Relationships of Emotional Intelligence and Performance-Based Self-Esteem with Burnout Among Pastors

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Abstract
Burnout threatens the emotional and physical well-being of pastors as well as their ability to provide competent and compassionate leadership to their congregations. This study examined the roles of emotional intelligence and performance-based self-esteem in the experience of burnout among pastors. Significant relationships were identified.

Relevant Literature
The overarching framework was drawn from the person-within-context theory of burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). The person-within-context theory views burnout as emanating from the interaction of organizational and individual factors.

- The organizational stressors examined were role conflict and role overload.
- The individual factors examined were emotional intelligence and performance-based self-esteem.

Other relevant literature includes:
- Maslach’s conceptualization of burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981)
- Role stress theory (Kahn et al., 1964) includes role conflict of and role overload
- Mayer and Salovey’s (1997) theory of emotional intelligence
- Theory of performance-based self-esteem (Hallsten, Josephson, & Torgén, 2005)
- Pastoral vocation (Carroll, 2006; Holifield, 2007)
- Burnout among pastors (Buys & Rothman, 2010; Francis, Hills, & Kaldor, 2008)

Problem
Burnout among pastors threatens their ability to provide the sensitive spiritual guidance and caring support often sought by congregational members and the community during times of crises. Significant gaps in the literature include:
- Only one prior study found that examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout among pastors.
- No studies directly examining the relationships between emotional intelligence and role conflict, a known contributor to burnout were identified.
- No studies examining the moderating influence of emotional intelligence on the relationships between role conflict and role overload (organizational stressors) and burnout were found.
- Only one prior study examining the relationship between performance-based self-esteem and burnout among pastors was found.

Purpose
The purpose of this quantitative study was to increase the understanding of burnout among pastors. Examining the roles of emotional intelligence and performance-based self-esteem with burnout among pastors was also sought.

Procedures
A convenience sample from 8 Protestant denominations in the U.S. was identified through interested denominational leadership. Data were collected online from 263 of these pastors, representing a 15% response rate.

Instrumentation
- Modified version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory, adapted for clergy (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996; Rutledge & Francis, 2004)
- Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale (Schutte et al., 1998)
- Performance-Based Self-Esteem Scale (Hallsten et al., 2005)
- Role Conflict Subscale of the Role Conflict and Ambiguity Scale (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970)
- Role Overload Scale (Beehr, Walsh, and Tabor, 1976)

Data Analysis
Correlational and hierarchical regression analyses were used to examine the hypothesized relationships.

Findings
Relationships were found between emotional intelligence, performance-based self-esteem, and the experience of burnout:
- Emotional Intelligence was negatively correlated with role conflict to a small, but significant degree ($r = -0.15, p = .01$).
- Emotional intelligence was not correlated with role overload.
- Emotional intelligence did not moderate relationships between role conflict and burnout or between role overload and burnout.
- Emotional intelligence was positively correlated with personal accomplishment to a large degree ($r = 0.51, p = 0.000$).
- Performance-based self-esteem was positively correlated with emotional exhaustion to a moderate degree ($r = 0.43, p = 0.000$).

Social Change Implications
Pastors who are engaged and not burned out are better able to attend to the emotional and spiritual needs of those who seek their assistance in times of crisis. Engaged and inspired, rather than burned out, pastors will be in a better frame of mind to create a climate that is positive and conducive to emotional, relational, and spiritual health of congregational members and to provide assistance to their communities.

Limitations
Convenience sampling
Low response rates – 15%
Predominantly male pastors all from Protestant denominations located mainly in the Midwestern U.S.
Self-report instruments may be subject to distortion
Correlation not indicative of causation