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Is There Hope for Teacher Burnout?

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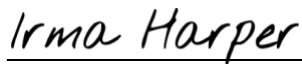
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership



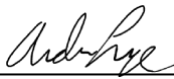
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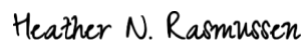
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Is There Hope for Teacher Burnout?

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Ami Houston

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Dedication

To Skylar, my heart and my best friend: If it were not for your suggestion to “get a hobby,” I might never have pursued my dreams. Thank you for staying up with me on the late nights, taking care of our girls when I couldn’t, cooking delicious meals, and holding down the entire house when the table was filled with articles, books, colorful pens, and coffee. Thank you for being my voice of reason, pushing me past the toughest moments, and reminding me who I am. I knew there was something special about you in seventh grade and that becomes more apparent to me each day I get to spend with you doing life together. You inspire me. I look up to you and only hope I make you as happy as you make me. I love you with all my heart.

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Abstract

The nation's educational system is faced with an ongoing issue as teachers are choosing to leave the profession in staggering numbers. Teacher attrition affects not only teachers who have already left the field and those currently still in it but also those who would potentially enter the teacher pipeline and students in the care of these teachers. While several factors are at fault for this phenomenon, one of the most pressing contributors to teacher attrition is teacher burnout, as teachers are exposed to exhaustion, cynicism, and decreasing self-efficacy. The purpose of this study was to examine relationships between the dimensions of teacher burnout and the cognitive constructs of hope and to understand the mediating role hope plays between teacher burnout and their intention to leave either their current role or the teaching profession altogether. While the existing literature addresses the relationships between hope and burnout in other areas, little has been published addressing these phenomena in the teaching profession. The strategy of inquiry for the study was quantitative, using a path analysis to determine if there was a relationship between burnout and hope and burnout and the intention to leave the teaching profession. Participants in the study included 95 teachers registered on the Performance-Based Academic Coaching Teams database. Data were collected using an online survey instrument and analyzed in IBM SPSS 25 Software using correlational analysis, multiple regression, and path analysis to analyze data. The results of this study indicated that there were statistically significant correlations between the dimensions of burnout and hope, and although it was a predictor for intention to leave, hope did not play a mediating role between burnout and intention to leave. Because of these relationships between hope, burnout, and intention to leave, school leaders have new alternatives to explore in initiating change and empowering and retaining teachers.

Keywords: burnout, intention to leave, hope, attrition, turnover

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Teacher turnover “has become increasingly important in debates about the teaching profession in the United States” and “reduces the quantity of teachers available to schools, particularly exacerbating localized teacher shortages” (Harris & Adams, 2007, p. 325). While numerous reasons are cited for the mass exodus of teachers, burnout has become subject of an abundance of recent research (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Teacher burnout is “an unpleasant and dysfunctional condition that both individuals and organizations would like to change” and many researchers “have tried to identify the primary causes or correlates of burnout, with the goal of developing generic intervention strategies to change these factors” (Maslach & Leiter, 2008, p. 498). These early indicators of teacher burnout could potentially “be used to identify ‘high risk’ people who could be targeted for early, preventative interventions” (Maslach & Leiter, 2008, p. 498) before the emotional cost of continuance becomes no longer worth the effort.

Teaching is “grasped as an emotional practice during which teachers explore their feelings and use them regularly” (Mevarech & Maskit, 2015, p. 243). It is these same emotions that will ultimately transmute into burnout, which “has been associated with various forms of negative responses to the job, including job dissatisfaction, low organizational commitment, absenteeism, intention to leave the job, and turnover” (Maslach & Leiter, 2008, p. 499). But even as the drudgery of the stressful workload ensues, there may be a new solution on the horizon in the role that hope plays in teacher burnout and a teacher’s intention to leave her job or the profession altogether.

This chapter contains the problem of practice, the purpose of this study, and research questions that frame and guide this study. In addition, I define and explain key terms that are

relevant and unique to this study. Finally, at the end of this chapter, the study is summarized, and an outline previews the subsequent chapters.

Background

Embodying a profession of helpers (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001), teachers are typically natural optimists and not chronic complainers (Tye & O'Brien, 2002). However, it seems that the stresses of the profession are resulting in a loss of joy and satisfaction for teachers, causing one of the highest turnover rates of all professional groups (Rumschlag, 2017). This exodus of disgruntled teachers causes alarm among school officials (Moller, Moller, & Schmidt, 2016) and places the delicate teacher pipeline at the forefront of national issues to be addressed.

Historically, teacher turnover is not a new problem. The national rate has remained high over the years: 15% in the late 1980s, 13.2% in the early 1990s, and 14.3% in the mid-1990s (Ingersoll, 2001). This attrition is linked to factors such as stress, burnout, salary, and job dissatisfaction (Ryan et al., 2017) and continues to increase, making it difficult for school districts to find qualified employees to fill positions (Rumschlag, 2017). A careful investigation of this crisis may provide new insight to stabilize this growing attrition rate (Rumschlag, 2017) and positively impact the nation's schools and the teacher pipeline.

In 1974, Freudenberger "studied emotional depletion, lack of motivation, and commitment to coin the phrase *burnout*" (Rumschlag, 2017, p. 23). For this research, Freudenberger (1974) focused on caregiving and service occupations, and his work was later expanded upon by Maslach (1976), who "interviewed workers about emotional stress, professional identity, and quality of work" (Rumschlag, 2017, p. 23). Freudenberger (1974) stated that he "considered job burnout as a symptom of emotional exhaustion that was commonly observed among individuals working in health professions" (as cited in Yu, Wang, Zhai, Dai, &

Yang, 2014, p. 702). This phenomenon of job burnout is the result of an individual's failure to endure work-related pressure and refers to an "exhausted state of emotion, attitudes, and behavior that arises from a prolonged experience of stress" (Yu et al., 2014, p. 702). Ultimately, the pressures associated with the workplace that contribute to job burnout cause teachers to "lose their passion for education and teaching, experience a state of extreme fatigue, completely lose their enthusiasm, and demonstrate passive, negative, or indifferent attitudes toward their students" (Yu et al., 2014, p. 705).

It is no secret that teachers are subjected to stress in their profession. This stress significantly contributes to teacher burnout, which is often a precursor to teacher attrition (Rumschlag, 2017; Ryan et al., 2017; Shen et al., 2015). However, teachers who are affected by the pressures and stressors of the workplace do not always choose to leave; rather, some stay, creating additional potential dangers with unsatisfactory teaching as they feel "helpless, negative, and overwhelmed" (Tye & O'Brien, 2002, p. 31).

Statement of the Problem

Teacher burnout "is a chronic phenomenon that continues to be a main cause of the teacher exodus in the 21st century," and it is "a precursor to teacher attrition" (Rumschlag, 2017, p. 22). It is characterized by emotional exhaustion and stress, which decrease one's feeling of efficacy and productiveness at work (Benoliel & Barth, 2017, p. 646). It continues to be "regarded as a serious problem in school settings," and it may dramatically reduce a teacher's quality of life, leading to deterioration in teaching efficiency, absenteeism, and job turnover (Shen et al., 2015, p. 519).

Teachers do not start their career this way, though. They often enter the profession hopeful, excited, and with the desire to impact students' lives (Tsang & Liu, 2016). They have a

“range of hope, from lighthearted hope of potential” to the “activist militant kind of hope that arises, strengthens, and defies adversity” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 27). Despite its importance in education, the “role of hope in teaching has not drawn much academic attention” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 27). In fact, the “much-studied cognitive and behavioral activities of teaching are treated as though they operate independently from dispositions and other affective states” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 27). Hope in teaching “remains largely unexplored, and our understanding of hope is intuitive rather than explicit” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 28).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between the dimensions of teacher burnout (Maslach, 1998) and the cognitive constructs of hope (Snyder, 2002). In addition, I sought to understand the mediating role hope plays between teacher burnout and their intention to leave either their current role or the teaching profession altogether. While researchers in the existing literature address the relationships between hope and burnout among nurses (Sherwin et al., 1992), athletes (Gustafsson, Skoog, Podlog, Lundqvist, & Wagnsson, 2013), and medical emergency professionals (Ho & Lo, 2011), little has been published addressing these phenomena in the teaching profession. In this study, I aimed to provide an awareness of the role hope plays in teacher burnout and provide valuable insight to initiate change in job satisfaction and retention of teachers.

The strategy of inquiry for the study was quantitative, using path analysis to determine if there was a relationship between burnout and hope and burnout and a teacher’s intention to leave. The participants from this study were practicing Texas teachers with at least 1 year of experience whom I randomly selected from the Performance-Based Academic Coaching Teams

(PACT) database. The participants completed a questionnaire on SurveyMonkey via a link sent to their email address.

Research Questions

Q1. To what extent, if any, is there a relationship between teacher burnout and hope according to the perspective of teachers?

H₀. There are no relationships between teacher burnout and hope.

H₁. There are significant relationships between teacher burnout and hope.

Q2. To what degree does hope mediate between teacher burnout and intention to leave?

H₀. Hope is not a mediator between burnout and intention to leave.

H₁. Hope is a mediator between teacher burnout and intention to leave.

Definition of Key Terms

Attrition. Teacher attrition, an aspect of teacher turnover, includes teachers exiting the profession and may also include teachers who change fields or schools (Croasmun, Hampton, & Herrmann, n.d.). In this paper, I will refer to attrition as teachers exiting the profession.

Burnout. Burnout is “a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job, and is defined by the three dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy” (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 397).

Hope. Hope is defined as “a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy) and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)” (Snyder, 2002, p. 250). In goal-directed human actions, “these goals are more clearly described as the cognitive component that anchors hope theory, and provide the targets of mental action sequences” (Snyder, 2002, p. 250).

Intention to leave. According to Sager, Griffeth, and Hom (1998), intention to leave “represents mental decisions intervening between an individual’s attitudes regarding a job and the stay or leave decision” (p. 255). They defined three components of intention to leave: thinking of quitting, intention to search, and intention to quit (Sager et al., 1998).

Teacher turnover. I will address teacher turnover as yearly changes in teacher status, which includes teachers changing job roles or changing schools (Croasmun et al., n.d.).

Turnover intention. Turnover intention is defined by Tett and Meyer (1993, p. 262) as “the conscious and deliberate willfulness to leave the organization.”

Summary

Identifying the relationships between burnout and hope and the mediating role hope plays between burnout and intention to leave can benefit school leaders as they plan interventions to support and retain teachers. As these relationships become apparent, school leaders can work to improve the workplace and even potentially identify early predictors that indicate a teacher might leave her current role.

This chapter included the growing alarm of teacher attrition, the role that burnout plays, and the positive mediation hope might bring between this burnout and a teacher’s intention to leave. Additionally, in this chapter, I addressed the problem and the purpose, presented research questions, and defined key terms. This study is organized into five chapters. In Chapter 2, I review the existing literature, specifically that regarding teacher burnout, hope, and intention to leave. Chapter 3 includes the methodology utilized in the study, and in Chapter 4, I highlight the results, findings, and analysis of the data. Finally, Chapter 5 includes a summary of the research, a discussion, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Our nation's educational system is faced with an issue that seems to defy numerous proposed solutions as teachers continue to leave the workplace. Teacher attrition affects not only teachers who have already left the field and those currently still in it but also those who would potentially enter the teacher pipeline and, worst of all, students in the care of these teachers. One of the most pressing contributors to teacher attrition is teacher burnout, which, with its unrelenting workplace stress, seems to incubate teachers' thoughts of leaving to go to another school, another district, or another career field altogether. While burnout has been heavily studied by researchers in the existing literature, the relationships between burnout and hope in teachers have not. Not every teacher with burnout chooses to leave the profession, and hope could potentially play the mediating role that prevents this from happening.

The purpose of this study was to identify the relationships between teacher burnout and hope and to attempt to reveal if hope is a mediator between teacher burnout and intention to leave the profession. While it is easy to dismiss hope as purely an emotion, this cognitive phenomenon may provide insight into solving the ongoing problems of teacher burnout and teacher attrition. As teachers continue in staggering numbers to exit the profession, policy makers are noticing the urgency of the issue and the potential damage this exodus can cause in the present era of education and in the future (Maslach, 2003). Teachers who were once heavily invested in the profession are now being exposed to exhaustion, cynicism, and decreasing self-efficacy (Maslach, 2003) as a response to increasing job stressors. To some, what once manifested itself as a calling or intrinsic desire just does not seem worth it any longer (Tye & O'Brien, 2002). Some burned-out teachers remain in their roles, which can often do more harm

than good (Tye & O'Brien, 2002), but too many jump ship and abandon teaching altogether for a more satisfying career elsewhere.

I begin this review of literature by discussing teacher attrition, specifically the harms and causes of teacher attrition. I also discuss teacher burnout, detailing the causes of teacher burnout, its impacts, and attempts at intervention. Finally, I introduce Snyder's (2002) hope theory and describe pathway and agentic thinking approaches in goal pursuit, connecting hope to teacher burnout.

The literature presented in this chapter was located primarily by using the OneSearch archives in the Abilene Christian University Brown Library. In addition, the ProQuest Digital Dissertations & Theses Global database was used to locate relevant dissertations. Search terms that were most commonly used were "attrition," "burnout," and "hope" in relation to the teaching profession.

Teaching has been a long-respected profession, but politics and increasing demands at the federal, state, and local levels are negatively impacting teachers. Results of Eren's (2015) study on prospective teachers' personal responsibility, academic optimism, hope, and emotions about teaching revealed that policy makers should look beyond the fact that teaching is about raising test scores and see that teachers' emotions, academic optimism, and hope play significant roles in their abilities to perform their jobs and raise student achievement. The pressure to increase standardized test scores and teacher accountability are rapidly eroding the profession and the joy that once came along with it. As teachers lose autonomy and a sense of purpose, their motivation and investment in the profession begin to crumble, and when the workplace pressures become too much, the consideration to leave becomes an open door.

While hope seems like a mere afterthought or a flippant wish in light of the increasing demands on teachers, Snyder (2002) in his hope theory gave insight into the cognitive element of hope, revealing that it is much more powerful. Through Snyder's (2002) careful study of agency and pathways thinking, it is clear how hope can play an influential role in high-stress workplaces for teachers, providing them with the motivation and mechanisms necessary to bypass these challenges and remain in the profession.

Theoretical Framework

The framework for this study was twofold. First, Maslach (1998, 2003) confirmed that burnout is a troublesome condition, targeted by individuals and organizations alike, which warrants change. However, researchers have neglected to address the causes of burnout, focusing on the solution rather than on understanding the problem itself. Maslach's (2003) approach goes beyond the unidimensional and the "individual stress experience (exhaustion), to encompass one's response to their job (cynicism), and even dispositional characteristics of one's self (feelings of inefficacy)" (p. 189). Maslach's research on burnout has resulted in "a comprehensive understanding of the environmental context of this phenomenon, as well as new ideas for intervention" (Maslach, 2003, p. 189), which should be framed around three dimensions: exhaustion, cynicism, and feelings of inefficacy.

Conventional researchers blame burnout on the individual person, but research has not supported that burnout is a dispositional characteristic of an individual (Maslach, 2003). Maslach (2003) has discovered that most intervention approaches to solve burnout neglect the situational aspect because workers usually have little control in their workplace. Although there is no pinpointed evidence on how burnout begins, many factors contribute to its development. Whether situational, organizational, or dispositional, the components of burnout lead individuals

to place cognitive and emotional distance from their workplace as a coping mechanism (Maslach, 2003), which demands that an individual intervention could still be a viable solution.

Second, for this study, I relied on Snyder's (2002) hope theory as a valuable role player in teachers' job motivation and goal pursuit. Whereas burnout focuses on the negative implications of job stressors, hope provides direction and an end point for hopeful thinking (Hanson, 2009). Snyder (2002) found that high hope correlates with numerous positive benefits, and it can be used to predict several outcomes, providing methods of interventions for those who are low in hope (Hanson, 2009) in the workplace.

Although I primarily focused on the theories of Maslach (1998, 2003) and Snyder (2002) for this study, theories of motivation and goal orientation also help support the constructs I examined. While approaching motivation, Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) asked individuals what satisfied them or dissatisfied them on the job (*Organizational Behavior*, 2017). They found that these satisfying or dissatisfying aspects of the work environment were very different and identified dissatisfying factors as "hygiene" because these were a facet of job performance rather than related to the job itself (*Organizational Behavior*, 2017). The satisfying factors of the job were labeled "motivators," as they truly encourage employees to try harder and they are intrinsic to the job (*Organizational Behavior*, 2017). Despite the limitations of this theory, it can be beneficial when it is used to aid in pointing out environmental contexts that either motivate employees or cause job dissatisfaction. Similarly, achievement "goal orientation is the term psychologists use to explain the mindset applied to achievement-related activities," which are "typically adopted based on one's situation or environment" (Donald, 2012, para. 6–7). There are two types of goal orientation: "mastery, or a focus on learning and improvement," and performance, "a focus on demonstrating competence relative to others" (Donald, 2012, para.

9). Typically, those who have a mastery goal orientation are persistent in challenging situations and take risks if mastery seems attainable (Svinicki, 2005). However, those who are performance oriented are less likely to persist, especially if they make an error or are required to put forth a lot of effort because they are unwilling to take risks and desire to outperform others (Svinicki, 2005).

Teacher Attrition and the Teacher Pipeline

In the United States, teacher turnover is 30% higher than that of other professionals (Dunn, Farver, Guenther, & Wexler, 2017; Rumschlag, 2017). Most of this teacher turnover begins between the first and fifth years of novice teachers entering the profession, where “50% or approximately half a million educators move to another district or leave the profession altogether” (Rumschlag, 2017, p. 22). In addition, 40% of undergraduates who were once education majors change their major to something else entirely. An astounding 9.5% of education graduates discontinued their role as classroom teachers before they even completed their first year of teaching (Rumschlag, 2017). Our nation “faces a projected 14% increase in the number of secondary teachers needed between 2010 and 2021” (Moller et al., 2016, p. 25). Also, the number of teacher retirees will increase and from 2010 to 2014, and “high school graduates expressing an interest in the teaching profession decreased by 16%” (Moller et al., 2016, p. 25).

Annual teacher attrition in the United States increased by 41% from 1987 to 2008 (Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2016). The mass exodus of teachers increased demand dramatically (Rumschlag, 2017). According to Lindqvist and Nordänger (2016), this attrition is an issue in other countries as well, and by 2015, half of them will also need to increase their number of teachers to accommodate all elementary-aged children. The main problem, though, is not merely a deficit of teachers entering the educational system but new graduates choosing not to enter the

profession at all or entering and leaving after just a few years (Dunn et al., 2017; Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2016).

According to Ramsay (2018), the Texas Education Agency's research specialist, attrition is defined as loss of employees, reflecting teachers leaving the Texas public school teaching force. From 2009 to 2011, Texas teacher attrition rates were almost 9%. From 2011 to 2017, however, rates increased to over 10%. The attrition rate in the United States ranged from 8% in Utah to 24% in Arizona and was substantially higher in the South and Southwest. Northeastern states boasted the lowest attrition rates, "where several states have leaving rates of under 5%" (Strauss, 2017, para. 29). At the lowest point, in 1992, the annual teacher attrition was 5.1% (Strauss, 2017, para. 27). In the late 1980s and 1990s, when wage trends were analyzed and compared with those of other college graduates, smaller gaps and disparities often correlated with lower attrition rates (Strauss, 2017). However, gaps have substantially increased since then, and in 2008 attrition rates peaked at 8% (Strauss, 2017). If the United States were able to cut overall attrition from 8% to 5% annually, the "hiring needs would decrease by more than 120,000 teachers annually, cutting demands by one-third immediately" (Strauss, 2017, para. 36).

Harms of teacher attrition. Teacher attrition not only causes shortages in staffing schools, it is also quite costly. Just losing teachers to another school can range in cost from \$4,300 to almost \$20,000 (Luther & Richman, 2009; Rumschlag, 2017; Strauss, 2017) due to hiring costs, salaries, and training. Schools in Milwaukee estimated the cost of teacher exits to be \$8,371, and schools in Chicago claimed \$9,500 per exiting teacher (Goldhaber & Cowan, 2014). Teacher attrition can cost up to \$2.2 billion a year, with the estimated cost nationwide being as high as \$7.3 billion a year (Dunn et al., 2017; Luther & Richman, 2009; Rumschlag, 2017). This cost would likely exceed \$8 billion in today's standards (Strauss, 2017). These high

costs do not even take into consideration the cost of human capital and the deficit this teacher exodus generates.

The harms of teacher attrition are not limited to teachers but rather affect all stakeholders involved with the school system in some way (Luther & Richman, 2009). Losing and hiring teachers further adds to schools' financial burdens, and money that could be used to support teachers and students goes elsewhere. The damage is not limited to financial resources. In fact, researchers indicated that higher rates of teacher turnover result in negative implications for all students, not just those in teacher-leaver classrooms (Strauss, 2017). These shortages created by attrition also affect the need for “substitute teachers, canceled classes, and inexperienced, underprepared teachers” within the school (Strauss, 2017, para. 18). Principals reported having to substitute in classrooms because their schools lacked qualified or certified teachers to fill the positions due to attrition (Strauss, 2017). Attrition can also result in above-average class sizes and go on to further affect student achievement (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Strauss, 2017).

The existing literature contains a wealth of studies in which researchers go into further detail for the causes of teacher attrition. Researchers also examine the reasons seasoned and novice teachers alike choose to abandon their calling and profession. In this study, however, I focused on the phenomenon of burnout.

Burnout Theory

In 1974, Freudenberg “studied emotional depletion, lack of motivation, and commitment to coin the phrase *burnout*” (Rumschlag, 2017, p. 23). His research focused on caregiving and service occupations, and his work was later expanded upon by Maslach (1976), who “interviewed workers about emotional stress, professional identity, and quality of work”

(Rumschlag, 2017, p. 23). Freudenberger stated that he “considered job burnout as a symptom of emotional exhaustion that was commonly observed among individuals working in health professions” (as cited in Yu et al., 2014, p. 702). This phenomenon of job burnout is the result of an individual’s inability to successfully manage pressures associated with her job and refers to an “exhausted state of emotion, attitudes, and behavior that arises from a prolonged experience of stress” (Yu et al., 2014, p. 702). Ultimately, these job-specific pressures that contribute to burnout cause teachers to “lose their passion for education and teaching, experience a state of extreme fatigue, completely lose their enthusiasm, and demonstrate passive, negative, or indifferent attitudes toward their students” (Yu et al., 2014, p. 705).

Teaching is a highly stressful occupation (Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Leung & Lee, 2006; Weisberg & Sagie, 1999). Weisberg (1994) stated,

Teachers are often faced with excessive work, inadequate salaries, disciplinary problems, lack of student interest, overcrowded classrooms, a requirement to give too many tests, difficulty in advancement, lack of a support team and equipment, unwanted transfers to other schools, conflict in job perceptions, and public criticism of teachers and their work. (p. 5)

These stressors greatly contribute to teacher burnout, and while some burned out teachers stay (Tye & O’Brien, 2002), for many teachers, this condition is too often a proven precursor to teacher attrition (Rumschlag, 2017; Ryan et al., 2017; Shen et al., 2015).

While researchers Tye and O’Brien (2002) were gathering data for their qualitative research, one of them, while in a local antique shop, stumbled across a vintage copy of *Life* magazine from November 1962. To the researchers’ surprise, the antiquated cover revealed a title that boasted ironically timeless words: “How we drive teachers to quit.” In the article, the author, Richard Meryman, chronicled data collected from interviews done with former teachers from all over the country. Meryman (1962) wrote, “Too many will quit permanently because

they are fed up. Their ambition and self-respect will take them into business or other professions. They leave behind an increasing proportion of tired time-servers” (as cited in Tye & O’Brien, 2002, p. 24). What the researchers found was that while the “world was different” 56 years ago, “it is striking how many complaints from 1962 sound remarkably contemporary” (Tye & O’Brien, 2002, p. 25). The pressures of teaching continue to erode the profession, and in the process, our nation is “robbed of a high-quality workforce for its schools when so many teachers are beginning to think about leaving the profession” (Tye & O’Brien, 2002, p. 28).

Burnout of Teachers

Teaching is “grasped as an emotional practice during which teachers explore their feelings and use them regularly” (Mevarech & Maskit, 2015, p. 243) and it is these same emotions that will ultimately transmute into burnout, job dissatisfaction, and occupational stress. Teachers begin their career hopeful, excited, and feeling called to make a difference in the lives of students (Tsang & Liu, 2016). However, as the drudgery of the unexpected workload ensues, their energies shift from idealism to an attitude that exclaims that the “top three reasons for teaching are June, July, and August!” (Shapiro, 2010, p. 616). They are exposed to a paradigm that shakes their teacher identity and their emotions become a potential threat, which is “passively ignored or actively (albeit diplomatically) hushed” as they are “plagued by thoughts of failure and lack of support” (Shapiro, 2010, pp. 616–617). Teachers continue to regulate their emotions in hopes to just suppress them. Teachers are natural optimists and not typically chronic complainers (Tye & O’Brien, 2002), but increasing demands and job stressors have shifted these positive emotions to allow them to cope with situational and organizational factors beyond their control as they debate whether the cost of staying in teaching is worth it.

In addition to the attack on teacher emotions, “teachers are reported globally as demoralized,” or having the “feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, meaninglessness, subject incompetence, and diminished self-esteem” (Tsang & Liu, 2016, p. 202). These feelings are similar to the concept of job burnout, or an “extreme reaction that individuals experience when they cannot successfully cope with work pressure” (Yu et al., 2015, p. 702). Burnout typically occurs as resources are jeopardized, or when they are unable to provide an adequate level of return (Benoliel & Barth, 2017; Leung & Lee, 2006). Burnout is a detriment to the attitudes and behaviors of workers and is characterized by emotional exhaustion and stress, which in turn “decreases a feeling of competence and productivity at work” (Benoliel & Barth, 2017, p. 646). Teachers come to view their job as “losing its joy and satisfaction” (Tye & O’Brien, 2002, p. 24).

Burnout can have grave consequences for teachers and the profession. It is “regarded as a serious problem in school settings,” and it may dramatically reduce a teacher’s quality of life, leading to deterioration in teaching efficiency, absenteeism, and job turnover (Shen et al., 2015, p. 519). Being defined as the “crisis of self-efficacy” (Yu et al., 2015, p. 702), burnout “is a chronic phenomenon that continues to be a main cause of teacher exodus in the 21st century,” and it is “a precursor to teacher attrition” (Rumschlag, 2017, p. 22).

Causes of teacher burnout/stress. Teacher job burnout is a psychological syndrome that is caused by prolonged stress in the workplace. More specifically, it is “the chronic strain that results from an incongruence, or misfit, between the worker and the job” (Maslach, 2003, p. 189). In addition, this burnout is much more situational than it is associated with attributes of an individual. Maslach et al. (2001) proposed “six areas of worklife situations that encompass the central relationships with burnout” and “chronic mismatches between people and their work”

(Maslach et al., 2001, p. 414). These six areas “include workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values” (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 414). These six areas of worklife then “come together in a framework that encompasses the major organizational antecedents of burnout” (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 414).

Maslach et al.’s (2001) first area, workload mismatches, is usually identified by “excessive overload, through the simple formula that too many demands exhaust an individual’s energy to the extent that recovery becomes impossible” (p. 414). In addition, this may arise from being in the wrong kind of work, especially when workers are unqualified for the duties they are required to perform. While this area does include emotions, its primary focus is related to exhaustion.

Next, a mismatch in control is related to “the inefficacy or reduced personal accomplishment aspects of burnout” (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 414), and most often indicate that workers lack adequate resources they need to accomplish their job tasks effectively. Lack of control over the level of responsibilities in one’s job is also a cause for burnout, and “is reflected as one of responsibility exceeding one’s authority” (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 414).

In the area of rewards, this third mismatch “involves a lack of appropriate rewards for the work people do” (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 414). These can be insufficient financial rewards, lack of social rewards, or even lack of intrinsic rewards. When these rewards are missing, workers and work are often perceived as devalued and ignored or not appreciated by others. When workers are no longer able to take pride in their work, the mismatch is intensified, resulting in feelings of inefficacy.

The fourth mismatch, community, develops when individuals “lose a sense of positive connection with others in the workplace” (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 415). In a community,

workers are able to thrive, as they “share praise, comfort, happiness, and humor with people they like and respect” (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 415). It is these interpersonal contexts that “focus attention on the individual’s emotions, and on the motives and values underlying his or her work” (Maslach, 2003, p. 191). However, when these emotional exchanges are eliminated, affirmation of people’s association with a group and a sense of shared values is lost, isolating people from each other or depersonalizing social contact. Maslach et al. (2001) explained that “the most destructive part of this area of burnout is a chronic and unresolved conflict with others on the job, as it produces constant negative feelings of frustration and hostility” (p. 415).

Maslach et al.’s (2001) fifth area, fairness, results when an inequity exists. This can include “inequity of workload or pay, when there is cheating, or when evaluations and promotions are handled inappropriately” (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 415). When these grievances or disputes are not resolved, a perception of unfairness arises, which contributes to burnout in at least two ways: it is “emotionally upsetting and exhausting,” and it “fuels a deep sense of cynicism about the workplace” (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 415).

Finally, the sixth area is a conflict in values. This arises when unethical practices are introduced in the workplace and when people sense “a mismatch between their personal aspirations for their career and the values of the organization” (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 415). When conflicting values exist, this discrepancy can ultimately lead to workers feeling constrained by their job, leading to burnout.

Ultimately, this misfit and burnout are the results of the “problematic relationship between the person and their work environment” (Maslach, 2003, p. 191). For teachers, this typically develops in phases “as a result of extensive and prolonged work-related stress” (Pietarinen, Pyhältö, Soini, & Salmela-Aro, 2013, p. 63). As a result of high demands and low

resources, teacher burnout is a powerful predictor of turnover and early retirement in teachers (Pietarinen et al., 2013).

Teacher burnout and intention to leave. Burned-out individuals who are feeling totally overwhelmed and are no longer able to tolerate workplace stressors are likely to reach a breaking point (Weisberg & Sagie, 1999). Although researchers are recognizing the intense, stressful nature of the profession, the teaching profession is still debated within the context of burnout literature. Weisberg and Sagie (1999) stated,

Teachers are subjected to excessive work, lack of administrative and parental support, inadequate salaries, disciplinary problems, lack of student interest, overcrowded classrooms, difficulty in advancement, lack of a support team and equipment, unwanted transfers to other schools, conflict in job perceptions, and public criticism of teachers and their work. (p. 334)

These stressors and burnout lead to “a significant decrease in the quality of teaching, long absenteeism, and early leaving the profession, and also predict subsequent thoughts about leaving and actual turnover” (Weisberg & Sagie, 1999, p. 334).

Despite the desire to leave, many teachers feel stuck and remain in the profession due to a decreased likelihood of finding another suitable job. Leaving a job “may not always be an option for an individual and the decision to leave is influenced by many personal contextual factors such as employability and labor market conditions” (Bothma & Roodt, 2013, p. 3). These turnover intentions are also “dependent on perceived chances and the ease of finding another job (especially in tough economic conditions), the role of mobility cognitions, as well as individual differences in search behavior” (Bothma & Roodt, 2013, p. 3). Thus, “alternative employment opportunities therefore influence actual labor turnover behavior” (Bothma & Roodt, 2013, p. 3).

This turnover can occur as teachers move from job to job, transferring within their districts, or, even more permanently, as they leave the school system or role of teaching altogether (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). In a study of Israeli teachers, Weisberg and Sagie (1999) found a significant correlation between burnout and intention to leave one's job, and each component of burnout makes different contributions to explaining teachers' intentions to leave their jobs. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) also confirmed the connections between engagement, burnout, and turnover intentions at one's work.

Several aspects of the workplace impact teachers' choices to remain in their current role or leave it, including "job stress, job satisfaction, resilience, and self-efficacy" (Klassen & Chiu, 2011, p. 114). The negative emotions embedded in teacher stress are "related to poor teacher-pupil rapport, low self-efficacy, less teacher effectiveness, and more burnout," and teachers with these work-related stressors "had lower job satisfaction, less commitment to teaching, and a stronger desire to quit teaching" (Klassen & Chiu, 2011, p. 116). In their study of Canadian practicing teachers and preservice teachers, Klassen and Chiu (2011) found that these perceptions of job-related stress in teaching strongly influence teachers' commitment to the profession and their quitting intentions.

Numerous researchers' findings confirm the relationship between burnout and intention to leave (Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Leung & Lee, 2006; Weisberg, 1994; Weisberg & Sagie, 1999) and also that the existing empirical research confirming relationships between the three dimensions of burnout and intention to leave are limited and inconsistent (Leung & Lee, 2006). In Weisberg and Sagie's (1999) study of 28 Israeli female secondary school teachers, physical exhaustion was the dominant contributor to teachers' intentions to leave. They also found that depersonalization "led to a significant increment in the intention to quit, but no relationship was

found for emotional exhaustion” (Leung & Lee, 2006, p. 130). This is likely due to harsh work environments, large class sizes, and low pay for Israeli teachers (Weisberg & Sagie, 1999).

Klassen and Chiu (2011) found in their Canadian population that “self-efficacy mediated the effect of teachers’ stress on their occupational commitment” (p. 126) to stay in their jobs. Leung and Lee (2006) cited three American studies (Carlson & Thompson, 1995; Jackson, Schwab, & Schuler, 1986; Lee & Ashforth, 1990) that listed emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were the dominant factors in predicting a teacher’s intentions to leave. However, in a survey of 374 teachers in Holland (Houkes, Janssen, de Jonge, & Nijhuis, 2001), Leung and Lee (2006) noted the researchers discovered that the inability to meet career expectations and lack of social workplace support predicted turnover intentions, whereas emotional exhaustion did not. An additional inconsistency in the relationship between the burnout dimensions and teachers’ intention to leave is the point in their career when teachers are most vulnerable to burnout and leaving. Klassen and Chiu (2011) found that teachers who are in the later stages of their career are most vulnerable, whereas Weisberg and Sagie (1999) found that “teachers who have been in their jobs for shorter periods of time are more likely to quit due to burnout” (p. 338). While each component of burnout plays a role in intention to leave, variations are present across different cultures and tenures, leading to an inconsistency in the true outcomes of burnout and its impact on intention to leave and an urgency to expand knowledge in this area.

Solutions and interventions to teacher burnout/stress. Because burnout research “has been clearly grounded in the realities of people’s experiences” (Maslach, 2003, p. 190), a greater understanding of the phenomenon provided new ideas for interventions. Maslach (2003) suggested “interventions should be framed in terms of three dimensions: overwhelming

exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment” (p. 190). When combined, these dimensions “can result in different patterns of work experience and risk of burnout” (Maslach, 2003, p. 190) and should each be addressed to reduce the likelihood that they contribute to work stress.

Another approach is to focus on burnout’s “positive antithesis—job engagement” (Maslach, 2003, p. 190) rather than the more negative issue of burnout. This type of approach is a “persistent, positive-affective motivational state” of fulfillment and more of a positive goal for addressing burnout as it enhances the accountability of burnout interventions (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 414). Some researchers (Daniel, 2017; Maslach, 2003) view this engagement as the antithesis of the three burnout dimensions of energy, involvement, and self-efficacy, whereas others define it as “a persistent, positive motivational state of fulfillment in employees that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (Maslach, 2003, pp. 190–191). When leaders prioritize fostering engagement instead of reducing burnout, their efforts are likely to become much more successful.

Daniel (2017) suggested that in order to create conditions that promote engagement and reduce burnout, leaders need to “help teachers see RED,” meaning address three core aspects of engagement: resources, efficacy, and demands. Resources are not merely physical but also include “psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that have the potential to reduce job demands” (Daniel, 2017, para. 4). When districts provide adequate resources for teachers, teachers are more likely to exert efforts and abilities to more successfully contribute to their workplace. These resources are also linked to resiliency and can be related to a teacher’s self-confidence (Daniel, 2017). In contrast, the lack of such resources is a contributor to a mismatch of control (Maslach et al., 2001), which is a precursor to teacher burnout.

Efficacy is an individual's perceptions of her abilities and influences how much new effort teachers will be willing to give (Daniel, 2017). Researchers have found that self-efficacy has a strong correlation with performance, and the higher a person's self-efficacy, the greater her work performance will be (Daniel, 2017). When teachers have low self-efficacy, this contributes to a mismatch in control (Maslach et al., 2001) as well, leading to engagement's negative counterpart of teacher burnout.

Finally, Daniel (2017) addressed demands, the last of his core aspects of engagement. These demands are often associated with "the numerous tasks teachers need to accomplish with little time to get them finished" (Daniel, 2017, para. 14). They include difficult interactions with students and parents, weight of student struggles, and taking work home after long days of teaching (Daniel, 2017). When these demands are not managed appropriately, the possibility of burnout skyrockets, increasing workload mismatch (Maslach et al., 2001) in the process.

Most burnout intervention efforts have focused on "individual-centered solutions, such as removing the worker from the job" or "individual strategies" tailored specifically for the worker (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 418). However, researchers have found that individual factors alone have a far lesser contribution to burnout than situational and organizational factors (Maslach et al., 2001). Ultimately, the role of burnout interventions is to "enhance the capacity of individuals to cope with the workplace" (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 418).

Assuming it is possible for people to learn new ways to cope with workplace stress, research findings are mixed on whether individual interventions actually lead to a reduction in burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). Some intervention strategies focused specifically on the individual include "stress inoculation training, relaxation, time management, assertiveness training, rational emotive therapy, training in interpersonal and social skills, teambuilding,

management of professional demands, and meditation” (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 419). With these intervention strategies, some cases reported a reduction in stress, while others failed to have any results at all (Maslach et al., 2001).

However, when focused on the workplace and the individuals in it, organizational interventions may provide more promise for reducing burnout. Maslach et al. (2001) suggested that “the most effective mode of intervention is to combine managerial practice with individual educational interventions,” and “effective change often occurs when both develop in an integrated fashion” (p. 419). A focus on this combined intervention approach emphasizes building engagement within one’s work and “permits a closer alliance with the organizational mission, especially those aspects that pertain to the quality of work life in the organization” (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 420). This design also “supports the positive development of energy, vigor, involvement, dedication, absorption, and effectiveness among employees and should be successful in promoting their well-being and productivity” (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 420).

Several teachers feel like they should take a more proactive approach to reducing burnout instead of relying on others to fix it for them. In “10 Steps for Avoiding Teacher Burnout” by Johnson (2014), his strategies for teachers include having fun, taking care of one’s health needs, learning something new, helping others, and not taking things too seriously. Instead of falling into the trap of pessimism and negativity, he suggests teachers can choose their own attitude, and choosing to take a proactive approach will go a long way in helping keep sanity and avoiding burnout (Johnson, 2014). Chesser (2015) also noted how the teaching profession “kicks us around and often kicks hardest when we’re down,” and in light of this treatment, “it’s only natural to see teachers burn out more quickly than in any other profession” (para. 1). He also suggested taking a proactive approach to “protect ourselves from the inevitable because it can be

prevented and controlled” (Chesser, 2015, para. 1). Chesser’s (2015) solutions, or “survival tips” include self-care, positivity and changing one’s perspective, effective problem-solving, planning, learning something new, and developing relationships and social interactions.

Despite the fact that organizational interventions are very beneficial, they are “not easy to implement, as many potential barriers may arise” (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 420). These interventions can be “complex” and “require a considerable investment of time, effort, and money” (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 420). Nevertheless, the future of burnout research continues with promise and holds great potential to make a major change to the crisis of teacher burnout.

Hope Theory

Snyder (2002) detailed the development of his theory in his article “Hope Theory: Rainbows in the Mind.” In the mid-1980s, he was entrenched in his research on “how people give excuses when they make a mistake or perform poorly” (Snyder, 2002, p. 249). During this time, he began constructing the framework of the hope theory, and as he conversed with his research participants, a common theme arose: they all had the desire “to reach out for positive goals” (Snyder, 2002, p. 249). In Snyder’s (2002) first article, he ultimately described hope as the flip side of the process of making excuses. As Snyder began to search other scholarly literature, this theme was reaffirmed in studies by Cantril (1964), Farber (1968), Frank (1975), and Stotland (1969). While he was satisfied that other studies had confirmed the theme he was toying with, he noticed that the existing studies were “lacking in some yet to be identified component” (Snyder, 2002, p. 249).

In reading books on the “cognitive revolution,” Snyder (2002) found Craik’s 1943 classic, *The Nature of Explanation*, particularly influential. Craik “persuasively reasoned that the purpose of the brain is to comprehend and anticipate causal sequences” (Snyder, 2002, p.

249). He found that other cognitive theorists, like Miller, Galanter, and Pribram (1960), Newell and Simons (1972), and Anderson (1983), also had studies emphasizing this pathways-like thinking. These studies further kindled Snyder's (2002) interest in the value of pathways thinking in relation to goal pursuit.

At the suggestion of a valuable colleague, Snyder (2002) began to "interview people about their thought processes" in 1987, asking them to "describe their goals for that day" (p. 249). With no further prompting in the conversation, goals again emerged, either explicitly or implicitly. The results of these interviews further corroborated the theory that people "think in terms of goals" and confirmed Snyder's hypothesis that "people frequently process how to find routes in their goals" (Snyder, 2002, p. 249). Additionally, "people made a point to talk about their motivations to use those pathways" (Snyder, 2002, p. 249).

Around the same time, Snyder (2002) went to visit Menninger, who had delivered "The Academic Lecture on Hope" (1959) to the American Psychiatric Association. During their visit, Menninger suggested that he "place thinking at the core of hope rather than emotions," as the "latter he characterized as being reactive in nature" (Snyder, 2002, p. 249). As Snyder's views continued to evolve, he realized that cognitions provided the underlying bases of hope, and Snyder began to characterize it as "primarily a way of thinking, with feelings playing an important, albeit contributory role" (Snyder, 2002, p. 249).

Before Snyder could complete his work on hope, he "needed to clarify whether people's hopeful thinking was situation specific, cross-situational and trait-like, or some combination of the two" (Snyder, 2002, pp. 249–250). He "believed that hopeful thinking could reflect both situational and trait-like processes," but through his interviews, it became "clear that hope was something more than the thoughts surrounding a specific goal" (Snyder, 2002, p. 250). As

Snyder reflected on the interviews he had done, he noticed people were “superceding their thoughts about a specific goal,” and “appeared to have self-appraisals about their capabilities in goal pursuits more generally” (Snyder, 2002, p. 250). They also “had enduring, self-referential thoughts about their capacities to produce routes to goals, and their capacities to find the requisite motivations for those goal pursuits” (Snyder, 2002, p. 250). In 1991, Snyder and his colleagues Irving and Anderson arrived at their definition for hope: “Hope is a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy), and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)” (Snyder, 2002, p. 250).

Goals in hope theory. Because of the goal-directed nature of human actions, “the goal is the cognitive component that anchors hope theory,” and it is these goals that “provide the targets of mental action sequences” (Snyder, 2002, p. 250). Goals can take different shapes and vary from short-term to long-term. They can also “vary in the degree to which they are specified, with vague goals being less likely to occur in high hope thinking” (Snyder, 2002, p. 250). Goals must be of substantial value to be worthy of such intentional hopeful thinking

Additionally, in goal theory, the theory of planned behavior, an extension of the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), may also help explain Snyder’s (2002) goal attainment initiative through agency and pathways thinking. This theory is based on the presumption that individuals make logical, reasoned decisions to engage in certain behaviors and actions by evaluating information available to them (Ryan & Carr, 2010). Whether an individual engages in a behavior is determined by the individual’s intention, shaped by the ease of the task and the views of significant others, and also influenced by the perception that the action performed is within the individual’s control (Ryan & Carr, 2010). This “behavior intention is a reliable determinant of actual behavior and it has been empirically established that turnover

intention (conation) has a positive relationship with actual turnover (actual behavior)” (Bothma & Roodt, 2013, p. 2).

Attribution theory can also be connected with Snyder’s (2002) theories of agency and pathways thinking in goal pursuit. This theory “explains why people react variably to a given experience, suggesting that different responses arise from differences in the perceived cause of the initial outcome” (Cook & Artino, 2016, pp. 1003–1004). Although not the forefront of conscious thought, attributions significantly influence future activities and anticipation of future successes (Cook & Artino, 2016). In addition, they “directly influence expectancy of future success” and “indirectly influence perceived value as mediated by an individual learner’s emotional response to either success or failure” (Cook & Artino, 2016, p. 1004). This allows individuals to understand and master themselves and their environment to establish causal sequences for life events, influenced by both environmental and personal antecedents (Cook & Artino, 2016).

Snyder (2002) found two main goal types in his hope theory. The first type “reflects positive or approach goals, and these may be envisioned for a first time, pertain to the sustaining of a present goal, or represent the desire to further a positive goal wherein one already has made progress” (Snyder, 2002, p. 250). The second type of goal “involves the forestalling of a negative goal outcome, and in its strongest form, this type of goal reflects stopping something before it happens, while in its weaker form, such deterrence is aimed at delaying the unwanted” (Snyder, 2002, p. 250).

Lazarus (1999), like other writers, “placed constraints on what constitutes a legitimate goal for the hoping process” (Snyder, 2002, p. 250). In fact, he suggested that “a fundamental condition of hope is that our current life circumstance is unsatisfactory—that is, it involves

deprivation or is damaging or threatening” (Lazarus, 1999, p. 664). Snyder (2002) referred to this as the “*repair*” definition of hope “in which the only appropriate goals are those that fill a profound void in a person’s life” (p. 250). Snyder noted that many aspects of hope do fit into this theory, but to Snyder, this further revealed two distinct important categories of hope: maintenance goals, which “comprise daily agendas in living,” and enhancement goals, which “build on what is already satisfactory” in one’s life (Snyder, 2002, p. 250).

Pathways thinking. To Snyder (2002), “goals remain but unanswered calls without the requisite means to reach them,” and he suggested that “people approach particular goal pursuits with thoughts of generating usable routes” (p. 251). In fact, Craik (1943) reasoned that “the very purpose of the human brain was to anticipate these A to B sequences” (Snyder, 2002, p. 251). Even though time is typically linear and unidirectional, goals are not. Emotions are developed through past and present stimuli but also occur as individuals anticipate possible future events, influencing future goal pursuits (Eren, 2015). To generate usable routes, one must “think about how we can link our present to imagined futures” (Snyder, 2002, p. 251).

High-hope individuals utilize pathways thinking to produce a plausible route for goal achievement and also have more confidence in the route they have generated (Snyder, 2002). This allows them to become “more decisive about the pathways for their goals,” even those related to their career (Snyder, 2002, p. 251). For low-hope individuals, “the pathways thinking is far more tenuous, and the resulting route is not well articulated” (Snyder, 2002, p. 251). If the primary route to goal pursuit is insufficient, high-hope people’s flexible thinking allows them to be “very good at producing plausible alternative routes” (Snyder, 2002, p. 251), whereas the low-hope person’s inflexibility is likely unable to come up with a backup route. Even during challenges, individuals who are high in hope are especially effective at regenerating alternative

routes for goal pursuit (Snyder, 2002). Pathways thinking “should become increasingly refined and precise as the goal pursuit sequence progresses toward goal attainment,” and differences in the low-hope person and high-hope person may become very obvious as the high-hope person should “more quickly tailor their routes so as to effectively reach their goals” (Snyder, 2002, pp. 257–258).

Agency thinking. Agency thought is “the perceived capacity to use one’s pathways to reach desired goals—the motivational component of the hope theory” (Snyder, 2002, p. 251). These thoughts “involve the mental energy to begin and continue using a pathway through all stages of the goal pursuit” (Snyder, 2002, p. 251). Agency thinking is “important in all goal-directed thought, but it takes on special significance when people encounter impediments” (Snyder, 2002, p. 251). In the midst of these hindrances in goal pursuit, “agency helps people to channel requisite motivation to the best alternate pathway” (Snyder, 2002, p. 251).

The fusion of pathways and agentic thinking. Hopeful thinking requires both pathways and agency thoughts, as they “feed each other” and “are iterative as well as additive over a given goal pursuit sequence” (Snyder, 2002, p. 252). A person who is high in hope will “have iterative pathway and agentic thought that is fluid and fast throughout the goal pursuit sequence,” whereas the low hope person “will have iterative pathway and agentic thought that is halting and slow” (Snyder, 2002, p. 252). A person with high pathways and low agency will have active routes that lack motivation, whereas a person with low pathways and high agency will have “active motivation that lies fallow without the necessary pathways thoughts” (Snyder, 2002). Whichever is the weakest component will slow the iterative thinking.

A person begins constructing and learning her pathways and agency thinking during childhood (Snyder, 2002). Many people lack hope “because they were taught to think in this

manner, or forces intervened to destroy such hopeful thought during their childhoods” (Snyder, 2002, p. 253). It is these childhood habits that will shape the iterative thought processes in instances of goal pursuit in adulthood. Emotions also contribute to the development of hopeful thinking, as they “cast an affective tone on the goal pursuit process in general” and “represent the residue from myriad previous goal pursuits” (Snyder, 2002, p. 253). The emotions of high-hope individuals “reflect positive and active feelings about engaging in future goal pursuits” and are “flavored with friendliness, happiness, and confidence” (Snyder, 2002, p. 253). Those of low-hope individuals “tap into a reservoir of negative and passive feelings about task pursuit endeavors” (Snyder, 2002, p. 253). High-hope individuals should be able to generate more goals than the low-hope person and often have a “readily available new goal should an original prove unreachable” (Snyder, 2002, p. 253). Ultimately, people “will consider the outcome values of the particular goal pursuits,” and goals that are “based on one’s own standards should be more attractive than goals built on the standards of other people” (Snyder, 2002, p. 253).

Emotions in goal pursuit. Emotions can be defined as “socially constructed, personally enacted ways of being that emerge from conscious and/or unconscious judgments regarding perceived successes at attaining goals or maintaining standards of beliefs during transactions as part of social-historical contexts” (Eren, 2015, p. 78). They are also “deeply intertwined with the purposes of teaching, the political dynamics of educational policy and school life, the relationships that make up teaching, and the senses of self which teachers invest their work” (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 330). Snyder (2002) dismissed other theories that hope is solely an emotion by emphasizing the thinking processes apparent in his own theory. He suggested instead that “perceptions about the success (or lack thereof) regarding personal goal pursuits influence subsequent emotions,” which in turn “reflect responses to perceptions about how one is

doing (or has done) in goal pursuit activities” (Snyder, 2002, p. 252). Positive emotions should come from successful goal pursuit and “may result from unimpeded movement toward goals,” or “overcoming problems or blockages that appear in goal pursuit” (Snyder, 2002, p. 252).

Lack of success when pursuing goals leads to teachers experiencing negative emotions, which “can result from insufficient agentic and pathways thinking, or the inability to overcome a thwarting circumstance” (Snyder, 2002, p. 252). These memories, “as a mechanism for storage,” are “catalogued according to emotions—as well as the contents (in abbreviated form) of the particular action sequences” (Snyder, 2002, p. 253). Traumatizing events, because of their power on a person’s thinking, have the potential even to shatter further goal setting pursuits.

In pathways and agency thinking, “the person may experience emotional reactions to this ‘getting started’ process,” where emotions can “cycle back so as to influence the goal pursuit pathways and agency iterative thought process” (Snyder, 2002, p. 254). If individuals pursuing goals perceive the situation as productive, then positive emotions result and influence the goal pursuit process. When high in hope, one “enjoys goal pursuits and pursues them with a positive emotional set,” whereas the low-hope person “has a negative emotional set and is apprehensive about what is to come” (Snyder, 2002, p. 254). High-hope individuals “should be extremely attentive and focused on the appropriate stimuli at this getting started stage,” whereas low-hope individuals usually experience “an uncontrolled rush of negative emotions” that “cue self-critical rumination and cognitions become off task,” creating frustrations and even depression (Snyder, 2002, p. 254).

Even though “the goal-directed cognitions are eliciting the particular emotions, those emotions, in turn, are shaping and informing the cognitions of the person who is in the throes of a goal pursuit” (Snyder, 2002, p. 254), taking a functional role in the process. Embracing this

active emotional processing “should facilitate the pathways and agency thought” and contribute to “an active, productive, goal-directed type of thought” (Snyder, 2002, p. 254).

Challenges in goal pursuit. When individuals face problems, these can become barriers to desired goals, deflating and lessening a person’s agency (Snyder, 2002). In these situations, high-hope people are quicker to reenergize and rebound from challenges than low-hope people. When it is perceived that goal pursuit may fail, “the person may appraise that circumstance as being *stressful*” (emphasis added), and this “stress occurs when a particular situation threatens the attainment of some goal” (Lazarus, Deese, & Osler, 1952, p. 295). As a person “continues in a given goal pursuit and gains a stronger sense of the imperviousness of the barrier, the initial sense of stress is transformed into negative emotions” (Snyder, 2002, p. 252). Those with low dispositional hope are far more “likely to construe the impediments as stressful” than high-hope individuals, whose “subsequent thoughts and actions may render the impediment as being less and less stressful” (Snyder, 2002, p. 253) through *coping*.

As goal pursuits continue and a stressor is encountered, hopeful thought is jeopardized. Those who are low in hope become “especially susceptible to succumbing to stressors and becoming derailed in their goal pursuits” (Snyder, 2002, p. 255). Thus, the low-hope person “perceives that she or he is not going to reach the desired goal, and the resulting disruptive negative emotions cycle back to register on the person’s dispositional and situational hopeful thinking” (Snyder, 2002, p. 255). In contrast, to high-hope individuals, stressors are perceived as challenges that “may necessitate alternate pathways and rechanneling of agency to a new pathway” (Snyder, 2002, p. 255).

High-hope people often successfully persevere in surpassing stressors, and this “success feedback cycles back via approach emotions so as to reinforce the person’s dispositional and

situational hopeful thinking” (Snyder, 2002, p. 255) in a positive manner. Even when goals are not attained, individuals who are high in hope are able to use these same situations to apply feedback, thoughts, and strategies to plan for future goal endeavors (Snyder, 2002). However, those with low hope do not use this feedback to diagnostically improve future efforts but instead use this feedback to foster self-doubt and rumination (Snyder, 2002).

Hope and teaching. According to Eren (2015), an increasing body of research confirms that hope and emotions are essential to teacher behaviors and student outcomes. This hope is “considered a crucially relevant factor for teachers’ thinking and classroom practices, persistency in teaching, commitment to teaching, relationships with students, and visions in relation to teaching and learning” (Eren, 2015, p. 77). New teachers “create their teacher identities from the perspective of hope,” which is a “central part of their teacher identities” (Eren, 2015, p. 77). The agentic and pathways components of hope are especially important to teachers, as they are the foundation of cognitive appraisals that arise when analyzing one’s goal pursuit abilities (Snyder, 2002). While hope is an important component of teaching on its own, Eren (2015) revealed that hope was also significantly correlated to teaching-related emotions in prospective teachers, but it did not “warrant being responsible for the challenging aspects of teaching” (p. 96). Birmingham (2009) examined the disposition of hope in teaching and described dispositions as being “professional attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and nonverbal behaviors,” or “a tendency to act a certain way” (p. 28).

While loosely related to Snyder’s (2002) theory, Birmingham’s (2009) more closely related to the concept of hope to how it impacts teachers through an orientation toward moral goodness and motivation or passion. Birmingham (2009) stated,

Teachers are familiar with a range of hope, from the lighthearted hope of potential aroused by new pencils, new notebooks, and a small child on the first day of school to the activist militant kind of hope that arises, strengthens, and defies adversity. (p. 27)

It is this hope that “can encourage, sustain, and bring comfort in hardship. Hope can grow, and hope can be lost. Hope can be nurtured, and hope can be destroyed” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 27). Although hope serves as a “foundational motivation for education, the role of hope in teaching has not drawn much academic attention,” and these “much-studied cognitive and behavioral activities of teaching are treated as though they operate independently from dispositions and other affective states” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 27). Up to this point, “hope in teaching remains largely unexplored” and currently, our understanding of it is “intuitive rather than explicit” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 28).

Like Snyder (2002), Birmingham (2009) described hope as being goal oriented but more so toward “an object or goal- something that is hoped for” (p. 29). This object must “meet certain conditions” and be “possible yet difficult to attain, desirable, and in its most significant appearances, the object is a moral good” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 29). Another condition of hope is that it “implies a future orientation” (Birmingham, 2009, pp. 29–30), where timing plays a key role. Hope “presupposes a measured faith—a belief that something is possible, but not a belief that something is certain or even probable” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 30).

In order to more clearly describe hope, Birmingham (2009) considered the medieval philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, who “names hope as one of his eleven ‘passions’ or motivations” that “occurs in situations where it is difficult to attain something that is desired” (Aquinas, trans. 1920, II.40). Like Snyder, Aquinas acknowledged the motivational component of hope, and described that as a goal is pursued, the “motivation of hope arises more from the difficulty than from the object of hope itself” (Aquinas, trans. 1920, II.40). As individuals hold

out hope for something that seems impossible, they should consider the complexity of hope and its tendencies to fluctuate in certain instances but ultimately come to understanding that “hope includes difficulty” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 30).

Whereas Aristotle (trans. 1999) focused on the “flourishing of the self and not on promoting the flourishing of others,” Birmingham (2009) claimed that he would “agree that a teacher should develop virtue to promote his own well-being, and students should develop virtue to promote their own well-being” (p. 31). For teachers, “the moral object of hope can be conceived as the flourishing of students,” and “in the lived experience of teaching, hope for oneself is essentially tied to hope for one’s students” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 31). Thus, the object that is hoped for, the moral focus of a teacher’s work, is not the teacher’s own flourishing but that of her students.

While Snyder (2002) recognized a dyad of hope, created of pathways and agency thinking, Birmingham (2009) also suggested two considerable roles in teachers’ experiences. First, it “can be experienced as an orientation toward moral goodness,” orienting a teacher “toward students’ flourishing and organizes her thinking and acting to anticipate and promote” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 31) such flourishing. Although this hope serves as a virtue, it does have the potential to change over time (Birmingham, 2009). The second role hope plays in teachers is that of a motivator, using “the passion of hope to do what it takes to attain the object of hope” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 32). It allows teachers to keep their eyes on the future while practicing in the here and now.

Hope is subject to distortions, morphing into despair, hopelessness, and presumption (Birmingham, 2009). When hope turns to despair, a “paradoxical turning away from a desired object that is difficult to attain” occurs (Birmingham, 2009, p. 32). Despair is “simply a

movement away from something desirable,” and “in a moral sense, despair is movement away from a desired moral good, such as a student’s development and academic progress” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 32, 33). Often, this transmutation from hope to despair occurs when a person is overwhelmed by a challenge, or when he or she realizes “that the heights of moral excellence requires more than he or she is willing to take on” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 33). Over time, “the idealism of a hope-filled teacher distorts into the jaded cynicism of a teacher defeated,” and “when an idealistic teacher pursuing moral excellence in her work encounters an overwhelmingly challenging situation, she toys with the idea that perhaps she’s not cut out to be a super-teacher” and rejects the “possibility of moral greatness in teaching” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 33). When this occurs, teachers become less concerned with the well-being of their students and begin to focus more on self-interested goals and even merely survival (Birmingham, 2009).

As hope distorts to hopelessness, sorrow is felt and “the object of hope is mistakenly deemed irrefutably lost or impossible to attain” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 33). Seligman (1975) confirmed in his theory of learned helplessness that “as a result of these negative expectations, other consequences may accompany the inability or unwillingness to act, including low self-esteem, chronic failure, sadness, and physical illness” (Nolen, 2017, para. 3). This hopelessness is “caused by misinformation or lack of information” and “can be repaired with a more accurate interpretation of the situation” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 33), allowing the hopelessness to return to a state of hope (Birmingham, 2009). This can occur when teachers find a new way to approach challenging situations.

The third distortion of hope is presumption. This occurs when teachers underestimate a challenge or overestimate their ability (Birmingham, 2009). Technical approaches to teaching, such as “scientifically based” standardized curriculum “eliminate the need for professional

judgment and best goals and means for specific students and rely instead on the promises of distantly produced standards, curriculum and technology” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 34). While these technical approaches do not entirely prevent hope, they do diminish the role of hope in teaching and force teachers to relinquish control of decision-making to those in charge of policy and curriculum, assuming they will promote the flourishing of their students (Birmingham, 2009).

A teacher without hope is “subject to frustration, burnout, and attrition” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 34). As hope grows and diminishes, “many seasoned teachers have felt from time to time that sustaining hope is simply too difficult and have chosen a lesser yet easier path, at least for a while” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 38). These teachers “may not have the moral strength to do the challenging moral work required to be caring, fair, honest, and responsible, much less to promote social justice, maintain high standards, and commit to a safe and supportive learning environment” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 34). When the foundation of a teacher’s hope is diminished, other dispositional characteristics may also discontinue in its absence (Birmingham, 2009).

Snyder (2002) described hope as the cognitive approach to goal pursuit. This goal for teachers “places the learning of all students as an object of hope by recognizing that the learning of all students is indeed a morally desirable, possible, yet challenging goal” (Birmingham, 2009, p. 35). The learning of students *is* the moral purpose of teachers *and* their hope, and as teachers use their professional judgment in doing difficult work, their idealism and hopefulness are developed over time (Birmingham, 2009). Birmingham stated,

Teachers identify and judge the worth of explicit and implicit educational goals, consider and build on students’ prior knowledge, interests, and cultural embeddedness, and help

students in important ways that are not measured on standardized tests or dictated by standardized curriculum. (p. 36)

And because of the challenges embedded within the teaching profession, hope is vital, not only for one's students but for the teachers themselves. For teachers, hope's impact is "profound" and "lives in the pleasure of optimism, the determined defiance of adversity, comfort in loss, and persistence in hardship" (Birmingham, 2009, p. 38).

Low-hope teachers and burnout. If agency and pathways thinking underscore an individual's cognitive appraisal of goal-related competencies, teachers who are low in hope are at a complete disadvantage, as they are unable to come up with alternative pathways in facing the challenges of job stressors in their career-related goal pursuits. If job circumstances are unsatisfactory and stressors are high, negative emotions can result and thus feed back into the goal pursuit model, jeopardizing hopeful thought. As these negative emotions are rechanneled and feedback is not used to propel motivation and the creation of new pathways, categorized memories from failure in goal pursuit decrease the efficacy necessary to begin new goal pursuits in a successful manner. Whereas high-hope teachers are more decisive about their career goals (Snyder, 2002), low-hope teachers perceive hopelessness as they link their present goals to future ones. Hope helps teachers get past challenges, and motivated by negative emotions from failed goal pursuit, low-hope teachers are derailed in their goal pursuit, especially when they already perceive these goals as unattainable. When these instances of self-doubt and rumination are present, it seems teachers have reached the point of burnout, where their emotions, motives, and values no longer match the context of their workplace, and they have "lower levels of hardiness and self-esteem" (Maslach, 2003, p. 191).

Although burnout is more situational than personal (Maslach, 2003), the lack of goal attainment creates a “problematic relationship between the person and the work environment,” resulting in a “misfit” (Maslach, 2003, p. 191). The extensive requirements of teaching may “exceed the capacity of the individual to cope effectively” (Maslach, 2003, p. 192), possibly prompting teachers to abandon the teaching profession altogether.

High-hope teachers and burnout. Even when impediments and stressors exist, high-hope teachers are quicker to reenergize and bounce back from them, heading on to the next goal pursuit effort (Snyder, 2002). Their next thoughts and actions deescalate stressors, and they press on to cope with it instead, even seeing it as a provocation, inciting them to rechannel agency thinking (Snyder, 2002). Unlike low-hope people, they are able to work around these stressors, using positive emotions to feed the goal pursuit cycle by “reinforcing their dispositional and situational hopeful thinking” (Snyder, 2002, p. 255). It seems that even though they are exposed to the same catalysts and precursors to burnout as their low-hope counterparts, they ultimately bypass this workplace mismatch and negative emotions, carrying on their goal pursuit efforts with positive, active, confident emotions that play a large role in their hopeful thinking. These “enduring positive emotions” continue to shape and inform the cognitions of these teachers in their goal pursuit “with a sense of affective zest about the pursuit of goals” (Snyder, 2002, p. 252).

Hope and burnout. According to Maslach (2003), the three key dimensions to responses to job stress are “overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment” (p. 190), or inefficacy. The basic hallmark of the burnout experience is the cynicism dimension, or “the negative, callous, or excessively detached response to other people and other aspects of the job” (Maslach, 2003, p.

190). The exhaustion dimension “represents the basic stress response,” and it “shows the expected positive correlation with workload demands” (Maslach, 2003, p. 190). This dimension “leads workers to engage in other actions to distance themselves emotionally and cognitively from their work, presumably as a way to cope with work demands” (Maslach, 2003, p. 190). Finally, the more complex dimension of inefficacy leads to “feelings of inefficacy” that “appear to be a consequence of exhaustion or cynicism, but in other cases, such feelings seem to develop in parallel with the other two dimensions, rather than sequentially” (Maslach, 2003, p. 190). While exhaustion and cynicism dimensions likely “emerge from the presence of work overload and social conflict,” inefficacy “arises more clearly from a lack of resources to get the job done” (Maslach, 2003, p. 190).

If hope is the cognitive force that grounds emotions and motivation in goal pursuit, it seems that teachers who would be high in the exhaustion dimension of burnout would be low in hope, as they have negatively used these components to distance themselves from their workplace. In addition, those high in inefficacy, which is defined as “lack of power to produce a desired effect,” as (“Inefficacy,” n.d.) would also seem to be low in hope, which embodies a high motivation to pursue a goal or desired effect. Ultimately, this inefficacy leads to a lack of clear goals (Maslach, 2003), which is quite the contrary for the high-hope person. The highly cynical teacher “tends to withdraw from the job and do the bare minimum, rather than strive to do the very best” (Maslach, 2003, p. 191). This also appears to mirror those who are low in hope, as it seems these teachers are unable to come up with alternate pathways in spite of job stressors as their motivation is diminished.

Although burnout is receiving attention from policy makers and administrators, limited research exists on interventions to burnout, not because of disinterest but because of the

challenges in creating an intervention, implementing it, and doing longitudinal follow-up studies (Maslach, 2003). Most researchers focus on individualized interventions, “such as removing the worker from the job or training the individual to change work behaviors or strengthen his or her internal resources” (Maslach, 2003, p. 192). This type of approach includes “notions of individual causality and responsibility and the assumption that it is easier and cheaper to change people than organizations” (Maslach, 2003, p. 192). However, this “type of approach is paradoxical given that researchers have found that situational and organizational factors play a bigger role in burnout than do individual ones” (Maslach, 2003, p. 192). Individual approaches “may help alleviate exhaustion, but may not affect the other dimensions of burnout,” and are “relatively ineffective in the workplace, where people have much less control over stressors than in other domains of their life” (Maslach, 2003, p. 192).

Few researchers link the impact of hope on burnout and explore the relationships they share. There is also very little evidence confirming hope’s mediation between burnout and keeping burned-out teachers in the profession. It is easy to speculate that their components are complexly intertwined, but evidence to support these speculations is scarce.

While most researchers have not examined these relationships in teaching, studies exist in other areas. Ho and Lo (2011) explored the relationships of hope and burnout in emergency professionals and found that “personnel with a higher dispositional hope tended to exhibit less burnout symptoms” (p. 3). Their results showed “that dispositional hope is an important factor in preventing burnout among medical personnel” (Ho & Lo, 2011, p. 3). Gustafsson et al. (2012) found that there were “significant negative relationships between hope and all three burnout dimensions in athlete burnout” (p. 640). They ultimately confirmed that “promoting hope may be relevant in reducing the likelihood of this detrimental syndrome” (Gustafsson et al., 2012, p.

640). In a study on hope and burnout in the caregiving profession of nursing, Sherwin et al. (1992) claimed that Snyder's theory of hope "has beneficial aspects for persons who have to endure long-term stressful situations that may not be necessarily perceived as threatening to the self" (p. 129). If this is the case in other professions, it seems crucial that the same relationships be explored in teaching to eliminate the harmful effects of burnout, and to keep valuable teachers in the profession.

Summary

In this study, I aimed to identify relationships between Maslach's (2003) dimensions of burnout and Snyder's (2002) levels of hope and whether or not hope plays a mediating role between teacher burnout and teachers abandoning their current job or the teaching profession. While a body of evidence exists where researchers chronicles burnout, and even more specifically teacher burnout, few relate those concepts to the role of hope in teachers. Because hope is a major component of goal pursuit and teacher identity, this warrants attention. In this quantitative study, I used path analysis where multiple regression was used to examine relationships in burnout and hope and burnout and the intent to leave the profession.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Teacher attrition continues to plague the educational system in the United States. Turnover rates for teachers average 30% higher than those of other professionals (Dunn et al., 2017; Rumschlag, 2017), and the annual teacher attrition rate has almost doubled from 1987 to 2008 (Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2016). While most teachers are natural optimists and not typically chronic complainers (Tye & O'Brien, 2002), increasing demands and job stressors shift these positive emotions to allow them to cope with situational and organizational factors beyond their control. As the stress manifests itself into burnout, teachers begin to debate whether staying in the teaching role or teaching profession is worth the cost. The problem addressed in this study was the lack of understanding about the relationships that exist between teacher burnout, hope, and a teacher's intention to leave her current role, her current school, or the teaching profession altogether.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationships between the dimensions of teacher burnout (Maslach, 1998) and the cognitive constructs of hope (Snyder, 2002). To determine if a relationship exists, I used path analysis, which is a component of multiple regression (Streiner, 2005). Path analysis allows researchers to advance past simple regression when the need arises to analyze more complicated models (Streiner, 2005). This method of analysis was appropriate because it allowed me to examine the significance and extent of hypothesized causal relationships between variables of the study (Webley & Lea, 1997). In analyzing these relationships, I also sought to determine if hope plays a mediating role between burnout and a teacher's intention to leave, according to the perspective of teachers.

In order to determine the relationships between teacher burnout and hope, and whether or not hope is a mediator between burnout and intention to leave, I answered the following questions:

Q1. To what extent, if any, is there a relationship between teacher burnout and hope according to the perspective of teachers?

H₀. There are no relationships between teacher burnout and hope.

H₁. There are significant relationships between teacher burnout and hope.

Q2. To what degree does hope mediate between teacher burnout and intention to leave?

H₀. Hope is not a mediator between burnout and intention to leave.

H₁. Hope is a mediator between teacher burnout and intention to leave.

This chapter consists of the methodological approach to this study. It contains the research design and method, a description of the population and sampling, a discussion of the materials and instruments used to collect and analyze the data, a confirmation of the trustworthiness of the research methods, and the assumptions for the research. I conclude the chapter with a summary of the information in the chapter.

Research Design and Method

In this study, I used quantitative methods as a foundation for data collection and analysis, which is “explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods” (Muijs, 2016, p. 1). This type of numerical data collection and analysis explains the particular phenomenon, and although teacher burnout, hope, and intention to leave do not naturally exist as numbers, the data can still be collected quantitatively by utilizing specific validated instruments to convert them for analysis (Muijs, 2011). Quantitative

research is flexible, has notable advantages, and allows researchers to use computer software that allows analysis to be done quickly and relatively easy (Muijs, 2011).

Quantitative research is appropriate when there exists a desire to explain phenomena and to determine relationships between variables (Muijs, 2011). It is also suitable for collecting pertinent data and using statistical processes to determine whether hypotheses should be rejected or accepted (Muijs, 2011). Because the purpose of this study was to determine what relationships exist between dimensions of teacher burnout and the components of hope, and also the mediating role of hope between teacher burnout and intention to leave, the quantitative method seemed most appropriate.

In this quantitative study, I used nonexperimental survey research, which “provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (Creswell, 2014, p. 155). This cross-sectional study included a questionnaire for data collection, which allowed me to test my theories by analyzing relationships between variables (Creswell, 2014) and to summarize the data collected and generalize results obtained by statistical analysis (Roberts, 2010). In this correlational design, I used the correlational statistic to describe and measure the degree, association, or relationship between variables (Creswell, 2014) by using survey research. This type of research supported analysis of numerical data using statistical procedures (Creswell, 2014).

Due to my realist worldview, this study was conducted following this paradigm to uncover an existing reality (Muijs, 2011). In this approach, the researcher is detached and objective, minimizing her own involvement in order to uncover a truth in their research (Muijs, 2011). This is “best done by methods taken largely from the natural sciences, which are then transposed into social research settings (such as education),” where “positivism is the most

extreme form of this worldview” (Muijs, 2011, pp. 3–4). However, this approach is problematic due to the belief in a true reality that can be measured from a completely objective viewpoint and that researchers cannot actually completely detach themselves from their research (Muijs, 2011). Accepting the limitations of the positivist approach, the post-positivists believe that researchers cannot be completely objective nor can they research like disinterested outsiders. Post-positivists believe researchers “should try to approximate that reality as best we can, all the while realizing that our own subjectivity is shaping that reality” (Muijs, 2011, p. 5). Quantitative research can never be completely certain, but relies on confidence instead (Muijs, 2011).

For the purpose of this study, I took a post-positivist approach. In analyzing relationships between teacher burnout, hope, and intention to leave, this approach helped “reduce the ideas into a small, discrete set to test, such as the variables that comprise hypotheses and research questions” and develop “numeric measures of observations and studying the behavior of individuals” (Creswell, 2014, p. 7). As “data, evidence, and rational considerations shape knowledge,” I sought to “develop relevant, true statements,” being objective in competent inquiry (Creswell, 2014, pp. 7–8).

In this survey research design, data were collected from participants by a questionnaire encompassing the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1997), the Adult Dispositional Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1991), and the TIS-6 (Roodt, 2004), measuring intention to leave. The questions on the instrument were closed-ended and answered by a Likert-type scale to gather numerical data on teacher burnout, hope, and intention to leave their current role. The questionnaire helped accomplish the study goals by providing data that showed whether relationships existed between teacher burnout and hope and, if so, the mediating role of hope between teacher burnout and intention to leave.

This type of data collection is optimum and advantageous for many reasons. First, responses can be directly stored in a database, and many online systems allow simple analyses to take place in the process (Muijs, 2011). Next, online questionnaires saved time by eliminating data input (Muijs, 2011). Also, using an online tool to create questionnaires was beneficial as they were flexible and it was easier to make these questionnaires adaptive (Muijs, 2011). In addition, survey research made it easier to generalize findings to real-world settings, as this is where research takes place (Muijs, 2011). Finally, survey research was efficient in terms of being able to gather large numbers of data at relatively low cost and effort compared to other methods, protecting respondents' anonymity in the process (Muijs, 2011).

For this survey research design, I identified research objectives and formulated hypotheses to answer the research questions. To execute this design, I also decided on a population and determined how the sample would be obtained to choose participants. To gather data, I designed the survey instrument according to the dimensions of teacher burnout and the constructs of hope, along with questions about intention to leave. Data were collected using SurveyMonkey, and when available, data were entered in the SPSS Statistics Version 25 software and analyzed by path analysis and multiple regression according to the purpose of the study.

Population

The population of this study included Texas teachers randomly selected from the Performance-Based Academic Coaching Teams (PACT) database, which was developed by the Texas A&M University System (2013) and funded by the U.S. Department of Education and the Texas Education Agency. Teacher participants selected were registered in the database prior to

the 2017–2018 school year. There were approximately 5,000 teachers registered in the database, both veteran and novice, at the time of this study.

Sample

The size of the sample population was chosen using a power analysis to determine the ideal sample size for the study. According to the Institute for Digital Research and Education (2018), a power analysis detects a true effect when it exists. The primary goal of a power analysis is to decide “how large the sample size is needed to allow statistical judgments that are accurate and reliable” and “how likely your statistical test will be to detect effects of a given size in a particular situation” (StatSoft, 2018, para. 1).

The sample design used for this study was single-stage sampling, such that I could access individuals in the population and could sample the participants directly (Creswell, 2014). Utilizing the PACT database, I randomly selected experienced teachers, allowing every teacher listed in the database equal chance of being selected (Leavy, 2017). This type of random sampling also allowed for generalizing results to a population (Creswell, 2014). Upon selection, survey links and informed consent forms were sent to the sample population using email addresses obtained through the PACT database.

Once I sent the survey to the sample population, the desired response rate from the sample population was 30%. To obtain this goal, I sent reminder emails after 7 days, then again after 2 weeks to encourage participation in the study. This percentage seemed ideal to gain a variety of teaching experiences and backgrounds to enhance the study and provide diverse insight into a wide range of teaching perspectives throughout Texas.

The potential participants for the study were contacted through email to inform them of the study’s purpose and requirements for participation. In addition to the purpose, the email

detailed the survey process and the steps I took to follow ethical considerations and guidelines. I sent participants an email inviting them to participate in the study, which contained a link to the questionnaire on SurveyMonkey. If participants chose to proceed with the study, they were asked a question at the beginning of the survey to indicate consent for participation.

Materials and Instruments

In this study, I combined two validated instruments in questionnaire form to explore the relationships between burnout and hope. In addition, I employed another scale, asking six questions to assess intention to leave in participants. The first instrument, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach et al., 1997), was developed to assess three dimensions of burnout in the helping professions, and the Educator Survey specifically focuses on burnout in teachers. The second instrument was the Adult Dispositional Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1991), which measures hope in three forms: agency thinking, pathways thinking, and overall hope. Finally, the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6) (Roodt, 2004) measures intention to leave one's current job by inquiring about job satisfaction, the extent to which needs are being met in the role, work-related goal pursuit, and other job possibilities.

Maslach Burnout Inventory. According to Maslach et al. (1997), the Maslach Burnout Inventory is “designed to assess the three components of burnout syndrome: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment” (p. 193). It contains 22 items, which measure each dimension. It was initially designed for people who provide “service, care, or treatment” (Maslach et al., 1997, p. 193) in their professions. The items on the instrument are “written in the form of statements about personal feelings or attitudes” (Maslach et al., 1997, p. 193), and respondents answer in terms of frequency with a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 = *never* to 6 = *every day*. Maslach et al. (1997) described that this

frequency dimension also creates a degree of certainty for the researcher from respondent meanings for each scale value. The instrument uses nine items to measure emotional exhaustion, five items to measure depersonalization, and eight items to measure personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 1997).

Maslach et al. (1997) cautioned that the survey is best taken alone, as participants' answers might be influenced by conversations with others. Maslach et al. warned that due to the sensitivity of some items, participants may feel uncomfortable sharing their personal feelings, and researchers should do their best to ensure anonymity and efforts should be made to avoid revealing information about participants. Maslach et al. also explained that since participants are often varied in their burnout beliefs, respondents should be unaware that the instrument is measuring burnout, reducing the reactive effect of personal beliefs, bias, and sensitivity to the instrument. Instead, the scale should be "presented as a survey of job-related attitudes" rather than "linked to burnout in any way" (Maslach et al., 1997, p. 196). These suggestions greatly aided in minimizing the response bias of participants.

The MBI was initially "designed to measure hypothetical aspects of burnout syndrome" and was the result of data collected from previous earlier interviews and questionnaires that detailed "attitudes and feelings that characterized burned-out workers" (Maslach et al., 1997, p. 196). A preliminary form was constructed and contained 47 items, which was given to a sample of 605 people in varying health and service professions that were susceptible to burnout, according to previous research done by Maslach (1976, 1982).

Even though the MBI was designed to measure burnout in helping professions, several researchers began to take an interest in teacher burnout, as it is one of the most visible professions, it has been subject to increased pressures by society, and growing rates of teachers

are leaving the profession (Maslach et al., 1997). In response to these issues, Maslach et al. (1997) developed the MBI-Educator Survey and first published it in 1986 in the second edition of the MBI Manual. The MBI-ES “is basically the same as the MBI” but interchanges the word *recipient* with *student* to “ensure clarity and consistency in the interpretation of the items” (Maslach et al., 1997, p. 206).

Maslach et al. (1997) explained that two studies were conducted to confirm the validity and reliability of the MBI-ES: a factor analysis by Iwanicki and Schwab (1981) with 469 Massachusetts teachers and one by Gold (1984) with 462 California teachers. Iwanicki and Schwab (1981) reported Cronbach’s alpha estimates of .90 for emotional exhaustion, .76 for depersonalization, and .76 for personal accomplishment, whereas Gold (1984) reported estimates of .88, .74, and .72, respectively, which paralleled those of the MBI (Maslach et al., 1997).

Additionally, Platsidou and Daniilidou (2016) addressed the construct validity of the MBI by comparing the psychometric characteristics of three different instruments that measure burnout: the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach, 1982), the Burnout Measure (Pines & Aronson, 1988), and the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (Kristensen, Borritz, Villadsen, & Christensen, 2005). In their overall findings, the researchers suggested that “the MBI is the most appropriate measure for assessing teachers’ burnout compared to the MB and CBI, which presented not so well-defined inner structures and highly correlated subscales” (Platsidou & Daniilidou, 2016, p. 164). After data were collected, confirmatory factor analysis was performed to test the validity of the three instruments, and correlations between the instruments were examined. Confirmatory factor analysis “yielded a reasonably good model fit for the MBI, and merely acceptable model fit for the BM and CBI” (Platsidou & Daniilidou, 2016, p. 179). In addition, the MBI was also “found to assess the three dimensions of teachers’ burnout as

predicted by the theory and their internal structure matched the original MBI' (Platsidou & Daniilidou, 2016, p. 179). Ultimately, the results confirmed the factorial structure of the MBI and showed it "assesses different aspects of the burnout phenomenon, while in the other two measures subscale scores were fairly intercorrelated, indicating that they might assess burnout as a more unified phenomenon" (Platsidou & Daniilidou, 2016, p. 181).

Adult Dispositional Hope Scale. The Adult Dispositional Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1991) was the first instrument designed to measure hope with regards to Snyder's theory. This scale involves dispositional hope through a self-report questionnaire that addresses agency thinking, pathways thinking, and overall hope. Items are scored on a Likert scale in order to encourage more diverse responding (Snyder, 2000). Snyder et al. (1991) also found that there were positive statistically significant correlations between his theory's two distinct components of pathways and agency at .001 (Hanson, 2009).

Snyder (2000) suggested that, when administered, the survey be referred to as the Goals Scale to reduce participant bias. This survey takes from 2 to 5 minutes to complete (Snyder, 2000) and has straightforward, simplistic scoring. I chose to use the dispositional hope measure instead of a domain-specific measure because trait hope transcends other context-specific hope and makes more sense for the purpose of the study, as opposed to pinpointing areas of hope and focusing specifically on job-related components, which would limit the focus of the study.

The Adult Dispositional Hope Scale is also known as the Goals Scale to make less obvious the measure's purpose to respondents. The Adult Dispositional Hope Scale is a self-report measure of 12 items. Early participants taking the survey were asked to rate statements on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *definitely false* to 4 = *definitely true* (Edwards, Rand, Lopez, & Snyder, 2007), but this has changed to an 8-point Likert-type scale to enhance

the clarity of responses. The highest possible score is 32, while the lowest is 8. The survey includes four items measuring agency thinking, four items measuring pathways thinking, and four distractor items that are not scored for the total hope but rather to make the scale content seem less obvious (Edwards et al., 2007). The scale was tested on college and noncollege samples of adults and, consistent with the hope theory developed by Snyder and his colleagues, provides an agency subscale score, a pathways subscale score, and a total hope score.

According to Edwards et al. (2007), several studies have validated the internal reliability of the Hope Scale, with Cronbach's alphas ranging from .74 to .88. Both subscales have shown internal reliability in these studies as well, with Cronbach's alphas ranging from .70 to .84 on the Agency scale and from .63 to .86 on the Pathways scale. The test-retest reliability was .85 over a 3-week period, .73 over an 8-week period, and from .76 to .82 over a 10-week interval (Edwards et al., 2007).

In another study by Gana, Daigre, and Ledrich (2013), although the primary goal was to evaluate the psychometric properties of the French translation of the Adult Dispositional Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1991), the researchers examined reliability, confirmatory factor analysis, invariance of the ADHS across gender, and the construct validity of the scale (Gana et al., 2013). For construct validity specifically, the researchers used the Life Orientation Test–Revised (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994), the Hopelessness Scale (Beck, Weissman, Lester, & Trexler, 1974), the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988), and the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (Zigmond & Snaith, 1983). Total ADHS scores were “significantly and negatively related to hopelessness, negative affectivity, anxiety, and depressive mood” (Gana et al., 2013, p. 114). They were also “significantly and positively

correlated with optimism and positive affect” (Gana et al., 2013, p. 114). Overall, Gana et al. (2013) found that the ADHS is a valid and reliable measure for assessing dispositional hope.

Intention to leave. The TIS-6 is a six-item measure of turnover intention to stay or leave an organization and is a valid and reliable scale for measuring turnover intentions (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). This measure is unique in that it considers that the “path to turnover intention is the result of job demands that cause burnout,” and an “indirect relationship between job demands and turnover intention is proposed” (Bothma & Roodt, 2013, p. 2). In a study to determine the validity of the measure by Bothma and Roodt (2013), the researchers examined the reliability, the construct (factorial) validity, the criterion-predictive validity, and the differential validity of the TIS-6. Correlational statistics were also applied for analyzing relationships between variables (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). In addition to the TIS-6, which was adapted from the 15-item scale initially developed by Roodt (2004), the researchers used six other valid and reliable measuring instruments (Bothma & Roodt, 2013), one of which was the Maslach Burnout Inventory–Human Services survey (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). This was used to measure workplace burnout and contained the same dimensions as the MBI-ES.

The results of the study indicated that there was “a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0.80 for the TIS-6,” and “these findings confirm the factorial validity as well as the reliability of the instrument” (Bothma & Roodt, 2013, p. 6). In addition, the intercorrelations between the variables make it “evident that the different variables are all significantly related” (Bothma & Roodt, 2013, p. 6). In analyzing participant data, the researchers found a “significant difference in the turnover intention scores of those employees who resigned compared to those who stayed,” where the mean difference had a large effect, “supporting the criterion-predictive validity of the TIS-6 to predict actual turnover” (Bothma & Roodt, 2013, p. 7). These findings

indicated the link between turnover intention, work engagement, and burnout (Bothma & Roodt, 2013).

The “exploratory factor analysis using principal axis factoring and varimax rotation” led the researchers to the conclusion that the “TIS-6 is a one-dimensional construct, thereby confirming the construct” of the scale (Bothma & Roodt, 2013, p. 10). The scale had an overall reliability alpha of .80, confirming its reliability (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). It was also determined that “the scores of the TIS significantly relate to all other variables in this study, namely work engagement, work-based identity, burnout, helping behavior, work alienation, and task performance” (Bothma & Roodt, 2013, p. 10). Thus, the findings of this study indicate the validity and reliability of the instrument to measure turnover intention (Bothma & Roodt, 2013).

For the purpose of this study, I combined the 22 items on the Maslach Burnout Inventory–Educator Survey, the 12 items on the Adult Dispositional Hope Scale, and six questions on the TIS-6 that measure intention to formulate one questionnaire to be emailed to participants. This questionnaire also included demographic information of participants. As suggested by Maslach et al. (1997) and Snyder (2000), I limited disclosure of the burnout and hope measures within the study, minimizing the reactive effect of participants’ personal beliefs and bias, avoiding sensitizing participants to the general issues of burnout and hope respectively. This online survey (administered by using the SurveyMonkey website) on average took participants no more than 20 minutes to complete with all questions being answered.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

In this study, I took into consideration three separate components: burnout, hope, and intention to leave as a result of burnout. I explored relationships between burnout and hope and assessed to what extent, if any, hope serves as a mediator between teacher burnout and intention

to leave. In this study, burnout served as the dependent variable because it is affected or influenced by another variable (Leavy, 2017), which, for the purpose of this study, was hope. Hope served as the independent variable because it is hypothesized that it likely affects or influences teacher burnout. Once existing relationships between burnout and hope were analyzed, hope also served as an intervening, or mediating, variable that had potential to mediate the effect of the dependent variable (burnout) on teachers' intention to leave.

After confirming the existence of relationships between burnout and hope, I used multiple regression and path analysis to answer the second research question using Baron and Kenny's (2018) four steps of regression. First, I tested whether or not the causal variables of burnout were correlated with the outcome variable of intention to leave using Pearson's r to determine statistically significant relationships between the variables. Upon determining these correlations, I ran tests for multiple linear regression with emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment, and hope as predictor variables and intention to leave as the outcome variable using ANOVA. Second, I tested whether or not the causal variables of burnout were shown to be correlated with the mediator, hope. I again ran tests for multiple linear regression with the personal accomplishment dimension of burnout as the independent variable and hope as the dependent variable. In the third step of Baron and Kenny's (2018) model, regression tests were done to determine whether the mediator, hope, affects the outcome variable of intention to leave. Finally, in the last step, to establish that there is a complete mediation, the effect of burnout on intention to leave while controlling for hope should be zero. If the first three steps are met, but not step four, then there is a partial mediation present instead of a complete mediation.

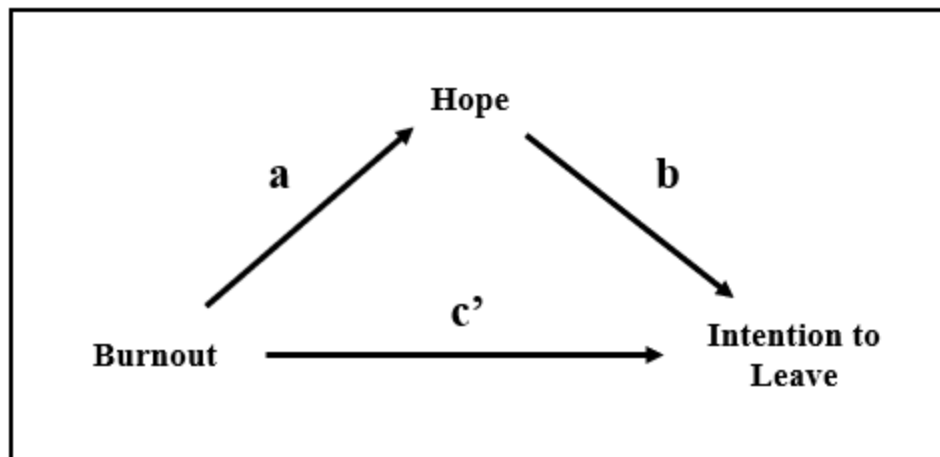


Figure 1. Mediation model. This figure illustrates how mediation variables were analyzed according to Baron and Kenny (2018).

Operational Definition of Variables

Burnout. In 1982, Maslach later defined burnout as a “psychological syndrome comprised of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a diminished sense of personal accomplishment,” occurring in those working in stressful or challenging environments (Poghosyan, Aiken, & Sloane, 2009, p. 895).

Hope. Snyder and colleagues (1991) defined hope as a “positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful agency (goal-directed energy) and pathways (planning to meet goals)” (Edwards et al., 2007, p. 83). This model “involves three interrelated cognitive components: goals, agency, and pathways,” where “pathways and agency thinking are additive, reciprocal, and positively related,” as neither individual component alone defines hope (Edwards et al., 2007, p. 83).

Instrumentation. The Maslach Burnout Inventory is a multidimensional approach designed to measure an “enduring state of experienced burnout” and “assess levels and patterns of burnout among groups of workers, while not assessing individual distress” (Maslach et al.,

1997, p. 203). This multidimensional model contrasts unidimensional models by providing a multifaceted conception of burnout instead of a single, unitary measure. This approach incorporates each single dimension (exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment) and extends it by adding the two other dimensions (Maslach et al., 1997).

Intention to leave. According to Sager et al. (1998), intention to leave, or turnover cognitions, “represent mental decisions intervening between an individual’s attitudes regarding a job and the stay or leave decision” (p. 255) and include “thinking of quitting, intention to search, and intention to quit” (p. 254). This turnover intention is also seen “as the final step in the decision-making process before a person actually leaves the workplace” (Bothma & Roodt, 2013, p. 2).

I collected a portion of the quantitative data using the Maslach Burnout Inventory–Educators Survey, as participants responded to survey questions with a 7-point Likert-type scale. This closed-ended survey measured participants’ burnout overall and in three distinct dimensions: exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy. This section of the survey consisted of 22 items and averaged between 10 and 15 minutes for completion.

To Snyder (2000), agency is the motivational component necessary to fuel individuals in their goal pursuit. This agency thinking affects the perception that individuals have the ability to move toward goals utilizing generated pathways, and it also affects the reflection of one’s appraisal of her ability to be persistent as they pursue goals (Snyder, 2000). Pathways thoughts, however, are routes created to reach to the desired goals, which also taps perceived ability to goal pursuit (Snyder, 2000). By working together in an iterative process, agency sparks pathways thinking and pathways thinking influences agency thinking (Snyder, 2000). The two

components of hope—pathways and agency thinking—continuously enhance and affect each other as goal pursuit takes place (Snyder, 2000).

On the second portion of the quantitative survey, I measured how participants scored on Snyder et al.'s (1991) Adult Dispositional Hope Scale using an 8-point Likert-type scale. This 12-item scale measures an individual's level of hope and is divided into two subscales—agency thinking and pathways thinking—which are components of Snyder's cognitive theory of hope. Agency thinking is measured with four questions, pathways thinking is measured with four questions, and four filler questions are embedded in the survey to remove the potential influence of respondents' answers. These questions result in three scores: an overall hope score, an agency thinking score, and a pathways thinking score.

On the last portion of the quantitative survey, I measured intention to leave using the fourth version of the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6). These six questions were taken from the longer 15-item scale initially developed by Roodt (2004). This scale uses a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *never* to 5 = *always*. Sample items include the following: "How often have you considered leaving your job?" "To what extent is your current job satisfying your personal needs?," and "How often are you frustrated when not given the opportunity at work to achieve your personal work-related goals?" (see Appendix B).

By combining the MBI-ES, ADHS items, and intention-to-leave items, I created a questionnaire compiling existing surveys to send to participants using the SurveyMonkey website. I gathered data as respondents answered questions on the survey and entered them into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25 software for further descriptive statistical analysis. Using regression models, I first analyzed the relationships between burnout

and hope. Because significant correlations existed, I examined the mediating role hope played between burnout and intention to leave.

Validity and Reliability

Researchers must take extensive measures to ensure the credibility and accuracy of findings (Creswell, 2014). In a quantitative study, validity can be compromised by internal threats, which affect the researcher's ability to correctly infer information from the data about the study's population (Creswell, 2014). It can also be compromised by external threats as the researcher draws incorrect inferences and applies them to situations outside of the study or falsely generalizes the results beyond the groups in the study (Creswell, 2014). In addition, quantitative researchers can also be in danger of statistical conclusion validity when they "draw inaccurate inferences from the data because of inadequate statistical power or the violation of statistical assumptions" (Creswell, 2014, p. 177). In order to address these threats to validity, I used caution when analyzing data results, drawing inferences, and generalizing the results to other populations.

Ethical considerations. This study was submitted to the Abilene Christian University (ACU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval upon completion (see Appendix A), and I collected no data until ACU fully approved the study. Once IRB approval was received, I began random sampling to gather participants for the study. Before participants received the survey, I provided an informed consent form, detailing information about the study and methods to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of participants' identities and responses. Participants were not coerced to take part in the study but rather did so according to their own choice, after being informed of any potential risks involved. As designed, there were no risks to participants nor

was there any cost to participate. I ensured participants, upon agreeing to be a part of the study, that they could withdraw their consent to participate at any time without penalty.

There is a grave need for researchers to protect the identity of participants to develop trust, promote integrity, and shield them from misconduct or other challenges that may arise (Creswell, 2014). To ensure ethical procedures were followed, I protected the anonymity of individuals and their roles in the project. Participants were informed of possible risks of nonconfidentiality, but I avoided disclosing information that could potentially harm participants. In addition, all data collected were securely stored and accessed in accordance with ACU's IRB requirements.

Assumptions. I made several assumptions in relation to conducting this study. First, I assumed and trusted that participants completed the online surveys to the best of their ability, answering questions frankly and honestly. This assumption was made because I ensured anonymity and confidentiality of participants, so they could complete the survey without fear, realizing that they could discontinue participation in the study at any time. Second, I assumed the PACT database was appropriate for selecting participants and provided a wide base of diverse backgrounds and experiences. The sample population included numerous participants to collect data from until I reached the point of saturation, where gathering new data no longer sparked new insights (Creswell, 2014). Finally, I assumed that the participants in the study held a vested interest in the purpose of the study and responded to questions with no other motives. I made this assumption on the premise that participants were not coerced into study participation and would not receive any compensation or penalty for their role in the study. In addition, participants were informed that their participation was strictly voluntary, and they could choose to exit the study at any time without penalty.

Limitations. The study had three potential limitations. First, the study was conducted in the fall, when teachers were fresh into their new school year. At this point in the school year, teachers may not have experienced great amounts of job-related stress, so burnout measures might not be the same as they would be at the end of the school year. However, conducting the study at this time may have given a truer measure of dispositional hope without the influence and pressures of job-related challenges to tarnish it.

Second, the study contained self-reported data, which were limited in verification. These data could potentially contain bias, selective memory, telescoping, attribution, or exaggeration (*Organizing*, 2018). Any of these instances could diminish the quality of results and not completely present accurate representations of the participants' experiences.

Finally, for this study, I used a cross-sectional approach, analyzing data collected from a specific point in time. While I measured the phenomena during a specific period, the results did not measure change as time progressed, nor did I consider the growth of teachers in their ability to manage job-related stressors that contribute to burnout. The cross section of time in the fall of 2018 utilized in the study may not have been adequate in fully addressing the burnout and hope measured in participants.

Delimitations. For the purpose of this study, I limited participants to teachers who had completed at least 1 year of teaching experience. Initially, I considered limiting participants to only those who taught core content subjects, but this restriction could have potentially prevented valuable insight into the phenomena from enrichment teachers. The participants were also limited to the PACT database, which provided me easy access to a wealth of Texas teachers.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the relationships between teacher burnout and hope. I also examined the mediating role hope plays between teacher burnout and intention to leave one's current role. The quantitative design allowed me to accomplish the study's purpose by generating rational knowledge of existing relationships between the variables to further explain the phenomena.

Chapter 3 included the design and methods of the study, population and sample, materials and instruments that would be used, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study. In Chapter 4, I gave more insight into the study's results, including a detailed description of the research processes. In this chapter, I discussed the study's findings built logically from the problem and research design, addressed the research questions driving the study, provided relevant tables and figures, and gave evidence of the quality control measures taken during the process of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to examine existing relationships between the dimensions of teacher burnout and the cognitive constructs of hope. In addition, I identified the presence of the mediating role of hope between teacher burnout and intention to leave. This chapter consists of a summary of the research process; a description of the study participants, research findings, and additional findings; and a summary and preview of Chapter 5.

Summary of Research Processes

In this quantitative study, I used nonexperimental survey research, which provided a “quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (Creswell, 2014, p. 15). This cross-sectional study included a questionnaire for data collection, which allowed me to summarize survey results from numerous participants and generalize results based on statistical data analysis and projections (Roberts, 2010). In this correlational design, I utilized statistical analysis to describe and quantify the degree, sodality, and existing relationships between variables by utilizing survey research (Creswell, 2014).

To collect data for this study, I opened a link to the study’s questionnaire on the SurveyMonkey website on September 4, 2018, and sent an email to potential participants with an explanation of the study and a link to the questionnaire. The initial page contained an informed consent, and participants could not progress to the study’s questions without first indicating consent for participation. The study’s questionnaire included items from the Maslach Burnout Inventory–ES (MBI-ES), the Adult Dispositional Hope Scale (ADHS), and the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6), which each contained Likert scales unique to each survey’s questions

(see Appendix B). After data were collected, they were compiled into an Excel spreadsheet and uploaded into IBM SPSS Statistics 25 software.

To analyze the data, I began with descriptive statistics and frequency for all dimensions of burnout, hope total score, and intention to leave. I also calculated descriptive statistics for participant demographics of age, gender, and years of teaching. Once I determined that the data were normally distributed using skewness and kurtosis, Pearson correlations were used to determine the relationships existing between the independent variables and the dependent variable. After proving there were relationships between the burnout dimensions and hope, I ran regression models using path analysis to determine the strengths of relationships and the statistical significance of each, as well as to determine whether hope mediated burnout and intention to leave.

Study Participants

Participants in the study included 95 teachers listed in the Performance-Based Academic Coaching Teams (PACT) database. Out of about 5,000 teachers, 2,000 emails were sent out using random selection. Out of these emails, 614 were returned due to bad email addresses or rejected emails. The final sample population was 1,386. Out of this population, 95 (7%) participants gave consent and completed the survey.

Demographic data. After the first question indicating consent for participation, the survey contained three demographics questions in open-ended form, including gender, age, and years of teaching. There were 74 females (77.9%) and 21 males (22.1%) who participated in the survey. The results also indicated that participants on average were 38.7 years of age ($SD = 6.37$) and the mean of their years of teaching experience was 6.4 ($SD = 6.53$). One participant neglected to put an appropriate age, so these data was removed. While the data included a wide

range of teacher ages, 70 participants (74%) had 5 years of teaching experience or less, whereas only 25 participants (26%) had from 6 to 30 years of teaching experience. In addition, 21 participants (22%) had exactly 4 years of teaching experience.

Presentation of Findings

In this section, I provide the findings of each statistical analysis conducted to determine the answers to the research questions. I also detailed additional findings of these analyses.

Before correlations were calculated, I tested the distributions of the data for skewness and kurtosis of the variables. The results of these tests revealed that gender exhibited a skewness of 1.366 ($SE = .247$) and a kurtosis of -1.137 ($SE = .490$), age exhibited a skewness of $.435$ ($SE = .249$) and a kurtosis of -1.108 ($SE = .493$), and years taught exhibited a skewness of 1.773 ($SE = .247$) and a kurtosis of 2.321 ($SE = .490$). Because these demographic variables are not factored into the correlational testing for the relationships between burnout, hope, and intention to leave, the elevated skewness and kurtosis of some demographic data do not disqualify the variables, which fell under normal distribution ranges from Pearson correlation analysis. Additionally, the demographic variables had no statistically significant correlations with any of the dimensions of burnout, hope, or intention to leave. The results of the hope, burnout, and intention-to-leave correlation variables revealed that hope exhibited a skewness of -0.906 ($SE = .247$) and a kurtosis of $.807$ ($SE = .490$), emotional exhaustion exhibited a skewness of -0.369 ($SE = .247$) and a kurtosis of $.800$ ($SE = .490$), personal accomplishment exhibited a skewness of -0.863 ($SE = .247$) and a kurtosis of $.670$ ($SE = .490$), depersonalization exhibited a skewness of $.765$ ($SE = .247$) and a kurtosis of -0.204 ($SE = .490$), and intention to leave exhibited a skewness of -0.172 ($SE = .247$) and a kurtosis of $.879$ ($SE = .490$).

I also calculated descriptive statistics for the components of burnout, total hope score, and intention to leave. These findings are illustrated in Table 1. Considering the maximum score for hope was 64, on average, most participants scored high in hope ($M = 51.7$, $SD = 8.2$). Emotional exhaustion was slightly elevated ($M = 33.1$, $SD = 12.2$), as was personal accomplishment ($M = 36.8$, $SD = 7.5$). Depersonalization scores were rather low among participants ($M = 9.2$, $SD = 7.2$), whereas intention to leave was slightly elevated ($M = 18.8$, $SD = 6.5$).

Table 1

Variable Descriptive Statistics

		Hope	Emotional exhaustion	Personal accomplishment	Depersonalization	Intention to leave
<i>n</i>	Valid	95	95	95	95	95
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		51.75	33.17	36.79	9.22	18.84
Standard deviation		8.20	12.25	7.46	7.21	6.53
Variance		67.28	149.95	55.66	51.98	42.65
Range		38.00	49.00	34.00	30.00	24.00
Minimum		26.00	4.00	14.00	0.00	6.00
Maximum		64.00	53.00	48.00	30.00	30.00

I centered this study centered on two research questions. For each question, I conducted an analysis to test the null hypothesis.

Q1. To what extent, if any, is there a relationship between teacher burnout and hope according to the perspective of teachers?

H₀. There are no relationships between teacher burnout and hope.

H₁. There are significant relationships between teacher burnout and hope.

To answer this question, I calculated correlation coefficients using Pearson's r for emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and the personal accomplishment dimensions of burnout and the participants' total hope scores. This information is indicated in Table 2.

Table 2

Correlation Coefficients Between Burnout and Hope

	Hope total	Emotional exhaustion	Personal accomplishment	Depersonalization
Hope total	–	–.243*	.616**	–.289**
Emotional exhaustion	–.243*	–	–.397**	.543**
Personal accomplishment	.616**	–.397**	–	–.475**
Depersonalization	–.289**	.543**	–.475**	–

* $p < .05$, two-tailed. ** $p < .01$, two tailed.

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis indicated that there are several statistically significant relationships between the dimensions of teacher burnout and hope. Emotional exhaustion had a modest negative correlation with hope ($r = -.243$, $p = .018$) along with depersonalization ($r = -.289$, $p < .001$). While these relationships between burnout and hope are negatively correlated, the relationship between personal accomplishment and hope was not ($r = .616$, $p < .001$), and also indicated that there was a strong relationship between the two variables of burnout and hope. Likewise, the results of the Pearson correlation analysis also revealed that there are statistically significant relationships among the burnout dimensions themselves.

The positive component of burnout, personal accomplishment, was negatively correlated to the two other more negative dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion ($r = -.397$, $p < .001$) and depersonalization ($r = -.475$, $p < .001$). As personal accomplishment increases, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization decrease. The negative dimensions of burnout,

emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, had a strong positive correlation ($r = .543, p < .001$) with each other. As emotional exhaustion increases, depersonalization increases as well. These results allow me to reject the null hypothesis that there are no relationships between burnout and hope and accept the alternative hypothesis that there are.

Q2. To what degree does hope mediate between teacher burnout and intention to leave?

H₀. Hope is not a mediator between burnout and intention to leave.

H₁. Hope is a mediator between teacher burnout and intention to leave.

After confirming the existence of relationships between burnout and hope, I used multiple regression and path analysis to answer the second research question using Baron and Kenny's (2018) four steps of regression. First, I tested whether or not the causal variables of burnout were correlated with the outcome variable of intention to leave (see Figure 2).

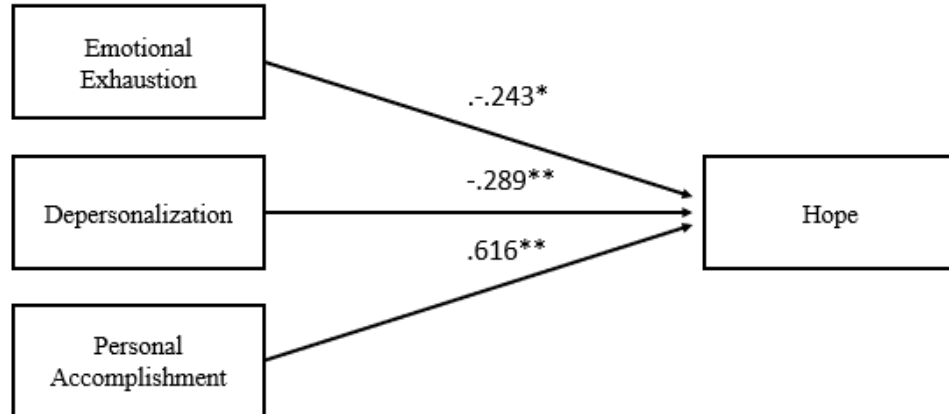


Figure 2. Correlations between burnout dimensions and hope. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$.

Upon determining these correlations, I ran tests for multiple linear regression with emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment, and hope as predictor variables and intention to leave as the outcome variable. The results showed that the independent variables strongly predicted intention to leave, showing 66.8% in variance. Because this percentage was relatively high, this indicated a closer fit of the data to the line of the regression model. ANOVA tests revealed that a significant regression equation was found, $F(4, 90) = 45.236, p < .001, R^2 = .668$. Participants' predicted intention to leave was equal to $13.174 + .070$ (hope) $+ .298$ (emotional exhaustion) $- .255$ (personal accomplishment) $+ .169$ (depersonalization). Participants' intention to leave increased .070 units for each unit of hope, increased .298 for each unit of emotional exhaustion, decreased .255 for each unit of personal accomplishment, and increased .169 for each unit of depersonalization. Emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, and depersonalization were all strong significant predictors of intention to leave ($p < .001$), whereas hope was not ($p = .260$). Emotional exhaustion was the strongest predictor of intention to leave ($r = .754, p < .001$), followed by depersonalization ($r = .602, p < .001$), and personal accomplishment ($r = -.547$), which was negatively correlated with intention to leave.

Second, I tested whether or not the causal variables of burnout were shown to be correlated with the mediator, hope. I again ran tests for multiple linear regression with the personal accomplishment dimension of burnout as the independent variable and hope as the dependent variable. The results showed that the independent variable moderately predicted intention to leave, showing 38% in variance. Despite being on the lower end, this lower variance was to be expected, as it is difficult to predict human behavior and most fields attempting to do so have R^2 values less than 50% (Frost, 2018). ANOVA tests revealed that a significant

regression equation was found, $F(1, 93) = 56.957, p < .001, R^2 = .380$. Participants' predicted hope was equal to $26.820 + .678$ (personal accomplishment). Participants' hope increased .678 units for each unit of personal accomplishment. Personal accomplishment was a significant predictor of intention to leave ($p < .001$).

In the third step of Baron and Kenny's (2018) model, it indicated that the mediator, hope, affected the outcome variable of intention to leave. In this case, the relationship between burnout and intention to leave was not mediated by hope. As Figure 3 illustrates, the standardized regression coefficient between hope and intention to leave was weak and not statistically significant, $\beta = .087, p = .260$. Because this step was not shown to mediate the relationship, Baron and Kenny's (2018) fourth step, to establish that there is a complete mediation, could not be tested. These results led me to accept the null hypothesis that hope was not a mediator between teacher burnout and intention to leave.

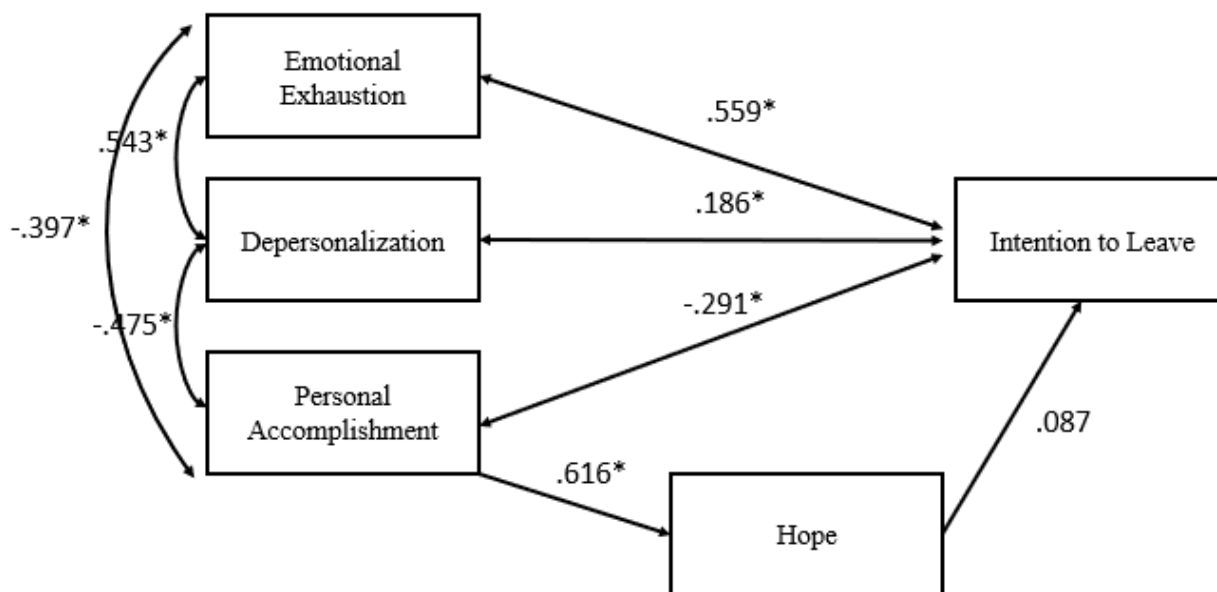


Figure 3. Path analysis model of mediation between burnout dimensions and hope. * $p < .05$.

Additional Findings

As I began analyzing the relationships between burnout, hope, and intention to leave, an important relationship between hope and intention to leave emerged. The Pearson correlation analysis revealed that there was a moderate statistically significant correlation between hope and intention to leave, $r = -.281, p = .006$. As participants' hope increased, their intention to leave decreased. However, as the multiple regression analysis revealed, hope was not a statistically significant predictor of intention to leave, $\beta = .087, p = .260$.

Summary

In this chapter, I conducted a series of analyses to examine the relationships between teacher burnout, hope, and intention to leave. The tests used to examine the relationships specifically between burnout and hope (Q1) revealed that there were significant relationships between the burnout dimensions and participants' total hope scores. However, the tests used to determine whether hope served as a mediator between teacher burnout and intention to leave (Q2) indicated that there while hope did predict teacher burnout, there was no statistically significant prediction with hope and intention to leave. Therefore, hope is not a mediator between the two variables. In Chapter 5, I will discuss these findings, detail the importance and implications of this study's results, address limitations, and will provide recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Since the late 1980s, teacher turnover has been problematic, and the national rate remains high even today. While attrition can be traced to many factors, the focus of this study was teacher burnout, which is a precursor and predictor of teacher attrition (Rumschlag, 2017; Ryan et al., 2017; Shen et al., 2015). While many researchers have chronicled the causes and results of teacher burnout in their studies, this study offers the contribution of hope and the role it plays in the teaching profession. In this chapter, I describe and discuss the findings and implications of this research, offering suggestions for future practice and research and ending with a conclusion of the study.

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this correlational, nonexperimental study was to examine relationships between the dimensions of teacher burnout and the cognitive constructs of hope. In addition, the identification of the presence of a mediating role of hope between teacher burnout and intention to leave.

Demographic findings. Before correlations were calculated, I began data analysis with descriptive statistics for the study's sample population. The mean age of teachers was 38.7 ($SD = 11.33308$). Out of the 95 participants, the mean years of teaching experience was only 6.4 years. In fact, 70 teachers (74%) had 5 years or less of teaching experience, and 21 participants (22%) had exactly 4 years of teaching experience.

Weisberg and Sagie (1999) found that teachers who had less experience in their jobs were more likely to leave due to burnout. For gender, 74 participants (77.9%) were female and 21 participants (22.1%) were male. Again, initially, this seemed to be a limitation, but according to Loewus (2017), the National Center for Education Statistics 2015–2016 survey showed that

about 77% of American teachers were women, which closely paralleled the sample population for this study.

Components of burnout, hope, and intention to leave. After demographic data were analyzed, descriptive statistics were calculated for the components of burnout, hope, and intention to leave. As the highest possible score for hope was 64, the participants' mean total hope score was 51.7 ($SD = 8.2$), which indicated that most participants scored on the higher side of hope. For the emotional exhaustion dimension of burnout, the highest possible score was 54, and the mean score was 33.2 ($SD = 12.2$). While this is not extremely high, it does appear to be slightly elevated. The personal accomplishment dimension of burnout was also high, with the highest possible score of 48 and a mean score of 36.8 ($SD = 7.5$).

In contrast to the other dimensions of burnout, depersonalization was rather low, with the highest possible score of 30 and a participant mean of 9.2 ($SD = 7.2$). Finally, participant intention to leave had a highest possible score of 30 and the participants' mean score was 18.8 ($SD = 6.5$). Because participants were slightly above average for emotional exhaustion, it made sense that they would be slightly above average for intention to leave as well, as the results of this study indicated that emotional exhaustion was the strongest predictor for intention to leave. In addition, because the population measured high in hope, the high mean score of personal accomplishment also came as no surprise, as teachers who feel a high sense of personal accomplishment typically have higher levels of the cognitive goal pursuit through pathways and agentic thinking.

Research Question 1. Research Question 1 was designed to analyze existing relationships between hope and teacher burnout. The results of the Pearson correlation indicated that there were significant relationships between each dimension of burnout and hope, with

personal accomplishment having the strongest relationship, followed by depersonalization, and finally emotional exhaustion. In the burnout literature, personal accomplishment is referred to as reduced personal accomplishment or inefficacy, whereas the MBI-ES is used to test personal accomplishment, the positive flipside of the dimension. Because the positive side of this dimension was tested, the correlation with hope was also positive and strong, indicating that when hope is high, personal accomplishment is as well. However, depersonalization (otherwise known as cynicism in the burnout literature) and emotional exhaustion, which are negative components of burnout, were negatively correlated with hope. This implies that when participants are low in hope, they are typically high in depersonalization and emotional exhaustion. In addition to these relationships between hope and burnout, hope also predicted intention to leave with a negative correlation. When teachers are high in hope, they are high in personal accomplishment and have little reason to consider leaving their job. In addition to burnout and hope being related, the data indicated that the dimensions of burnout were also related to each other.

Research Question 2. For Research Question 2, I tested whether or not hope served as a mediator between teacher burnout and intention to leave. In the first part of the regression model, it was determined that all dimensions of burnout were predictors of intention to leave, with emotional exhaustion being the strongest statistically significant predictor, then depersonalization, and finally personal accomplishment, although this correlation was negative. If teachers are high in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, this information could be used to identify them as potential teacher leavers. On the contrary, personal accomplishment was negatively correlated with intention to leave, indicating that when teachers are pleased in their personal accomplishments in their jobs, they are less likely to think of leaving. The

mediation model stopped here, though, as hope was not a statistically significant predictor of intention to leave. Hope is, however, moderately negatively correlated to intention to leave, meaning that if teachers have high hope, they typically have lower intention to leave and, on the contrary, if they are low in hope, they are typically higher in intention to leave.

The results of this study are confirmed by researchers and other studies that address whether burnout is a contributing factor to intention to leave (Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Ryan et al., 2017; Weisberg & Sagie, 1999). Weisberg and Sagie (1999) described burned-out individuals as feeling totally overwhelmed and no longer able to tolerate workplace stressors such that they ultimately reach a breaking point, leading to subsequent thoughts of leaving. Although studies on Israeli (Weisberg & Sagie, 1999) and Holland teachers (Houkes et al., 2001) vary in terms of the strongest predictors of intention to leave, American studies (Carlson & Thompson, 1995; Jackson et al., 1986; Lee & Ashforth, 1990) tend to confirm this study's results that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization are the dominant factors in predicting a teacher's intention to leave.

Context and Interpretation of Findings

As the results of this study indicated, emotional exhaustion was the strongest dimension of teacher burnout that predicts intention to leave. Teaching is an emotional practice where feelings are examined and regularly used (Mevarech & Maskit, 2015). Emotions are “deeply intertwined with the purposes of teaching, the political dynamics of educational policy and school life, the relationships that make up teaching, and the senses of self which teachers invest in their work” (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 330). When experiences of emotional exhaustion occur, this facet of burnout causes individuals to “distance themselves emotionally and cognitively from their work” as a coping mechanism, and it is these same negative emotions that ultimately result

in intention to leave (Maslach, 2003, p. 190). When emotionally exhausted, teachers passively ignore their emotions or actively hush them due to their thoughts of failure and lack of support (Shapiro, 2010). This emotional exhaustion and stress “decrease feelings of competence and productivity at work” (Benoliel & Barth, 2017, p. 646), resulting in feelings of inefficacy and reduced personal accomplishment, which also predict intention to leave.

Perceptions of success or failure in goal pursuit affect future goal pursuit efforts in a teacher’s work (Snyder, 2002), and if a sense of failure occurs, this inability to achieve goals fuels inefficacy and reduced personal accomplishment, further adding to the teacher’s burnout. Because personal accomplishment is negatively related to intention to leave, teachers who feel they have work-related successes are less inclined to leave their role as a teacher.

The results of this study also indicated that emotional exhaustion was negatively related to hope. Because emotions contribute to the development of hopeful thinking, they have a tendency cast a specific tone on goal pursuit, stemming from their past goal pursuit experiences, and have an impact on future goal pursuit endeavors as well. Individuals who are high in hope, as this study’s population seemed to be, have friendly, happy, and confident emotions, whereas their lower-hope counterparts have a “reservoir of negative and passive feelings” in their goal pursuit (Snyder, 2002, p. 253), indicating they might have high levels of emotional exhaustion, putting them at a higher risk of intention to leave.

As stressors arise, hope becomes important because it allows individuals to channel the requisite motivation needed and to create alternative pathways to surpass these stressors that can contribute to burnout (Snyder, 2002). When stressful situations occur, low-hope individuals may see their goal pursuits thwarted and attainment of a goal as near impossible (Snyder, 2002). When this hopeful thought is jeopardized, low-hope individuals are extremely susceptible in

succumbing to stressors of burnout, perceiving they are not able to reach their desired goal (inefficacy) and become more likely to consider leaving their role. This sense of inefficacy fosters self-doubt and rumination, resulting in a lack of personal accomplishment, which is a predictor of intention to leave.

Hope and emotions are essential in teaching, as they shape classroom practices, persistency in teaching, and a commitment to stay (Eren, 2015). Hope is significantly related to emotions of teaching (Eren, 2015), which explains why those who are high in hope are usually lower in the emotional exhaustion dimension of burnout. Teachers without hope are subject to frustration, burnout, and attrition (Birmingham, 2009). This study fortifies that as those who are high in emotional exhaustion have a higher intention to leave and those who fall into these categories are lower in hope. Because teaching is so challenging, hope is vital and creates a culture of optimism, helps teachers navigate the defiance of adversity, and aids in persistence during hardship (Birmingham, 2009). It allows teachers who are high in the dimensions of burnout to deescalate stressors, even allowing them to work around them in their goal pursuit.

Implications

Teacher burnout is the “chronic strain that results from an incongruence or misfit between the worker and the job” (Maslach, 2003, p. 189) and is usually more the result of situations or organizations than individuals, which are the result of a lack of control in the workplace (Maslach, 2003). Even though this is the case, interventions for burnout are usually centered on individuals, as it is more cost-effective to rehabilitate the individual than the organization. Maslach et al. (2001) described “six areas of worklife that encompass the central relationships which cause burnout” and “chronic mismatches between people and their work” (p. 414). These are detailed in Table 3.

Table 3

Maslach's Six Worklife Mismatches and Their Effects on Teacher Burnout

Worklife mismatch	Emotional exhaustion	Depersonalization or cynicism	Reduced personal accomplishment or inefficacy
Workload	X		
Control			X
Reward			X
Community		X	
Fairness	X	X	
Values			X

These mismatches are due to excessive workload, lack of control, lack of appropriate rewards, lack of a sense of community, lack of fairness, and situations where the values of the workers do not match those of the organization. Each one of these mismatches uniquely contributes to a dimension of teacher burnout, which all predict intention to leave. If situational or organizational factors contribute to burnout in such a manner, they could likely be responsible for a teacher's intention to leave the profession, as she encounters overwhelmingly challenging situations beyond her control that heighten emotional exhaustion, reduce personal accomplishment, or increase feelings of depersonalization or cynicism. If a teacher finds her job circumstances unsatisfactory and filled with stressors both within and beyond their control, negative emotions again result and feed back into her goal pursuit model of hope in her teaching, decreasing the efficacy necessary to begin new goal pursuits in their careers and increasing the teacher's intention to leave. In organizational situations, the demands of teaching "may exceed the capacity of the individual to cope effectively" (Maslach, 2003, p. 192) with these stressors, prompting her to abandon her current role or the teaching profession altogether. High-hope

individuals face the same catalysts as their low-hope counterparts; they ultimately bypass these workplace mismatches and negative emotions, carrying on in their goal pursuit efforts with positive, active, confident emotions that play a role in their hopeful thinking (Snyder, 2002).

Hope may provide solutions to these areas of worklife mismatches. High hope, which is negatively correlated to teacher burnout, helps teachers deescalate stressors and provides them with pathways and agentic thinking, which gives them a coping mechanism in these stressful situations. This enables teachers high in hope to work around stressors and use positive emotions to feed the goal pursuit cycle, further reinforcing their situational hopeful thinking, even when these situations are beyond their control. High-hope teachers see these challenges as provocations, inciting them to rechannel their agency thinking to bypass workplace mismatches and negative emotions (Snyder, 2002). This allows them to carry on their goal pursuit efforts with positive, active, confident emotions that continue to play a large role in their hopeful thinking (Snyder, 2002).

Teacher burnout is an undesirable condition affecting both individuals and organizations alike. Sadly, identification of the primary causes of burnout has only led to generic intervention strategies for change, which assumes individual causality and assumes “that it is cheaper to change people than organizations” (Maslach, 2003, p. 192). These approaches “may help alleviate exhaustion, but may not affect other dimensions of burnout” and have proven “relatively ineffective in the workplace, where people have much less control over stressors than other domains of their life” (Maslach, 2003, p. 192). While individual approaches have potential to make a positive difference in a teacher’s burnout, “researchers have found that situational and organizational factors play a bigger role in burnout than do individual ones” (Maslach, 2003, p. 192), which indicates that intervention efforts might be best done at those levels instead.

Although burnout is receiving attention from policy makers and administrators, there is limited research on burnout interventions due to difficulties in designing these interventions, implementing them, and doing longitudinal follow-ups (Maslach, 2003). When politics and increasing demands at the federal, state, and local levels are negatively impacting teachers beyond their locus of control, it seems their only solution is to leave, resulting in great financial burdens for the government, as millions of dollars in funds are needed to train new teachers and replenish the teacher leavers.

Ultimately, the role of burnout interventions is to better enable individuals to manage workplace stressors. If educational leaders find it necessary to focus on the individual for intervention rather than the organization, dimensions of burnout can be used to identify those who are at a higher risk for intention to leave and target them for early interventions. A teacher's levels of hope can also be used to determine her ability to surpass job-related stressors and her commitment to stay in the profession. Maslach (2003) suggested that leaders should plan interventions to support individual teachers or groups of teachers centered on the three burnout dimensions: "overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment" (p. 190). Combinations of these burnout dimensions can result in different patterns of work experience and burnout and should each be addressed to decrease the likelihood that they contribute to job-related stress (Maslach, 2003) and intention to leave.

Another individual or group approach to intervention is to focus on burnout's positive antithesis of job engagement (Maslach, 2003). This approach is a "persistent, positive motivational state of fulfillment" (Maslach, 2003, p. 190), as it presents a positive goal pursuit approach for addressing burnout, enhancing the accountability of burnout interventions. This

approach centers on energy, involvement, and self-efficacy (Maslach, 2003). When leaders focus on building engagement rather than reducing burnout, efforts are likely to become much more successful (Maslach, 2003) as they build necessary skills for personal accomplishment and job involvement, also reducing depersonalization and emotional exhaustion.

If an individual is engaged in her work, she likely has a high sense of efficacy and personal accomplishment (Maslach, 2003), which the results of this study show leads to lower intention to leave. Focusing on fostering this self-efficacy is also an individual approach leaders can take. The higher a teacher's self-efficacy, the greater her work performance and sense of personal accomplishment, lowering the likelihood she would consider leaving.

While individual interventions are important, most have focused on "removing the worker from the job" or other "individual strategies" tailored specifically for the worker (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 418). However, because situational and organizational factors are more to blame than individual factors, organizational interventions may provide more promise for reducing burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). The most successful interventions for burnout efforts combine managerial practice with individual educational interventions, and effective change occurs within this integrated fashion. These joint approaches emphasize building engagement with one's work and more closely align the worker with the organization's mission, "especially those that pertain to the quality of work life in the organization" (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 420). It is this joint design that "promotes involvement, dedication, absorption, and effectiveness among employees" and "should be successful in promoting teachers' well-being and productivity" (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 420).

Limitations

This study had several potential limitations. First, the study was conducted in the fall, when teachers were fresh into their new school year. Because this was early in the school year, job-related stressors may not have had the impact that they would at later points in the school year, and burnout levels might not be accurately indicated at this point in the school year.

Second, the study contained self-reported data, which were limited in verification. These data could potentially contain bias, selective memory, telescoping, attribution, or exaggeration (*Organizing*, 2018). Any of these instances could diminish the quality of results and not completely present accurate representations of the participants' experiences.

Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of this study merely pinpointed a certain moment in time and made it unfeasible to measure burnout, hope, and intention to leave over a time period, showing changes as time progresses. Findings also did not indicate the growth of teachers in their abilities to manage job-related stressors that contribute to burnout. They may also not have accurately measured the fluctuation of hope in participants.

Two participant demographics could be potential limitations. First, the vast majority of participants had fewer than 5 years of service. Out of the 95 participants, the mean years of teaching experience was only 6.4 years. In fact, 70 teachers (74%) had 5 years or less of teaching experience, and 21 participants (22%) had exactly 4 years of teaching experience. Initially, this seemed like a limitation because the great majority of the sample had so few years of experience. However, because teacher leavers typically leave in the first 5 years of teaching and "50%, or approximately half a million educators, move to another district or leave the profession altogether" in these 5 years (Rumschlag, 2017, p. 22), this may have proved to be a strength as participants seem most vulnerable during the emerging stages of their career.

Weisberg and Sagie (1999) found that teachers who had less time in their job were more likely to quit due to burnout. For gender, 74 participants (77.9%) were female and 21 participants (22.1%) were male. Initially, this seemed to be a limitation, but according to Loewus (2017), the National Center for Education Statistics 2015–2016 survey showed that about 77% of American teachers were women, which closely paralleled the sample population.

Perhaps the greatest limitation of this study was the 7% response rate from participants. This “representativeness refers to how well the sample drawn for the questionnaire research compares with the population of interest” (Fincham, 2008, p. 1). This low response rate could potentially indicate nonresponse bias. However, the intended minimum number of participants suggested by the power analysis ($N = 89$) based on four variables was exceeded, as 95 participants completed the survey. This test determined that this sample size was adequate to allow statistical judgments that were accurate and reliable (StatSoft, 2018).

Recommendations for Future Research

In this study, I measured the dynamic of the existing relationships between hope, burnout, and intention to leave. However, further research is needed to explain these relationships using quantitative data. The results of the study delineated each phenomenon and how hope operates as teachers experience burnout and how they determine whether (or not) the position as a teacher is worth keeping. In addition, there is a need for future research to analyze the specific cognitive components of hope (pathways and agency thinking) and how they uniquely impact burnout and intention to leave.

Conclusions

While the literature on teacher burnout is far from scarce, this study contributed to the existing body of knowledge by showing relationships between hope, burnout, and intention to

leave. While the majority of studies focus on the causes of burnout and potential solutions, in this study I examined dimensions of burnout as predictors of intention to leave and also found that dimensions of burnout are predictors hope as well.

Two meaningful findings emerged from this study. First, I found that there are relationships between dimensions of burnout and hope according to Maslach's (1976, 1982, 1998, 2003) theory of burnout and Snyder's (2000, 2002) theory of hope. This confirmed previous studies examining these relationships (Birmingham, 2009; Gustafsson et al., 2012; Ho & Lo, 2011; Sherwin et al., 1992; Weisberg & Sagie, 1999) and reiterated findings in Maslach and Snyder's theories. Second, I found that hope does not mediate burnout and intention to leave. In addition to the answers to the research questions, I found that hope was related to intention to leave. These findings could prove beneficial as school leaders and policy makers seek to solve the ongoing problem of teacher attrition, especially from the perspective of burned-out teachers and finding new solutions and interventions in hope.

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Appendix A: IRB Approval

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY*Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World*

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 28100, Abilene, Texas 79699-9100
325-674-2885



August 20, 2018

Arri Houston

Department of Education

Abilene Christian University

Dear Arri,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled "Is There 'Hope' for Teacher Burnout?"

(IRB# 18-053) is exempt from review under Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects.

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit to the IRB so the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

Megan Roth

Megan Roth, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs

Appendix B: Questionnaire

TURNOVER INTENTION SCALE (TIS)

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The following section aims to ascertain the extent to which you intend to stay at the organization.

Please read each question and indicate your response using the scale provided for each question:

DURING THE PAST 9 MONTHS.....

1	How often have you considered leaving your job?	Never	1-----2-----3-----4-----5	Always
2	How satisfying is your job in fulfilling your personal needs?	Very satisfying	1-----2-----3-----4-----5	Totally dissatisfying
3	How often are you frustrated when not given the opportunity at work to achieve your personal work-related goals?	Never	1-----2-----3-----4-----5	Always
4	How often do you dream about getting another job that will better suit your personal needs?	Never	1-----2-----3-----4-----5	Always
5	How likely are you to accept another job at the same compensation level should it be offered to you?	Highly unlikely	1-----2-----3-----4-----5	Highly likely
6	How often do you look forward to another day at work?	Always	1-----2-----3-----4-----5	Never

Scale (taken from <http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu/hopescale.pdf>)

Directions: Read each item carefully. Using the scale shown below, please select the number that best describes YOU and put that number in the blank provided.

- 1. = Definitely False
- 2. = Mostly False
- 3. = Somewhat False
- 4. = Slightly False
- 5. = Slightly True
- 6. = Somewhat True
- 7. = Mostly True
- 8. = Definitely True

- ___ 1. I can think of many ways to get out of a jam.
- ___ 2. I energetically pursue my goals.
- ___ 3. I feel tired most of the time.
- ___ 4. There are lots of ways around any problem.
- ___ 5. I am easily downed in an argument.
- ___ 6. I can think of many ways to get the things in life that are important to me.
- ___ 7. I worry about my health.
- ___ 8. Even when others get discouraged, I know I can find a way to solve the problem.
- ___ 9. My past experiences have prepared me well for my future.
- ___10. I've been pretty successful in life.
- ___11. I usually find myself worrying about something.
- ___12. I meet the goals that I set for myself.

Scoring:

Items 2, 9, 10, and 12 make up the agency subscale.
 Items 1, 4, 6, and 8 make up the pathway subscale.

Researchers can either examine results at the subscale level or combine the two subscales to create a total hope score.

Appendix C: MBI Permission and Sample Items

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To Whom It May Concern,

The above-named person has made a license purchase from Mind Garden, Inc. and has permission to administer the following copyrighted instrument up to that quantity purchased:

Maslach Burnout Inventory forms: Human Services Survey, Human Services Survey for Medical Personnel, Educators Survey, General Survey, or General Survey for Students.

The three sample items only from this instrument as specified below may be included in your thesis or dissertation. Any other use must receive prior written permission from Mind Garden. The entire instrument form may not be included or reproduced at any time in any other published material. Please understand that disclosing more than we have authorized will compromise the integrity and value of the test.

Citation of the instrument must include the applicable copyright statement listed below.

Sample Items:

MBI - Human Services Survey - MBI-HSS:

I feel emotionally drained from my work.
I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.
I don't really care what happens to some recipients.

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MBI - Human Services Survey for Medical Personnel - MBI-HSS (MP):

I feel emotionally drained from my work.
I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.
I don't really care what happens to some patients.

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MBI - Educators Survey - MBI-ES:

I feel emotionally drained from my work.
I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.
I don't really care what happens to some students.

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Cont'd on next page

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MBI - General Survey - MBI-GS:

I feel emotionally drained from my work.
In my opinion, I am good at my job.
I doubt the significance of my work.

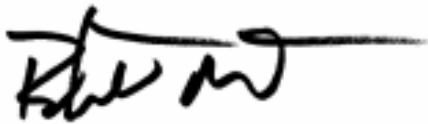
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MBI - General Survey for Students - MBI-GS (S):

I feel emotionally drained by my studies.
In my opinion, I am a good student.
I doubt the significance of my studies.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Most", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Robert Most
Mind Garden, Inc.
www.mindgarden.com