did not wish to complete it were invited, in the covering letter, to hand the questionnaire to a colleague or acquaintance who was counselling in a B.C. high school, regardless of whether

that person was a member of the B.C. School Counsellors Association.

In light of the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity, and because the questionnaire was relatively brief and worded straightforwardly, an adequate response rate was anticipated by the researcher.

Measures: The survey instrument, which is titled High School Counsellor Questionnaire, is included as Appendix C. The questionnaire was designed so as to take roughly 20 minutes to complete. It consists of four parts:

I. Counsellor and Job Characteristics:

Participants are asked for the following information:

- a. Age
- b. Gender
- c. Years of experience as a part-time and/or full-time counsellor
- d. Highest degree they have obtained (in any field of study)
- e. The student population of their school
- f. Whether they counsel only, or have other duties such as administration or teaching; if they have duties other than counselling, they indicate the percentage of their time that is designated for counselling

II. Social Support Appraisals Scale:

This measure of perceived social support (Vaux, Phillips, Holly, Thomson, Williams, & Stewart, 1986) encompasses the major components of models of perceived social support developed by Cobb (1976) and others. It is designed to gauge the extent to which a person believes he or she is loved by, esteemed by, and involved with family, friends and others.

Participants respond to 23 support-related items on a four-point scale indicating how strongly they agree or disagree with each statement. Five items are reverse-scored. Scoring is accomplished by adding up the scores for a total score, with higher scores indicating a stronger subjective appraisal of social support. Eight items relate to support from family, seven items relate to support from friends, and the remaining eight items relate to support from others or from people in general.

There is considerable evidence of the reliability of the Social Support Appraisals Scale. The instrument was tested with 10 samples totalling almost 1,000 respondents from a variety of populations. Internal consistency (coefficient alpha) reported for the scale ranged from .80 to .90 (Vaux et al., 1986, p. 206). No data on stability were reported.

The Social Support Appraisals Scale was subjected to intensive evaluation of its validity. It showed very good concurrent, predictive, known-groups, and construct validity. Its scores have been reported as being significantly correlated, in predicted ways, to other measures of social support and of psychological well-being. Such measures included social network satisfaction, family environment, depression, positive affect, negative affect, life satisfaction, loneliness, happiness, and the Symptom Check List 90 (SCL-90). These correlations "are as strong or stronger than those reported for other support appraisal measures" (Vaux et al., 1986, p. 216).

The simplicity and brevity of the scale added to its appeal for use in the present study. Furthermore, respondents "appear interested and motivated, and missing data are rare" (Vaux et al., 1986, p. 216).

III. Administrative Support Measure:

In the absence of any published or unpublished instrument measuring perceived administrative support, a 10-item questionnaire was devised for the purposes of the present research. This new measure is intended to be consonant with the notion of *administrative support* as conceptualized by Arends (1982), and is based on the five factors isolated by him. There are two questions per factor. Participants reply on a five-point scale indicating their perception of how often their principal behaves in certain ways. Scores on the 10 items are added up to make a total score, with higher scores indicating a higher subjective appraisal of administrative support.

Although no reliability or validity data are available, the Administrative Support Measure was piloted with high school counsellors who commented on the clarity and comprehensiveness of the statements and on how the instrument might be made easier to complete. The measure was revised in accordance with their remarks, with academic advice, and with its original orientation to Arends's work. Scores during the final stage of piloting corresponded strongly and positively with the respondents' answer to an extra item administered separately as a check: "I am satisfied with the support I get from my principal." However, no correlation was calculated. If this measure were to be used again, internal consistency could be determined using Cronbach's coefficient alpha.

IV. Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI):

This study employed the Second Edition (1986) of the Human Services Survey form of the MBI. This form is identical to the other one published, the Educators Survey, with one exception: The human services form uses the term *recipient* to refer to clients, whereas the educators form uses the term *student*.

Despite the cumbersome nature of the word *recipient*, the human services form seems preferable because many counsellors perceive young people at school primarily as clients, though they are obviously students too.

The inventory consists of 22 items to which participants respond on a 0-6 scale indicating the frequency of their experiencing job-related feelings. There is no total score, but scores are obtained for the inventory's three scales, which are designed to measure three domains of response to stresses: emotional exhaustion (9 items), feelings of being emotionally drained; depersonalization (5 items), negative or impersonal attitudes to clients; and personal accomplishment (8 items), feelings of ability and achievement in working with people. Higher scores on the first two scales, and lower scores on the third scale, reflect greater levels of burnout.

The MBI is the dominant instrument in its field, and commended itself to use in this study for several reasons.

First, the MBI operationalizes *burnout* as defined by Maslach. She designed the MBI on the basis of her own pioneering conceptualization and definition of burnout. As her concept of burnout is the one employed in this study, the instrument is ideally suited to measure the construct.

Second, the MBI's format is simple, its explanations and items are clear, and it takes only about 10 minutes to complete, including time to read instructions (Maslach and Jackson, 1986). The MBI was designed specifically to measure human service workers, and it is worded to reflect their vocabulary. These qualities make the instrument well suited for individual completion by counsellors.

Third, the division of scores into three scales permits a more detailed analysis of the specific aspects of burnout that may be in play. Analysis might

show, for example, that counselling experience is related strongly to emotional exhaustion, weakly to depersonalization and not at all to personal accomplishment. Such results may be suggestive to later researchers or to persons devising interventions to combat burnout.

Fourth, the MBI has been used so frequently in burnout research that it forms a touchstone in the field. The inventory's wide acceptability allows us to make useful comparisons among research studies, including this one, without concern about variations across instruments.

The MBI has been shown to be a reliable and valid measure of burnout.

The MBI's reliability, especially for research purposes, has been well established (Sandoval, 1989). Reliability coefficients for the subscales ranged from .71 to .90 ($N = 1,316$) in development trials. In smaller studies, test-retest reliability coefficients ranged from .60 to .82 after two to four weeks and from .54 to .60 after two years (Hargrove, 1989, p. 474). The emotional exhaustion scale tends to show higher reliability than the other two subscales. In one set of development studies, the alpha coefficient for emotional exhaustion was .90, and the stability co-efficient over a two-to-four-week period was .82. The alpha coefficient of the depersonalization scale was .79, and the stability was .60. In the personal accomplishment scale, the alpha was .71 and stability was .80 (Sandoval, 1989, p. 475).

Personal accomplishment correlates weakly with depersonalization (.26), and weakly with emotional exhaustion (.22). Depersonalization and emotional exhaustion are moderately intercorrelated (.52) (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Considerable evidence endorses the validity of MBI scores. In studies of convergent validity, "the MBI scores have been correlated with behavior ratings

made by knowledgeable informants, with job characteristics that are expected to contribute to burnout, and with other measures of outcome related to burnout" (Sandoval, 1989, p. 475). The MBI's discriminant validity is supported by evidence that measures of job satisfaction yield results markedly different from the MBI; in other words, burnout and job dissatisfaction are not the same thing. They are related but are distinct enough to be seen as separate constructs. Additionally, the MBI has been shown not to be influenced by social desirability considerations and not to measure clinical depression.

The inventory has been shown to be flexible and to be applicable over a broad geographical and occupational range. "The MBI is certainly the instrument of choice to use in research and evaluation endeavors studying the phenomenon of burnout" (Sandoval, 1989, p. 476).

Data Analysis, Organization and Interpretation: The questionnaires were scored by the researcher. Scores were entered first into a data entry sheet, then into the computer statistical program SPSS 7.5 for Windows.

The data was analyzed to produce results, including figures and tables, describing the data and showing relationships between the predictor or independent variables (perceived social support, perceived administrative support, and the six counsellor and job characteristics), and the criterion or dependent variables (the three burnout scales).

First, to get an overview of the data, frequency distributions of all variables were examined. Means, standard deviations, and ranges were found. Correlations among all variables were calculated, with significance at the .05 and .01 levels flagged.

Then a series of six bar charts was produced to illustrate the distribution of the six counsellor and job characteristics of the participants.

Next, *t*-tests were employed to compare means of participants' scores on the three MBI scales with the most recent normative data provided by the publishers of the MBI for mental health workers. Significance at the .05, .01 and .001 levels was noted.

Stepwise multiple regression procedures were performed with each of the three burnout scores as the dependent variable. In each of the three analyses, the five theory-grounded independent variables — social support, administrative support, gender, experience, and percentage of time counselling — were entered in the order of the strength of their correlation with the dependent variable, from highest to lowest. Independent variables that added nothing to R^2 were removed.

Next, the effects of the three exploratory variables — age, education, and school size — on burnout were examined. The correlation of age with each of the three classes of burnout was considered. The influence of education on each of the three burnout categories was examined by a one-way ANOVA, as was the impact of school size.

Finally, a series of tests investigated the relationships among certain independent variables, as listed in the Hypotheses section earlier:

Administrative support's relationship with social support was found by correlation, as was administrative support's relationship with percentage of time counselling. Gender differences in administrative support were explored by a *t*-test. Differences in administrative support in schools of varying sizes were examined by one-way ANOVA.

Gender differences in social support were explored by a *t*-test, and

social support's relationship with age was found by correlation.

Differences in percentage of time counselling, having regard to school size, were investigated by one-way ANOVA.

Chapter IV

Results

This chapter comprises: a profile of the participants, including graphs of their personal and job characteristics; an overview of the data, with all variables' means, standard deviations, and correlations; a comparison of participants' burnout levels with norms; and results of the statistical tests performed on the data to examine the relationships among variables.

Participants

Of the 265 surveys mailed out to high school counsellors, 163 were answered and returned, for a return rate of 61.51%. Six questionnaires could not be used, leaving an N of 157. These 157 surveys were complete except that seven lacked information on years of counselling experience, and three lacked an answer on the percentage of time designated for counselling. Details of returns and the scoring of questionnaires are in Appendix A.

The job and counsellor characteristics of the participants are displayed in Figures 1-6; percentages, rather than numbers, of counsellors in the sample are used. Since no study of burnout among high school counsellors was found in the literature, this sample cannot be compared with any other.

As Figure 1 indicates, the vast majority of counsellors were aged in their 40s or early 50s. The mean age was 46.31; the standard deviation was 7.05 years. The youngest counsellor was 26, the oldest 60, for a range of 34 years.

Figure 1

Participants by Age

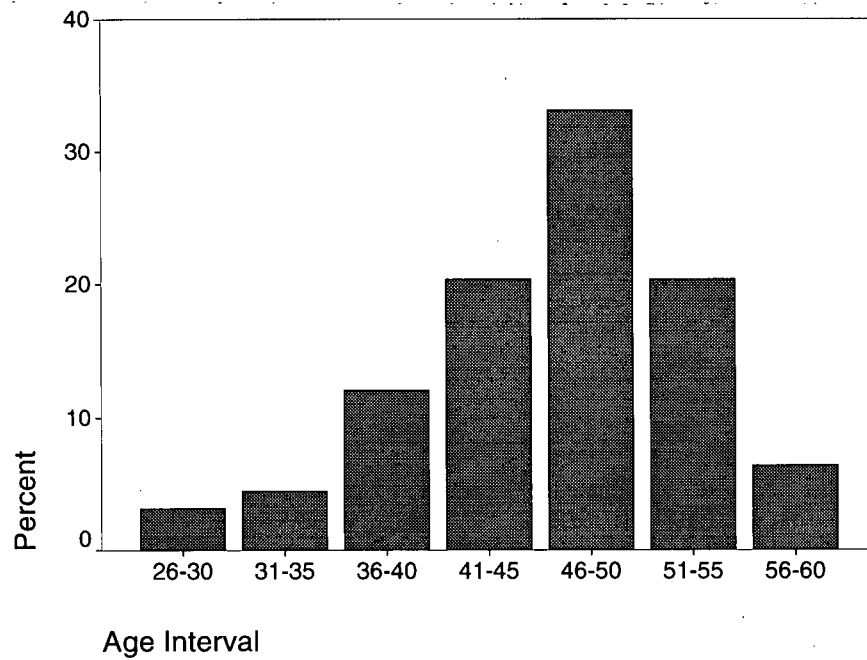


Figure 2

Participants by Gender

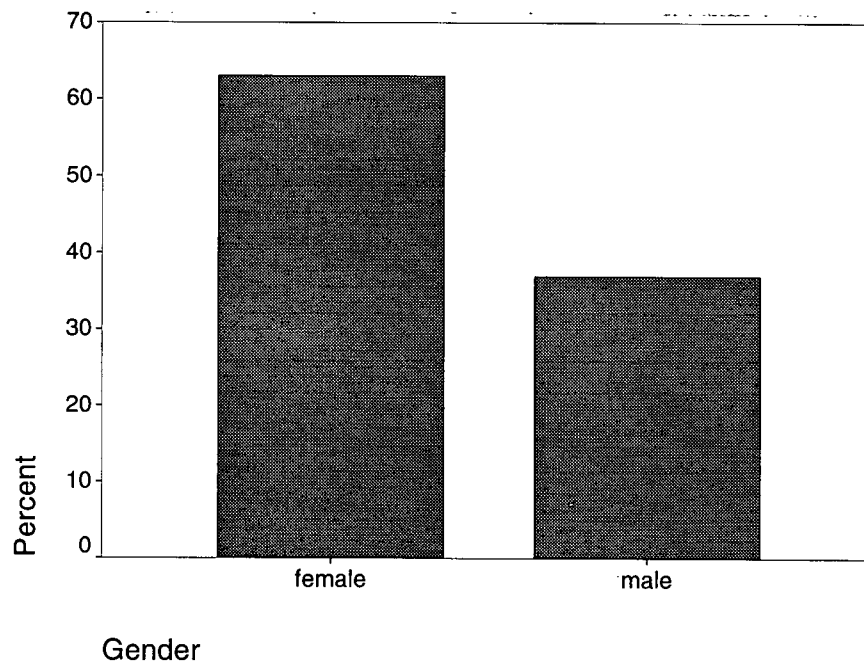
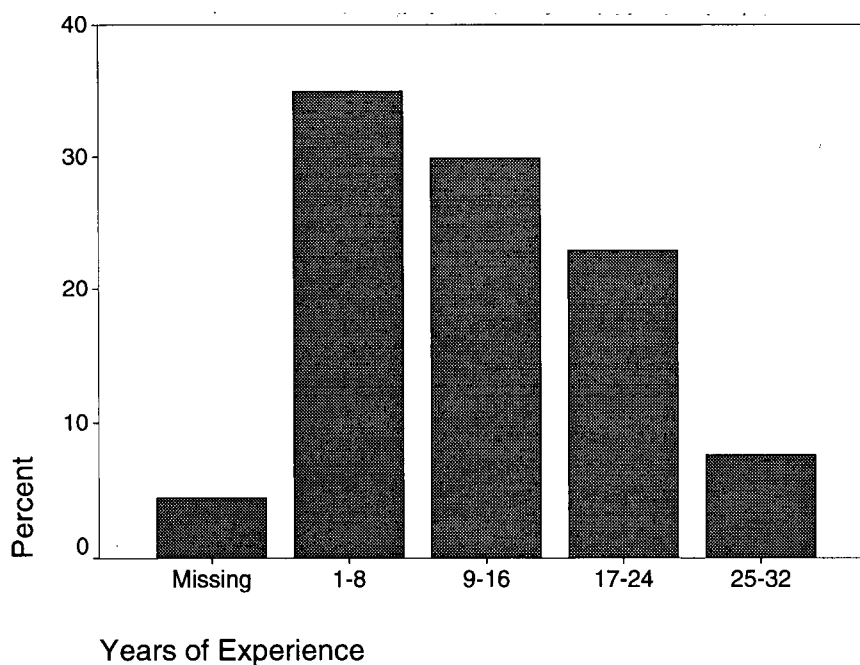


Figure 2 shows the breakdown by gender. The sample of counsellors was 63.1% female, 36.9% male. This imbalance is in line with the proportion of women and men listed as high school counsellors on the British Columbia School Counsellors Association membership rolls, from which the sample was taken.

The participants' years of experience as full-time or part-time counsellors are displayed in Figure 3. Experience varied from one year to 32 years, for a range of 31 years. The mean was 12.55 years, and the standard deviation was 7.50 years.

Figure 3 **Participants by Experience**



The counsellors' highest degree obtained is shown in Figure 4. The master's degree is the highest one attained by 66.9% of the counsellors.

Figure 4 **Participants by Education**

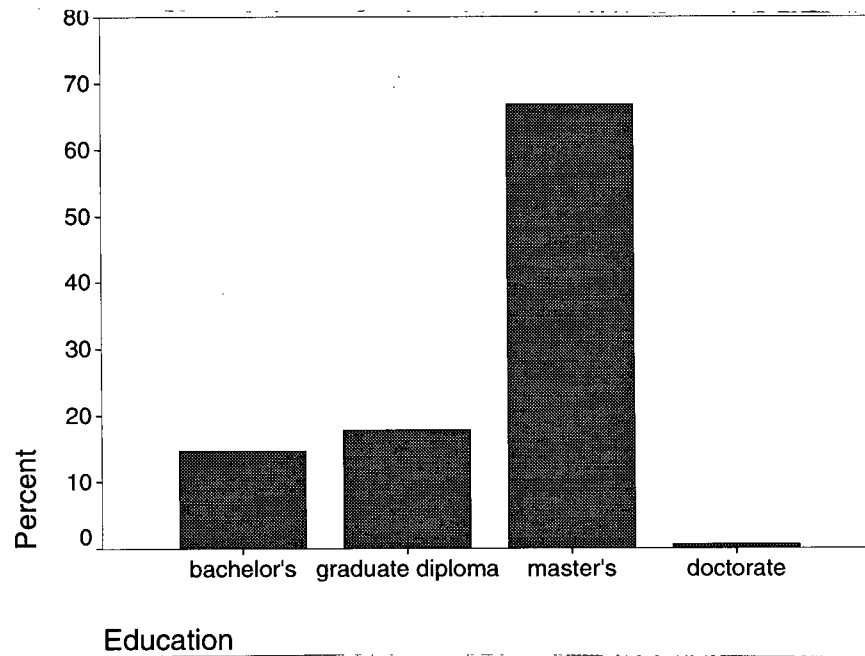
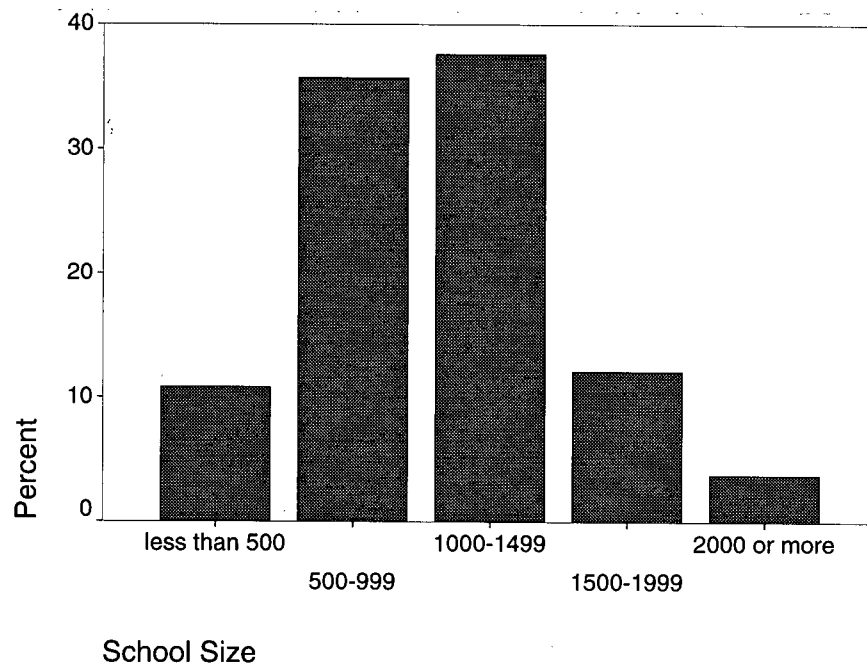


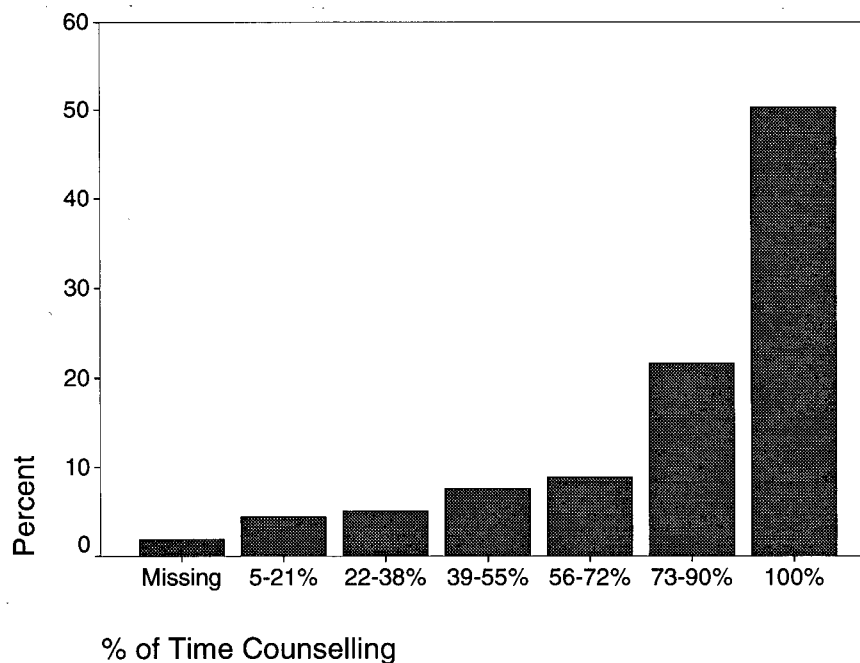
Figure 5 **Participants by School Size**



As Figure 5 illustrates, the great majority of high school counsellors who were surveyed work in medium-sized schools whose student population is between 500 and 1499.

Figure 6 displays the percentage of counsellors' work time that was designated for counselling rather than for other duties such as teaching or administration. Half the participants (50.3%) were full-time counsellors, while another 22.1% were counselling close to full-time (73-90% of their work time was designated for counselling). The mean was 80.66%, and the standard deviation was 25.49%. The lowest percentage designated for counselling was 5%, the highest 100%, for a range of 95%.

Figure 6 Participants by Percentage of Time Counselling



Overview of the Data

Only the relationships mentioned in the Hypotheses section above were chosen for analysis in this study. Other relationships, found incidentally, were not analyzed, in light of the danger that such relationships might simply result from peculiarities of the sample. However, as this study appears to be the first into burnout among high school counsellors, the researcher felt it important to offer a glimpse of all relationships, for the potential benefit of later investigators. Therefore, a full correlational matrix, including means and standard deviations, is presented as Table 1.

Levels of Burnout

Scores on the three burnout scales were compared with normative data in two ways: by degree of burnout, and by comparing the means of the current and normative samples.

As to degree of burnout, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) divides scores on each subscale into three categories: The lowest one-third of the normative sample was assigned to the *low* category, the next one-third to the *moderate* category, and the uppermost third to the *high* category. For emotional exhaustion, the current sample of high school counsellors fell in the moderate range, but at the top end of that range. For depersonalization, the present sample fell in the low range, but at the high end of that range. Finally, for personal accomplishment, the counsellors scored in the middle of the low range.

The second method of interpretation is by comparing means. Means,

Table 1**Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations among All Variables**

<u>Variable</u>											<u>M</u>	<u>S.D</u>
1. Age											46.31	7.05
2. Gender	$\frac{1}{.14}$										1.37	.48
3. Experience	.54**	$\frac{2}{.16^*}$									12.55	7.50
4. Education	.12	-.02	$\frac{3}{.06}$								2.54	.75
5. School Size	.25**	.12	.00	$\frac{4}{.13}$							2.62	.96
6. % Counselling	.18*	.15	.22**	.05	$\frac{5}{.31^{**}}$						80.66	25.49
7. Social Support	.16*	.02	.13	-.03	.22*	.31*	$\frac{6}{}$				81.34	7.83
8. Administrative Support	-.06	.04	.02	-.06	.05	.27**	.31**	$\frac{7}{}$			38.73	8.07
9. EE	-.08	-.08	.03	-.06	-.06	-.06	-.10	$\frac{8}{.18^*}$			19.96	8.96
10. DP	-.01	.12	.10	-.07	-.07	.01	-.25*	-.07	$\frac{9}{.50^{**}}$		4.17	3.67
11. PA	.05	.08	-.04	.04	.22**	.26**	.41**	.26**	-.24**	$\frac{10}{.34^{**}}$	42.43	4.66

Note. N = 157. EE = Emotional Exhaustion. DP= Depersonalization. PA = Personal Accomplishment.

* Significant at the .05 level (2-tailed). ** Significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

standard deviations and results of t -tests comparing the current sample with the MBI norms are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) Means and Standard Deviations

	Present Sample High School Counsellors		MBI Normative Mental Health Sample		t	p
	M (N = 157)	SD	M (N = 730)	SD		
Emotional Exhaustion	19.96	8.96	16.89	8.90	4.26	<.001
Depersonalization	4.17	3.67	5.72	4.62	-5.34	<.001
Personal Accomplishment *	42.43	4.66	30.87	6.37	31.24	<.001
* High scores reflect less burnout						

As measured by comparing means, the present sample had markedly different levels of burnout from the MBI norm for mental health professionals. The counsellors reported significantly higher ($t=4.26$; $p<.001$) levels of emotional exhaustion than did the normative sample. However, on the other two subscales, the counsellors reported lower burnout. They scored significantly lower ($t=-5.34$; $p<.001$) on depersonalization, and significantly higher ($t=31.24$; $p<.001$) on personal accomplishment — the latter indicating low burnout, as it is interpreted in the opposite direction from the other two scales.

The normative sample included counsellors from school and other settings; psychologists, psychiatrists and psychotherapists. The suitability of these norms for the present study will be discussed in Chapter V.

Multivariate Tests

Regression

Five independent variables — social support, administrative support, gender, experience and percentage of work time designated for counselling — were selected, a priori, for inclusion in the multiple regression analysis of each of the three classes of burnout. These variables were chosen, following the review of the literature, because of indications that they were all factors of consequence to burnout.

For each of the three classes of burnout, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was executed. In each case, the five independent variables were entered in the order of their correlation (from highest to lowest) with the burnout score. Then, variables that did not add to R^2 were eliminated. The relevant correlations are listed in Table 3.

Table 3**Correlations between Burnout and Independent Variables****Employed in the Multiple Regression Analysis**

	Emotional Exhaustion	Depersonalization	Personal Accomplishment
Social Support	-.10	-.25*	.41**
Administrative Support	-.18*	-.07	.26**
Gender	-.08	.12	.08
Experience	.03	.10	-.04
% Counselling	-.06	.01	.26**

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

Tables 4, 5 and 6 present the results of the multiple regression analyses of the three classes of burnout. The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates the amount of variance in the burnout class that can be predicted from one independent variable or from a combination of several. As each step is added, R^2 rises to express the new amount of variance predictable from the combination. The R^2 increment states the predictive improvement gained by adding each step to the equation. The F -ratio allows us to conclude whether the change in each step is significant at $p < .05$, $p < .01$, or $p < .001$.

When the five relevant variables were employed in the regression

analysis of emotional exhaustion (Table 4), percentage of time counselling was excluded because it added nothing to the predictive value. Administrative support predicted a significant ($p = .01$) amount, 4.3%, of the variance in emotional exhaustion. The three remaining variables together predicted an additional 0.9% of the variance. The equation accounted, then, for 5.2% of the variance [$F(4, 145) = 1.972$; $p = .10$]; this equation did not achieve significance at $p < .05$.

Table 4

**Stepwise Multiple Regression of Independent Variables
on Emotional Exhaustion**

<u>Step</u>	<u>Emotional Exhaustion</u>			
	<u>R²</u>	<u>R² increment</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
1. Administrative Support	.043	.043	6.659	.01
2. Social Support	.046	.003	.486	.49
3. Gender	.049	.003	.431	.51
4. Experience	.052	.003	.392	.53

$F(4, 145) = 1.972$; $p = .10$

The results of the regression analysis of depersonalization are shown in Table 5. Administrative support was excluded because it did not add to the predictive value. Social support, entered first, predicted a significant ($p = .01$) proportion, 5.2%, of the variance in depersonalization. Gender, entered second, predicted a further 2.2% of the variance. Together, the two other

variables predicted 1.2% of the variance. The equation reached significance at $p < .05$ [$F(4, 142) = 3.344$; $p = .01$].

Table 5

**Stepwise Multiple Regression of Independent Variables
on Depersonalization**

<u>Step</u>	<u>Depersonalization</u>			
	<u>R²</u>	<u>R² increment</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
1. Social Support	.052	.052	7.983	.01
2. Gender	.074	.022	3.388	.07
3. Experience	.084	.010	1.599	.21
4. % Counselling	.086	.002	.292	.59

$F(4, 142) = 3.344$; $p = .01$

Table 6 displays the results of the regression analysis of personal accomplishment. This time, all five independent variables contributed something to predictive power. Social support alone predicted a significant ($p < .001$) 16.1% of the variance in personal accomplishment. Administrative support contributed a further, significant ($p = .04$) 2.4%. Together, the five variables accounted for 21.3% of the variance in personal accomplishment; the equation was significant [$F(5, 141) = 7.614$; $p < .001$].

Table 6

Stepwise Multiple Regression of Independent Variables
on Personal Accomplishment

<u>Step</u>	<u>Personal Accomplishment</u>			
	<u>R²</u>	<u>R² increment</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
1. Social Support	.161	.161	27.846	<.001
2. Administrative Support	.185	.024	4.178	.04
3. % Counselling	.195	.010	1.814	.18
4. Gender	.196	.001	.211	.65
5. Experience	.213	.016	2.944	.09

$F(5,141) = 7.614; p < .001$

Burnout and Exploratory Variables

The exploratory variables — age, education and school size — were included in the survey as a result of the researcher's curiosity, academic advice, and suggestions in the literature that such factors might be important. These three independent variables were not included in the regression analysis. They were examined separately to determine whether there was a relationship with each of the three classes of burnout.

Age correlated very weakly with the burnout scores. The correlation of age with emotional exhaustion was $-.08$, with depersonalization was $-.01$, and

Table 7**Means, Standard Deviations, and *F* Values of Burnout****Scores by Level of Education**

<u>Variable</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Emotional Exhaustion:				
Bachelor's	20.04	9.64		
Graduate Diploma	22.18	9.65		
Master's	19.29	8.63		
Doctorate	26.00	___*	0.92	.43
Depersonalization:				
Bachelor's	4.61	4.19		
Graduate Diploma	4.43	3.80		
Master's	4.01	3.56		
Doctorate	3.00	___*	0.25	.86
Personal Accomplishment:				
Bachelor's	42.87	4.37		
Graduate Diploma	41.00	5.79		
Master's	42.68	4.36		
Doctorate	46.00	___*	1.25	.29

* N = 1

Table 8**Means, Standard Deviations, and *F* Values of Burnout**

<u>Scores by School Size</u>				
<u>Variable</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Emotional Exhaustion:				
Less than 500	23.12	9.85		
500-999	18.88	8.83		
1000-1499	20.46	8.80		
1500-1999	19.26	8.39		
2000 or more	18.33	11.33	0.85	.49
Depersonalization:				
Less than 500	4.06	3.21		
500-999	4.59	3.95		
1000-1499	4.24	3.54		
1500-1999	2.42	2.97		
2000 or more	5.33	4.84	1.44	.23
Personal Accomplishment:				
Less than 500	40.53	5.27		
500-999	41.82	4.87		
1000-1499	42.75	4.72		
1500-1999	44.68	2.56		
2000 or more	43.17	2.64	2.23	.07

with personal accomplishment was .05. None of these correlations was significant at $p < .05$.

Differences in burnout scores by education level were examined by one-way ANOVA; the results are presented as Table 7. Varying education levels accounted for no significant differences in emotional exhaustion ($F = 0.92$; $p = .43$), depersonalization ($F = 0.25$; $p = .86$) and personal accomplishment ($F = 1.25$; $p = .29$).

Similarly, an examination by one-way ANOVA was made of differences in burnout scores by school size (Table 8). School size did not account for significant differences in emotional exhaustion ($F = 0.85$; $p = .49$), in depersonalization ($F = 1.44$; $p = .23$), or in personal accomplishment ($F = 2.23$; $p = .07$). In the last case the differences approached significance at $p < .05$; larger school size tended to be associated with greater feelings of personal accomplishment (an indication of lower burnout).

Relationships among Independent Variables

Seven pairs of independent variables were selected, a priori, to be analyzed for possible relationships.

Administrative support was correlated significantly ($r = .31$; $p < .01$) with social support and with percentage of time counselling ($r = .27$; $p < .01$) (Table 1).

A one-way ANOVA showed no significant differences in administrative support by size of school ($F = 0.93$; $p = .45$) (Table 9).

A t -test examined differences in administrative support by gender (Table 10). There was no significant difference ($t = -0.52$; $p = .60$).

Social support was correlated significantly ($r = .16$; $p < .05$) with age

Table 9

**Means, Standard Deviations, and *F* Values of Administrative
Support and Percentage Counselling by School Size**

<u>Variable</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Administrative Support:				
Less than 500	38.41	9.35		
500-999	38.11	7.28		
1000-1499	39.63	8.61		
1500-1999	36.79	8.08		
2000 or more	42.83	4.83	0.93	.45
Percentage Counselling:				
Less than 500	60.35	27.23		
500-999	78.02	25.18		
1000-1499	85.80	23.76		
1500-1999	85.32	23.72		
2000 or more	100.00	0.00	4.89	.001

(Table 1); that is, older counsellors tended to report higher perceived social support than did younger counsellors.

A *t*-test showed no significant difference in social support by gender ($t = -0.19$; $p = .85$) (Table 10).

Table 10

**Means, Standard Deviations, and *t* Values of Administrative
Support and Social Support by Gender**

<u>Variable</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u><i>t</i></u>	<u><i>p</i></u>
Administrative Support:				
Female	38.47	8.09		
Male	39.17	8.08	-0.52	.60
Social Support:				
Female	81.25	7.47		
Male	81.50	8.46	-0.19	.85

Percentage of time counselling was shown by one-way ANOVA to differ significantly ($F=4.89$; $p=.001$) by school size (Table 9); that is, the larger the school, the higher the percentage of time counsellors tended to have designated for counselling rather than for other duties such as teaching or administration.

Chapter V

Discussion

This final chapter begins with a summary of the findings in regard to the hypotheses, together with discussion of the results and their implications (significance is at the .05 level unless otherwise indicated). Then there are suggestions as to the scope, approaches and methods of future research on the topic.

Summary and Implications

Social and Administrative Support

A major hypothesis of this study was that there would be an inverse relationship between each of the three classes of burnout and each of two other factors: perceived social support and perceived administrative support.

All correlations between social support and burnout were in the expected direction. Those between social support and depersonalization ($r = -.25$), and between social support and personal accomplishment ($r = .41$), reached significance. The correlation between social support and emotional exhaustion ($r = -.10$) was not significant. These results generally coincide with those of several other studies (e.g. Sowa, May & Niles, 1994; Shinn, Rosario, Morch & Chestnut, 1984; Blase, 1982) that showed negative relationships between social support and burnout and/or other forms of occupational strain. Flournoy

(1990) did not find any significant relationships between social support and the three burnout classes. She explained this by noting that her instrument measured the objective availability of family members and others, rather than the perception that there are people on whom one can rely — the latter factor seemingly the most important. The results of Ross, Altmaier and Russell (1989) were mixed. They did not find the overall inverse relationship they had hypothesized between social support and burnout. However, using the six-category Social Provisions Scale, they found that three categories were significantly correlated in the expected direction with burnout classes. Higher levels of social integration (a sense of belonging to a group) were related to lower emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Reassurance of worth (acknowledgment of one's abilities by others) and guidance (advice or information) were related positively to personal accomplishment. These results suggest that the specific type or form of social support is a relevant factor.

In the case of administrative support and burnout, relationships found were also in the expected direction. The correlations between administrative support and emotional exhaustion ($r = -.18$), and between administrative support and personal accomplishment ($r = .26$), attained significance. The correlation of administrative support and depersonalization ($r = -.07$) was not significant. These results reinforce those of other studies. Lack of perceived supervisory support was related to higher levels of all three burnout classes in the college counsellors studied by Ross, Altmaier and Russell (1989); the researchers concluded that supervisory support has a positive effect on workers' physical and mental health. Similarly, Russell, Altmaier and Van Velzen (1987), in their study of Iowa teachers, found that perceived administrative support was negatively related to the three burnout classes.

Sutton and Fall (1995), who studied the effects of school climate on counsellors' feelings about themselves and their work, found that supportive administrators predicted high self-efficacy among counsellors and high expectations for good results in their work.

The present results, in general, confirm those of earlier studies associating perceived social and administrative support negatively with burnout. Although causation cannot be proven, it is clear that if interventions against burnout among counsellors are created, these support variables will need to be among the factors targeted.

Other Relevant Variables

Three independent variables — gender, experience, and percentage of work time designated for counselling — were suggested by the literature as factors potentially relevant to burnout. The direction of such possible relationships did not emerge clearly from the published research studies. Correlations of each of the three variables with the three burnout classes were examined.

Gender was not correlated significantly with any of the three burnout classes — emotional exhaustion ($r = -.08$), depersonalization ($r = .12$), or personal accomplishment ($r = .08$). These nonsignificant findings coincide with those of three other studies of counsellor burnout in educational institutions. Flournoy (1990) found no gender differences in burnout among college psychotherapists in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. Jupp and Shaul (1991) found similar burnout levels in female and male counsellors at Australian junior colleges. Ross, Altmaier and Russell (1989) discovered similar degrees of

burnout in female and male college counsellors in the U.S. Two other studies each showed gender differences in one burnout class. Russell, Altmaier and Van Velzen (1987), in their study of teacher burnout in Iowa, found that men reported higher depersonalization than did women; the authors offered no explanation. Kruger, Botman and Goodenow (1991) found that female counsellors of emotionally disturbed young people reported higher emotional exhaustion than did their male counterparts; the researchers attributed this in part to the counsellors' need to physically restrain their clients at times, a task the women apparently considered more taxing and troubling than did the men. Overall, gender does not appear to be an important factor in burnout. A question mentioned by Greenglass (1993) is whether family relationships ease job-related strain for working women as much as for working men. Gathering data on familial connections and responsibilities would permit a more complex analysis of the gender issue.

No significant correlation was found between counselling experience and any of the three burnout classes. Experience was weakly correlated with emotional exhaustion ($r=.03$), depersonalization ($r=.10$), and personal accomplishment ($r=-.04$). Likewise, in their study of teacher burnout, Nagy and Davis (1985) found no relationship between experience and burnout. However, a study of counsellors in Australian colleges found that longer employment there was associated with higher burnout (Jupp and Shaul, 1991). The authors said this suggested that burnout results from an accumulation of stress rather than occurring early in employment and then declining; however, Jupp and Shaul did not gather data on overall counselling experience, leaving open the question whether switching to another job would alleviate burnout. Two other studies have shown evidence of the opposite tendency: that less-experienced

counsellors are generally more emotionally exhausted than more-experienced ones. Kruger, Botman and Goodenow (1991) found that counsellors of emotionally disturbed young people reported decreased emotional exhaustion as they gained experience. Similarly, in their investigation of U.S. university counselling centres, Ross, Altmaier and Russell (1989) discovered that less-experienced counsellors were more prone to emotional exhaustion. They suggested that more-experienced counsellors might be less willing to admit to psychological strain than might less-experienced ones, but also that the latter lacked some of the coping mechanisms required to handle job-related stress. It is likely that, as stresses are accumulating over years of experience, counsellors gradually put more emphasis on developing the support and the coping skills that will moderate the damage. If they are unsuccessful at this, they may leave counselling; there is a survivor bias in the data. A study of U.S. social workers found that a core group of highly experienced workers seemed immune to burnout although the turnover rate among their colleagues was high (Beemsterboer & Baum, 1984).

Percentage of work time counselling was not correlated significantly with emotional exhaustion ($r = -.06$) or with depersonalization ($r = .01$). However, percentage counselling was correlated significantly with personal accomplishment ($r = .26$); that is, the higher the proportion of work time spent counselling, the greater the counsellor's feelings of personal accomplishment were likely to be. Apparently, feelings of job fulfilment are greater when the counsellor can concentrate on playing one role. In the literature there is no direct reinforcement of this result, but studies raise related issues. Sutton and Fall (1995) found that school counsellors who were assigned to duties outside their specialty area expected their counselling work to be less effective; the

authors did not study burnout, but it is reasonable to expect that lower outcome expectancy would be associated with reduced feelings of personal accomplishment. Ross, Altmaier and Russell (1989) found that counsellors who supervised a colleague in addition to doing their own counselling work were more affected by emotional exhaustion than those who were just counselling. The significant positive correlation found in the present study between personal accomplishment and percentage of time devoted to counselling suggests it would be helpful for educational administrators to minimize mixed-role assignments in schools: As much as possible, that is, counsellors will counsel, teachers will teach, and administrators will administer. Counsellors would be torn less frequently between the conflicting demands of being a teacher or administrator as well as a counsellor. Because of limited resources and the exigencies of scheduling, this ideal division of roles would be more easily accomplished in larger schools.

Regression

Gender, experience and percentage counselling were employed, along with social support and administrative support, in a multiple regression analysis of each of the three burnout classes. The relationships, or lack thereof, between these five independent variables and burnout were discussed above. In this section there is a summary of the regression analyses, along with brief comments on the results.

Emotional exhaustion was correlated significantly with only one of the five variables, administrative support ($r = -.18$). In the regression analysis of emotional exhaustion, administrative support predicted 4.3% of the variance.

Social support, gender and experience together predicted only an additional 0.9% of the variance, and percentage counselling was excluded as it added nothing to predictive value. The equation was not significant [$F(4,145) = 1.972$; $p = .10$]. Clearly, factors more relevant to emotional exhaustion need to be identified and evaluated. In their meta-analysis of research on burnout in social work, Soderfeldt, Soderfeldt and Warg (1995) found that emotional exhaustion had been shown in various studies to be associated with boredom, low job satisfaction, intent to change jobs, and role conflict. None of these factors was considered directly in the current research; however, role conflict may be a significant factor in relation to emotional exhaustion in the present sample, an issue considered below under Levels of Burnout.

Of the five independent variables, only social support was correlated significantly with depersonalization. When depersonalization was analyzed by multiple regression, social support predicted 5.2% of the variance. Gender, entered next, accounted for an additional 2.2% of the variance. As a group, experience and percentage counselling added 1.2% to the prediction, while administrative support was excluded. The equation was significant [$F(4,142) = 3.344$; $p = .01$]. However, it accounted for just 8.6% of the variance. Accordingly, there must be other, more pertinent factors in predicting depersonalization. In the Soderfeldt et al. (1995) meta-analysis of burnout in social workers, factors shown to be associated with depersonalization were value conflict, high education, low age, and lack of supervisory support. The first of these variables was not measured in the present study, and the other three did not prove to be associated with depersonalization.

As for personal accomplishment, it was correlated significantly with social support, administrative support, and percentage counselling. In the regression

analysis, all five factors contributed to predict personal accomplishment. Social support alone predicted 16.1% of the variance, while administrative support accounted for a further, significant amount, 2.4%, of the variance. The five variables as a group predicted 21.3% of the variance in personal accomplishment. The equation was significant [$F(5,141) = 7.614; p < .001$]. Social support, administrative support and percentage counselling are undoubtedly related in an important way to personal accomplishment in the present sample. None of these variables was found in the Soderfeldt et al. (1995) meta-analysis, but it listed other factors shown to be associated negatively with personal accomplishment: Type A personality, public-sector work, bad working conditions, unfair promotional policies, role ambiguity, and lack of team support. The last two variables may be related to aspects of the present study. In a way, role ambiguity may parallel percentage counselling; a lower percentage of counselling duties implies the presence of teaching or administrative duties, and this combination of roles might create ambiguity. Lack of team support may be associated with lack of administrative support, as the principal is customarily expected to develop cohesion among professional staff.

In summation, the five variables entered into the regression analyses predicted, as a group, only modest proportions of the variance in the three burnout classes. One factor of note in each analysis is multicollinearity; the significant correlation ($r = .31; p < .01$) between social support and administrative support meant that the two factors overlapped in explaining variance. If the exploratory variables had been entered, they would likely have accounted for little additional variance, for they were not significantly associated with burnout. Other factors that might be better predictors of burnout are discussed below in the sections Further Discussion and Recommendations for Future Research.

Exploratory Variables

Three further independent variables — age, education and school size — were added to the study as exploratory factors.

Age was not correlated significantly with any of the burnout classes: emotional exhaustion ($r = -.08$), depersonalization ($r = -.01$), and personal accomplishment ($r = .05$). These results contrast in part with those of Flournoy (1990), who surveyed psychotherapists employed in college counselling centres in the Los Angeles area. She found a significant negative relationship between age and emotional exhaustion, and attributed it to two factors: frustrated idealism among younger professionals, and older workers' more efficient use of time and energy. Flournoy found no significant correlation between age and depersonalization, or age and personal accomplishment. A study of teacher burnout in Iowa found a similar pattern. Younger teachers reported higher emotional exhaustion than did their older colleagues, but there was no significant relationship between age and either of the other two burnout classes (Russell, Altmaier & Van Velzen, 1987). The lack of a significant finding in the present study can perhaps be understood in light of the fact that the vast majority of participants were of mature years; only 7.7% of the counsellors were younger than age 36. This suggests that maturity is an important criterion in deciding which teachers are assigned to counselling positions. It is reasonable to suppose the younger professionals were given counselling duties because, among other reasons, they displayed the maturity essential to dealing with the job's pressures in a way that would forestall exhaustion.

In a report on their study of self-efficacy among elementary and high school counsellors in Maine, Sutton and Fall (1995) suggested the counsellors'

personal level of education as a variable worth investigating. Two of the major inquiries into counsellor burnout (Flournoy, 1990; Ross, Altmaier & Russell, 1989) confined themselves to doctoral-level professionals. There is nothing else in the literature about the possible association of burnout and education level. In the present research, education level did not account for significant differences in any burnout class — emotional exhaustion ($F=0.92$; $p=.43$), depersonalization ($F=0.25$; $p=.86$), or personal accomplishment ($F=1.25$; $p=.29$). It is difficult to know the meaning of this lack of differences. If it is true, as some burnout theorists say, that burnout arises from difficulties in the personal interactions of helpers with others (Maslach, 1982, p. 3), then education level may simply be irrelevant to this interplay. On the other hand, one must consider that 67.5% of the counsellors in the present study had at least a master's degree, and a further 17.8% had a graduate diploma. While no information was gathered on the disciplines in which these degrees and diplomas were granted, it seems safe to state, from anecdotal evidence, that in most cases the fields of study would be counselling, counselling psychology, or related areas such as educational psychology. In such programs of study, counsellors generally get information and practice in dealing effectively with others without suffering undue strain. In this light, we might have expected a higher level of education to be associated with lower burnout. Gathering information on fields of study would have permitted further analysis of this phenomenon.

School size was also recommended by Sutton and Fall (1995) as a variable worthy of interest in research on school counsellors. They did not suggest what direction the burnout-size relationship might take. In the present study, school size did not account for significant differences in emotional exhaustion ($F=0.85$; $p=.49$) or in depersonalization ($F=1.44$; $p=.23$). There

were no significant differences in personal accomplishment either ($F=2.23$; $p=.07$), but this result trended toward significance at $p<.05$; larger school size tended to be associated with higher personal accomplishment (a sign of lower burnout). The explanation of this tendency is not clear, but it may perhaps be found in the significant positive correlation between percentage counselling and personal accomplishment ($r=.26$; $p<.01$). As will be noted in the next section, counsellors in larger schools are far more likely than their counterparts in smaller schools to be counselling full-time, or nearly; this fact, rather than school size in itself, might account for counsellors' tendency to have stronger feelings of personal accomplishment in larger schools.

Relationships among Independent Variables

Seven pairs of independent variables were chosen, a priori, to be examined for relationships. The findings are outlined and discussed here.

As expected, the correlation between administrative support and social support was positive and significant ($r=.31$; $p<.01$). The explanation has several facets. As mentioned in Chapter I, it is difficult to avoid overlap in measuring the two types of support. Sometimes counsellors consider their principals as belonging to their social networks; in fact, one participant in this study added to the questionnaire a note saying his principal was his best friend. Administrative support may be seen as a type of social support and is sometimes measured in that way. For example, Ross, Altmaier and Russell (1989), in studying U.S. college counsellors, appraised support network resources by dividing them into four categories: supervisor(s), co-workers, spouse, and friends/relatives. Another factor helping to explain the correlation

found is that both support variables were measured by perception. Counsellors' general orientation to the world may have produced part of the correlation. For instance, counsellors who felt lonely may have minimized, consciously or unconsciously, their feelings of being supported by principals, friends and family members, while optimistic counsellors may have maximized such feelings.

Administrative support was also correlated positively and significantly ($r = .27$; $p < .01$) with percentage of time counselling; that is, the higher the proportion of work time designated for counselling, the higher the counsellor's perception of administrative support was likely to be. This result may be explained tentatively. Most counsellors who have been assigned to spend all or most of their work time counselling are likely to feel they have the confidence of the principal. Counsellors who spend less time counselling may feel they have not entirely proven themselves to their principals, and would feel less support. The latter group may also be more vulnerable to the role conflict that affects professionals who fill two different roles (in this case, usually teaching in addition to counselling); this may influence their perception of support as well. Another factor to consider is the pair of significant correlations, discussed above, between percentage counselling and personal accomplishment ($r = .26$; $p < .01$) and between administrative support and personal accomplishment (also $r = .26$; $p < .01$). It is impossible to determine causation in the interplay of these three variables. It is reasonable to speculate that both higher administrative support and higher percentage counselling play a role in promoting feelings of personal accomplishment. However, it may also be true that a sense of enhanced personal accomplishment is generated in counsellors who are assigned a high percentage of counselling duties, and this in turn may predispose them to look upon their principal's behaviour as being more

supportive.

There were no significant differences in administrative support by size of school ($F=0.93$; $p=.45$). There is nothing in the literature to indicate that such differences exist. Anecdotal evidence is mixed. Counsellors and teachers sometimes remark that smaller schools are more closely knit; accordingly, one might expect higher perceived support from principals there than in larger schools. On the other hand (as will be seen below), in larger schools counsellors are more likely to spend all, or almost all, their time counselling; therefore, they might consider they have the confidence of the principal in their counselling role, and this belief would be reflected in their perception of administrative support.

Heaney (1993), in a study of perceived control in the workplace, suggested women and men may perceive supervisory support in different ways. In the present study, gender did not account for a significant difference in perceived administrative support ($t=-0.52$; $p=.60$). In considering these results, it is important to bear in mind that most high school principals are men; obtaining data on principals' gender would allow exploration of same-gender and different-gender relationships between counsellors and principals.

Social support was correlated significantly ($r=.16$) with age, older counsellors tending to report higher perceived social support than did younger ones. This finding may be explained in two ways. First, given that it was counsellors' perception of support that was measured, older counsellors may have a fuller, more reflective awareness than do younger counsellors of their personal social network and its value to them. Second, counsellors' perception may simply coincide with reality; older counsellors may indeed have wider and deeper social and familial connections than do their younger colleagues.

There was no significant difference in social support by gender ($t = -0.19$; $p = .85$). In the vast literature on social support there is some evidence, albeit tentative and often inconsistent, of gender differences in various aspects of social support. For example, Mallinckrodt and Fretz (1988) found that older professional women who had lost their jobs reported greater social support than their male counterparts; however, the participants in that study were not helping professionals, their number was very small, and they were all middle-aged or older, so conclusions are difficult to draw. Other research connecting gender and social support had similar limitations. As for the current study, perception was the sole aspect of social support measured, and it appears to be unaffected by gender. If social support had been measured in other established ways — for instance, by an inventory of friends and family members, or by frequency of social contacts with them, or by diagramming social networks — the results might be different.

There were significant differences in percentage of time counselling by school size ($F = 4.89$; $p = .001$); the larger the school, the greater the counsellor's percentage of work time designated for counselling tended to be. This finding was as expected, and is largely attributable to differences in the apportionment of counselling time in schools of various sizes. Small schools tend to have two counsellors (administrators prefer to have one female and one male) but often there are insufficient counselling hours available for these counselling positions to be full-time, so the incumbents teach or administer as well. In medium-sized schools there are typically two or three full-time counsellors along with one or more part-time ones. In very large schools there is plenty of counselling time to be allotted, and this permits several full-time counsellors (frequently one for each grade level).

Levels of Burnout

The participants in this research reported significantly higher emotional exhaustion than did the normative group of mental health professionals ($t=4.26$; $p<.001$). However, they reported significantly lower depersonalization ($t=-5.34$; $p<.001$) and significantly higher personal accomplishment, an indication of low burnout ($t=31.24$; $p<.001$).

Drawing conclusions from comparison of this sample with the norms must be done with caution. Although the normative group chosen for the comparison was, in its composition, the closest fit to the high school counsellor sample, there is hardly an ideal correspondence between the two. The Maslach Burnout Inventory mental health sample included school counsellors but also several other types of mental health workers including psychologists and psychiatrists. It is possible that working conditions, types of clients, problems addressed, and personal influences may differ greatly between the two groups. Comparisons of burnout levels must be regarded in that light.

With this caution in mind, it is still worth considering the relatively high level of emotional exhaustion found in the present sample, especially in view of the low levels of burnout found in the other two categories. If emotional exhaustion were low, one might conclude that burnout appeared not to be a serious issue for high school counsellors; as it is rather high, it merits more attention than the other two burnout classes.

Regrettably, the independent variables selected for this study do not allow us to account for much of the comparatively high levels of emotional exhaustion — the feeling of being emotionally overextended and fatigued by one's work, so that one feels less able to give of oneself. Emotional exhaustion

was significantly correlated with administrative support ($r = -.18$); this explained only 4.3% of the variance in emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion was correlated weakly and not significantly with social support ($r = -.10$), and not significantly with any other independent variable. Plainly, we must look elsewhere for explanations, which are necessarily speculative.

In their meta-analysis of studies of burnout in social work, Soderfeldt, Soderfeldt, and Warg (1995) outlined factors shown by various researchers to be related to emotional exhaustion: role conflict, boredom, low job satisfaction, and intention to change jobs. The present study did not measure these four factors, and it is possible that some or all of them are associated with the quite high level of emotional exhaustion found; they merit further research.

The relatively high emotional exhaustion found in the sample suggests that help should be offered to counsellors who want it. Intervention could be aimed primarily at counsellors' inner world, at the external stress factors, or both. In the first case, programs could help counsellors develop the attitudes, coping strategies, new counselling behaviours and other aptitudes that might alleviate job stress and lessen emotional exhaustion. Such interventions could take forms similar to those offered by counsellors to their clients who have similar problems (for a review, see Pearson, 1990). In the second case, the specific stressors in the job, if identified, could be minimized by counteractions as needed — for instance, cutting the work load, changing or clarifying the role description of counsellors, or providing them with additional free time, more comfortable office space, higher prestige, or other forms of support. Some sources of stress in modern high school counselling are discussed further in the next section. However, if interventions are to be useful, they will need to be based on further research into factors related to emotional exhaustion.

Further Discussion

The results reaffirm the relevance of perceived social and administrative support to burnout. On the other hand, with the exception of the two variables that appear pertinent to personal accomplishment, the six counsellor and job characteristics showed only weak, nonsignificant associations with burnout. This implies that other factors are more important. Some variables of interest are suggested in this section, which outlines a few contemporary issues in the working lives of British Columbia high school counsellors.

Many of these counsellors have made anecdotal reports (some of which were appended to the questionnaire used in this research, though they were not requested) of feeling overwhelmed by one or more aspects of their work: the seemingly ever-increasing demands of their job, higher caseloads, the tedium of the paperwork burden, lack of helpful evaluation of their work, and difficulty created by the lack of a clear role definition for them. Each issue is considered here in turn.

As to rising demands on their time and talents, counsellors often find themselves having to fill the responsibilities of others — for example, to sort out personal problems of students that in an earlier era would have been handled by parents. There are counsellors who are not educated or inclined to do therapeutic work who nevertheless feel forced to take it on because family support and community resources are not available to students. More and more, counsellors do social problem-solving work such as presenting anti-bullying workshops to groups of their student clients. They also serve, with increasing frequency, as unofficial hosts to social workers who visit the school on child-welfare and child-custody investigations, to police personnel, and to a

variety of other visitors. These extra duties must be considered deleterious for counsellors in view of evidence that job settings that are burnout-prone are characterized by work overload (Flournoy, 1990).

Caseloads have been increased sharply in recent years as a result of budget cuts to British Columbia schools. In early 1998, a survey by the British Columbia School Counsellors Association showed that student/counsellor ratios in the province's high schools varied from 541/1 to 225/1. Reporting the results of the survey, the association's president noted that the average ratio has increased sharply, leading to a wearing away of direct counselling time with students:

Erosion has several faces: elimination of services; increased teaching time; increased paper work (particularly at the senior secondary level), meetings, and consultation with staff and parents. In some districts, erosion has been quite subtle. Until the counsellors actually sat down and looked at what counselling services they had been providing for students four years ago and what they are doing today, they did not realize how much actual counselling time they had lost! And while our services are being eroded, we are all seeing more and more needy children in our schools (Clayton, 1998, p. 1-2).

Paperwork appears to be a particular annoyance to counsellors, at least in some school districts. Counsellors have reported their frustration at the mounting paperwork thrust upon them — for instance, government and school district forms, and scholarship applications for senior students. (A few school districts employ clerical workers to perform these tasks.) These comments echo the finding of Partin (1993) that there is an enormous difference between the ideal and actual time designated for school counselling, especially in view of

the increasingly heavy load of clerical and quasi-administrative tasks involved in the job.

Constructive evaluation of counsellors' work is frequently lacking. While the work of high school teachers is evaluated objectively at least sometimes (for example, through provincial exam results and school test results compared with those of other teachers), the effectiveness of counsellors' work is intrinsically hard to measure. Administrators and fellow counsellors are understandably reluctant to intrude on the privacy of much counselling work, but the lack of suitable evaluation may contribute to isolation, confusion, or the repetition of pointless or negative counselling behaviour.

The role ambiguity inherent in being a counsellor seems troublesome to many counsellors. Expectations for counsellors vary among school districts, among schools in the same district, and even among counsellors in the same school. Role confusion has many causes and takes diverse forms. Often counsellors feel confused or upset because their commitment to the educational, personal and social development of students comes into conflict with the demands of the system; some counsellors are expected to discipline students, to look after attendance monitoring and follow-up, to do timetabling, to cover teachers' classes, or to submit to various other administrative intrusions on their time and preferred role. These matters can have direct, harmful effects on the counsellor; moreover, they can undermine or destroy the student-counsellor relationship, as the student may no longer see the counsellor as a safe and confidential source of support. An additional concern for counsellors at the moment is the potential influence on their work of the province's new Ministry for Children and Families. This ministry was established to play the leading role in providing social services to children and adolescents. Until now,

the ministry's work in schools has been mostly confined to the elementary level. High school counsellors have noted little impact on their work, but some are concerned that a projected reorganization of counselling services for adolescents might change or even usurp their present role. Incertitude about how the work of the two groups will interact, and to what effect, is causing disquiet (Clayton, 1998, p. 2). One important aspect of the role confusion is that in British Columbia, as in many other places, the high school counsellor's duties are not specified legally or contractually. Whether the ambiguity of the role helps to create the contractual vagueness, or results from it, is debatable. In any case, counsellors have no specific legal support in saying "no" to having extraneous or contradictory duties imposed on them. Attempts have been made to develop a role description that can be used by counsellors individually or in groups to assert their desires for, and their rights to, a clear and workable role in the schools. The British Columbia School Counsellors Association outlined a job description that included four major elements: counselling, consultation, co-ordination and education. This framework was adopted by the provincial education ministry (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1995, p. D5-6). However, given the disparities in the expectations held for counsellors in different schools, districts and regions, and the relative isolation of many counsellors, little progress has been made in implementing this model. It may be prudent for counsellors to unify themselves more and to press more strongly for the dignity and clarity of their role.

If these five issues in the current working lives of British Columbia high school counsellors had been considered in the present research, it is likely that more of the variance in burnout would have been explained. Which of the five variables would have predicted changes in specific burnout classes is a matter

of speculation, but a meta-analysis of research on burnout in social work provides clues. Soderfeldt, Soderfeldt, and Warg (1995) found that emotional exhaustion had been associated with role conflict and with boredom. Therefore, role ambiguity and the tedium of paperwork may help to further explain emotional exhaustion. Soderfeldt et al. found depersonalization to be related to value conflict. The role ambiguity often reported anecdotally by counsellors may reflect such conflict. Asking counsellors to specify the vagueness, the dilemmas and the contradictions associated with their work might lead us to a deeper understanding of depersonalization. As to personal accomplishment, role ambiguity again appeared in the Soderfeldt et al. study as an important related factor. In addition, public-sector work and bad working conditions were related to reduced personal accomplishment. In an era of governmental budget cuts, the increasing demands on counsellors' time and the higher caseloads may explain an important proportion of variance in personal accomplishment.

Clearly, the five elements of high school counsellors' contemporary work situation discussed in this section need to be weighed in any further research that is done, in the possible development of supportive interventions, and in any practical and policy changes designed to enhance counsellors' work. The quickly changing nature and circumstances of counsellors' work point to the need to consult counsellors directly about research variables, interventions, and ongoing changes to their job descriptions and responsibilities.

Recommendations for Future Research

This concluding section comprises some general suggestions on how other investigators could proceed with research on this topic, and then some

more specific recommendations of variables to be examined.

As noted in the review of the literature, burnout among high school counsellors has attracted scant attention. Burnout studies in general are sometimes hard to evaluate because of the great variety of methods and instruments used, the sometimes vague reporting, and the inadequately defined samples employed. Investigations need to be designed rigourously, samples need to be chosen carefully and with little regard for convenience, and thorough statistical analysis should be brought to bear. Much remains to be done if a strong understanding of the problem is to be developed.

Although burnout is widely viewed as a menace, little is actually known about its prevalence. We need more studies employing descriptive statistics to define the prevalence of burnout in the schools of various school districts, provinces, even countries. There is now little empirical justification for answers to such questions as: 1. "What percentage of the counsellor population is burned out?" and 2. "Do people get over being burned out, and if so does the problem recur?"

This first question raises a central issue: the lack of a clearcut border between burnout cases and non-cases. There is a natural reluctance to label people, and scores on the MBI and on other instruments are usually compared to the relevant norms without any effort to say whether the individual is burned out; the interventions that have been developed are simply aimed at moderating the burnout and thus lowering the score. Adopting cutoff points might help researchers focus their attention on dealing with the serious cases and might also promote knowledge about the varying effects of burnout at different levels, from low to high.

The second question above underlines the importance of longitudinal

studies. Despite the practical and methodological difficulties inherent in such research, the longitudinal approach will be needed to overcome the limitations of correlational research, in which cause-and-effect inferences cannot be drawn. For example, the present study confirmed the relationship of administrative support to burnout, but cannot draw conclusions about causation. In contrast, longitudinal studies have already fingered lack of supervisory support as an antecedent of burnout (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993). Longitudinal research would also provide information about the phases of burnout.

Research into the natural cycles of school life as they affect counsellors could yield interesting results. Although the pattern of such cycles is the subject of much debate among counsellors, many of them would report that their morale and energy are stronger at certain stages of the school year than at others. This research was conducted in February, mid-year for schools on a linear timetable but the beginning of a semester for schools on a semester timetable. It is impossible to know how this timing affected the results. Future research could investigate seasonal fluctuations by surveying counsellors more than once during the year.

There is a need for a common language to denote the phenomenon of burnout wherever and whenever it may appear. Using the same measure in all research would provide consistency and comparability. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) is by far the most popular instrument and has well-established psychometric utility. Moreover, research outside North America shows the MBI's exportability. "Available studies reveal patterns of burnout covariates much like those isolated in U.S. and Canadian settings. Specifically, the three subdomains of burnout seem to be perceived similarly by samples from different nations" (Golembiewski, Scherb, & Boudreau, 1993, p. 235). Therefore, future

studies would probably benefit from using the MBI.

Notwithstanding this suggestion, it is striking that self-report measures such as the MBI are often the only index of burnout used in studies. Researchers seldom consider such items as job performance evaluations, absenteeism, turnover, illness, and ratings by other such as colleagues, clients or family. The relationship between these measures and self-reported burnout needs investigation.

Inquiring into relationships among the three classes of burnout considered by the MBI is another potentially rewarding avenue of research. For instance, could feelings of frustration and reduced personal accomplishment lead to emotional exhaustion, and could that then lead to depersonalization? Alternatively, might emotional exhaustion from overwork provoke depersonalization, which in turn could lead to impaired feelings of personal accomplishment? Or could there be a completely different chain of cause-and-effect? If such sequences could be identified, corrective action would be easier to develop and to implement successfully.

This study did not inquire into the specific stressful events that counsellors encounter at work. A future investigation could develop a measure of job-related stressful incidents. Perhaps a pilot study could ask a sample of counsellors to list the most stressful events or situations they had experienced in the preceding months or the previous school year — for example, “having to take work home on the weekend” or “argument with a colleague”. Researchers then could combine similar replies and make up an inventory of events for use in their research; participants in the second stage of the research would indicate whether they had experienced each type of event and, if so, would indicate on a scale how stressful the event was to them. The researchers could use the

number of experienced events as one measure of stress, and the subjective ratings of intensity of stress as another measure.

One potential use of such an instrument would be in research into the mutual interaction between stress and burnout — i.e. how stress may create burnout, and how burnout may increase the number of stresses experienced or intensify their effect. There may be patterns of influence that are so far unknown; as a speculative example, disputes with colleagues or administrators might be shown to be more frequent or more damaging to counsellors than are problems in dealing with student clients. If such patterns were known, remedies might be more easily obtained.

In addition to the general recommendations made so far, here are several more specific ones about variables that might profitably be considered in future investigations.

This study found no relationship between the counsellors' gender and their perceptions of administrative support, but the survey did not inquire about the gender of principals. Until recently, this question would have been almost pointless, as virtually all high school principals were men. However, with more women acceding to the position, future studies might ask for the gender of both counsellors and principals, with a view to determining whether perceived support of same-gender principals differs from that of opposite-gender principals.

Although the principal is usually seen to set the tone in a school, there is a wider school culture that could be investigated. The importance of collegial support, including that of counsellors from other schools or other counselling settings as well as that of counsellors and teachers in the same school, is widely acknowledged, but such support has not been thoroughly examined in

connection with burnout.

The current study did not inquire into the personal lives of counsellors. One interesting approach would be to consider the influence on burnout of a caregiving role at home; in other words, is counsellors' burnout mitigated, or exacerbated, by having responsibility for others? Or, marital status, although this is somewhat difficult to define at present, could be considered. Ross, Altmaier and Russell (1989), in their study of U.S. university counselling centres, found that married counsellors suffered more emotional exhaustion than did unmarried ones; however, they noted earlier studies showing just the opposite.

Another avenue of inquiry would be to find out precisely what counsellors do during their working day. Asking them to specify their duties, along with the amount of time allotted to each, would garner valuable information. Researchers might discover, for instance, whether a counsellor with a heavy paper burden is more likely to be burned out than one who spends most of the day in group guidance sessions, or one who offers intense individual counselling for personal issues.

In light of the widely accepted importance of coping strategies in dealing successfully with stress, future burnout studies could investigate the particular ways in which counsellors endeavour to deal with the daily pressures of their lives and jobs. Sowa, May and Niles (1994) found that rational-cognitive problem-solving ability was not associated with reported stress levels among school counsellors in Virginia; the researchers suggested that other coping resources might prove to be of greater importance. Instruments measuring a range of coping processes such as confrontive coping, escape-avoidance, and positive reappraisal (e.g. the Ways of Coping Questionnaire, designed by Folkman and Lazarus) are available and could yield interesting results.

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Appendix A

Notes on Returns and Scoring

Returns

Of the 265 surveys mailed out on February 1, 1998, 163 were filled in and returned, for a return rate of 61.51%.

Included in the return rate were six questionnaires that were not used:

- One was discarded because only scattered parts of it were completed, and the respondent appeared to have seriously misunderstood the directions.

- Another was set aside because Part IV (the burnout measure) had been detached and was not returned.

- A third questionnaire was not used because the respondent, normally a counsellor, was teaching full time that school year and not counselling at all.

- Three questionnaires arrived too late to be included in the analysis.

Five additional questionnaires were returned without being filled in; these were not included in the return rate.

The 157 surveys used in this study were complete except for seven that lacked a response on years of counselling experience, and three that lacked an answer on the percentage of time designated for counselling.

Scoring

In consultation with Dr. Beth Haverkamp, a member of the research committee, decisions were made about how to deal consistently with occasional responses that did not entirely fit the directions on the questionnaire.

On the burnout measure, from time to time answers such as "always" and "once in a while" were entered instead of the required numbers. These replies were converted into the most closely corresponding numbers.

Also on the burnout measure, answers on individual items were sometimes omitted. Each missing answer was scored as the average of the other scores on the subscale to which the item belonged.

In all parts of the questionnaire, whenever a participant gave two answers to an item, or an answer fell between two scores, the higher score was used.

Appendix B

Covering Letter

Appendix C

High School Counsellor Questionnaire

High School Counsellor Questionnaire

In Part I of this survey, you are asked for information about **you and your job**. Then, in Part II, you are asked to comment on a set of statements about your relationships with **family and friends**. Part III invites you to respond to statements about your **principal**. Finally, in Part IV, you are asked to say how frequently you experience some **job-related feelings**.

Part I

Please provide the following information by filling the blank or using a ✓, as needed.

- a. Age: ____
- b. Gender: Female ____ Male ____
- c. Years of experience as a part-time and / or full-time counsellor: ____
- d. Highest degree you hold (in any field of study):
- Bachelor's ____
- Graduate Diploma ____
- Master's ____
- Doctorate ____
- e. The student population of your school is:
- Less than 500 ____ 500-999 ____ 1000-1499 ____
- 1500-1999 ____ 2000 or more ____
- f. Specify your present regular duties in the school:
- Counselling only ____
- Counselling and other duties such as administration or teaching ____ *
- * If you have duties other than counselling, please indicate the
 percentage of your time that is designated for counselling: ____%

Part II

Below is a list of statements about your relationships with **family and friends**.
By circling one number in each row, please indicate how much you disagree or agree
with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. My friends respect me.	1	2	3	4
2. My family cares for me very much.	1	2	3	4
3. I am not important to others.	1	2	3	4
4. My family holds me in high esteem.	1	2	3	4
5. I am well liked.	1	2	3	4
6. I can rely on my friends.	1	2	3	4
7. I am really admired by my family.	1	2	3	4
8. I am respected by other people.	1	2	3	4
9. I am loved dearly by my family.	1	2	3	4
10. My friends don't care about my welfare.	1	2	3	4
11. Members of my family rely on me.	1	2	3	4
12. I am held in high esteem.	1	2	3	4
13. I can't rely on my family for support.	1	2	3	4
14. People admire me.	1	2	3	4
15. I feel a strong bond with my friends.	1	2	3	4
16. My friends look out for me.	1	2	3	4
17. I feel valued by other people.	1	2	3	4
18. My family really respects me.	1	2	3	4

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
19. My friends and I are really important to each other.	1	2	3	4
20. I feel like I belong.	1	2	3	4
21. If I died tomorrow, very few people would miss me.	1	2	3	4
22. I don't feel close to members of my family.	1	2	3	4
23. My friends and I have done a lot for one another.	1	2	3	4

Part III

Here are some statements about your **principal**. Please indicate the relative frequency with which these behaviours occur (or would occur) by circling one number after each statement.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
1. My principal makes supportive statements about my work.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My principal helps me to be clear about my role.	1	2	3	4	5
3. My principal would defend me against dissenting voices.	1	2	3	4	5

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
4. My principal gives me resources I value (e.g. free time, clerical support, professional growth opportunities, desirable office space).	1	2	3	4	5
5. My principal makes time available to deal with my projects and concerns.	1	2	3	4	5
6. My principal knows how I contribute to the school.	1	2	3	4	5
7. My principal encourages me to express my ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My principal would help relieve the pressure if I felt overwhelmed by the demands of the job.	1	2	3	4	5
9. My principal would consider my needs when changes were being made that would affect me and my work.	1	2	3	4	5
10. My principal's style of leadership is one with which I am comfortable.	1	2	3	4	5

Part IV

Please see the next sheet. On it, recipients refers to the students you counsel.

MBI Human Services Survey

The purpose of this survey is to discover how various persons in the human services or helping professions view their jobs and the people with whom they work closely. Because persons in a wide variety of occupations will answer this survey, it uses the term *recipients* to refer to the people for whom you provide your service, care, treatment, or instruction. When answering this survey please think of these people as recipients of the service you provide, even though you may use another term in your work.

On the following page there are 22 statements of job-related feelings. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way *about your job*. If you have *never* had this feeling, write a "0" (zero) before the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate *how often* you feel it by writing the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way. An example is shown below.

Example:

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

HOW OFTEN

0 - 6

Statement:

_____ I feel depressed at work.

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



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MBI Human Services Survey

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

HOW OFTEN 0 - 6

Statements:

1. _____ I feel emotionally drained from my work.
2. _____ I feel used up at the end of the workday.
3. _____ I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.
4. _____ I can easily understand how my recipients feel about things.
5. _____ I feel I treat some recipients as if they were impersonal objects.
6. _____ Working with people all day is really a strain for me.
7. _____ I deal very effectively with the problems of my recipients.
8. _____ I feel burned out from my work.
9. _____ I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work.
10. _____ I've become more callous toward people since I took this job.
11. _____ I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.
12. _____ I feel very energetic.
13. _____ I feel frustrated by my job.
14. _____ I feel I'm working too hard on my job.
15. _____ I don't really care what happens to some recipients.
16. _____ Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.
17. _____ I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my recipients.
18. _____ I feel exhilarated after working closely with my recipients.
19. _____ I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.
20. _____ I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.
21. _____ In my work, I deal with emotional problems very calmly.
22. _____ I feel recipients blame me for some of their problems.

(Administrative use only)

cat.

cat.

cat.

EE: _____ DP: _____ PA: _____