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Teacher Burnout: A Comparison of Schools in North Dakota

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Abstract

Teacher burnout is a substantial issue in education today, and its negative effects have been seen across the United States. This quantitative study will focus on the state of North Dakota and analyze teacher burnout through the lens of the number of students that a school serves. By implementing the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educator's Survey (MBI-ES) this study attempts to not only see the prevalence of teacher burnout between large and small schools in North Dakota, but also to understand if the causes for burnout are similar or different based upon student population in schools. According to the information gathered within the study, there is a significant difference in levels of burnout between large and small schools within North Dakota. Looking further into the information provided there are specific symptoms which have significant differences between the two groups as well. By understanding the differences in burnout between large and small schools in North Dakota, school officials may be able to tailor remedies to burnout exclusive to their own school.

Dedications

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Camille, and daughter, Brynja, who have allowed me to follow my dreams to their fullest extent. The success that I have seen would not be possible without my wife being in my life. This project would definitely not have been completed without the support that my wife has provided me day in and day out. She has provided me with the strength to continue through with my goals, and she is the person who I continuously look towards as a beacon through stressful times. Every day I admire the sacrifices that she makes to make sure that our family will continue to thrive—thank you Camille, you are truly the love of my life.

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As I look back across this study there are several people who I would like to thank and acknowledge. These people have had a lasting impact on my life, and for that I am ever grateful. I know that I am not able to acknowledge everyone, and I am sure that I am missing a few, but I want everyone to know that I appreciate the time and effort they have put in to helping me become a better person

I would first like to acknowledge and thank all the students that have allowed me the privilege to teach them throughout the years. The joy that I have had in front of my many classrooms is difficult to surpass in my memories of wonderful things throughout my life. The students who I have had the pleasure to have in my classes will come out as the leaders of tomorrow, and I hope that I have had some sort of positive impact on their lives.

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A huge thank you needs to go out to the members of my committee, Dr. Lindstrom, Dr. Aslyn, and Dr. Sambs, for providing the guidance necessary to complete this study. I would especially like to thank Dr. Lindstrom, my advisor, for working with me throughout the entire dissertation process. I always felt that these people were there for me, and with that support, I never doubted that I could finish this dissertation.

I feel that it is important to thank the teachers who participated in the study, and to those who are feeling the symptoms of burnout; keep fighting the good fight. Teaching is one of the more noble professions we have left. The intensive hours working in the school and at home will flower into something great. Your efforts make a difference, never forget that.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents, grandparents, sisters, aunts, uncles, and cousins, along with the rest of my family who have helped shape the person who I am today. I cherish the positive memories we have had together, and I look forward to making even better ones in the future.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Teaching has been found to be one of the most satisfying professions (Busteed & Lopez, 2013), but on the opposite side of the matter, education has also been known to be one of the more stressful vocations an individual may take on (Richardson, 2010). These jarring contradictions may have a major impact on the overall well-being of the educator. Oftentimes the stress and difficulties of the occupation can be considerably wearing. Each teacher may experience struggles within education, but when these wearing stressors reach a certain critical mass, the mixture of feelings and emotions may develop into teacher burnout. The syndrome of burnout is a multifaceted, work-related paradigm that includes exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment (Maslach, 1979; Maslach, 1982). Along with these measurable themes found within teacher burnout, there are other negative perceptions generated by those experiencing burnout: cynicism, professional detachment, and a sense of ineffectiveness to name a few. These feelings directly add to the compounding issues found within the individuals suffering from burnout (Maslasch, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). Although teacher burnout, and its more generalized relative, occupational burnout, is not necessarily an established psychological construct as it has been only studied for roughly 45 years within occupational research, there is a significant amount of research about the topic.

Even though teacher burnout has become an issue in today's current educational environment, the study of burnout as a whole did not start within the walls of a school building. The burnout syndrome has been a studied concept under the moniker of occupational burnout since the late 1970s. There are two researchers that are consistently credited with introducing the idea of occupational burnout to the academic and professional communities. Herbert

Freudenberger (1974, 1975) is often credited with coining the phrase, burnout, with his work in free clinics and different therapeutic groups. Parallel to Freudenberger's work, the ever-present research of Christina Maslach (1976) and her colleagues has allowed for the burnout concept to be better understood and further studied. Freudenberger (1974, 1975) and Maslach (1976) have set the stage for professional analysis of the primary complications associated with occupational burnout and eventually the formation of teacher burnout.

With the majority of this early academic work focused on careers outside of education, it was only a short while until researchers started to focus on teachers. It has been shown that teaching is a career that requires much from those who enter the profession, besides performing the direct teaching duties they were hired to perform, teachers are charged within many other responsibilities from discipline, grading, administrative demands, supervision, professional development, curriculum creation, and numerous other obligations. According to Nagy (2006), due to the plethora of assignments that teachers are required to perform, research has shown that a large percentage of teachers will experience symptoms of teacher burnout at some levels throughout their career. Nagy demonstrated that it is not necessarily a topic about whether or not a teacher will feel symptoms associated with burnout, but when and to what degree these symptoms will eventually happen. With occupational burnout becoming a legitimate concern in fields such as education, health care, and economics, it is estimated that over 6,000 publications have been made about the topic (Shaufeli, Leiter, & Maslach, 2008). That quantity of publications possibly demonstrates how significant this problem has become throughout numerous working environments and the overall growing need for more research to understand the problems that burnout may create.

By recognizing that teachers will more than likely experience burnout symptoms at least once during their career, it may be important to look at teacher burnout as a part of a much larger problem within education (Nagy, 2006). As education is a vital profession for the success of our society, it may be of importance to find answers to why the profession is losing teachers at a rate substantially higher than other professions. This problem may be worth researching because of the considerable number of teachers leaving the profession for numerous reasons, including teacher burnout (Maslach, 2003). According to the Kopkowski (2008) from the National Educators Association, the national average of teacher turnover was 17%; this encompasses teachers in all disciplines in both elementary and secondary levels through many different demographics. To establish the significance of the 17% turnover rate for teachers, this rate can be compared to other professions and the general turnover rates for other professions within the United States. For comparison, the national average for employment turnover rates was approximately 3-3.5% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). This creates a roughly 14% difference between national employment turnover rates and the turnover rates seen in education.

The 14% discrepancy between the educational field and other profession's turnover rates indicates that there were possible retention problems within education. Teachers have a substantially higher rate of turnover than other professions, but what may be even more discouraging is when the research starts to focus on younger teachers or teachers new to the profession, these turnover rates increase dramatically. The 17% turnover rate for teachers in general, starts to look like an insignificant number when researchers start to isolate teachers within their first five-years of employment. It has been reported that approximately 50% of new teachers will leave the profession within the first five years of becoming a teacher. This

percentage is corroborated with studies done by the National Center for Education Statistics (Keigher & Cross, 2010) and a report done by Hunt and Carroll (2003). These statistics validate the importance of research in the area of teacher burnout. With what these sources are reporting about new teacher turnover rates, the education profession is losing a considerable amount of young educators. The retention statistics are disheartening, but it is difficult to pinpoint the exact cause for the retention issue. Teacher burnout may be an underlying characteristic to these issues the profession is experiencing, with the research done by Hakanen, Bakker, and Schaufeli (2006) indicating that anywhere from 5% to 20% of teachers within a school are feeling the symptoms of burnout at any one time. Even with the main focus of this study being on teacher burnout, it is important to reiterate that teachers leave the profession for many reasons overall, not only because they are experiencing issues directly related with burnout.

Besides the influences of teacher burnout, teachers are leaving the profession for many reasons. According to Tye and O'Brien (2002), teachers who have already left teaching will typically provide one of seven reasons, in order of significance: accountability, paperwork, attitudes, parental support, administration, professional status, and salary considerations. By looking at the most significant reason for teachers leaving the profession according to Tye and O'Brien, accountability, this includes pressures of increased standards, high-stakes testing, and overall assessment preparation. These characteristics may create an environment where teachers have less time to perform their actual teaching responsibilities and require more time devoted to the secondary requirements of an educator. This information is paralleled by the work of Lloyd (2012), where an overall feeling of having, "Not enough time" (p. 154), proliferates into many similar issues discussed within Tye and O'Brien's (2002) work. Even though this research

demonstrates other reasons why teachers are leaving the profession, Lloyd (2012) pointed out that many of these tertiary accountabilities, in fact can lead to overall issues with stress and may eventually manifest into teacher burnout.

These statistics show the reality that the education professional community has been experiencing, the next phase is to comprehend the causes for this issue of teacher burnout experienced within the occupation. As seen in the work of Lloyd (2012) and Tye and O'Brien (2002), there are many reasons to why teachers leave the profession, but one of the more significant underlying causes of teacher burnout deals specifically with the difficulties of the job as a whole. As these difficulties begin to expand a teacher may start to feel stressors that are specific for educators. This sort of stress is known as occupational stress and is a problem within education as in other professions. With education being a unique profession, the stresses that accompany it are unique as well. There are many facets of stress found in education that make it challenging to simply distinguish as one sees stress in other professions (Maslach, 2003).

One example of educational specific stress would be the complications created by the inclusion of new state and national standards for student achievement. With the 2001 implementation of No Child Left Behind legislation, the success of students has been placed solely in the hands of educators, providing higher levels of accountability. These new found accountabilities can create multiple negative externalities that can spill over into other responsibilities that teachers are required to accept. When a teacher's livelihood is reliant on the test-taking abilities of their students, this may create an environment ripe for the development of occupational stress (Simpson, 2004). Besides the stresses brought about by the No Child Left Behind regulations, many states have adopted the Common Core State Standards, North Dakota

has implemented these standards to overhaul the English and Math standards, with the Science standards being overhauled as well (NDDPI, 2010). The mandated test that evaluates the student's understanding of the new Common Core Standards has replaced the paper and pencil North Dakota Standardized Assessment (NDSA). North Dakota has utilized the Smarter Balanced state assessment as the new state based standardized testing system (Smarter Balanced, 2013). The research of Richards (2012) showed one of the most common stressors that teachers have is the feeling of being overly committed or having too many duties to accomplish. Within this same research having limited time to relax, issues with support, and an overarching feeling of accountability all add to the occupational stress that teachers feel within the daily duties that they have assigned to them. The new aspects of the profession and an overall lack of preparedness for new standards and testing procedures may lead to a stressful environment for teachers and administrators alike, and as demonstrated by work done by Lloyd (2012) and Tye and O'Brian (2002) these changes may again add to the number of secondary responsibilities that teachers need to incorporate into their workday. As teachers prepare for new standards and assessments, there are still looming the everyday requirements of the profession.

As changes are happening throughout the education system, student behavior in classrooms has been something of interest for researchers for quite some time. How students behave in the classroom setting is another example of stresses that may be unique to education. There is recent research that looks at the connection between student behavior and teacher burnout. According to a meta-analysis done by Aloe, Shisler, Norris, Nickerson, and Rinker (2014), student misbehavior was found to be a common force that could lead to burnout for educators. This research has shown that student misbehavior can establish feelings of

frustration, guilt, anxiety, and an overall sense of anger within the teacher. These negative states of mind may feed into teacher burnout (Chang, 2009). The emergence of occupational burnout and eventually teacher burnout has created a need for a measurable assessment to study the symptoms of the issue.

The Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educator's Survey (MBI-ES) was the primary instrument used within this study to determine the differences or similarities between large and small schools within the confines of teacher burnout. There are many researchers looking into teacher burnout, but there are few projects that use the school's size, based upon student numbers, as a determinant for the information being collected. This study looked at the differences and similarities perceived between these two groups (large and small schools), and provide information possibly valuable to the profession. The project not only studied the prevalence of teacher burnout within North Dakota, but it also peered into the issue to isolate certain parameters that may be causing the issue between large and small schools throughout the state. This information may be significant due to the lack of research available when looking at teacher attrition and burnout through the lens of school size, and may possibly be used by schools to narrow down prospective causes of burnout and overall teacher attrition within their school.

Throughout this introduction, numerous conditions have been mentioned that may lead to teacher burnout. One of the least researched conditions for this problem is school size and the different forms of burnout teachers may be experiencing based upon the size of school where they are working. In the existing research that looked into the relation of burnout and school size, there is tendency to have conflicting results and variegated experiences by the individuals

involved. Some research demonstrated an increase in attrition within larger schools (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Borman & Dowling, 2008; Brill & McCartney, 2008; Cheung, 2009; Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002; Tokar & Feitler, 1986). Other studies have looked at burnout as a more eminent issue within smaller schools (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Hoover & Aukhus, 1998; Rottier, Kelly, & Tomhave, 1986; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). By comparing the amount of burnout between large and small schools in North Dakota and analyzing the possible similarities and differences between the groups, the educational environment may benefit by being able to identify the causes of burnout, which may be specific to the different schools throughout the state.

Studying teacher burnout may be important to the health and longevity of education. Teachers are leaving teaching at a much higher rate than other professions, and this is a trend that may create interest for researchers. Teachers are vacating their posts for many reasons, but the research cannot deny that one of the facets to the major retention issues seen throughout the United States and other countries, such as Canada, India, Finland, and England (Ewart, 2009; Sharma, 2013; Webb et al., 2004) is indeed teacher burnout. If the educational community can become more aware of the causes to teacher burnout throughout education, this will allow researchers, administrators, and teachers to be able to combat the problem.

Statement of Problem

As stated in the introduction, teacher burnout may be directly related to the teacher retention issues that schools are encountering throughout the United States. Work has been done on the topic of burnout since the 1970s, but since those early, foundational aspects of burnout research, there has been a significant amount of work done on the topic within the realm of

education. This problem is not only within the hands of educators and educational researchers, but it is also a concern for psychology, psychiatry, and economic researchers as well, making burnout more of a universal issue than simply occupationally isolated (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007; Freudenberger, 1974, 1975; Maslach, 1979, 1982). With this research, it is plausible to assume that there may be a universal issue that is possibly the root to the syndrome of burnout seen in so many professions.

According to Curry and O'Brien (2012), stress is one of the key aspects to teacher burnout, and stress is seen as a general problem throughout many careers. These researchers spoke about the more well-known educational stresses like changes in standards, behavior, and overall expectations, but they spoke more generalized stressors that many people, in a wide variety of professions are facing today like terrorist attacks, the changing of United States demographics, and natural disasters as well. These generalized stressors, along with the occupationally specific issues found in teaching, may play a major role in the process of burning a teacher out, but also may be the offending problem found within occupational burnout as a whole. As teachers continue to burnout of the occupation, this consistent amount of attrition may lead to financial issues for the vocation as well (Barnes, Crowe, & Schafer, 2007).

Borman and Dowling (2008) demonstrated that the consequences of teacher retention problems may have a detrimental impact on education as a whole. When a school loses a teacher to burnout or any other causes for attrition, the recruitment and eventual training of a replacement teacher on average costs over $2 billion per year for all schools within the United States. Within the same article, Borman and Dowling reference information from the Alliance for Excellent Education (2005), a teacher who leaves the profession places a financial strain on

the school district upwards of $12,000 per teacher. Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, and Felsher (2010) suggested that turnover costs per teacher may be roughly 25% of that teacher's salary. From research done by Barnes, Crowe, and Schaefer (2007), the recruitment, training, and development of new teachers ultimately can cost the educational system $7 billion per year in the United States, making Borman and Dowling's (2008) estimate quite conservative at best.

There are a multitude of other expenses a school incurs besides simple staff recruitment. Schools are also responsible for training and developing new teachers. Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, and Felsher (2010) demonstrated that if there is consistent training and development of newly hired teachers to be done annually these actions start to add up financially. With the funding going into recruiting new teachers to replace educators who have left the profession these funds are not being used for the overall betterment of the school system. These funds are basically being used as a stop gap for teacher loss by not making the profession more accommodating for those already employed, but a scramble to find replacements for disenfranchised teachers year after year. With a large number of teachers leaving the profession within the first five years of their career, this information may indicate that a larger percentage of school funding may be needed to go into recruitment and retention of teachers rather than using available funds to pay for programming that may directly increase student learning. There are even hidden costs that do not influence a school's pocketbook like the impact of losing an experienced educator has on the success of the students in that school.

Besides the financial difficulties that teacher burnout creates, the consistent loss of quality teachers has an equally devastating effect on the overall well-being of education (Martinez, Frick, Kim, & Fried, 2010). The societal impact of losing teachers throughout time

can be detrimental to the future of educational effectiveness (Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, & Felsher, 2010). If society keeps losing teachers because of autonomy issues like lack of job satisfaction and stress, the positive educational outcome of students is likely to suffer as well (Borman & Dowling, 2008). This concept is seen within the work of Heck (2008), who found that achievement levels for students in the disciplines of reading and mathematics were higher in schools that could provide an increased level of staff stability. By synthesizing this information with the research done within the cost of teacher turnover, it may be interpreted that teacher loss creates a difficult environment for student achievement, whether that be financial struggles for the districts or a decreased amount of qualified, experienced teachers. If burnout even led to a fraction of these teachers leaving the profession it may be beneficial to work towards understanding the syndrome even better.

With all these issues coming to light, it may be imperative to analyze the causes of teacher burnout as a whole. There are many studies available in regard to teacher burnout or other like problems; however, there are very few that provided school population as a major research focus. There are many ways to describe the concept school population: urban and rural schools, student demographics, large and small schools, just to name a few, but ultimately this project will look at the number of students within a school as a variable, and segregate teachers based upon those who are working in the larger student population schools and the smaller schools. By isolating those groups, there may be differences or similarities that come out of those schools that may lead to teacher burnout, by analyzing those outcomes educators may be able to find more specified remedies for the problem of burnout. Work done by McCracken and Barcinas (1991) demonstrated that there are substantial differences between large and small

schools. These differences consisted of how teachers and students felt about the schools where they work or attend, which includes concepts like respect, pride, and overall values. These researchers also discussed working conditions along with occupational aspirations of the teachers between the two groups as something that defines each type of school. McCracken and Barcinas (1991) also found differences between student-based paradigms like self-esteem and educational ambitions. This work shows that there are possible differences between large and small schools, not only on the professional level as we have seen with the variations between teachers, but on the student level as well.

Researchers Abel and Sewell (1999) confirmed the information brought to the forefront by McCracken and Barcinas (1991), and added to the pool of information by focusing these differences within the concepts of stress and burnout. To demonstrate the possible differences in the causes for burnout between large and small schools, Abel and Sewell (1999) found that teachers working in smaller schools have substantially lower levels of stress. These researchers discussed that large school teachers suffer from significantly worse working conditions than their counterparts in small schools, especially when those larger schools are found within inner-city or urban areas. Some of the stressful characteristics found in the large schools studied by Abel and Sewell are the lack of compensation, promotional opportunities, and a decrease in teaching resources required to adequately meet teacher needs. Along with these organizational problems, there were also issues discussed within teacher relationships, where large schools were found to have worse staff relations and a less friendly atmosphere within the building.

It is quite apparent that there are differences between large and small schools within the confines of stress and burnout. By analyzing these differences educators can work towards

sequestering these issues within their own unique educational environment. These studies demonstrated that burnout can lead to many problems within education, whether it is in the financial realm or simply through teacher retention. Educators may want to look at burnout interventions that are more specific for their own educational environment. It may be possible that interventions geared for a more universal approach towards eliminating burnout may not be as effective as designing specific methodologies catered towards the size of the school itself, due to the differences shared within research based upon school population as a variable within teacher burnout (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Borman & Dowling, 2008; Brill & McCartney, 2008; Cheung, 2009; Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002; McCracken & Barcinas, 1991). By creating interventions that are specified for individual sized schools this may lead to practices that may meet the unique needs of different schools better than generalized treatment methods.

Significance of the Study

Students need experienced, well-qualified teachers to be successful (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005; Borman & Dowling, 2008; Heck, 2008). Ultimately, this is why any study regarding teacher burnout is significant locally for schools and states, but also for society as a whole. With estimated costs between $2 and $7 billion per year for battling the problem of teacher retention, the educational community may benefit from any specific research on the topic (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007). Besides the monetary costs that burnout places upon society, research has shown that burnout negatively impacts the quality of life an individual experiences and has been linked to numerous physical and mental health ailments (Freudenberger, 1975; Rupert, Miller, & Dorociak, 2015).

As indicated, there is a large amount of research available on occupational and teacher burnout, but a small amount of recent research used student numbers as a variable. There is also a lack of research on teacher burnout within the state of North Dakota. Any information that may lead to a better understanding of the causes and symptoms for teacher burnout within North Dakota may be valuable to the state's community as a whole. A dissertation done by Dr. Erin Mowers (2010) is one of the only recent pieces of research done that focused on teacher burnout within the state. Mowers work focused on the influence of No Child Left Behind, whereas this study will focus on the differences in teacher burnout between large and small schools within North Dakota, allowing professionals to understand that there may be differences for teachers in different sized schools.

North Dakota is a difficult state to generalize due to its unique geography and the changes that the state has experienced. North Dakota has seen increases in population due to the oil boom, mainly centered on the Bakken Oil Field in the Western portion of the state. Even though this may be geographically isolated, the entire state has felt the impact of the boom. There is no doubt that North Dakota is in a state of change; due to the dramatic increase in oil production from the Bakkan Oil Field, there have been numerous influences felt throughout the state. Some of these changes are positive, as money and other forms of resources are flowing into the state at unprecedented levels. These dramatic changes have allowed the state's overall budget surplus to increase, which may allow the state to help build new schools, roads, and increase health care throughout the state (Horwitz, 2014). However, just as there are numerous positives to the evolution of the state as an economic forerunner within the United States' oil industry, these changes have put the state in many difficult situations as well.

One of the areas of North Dakota society that has felt some of the more significant pressures from the unique scenarios created by the oil boom is the educational system. Williston, a city in the heart of the Bakken Oil Field, has seen intense increases in student population as the flood of new oil workers move into the area. The oil boom allowed the local economies within Western North Dakota to expand. This enormous expansion created a job market which can offer starting salaries for traditionally blue-collar jobs at times upwards of $100,000 per year or more (Siegler, 2014). With employment prospects like the ones seen in Bakken, families continue to move into the area. Oftentimes these new employees have brought children into the school districts that make up the Bakken oil field. In Williston alone, there have been over 1,000 new students within the past seven years, the majority of which are elementary students, which may pose issues every year as they get older (Farabough, 2014). As schools continue to see extraordinary growth, numerous schools are finding it increasingly difficult to fill open teaching positions, not necessarily from teachers leaving the profession, but from the need to expand the gross number of teachers that a school has on their staff. Schools are seemingly up against an impossible challenge to compete with the wages that oil companies are willing to offer workers, and as the number of students enrolled in these schools increase, this may place perpetual pressure on the teachers currently employed (Farber, 2000; Faulx, 2014; Weber, Giegle, & Barkdull, 2014).

When school size is studied as a variable within teacher burnout there are typically mixed outcomes. Some research showed a substantial increase in burnout within larger schools (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Borman & Dowling, 2008; Brill & McCartney, 2008; Cheung, 2009; Tokar & Feitler, 1986) while others looked at burnout as an issue within smaller schools (Hoover &

Aukhus, 1998; Rottier, Kelly, & Tomhave, 1986; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Through the same research it was stated repeatedly that larger schools have been researched more frequently as compared to smaller schools. Alongside of this lopsided research, there was not sufficient evidence to show the different parameters that caused there to be more burnout in larger schools as compared to smaller schools. This project's focus is to understand the differences and similarities between these two groups. Even though there is more research developed in these areas, it may still be an important piece for the North Dakota education system specifically.

With the changes that the oil boom has caused, the adoption of the Common Core State Standards, and the implementation of the Smarter Balanced Assessment, North Dakota's education system may be considered in state of fluidity. These new additions to the requirements for North Dakota teachers may increase the pressure teachers have felt, which may have led to some destructive behaviors and the possibility of burning out of the profession entirely (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996; Richards, 2012; Stoeber & Rennert, 2008; Van Droogenbroeck, Spruyt, & Vanroelen, 2013).

Purpose of the Study

Due to the general lack of research centered on teacher burnout in North Dakota and an overall absence of research in comparing teacher burnout in smaller to larger schools, these circumstances research may be needed within these areas. This study may be able to provide a missing piece to understanding burnout as a functional problem within education. Not only can the project provide supplemental evidence for research looking specifically at larger schools or smaller schools, but it can also give another perspective by comparing the two types of schools within the same study. This comparison will allow for the differences and similarities of what is

causing burnout between large and small schools to become more apparent for professionals in education and researchers as well.

The purpose of the study is to provide a further understanding of teacher burnout in North Dakota. By identifying if burnout is more prevalent in large or small schools in the state, while possibly identifying certain symptoms that may be causing these differences, this may allow districts to create more personalized remedies to combat the problem of burnout based upon the size of their schools.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Education may be perceived as a stressful profession, and regardless of geographic area and school format, teacher burnout has become a problem for members of the educational community (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). There has been a wide variety of research on the external causes of teacher burnout (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Cassel, 1984; Emery & Vandenburg, 2010) as well as the internal or personal causes (Davis & Palladino, 2011; Friesen & Others, 1988; Lloyd, 2012). With the plethora of research available focused on why teachers are burning out, it may have become important to generate more research in focused areas in order to provide a better understanding of the syndrome as a whole. While working through the research on burnout, the issue is not only found within education, but many different occupations. As burnout has an effect on numerous careers, these different occupations have influenced many diverse definitions throughout the years of research for burnout (Freudenberger, 1974, 1975; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). As burnout is observed differently in a wide spectrum of careers, this is why it may be important to synthesize the numerous definitions for burnout, review the early and current research dealing with burnout, analyze the impact burnout has within the education profession and provide some coping mechanisms than may be utilized by people within the field.

History of Burnout

Definitions. In order to formulate a working definition appropriate for this study, Freudenberger (1975), one of the first researchers of the burnout phenomena, must be included in the process. Freudenberger created a definition to describe burnout, "To fail, wear out, or become exhausted by making excessive demands on energy, strength, or resources" (p. 73).

Freudenberger's (1975) definition provided an overarching understanding to the concept of burnout that may be applied to many areas and careers. As burnout researchers started to look further into the syndrome, definitions evolved as well. By adapting Freudenberger's original definitions, some of the other pioneering studies about burnout defined the issue as a syndrome of decreased drive, motivation, and wanting that is created from emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a decrease in professional accomplishments generated by prolonged responses to stressors in the workplace (Maslach, 1979; Maslach, 2003; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). This synthesized definition provided a more attentive approach to the issue as compared to the more generalized definition initially provided by Freudenberger. In a sense, Freudenberger provided the footing for research, and Christina Maslach along with her colleagues built the structure in which research could be done on the topic.

As society has become more aware of the problems that are aggravated by burnout symptoms, researchers have found that burnout is not a geographically isolated issue, and more importantly different cultures around the world experience burnout with similarities. Throughout the world, there has been research confirming the concepts devised within the definition of burnout. Canada, Israel, Cypress, Finland, the United States, Spain, China, India, the United Kingdom, and a number of countries in Africa all have had research done on the effects and symptoms of burnout that demonstrate the notions within the generated burnout definition (Aloe et al., 2014; Schaufeli, Leiter, & Maslach, 2009; Sharma, 2012; Xiaofu & Qiwen, 2008). Even through these different countries and the multitude of cultures found within these countries, the synthesized definition withstands the differences society found throughout the world. As

burnout showed itself similarly from country to country, it may be wise to look at the historical foundations of the research itself.

Historical foundation. With experiences across the globe, burnout may be seen as significant issue today that has been studied since the mid-1970s (Cassel, 1984; Freudenberger, 1974, 1975; Kirk & Walter, 1981; Maslach, 1976; McPherson, 1983; Sweeney, 1981). Through the work of Freudenberger, the term "burn-out" was coined in his seminal 1974 and 1975 articles, *Staff Burn-out* and *The Staff Burnout Syndrome in Alternative Institutions*. Freudenberger was a psychiatrist and self-admitted individual who suffered from burnout, and through his own experiences and along with his observations at the free clinic in which he worked; he initiated research into this yet unknown, formal topic of occupational burnout. Freudenberger's (1975) work also initiated the possibilities of burnout in different areas other than "self-help groups" (p. 73). He eventually successfully applied burnout to many different avenues of experiences: drug addicts, people with interest in driving at high speeds, gambling, and even overeating. Through this article, there is a definite implication that burnout may be found in numerous walks of life, not only those associated with the service industry as originally studied.

Freudenberger (1974, 1975) includes a number of symptoms of burnout: exhaustion, a general feeling of being run-down, weight loss, gastrointestinal issues, lack of charisma, loss of sleep, and an overall detachment from the work environment to name a few. Out of these symptoms, the concept of exhaustion is continuously repeated throughout more recent installments of research into burnout, whereas the only symptoms Freudenberger put forth take on a role of more secondary symptoms. These symptoms needed to be identified because

Freudenberger implied that individuals who are committed to their work will have a higher prevalence of burnout.

While Freudenberger (1974, 1975) introduced the academic and clinical community to the implications to burnout, there are a number of other researchers who have made their careers studying this occupational issue. Christina Maslach (1976) came into the limelight with her initial work for the academic journal, *Human Behavior*. Maslach worked as a social psychologist who studied emotions in the workplace during the mid-1970s. Through Maslach's work, burnout research started to focus on the interpersonal aspects of care-giving and service positions. These professions required a unique environment where the relationship between the care recipient and care giver becomes paramount for the success of the duties required out of these professions. With these distinctive characteristics within the fields studied, the research became less focused on individual stressors that the phenomena created. The focus naturally shifted towards understanding the emotions of the individuals involved and their motives when working within service professions (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Maslach furthered her understanding of the concept of burnout through numerous papers and research works mentioned throughout the current study. As Maslach and her colleagues continued to research the area of burnout, she commenced with designing a more structured approach to studying the phenomena.

Maslach and Jackson's (1981) research spearheaded the need to find more stability within burnout research. As more research was completed, it was clear that there were a number of regularities found. First among these demonstrated is that professions of service or care are demanding within their scope of expectations and required responsibilities. Another common theme that started to develop through early research is that much of burnout had to do with three

specific areas: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment (Maslach, Schaufeli, Leiter, 2001). With these three subscales in mind, emotional exhaustion took on the most significant aspect of burning an individual out, especially within education (Sangganjanavanich & Balkin, 2013). In combination with an overall feeling of depersonalization and a lack of personal accomplishment experiences, these three areas can create a significantly volatile work environment for individuals who may be ripe for the symptoms of burnout. These early pieces of research identified the potential problems that burnout may bring about, which include higher turnover rates, lower overall morale, and increased absenteeism; natural consequences are also corroborated with more recent research (Hughes, 2012; Kopkowski, 2008; Van Der Doef & Maes, 2002; Watson, Harper, Ratliff, & Singleton, 2010).

The early research within burnout focused primarily on the qualitative aspects of the issue, this includes interviews, case studies, and observation. As qualitative research starts to build there becomes a need for quantitative information as well (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). This is where Maslach and Jackson (1981) began to formulate a research tool that would allow for quantitative data to be extracted along with the qualitative information that a researcher may use to supplement their studies. This research tool eventually became the Maslach Burnout Inventory or the MBI.

With formal research for burnout having its genesis in the 1970s, this does not infer that burnout originated around that timeframe. Maslach (2003) lets it be known that burnout has been a culturally significant issue for quite some time, even to the point of the concept being demonstrated in novels and motion pictures prior to the initial research era. Burnout is not a

topic generated out of theory, it is a concept derived from real needs, observed and diagnosed with workers across the United States and many countries throughout the world (Aloe et al., 2014; Maslach, 2003). Burnout can be a destructive force in many different occupations, but the most studied areas dealt specifically with service industries and the strains of serving other individuals. With this generalization it may be important to understand not only the macro elements of burnout and why employees are burning out within certain organizations, business, and industries, but researchers may also focus on the micro-level or personalized issues that are associated with the phenomena as well.

Through the years of focused research, it is now better understood the sort of individuals who are at a higher risk for burnout. When looking through burnout issues found within education, Farber (2000) described the typical teacher who may experience burnout as an individual under 40, who is highly devoted to their work, with high standards and is an idealist when it comes to education as a whole. These high-prevalence individuals are also teachers who are consistently influenced more by external input as compared to intrinsic. Understanding the complex relationship between the climate of the work place and the unique characteristics of the employee became an important influence of burnout research.

From its early beginnings with the inaugural work of Freudenberger (1974) and Maslach (1976), to the continued modern research of Aloe et al., (2014), Farber (2000), and Hakanen, Bakker, and Schaufeli (2006) to name a few, burnout became a legitimate concern and research topic for academics and clinicians throughout the world (Maslach, 2003). By synthesizing different forms of research, this has provided a foundation for understanding the issue of

burnout, with this foundation, the causes for teacher burnout can be worked through much more efficiently.

Causes of Teacher Burnout

Teacher burnout has been viewed and analyzed in many different ways and forms; however, there may be a need to provide specific analysis regarding more individualized causes. This may be reasonable because according to Nagy (2006), "All teachers suffer burnout at some point over the course of their teaching" (p. 15). Nagy's research indicated that burnout is not only an isolated issue, but may affect the entire workforce within education at sometime within their career. Along with this, researchers Gold and Bachelor (1988) have found teacher burnout to be prevalent even among individuals within teacher training programs, prior to entering the profession and becoming a full-fledged educator; this indicated that some people may be predisposed for burnout. This predisposition may be interlaced into education within itself as well, from the early work of Cherry (1978), professions involved with supervision, contact with people and teaching among others are predisposed for occupational stress as compared to those professions that focus on manual labor. Cherry's work is supported by concepts developed by Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001), in that burnout is common among individuals who worked within service professions. If an individual is employed within a service profession much like teaching, they will have a higher propensity to burnout even without having strains in other areas. These pieces of research suggested that teaching provided an environment of stress regardless of experience levels, and in fact, may be inherently stressful due to the requirements of the job itself. Burnout may be derived from stress generated from the profession, but there are many other facets that led to the problem as well, besides the inherent issues the profession

brings about. Even though research has found the majority of teachers leaving the profession either at the beginning of their career or towards the end, burnout may happen at any point during one's career (Borman & Dowling, 2008).

Just as in other human ailments, the direct cause of teacher burnout differed from one individual to another. The current research available identified many different variables that may contribute to the prevalence of burnout within teachers. These variables include but are not limited to age, gender, seniority, job satisfaction, coping resources, demographic characteristics, staffing shortages, exhaustion, disconnection, student misbehavior, No Child Left Behind policies, National Board Certification, and socioeconomics (Aloe et al., 2014; Chang, 2009; Chenevey, Ewing, Whittington, 2008; Davis & Palladino, 2011; Koruklu, Feyzioglu, Özenoglu-Kiremit, & Aladag, 2012; Pucella, 2011). There are numerous variables that led a person to burning out, this makes it difficult to address the symptoms of burnout and research continues on different variables. By looking at the previous variables those may seem somewhat conventional for teachers who suffered from burnout, but even something like when a teacher does their most significant work. Randler, Luffer, and Muller (2015) looked at how time-efficient teachers are and how teachers use the time they have for their responsibilities. These researchers found that teachers who work better in the morning have a lower propensity to feel emotional exhaustion, one of Maslach's three burnout dimensions and arguably the key factor in burnout within any service profession. Even with all these variables that can be attributed to the causes of teacher burnout there is research available that looks at seemingly simple triggers to an individual's burnout symptoms. Rupert, Miller, and Dorociak (2015) indicated that researchers may like look at the number of hours worked and how those hours are spent when trying to determine issues

with burnout. These researchers then go on to mention how devastating large amounts of paperwork can be for people who struggled with occupational stress, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Something as simple as too much time dedicated to paperwork may lead a teacher down the road of burning out. These complexities provided a reasoning to why more research may be needed in this area.

Occupational stress. With all the indicators of burnout, whether they be individual specific or generalized, occupational stress continues to be mentioned consistently as an influence that led to the three dimensions of burnout as described by Maslach (1976, 1982). These stressors can take on many different functions and may look different from profession to profession, and even from individual to individual. It is difficult to argue that stress has an umbrella effect that led to numerous burnout issues throughout an individual's work career.

The research of Hughes (2012) found that having an insufficient pool of teaching knowledge or educational capital is one of the main reasons for younger teachers leaving the profession. Within this idea, Hughes indicated that the lack of professional development is a direct cause of stress for these individuals, this therefore has a significant impact on the overall decrease in job satisfaction that young teachers have felt. This feeling may show itself in many forms, and even though Hughes does not directly state that teacher burnout is attributed to teacher retention issues, high levels of stress may lead to exhaustion (Maslach, 2003), which in turn is one of the three major dimensions of burnout. Hughes' (2012) research, tied with the work of Maslach (2003) shows that stress, exhaustion, and burnout are issues that may be related, and if stress leads to exhaustion, this pattern may eventually lead to burnout as time progresses.

Richards (2012) has researched stress within education, and what she has found confirms many of the characteristics of teacher stress are tied with the causes of burnout within the profession. According to Richards, some of the most devastating stressors teachers felt over-commitment to the profession, an increase in needy students with a lack of helpful resources, less overall time to relax, working with unmotivated students, and a consistent feeling of accountability due to new standards throughout teaching. The work of Hakanen, Bakker, and Schaufeli (2006) described this idea of occupational stress as an imbalance within the equilibrium of worker demands and the skills/coping mechanisms employees have to combat this irregularity. All these different descriptions can be blended into the research done by Wheeler, Vasser, Worley, and Barnes (2011), who demonstrated that there may be an underlying stress component behind each of the MBI's three dimensions of burnout (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). This research has shown stress one of the root causes behind burnout. With this understood, it may be important for researchers to focus and individualize some of the key facets of the topic into the three different dimensions of burnout. As Maslach (2003) indicated, the three main dimensions of burnout may be responses to the individualized feelings of occupational stress that are developed within the workplace. Therefore, occupational stress oftentimes takes on the role of catalyst to the three main dimensions of burnout that Maslach described throughout her research, especially in the primary area of emotional exhaustion.

Emotional exhaustion. The early researchers on burnout consistently pointed towards emotional exhaustion as one of the leading dimensions for burnout in teachers (Freudenberger, 1974, 1975; Maslach, 1976; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). This dimension of burnout is the most reported and easily the most studied aspect of the

phenomena. Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter mentioned that typically when an individual expressed that they are burned out they are usually indicating some form of emotional exhaustion as compared to the other two dimensions of burnout. Maslach (1982) described emotional exhaustion as a feeling of overextension within the workplace. An emotionally exhausted individual may feel that they have depleted all of their emotional resources and coping mechanisms when directly facing issues with occupational stress. A drastic decrease in overall physical and mental energy is also a prime characteristic of emotional exhaustion. Even though Maslach (1976, 1982) and the work done by Wheeler, Vasser, Worley, and Barnes (2011) stated that emotional exhaustion is a key component to burnout, it is difficult to say that exhaustion is the spark to full-blown burnout due to its nature as a causal mechanism of other major dimensions of burnout in itself. Maslach (2003) continued to acknowledge that exhaustion may be a key consequence of occupational stress and is often a criterion for burnout, but even within this thought, exhaustion alone is not always sufficient to lead individuals toward the path of burnout. There may be a strong correlation between emotional exhaustion and the feeling of disconnect (depersonalization) within an individual's current job. Maslach may have indicated that exhaustion needs to accompany the other dimensions of burnout in order to cause major occupational issues within one's career as these dimensions have a tendency to form interdependent of each other; however, it is clear even if individual dimensions develop they may have some negative aspect on the output of the employee. Education may be a profession primed for exhaustion due to many factors within the field.

The work of Basim, Begenibras, and Yalcin (2013) indicated that teachers are highly susceptible to emotional exhaustion within the confines of burnout because of the consistent

face-to-face aspect of the profession. The constant emotional labor that teachers are required to put forth within their profession places them at risk to become emotionally exhausted. These researchers also proposed that teachers with a sense of neuroticism, which is defined as, "people who are generally nervous, stressful, unsatisfied, displeased and inadequate" (p. 1493), are highly susceptible to the characteristics of emotional exhaustion and occupational stress. This provided more evidence for what Maslach (2003) proposed; emotional exhaustion is correlated with an overall feeling of depersonalization and lack of personal achievement. There has been also a negative relationship between overly extroverted individuals and emotional exhaustion. People who are extroverted have demonstrated social skills that directly combat the issue of emotional exhaustion.

As Maslach (2003) indicated that extroverted people may develop social skills necessary to defend themselves against certain aspects of burnout, there are other personality traits that has exhibited a higher propensity to develop burnout characteristics. The personality of teachers has a direct impact on the amount of burnout that an individual experience within the construct of emotional exhaustion. If an individual is consistently worried, distracted and cynical about their profession, even within their personal life, they may have a higher inclination to becoming emotionally exhausted, which may in time, lead to burnout (Basim, Begenibras, & Yalcin, 2013). Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) revealed that individuals suffering from emotional exhaustion may distance themselves emotionally and cognitively from the demands of their service positions, these researchers assumed this reaction is a coping mechanism to the stresses felt within their respective professions. These feelings may create an environment where the understanding of the recipients of the service, in the case of this study, students, changes within

the eyes of the teacher towards a negative conceptualization. These changes ultimately led to the other dimensions within burnout, and it also demonstrated that the Maslach's three dimensions of burnout are not isolated, as they are often interconnected with each other. Oftentimes emotional exhaustion manifested directly parallel with depersonalization, another dimension of burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001).

Depersonalization. Continuing with the three subscales of burnout, much like emotional exhaustion, depersonalization is a feeling that led to teachers burning out of the profession according to Maslach and Jackson (1981). Cephe (2010) described depersonalization as an effect where teachers may view their students and colleagues as something less than human. This dehumanizing concept created a less than desirable working environment for not only the individual depersonalizing the ones around them, but also the people being subjected to the effects of depersonalization. Cephe indicated that a depersonalized teacher will not give a student the same courtesies as they would another person within a different environment. This may have a negative effect on how the teacher may perceive not only their students, but also the environment where they work as well. Chang (2009) confirmed the research of Cephe and added that depersonalization is characteristic of a withdrawing from the student-teacher relationship that is so vital to the success and overall well-being of both parties.

Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) corresponded with the work of Cephe (2010) and Chang (2009) by demonstrating that depersonalization is the process of ignoring the qualities that make an individual who they are. These negative feelings may create a distance between the relationships that individuals have created in the past. The dissolving of former positive relationships may lead to a setting where people feeling burnout symptoms look to lessen the

stressors around them. In service fields the demands of an individual's duties are more manageable and possibly less stressful if they consider those who are being served as simply required components of their job rather than vibrant people. With distancing being a common reaction to emotional exhaustion it may be interpreted that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization are highly related, one dimensional outcome leading to the other, or a combination of each characteristic.

A study done by Cassel (1984) connected burnout to what can be interpreted as characteristics of cynicism and the overall depersonalization of the profession as a whole. Cassel stated that current experiences add to the overall negative feelings toward education; the lack of support for students and teachers at home and the widening deficit within student achievement may lead to burnout through the perceived depersonalization dimension. In a sense, teachers may look down upon students or change their entire perception of the profession, based upon the idea that underachieving students may indicate that the teachers are underperforming. Newer research supported the work of Cassel. Koruklu, Ozenglu-Kiremit, Feyzioglu, and Aladag (2012) demonstrated that the current issues as seen within education may lead to more depersonalized feelings, but even basic variables like seniority and gender may have differences with how teachers perceive the individuals they are serving. These researchers also looked into the relationship that teachers have with their colleagues as a primary characteristic for depersonalization. If teachers stated that they have a problem with a colleague those individuals often have higher levels of depersonalization, due to a separation they are feeling between their co-workers. With emotional exhaustion and depersonalization influencing burnout in teachers,

the third characteristic of burnout analyzing the important aspect of how a teacher perceives success within their profession.

Personal accomplishment. Maslach and Jackson's (1981) third dimension of burnout involved the personal accomplishment and self-efficacy the educator feels within their profession. Teachers who experienced burnout within this subscale typically feel as if they are genuinely ineffective in their abilities as a teacher, especially within the arena of providing their students with an opportunity to be successful and reach their individual levels of achievement (Pucella, 2011). Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) described this dimension as the most independent of the three dimensions, and with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization being so interrelated, these researchers suggested that self-efficacy issues may form parallel to, but not necessarily within the other forms of burnout. However, that does not indicate that personal accomplishment issues cannot be some sort of catalyst for emotional exhaustion, depersonalization or both.

These feelings of negativity can compound over time, which may start to generate an anchor in the ability of the educator to continue a track toward personal improvement and overall effectiveness as a teacher. If personal accomplishment issues are allowed to fester over time they may eventually cause teachers to develop negative feelings towards themselves, which ultimately led to burnout or created additional pressure on an individual already suffering from different dimensions of burnout (Abel & Sewell, 1999). By linking this information, it may be apparent that having a lower sense of self-achievement led to not only burnout within the personal accomplishment dimension, but quite possibly within emotional exhaustion and

depersonalization as well. Therefore, personal accomplishment took on a significant role within the overarching construct of teacher burnout.

There is a significant amount of research available looking into the impact of personal accomplishment on burnout. Research completed by Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni, Petitta, and Rubinacci (2003) suggested that teachers who believe that they have a positive impact on their students' ability to be successful show greater values of accomplishment within the profession. These feelings are shown have a decreasing effect on the burnout symptoms that teachers may be experiencing. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010) suggested the same thoughts. From their work, teachers in Norway who demonstrated high amounts self-efficacy show lower amounts of burnout, whereas the teachers who showed lower levels of personal accomplishment have a tendency to develop burnout traits much faster than other colleagues. Work done by Wang, Hall, and Rahimi (2014) agreed with the previous research, teachers with high levels of self-efficacy rarely burnout and actually have higher levels of overall physical health. This correlated well with the research done by Schwerdtfeger, Konermann, and Schonhofen (2008), which suggested that higher amounts of personal accomplishment also decrease the amount of physical issues and complaints such as fatigue and pain, along with other physical symptoms that may be attributed to the feelings of burnout. By understanding the impact that personal accomplishment may have on teacher burnout, both positively and negatively, it may be important to discuss the treatment that may be available to help safeguard against burnout within education.

Treatment for Burnout

In both the psychology and education professions there is a sizable amount of research focused on the causes of burnout within those respective fields. As the causes of burnout are demonstrated there is often a discussion on how to alleviate the issue in some way or another. This ultimately is what most of the research attempts to accomplish. With an understanding of the latter, researchers gathered a generous amount of information that can lead to possible therapies for burnout symptoms. For instance, if the remedies for the problem are fairly similar, regardless of the variable analyzed, those involved may have developed a universal methodology for combating the problem at hand. However, because burnout is a combination of experiences felt by the individual and the unique characteristics found within each workplace environment, burnout treatment may be best developed on an individual basis rather than the use of universal methods. Lambie (2006) agreed that burnout is specific to each individual and workplace. Therefore, the treatment of burnout needed to concentrate on the individual who is experiencing those explicit burnout symptoms, as well as being focused on the unique characteristics that the workplace may have. By isolating the burnout triggers for both the individual and the workplace, a more individualized therapy plan may be created to help combat these problems. The understanding of these two facets, the individual and the workplace, may be an important aspect to creating a treatment that is conducive to eliminating burnout.

According to the work done by Rupert, Miller, and Dorociak (2015), one of the most substantial safeguards to burnout dealt with control and autonomy within the workplace. These concepts emphasized specifically with the individual's ability to control themselves, but also the work environment. This fit within the confines of a classically liberal work environment where there is more employee centered decisions and fewer top-down mandates. Now with burnout

being found in numerous fields, it is difficult to identify a universal concept for control, but certain capacities of employee control consistently show a decrease in the sub-scores in all three dimensions of burnout. These researchers also suggested that facilities which have higher levels of employee support in the workplace have a significantly lower amount of burnout symptoms. With the benefits of employee control and workplace support, there is also a correlation between decreased burnout and the availability of professional development, continuing education, and supervisor feedback.

One of the more prominent pieces of research on treatment strategies for teacher burnout comes from Farber (2000). Within Farber's work he took Maslach's research and introduces three related, but renamed forms of teacher burnout. One example would be Farber's "worn-out subtype" (p. 677), this related to Maslach's emotionally exhausted dimension. These individuals typically looked for more outside professional help. This may show that the affected individual may still have the vital connections to the people they are serving, but they may be exhausted due to the demands of the profession. Farber saw this form of burnout as having more to do with overworking the individual than the other triggers for burnout like depersonalization or a decrease in professional accomplishments as seen in the numerous other articles. According to Farber, this form of burnout yearned for the inclusion of therapists or psychiatrists, which may be the most substantial help to this specific ailment. If a worn-out individual looked for professional help to combat the feelings of burning out, this provided the organization a chance to capitalize on the willingness of the employee to find help before full-fledged burnout sets in or the other burnout symptoms like depersonalization take hold. Schools may be able to provide

their employees with avenues to seek this help, but may also create faculty support groups that may provide the same forms of services that a professional therapist can deliver (Meyers, 1991).

For teachers who are traditionally burned out as described by Farber (2000), he suggested a series of relaxation training sessions. The intentional training sessions are an attempt to significantly reduce one's stress in order to be successful in the work place. The concept of providing a way for individuals struggling with burnout to learn how to relax are backed by the work of Steinhardt, Jaggars, Faulk, and Gloria (2010). These researchers indicated that the overwhelming amount of stress teachers feel often leads to situational depression and by developing coping methods often taught to individuals suffering from depression, this may in fact alleviate some of the negative symptoms of teacher burnout. Richards' (2012) work agreed also that general training with coping mechanisms may be an affective panacea towards burnout and occupational stress in general. With the work of Farber (2000), Steinhardt, Smith Jaggers, Faulk, and Gloria (2010), and Richards (2012), it was apparent that burnout does not only influence the individual as they appear within the workplace. These issues can cause deficits that may be problematic for the teacher in his or her personal life as well.

Rupert, Miller, and Dorociak (2015) demonstrated that an individual's home life is an important factor for decreasing levels of burnout, "Recreational activities, work-life balance, and social support are linked to burnout at work" (p. 171). This is an important note to take into consideration, because oftentimes it is felt that burnout is situated as a relationship between the individual involved and the work environment in which they are employed (Lambie, 2006). With this understood, researchers should take into account the home life of the individual affected as well. These researchers have found that issues at home have a direct relationship

with increased levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Reducing burnout causes may be as simple as bringing up a conversation with the individual suffering from burnout symptoms about how they manage their time at home, speaking with those affected by burnout about issues they may be experiencing personally, or suggesting counseling for those who may be careworn with that aspect of their life. These conversations could be facilitated by administration within schools if they were properly trained.

Even with the out-of-school issues that school burnout can cause, there is research available which has demonstrated that the actions of school administration can be a remedy for such issues. By sharing the different variables caused to increase teacher burnout, Teven (2007) suggested that a school needs to increase the levels of overall autonomy, decrease curricular restrictions, and invest in ways to lower the overall pressures from the teacher as a way to alleviate the growing issues that teachers experience. Teven's research along with Certo and Fox (2002) showed that teacher burnout may be alleviated by involved administrative work. Administrators have a direct tie with the areas that Teven (2007) has found to decrease the levels of stress as well as teacher burnout within a school. With the administration aware of the variables that have been found to directly cause teacher burnout this in itself can be seen as a remedy for the problems at hand. The work of Yong and Yue (2006) identified six areas where teachers in China have worked on relieving burnout symptoms. The six areas are taking a proactive attitude toward work, trying to make work synonymous with pleasure, continuing professional development, managing time appropriately, working towards defining roles within the work place, and welcoming reform, change, and new additions. By focusing on these six

areas it has been found that there is an overall decrease in burnout symptoms. These are areas where school administrators can focus on if there are burnout issues within their school.

Teacher Burnout and North Dakota

There are few pieces of academic literature that is focused on occupational burnout within North Dakota, let alone a focus on teachers and the burnout phenomena within the state. North Dakota may be a difficult state to generalize about due to the changes currently being seen. There may be a need for increased awareness within the state for teacher burnout because of the negative effects that burnout may create for many individuals and schools, but also for the fact that North Dakota is currently in a state of flux due to the shale oil boom seen in the western part of the state. The changes found throughout the state have been based upon the economic expansion and population increases seen in areas who before the oil boom underwent decades of decreasing population and overall negative economic issues (Weber, Geigle, & Barkdull, 2014).

The lives of people within the state are being influenced due to the availability of oil within the state's borders. With the fluidity in the profitability in oil this has influenced many aspects of the state. One specific impact is the shift seen in population throughout many counties. There are certain areas of the state which are growing dramatically and a handful that are shrinking in population (Hill & Olson, 2012; Weber, Geigle, & Barkdull, 2014). The state has always been known for having bountiful agricultural resources throughout, but now energy production and the influence it has on the people within the state has become North Dakota's calling card (Hill & Olson, 2012).

The Bakkan Oil Field in western North Dakota has continued to place the state in the public eye, and in some minds the oil boom has made North Dakota more visible than any time

within its history (Weber, Geigle, & Barkdull, 2014). These researchers stated that since 2007, North Dakota has been one of the fastest growing states within the United States, and due to the draw that the oil business has, North Dakota consistently garnered one of the lowest levels of unemployment in the nation. The North Dakota oil boom has undoubtedly led to economic growth and overall stability throughout the state, but it has also brought its fair share of difficulties. According to Archbold, Dahl, and Jordan (2014) the boom, with its population increases, has led to major issues within schools, housing, medical care facilities, policing, emergency preparedness, and general social services. This is compounded with the state's unique migration population increases, and specific problems with infrastructure created by the increased need for roads and transit (Tollefson, 2013). As one of the fastest growing states in the nation, North Dakota has one of the lowest percentages of population increase based upon natural increase, which is when the number of births outweigh the number of deaths (Cicha, 2015). Cicha stated that over three-quarters of North Dakota's population increase since the 2010 census is due to people moving into the state, compared to only a quarter seen in natural increase. Many of the problems the state has worked through can be attributed to the strain that population growth may put on existing infrastructure. As the state moved through this economic windfall certain counties in the western part of the state are seeing historical gains in population. Williams and Stark counties ranked in the top 10 United States' fastest growing counties from 2011 to 2012.

With the differences in county populations, it is straightforward enough to understand that educationally, North Dakota is a state that has had a definite distinction between large and small settings. Within North Dakota, there has been roughly four larger population centers.

Easily the largest population center has been the Fargo area located within the southeastern portion of the state. However, there are also large centers of population located around Bismarck, Grand Forks, and Minot. With the oil boom, there have also been population increases in Williston, Dickinson, and numerous smaller communities as well. Even with these changes, there are still large student population schools like West Fargo High School (9-12), which has an enrollment of roughly 1,500 students, and there are small student population schools like Amidon Elementary School (K-8), which had an enrollment of eight students in 2014-15 (NDDPI, 2014). From the same resource, there are school districts that have been consistently trending towards the process of expanding, building multiple schools within the same district, and many rural schools that have such low student populations that an observer can count the graduating class on one or two hands. With these differences between each school district and the environment of the state's economic influence on the educational system as a whole, the state can benefit from a study focused on how student population can influence burnout and use this information to interpret the potential differences between large and small student population schools.

With the understanding of why it is important to isolate the variable of student population, there is only a small amount of research that used this variable as a researchable factor for teacher burnout. There may be many reasons for this lack of research. One reason may simply be due to the fact that school population is typically a variable that is neutralized (Freidman, 1991). In some of the other areas of research, school size has been tied into many different variables like the quality of the facility/plant, cleanliness, and antiquated resources (Farber, 2000). This is understandable because researchers may want to compare similar

variables, and only use large school or small schools as their subjects for the project. Research from Abel and Sewell (1999) showed that there may be an ever-growing importance to analyzing teacher stress and burnout creating a distinction between urban or rural schools, or in the terms of this project, large and small student population schools. As paralleled in Abel and Sewell's research, identifying the differences in burnout between small and large schools may have allowed researchers to further understand the relationship between education and burnout.

With the nature of teacher retention, and specifically teacher retention issues dealing with burnout, it may be important to continue to study the causes for the problem as a whole. There are many research projects focused on the various causes of teacher burnout, but there are very few available that look at teacher burnout through the lens of the school's student population. Many articles (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Cheung, 2009; Martinez, Frick, Kim, & Fried, 2010) listed student population as a causal reason for teacher burnout, but this project looked at student population as a comparable, environmental variable that serves as the framework for finding reasons for teacher's burning out within their own specifically sized schools. This is why using a school's student population as a variable may allow researchers to understand the individual similarities and/or differences in burnout between the two sample groups. If a researcher can determine if there are similar reasons to why teachers are burning out within their respectively sized schools, this may allow more individualized treatment for the syndrome itself.

Chapter III: Methodology

Procedures and Research Design

Introduction. A researcher may take many different avenues within a study on burnout, as it is extensive and at times a highly individualized ailment. Due to the service aspects of education, even with the nature of burnout, the teachers have a tendency to see a higher amount of burnout as compared to those who work in other non-service fields (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Due to the levels of burnout found within education and the cost to the system when teachers burnout, this study focused on how burnout symptoms are differentiated between large and small schools based upon student population. With the help of the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educator's Survey this study looked into the differences and/or similarities in teacher burnout between large and small secondary schools. To define both large and small, this study used the method that the North Dakota High School Activities Association uses to define a Class A and a Class B school.

Research method and design. This research study used a quantitative method. Quantitative studies have allowed for a wide dispersal of measuring instruments to be utilized. With a research topic surrounding something as personal as teacher burnout it may be important to this study to understand what the most pressing causes are for teachers possibly burning out of the profession between large and small schools within North Dakota.

Research questions. The study attempted to answer two specific questions.

1. Are large or small schools more apt to see symptoms of teacher burnout in North Dakota?

2. What are the differences (if any) in the causes of teacher burnout between large and small schools?

As North Dakota has lacked in data, specifically within the area of teacher burnout, these questions allowed for a broader understanding of burnout for teachers, but also information that can be provided to specific districts based upon student numbers.

Hypotheses. The study will attempt to reject or fail to reject each null hypothesis.

$H1_0$ There is no difference in the amount of teacher burnout symptoms between large (Class A) and small (Class B) schools in North Dakota.

$H1_A$ There is a difference in the amount of teacher burnout symptoms between large (Class A) and small (Class B) schools in North Dakota.

$H2_0$ There are no differences in the causes of teacher burnout between large (Class A) and small (Class B) schools within North Dakota.

$H2_A$ There are differences in the causes of teacher burnout between large (Class A) and small (Class B) schools within North Dakota.

Sample and Participants

The individuals surveyed within this study were teachers who were employed as teachers in grades nine through 12. The majority of North Dakota employs a dedicated e-mail system for schools. This system is run by EduTech out of Valley City, North Dakota. The state-wide e-mail system provides a unique opportunity to reach a large number of teachers within the state. EduTech has allowed the use of the state-wide listservs to be utilized by researchers with projects that may benefit education for the state as a whole. This exclusive opportunity will allow for a significant sample to be attained for the purposes of the study (Appendix A).

According to the NDDPI's (2015) Educational Directory, North Dakota has had 372 total public schools. The total is broken down of 171 Pk-8 Elementary schools, 24 Middle/Jr. High schools, 32 9-12 secondary schools, 135 combination schools (elementary, middle, junior high, and secondary), and 10 one-room/one-teacher schools. Within all of these schools, North Dakota public schools have had a total enrollment, PK-12, of 106,338 students. North Dakota public schools also have had over 10,000 (FTE) licensed staff, which includes administration, counselors, instructional coaches to name a few. Within this licensed staff there were 105 Pre-K teachers, 516 Kindergarten teachers, 3,829 classroom teachers (grades 1-8), and 2,109 classroom teachers (grades 9-12). This leads to roughly 6,559 public school teachers devoted to classroom instruction.

Alongside North Dakota's public school system, there were 50 non-public schools, four state institutions, and six Bureau of Indian Affairs schools. Within these schools there was an enrollment of 8,702 students. These schools also employed 1,020 FTE licensed staff. Within these licensed professionals there were 31 pre-K teachers, 62 Kindergarten teachers, 389 classroom teachers (Grades 1-8), and 182 classroom teachers (grades 9-12). This left 664 teachers who worked in non-public schools within North Dakota (NDDPI, 2015).

In total there was an estimated 7,200 classroom teachers who were employed by schools throughout the state. To align with this study there were roughly 2,291 teachers who taught at the secondary level. To define the sample group out of this teacher population, with a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 5%, the sample group within North Dakota for licensed and working secondary teachers would be somewhere around 329 responses. For

this project there was an aim for roughly 350 responses to provide a proper baseline of information to answer each of the hypotheses.

For the purposes of this study, large and small schools were defined as to which class the school falls in for state basketball participation. Currently in North Dakota there are two classes designated for schools participating in high school basketball. Within this study, Class A schools were considered large schools. This class consisted of the prominent high schools located in North Dakota's major cities. Fargo, West Fargo, Grand Forks, Bismarck, and Minot are all represented through multiple high schools. Class A also included Valley City, Wahpeton, and Devils Lake to identify schools not located in the larger metropolitan areas of the state. In order to be considered a Class A school, Justin Fletschock (personal communication, October 26, 2015), an Assistant Director of the North Dakota High School Activities Association, noted that the school needs to have an enrollment of 325 students or above. The remainder of the schools within North Dakota were considered Class B or small schools.

Certain schools combined to form cooperative teams for their participation within basketball, but for the sake of this study, any school that was below 325 students was considered a Class B or small school. This may have eliminated the confusion that cooperatives created while attempting to isolate whether a school is large or small. By using the 325 student threshold this may also have placed certain schools within larger districts as small schools. An example of this would be Woodrow Wilson Alternative High School, which was in the Fargo School District, but only had a registered enrollment of 140 students. Based upon its enrollment Woodrow Wilson would have been considered a small school.

The teachers from large and small schools were isolated by the use of a question within the survey. Within the demographic portion of the instrument, the educator who took the survey can identify whether they work at a school above the 325 student threshold or below that number. The participants in the survey self-identified whether they were employed by a Class A or Class B school, this allowed for a comparison between the participants and ultimately, demonstrate the similarities or differences in burnout between the two studied groups.

Each of the individuals involved within the project were adults, and the voluntarily provided their time answering the questions within the survey. These individuals were currently employed by a public or non-public school district within North Dakota. The survey did not differentiate between full-time equivalencies. A half-time teacher's input was as valuable as a 1.0 FTE. The study did not discriminate based upon the percentage of a teacher's day dedicated to teaching high school students. As long as the teacher taught one period of Grades 9 through 12, they will be allowed to take the survey.

Instrumentation and Measures

Teacher burnout is a phenomenon that is not necessarily new, and there are numerous instruments available for use. However, throughout the study of teacher burnout there was one instrument that is used frequently within the research. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) was implemented within numerous service industry disciplines including education. With the amount of research that uses the MBI, it may be said that this instrument served as one of the standards within the topic. This research came from a wide variety of vocations: police service, pharmacy and medicine, social work, and even retail sales (Hawkins, 2001; Lahoz & Mason, 1989; Maslach, 1978; Rutherford, Hamwi, Friend, & Hartmann, 2011).

The breadth of these vocations showed the widespread use of the MBI throughout numerous service related fields. This inventory was the most commonly given research measure within the topic of burnout, and Christina Maslach, one of the primary authors of the MBI, was also one of the most significant researchers on burnout going back to the mid-1970s (Langballe, 2006; Maslach, 1976).

The Maslach Burnout Inventory measured three specific subscales within the construct, including Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). The first MBI was originally created to understand health professions; an education-based survey was created shortly after. The latter was the measure that was applicable for this study (Aguayo, Vargas, de la Fuente, & Lozano, 2011). The three subscales that were carried over from earlier versions of the MBI to the MBI-Educator's Survey (MBI-ES), which was created by Maslach, Jackson, and Schwab (1986) hold significant meaning and characteristics unique to the educational profession. For instance, the area of Depersonalization dealt specifically with the educator losing positive feelings for the students they are teaching. Personal Accomplishment, according to Maslach, Jackson, and Lieter (1996), is especially important to educators as there seems to be a correlation between the amount of success an educator sees for themselves and the level of burnout they may be experiencing. With consideration of the previously mentioned themes of burnout, researchers have found that the Emotional Exhaustion aspect to be the most significant indicator of burnout. Wheeler, Vassar, Worley, and Barnes (2011) stated that emotional exhaustion is the "primary manifestation of burnout" (p. 232). With the significance of Emotional Exhaustion within the confines of

burnout, this subscale is, rightfully so, the most researched and analyzed themes within the MBI (Shirom, 1989).

Even though the Maslach Burnout Inventory is seen as the professional standard, it is important to verify the validity and reliability of the measure (Langballe, 2006). Aguayo, Vargas, de la Fuente, and Lozano (2011) found Cronbach's alpha was consistently between 0.81 and 0.92. These alpha coefficients showed that the instrument is quite reliable. When the different themes were broken down individually; the reliability became slightly more unstable. For instance, the personal accomplishment parameter varies between 0.57 and 0.82. Researchers Iwanicki and Schwab (1981) have segregated the themes and analyzed reliability by those specific tracks, and these researchers found Cronbach alpha estimates of .90 for emotional exhaustion, .76 for depersonalization, and .76 for personal accomplishment respectively. Gold's (1984) work shows slightly lower Cronbach alpha estimates of .88, .74, and .72, but they are still reliable nonetheless.

As for validity, Maslach and Jackson (1981) demonstrated validity in multiple ways. The first test for validity involved interviewing individuals close to the person being studied. The second method included correlating the individual within the study to certain job aspects that can be equated to a higher-prevalence of burnout. Thirdly, the Maslach Burnout Inventory scores were compared to outcomes hypothesized to be associated with burnout. Here are the results to the initial validity measurements:

> As predicted, people who were rated by the co-worker as being emotionally drained by the job scored higher on Emotional Exhaustion ($r = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$) and on Depersonalization ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, people who were rated as

> appearing physically fatigued scored higher on Emotional Exhaustion (frequency only, $r = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$) and on Depersonalization ($r = 0.50$, $p < 0.01$). It had been expected that high scores on Depersonalization would be reflected in the behavior of frequent complaints about clients. Co-workers' ratings of this behavior were indeed correlated with Depersonalization scores ($r = 0.33$, $p < 0.05$). The predicted correlation between co-worker ratings of the individual's satisfaction with the job and scores on Personal Accomplishment failed to achieve statistical significance (105-106).

There are positive correlations for nearly each one of the parameters when co-workers provided information about the individual within the study. If a co-worker rated the individual as emotionally drained those individuals had a significant tendency to score a higher mark within emotional exhaustion.

Data Collection

This study utilized the North Dakota EduTech e-mail system, and the data collection tool was delivered through each participant's school e-mail. Being aware of courtesy, it is important to gain permission from each school's administration to ensure that the use of contracted, school time may be used for the completion of the data collection tool along with permission to use the school's e-mail. By taking advantage of the EdLead listserv, which provided a communication link to many of the state's school administrators, an e-mail was sent out. This e-mail asked permission from administrators for their teachers to participate in this study. The e-mail also provided the administrators with the link to the data collection tool. If the school's administration deemed it appropriate for their staff to be a part of this study could have forwarded the link onto their staff for voluntary completion.

The data collection tool will be the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educator's Survey (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996), which is a survey of 22 scenarios that an educator might experience over the course of their professional career. These scenarios were delivered in short phrases (found in Appendix B). The participants were then given a series of seven timeframe indicators that they chose to best describe the frequency of these scenarios. These choices were designated by a number, zero through six, with zero representing "never" and six representing "every day" (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). In order to answer the research questions posed within this study, the survey also included a demographic question that differentiated individual participants between educators from large and small schools. The demographic question was queried within a different section of the survey as compared to the 22 MBI-ES scenarios to ensure that they did not influence the validity and reliability of the MBI-ES.

The nature of the MBI-ES provided an opportunity to reach a large number of educators through the use of an online survey. The survey mirrored the questions found within the paper format of the MBI-ES, as provided through MindGarden.com, the organization that publishes and provides licenses to use the MBI. Converting the paper format to digital allowed the survey invitation to be distributed through an easily accessible medium like e-mail. Using Qualtrics, the survey listed the same scenarios seen within the paper format of the MBI-ES, but it included a simplistic choice system in which the participant only had to click their frequency choice with their mouse. When the participant was finished they chose submit at the bottom of the survey. The information that the participant provided was collected within the proprietary data analysis tools that Qualtrics provided. This information was stored within the Qualtrics software and flash memory devices.

Data Analysis

For this study, the use of an independent samples t-test allowed for comparison and provided an avenue to understand the differences as well. There were three dependent variables due to the fact that the MBI-ES has three different subscales; Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment, when the instrument was scored. The dependent variables were analyzed individually to ensure that a proper comparison was made between with the independent variable. The independent variable was school size based upon the high school's enrollment. High schools with an enrollment of 325 students or above were considered large schools and schools below the 325 student designation will take the role of small schools. The simplicity of the analysis process allowed the MBI-ES information to show through to define the differences between the independent variable groups.

Each of the three themes or parameters that the MBI-ES measured: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment, was measured and compared between large and small schools. Since the MBI-ES, rated the frequency of certain scenarios or feelings a teacher may feel throughout their career, and those frequencies were represented by a number line, zero through six, the dependent variable was considered an interval based variable. The data collected from the two sample groups, was compared to determine if there are any significant differences between the groups based upon the parameters measured by the MBI-ES. An independent samples t-test was implemented for each of the subscales found within the MBI-ES; therefore. Looking at each subscale with its own individual analysis allowed for a broad topic, teacher burnout, to be specified into more manageable aspects. The work of Pucella

(2011) used a very similar method of data analysis within her work with the three dimensions of the MBI-ES, combined with her research on National Board Certification and teacher burnout.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study used an online, e-mail based survey to gather information. Within this sort of measure intrinsic issues may arise, but there are also benefits to using this sort of measure. According to Reips (2002), online research provided a fast, efficient way to contact a large number of participants. Also, this sort of research may have provided a very low maintenance experience due to the increased amounts of automation that internet based delivery can provide. With this information understood, it is inappropriate to assume that a study does not have any limitations. This study most surely does.

Limitations. With the understanding that this study will be completed with the utmost professionalism, there were still limitations within this study. There was no demographic isolation besides the number of students enrolled within the Grades 9 through 12 in the school. It can be assumed that there are differences between every school, whether it is leadership, socioeconomic status, and/or facilities to name a few. All these different variables may have influenced the levels burnout for each district, some may have had higher levels of burnout where as others may have garnered lower levels. The differences created by each school district may have actually added to the project, because the research questions are geared towards finding the differences and/or similarities between larger and smaller schools. Even with this, the additional variables were limitations to the study itself.

Online surveys inherently have limitations. There may be teachers who have not consented to taking the survey for various reasons. As an online survey, if a significant group of

either large school or small school teachers did not consent to the survey this may have skewed the results of the survey towards the other group (Matsuo, McIntyre, Tomazic & Katz, 2004). Within North Dakota education, there are a large percentage of teachers tied into the e-mail system that was used for the invitation, but that does not necessarily guarantee that all teachers who were delivered the e-mail consented to take the survey. The small amount of teachers who were not tied into the system did not have the opportunity to provide their input and will be missing from the final results.

Along with the inherent issues that online surveys have, there are limitations in how teachers accessed the data collection tool as well. By using the EdLead listserv through Edutech, this allowed a large percentage of administrators to provide their staff with the data collection tool. This method relied on the school's administration to distribute the survey. Without being able to control the distribution of the surveys directly this created an information pool that may be slightly disproportionate to large or small schools. This may not have allowed for the information collected to provide a proper sampling of North Dakota teachers between the two sampled groups.

Since this study was interested in teachers who may be experiencing burnout, this created its own limitation within the study. According to Maslach (1979), burnout may have led to occupational disconnect, which may have indicated that teachers experiencing burnout may not even have completed the survey due to burnout symptoms they were already experiencing. Even when surveys were completed, the responses needed to be put in consideration as well. There were many sorts of responses that may have caused issues; participant self-selection, multiple submission, serious and non-serious answers, and semi-completed responses (Gosling, Vazire,

Srivastava, & John, 2004). Taking one of these possible scenarios; participant self-selection, which is where the participant actively and voluntarily engaged in the online survey, can create a skewed body of responses because the individuals being studied make the decision to take the survey or not. According to Matsuo, McIntyre, Tomazic, and Katz (2004), this was not necessarily any different from telephone or mail surveys; possible participants had the ability to reject the survey regardless of delivery method.

One of the most significant limitations to an online survey is the researcher's ability to control the surveying or testing conditions. This may add to the variability of the environment where teachers were taking the survey. For teachers, it was difficult to control the time the survey is completed. If the survey was delivered to each participant's school e-mail, it can be assumed that there was more individuals taking the survey while school is in session. The date, time and setting that a teacher took the survey may have influenced the choices they made at that current time. There may be a difference in responses for teachers who completed the survey in the morning, before the majority of school has been finished as compared to a teacher who took the survey once they have completed a day of teaching. Related to these limitations, this study could not control the emotional or physical state the teacher was in when they completed the survey. Naturally there may be day-to-day differences within a teacher's attitude toward the profession. If a teacher took the survey during a stressful day as compared to a day with less stress, this may have influenced some of their responses, and ultimately may have distorted the information collected from the tool.

Delimitations. The above limitations, although considerable for this study, may be delimited with additional work into the topic. As the issue of online availability may become a

problem for some, the use of the individual school's network allowed for each teacher to have access to the internet and the survey. By having requested that administration distribute the survey during contracted-school hours, this allowed even those without internet at their place of residence to access the survey using the internet service that the school provided its staff and students.

By asking permission for teachers to take the survey during school hours, this may have alleviated another limitation discussed. Based upon the nature of internet-based surveys it may be difficult to control the conditions in which the survey will be taken. Within the distribution of the survey, administrators were asked to allow their educators to take the survey during contracted hours. With that, there may have been an understanding that teachers are to take the survey during school hours. This may have helped isolate certain conditions that may have skewed survey results. If teachers took the survey during school hours, they were more than likely not to take the survey at home, at a coffee shop, or some other unspecified area. By understanding that the majority of the participants may have taken the surveys within their place of employment this allowed for a certain amount of delimitation towards the issue of controlled versus uncontrolled surveying conditions.

Another limitation related to how the questions are asked as well as how the answers are delivered through the survey. The survey incorporated the exact Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educator's Survey and its questions, which was published through MindGarden.org. The way the questions were to be answered was also modeled off of the MBI-ES in its original format. As explained prior, the MBI-ES is one of the most used and researched information gathering tools within the confines of burnout research. Also, through the consultation of experts,

professional journal articles, and years of research-based use, the survey, its questions, and response possibilities were analyzed and verified to cover the construct of burnout.

Ethical Considerations

Any time that a researcher asked about what is causing an education professional to struggle, stress, or anything of that nature, it is important to keep confidentiality as the utmost important aspect. The topic of teacher burnout offers some issues within ethical considerations for this study. With the topic being such an important piece to the future success of education, any information that may remedy the problem should be presented to any individual responsible for teacher retention. However, with that understanding, there are numerous personal and possibly destructive reasons why teachers were leaving the profession.

Participants within the study were required to think of and possibly indicate certain individuals, schools, experiences, students, and a multitude of other sensitive information. It is up to the researcher to ensure that the communication of this information stayed private, but is allowed to be interpreted as information that will aid the constructive attempts to combat the problem of burnout.

Like all forms of research, ensuring that all participants were free from harm should have been the most important piece of this project. Each participant within this study was free from harm to the researcher's best abilities, and there was substantial steps taken to ensure the security of the information gathered within the study. This is a crucial piece to the project as a whole. If inappropriate information was ever leaked or released this could be detrimental to careers and livelihoods, there needs to be a method to ensure that each survey and interview will be kept confidential and as protected as possible.

Once the information was gathered and analyzed it was the duty of the researcher to ensure that the information is appropriately stored. Since the information is digital, once the project was completed the digital information was stored on a series of flash-memory devices and housed within Qualtrics' online storage. These flash-memory devices will then be stored in a secure lockable safe. The flash-drives will be appropriately destroyed and the online data will be deleted after the course of seven years, unless there is a need to revisit the information for further research.

Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this study was to identify whether teacher burnout was more apt to be found in large or small high schools in North Dakota, while identifying the differences and similarities in burnout, if any, between the two groups of teachers. The survey was open April through May, 2016, and during that time 395 participants responded to the survey. Out of those participants, 365 were used within data analysis due to the remainder being incomplete. The 30 eliminated surveys were discarded due to having less than half the questions completed. Within those 365 participants, 128 were teachers who identified as working in a Class A high school (325-students or above; 35%), while 237 identified as teachers who worked within a Class B high school (324-students or below; 65%). Eight teachers indicated they were from private schools (2%), while 357 identified as being employed by a public school (98%). The differences found between private and public school responses were minimal, and therefore no skewing of data was observed by using teacher responses from both private and public schools. Both males and females completed surveys, with 223 teachers identifying as female (61%) and 142 reported that they were male (39%). As for the years of experience, 91-participants identified as teachers with zero to five years of experience (25%), 77-individuals declared six to ten years of experience (21%), 50 teachers chose 11 to 15 years of experience (14%), and 147 participants identified as a teacher with 16 or more years of experience (40%). With this information, analysis was performed to answer the research questions.

Data Analysis

Independent samples t-tests were used to analyze the research questions within the study. Within the MBI-ES, each question was designated to identify one of the three subscales of

burnout; Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, or Personal Accomplishment. Each of these questions was analyzed based upon the size of the schools as identified by the participants.

A 95% confidence level was used for the analysis of each question within the three separate MBI-ES subscales. Therefore, the level of statistical significance between the two groups was set at 0.05. If the P-value is greater than 0.05 the result was to fail to reject the null hypothesis. If the P-value is less than or equal to 0.05 the result was to reject the null hypothesis.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Within this study there are two research questions:

1. Are large or small schools more apt to see symptoms of teacher burnout in North Dakota?
2. What are the differences (if any) in the causes of teacher burnout between large and small schools?

The answers to these questions may provide a better understanding of burnout within North Dakota, and possibly provide schools with more information on how to combat the symptoms of burnout based upon the size of their schools. With these questions guiding the research, the MBI-ES provided a wealth of information that was analyzed by SPSS to provide statistical information to be interpreted.

Based upon these research questions a hypothesis and null hypothesis has been generated for each question. For research question 1, the hypotheses were:

$H1_0$ There is no difference in the amount of teacher burnout symptoms between large (Class A) and small (Class B) schools in North Dakota.

$H1_A$ There is a difference in the amount of teacher burnout symptoms between large (Class A) and small (Class B) schools in North Dakota.

For research question 2, the hypotheses were:

$H2_0$ There are no differences in the causes of teacher burnout between large (Class A) and small (Class B) schools within North Dakota.

$H2_A$ There are differences in the causes of teacher burnout between large (Class A) and small (Class B) schools within North Dakota.

Question One Analysis

Question one. Are large or small schools more apt to see symptoms of teacher burnout in North Dakota?

Null hypothesis one. There is no difference in the amount of teacher burnout symptoms between large (Class A) and small (Class B) schools in North Dakota.

Hypothesis one. There is a difference in the amount of teacher burnout symptoms between large and small schools in North Dakota.

Each statement to be answered within the MBI-ES relates directly to one of Maslach's subscales; Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, or Personal Accomplishment. The descriptive analysis is built after the surveys are scored using the raw survey data when used in application. The statements that teachers must address within the MBI-ES relate to how teachers are feeling or what they were experiencing while they were working as teachers. As an example, "I feel emotionally drained from my work," was the first statement of the MBI-ES that must be addressed by teachers (Maslach, Jackson, & Schwab, 1986, p. 62). The teacher's answers within the survey were given by utilizing a Likert scale. As SPSS cannot find the means of text

answers, the MBI-ES utilizes numbers that equate to the frequency teachers were experiencing what was described in the statements. An answer of zero signifies never, one signifies a few times a year or less, two signifies once a month or less, three signifies a few times a month, four signifies once a week, five signifies a few times a week, and six signifies every day. By finding the means for each question it was calculated as if the individuals from each group were feeling the effects of burnout or not.

Tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 demonstrates the calculated mean based upon the answers provided by the survey participants. These means were broken down by the corresponding questions for each subscale. By then adding these means together, and using the guide created by Maslach, Jackson, and Schwab (1986) to determine the extent of burnout, the information showed whether or not, based upon the survey data, if each group was experiencing certain burnout symptoms. The mean then was compared to the Maslach Scale which labeled the prevalence of burnout symptoms considered for the purpose of this study as High, Moderate, and Low. Each of the subscales had its own unique prevalence measure to determine the incidence of the burnout symptoms that the teachers may be demonstrating. For instance, a low score for Emotional Exhaustion may not be the same as a numerically similar score for Depersonalization. Due to these differences for each subscale, it was important to ensure that individuals reviewing the results understand the different point scales for each subscale.

The designation of High, Moderate, and Low are based upon the normative distribution found within the burnout research of Maslach, Jackson, and Lieter (1996). Therefore, a Moderate score within this study demonstrates an average amount of burnout as seen across the normative distribution. A High score shows that teachers may be suffering from the amount of

burnout experiences in the upper third of the distribution, while a Low score demonstrates that the participants are experiencing symptoms similar to those across the lower third of the normative distribution. Based upon this information, if North Dakota teachers score Moderate across the three subscales this shows that they are experiencing an average amount of burnout based upon the normative distribution. If North Dakota teachers demonstrate a High score this shows that they are experiencing burnout symptoms at a higher rate than average, and in a similar mind, if a Low score is achieved, the teachers are showing a lower rate of symptoms than the norm.

The calculated means were then compared using an independent t-test, and the information derived from that analysis was observed within the confines of the three burnout subscales, with each subscale receiving their own t-test to determine if there was a significant difference between Class A and Class B teachers. The standard deviation (SD) was calculated and then using the number of survey responses (N), the significance of the mean difference (P-value) was found.

Table 4.1

Emotional Exhaustion (EE) Scores

Class A Question	Mean	Class B Question	Mean	Maslach (EE) Scale	
1	3.457	1	3.275	High	27+
2	3.724	2	3.573	Moderate	17-26
3	2.661	3	2.792	Low	0-16
6	1.646	6	1.554		
8	2.669	8	2.689		
13	3.228	13	3.205		
14	3.213	14	3		
16	1.189	16	1.297		
20	1.149	20	1.741	Mean Difference	
	22.936		23.126		-0.19
SD	0.985	SD	0.829	P-value	
N	128	N	237		0.0515

Note: The Mean Difference is negative because Class B scored higher than Class A.

Table 4.1 indicates that for both Class A and Class B burnout symptoms may be seen as moderate within the Emotional Exhaustion (EE) subscale. The work of Basim, Begenibras, and Yalcin (2013) showed that teachers may have higher prevalence to feel burnout symptoms related to Emotional Exhaustion because of the personal nature of the profession. The Class A surveys generated a mean of 22.936, while the Class B surveys produced a mean of 23.126. These scores both show that Class A and Class B teachers were demonstrating a moderate amount of burnout symptoms within the Emotional Exhaustion subscale. The score of Moderate that both groups have demonstrated showed that North Dakota teachers were experiencing an average amount of burnout symptoms as compared to others. Based upon the data gathered, the Class B surveys demonstrated a score of 0.19 higher than the Class A surveys. The P-value between the Class A and Class B teachers registered at 0.0515, which demonstrated that the Emotional Exhaustion subscale difference between Class A and Class B teachers was not statistically significant.

Table 4.2

Depersonalization (DP) Scores

Class A Question	Mean	Class B Question	Mean	Maslach (DP) Scale	
5	1.165	5	1.013	High	14+
10	1.748	10	1.688	Moderate	9-13
11	1.598	11	1.752	Low	0-8
15	0.78	15	0.854		
22	2.008	22	2.471	Mean Difference	
	7.299		7.778		-0.479
SD	0.488	SD	0.648	P-value	
N	128	N	237		<0.0001

Note: The mean difference is negative because Class B scored higher than Class A.

Depersonalization is described by Cephe (2010) as feelings that teachers may develop where they perceive their students and colleagues as less than deserving of common human treatment. Based upon this explanation, Depersonalization has a substantial impact on burnout (Maslach, 2003). Table 4.2 demonstrates that both Class A and Class B surveys indicate that they are within the low section of the Depersonalization (DP) subscale. For the DP subscale, a Low score demonstrates that a smaller degree of burnout symptoms were found within the group. As compared to the normative distribution, North Dakota teachers were demonstrating a lower than average amount of burnout symptoms within the Depersonalization subscale as compared to others. The Class A surveys generated a score of 7.299 while Class B surveys scored 7.778. Based upon these scores, the Class B surveys show a score of 0.479 higher than Class A surveys. The P-value between the Class A and Class B teachers registered at <0.0001, which demonstrated that there was a statistically significant difference between Class A and Class B teachers within the subscale of Depersonalization. Based upon the survey data within the Depersonalization subscale, Class B teachers were feeling significantly higher amounts of burnout symptoms than Class A teachers; however, it is important to keep in mind that both groups were experiencing a less than average amount of burnout symptoms within this subscale.

Table 4.3

Personal Accomplishment (PA) Scores

Class A Question	Mean	Class B Question	Mean	Maslach (PA) Scale	
4	4.874	4	4.832	High	37+
7	5.142	7	5.139	Moderate	31-36
9	4.754	9	4.717	Low	0-30
12	4.307	12	4.202		
17	5.22	17	4.962		
18	4.701	18	4.548		
19	4.315	19	4.237		
21	4.638	21	4.569	Mean Difference	
	37.951		37.206		0.745
SD	0.336	SD	0.33	P-value	
N	128	N	237		<0.0001

Note: For PA the subscale is scored in reverse, high amounts of PA indicate less burnout.

Note: The mean difference is a positive number because Class A scored higher than Class B.

Table 4.3 focuses on the Personal Accomplishment (PA) subscale. Both Class A and Class B surveys demonstrated that the participants may have a high amount of Personal Accomplishment based upon Maslach's scale. The PA subscale is measured differently than EE and DP, as the higher the score for the PA subscale, the lower the prevalence of burnout symptoms (Maslach, Jackson, & Schwab, 1986). As North Dakota teachers were demonstrating a high amount of Personal Accomplishment, they were experiencing a lower amount of burnout symptoms within the PA subscale than the average. The Class A surveys scored 37.951 while Class B surveys scored 37.206. With that information, Class A surveys showed lower levels of burnout symptoms within the PA subscale than Class B by 0.745. The P-value between the Class A and Class B teachers registered at <0.0001, which demonstrated that there was a statistically significant difference between Class A and Class B teachers within the Personal Accomplishment subscale. Based upon this information, Class B teachers demonstrated a significantly higher quantity of burnout symptoms than Class A teachers within the Personal Accomplishment subscale.

With the analysis of the descriptive information, both Class A and B schools may have been experiencing emotional exhaustion on a moderate level. Whereas the groups were experiencing a low prevalence of burnout symptoms in the other two subscales. Through all three subscales Class B teachers demonstrated higher levels of burnout symptoms to varying degrees based upon the survey answers. Class B teachers also showed a statistically significant higher level of burnout in both the Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment subscales, but the data did not show a statistical significance for the Emotional Exhaustion subscale.

Due to the above information, for research question 1, within the subscale of Emotional Exhaustion (EE), the study has failed to reject the null hypothesis. For the subscale of Depersonalization, the information demonstrates a statistically significant difference between Class A and Class B teachers within burnout symptoms; therefore, the study rejected the null hypothesis. Within the subscale of Personal Accomplishment, the survey responses demonstrated a statistically significant difference in burnout symptoms between Class A and Class B teachers; therefore, the study rejected the null hypothesis. Due to two out of the three subscales showing a statistically significant difference the null hypothesis has been rejected for research question 1, this has demonstrated that there is a difference between the amount of burnout experienced in large and small schools within North Dakota, with smaller schools having experienced greats levels of burnout.

Question Two Analysis

Question two. What are the differences (if any) in the causes of teacher burnout between large and small schools?

Null hypothesis two. $H2_0$ There are no differences in the causes of teacher burnout between large and small schools within North Dakota.

Hypothesis two. $H2_A$ There are differences in the causes of teacher burnout between large and small schools within North Dakota.

Research question 2 focused on finding if there were differences in specific aspects of the burnout symptoms being experienced. In order to find the answer for the question, the MBI-ES was broken down into individual questions. The mean of those questions were then compared. If there was a statistically significant difference between Class A and Class B teachers within a

certain question this may have indicated that certain groups teachers may have struggled more with that specific aspect of burnout as compared to the others based upon the unique environments that Class A and Class B schools possess in relation to each other.

The following tables demonstrate the survey response means for Class A and Class B teachers, t-value (t), degrees of freedom (df), significance (P-value), and effect size (Cohen's d). The information was organized by the questions that determined the amount of burnout symptoms found within a certain subscale (Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment). In order to understand which group of teachers may have had significantly more burnout symptoms than the other, the means and the P-value must be understood.

Table 4.4

Emotional Exhaustion Subscale Questions

Question	Class A Mean	Class B Mean	t	df	P-value	Cohen's d
1	3.457	3.275	1.077	363	.282	0.118
2	3.724	3.573	.844	362	.399	0.093
3	2.661	2.792	-.697	363	.486	-0.077
6	1.646	1.554	.593	363	.554	0.065
8	2.669	2.689	-.105	363	.916	-0.012
13	3.228	3.205	.174	363	.862	0.019
14	3.213	3	1.092	363	.276	0.12
16	1.189	1.297	-.737	363	.461	-0.081
20	1.149	1.741	-1.394	361	.164	-0.154

Table 4.4 demonstrates the statistical significance for each of the individual questions from the MBI-ES, which determines the prevalence of Emotional Exhaustion burnout symptoms. It is important to remember that Emotional Exhaustion is the most common dimension of burnout experienced, while also being (rightfully so) the most researched out of the three subscales (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Based upon the means generated from the teacher responses alone, Class B teachers demonstrated higher amounts of burnout symptoms in this subscale, but no specific question stood out as statistically significant. This indicated that there is not a significant difference between Class A and Class B teachers as to specifically why teachers are experiencing burnout symptoms within the Emotional Exhaustion subscale.

Table 4.5

Depersonalization Subscale Questions

Question	Class A Mean	Class B Mean	t	df	P-value	Cohen's d
5	1.165	1.013	1.102	363	.271	0.121
10	1.748	1.688	.342	362	.732	0.038
11	1.598	1.752	-.794	363	.428	-0.087
15	0.78	0.854	-.420	363	.675	-0.046
22	2.008	2.471	-2.300	363	.022	0.253

Table 4.5 displays the statistical significance for the questions within the MBI-ES which are related to the Depersonalization burnout symptoms that a teacher may be experiencing. The means demonstrated that class B teachers indicate a higher level of burnout symptoms within this subscale. Of the five specific questions which demonstrated Depersonalization, one showed a statistically significant difference between Class A and Class B teachers. Question 22 within the MBI-ES, asks if teachers feel that students blame them for some of their problems. From the survey responses, Class B teachers scored 0.471 higher than Class A teachers. This showed that Class B teachers were possibly exhibiting increased level of burnout symptoms revolving around this specific question and its concept. An example of a symptom relating to this question could be the feeling that students were against the teacher rather than being able to learn and work with the teacher for mutual success. With the difference being statistically significant, this may be one of the reasons why Class B teachers showed higher rates of burnout within the Depersonalization subscale.

Table 4.6

Personal Accomplishment Subscale Questions

Question	Class A Mean	Class B Mean	t	df	P-value	Cohen's d
4	4.874	4.832	0.354	361	.724	0.039
7	5.142	5.139	.027	363	.979	0.003
9	4.754	4.717	.246	361	.806	0.027
12	4.307	4.202	.693	363	.489	0.076
17	5.22	4.962	2.021	362	.044	0.222
18	4.701	4.548	1.118	363	.264	0.123
19	4.315	4.237	0.585	363	.559	0.064
21	4.638	4.569	.525	362	.600	0.058

Note: For Personal Accomplishment a higher mean indicates lower burnout symptoms

Table 4.6 looks into identifying the statistical significance of each question found within the MBI-ES that is related to Personal Accomplishment burnout symptoms. This specific subscale is often seen as the most independent of the three subscales. Whereas Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization being are related to a certain extent, Personal Accomplishment oftentimes runs parallel with EE and DP, rather than having a cause and effect relationship (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Pucella, 2011). Much like the other subscale areas, the calculated means showed that Class B teachers may be suffering more from burnout symptoms than teachers within Class A schools. However, Personal Accomplishment is measured differently as compared to the other subscales. Within the Personal Accomplishment subscale, a higher score demonstrates a lower amount of burnout. Based upon this information, question 17 demonstrated a statistically significant difference between the means found from Class A and Class B surveys. Question 17 from the MBI-ES measures whether or not teachers believe they can create a relaxed environment for their students. According to the surveys, Class B teachers scored 0.258 less than Class A teachers. This demonstrates that Class B teachers may have suffered more from this specific burnout symptom within the Personal Accomplishment subscale than Class A teachers. An example of a symptom based upon this question could be a feeling that a teacher has failed to create a classroom where student learning can properly take place.

The purpose of the previous tables is to demonstrate the statistical significance between the differences found between the Class A and Class B teacher responses from the MBI-ES. The columns labeled “Class A Means” and “Class B Means” showed the average score for each labeled question. By observing these means this can demonstrate which group of teachers

exhibited a greater degree of burnout symptoms within that specific question. However, it is essential to determine if these differences had statistical significance. By better understanding the burnout differences between large and small schools in North Dakota, this may allow Class A or Class B schools to personalize burnout remedies for their specific school sizes.

Summary

Research question one.

1. Are large or small schools more apt to see symptoms of teacher burnout in North Dakota?

For research question one the study indicates that Class B (smaller schools) schools experienced higher amounts of burnout in all three of Maslach's subscales, but only two out of the three subscales showed a statistically significant difference between Class A (larger schools) and Class B. Within the Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment subscales, Class B had a higher statistically significant amount of burnout as compared to Class A schools. With the Emotional Exhaustion subscale not registering as statistically significant. Based upon this information, the study had successfully rejected the RQ1 null hypothesis, revealing that there is indeed a statistically significant difference in burnout symptoms between the two teacher groups, with smaller schools experiencing greater levels of burnout.

Research question two.

2. What are the differences (if any) in the causes of teacher burnout between large and small schools?

The MBI-ES was broken down into 22 questions, and out of those questions there were two that were found to have a statistically significant difference between Class A (larger) and

Class B (smaller). Question 22 out of the Depersonalization subscale asked if teachers felt that they were the blame for student problems. The responses indicated a statistically significant difference in favor of higher amounts of burnout in Class B teachers. Question 17 out of the Personal Accomplishment subscale explored the extent to which teachers feel that they can create a relaxed environment for their students. Much like question 22, there was a statistically significant difference in favor of Class B teachers in terms of burnout symptoms. Due to the significant differences found in two questions, the study has successfully rejected the RQ2 null hypothesis.

Chapter V: Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

Chapter five provides for an overview of the study; reiterates the research questions, hypotheses, findings, and conclusions. This chapter will also provide extended understanding of the overall limitations, implications, and recommendations for both academics and practitioners.

Overview of the Study

North Dakota is a state that has experienced recent changes to the overall makeup of the population. The Western portion of the state has been impacted by the state's oil industry, while the Eastern half of the state remains dominated by the farming economies of the Red River Valley and the growing city of Fargo. As the populations change, schools are required to absorb some of these differences as they gain or lose students for various reasons. Within this unique time in North Dakota's history, there may be a need to research the impact these changes have had on the teachers who allow our schools to be successful.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore the prevalence of teachers who are experiencing the symptoms of burnout. This study looked specifically at two separate groups of teachers with school size being the determining factor for which group the participants fell into. For the purposes of the study, small schools are seen as schools with high school enrollments of 324 students or less. These small schools are labeled as Class B, and this identification falls within guidelines set forth by the North Dakota High School Activities Association. Class A schools are the schools that have 325 students or more enrolled in high school. Within those confines, the study investigated whether teachers within Class A or Class B schools were experiencing greater symptoms of burnout, as well as any differences in burnout symptoms between the two groups of teachers.

Review of Methodology

In April, 2016, a survey link was sent out through e-mail utilizing the EduTech, EdLead and Secondary Principal listservs, which connect a high percentage of educational leaders within the state of North Dakota. The link was connected to a survey built and housed using Qualtrics survey software. The survey was based upon the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educator's Survey (MBI-ES), which is a twenty- two question survey developed by Christina Maslach and her colleagues (Maslach, Jackson, & Schwab, 1986). The MBI itself is observed as the one of the professional standards for burnout research (Langballe, 2006). By utilizing the exact questions from the MBI-ES, this assured the validity and reliability of the instrument used within this study. In order for the teachers to have access to the survey, their administrators had to send the link to them. By using this method of distribution, permission was obtained from the school administration for their teachers to participate in the study. If an administrator did not approve of their teachers participating, they would not disseminate the e-mail to their staff. By utilizing the listserv, 395 teachers responded, with 365 surveys used within this study. The remaining thirty surveys were not used since only half (or less) of the survey was completed.

Once the responses from the survey were tallied, the information was separated between self-identified Class A and Class B teachers. The responses were then analyzed using SPSS to find whether or not there was a statistically significant difference between the responses of the two groups. The responses for each specific question of the survey were then further analyzed to determine any statistical difference between the two groups of teachers. This process was employed to recognize if there were any specific burnout symptoms that were unique to either Class A and Class B teachers.

Larger and smaller schools in general have different issues that each school needs to work through. This became apparent while reviewing studies which look at teacher burnout within large and small schools (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Borman & Dowling, 2008; Brill & McCartney, 2008; Cheung, 2009; Hoover & Aukhus, 1998; Rottier, Kelly, & Tomhave, 1986; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Tokar & Feitler, 1986). With that understood, by using this information schools may be able to provide burnout remedies more specific to their size, rather than a more generalized approach.

Research Questions, Findings, and Conclusions

For both research questions an independent samples t-test was used to determine the significance of the responses. For research question one, the means for each question within the Maslach subscales were analyzed as a whole to find whether there was a statistically significant difference in burnout between both Class A and Class B teachers. For research question two, each individual question was analyzed and compared between Class A and Class B teachers, to find if there were statistically significant differences in burnout symptoms between the two groups.

Research question one. Are large or small schools more apt to see signs of teacher burnout in North Dakota?

Table 5.1

Research Question One Findings

Subscale	Burnout Level	Statistically Significant Difference
EE	Class A: Moderate	No
	Class B: Moderate	Responses indicate that Class B feels more symptoms
DP	Class A: Low	Yes
	Class B: Low	Responses indicate that Class B feels more symptoms
PA	Class A: Low	Yes
	Class B: Low	Responses indicates that Class B feels more symptoms

Research question one conclusions. Table 5.1 provides information for each of Maslach's subscales; Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DP), and Personal Accomplishment (PA). The burnout level is based upon the scale that the MBI-ES provided with the survey. Under EE, both Class A and Class B teachers showed a moderate degree of burnout, while under DP and PA, both groups of teachers demonstrated low levels of burnout. However, in each of the subscales, Class B reported a higher level of burnout. In both DP and PA, there was a statistically significant difference between Class A and Class B schools. Whereas for the EE subscale there was not a statistically significant difference between the two groups.

Hypotheses. For research question 1 the hypotheses are:

$H1_0$ There is no difference in the amount of teacher burnout symptoms between large (Class A) and small (Class B) schools in North Dakota.

$H1_A$ There is a difference in the amount of teacher burnout symptoms between large (Class A) and small (Class B) schools in North Dakota.

North Dakota teachers as a whole were demonstrating a low amount of teacher burnout. With only Emotional Exhaustion measured at a moderate level of burnout, this is definitely a positive finding. Additional research may be required to find the reason for the generally low amounts of burnout found in this study. However, even though there were low amounts of burnout as demonstrated by the participants within this study, there was a statistically significant difference between Class A (larger schools) teachers and Class B (smaller schools) teachers in terms of the degree of teacher burnout within the state of North Dakota. This difference showed that Class B teachers may have a higher propensity to experience burnout symptoms than their colleagues who work within Class A schools. Based upon the hypotheses stated for Research

Question One, the study has rejected the null hypothesis and has shown there is a difference in the amount of teacher burnout symptoms between large and small schools in North Dakota.

Research question two. What are the differences (if any) in the causes of teacher burnout between large and small schools?

Table 5.2

Research Question Two Findings

Emotional Exhaustion		Depersonalization		Personal Accomplishment	
Question	Significant	Question	Significant	Question	Significant
1	No	5	No	4	No
2	No	10	No	7	No
3	No	11	No	9	No
6	No	15	No	12	No
8	No	22	Yes	17	Yes
13	No			18	No
14	No			19	No
16	No			21	No
20	No				

Research question two conclusions. In order to identify if there were any specific symptoms that are different between Class A and Class B schools, each question from the MBI-ES was analyzed through SPSS. According to the information from the surveys, there were only two questions out of the 22 possible questions found within the survey which provided a statistically significant difference based upon the participants' responses. For simplicity, Table 5.2 is sorted by subscale and then each question is grouped as an indicator for their respective subscale and is listed as having a statistically significant difference or not between the Class A and Class B teachers. For Emotional Exhaustion, nine questions from the survey were analyzed, Depersonalization included five of the questions, and Personal Accomplishment had eight questions.

Hypotheses. For research question 2 the hypotheses are:

$H2_0$ There are no differences in the causes of teacher burnout between large (Class A) and small (Class B) schools within North Dakota.

$H2_A$ There are differences in the causes of teacher burnout between large (Class A) and small (Class B) schools within North Dakota.

The subscale of Emotional Exhaustion showed no specific question with a statistically significant difference. This demonstrated that teachers between Class A and Class B schools do not show a distinct difference between any of the components of Emotional Exhaustion. The Depersonalization subscale had one question which had a statistically significant difference, and that question was number 22. Personal Accomplishment also had one question that scored a statistically significant difference, and that question was number 17.

Question 22, which helped calculate the Depersonalization subscale, explored the extent to which teachers felt like their students blame them for their problems. Class B participants averaged a 2.471, which placed them in between the "Once a month or less" and "A few times a month" response options. While the Class A participants averaged a 2.008, which placed them around the "Once a month or less" option. According to the analysis the P-value came back as 0.022. This indicated a statistically significant difference between the two groups of participants. Even though both groups do not necessarily show a high level of burnout within this question, Class B teachers showed a statistically higher level of burnout symptoms originated around this specific response prompt.

Question 17, which helped calculate the Personal Accomplishment subscale, questions whether teachers feel that they can create a relaxed atmosphere. It is important to remember that within the questions from the Personal Accomplishment subscale, a higher scoring mean indicates lower levels of burnout. Class B participants averaged a score of 4.962, which places their average response very close to the "A few times a week" response option. Whereas Class A teachers averaged 5.22, which is over the "A few times a week" response option. Based upon these scores, there was a statistically significant difference with a P-value of 0.044. The raw scores showed that both groups of participants demonstrated a relatively low degree of burnout within the Personal Accomplishment subscale, but much like the discussion with question 22, the responses from question 17 demonstrated that Class B (smaller schools) teachers indicated a statistically higher degree of burnout symptoms than their Class A counterparts. Due to these findings, this study has rejected the null hypothesis for Research Question Two, and has found

that there are differences in the causes of teacher burnout between large and small schools in North Dakota.

Limitations, Cautions, and Recommendations

Limitations and recommendations for academics. There are multiple thoughts to consider while reviewing this study for continued research applications. One consideration to take into account is how the survey was distributed. Even though the number of participants in the study was substantial, the use of the EdLead listserv and Secondary Principals listserv through EduTech exclusively may have allowed for teachers to be missed. Utilizing North Dakota United, the state's teacher union, this may have allowed more teachers to be reached; however, by using this method, it may have been more troublesome to gain administrator approval for teachers to participate within the survey. Even with this, if there were to be further research, it may be important to look into the way that the research instrument may be distributed. There are other options that may be further utilized to increase the amount of teachers who participate within the study. Out of the roughly 2,300 secondary teachers within North Dakota this study analyzed responses from 365 teachers.

Another issue came about after the research was concluded. It was found in a number of Class A schools that in order for a teacher to participate in research they may have had to achieve not only building level permission, but possibly district level permissions as well. This process may have been more intricate and lowered the approval rate. Class B teachers may have only required to have building level permission to participate, not having to go through the additional layer of permissions. This may be the reason why the number of teachers from Class A schools were smaller as compared to Class B participants. If further research is conducted, it may be

worthwhile to notify schools earlier to allow for schools who have additional permission levels to indeed approve teachers to participate in the study.

As burnout is an issue which has a tendency to develop occupational disconnect within the people feeling its symptoms (Maslach, 1979), a person suffering from occupational disconnect may be more likely to not participate in the study, especially in a study utilizing random sampling through an e-mail survey. Due to occupational disconnect, the study may be demonstrating a disproportionately high number of teachers who are not feeling a significant amount of burnout symptoms. If a smaller number of teachers who are actually feeling burnout symptoms are participating, this would lead to the study exhibiting lower than actual amounts of burnout symptoms throughout the state. Based upon the results, this may be happening as two out of the three burnout subscales showed that teachers within North Dakota are demonstrating a lower than average amount of burnout symptoms. To combat this issue, further research may be needed. An alternate course of study may be to initiate multiple case studies where a researcher personally visits a number of schools throughout the state and interviews participants. Each of these case studies may provide a more intentional method of directly contacting a group of teachers within a specific sized school. By using this method, it may allow for an increased encounter rate of teachers who may be burning out. That method would not allow teachers to simply bypass an e-mail based survey.

A case study method may also be an answer for one of the inherent issues of online surveys; the controlling of variables and testing conditions. The survey for this study may have been taken at any time, place, or with any other influencing variable. By going through school's administrators there were hopes that many teachers could have taken the survey during school

hours, which may have provided an isolation at least for the setting in which the survey was taken; however, even with administrator permission and encouragement teachers may have taken the survey whenever they saw fit. Even though a researcher may not be able to isolate every variable while personally interviewing teachers, the researcher would be able to ensure increased variable control over what an online survey is capable of delivering.

Limitations and recommendations for practitioners. Based upon the findings within this study, there was a statistically significant difference between large and small schools within North Dakota. Small schools demonstrated an increased degree of burnout when compared to large schools within the state. Even so, this study has shown North Dakota to have a generally low level of teacher burnout throughout the state regardless of school size. Of the three subscales that assist in measuring burnout symptoms, North Dakota showed less than average amounts of burnout in two, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment. The surveys showed a moderate level of symptoms measured within the Emotional Exhaustion subscale. These results are positive for the teachers, administrators, and in general, the citizens of North Dakota. Without further research it may be difficult to determine why North Dakota is demonstrating lower than average amounts of teacher burnout.

Even with the positive results for the state, teachers in smaller schools were feeling a heavier burden of burnout symptoms than their counterparts in larger schools. The two questions where smaller schools showed a higher statistically significant result than Class A schools focused on how the teacher feels about students blaming them for issues, and if the teacher believed they can create an environment beneficial for student learning.

Even though only two questions were found to have a significant difference between the two groups, this does not eliminate the need to look further into the information. There may be other areas, which raise concern based upon the descriptive responses. For instance, question two, which is used to determine the subscale of Emotional Exhaustion, scored a 3.724 for Class A and 3.573 for Class B teachers respectively. This question aims to detect if teachers feel used up by the end of the workday. Both groups responded that this happens more than a few times a month. Although that may not necessarily seem very often, these feelings over the course of a teacher's career may be wearing. Teachers, administration, and other school leaders may want to examine these results in order to develop discussion points for teachers. If there are areas which show areas of concern, much like question two, it may be beneficial for districts to look into creating remedies for their own organization.

One of the main issues is that Maslach (2003) herself admits that research on burnout interventions are limited, and they become even more inadequate when the issue is drilled down into the education field. One suggestion may be to look at identifying the individuals who are suffering from burnout symptoms, and work on individual strategies with them: coping, stress relief, and organization skills to name a few, but this does little to remedy large organizational issues that may be the root cause of the issues themselves. Even with these problems, the individualized method may be the way schools should approach counteracting burnout symptoms in the short-term, as individual remedies are typically easier to implement and much cheaper to incorporate into a school's environment. System-wide remedies then can be implemented as the individualized remedies are being incorporated into a teacher's daily activities (Maslach & Goldberg, 1998).

Summary and Conclusion

Teacher burnout in North Dakota is a relatively unexplored subject, especially within the confines of school size. With its distinct differences between large and small schools within the state, this provided an interesting look into the issue of burnout for the teachers in North Dakota. This study found that there are statistically significant differences between North Dakota's large and small schools, and looking at this information more closely, there are two specific questions that show a significant difference between the two groups. Although the information may be difficult to generalize throughout the state based upon the limited survey sample, these results may trigger discussion in schools that would allow for a better understanding of how to continue to combat the problem which has been found to be a part of the $2 billion plus teacher retention problem that the United States is currently facing.

With the changes that North Dakota is facing, the ups and downs of the oil industry, and as the state generally continues to grow and evolve there are a number of issues that the state faces. These issues may take on many faces, whether that be an influx of English Learner students, students with housing issues, or other social worries (Weber, Geigle, & Barkdull, 2014). Schools may continue having to evolve with these new challenges, and as schools continue to change, teachers may take on the additional pressure and stresses that come with fluctuations. These may lead to the many symptoms which can lead to a teacher burning out and possibly leaving the profession (Hughes, 2012; Maslach, 2003). Studies such as this shed light on strategies that have the potential to combat teacher burnout.

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Appendix A—EduTech Permission

[redacted]

Multiband Building • 2000 44th St S - Floor 3 • Fargo, ND 58103

Regional Tech Center • 415 Winter Show Road - Suite 2 • Valley City, ND 58072

July 24, 2015

To whom it may concern:

This letter provides permission to Wayne Samson to use the EduTech e-mail system as it pertains to his research study. Wayne Samson will engage various listservs (TECO, EDLEAD, etc.) within the e-mail system in order to provide educators a survey consisting of questions to identify specific demographics (school size, school location, sex, age, experience, etc.) and areas of teacher burnout. Wayne Samson will abide by all rules or regulations set in place to protect the users of the EduTech e-mail system.

Sincerely,

Robert Kaspari

Robert Kaspari

[redacted]

www.edutech.nodak.edu • Fargo: 800.774.1091 • Valley City: 800.804.8550

Appendix B—Survey

What gender do you consider yourself?

- Male
- Female
- Other

How many years have you been employed as a teacher?

- 0-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16+

Which would best describe the school where you are currently employed?

- A school with a grade 9-12 enrollment of 325-students or more
- A school with a grade 9-12 enrollment of 324-students or less

For each statement, please choose the option that best describes the frequency of those feelings/experiences

	Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
I feel emotionally drained from my work	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel used up at the end of the workday	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can easily understand how my students feel about things	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal objects	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Working with people all day is really a strain for me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

>>

For each statement, please choose the option that best describes the frequency of those feelings/experiences

	Never	A few times a year	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
I deal very effectively with the problems of my students	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel burned out from my work	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I've become more callous toward people since I took the job	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel very energetic	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

>>

For each statement, please choose the option that best describes the frequency of those feelings/experiences

	Never	A few times a year	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
I feel frustrated by my job	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel I'm working too hard on my job	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I don't really care what happens to some students	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Working with people directly puts too much stress on me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my students	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel exhilarated after working closely with my students	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

>>

For each statement, please choose the option that best describes the frequency of those feelings/experiences

	Never	A few times a year	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel like I'm at the end of my rope	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
In my work, I deal with emotional problems very calmly	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel students blame me for some of their problems	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

>>