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The Big Five as Predictors of Behavioral Health Professional Burnout

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Walden University
2017

Abstract

The Big Five as Predictors of Behavioral Health Professional Burnout

by

Alicia Mae Greene

MEd, Lindsey Wilson College, 2009

BSM, University of Phoenix, 2006

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Psychology

Walden University

February 2017

Abstract

While the majority of studies appeared to focus on health service workers and job satisfaction, there was a substantial lack of literature that explored the relationship of personality traits and burnout specific to behavioral health professionals. Research has indicated that behavioral health professional burnout is a mediating factor in early job exodus primarily due to highly interactive work with people. The purpose of this study was to consider the relationship between behavioral health professional burnout, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory for Health and Human Service workers, and the big five personality traits, as measured by the NEO Five Factor Inventory. This multiple regression study evaluated 305 behavioral health professionals who were currently licensed and practicing in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and Ohio. Results of the study yielded a significant correlation between behavioral health professional burnout and personality traits. The more extraverted, open, agreeable, and conscientious behavioral health professionals are, the less likely they are to experience burnout. The more narcissistic behavioral health professionals are, the more likely they are to experience burnout. In addition, age significantly correlated to behavioral health professional burnout. As age increased, burnout potential decreased. The implications for social change include potential use at the organizational level to implement policy changes, such as regular or preburnout screenings, in order to prevent early exodus from the behavioral health field and increase positive patient outcomes.

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Dedication

I wish to dedicate this dissertation to the many people in my life who have made this adventure possible. First and foremost is my best friend, the love of my life, and the one who understands me the most—my fiancé, Jeff—for having to "share" me during so many different facets of this process—residencies, trainings, and the many nights at the computer diligently plugging away at my homework and research while he waited patiently for me to return from my trips or merely "come to bed" in a timely manner, which most often resulted in me entering the room to the sounding roars of snores. To my children—Jamie and Johnnie—who always believed in me, even when I was not at my best—I cannot get rid of my skeletons, but I sure will make them dance! To my mother—no longer of this world—who taught me that determination is the road to success and self-discipline is the key—your "Useless" did it! To my father—also no longer of this world—I thank you for allowing me to dream, for the reality of my dream has come to be—I only wish you were here to share. To Blizzard Entertainment—for being there when I needed to release the "beast" to hunt and kill—For the Alliance!!! Lastly, my staff at New Hope who had to deal with me through the sleepless days, stress, and pressure of this whole process and particularly to Jac Barney that returned to the office afterhours to proof my manuscript on her own, without threats from me. My staff has always encouraged me to proceed and never threw me in the dunk tank. To all of you—thank you from the bottom of my heart.

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I want to acknowledge my friend and mentor, Dr. Michael Cornwall, who gave me the insight and courage to continue my education with my doctorate—with all your quirkiness, you inspired me so much. I would also like to acknowledge my committee members, Dr. Matthew Fearrington and Dr. Susan Rarick. Thank you, Dr. Fearrington, for agreeing to be my committee chair when no other avenues were available to me and you courageously stepped forward—you have always been a positive light in my darkest hours of dissertation hell. Thank you, Dr. Rarick, for enduring the grammar abyss of my verb tense and run-on sentences! You were also a central focus of my success, and for that I will forever be thankful. A big hearty "thank you" to Janis Baskett for such a fast turnaround when proofreading all this—you are and will continue to be a great friend. Thank you, Donna Burke, for always believing in me. Lastly, I want to thank all the behavioral health professionals who volunteered to participate in this study—without you, this would have never happened. Keep the faith! You DO matter!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

As the burnout phenomenon becomes more of an ongoing problem within the human services field, researchers have paid increased attention to the resulting devastating outcomes and continuing problems that have plagued the behavioral health profession (BHP; Francis, Louden, & Rutledge, 2004; Maslach & Leiter, 2008; McVicar, 2003; Oginska-Bulik & Kaflick-Peirog, 2006; Ogresta, Rusac, & Zorec, 2008). In 1974, Freudenberger coined the familiar term *burnout*, which means a syndrome resulting from a "loss of spirit" (p. 159) due to perceived or real demands on their inventory of personal resources. Burnout affects individuals as well as organizations. According to Shirom and Melamed (2006), burnout has become a serious mental health problem to which BHPs are susceptible due to their highly interactive work.

In 1985, the American Psychological Association (APA; Laliotis & Grayson, 1985) created a steering committee addressing stress-related problems within the psychological field and acknowledged the existence of burnout among psychologists. They acknowledged the responsibility of the organization in assisting professionals, often struggling with the stressors associated with human service work (Laliotis & Grayson, 1985). Due to the increasing effects on the BHP's job, the APA Committee on Distressed Psychologists was formed to address problems that Thoreson, Nathan, Skorina, and Kilburg (1983) identified and cited. These problems included alcoholism, psychiatric disorders, sexual misconduct, major medical problems, and occupational burnout. Thoreson et al. identified these major areas as increasing concerns for public

safety. However, despite the acknowledgement of the devastating effects of burnout on the profession, it continues as a paramount problem (Peeters & Rutte, 2005).

Individuals who choose the behavioral health profession are at a higher risk of burnout due to the stressors associated with patients' mental health care and the personal nature of the work (Laliotis & Grayson, 1985). The dynamics of occupational burnout are becoming increasingly recognized as mediating factors of early exodus from this profession (Rupert & Morgan, 2005). However, due to the nature of burnout and its identified features, other etiological factors associated with burnout's negative outcomes become evident. The nature of the BHP's human interactions appears to make them highly susceptible to disease or impairments that are difficult to associate with burnout (Laliotis & Grayson, 1985; Rupert & Morgan, 2005), such as consistent exposure to negative situations in the realm of working with patients. They will struggle with coping with their own emotional connections with patients. In addition, BHPs have minimal resources and ethical boundaries, limiting them from discussing the situational causation of constant negativity that is the foundation of the profession.

Several researchers suggested that personality factors played an intricate role in the defense or vulnerability of the burnout phenomenon (Francis et al., 2004; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach & Leiter, 2008; McVicar, 2003; Oginska-Bulik & Kaflick-Peirog, 2006; Ogresta et al., 2008; Soderfeldt, Soderfeldt, & Warg, 1995). According to Bolger and Zuckerman (1995), personality factors negatively influence people's behaviors due to exposure to stressful events, causing some to develop a reactive personality. If this is true, one may presume that personality factors influence BHPs'

reactivity to the stressors of the profession and the mere exposure to the negative aspects of the profession itself. However, as affirmed by Laurenceau and Bolger (2005), personality styles affect coping choices, which would essentially appear to affect responses to stress. Therefore, one could ascertain that personality styles might potentially affect how a BHP would respond to daily stressors. In addition, Posig and Kickul (2003) posited that burnout continues to create a substantial burden on professionals and organizations. Any action to prevent or stall burnout would be beneficial for both the profession and the organization. Therefore, one might conclude that additional research remained necessary on burnout. This study's main purpose was to evaluate personality traits as predictors of burnout to further the need to understand and prevent this phenomenon.

Background of the Problem

With greater than 78% of all BHPs experiencing burnout at some point in their career (Rohland, 2000; Siebert & Siebert, 2005; Webster & Hackett, 1999), it is necessary to develop a better understanding of the risk factors associated with it. Several researchers have identified that individuals in human health services are susceptible to burnout more so than other professions (Barak, Nissly, & Levin, 2001; Ben-Dror, 1994; Blankertz & Robinson, 1997; Cyphers et al., 2005; Morse, Salyers, Rollins, Monroe-DeVita, & Pfahler, 2012; Paris & Hoge, 2009). According to Stevanovic and Rupert (2004), BHPs face a plethora of stressors in their work that may contribute to burnout—legal and ethical considerations, providing competent support services to patients,

financial burdens in an evolving economic crisis, and ever-changing horizons on healthcare and its compensation.

Many researchers (Betoret & Artiga, 2010; Griffith, 1997; Halbesleben, Wakefield, Wakefield, & Cooper, 2008; Langdon, Yaguez, & Kuipers, 2007; Leiter & Harvie, 1996; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach & Leiter, 2008; Matteson & Ivancevich, 1987; Paris & Hoge, 2009; Ross, Altmaier, & Russell, 1989) have identified occupational traits associated with BHP burnout. These include decreased patient treatment effectiveness, detachment, absenteeism, drug and alcohol abuse, somatic complaints, loss of belief in effectiveness on the job, and psychological disorders. The harm to the patient comes in the form of compassion fatigue, a lack of empathy, and reduced effectiveness of treatment deliveries.

Because the profession itself potentially contributes to BHP burnout, understanding burnout and its facets could predict who might be at a higher risk of contracting this ailment and how to assist in its prevention. When identified, it may be possible to employ preventative measures in the chance of protecting patients and preventing early exodus from this profession. Not only does this represent a concern for the BHP profession, global implications also exist for burnout, equating to billions of dollars in lost productivity each year (Krajewski & Goffin, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

Individuals interested in working within the human service professions may face a continuum of problems associated with the nature of the profession itself. As Suran and Sheridan (1985) surmised, core issues associated with this profession included burnout

and prevention. Since Freudenberger's (1974) recognition and identification of burnout,

increased research has occurred in the understanding of the concepts of burnout and its

effects on all occupational areas. Recent researchers have identified that burnout has

become one of the major sources of mental health problems in organizational functions

(Maslach-Pines, 2005). However, as Vredenburgh, Carlozzi, and Stein (1999) posit, even

though researchers have recognized burnout within the human services field as a

substantial source of problems, researchers still fail to fully understand burnout,

especially regarding the dynamic it plays within BHP roles and organizational functions.

Krajewski and Goffin (2005) theorized that significant levels of burnout exist in

the human service field. Due to the susceptibility of burnout in this profession, the role

of the BHP may be physically hazardous to the health of providers. Wood, Klein, Cross,

Lammers, and Elliott (1985) identified preferences in dealing with the high stress of BHP

burnout through the use of substances, high levels of depression, poor clinical support for

patients, sexual misconduct with patients, and psychological disorders. The authors

found that nearly 78% ($N = 167$) of all BHP participants regarded burnout as a severe

detriment to the ability to perform their jobs. In accordance with Wood et al.'s study,

Contrada, Leventhal, and O'Leary (1990) specifically identified personality traits as

potential predictors of negative psychological and physical health problems. Although

the researchers did not include BHPs, it certainly solidifies the concept that personality

traits may play a key role in understanding burnout and its prevention.

A clear understanding of the precipitating factors that contribute to burnout does

not exist. However, Houkes, Janssen, DeJonge, and Bakker (2003) advocated that

personality can and does affect an individual's mental health. Furthering this study's premise, other researchers suggested that individuals' relationships with their occupational setting was a key element in occupational burnout (Ablett & Jones, 2007; Asad & Khan, 2003; Fives, Hamman, & Olivarez, 2007; Kokkinos, 2007; Koustelios & Tsigilis, 2005; Krajewski & Goffin, 2005; Lambie, 2006; Lee & Akhtar, 2007; Maslach & Leiter, 2008; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Rose, Horne, Rose, & Hastings, 2004; Rowe & Sherlock, 2005; Salyers & Bond, 2001). However, a specific gap in the literature included BHP burnout. This gap strongly supports the need for further research in understanding the dynamics of burnout, as it relates to personality, how this may correlate to BHP burnout, and predicting its potential to assist in its identification and prevention. In this study, I focused predominately on the Big Five and its potential predictive nature to BHPs' burnout syndrome.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study, using a nonexperimental survey design, was to examine the relationship among BHPs' burnout (i.e., emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment) and the constructs of the Big Five personality traits of neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. This study might expose a relationship between BHPs' personality traits and burnout, indicating that dominate personality types have higher risk potentials of burnout and experience higher levels of stress.

In the study, I attempted to identify a specific relationship between BHPs' individual Big Five traits, burnout, and BHPs' demographic variables. Having the ability

to identify a specific personality trait, while recognizing a predisposition to burnout, might assist in identifying an individual's susceptibility or resistance to the effects of BHP workloads. It also might assist in determining intervention protocols to reduce the reported 78% of those leaving the profession due to their inability to cope with burnout and stress (Ablett & Jones, 2007; Asad & Khan, 2003; Fives et al., 2007; Kokkinos, 2007; Koustelios & Tsigilis, 2005; Krajewski & Goffin, 2005; Lambie, 2006; Lee & Akhtar, 2007; Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Hiring professionals might be interested in personality assessments to aid in job placements. Due to the potential interrelation of personality constructs and professional burnout, additional needs inventories might be necessary to identify support systems to assist in combating BHP burnout.

Theoretical Support for the Study

The main theoretical foundation for this study derived from the theory of five personality traits, as recognized by McCrae and Costa (1986). Another theoretical premise discussed includes burnout as identified and defined by Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter (1996). In the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) manual, Maslach et al. described three specific components of burnout: depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishment, and emotional exhaustion. These three conceptual descriptions of burnout are internationally accepted burnout ratings (Lanctot & Hess, 2007).

Even though there is no standard definition of this construct, several studies have used similar expressions and descriptors. These descriptors appear to support a general agreement of the definition of burnout (Ablett & Jones, 2007; Asad & Khan, 2003; Fives et al., 2007; Kokkinos, 2007; Koustelios & Tsigilis, 2005; Krajewski & Goffin, 2005;

Lambie, 2006; Lee & Akhtar, 2007; Maslach & Leiter, 2008; Maslach et al., 2001; Rose

et al., 2004; Rowe & Sherlock, 2005; Salyers & Bond, 2001). The general agreement on

the description of burnout includes that it is an internal experience, occurring at the

personal level. Researchers usually describe burnout as a psychological process that

involves emotions, perceptions, motivations, expectations, and a negative experience.

This induces feelings of distress, produces a level of dysfunction, and potentially aspires

to negative outcomes (Eriksson, Starrin, & Janson, 2008; Mattingly, 1977; Schaubroeck

& Jennings, 1991).

       According to Van Dierendonck, Schaufeli, and Buunk (1998), of the three-

burnout dimensions, identified in Maslach et al.'s (1996) manual for the MBI (i.e.,

depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishment, and emotional exhaustion),

researchers considered emotional exhaustion as the main component of stress. Leiter

(1989) exposed emotional exhaustion as the critical component initializing burnout.

However, it is not possible to experience emotional exhaustion until depersonalization

and reduced personal accomplishment occurred. One important characteristic of burnout,

as identified by Lanctot and Hess (2007), included individuals' perceptions of certain

situations and whether they felt stress. If perceptions of stress are indicated, this may

well trigger an emotional response, which begins the emotional strain of dealing with

stress and its outcomes.

       Maslach et al. (1996) stated that

       Burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced

       personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do "people

work" of some kind. Burnout is a response to the chronic emotional strain of dealing extensively with other human beings; particularly when they are troubled or having problems. (p. 52)

Individuals' perceptions may be molded by their personality and how it plays a particular role in the development of views. As noted, the theoretical principal that guided this study included the five-factor theory of personality (McCrae & Costa, 1986). The core of the Big Five included its construct of personality, as defined by five core domains. Its domains characterize an individual's propensity toward thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. After the analysis of thousands of adjectives used to describe personality, I identified five distinct domains as broad and distinctive characteristics of personality: agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, and openness.

Even though researchers have struggled for a universal descriptor of personality, most would agree that one of the defining features, which appears to affect almost every facet of the human experience, includes personality (Mayer, 2005; McAdams & Pals, 2006). According to Mayer (2007), "Personality is a system of parts that are organized, developed, and expressed in a person's actions" (p. 14). These parts are identified components of emotions, motivations, and mental models of the self (Letzring, Bock, & Funder, 2005). Therefore, as Mayer (2005, 2007) surmised, personality is a component defining an individual's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors, which cannot be inherently defined by environmental influences. Some researchers have argued that the personality construct remains across a lifespan (Helson, Kwan, John, & Jones, 2002), while others believe it is an evolution across a lifespan (McCrae & John, 1992).

According to McCrae et al. (2002), domains of personality appear to form at an early age of an individual's developmental life. Domains of personality appear to be shaped by intrinsic maturation, giving little or no attribution to environmental influences. Costa and McCrae (2010) proposed that environmental influences do not affect an individual's personality. However, as Costa and McCrae posit, environmental influences do play a role in the evolution of personality traits but do not result in the development of a full personality type.

In retrospect, the Big Five model of personality shows personality along a continuum of time consisting of the identified characteristics and domains established, as previously identified: agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, and openness. According to Costa and McCrae (1985), individuals possess varying degrees of each facet. The fact that personality facets can play such an intricate role in behaviors may influence burnout to some degree through the prevention of or exacerbation of this phenomenon. It also may play a vital role in the mental health of BHPs.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between the constructs of the Big Five (extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) as measured by the NEO-Five Factor Inventory-3 (NEO-FFI) and the construct of burnout, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Health and Human Services (MBI-HHS) factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment?

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$1a) – BHPs' extraversion, as measured by the NEO-FFI, will

not have a negative correlation to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the

MBI-HHS factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced

personal accomplishment.

Alternate Hypothesis (H_1a) – BHPs' extraversion, as measured by the NEO-FFI,

will have a negative correlation to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the

MBI-HHS factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced

personal accomplishment.

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$1b) – BHPs' neuroticism, as measured by the NEO-FFI, will

not have a positive correlation to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the

MBI-HHS factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced

personal accomplishment.

Alternate Hypothesis ($H_1$1b) – BHPs' neuroticism, as measured by the NEO-FFI,

will have a positive correlation to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the

MBI-HHS factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced

personal accomplishment.

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$1c) – BHPs' openness, as measured by the NEO-FFI, is not

significantly correlated to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the MBI-

HHS factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal

accomplishment.

Alternate Hypothesis ($H_1$1c) – BHPs' openness, as measured by the NEO-FFI, is

significantly correlated to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the MBI-

HHS factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal

accomplishment.

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$1d) – BHPs' agreeableness, as measured by the NEO-FFI, is

not significantly correlated to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the MBI-

HHS factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal

accomplishment.

Alternate Hypothesis ($H_1$1d) – BHPs' agreeableness, as measured by the NEO-

FFI, is significantly correlated to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the

MBI-HHS factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced

personal accomplishment.

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$1e) – BHPs' conscientiousness, as measured by the NEO-FFI,

is not significantly correlated to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the

MBI-HHS factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced

personal accomplishment.

Alternate Hypothesis ($H_1$1e) – BHPs' conscientiousness, as measured by the

NEO-FFI, is significantly correlated to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by

the MBI-HHS factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced

personal accomplishment.

2. To what extent do the Big Five dimensions of personality-extraversion,

neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness—as measured by the

NEO-FFI, predict BHPs' burnout as measured by the MBI-HHS factors–

emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment?

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$2a) – There will be no significant predictive relationship between the Big Five personality factors—extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness—as measured by the NEO-FFI and BHPs' emotional exhaustion as measured by the MBI-HHS.

Alternate Hypothesis ($H_1$2a) – There will be a significant predictive relationship between the Big Five personality factor—extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness—as measured by the NEO-FFI, and BHPs' emotional exhaustion as measured by the MBI-HHS.

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$2b) – There will be no significant predictive relationship between the Big Five personality factors—extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness—as measured by the NEO-FFI and BHPs' depersonalization as measured by the MBI-HHS.

Alternate Hypothesis ($H_1$2b) – There will be a significant predictive relationship between the Big Five personality factors—extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness—as measured by the NEO-FFI, and BHPs' depersonalization as measured by the MBI-HHS.

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$2c) – There will be no significant predictive relationship between the Big Five personality factors—extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness—as measured by the NEO-FFI and BHPs' reduced personal accomplishment as measured by the MBI-HHS.

Alternate Hypothesis ($H_1$2c) – There will be a significant predictive relationship between the Big Five personality factors—extraversion, neuroticism, openness,

agreeableness, or conscientiousness—as measured by the NEO-FFI, and BHPs'

reduced personal accomplishment as measured by the MBI-HHS.

3. What is the best model that predicts BHPs' burnout?

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$3) – A model using the independent variables of the Big Five,

as measured by the NEO-FFI, and demographic variables of age, education level,

work sector, gender, and years working as measured by the demographic

questionnaire will not significantly predict BHPs' burnout.

Alternate Hypothesis ($H_1$3) – A model containing certain independent variables,

including the Big Five personality traits, as measure by the NEO-FFI and

demographic variables of age, education level, work sector, gender, years worked,

as measured by the demographic survey will significantly predict BHPs' burnout.

Definition of Terms Used

Agreeableness: Agreeableness is one of the Big Five traits that is characterized by

kindness, sympathetic tendencies, warmth, consideration, and a cooperative attitude.

High scorers on this trait often have an optimistic view of human nature and get along

well with others (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Those scoring low on agreeableness are less

concerned about the welfare of others and typically have less empathy. Low scorers on

agreeableness often are characterized by having pessimistic views, suspicion,

unfriendliness, and are more often competitive than cooperative.

Behavioral Health Professional (BHP): A BHP is a healthcare practitioner or

community service provider who offers services for improving an individual's mental

health (Maslach, 1982).

Burnout: A physical and mental manifestation of fatigue, frustration, or apathy, resulting from prolonged stress, excessive work hours, and exposure to environmental stressors over a period. It is identified by three standard components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach, 1982).

Conscientiousness: Conscientiousness is one of the Big Five traits that characterizes people as thorough, careful, or vigilant and often viewed as efficient and organized, as opposed to easy-going or disorderly (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Those who score low on conscientiousness tend to seem less motivated and less organized.

Depersonalization (DP): DP is one of the characteristics of burnout that tends to develop into a negative and/or pessimistic view towards others (patients; Maslach et al., 1996).

Emotional exhaustion (EE): EE is one of the characteristics of burnout in which a person loses emotional resources as well as the ability to give of oneself to an emotion at a psychological level (Maslach et al., 1996).

Extraversion: Extraversion is one of the Big Five traits that characterizes people as outgoing, enjoying human interaction, and being talkative, assertive, and gregarious. Extraversion often characterizes people as sensation seekers, cheerful, and personable (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

Neuroticism: Neuroticism is one of the Big Five traits that characterizes people as moody, fearful, worrisome, jealous, lonely, and envious. It also characterizes them as generally experiencing negative rather than positive emotions (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

Those who score low on neuroticism tend to be characterized by not worrying, being

confident and not jealous, and having more positive rather than negative emotions.

Openness: Openness is one of the Big Five traits that characterizes people as

being open to other's suggestions, willing to accept others and their opinions, and having

an active imagination. People would describe these individuals as generally more aware

of their own feelings, preferring variety in life, and demonstrating curiosity (Costa &

McCrae, 1992). Those who score low on openness tend to act closed to new experiences,

are traditional and conventional in their behavior and outlook on life, prefer normal

routines rather than change, and have a very narrow range of interests.

Reduced personal accomplishment (RPA): RPA is one of the characteristics of

burnout. It is distinguished by a negative view of work, less effectiveness with patients,

and a negative outlook on most things (Maslach, 1982).

Assumptions

First, I assumed that the licensed BHPs in both the Commonwealth of Kentucky

and Ohio experienced burnout. Second, I assumed that the participants would fill out the

surveys in a truthful manner and to the best of their abilities. Finally, I assumed the

instruments in the study remained appropriate for measuring all variables scrutinized.

Limitations

Some limitations included participants filling out the self-reported measurements

of the MBI-HHS and NEO-FFI. The use of the NEO-FFI posed a limitation because it

represented a shortened version of the NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI). The NEO-

PI offered a more in-depth personality profile compared to the NEO-FFI. As Creswell

(2015) surmised, self-report instruments might limit a study's validity due to relying on the assumptions that participants will answer questions honestly, have the ability to introspectively assess themselves, understand and interpret the questions that are being asked, and interpret the rating scales that assess the "level" in which they feel or do not feel.

Both instruments relied heavily on the hope that participants filled them out truthfully and openly. Some individuals might have minimized their symptomatologies of burnout or overestimated these. In addition, those suffering from high levels of burnout might not have found value in filling out the inventories and chose not to take part in the project. Further, the measuring assessments were administered online. This relied on the fact that participants had access to a computer and/or internet to participate.

Positive Social Change

Having the ability to identify individuals prone to a higher risk of burnout would be highly beneficial to understand the behavioral health profession. Burnout continues to plague the mental health profession with devastating effects that have threatened the foundation of this profession (Siebert & Siebert, 2007; Suran & Sheridan, 1985). Understanding the relationship between personality and burnout could assist in how BHPs' personality traits trigger levels of burnout due to the high demands of the human service work and help identify those at greater risk. If the profession could identify those at a high risk of early burnout, organizations could introduce interventions to attempt to reduce the effects of burnout. These could provide additional resources and supports to prevent any negative outcomes associated with its effects.

As Stevanovic and Rupert (2004) posit, the psychological field is highly susceptible to burnout due to its continued exposure to ethical and legal standards, working with highly intensive therapeutic cases, negative behaviors of patients, and surviving the financial changes of the healthcare environment. Not only does this affect the BHPs but also their patients through the decline in the quality of services (Rupert & Morgan, 2005). Therefore, not only did this study assist in potential aid to the profession by identifying personality traits that might predict burnout for future prevention strategies but also in protecting the very nature of patients' welfare.

Organizations could find value in a better understanding of burnout's impact on their employees. As Van Dierendonck et al. (2005) surmised that burnout has become a major concern for organizations due to the devastating effects on turnover rates, higher healthcare costs, lower job performance, and less organizational commitment. To keep the BHP workforce committed and productive, understanding burnout remains important. Stevanovic and Rupert (2004) identified that burnout is a danger to the BHP profession because it results in BHPs' negative treatment toward patients. This might result in harm to patients or negative patient outcomes. Ultimately, this would influence the profession.

I identified predictors of burnout in personality traits. This knowledge could improve organizational problems associated with the loss of time and of employees, as well as better services to the public through the identification of burnout effects that could link to health disparities and mental health problems. The implications of social change are obvious and highly important. Interventions at this level could assist organizations in reducing burnout effects that may contribute to poor morale, negative

patient outcomes, and time lost due to the physical symptoms that burnout may contribute to.

This information could be useful to career counselors identifying potential risks of professionals entering the workforce at higher risk of burnout. This information may also be useful to new BHPs to be aware of their own vulnerabilities of the job's hazards. Any risk factor that could be identified earlier could be handled in a proactive rather than a reactive way. This information would be vital to any organization, professional, educator, and others as a way to prevent future negative outcomes for this profession and its patients.

Summary

In 1974, Freudenberger first recognized the symptoms of burnout in his employees and began to wonder about its nature. Then, Cherniss (1980a) identified similar variances in behaviors with first-year workers and began to see behaviors worsening across some of the same dimensions, as previously noted by Freudenberger (1977). Finally, Maslach (1982) identified that the concept of burnout seemed to exist where there was a dysfunctional relationship between the work environment and the employee. These employees, according to Best, Stapleton, and Downey (2005), choose to work in careers where emotional interactions with others are a part of daily practice, thus potentially facing higher risk of burnout.

BHPs often work within the public's best interest in assisting and supporting those who struggle with mental illness. When BHPs become overwhelmed and over stressed, the nature of their work may induce more symptomatologies of burnout. In

turn, they become less effective and caring in their roles (Siebert & Siebert, 2007).

Hence, understanding the relationship between personality and burnout could offer a

strategic advantage for future research and interventions. If personality traits predict

burnout, then individuals and organizations may be able to use this information to explore

potentials for burnout risk.

The focus of this study included the Big Five traits (i.e., neuroticism,

extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) and the correlation

between the three components that identify burnout (i.e., emotional exhaustion, reduced

personal accomplishment, and depersonalization). The ability to identify predictors of

burnout in personality traits may assist in minimizing its effects, thus reducing the large

number of professionals appearing to leave the profession due to effects of burnout. To

study this subject further, Chapter 2 includes a literature review of burnout and

personality traits of the Big Five. Chapter 3 contains a discussion of the methodologies

of the study as well as a review of the instruments used: MBI-HHS and NEO-FFI. In

addition, in Chapter 3, I show the participant selection, data collection methods, and the

means of analysis of the collected data. Chapter 4 introduces the methodology employed

to interpret the data outcomes and Chapter 5 discusses the findings of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Researchers have identified individuals in occupations involving supportive services to others as highly susceptible to burnout (Francis et al., 2004; Leiter & Harvie, 1996; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach & Leiter, 2008; McVicar, 2003; Moore & Cooper, 1996; Oginska-Bulik & Kaflick-Peirog, 2006; Ogresta et al., 2008; Soderfeldt et al., 1995). As it continues to plague the behavioral health profession, burnout demonstrates as a serious mental health issue, affecting not only workers but also organizations (Halbesleben, 2006; Maslach, 1982). A core issue experienced by BHPs included the factor of burnout and its prevention (Suran & Sheridan, 1985).

This literature review contains the three-burnout dimensions, as identified by Maslach and Jackson (1981), and the personality constructs of the big five factor model (Costa & McCrae, 1985, 1992). In the review, I show why researchers use this model and ways in which personality traits may influence BHP burnout. A gap appears in the research literature, failing to provide supportive evidence of personality traits and their influence on burnout. Thus, exploring the three identified dimensions of burnout and the Big Five could provide an understanding of the influence of personality traits on BHP burnout and premature exodus from the profession.

Literature Search

A literature search was conducted using EBSCO databases, with a primary focus on PsycINFO databases. Other searches included PsycARTICLES, Academic Search Premiere, ProQuest database (containing dissertations and theses), and Minnesota State

University's library database. Literature searches comprised of searched terms of *burnout, depersonalization, exhaustion, personal accomplishment, big five, personality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness,* and *Maslach model*. Most articles were obtained through electronic print as well as traditional search methods in journals. Published books, included in the research, were obtained through libraries or were purchased through past educational courses or electronic ordering. A collection of these terms was used to develop a comprehensive search of the literature with relationship to the Big Five and burnout.

Burnout

Freudenberger (1974, 1975) first introduced the concept of burnout in the early 1970s. Through his observations about a New York free clinic, Freudenberger recognized a significant alteration of personality in himself and other volunteers with whom he worked. He observed these by changes in emotional, cognitive, and physical resources used within the clinic. Even though differences of cultural backgrounds existed, Freudenberger posited that they all suffered similar variances of the same outcomes associated with work in the clinic.

Freudenberger (1975) detailed an explicit description of feelings of emptiness, fatigue, and cynicism. These feelings resulted from the type of work the volunteers were performing in the clinic. Within this same decade, Cherniss (1980a) identified early signs of burnout with workers in their first year of employment. She identified such behaviors as employees becoming less trusting of other staff, being less sympathetic toward other staff, and having a personal loss of idealism.

Maslach (1978, 1981, 1982, 1993) also researched symptoms associated with loss of motivation, chronic exhaustion, and lower commitment to their jobs. With assistance from other supportive staff, Maslach (1982) began interviewing others in the supportive roles of helping people to attempt to identify an operational term. Within these interviews, Maslach (1982) recognized a merging identifier of burnout and even a way to assess it (a potential syndrome occurring as people engaged in what she termed, "People work" [p. 20]) and the emotional exhaustion experience, reduced personal accomplishment, and depersonalization. This identifier would become the standard to which people now recognize burnout.

Burnout Conceptualized

No single or widely accepted benchmark definition of burnout appears in the literature. There was, however, a broad consensus that this phenomenon appeared to occur at the individual level, involving expectation, perceptions, emotions, and attitudes. It appears as an injurious experience that fosters dysfunction, distress, and negative consequences (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Ahola et al., 2005; Jackson, Wroblewski, & Aston, 2000; Jason et al., 1995; Kim, Shinn, & Swanger, 2009; Shinn, 1981; Sullivan, 1993).

Per Halbesleben (2006), burnout is a response to chronic work stress influenced by an emotional strain on the individual providing the help. Researchers described burnout as a work-related state of mind, encompassing exhaustion and accompanied by decreasing motivation, stress, and effectiveness, as well as maladaptive behaviors and cognitive dysfunctions (Ablett & Jones, 2007; Asad & Khan, 2003; Balloch, Pahl, & McLean, 1998; Brill, 1984; Cherniss, 1980a, 1980b; Farber, 1991; Fives et al., 2007;

Friedman, 1999; Freudenberger, 1974, 1975, 1977; Jackson et al., 2000; Karasek, 1979; Kokkinos, 2007; Krajewski & Goffin, 2005; Koustelios & Tsigilis, 2005; Lambie, 2006; Lee & Akhtar, 2007; Maslach & Jackson, 1986; Maslach & Leiter, 2008; Maslach et al., 1996; Maslach et al., 2001; Pines & Aronson, 1998; Pines & Kafry, 1978; Prosser et al., 1997; Rose et al., 2004; Rowe & Sherlock, 2005; Salyers & Bond, 2001; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Studies showed that further understanding of BHP job-related burnout might assist in understanding how BHPs' personality factors contribute to this particular phenomenon (Barak et al., 2001; Ben-Dror, 1994; Blankertz & Robinson, 1997; Morse et al., 2012).

Some researchers have focused on burnout, as identified by diminished mental abilities and a lack of achievement (Jackson et al., 2000; Mattingly, 1977; Schaubroeck & Jennings, 1991). Other researchers have attempted to define their version of burnout through a process system of internal and external influences (Freudenberger, 1977; Freudenberger & Richelson, 1980). Kulik (2006) looked at burnout through stress exposure and exceeding frustration levels that triggered burnout and the lack of coping skills an individual has as indicators of potential burnout.

Several researchers have focused on facets other than those pertaining to work. Wessells et al. (1989) identified organizational and interpersonal dimensions that potentially led to burnout and how the interaction between work and the individual is a strong influence of this phenomenon. Best et al.'s (2005) survey research ($N = 859$) supported Wessells et al.'s premise of identifying the role of the individual's core belief system as a key element in determining work stress and potential burnout. These

researchers suggested that an individual's core belief system was not only a product of the conditions in which he/she works, but also the underlying maladaptive or dysfunctional relationship that was built between the individual and his/her work environment. As Best et al. surmised, an individual's mental health state was greatly influenced by his/her personality traits.

Researchers believe that personality traits influence an individual's perception of events, which appears to create problems within the working environment and increase stress because of faulty perceptions. Another self-report survey ($N = 338$) identified individual personality characteristics that contributed to an individuals' psychological well-being, which supported the premise that personality plays a distinct role in burnout (Houkes et al., 2003). This study relied on the perception of the influence of an individual's mental well-being affecting job satisfaction.

Again, Cherniss (1980b) identified burnout as a transactional process. She surmised that the use of the stage theory provided a good indication of how burnout may look. Suran and Sheridan (1985), building off Erikson's (1963) stage theory, identified a four-stage professional development theory: (a) identity versus role conflict, (b) competency versus incompetence, (c) efficiency versus stagnation, and (d) recommitment versus cynicism. In line with Erikson's stage theory and Suran and Sheridan's theory, problems occur when tasks have not been mastered, and conflicts remain unresolved along each stage of BHP professional development. Without resolution at these stages, problems can develop and burnout may occur (Baruch-Feldman, Brondolo, Ben-Dayan, & Schwartz, 2002; Cherniss, 1980a, 1980b; Grosch & Olsen, 1994; Jackson et al., 2000;

Ross et al., 1989; Rupert & Morgan, 2005; Schultz, Greenley, & Brown, 1995; Suran & Sheridan, 1985).

According to several other researchers, job-related stressors, across occupations, have similar negative outcomes, and researchers have associated these with low performance, absenteeism, increased turnover rates, and burnout (Griffith, 1997; Halbesleben et al., 2008; Jackson et al., 2000; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Matteson & Ivancevich, 1987; Ross et al., 1989). Those involved in helping professions appear to be at a higher risk of burnout (Betoret & Artiga, 2010; Langdon et al., 2007; Leiter & Harvie, 1996; Leiter & Maslach, 1988; Maslach & Leiter, 2008). According to Maslach (1982), burnout may have devastating consequences, leading professionals to search for new careers outside of the helping professions.

Stevanovic and Rupert (2004) surveyed Illinois psychologists (*N = 286*), identifying high levels of risk for burnout due to the stressors associated with therapeutic casework and their well-being. Since the helping professions are more susceptible to burnout, if there were a greater understanding of the underlying principles of burnout and its causes, a reduction in the burnout phenomenon may occur. Van Direndonck, Garssen, and Visser (2005) conducted a quasi-experimental design that focused on engineering (*N = 38*) burnout prevention and identified that professionals who are strongly motivated and engaged in their professions are highly susceptible to burnout. As van Direndonck et al. surmised, individuals who begin to suffer from burnout elicit behaviors to alleviate these tensions. These behaviors, at times, appear to cause more undue stress on themselves and other workers. They may set higher expectations, and when expectations

are not met, they become overwhelmed and cynical. If they have neither a healthy personal lifestyle nor the means to cope with work tension, they may be targets for burnout. As professionals begin to experience burnout, as Cherniss (1980a) identified, they become less trusting, less idealistic, and are less sympathetic toward fellow workers.

Zellars, Perrewe, Hachwarter, and Anderson's (2006) research on nurses (*N = 188*) identified personality traits influencing nurses' response to stress. Measurements in the study consisted of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1986), the NEO-FFI(Costa & McCrea, 1985, 1992), and the Positive and Negative Affect scale (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). In this study, Watson et al. focused on the emotional, physical, and work-related stress of nurses and their interaction within the workplace that resulted in high levels of burnout. The research showed a positive correlation to stress and low conscientiousness, indicating that individuals who chose work in a helping profession most often ignore their own problems. This lack of conscientiousness to their own needs appears to increase work stress and carries over into their personal lives. Watson et al.'s study also revealed that nurses, because they identify as helpers of others, often deny or avoid admission that they have personal problems. They fear appearing inadequate to helping others if they are not capable of handling their own personal problems. Although Watson et al.'s research project did not measure work stress as it related to job satisfaction, Zellars et al. did identify comparative elements of stress within emotional exhaustion as measured by the MBI-HHS, indicating that stress is an element of emotional exhaustion. According to Zellars et al., further study into other intensive,

personal, and interactive professions should be performed to determine whether the results of their study could be duplicated within other helping professions.

Researchers have increasingly identified burnout as emotional overload that perpetuates problems within therapeutic work between troubled clients and a stressful work environment (Beck, 1987). Although most researchers appear to focus on individual characteristics of burnout and its causes as well as burnout interactions and organizational structure, few researchers have attempted to understand the influences of personality traits and the factors affecting the nature of burnout on the BHP. Research on stressors of therapeutic work and demographic variables affecting burnout among BHPs is somewhat limited (Rupert & Kent, 2007). I focused on the position of personality traits, potentially predicting BHP burnout.

Three Dimensions of Burnout

As BHP stressors diminish the psychosocial resources available to the profession, burnout can develop (Hurrell, Nelson, & Simmons, 1998; Maslach et al., 1996; Jayaratne & Chess, 1986; Raiger, 2005; Schaufeli et al., 1998; Shirom & Melamed, 2006). The domains of the symptoms associated with burnout are exclusive to the workplace environment. According to Maslach et al. (1996), burnout is identified by three constructs that are interrelated but were reviewed individually.

In this research study, I used Maslach's (1982) measure of burnout, which, according to many researchers (Cherniss, 1980a, 1980b; Farber, 1991; Fives et al., 2007; Kokkinos, 2007; Krajewski & Goffin, 2005; Koustelios & Tsigilis, 2005; Lee & Akhtar, 2007; Maslach, 1978, 1981, 1982, 1993; Maslach & Jackson, 1986; Maslach et al., 1996,

2001; Pines & Aronson, 1998; Raiger, 2005; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998), equates to the most widely accepted measure of burnout. Maslach and Jackson (1981) based their multidimensional model of burnout on three aspects identified in their own work as the following: (a) emotional exhaustion (i.e., feeling no energy, totally drained), (b) depersonalization (i.e., treating patients as impersonal objects instead of people), and (c) lack of personal accomplishment (i.e., feelings of ineffectiveness and inadequacy; Maslach, 1982; Maslach & Jackson, 1986; Raiger, 2005; Shirom & Melamed, 2006). To measure burnout in BHPs, the MBI-HHS was used. Per a study performed by Chao, McCallion, and Nickle (2011), the MBI-HHS has strong reliability and is a good tool to measure burnout in an occupational group as compared to other measurements of burnout.

Emotional exhaustion (EE). According to several studies (Ben-Ari, Krole, & Har-Even, 2003; Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007; Jones & Fletcher, 1996; LePine, LePine, & Jackson, 2004; Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Maslach & Leiter, 1997, 2008; Maslach-Pines, 2005; Pines, Ben-Ari, Utasi, & Larson, 2002; Shirom, Cooper, & Robertson, 1989; Shyman, 2010; Siebert & Siebert, 2007), emotional exhaustion is a core component of the burnout phenomenon and perhaps the most important dimension (Burke & Greenglass, 1995; Etzion, Eden, & Lapidot, 1998; Farsani, Aroufzad, & Farsani, 2012; Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007; Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Shirom et al., 1989; Siebert & Siebert, 2007; Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, Warren, & de Chermont, 2003). In agreement with this research, Koeske and Koeske (1989) believed that emotional exhaustion is the core element of burnout and often uses emotional exhaustion as the single construct to

measure burnout. Pines et al. (2002) posit that burnout is encircled with emotional exhaustion. Leiter (1989) also views EE as the critical component of burnout, which ultimately leads to the other two dimensions of burnout—RPA and DP.

Past researchers indicate that this particular dimension of burnout could potentially lead to other detrimental problems associated with emotional difficulties, such as physical and psychological ailments, relational problems in families and work, and job turnover (Abramis, 1994; Cropanzano, Rupp, & Byrne, 2003; Davidson, 2009; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001; Kumar, Fischer, Robinson, Hatcher, & Bhagat, 2007). Maslach et al. (1996) describes emotional exhaustion as feelings of irritability, feelings of low energy, low frustration levels, and emotional variances because of personal contact with people. Emotional exhaustion may deplete a worker's emotional and physical resources associated with workplace stressors and become chronic in nature (Cropanzano et al., 2003).

LePine et al. (2004) espoused that emotional exhaustion develops early in the burnout process and intensifies as times goes by. As emotional exhaustion progresses, the worker may feel incapable of giving psychological support to others due to feelings of exhaustion and/or overextension of responsibilities (Abramis, 1994; Bakker, van Emmerick, & Euwema, 2006; Maslach et al., 1996; Zellars et al., 2006). Employees who feel emotionally drained may struggle with the inability to complete daily job requirements and, perhaps, dread reporting to work each day. A national survey of psychologists ($N = 562$), conducted by Ackerley, Burnell, Holder, and Kurdek (1988), shows that approximately 40% of participants experience extremely high levels of EE.

Additionally, Rupert and Morgan's (2005) study of psychologists ($N = 571$) supports that psychologists appear to be at the highest risk of burnout of all BHP fields and further indicates that male psychologists are at an even higher risk than female psychologists for acquiring EE.

Reduced personal accomplishment (RPA). According to Cropanzano et al. (2003), RPA is intensified by negative self-image. When individuals' perceptions of personal work performance are substandard, they suffer from RPA (Maslach et al., 1996). They may feel incompetent, less satisfied with their achievements, or lack efficacy in services provided to patients (Janssen, Schaufeli, & Houkes, 1999; Niebrugge, 1994; Peeters & Rutte, 2005; Zellars et al., 2006). This cognitive maladaptation may progress to maladaptive behaviors within the work environment.

Per Schaufeli and van Dierendonck (1993), RPA is considered an attitudinal dimension that focuses on negative attitudes toward work and job performance outcomes. As Schaufeli and van Dierendonck (1993) posit, RPA is directly correlated to the supportive resources the worker has in place, such as supervisors, autonomy, and co-worker support. However, a study by Rupert and Morgan (2005) suggests that burnout is a multi-dimensional construct and cannot be determined by work-related variables. As Houkes et al. (2003) surmises, personal characteristics might provide arbitrating factors interceding work stressors, which may lead to burnout. Their study also indicates that additional research is needed to review personality characteristics correlating behavior and coping styles that may influence or avert burnout in BHPs' careers.

Depersonalization (DP). The third dimension, as described by Maslach et al. (1996), involves a lack of bonding or having a pessimistic or negative view toward patients. DP is denoted by a negative attitude, depersonalization of patients, indifference to patients' problems and outcomes, disparagement for patients and co-workers, detachment from therapeutic relationships, and disassociation beginning with patients and co-workers (Abramis, 1994; Butler, 1990; Cropanzano et al., 2003; Maslach et al., 1996; Peeters & Rutte, 2005; Prosser et al., 1997; Rossi et al., 2011; Schmidt, 2007). DP leads to indifference and impersonal relationships with patients and co-workers and may lead to the professional's belief that people deserve what they are experiencing (Niebrugge, 1994).

A study of elementary school teachers (*N = 123*) by Peeters and Rutte (2005) explores the element of time management skills, demands of job performance, and autonomy on burnout. The results indicate that DP appears to increase when the work environment is perceived to be rigid, controlling, and bureaucratic. This study also concludes that those that are not involved in decision-making processes experience higher levels of DP. As DP progresses, this effect on co-workers and patients becomes problematic and may cause unfavorable consequences.

Other Variables Related to Burnout

BHPs' work with the public involves several different levels of emotional and interpersonal stressors. Most helping professions maintain the same type of challenges, but BHPs are faced with some unique precursors (Jenkins & Elliott, 2004; Leiter & Maslach, 1988). As Oginska-Bulik and Kaflick-Peirog (2006) posit, levels of emotional

exhaustion are substantially higher in BHPs compared to police officers, teachers, nurses, and organizational managers. Having direct patient contact with chronic mental disorders, according to Farber (1991), is more distressing compared to contact with other types of individuals. Due to the levels of negative, aggressive, and stressful behaviors of patients diagnosed with psychosis, schizophrenia, addictions, and other chronic mental disorders, there is an increased correlation of staff burnout (Acker, 1999; Ackerley et al., 1988; Ahola et al., 2005; Angermeyer, Bull, Bernert, Dietrich, & Kopf, 2006; Beck, 1987; Borland, 1981; Finch & Krantz, 1991; Karnis, 1981; Knudsen, Ducharme, & Roman, 2006; Pines & Maslach, 1978; Rupert & Morgan, 2005; Shoptaw, Stein, & Rawson, 2000; Skorupa & Agresti, 1993). When a BHP works with a patient who does not respond to a given treatment, he/she may view him/herself as a failure, which may trigger burnout (Maslach, 1978; Rabin et al., 2011; Raquepaw & Miller, 1989; Ratliff, 1988).

There has been extensive research into the demographic variables that may constitute burnout. Whether the literature associates burnout to specific diagnoses of *depressive narcissism* (Glickauf-Hughes & Mehlman, 1995) or other forms of narcissism (Fischer, 1983), individual factors have often been assessed in burnout research to correlate with the best attributes of burnout dimensions. Given this significance in prevention, attention to demographics may be important. I looked at some demographic variables that might have affected the predictors of burnout. The demographics that appeared most cited in the literature included age and gender, but I also incorporated the work sector category as an influence of burnout.

Age. Many studies indicate that younger BHPs report more symptoms of elevated

levels of burnout compared to older counterparts (Salyers & Bond, 2001; Schwartz,

Tiamiyu, & Dwyer, 2007; Sundin, Hochwalder, Bildt, & Lisspers, 2007). The literature

seems to verify that assertions regarding the relationships between personality and

burnout are problematic. Age differences, representing real-life experiences, may be

related to older BHPs reacting to premature resignation with indifference. Younger

BHPs, however, enter the profession with idealistic expectations then learn reality-based

concepts when working within helping professions (Beck, 1987; Gomez & Michaelis,

1995; Schultz et al., 1995; Van Humbeeck, Van Audenhove, & Declercq, 2004). Other

variables should be considered when interpreting negative age relationships relative to

burnout (Maslach, 2001), such as the number of direct clinical contact hours and tenure.

Gender. The literature is somewhat unclear when addressing differences in

gender related to burnout. Multiple researchers suggest that males might suffer more

from burnout compared to their female counterparts (Hoeksma, Guy, Brown, & Brady,

1994; Knudsen et al., 2006; van der Ploeg, van Leeuwen, & Kwee, 1990; Rees & Cooper,

1990; Shirom, Westman, Shamai, & Carel, 1997; Sundin et al., 2007). Other researchers,

however, suggest that females report somewhat higher scores on all dimensions of

burnout. Moreover, according to Rees, Breen, Cusack, and Hegney (2015), females

display heightened pathological symptoms, lower libido, and increased absenteeism due

to infirmity. However, the extensive literature review, completed by Maslach (2001),

exhibits no such gender differences, but concludes that men did score higher on cynicism

dimensions. Even though this supports an insignificant difference, Maslach's (2001)

general supposition appears deficient. There may be gender differences within occupational groups that have not been considered.

Work sector. Work in the field of human service supports involve many emotional and interpersonal stressors related to the tasks of the helping professions (Stastny, Lehmann, & Aderhold, 2008). The literature shows some relationships to social service workers and job demands. However, the literature fails to show any relationships between specific occupational roles of BHPs' job constructs and burnout (mental health supports, addiction supports, dual diagnosis, severe mental health supports, case management, etc.).

Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) compared the burnout rates of two fields in the helping professions (nurses and service workers) to other occupations (teachers, managers, service/sales employees, clerical support staff, and laborers; $N = 238$). The study revealed the highest levels of intensity, frequency, emotional duration, and expression in those involved in work with people. This validates lower levels of depersonalization, higher levels of reduced personal accomplishment, and comparable levels of emotional exhaustion within the helping professions. My study looks at the differences between organizational roles of BHPs within public and private settings (based on job classification) for any correlation with burnout.

Years working. Work in the field of human service supports involve many emotional and interpersonal stressors related to the tasks of the helping professions

Education level. Work in the field of human service supports involve many emotional and interpersonal stressors related to the tasks of the helping professions

Personality

This section of the literature review covers the research on personality predictors and job performance beginning with the Big Five, as there was minimal research supporting personality predictors and burnout. This study focused on the Big Five dimensions because it had extensive empirical support for construct validity. In addition, Miller and Lynam (2001) posit that the Big Five includes both convergent and discriminate validations across peer, individual, and spousal ratings. The Big Five was utilized as an integrative personality model for lifespan (children and adults), up to and including the elderly.

According to Barrick and Mount (1991), personality traits are significant in understanding individual differences. They identified that conscientiousness is interrelated to all three criteria of proficiency, performance, and employment data (comprised of salaries, turnover rates, satisfaction, etc.) across all occupational groups studied. The authors further went on to identify population validities for performance criteria predictors (neuroticism and agreeableness), social interaction requirements for job criteria (extraversion), predictors for good teamwork (neuroticism and agreeableness), and a good predictor for training performance (openness). Salgado (1997) performed a like analysis in European organizations and found similar results in addition to finding out that emotional stability, conscientiousness, and agreeableness are related to lower turnover rates. Following these studies, Hurtz and Donovan (2000) conducted a meta-analysis of the Big Five and found similar results as the previous two studies espoused.

Personality may affect the outcomes and reactivity to stressful events and is a basic concern of psychological practice everywhere (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995). Personality, according to Hall, Lindzey, and Campbell (1998), can predict what a person will do in a given situation. The research supports that personality is an important determinate of burnout (Bolger & Schilling, 1991; Friedman, 1999). Studies have shown that personality is biological, egosyntonic, and appears to be stable across a wide variety of situations (Choca, 2004; Srivastava, John, Gosling, & Potter, 2003; Swider & Zimmerman, 2010).

Contemporary research has turned to the Big Five to clarify salient individual factors that may predict burnout (Lloyd, King, & Chenoweth, 2002) and ways in which personality traits provide an approximation of human individuality (McAdams & Pals, 2006). Yet, several researchers suggest that specific personality types lead to work in the helping professions (Rees & Cooper, 1990; Shirom et al., 1997; Sundin et al., 2007; van der Ploeg et al., 1990) and individual personality traits appear to play a significant role in the influence of burnout. However, burnout may not occur for all BHPs. The ability to identify basic personality traits operating as the basis of personality research was important since this study used the foundation of Cattell's (1943) first construct of the Big Five through the use of Costa and McCrae's (1992) NEO-FFI.

The Big Five

In recent years, the Big Five has gained popularity within the psychological field (Barrick & Mount, 2005; Bernardin & Bownas, 1985; de Fruyt & Mervielde, 1999; Goldberg, 1993; Hough & Oswald, 2008; Mount, Barrick, & Stewart, 1998; Rossier, de

Stadelhofen, & Berthoud, 2004; Widiger & Trull, 1997) and has been identified as the

predominate model in trait psychology (Donnellan, Oswald, Baird, & Lucas, 2006).

Zhao and Seibert (2006) posit that the Big Five organizes personality variables into

personality constructs that assist in reliable and efficacious searches of personality

variables. Due to the way the Big Five organizes broad and individual differences into

five-factor categorical indices, it has come to be considered one of the most recognized

contributions to personality psychology today (Durbin & Klein, 2006; Neubert, Taggar,

& Cady, 2006). Costa and McCrae (1985, 1992) concur with the previous comments,

further divulging that the Big Five proffers a comprehensive rendering of an individual's

personality.

The Big Five was developed from an inductive process of adjectives in language

describing human personality traits. With the use of factor analysis, the lexical

methodology uncovered the structure of human personality under an abridged variation

of words. Friedman (2011) describes the lexical methodology as a bottom-up inductive

process chunking phrases together to perceive patterns in language for easier learning.

According to John, Angleiter, and Ostendorf (1988), the lexical approach assumes

that personal human differences that stand out will be encoded in language, and the

chosen words to define personality traits are a finite set. Researchers have used the

lexical hypothesis to identify underlying personality dimensions with the use of factor

analysis amassed by collective adjectives in the English language (Allport & Odbert,

1936; Durrett & Trull, 2005; John, 1990; Watson, 1989; Widiger & Trull, 2007).

Goldberg (1993) cited Tupes and Christal (1961) as the fathers of Big Five because they were the first to identify and replicate five broad personality domains. These personality domains are openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Since the original identification, several other studies have identified similar constructs and similar personality factors (Goldberg, 1990, 1993; John et al., 1988). Digman (1990) surmised that Cattell's (1943) use of 12 to 15 personality factors was too complex to work with and idealized a smaller and easier means to work with trait descriptors. Although there may be other studies that indicate more than five dimensions of personality, the Big Five is the recognized standard for the organization of personality traits (Allport & Allport, 1921; Cattell, 1943; Dudley, Orvis, Lebiecki, & Cortina, 2006; Durrett & Trull, 2005; Fiske, 1949; McAdams & Pals, 2006; Widiger & Trull, 2007).

Five Personality Domains

Understanding the core characteristics of the Big Five assists in understanding the measures of personality through the domains offered in the NEO-FFI (Costa & McCrae, 1992) and were used in this study. The NEO-FFI is a 60-item assessment that can be given both on paper and over the computer, which measures neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. It is a systemic assessment of interpersonal, emotional, attitudinal, experiential, and motivational personality styles.

Openness. Openness to experience is a cognitive style that differentiates creative individuals from conventional individuals. According to Barrick and Mount (1991), people with high levels of openness are naturally curious, sensitive to the beauty of things, and appreciate artistic mediums. They are more aware of their own personal

feelings and tend to think in broader and nonconforming ways (Costa & McCrae, 1985, 1992; John, 1990; McCrae & John, 1992; Watson & Hubbard, 1996).

Per Barrick and Mount (1991), people scoring high in openness tend to avoid negativism. They tend to think abstractly and with symbols. Depending on the individual's intellectual capabilities, this may take the form of mathematical thinking, metaphorical use of language, and visual or performing arts. As Costa et al. (1992b) posit, those who score high in openness are often described as independent, artistic, and creative. They often have a desire for a life of diversity.

Researchers also surmise that intellectual individuals tend to score high on openness. In Zhao and Seibert's (2006) study ($N = 1,914$), openness traits show as predominant descriptors of assiduous entrepreneurs who work well without limitations or constraints. As Zhao and Seibert posit, openness is a potential asset to private BHP practitioners yet a potential detriment to organizational settings.

Individuals, scoring low in openness to experience, tend to have more narrow interests and conventional thinking. They appear to prefer the plain, less complex, and straightforward to the multifarious aspects of life. Individuals scoring low on openness, may look at science and art as insignificant and of no practical use. They may prefer the familiar aspects of life and not take chances with novel thinking. They tend to be conservative and resistant to any type of change. Research shows that low scorers on openness are directly related to enhanced job performance in law enforcement work, sales, and public service-type occupations (Costa, 1996; Judge & Zappa, 2015; Salgado, 1997).

Burisch's (2002) longitudinal study on burnout among nurses ($N = 123$) indicates that openness is a significant predictor of depersonalization ($\beta = .24$). Other researchers verify that openness has no significant associations with all three burnout dimensions (Constable & Dougherty, 1993; Michielsen, Willemsen, Croon, De Vries, & van Heck, 2004; Piedmont, 1993). Despite the research contradicting the outcomes of the personality dimension of openness having no correlation to the three dimensions of burnout, the literature supports the idea that BHPs tend to be more susceptible to stress-related burnout due to empathy and sensitivity. Perhaps BHPs who choose to work with challenging and arduous patients may find they are more vulnerable and risk the potential for emotional consequences due to this choice.

Conscientiousness. Conscientiousness relates to how we manage, regulate, and dictate impulsive behaviors. High scorers on conscientiousness identify as individuals who are purposeful, determined, punctual, hardworking, scrupulous, strong-willed, stubborn, meticulous, ambitious, and reliable (Costa & McCrae, 1985, 1992, 2008, 2010; Judge, Martocchio, & Thoreson, 1997; McCrae & John, 1992; Witt, Andrews, & Carlson, 2004; Zellars et al., 2006). According to several studies, high scores on conscientiousness is associated with positive work outcomes (Judge et al., 1997; Matthews et al., 2006; Zellars et al., 2006). Matthews et al. (2006) describes a predictor of conscientiousness as task-focused management due to self-disciplined nature and a drive to accomplish tasks efficiently. In addition, Judge et al. (1997) characterizes conscientiousness as dutiful, self-disciplined, determined, and competent. Individuals who rate high in this personality dimension appear to show higher levels of organization

commitment. As LePine et al. (2004) espouse, conscientiousness embodies loyalty, dependability, and a desire to succeed.

According to Matthews et al.'s (2006) research on university students (*N = 200*), those who rate higher on conscientiousness have better coping skills than those who rate lower. The students appear to have better means of coping with problems and, overall, live a healthier lifestyle. If this is true, I would hope to find a correlation between BHPs and their ability to cope with the stressors associated with high scores of conscientiousness. However, there appears to be some discrepancies in the literature, especially regarding correlational studies of conscientiousness and stress.

Mills and Huebner (1998) found a negative correlation between emotional exhaustion and stress ($r = -0.37$). Rogerson and Piedmont (1998) found a negative correlation between conscientiousness and emotional exhaustion as well as depersonalization. Bakker, Van der Zee, Lewig, and Dollard (2006) found no correlation between conscientiousness and any of the three-burnout dimensions. As the literature supports, there appears to be some data conflict in the realm of understanding whether conscientiousness truly correlates with any of the burnout dimensions. In my study, I looked at burnout dimensions in correlation to BHP burnout to show either more information in support of correlations or, as Bakker et al. (2006) posits, no correlations.

Low scorers of conscientiousness act impulsively (Costa et al., 2008; Judge & Zappa, 2015; Matthews et al., 2006). However, impulsivity is not necessarily a negative construct. Sometimes impulsivity is necessary to make split-second decisions in a work environment and in leisure. Furthermore, acting spontaneous and impulsively can be fun.

Impulsive people can be seen as fun, colorful, and outgoing. However, impulsivity can have a negative effect on behaviors as well. Some impulsive behaviors may be seen as antisocial. Impulsive behaviors, even when seen as harmless, may diminish a person's effectiveness. Problem-solving measures are significantly hindered by individual's impulsive acts as well as derailment of productivity, which obstruct organizational goals. Therefore, accomplishments of impulsive individuals are, at times, limited and inconsistent (Costa et al., 2008; Judge & Zappa, 2015; Zellars et al., 2006).

Conscientiousness has been classified as the most consistent predictor of all types of organization profiles (Ebling & Carlotto, 2012; Judge et al., 1997; Siebert & Siebert, 2007; Watson & Hubbard, 1996; Zellars et al., 2006). Schmidt (2007) suggests that those scoring high on the conscientiousness trait appear to have fewer burnout symptoms, precluding the fact that this trait may very well cushion BHP burnout. Schmidt (2007) focused on city administrators ($N = 506$) and identified those managers with high levels of dependability and a desire to succeed (identified above as an embodiment of conscientiousness) appear to have lower levels of burnout characteristics. In accordance with Zellars et al. (2006), a lack of conscientiousness may influence negative organizational behaviors, in turn, influencing higher levels of work absenteeism. Workers that resort to the use of blaming and avoidance as a means to cope show consistent lower levels in conscientiousness (Deary et al., 1996; Deary, Watson, & Hogston, 2003; Matthews et al., 2006; Piedmont, 1993; Robinson, Wilkowski, Kirkeby, & Meier, 2006).

Extraversion. The third factor of the Big Five is extraversion. Individuals that score high on extraversion are identified by prominent connections to the external world. Extroverted people enjoy being around others. They are often full of energy and display positive emotions most often. Costa and McCrae (1985, 1992) describe these individuals as assertive, social, talkative, sensation seekers, and having a preference for large groups of people. Some studies (Block, 1961; Botwin & Buss, 1989; Judge et al., 1997; Zhao & Seibert, 2006) identify traits of extraverted individuals as gregarious, sensation seekers, and most often cheerful people. Those scoring higher in extraversion seem to seek attention from others and appraise their environments, most often, as positive (Bakker et al., 2006; Costa & McCrae, 1985, 1992). Nettle (2006) describes extraverted individuals as having positive outlooks on life and tend to enjoy investigative-type tasks. They like excitement, stimulation, challenges; appear to seek social support; and use logical problem-solving skills as a means to work through stress (Beehr, 1985; Beehr & McGrath, 1992; Ben-Zur & Michael, 2007; Costa et al., 1992a, 1992b; Constable et al., 1993; Dorn & Matthews, 1992; Kaufmann & Beehr, 1986; Watson & Hubbard, 1996).

Those scoring low on extraversion indicate introversion—quiet and reserved (Bahner & Berkel, 2007). Introverts enjoy solitude and activities that are predominately solitary in nature. They have few very close friends and prefer to interact within the familiarity of their close associations. Low scorers on extraversion tend to withdraw from social activities, be very quiet, and deliberately seek activities that are away from mainstream activities. Introverts tend to need less stimulation from the world. This should not be, in any way, interpreted as a negative thing. The reservation and

independence of a low extraversion scorer will, at times, be viewed as unfriendly, arrogant, and may be mistaken as depression. In reality, introverts who score high on agreeableness will not seek out other individuals, but when approached, will be open and friendly.

In multiple studies, extraversion appears to be significantly and negatively related to all three burnout dimensions and appears to be predictive of reduced personal accomplishment (Bakker et al., 2006; Francis et al., 2004; Zellars et al., 2006). A study conducted by Mills and Huebner (1998) on school psychologists ($N = 509$) identified extraversion as accounting for 10% of the emotional exhaustion variance and 24% of the reduced personal accomplishment variance of occupational stressors. Those who report higher emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment identified with introverted tendencies. However, Eastburg, Williamson, Gorusch, and Ridley's (1994) study on nurses ($N = 76$) identified extroversion as having buffering characteristics that appears to decrease the risk of burnout. This occurs only if the social support is reciprocated and the nurses view their support networks as adequate.

Agreeableness. Agreeableness is characterized by an individual's desire to assist and get along with others. People who score high in agreeableness are, as Bakker et al. (2006) posit, friendly, considerate, helpful, generous, and willing to compromise their wishes for the benefit of the group. They are often seen as optimistic believing that people are inherently good, trustworthy, and honest (Bahner & Berkel, 2007; Judge & Zappa, 2015; McCrae, Costa, & Busch, 1986). Per Costa et al. (1985, 1992a, 1992b), agreeable individuals have sympathetic and altruistic behavior. They believe if they help

others, the support will be reciprocated. They are described as soft-hearted, compassionate, caring, trusting, modest, straightforward, forgiving, and often guided by their emotions rather than thinking (Bakker et al., 2006; Balloch et al., 1998; John & Srivastava, 1994; McCrae et al., 1986).

Those who score low on agreeableness tend to show less concern for others (Judge & Zappa, 2015). They are seen as critical, uncompromising, and hard. According to Judge et al., they appear to be less concerned about others' needs and selfish to their own. This, again, should not be viewed as a negative trait. Those who are disagreeable can make for excellent critics, scientists, and military personnel.

The results of several studies espouse that agreeableness appears to defend against at least two burnout dimensions and is less likely to depersonalize patients (Bahner & Berkel, 2007; Mills & Huebner, 1998; Zellars, Perrewe, & Hachwarter, 2000). Judge, Heller, and Mount's (2002) meta-analysis ($N = 163$) of the Big Five reports a significant correlation between job satisfaction and agreeableness ($r = 0.17$). The study shows an indirect correlation between job satisfaction and burnout; however, this was a comprehensive review, as it did not delineate between organizational groups. Per Bakker et al. (2006) and Zellars et al. (2001), those high in the agreeableness trait report high levels of reduced personal accomplishment and appear to prefer to engage in altruistic behaviors. If this is the case, and job satisfaction can be attributed to burnout defense, then it would be expected to see the same outcomes with BHPs' correlation to agreeableness and burnout.

Neuroticism. The final facet of personality portrays life as negative and according to Bolger and Zuckerman (1995); those scoring high on neuroticism have a tendency to be overly sensitive to negative stimuli. Freud (as cited in Zellars et al., 2001) posits that all individuals suffer from some level of neurosis, but ultimately differ in the degree of which they suffer. Neuroticism defines emotional suffering with the tendency to experience negative feelings associated with perceptions (Zellars et al., 2001). As Costa and McCrae (1985, 1992), Mills and Huebner (1998), and Tellegen (1985) speculate, those scoring higher in neuroticism have a penchant to experience higher levels of psychological distress than the other four personality traits. This would imply they have the propensity to experience negative outcomes associated with work performance and difficulties with interpersonal relationships.

Neuroticism has been associated with patterns of negativism that may cause heightened responses. These responses influence maladaptive cognitions, behaviors and an increased potential for depression and anxiety, as well as exacerbating the effects of burnout (Brenninkmeyer, Van Yperen, & Buunk, 2001; Brown & O'Brien, 1998; Buhler & Land, 2003; George, 1989; Gunthbert, Cohen, & Armeli, 1999; Larsen, 1992; Larsen & Ketelaar, 1989; Leiter & Durup, 1994; Lloyd et al., 2002; McCrae & Costa, 1989; Smillie, Yeo, Furnham, & Jackson, 2006; Tellegen, 1985). Those who score high in neuroticism tend to be reactive in nature and respond with higher intensity. In association with these behaviors, it would appear that neuroticism has heightened negative implications for work performance and an array of psychosomatic symptoms

(Bolger, 1990; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1991; Heppner, Cook, Wright, & Johnson, 1995; McCrae, 1991; Zhao & Seibert, 2006).

Those scoring lower on neuroticism indicate a level of calmness (Judge & Zappa, 2015). Those scoring low in neuroticism are less likely to become upset and are usually not emotionally reactive to situations. They tend to be calm, free from negativistic outlooks, and emotionally stable (Judge et al., 2015).

Bolger and Zuckerman's (1995) research of psychology students (*N = 94*) identified individuals high in neuroticism as having greater reactivity to conflict and an increased exposure to discord. They also identified differences in coping and conflict resolution relative to how they scored on the personality scale. Those who score low in neuroticism show fewer difficulties in coping efforts than those who score high (increased coping difficulties). The strongest empirical links to burnout characteristics appear to be those with neuroticism. As Eysenck (1947, 1977) posits, individuals high in neuroticism tend to set excessively high goals that are difficult to maintain. They struggle with efficiently performing organizational tasks (Drebing, McCarty, & Lombardo, 2002; Gandoy-Crego, Clemente, Mayan-Santos, & Espinosa, 2009) and are often focused on the negative aspects of conversations and feedback from others (Zellars et al., 2001).

Therefore, it may be presupposed by stress research that neuroticism would be related to higher levels of EE, DP, and RPA (Bakker et al., 1998; Deary et al., 1996; Francis et al., 2004; Mills & Huebner, 1998; Zellers et al., 2001). Cano-Garcia et al. (2005) conducted a study on teachers (*N = 99*) and found when specific variables of

neuroticism are included in the regression model, it is the strongest predictor of EE ($\beta =$ .72). Because of this, I would expect to see those with higher levels of neuroticism score higher on the burnout inventory.

Stress and Burnout

Despite its popularity, the use of the Big Five in predicting specific outcomes related to stress and other job factors has been met with increased criticism and skepticism (Murphy et al., 2005). Several studies raised the question relating to the use of personality factors as links to burnout outcomes (Birkeland, Manson, Kisamore, Branninck, & Smith, 2006; Donovan, Dwight, & Hurtz, 2003; Furnham, 1997; Goffin & Christiansen, 2003; Griffith, Chmielowski, & Yoshita, 2007; Heggestad, Morrison, Reeve, & McCloy, 2006; Hogan, Barrett, & Hogan, 2007; Jackson et al., 2000; Kirmeyer, 1962; Komar, Brown, Komar, & Robie, 2008; McFarland, 2003; Mueller-Hanson, Heggestad, & Thornton, 2003; Norman, 1963; Peterson, Griffith, O'Connell, & Isaacson, 2008; Schmitt & Oswald, 2006). These were associated with individuals' performance under certain stressful criteria, which appeared to correlate to burnout symptoms. Some of the research outcomes were questioned as to the relevance of potential bias due to individuals' attempts to fake bad on evaluations, which may have distorted the data.

Even though most criticism of personality testing has produced beliefs that support moderate-to-low correlations of personality factors as predictors of job satisfaction, it can still be used to predict important personality variables and outcomes (Guion & Highhouse, 2006; Ones, Viswesvaran, & Dilchert, 2005). Ones et al. (2005) espoused that the open criticism of personality testing was based merely on the

conjecture of poor measures and did not reflect current personality theories. Ones et al.

further supported claims by offering evidence that overall job satisfaction was, in fact, a

collection of traits within conscientiousness, emotional stability, and agreeableness with

an operational validity of .41. This, according to the study, is a preventative measure

against burnout. They further claimed the supportive use of personality testing for

personnel selection by using the Big Five personality factors instead of using only one to

support higher validity. In addition to Ones et al.'s study, several others have concluded

similar findings in relation to population validities between Big Five and job-stress

predictors (Barrick & Mount, 2005; Bertua, Anderson, & Salgado, 2005; Dudley et al.,

2006; Griffin & Hesketh, 2004; Hough & Oswald, 2005, 2008; Hulsheger, Maier, &

Stumpp, 2007; Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2002; Kamdar & Van Dyne, 2007;

Marcus, Goffin, Johnston, & Rothstein, 2007; Moregeson et al., 2007; Murphy &

Dzieweczynski, 2005; Ones et al., 2005; Sackett & Lievens, 2008; Schmitt, 2007; Witt &

Spitzmuller, 2007).

There are copious studies reflecting the hypothesis that personality affects an

individual's reactivity to stress simply by inducing certain coping styles, effectiveness, or

both styles and effectiveness (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995; Cherniss, 1980a, 1980b,

Cropanzano et al., 2003; Etzion et al., 1998; Fagin et al., 1996; Farber & Heifetz, 1981;

Ghorpade, Lackritz, & Singh, 2007; Gunthbert et al., 1999; Hooker, Frazier, & Monahan,

1994; Janssen et al., 1999; Koeske & Koeske, 1993; Leiter, 1991; LePine et al., 2004;

Matteson & Ivancevich, 1987; Pienaar, Rothmann, van de Vijver, 2007; Ross et al., 1989;

Seibert & Seibert, 2007; Wheaton, 1985). Siebert and Siebert (2007) showed a causal

link between professional roles and reluctance to accept help for symptoms, which inevitably lead to burnout. Bolger and Zuckerman's (1995) study indicated links between individuals' personality characteristics and interpersonal conflicts, distress, and coping styles. Bolger and Zuckerman suggested that individuals' personality styles influenced the way in which individuals' symptoms eventually led to burnout. If BHPs do not understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and coping mechanisms, they may very well become susceptible to burnout and its devastating consequences (Ackerley et al., 1988; Eriksson et al., 2008; Gilibert & Daloz, 2008; Smillie et al., 2006; van Direndonck et al., 2005; Vredenburgh et al., 1999). It is, therefore, important to understand the dimensions of the Big Five and its constructs related to burnout to identify potential risk factors associated with personality types. This may assist in reducing the number of professionals choosing to leave the profession in an untimely manner due to the inability or lack of skills to cope with the effects of burnout.

Although the connection to personality and psychological outcomes has not been fully identified, studies support the notion that stress, and how individuals cope with stress, plays an intricate role in mental health outcomes (Ashton, 1998; Bolger & Schilling, 1991; Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995; Bertua et al., 2005; Contrada et al., 1990; Farrell & Hakstian, 2001; Grant & Langan-Fox, 2007; Griffin & Hesketh, 2004; Landsbergis, 1988). According to Grant et al. (2007), individuals' personalities play a key role in how they respond to stress. Three predominate stress models were examined appearing to explain the importance of individuals' personalities to the construct of stress: (a) the Transactional Stress Model, (b) the Moderated Effect Model, and (c) the

Differential Exposure-Reactivity Model. The Transactional Stress model indicates individuals create their own level of stress based predominately on maladaptive cognitions and behaviors. The Moderated Effect Model suggests that the constructs of stress are more predominate in individuals who have certain personality traits, implying an individual's personality plays a predominate role in stress outcomes. Finally, the Differential Exposure-Reactivity Model proposes that personality affects the way individuals are exposed and how they relate to stress. All three of these models imply that individuals' personalities may influence their response to stress and may assist in increasing or decreasing the effect of stress, which connects to the burnout dimensions.

Summary

This review of the literature identifies the prevalent need for additional research and clarification of the constructs of burnout and its effects on BHPs. With the influencing effect burnout and its sources has on BHPs, it is important that these professions have a greater understanding of its prevalence and potential impact on particular personality traits, which may exacerbate negative outcomes of burnout. The nature of BHPs' work may very well cause burnout. A greater understanding of its symptomatology may assist in identifying and preventing those at risk for such a phenomenon. As Grant et al. espoused, it is imperative to identify individuals at risk for burnout and to prevent it. In Chapter 3, the design and methodology of this study are discussed with a broader description of its measurement instruments, as well as the rationale, research questions and design, and its procedures.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The central focus of this research project was to evaluate the Big Five factors as potential predictors of the construct of burnout – emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. In this chapter, I provide an introduction to and rationale for the specific research design that was used. First, the purpose of this study is introduced. Then, the procedures of the study are summarized, including participants, sampling, and inclusion and exclusion criteria. The rationale for using a multiple regression as the chosen type of quantitative study is discussed. Moreover, a scholarly critique of two chosen inventories used in this study—the MBI-HHS (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) and the NEO-FFI (Costa & McCrae, 1992)—is offered, which includes the validity, reliability, and norming data of both instruments.

Research Method and Design

The purpose of this multiple regression study was to determine whether the Big Five personality traits of BHP could assist in predicting burnout. Understanding the potential relationship between the variables might provide organizational incentives and directions for burnout interventions. This was all in an attempt to reduce the outcomes associated with premature BHP burnout. In Chapter 2, I demonstrated the gap in the literature and the need for this particular type of study to further understand a possible predictive correlation between BHP personality types and burnout. Providing organizations with an understanding of this relationship might assist in identifying and interceding in premature exodus from the BHP profession.

According to Ngobeni and Bezuidenhout (2011), the choice to use a correlational design allows for the entry of several variables in an attempt to predict a single variable. Unlike an experimental design where the variables are controlled, a correlational design relies on the variables measured as found in the real world. This type of research design allowed me to determine whether the variables correlated and verified changes in one variable associated with the changes in the other.

Per Cooper and Schindler (2001), to determine whether a relationship exists between variables, a correlational design is the preferred choice. However, there are limitations to this type of study. Cooper et al. (2002) posited the inability of this type of study to identify the causes and effects of the variables. Therefore, since I wanted to determine whether Big Five personality traits, individually, would predict burnout and personality was a fixed concept that cannot be manipulated or changed, it was logical to use a correlational analysis in this study rather than an experimental one.

Sample and Setting

The participants were randomly selected from a database of all licensed BHPs (counselors, therapists, social workers, psychologists, and psychiatrists) from the Commonwealth of Kentucky and Ohio. This population was selected because of the high risk of burnout associated with these professionals (Rees & Cooper, 1990; Shirom et al., 1997; Sundin et al., 2007; van der Ploeg et al., 1990). According to Stevanovic and Rupert (2004), those highly involved in therapeutic support work are at higher risk to develop symptoms of burnout.

Balnaves and Caputi (2001) posited that a researcher could make statistical inferences from samples to populations. Cohen (1992) posited that the statistical power depends on three specific parameters: (a) the significance level, (b) the sample size for the study, and (c) the defined effect size that delineates the alternate hypothesis. Per Cohen (1992), before a study is conducted, a priori power analysis will help control for statistical power. In a priori power analysis, sample size (N) is computed based on the identified power level (80, [1 − β]) and the significance level (α = 0.05). Fisher (1926) further espoused that 0.05 is a feasible significance level for research and by using the 0.05 level of significance, there is only a 5% chance of a Type 1 error.

Several psychological researchers using the 0.05 within their tests showed significance in outcomes and have done so with published support (Betoret & Artiga, 2010; Langdon et al., 2007; Leiter & Harvie, 1996; Leiter & Maslach, 1988). Therefore, I estimated the sample size using G*Power 3.1.92 using the psychological research standard alpha of .05 and a power of .80. Since there was no prior knowledge of the effect size, an intermediate effect size (f^2 = .15) was used. Therefore, the minimum number of participants needed to determine statistical power with a moderate effect size included a sample population of 118.

Using a statistical test of multiple regression (R^2 increase) with one dependent variable (DV; burnout) and 10 independent variables (IVs; Big Five and demographic variables), the suggested sample size desired equated to 118. In accordance with Bartlett, Kotrlik, and Higgins (2001), the use of survey research models should calculate a 40 to 50% oversampling. Therefore, the minimum number of participants to include in this

study equated between 147 and 236 participants. However, due to the lower expected response rate of this highly busy profession, Kaplowitz, Hadlock, and Levine (2004) suggested a response rate of approximately 20% is average. In this case, based on 20% response rates, a minimum of 550 respondents were invited to ensure a sample size of 147 to 236. This helped to achieve the number of responses needed to gain enough participants to support the outcomes reflectively. Therefore, increasing the population size by the suggested 40 to 50%, 147 to 236 participants were needed to ensure correct response/participation. The total database of 5,038 BHPs was approached for invitation to ensure a minimum participation rate of 150 qualified BHPs.

Measurement Instruments

There were three instruments used in this study: (a) NEO-FFI (Costa & McCrae, 1992), (b) MBI-HSS (Maslach & Jackson, 1981), and (c) a brief demographic questionnaire of personal design.

NEO Five-Factor Inventory

The NEO-FFI is a highly-standardized instrument designed for the assessment of personality constructs that provides norm-referenced data that can assist in identifying individuals' normal personality constructs (Dudley et al., 2006; Hulsheger et al., 2007; Kamdar & Van Dyne, 2007; Moregeson et al., 2007; Ones et al., 2005; Sackett & Lievens, 2008; Witt & Spitzmuller, 2007). In addition, the psychometric properties of the NEO-FFI are representative of the NEO-PI-R psychometric properties, as the scales that have been found to be generalized across age, culture, and measurement (McCrae, Kurtz, Yamagata, & Terracciano, 2011). Since the NEO-FFI is a widely-accepted

measure of the Big Five (Costa, 1996; Judge & Zappa, 2015; Salgado, 2003), this instrument was used in this study.

Item selection for the NEO-FFI was based on the full version of the NEO-PI-R. It is a 60-item assessment given both on paper and online that measures the Big Five: neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Costa et al, 1992a). It is a systemic assessment of interpersonal, emotional, attitudinal, experiential, and motivational personality styles. The inventory measure consists of 12 questions in each personality domain that measures constructs of personality using a 5-part Likert scale: *strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), neutral (N), agree (A),* or *strongly agree (SA)*. Compiled domain *t*-scores of 66 or greater are deemed to indicate a very high score range, 56 to 65 a high range45 to 55 an average range, 35 to 44 a low range, and 34 or below is a very low range for each particular personality construct (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

Reliability and Validity of the NEO Five-Factor Inventory

Several studies showed the reliability and validity of the NEO (Costa & McCrae, 1985, 1992; Judge & Zappa, 2015; McCrae & John, 1992; Witt et al., 2004; Zellars et al., 2006). The NEO-FFI was developed by selecting certain questions on the NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992) that had the strongest correlations with respective personality facets. The facet and domain scores are reported in *t*-scores to provide profile interpretation, much like other personality profiles. Once these profiles are interpreted, they are then visually compared within the appropriate norm group (Hough, 1992; Robins, Fraley, Roberts, & Trzesniewski, 2001).

Reliability. Internal consistency of the NEO-FFI was determined using Cronbach's alpha technique. Murray, Rawlings, Allen, and Trinder (2003) revealed strong coefficient alpha ranges from .80 to .86, which indicate that the items within the NEO-FFI subscales are consistent in the measurement of personality characteristics. To further support the NEO-FFI's reliability, McCrae et al. (2002) used two studies: one study sample of high school students ($N = 1,959$) and the other study sample of adults ($N = 1492$). Both studies included participants within the age range of 19 to 53. The studies' outcomes resulted in alpha coefficients of .86 to .91, which further determined that the subscales are consistent with the measurement of personality characteristics.

The test-retest reliability of the NEO FFI is also good. An earlier test-retest over 3 months showed domain values of .86 to .91 (McCrae & Costa, 1983) and over 6 years showed alpha coefficient values of .63 to 83 (McCrae & Costa, 1989). Another study by Kurtz and Parrish (2001) yielded alpha coefficients of .91 through .93 for personality domains and .70 through .91 for facets within a 1-week interval test-retest. In addition, Stephan, Sutin, and Terracciano's (2015) 10-year study resulted in alpha coefficients of .78 through .85 for domains and .57 through .82 for facets. As Costa and McCrae (1992) pointed out, this not only shows the good reliability of the personality domains but also that they are stable over a long period of time, as shown in the 6-year test marginally changing from the initial scores measured a few months apart.

Validity. In the *NEO Inventories Professional Manual* (Costa & McCrae, 2010), extensive information is given on the convergent and discriminant validity of the NEO-FFI-3. Several studies have indicated that the NEO-FFI has been validated over an

extensive population variance and range of ages as well as national collective norms

(Ellenbogen, Hodgins, & Walker, 2004; Kochanska, Friesenborg, Lange, & Martel,

2004). Its convergent validity was supported by correlating it with other Big Five

instruments (Block, 1961; Hogan, 1986). In addition, correlations have been found with

the use of sentence completion tests and adjective lists that further support the validity of

the NEO-FFI (Costa & McCrae, 2008; Hendricks, Hofstee, De Raad, & Angleiter, 1999;

McCrae, 1991, 1992). The NEO-PI-R was compared against the five-factor version of

the California Q-Set and the Hogan (1986) Personality Inventory. The results supported

the construct validity of the NEO (Block, 1961; Hogan, 1986).

According to Costa and McCrae (1992), the Eysenck (1977) Personality

Inventory correlates strongly with the NEO specifically on the E, N, and O factors.

Gosling, Rentfrow, and Swann (2003) conducted two studies to evaluate the measures of

the NEO-FFI's 5-item listing of the Big Five against an already established instrument—

the Big Five Instrument. To assess the convergent and discriminant validity, they used

self-ratings, observer ratings, and peer ratings, which resulted in a high convergence ($rs =$

.81 and .73) when compared against the Ten-Item Personality Inventory and the Big Five,

which showed consistent factor loading on the intended personality domains. In addition,

Costa et al. (2004), using two samples in high school ($N = 1959$) and adult ($N = 1492$),

verified that the facets, when factored, loaded on their intended domains with only 2 of

the 60 items (correlating to N) loaded less than 0.30.

Several recent studies have supported the criterion validity of the NEO, as found

in Conard's (2006) study that conscientiousness predicted college students' ($N = 300$)

GPAs. Korukonda (2007) identified neuroticism as positively correlated with computer anxiety, while agreeableness and openness were negatively related to it. Wang, Jome, Haase, and Bruch (2006) found that minority students' ($N = 184$) decision-making skill on career selection was correlated to extraversion at $r = 0.30$, and neuroticism was highly correlated to commitment to career at $r = 0.42$. Finally, Cano-Garcia et al. (2005) correlated the NEO to predictors of burnout in Spanish teachers ($N = 99$), showing that neuroticism was related to *emotional exhaustion* (recognized as a factor of burnout on the MBI) at $r = 0.44$.

Concurrent criterion-related validity studies demonstrated that the NEO could be used across multiple cultural groups. Buss (1991) validated the cross-cultural robustness across time and contexts of all the personality dimensions of the NEO. Other evidence of concurrent validity was established by taking scores on the NEO and matching those scores with other personality inventories (Block, 1961; Buss, 1991; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1991; Hogan, 1986).

The Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Survey

The MBI-HHS was used to determine participants' current burnout level experienced. It was used to correlate scores of burnout within the Big Five traits of BHPs. This inventory was selected because it has been used extensively to measure burnout within the health services field and in multiple studies (Betoret & Artiga, 2010; Langdon et al., 2007; Leiter & Harvie, 1996; Leiter & Maslach, 1988).

The MBI-HHS is a Likert-scale 22-item inventory that can be completed in about 10 minutes. It is used to distinguish respondents' descriptive experiences of burnout.

Maslach (1981) identified three constructs of burnout, as noted previously, through the development of the MBI-HHS – DP, RPA, and EE. Responses for this inventory are scored from *never* (0), to *a few times a month* (3), and to *daily* (6). The manual associated with this inventory identifies a high degree of burnout if participants have high scores in EE and DP and low scores in RPA (Maslach et al., 1996).

Maslach (1993) used a sample of individuals from several human services groups, including elementary and secondary education, postsecondary education, social service workers, medicine, and mental health ($N = 11,067$) to norm the measure of the instrument. Average scores in all three subscales reflect the scoring average. Low scores on depersonalization and emotional exhaustion and inversed scores on reduced personal accomplishment indicate low levels of burnout. Each MBI-HHS subscale has an individual cutoff score. The subscale reduced personal accomplishment scores in the opposite direction as the other two subscales, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. On emotional exhaustion, the range of low scoring is between 0 to 16, whereas a score of 17 to 26 would designate a moderate level of burnout. A score of 27 or higher would signify high levels of burnout (Maslach et al., 1996). According to the manual, subsequent scores of 0 to 6 on depersonalization would indicate a low level of burnout, whereas scores of 7 to 12 would suggest a moderate level of burnout. Scores of 13 or higher would denote a high level of burnout. To attest to reduced personal accomplishment, the MBI-HHS scores of 0 to 31 indicate a high level of burnout, 32 to 38 would imply a moderate level of burnout, and 39 or greater imply a low level of

burnout. Maslach et al. also suggested not combining the scores of the three identified dimensions.

Reliability and Validity of the MBI-HHS

Maslach et al. (1996, 2001), as well as several independent researchers, such as Iwanicki and Schwab (1981), Barad (1979), Meier (1984), and Pines and Maslach (1978) found support for the reliability and validity of the MBI-HHS.

Reliability. The internal consistency of the MBI-HHS was determined in studies that used Cronbach's alpha technique. Studies revealed coefficient alphas of 0.90 for EE, 0.79 for DPA, and 0.71 for PA (Koeske & Koeske, 1989; Maslach, 1993) with test-retest reliability ranging from 0.50 to 0.82 for burnout subscales. In addition, all coefficients were significant beyond the .001 level. These were measured within sessions separated by 2 to 4-week periods over a period of 6 months (Malinowski, 2013). Several other studies (Bard, 1979; Beck & Gargiulo, 1983; Iwanicki & Schwab, 1981; Maslach et al., 1996) supported the reliability of the measure for burnout including a study by Jackson et al. (2000) of graduate students in social welfare ($N = 53$). This study resulted in test-retest reliability coefficients of .82 for EE, .60 for DP, and .80 for RPA being significant with tests separated by 2 to 4-week intervals across a span of 6 months. Maslach and Jackson (1986) also confirmed the test-retest reliability with a study of administrators tested in weekly intervals, resulting in reliability coefficients of 0.82 for EE, 0.60 for DP, and 0.80 for PA. However, Maslach and Leiter's (2008) test-retest results indicated slightly lower coefficients over a 1-year interval of 0.60 for EE, 0.54 for DP, and 0.57 for RPA. According to Ackerly et al. (1988), the factor structure has been replicated within a

large sample of psychologists (N = 562) and possessed good psychometric properties

through the test-retest with minimal variances of coefficients of 0.74 for EE, 0.72 for DP,

and 0.65 for RPA for reliability.

Validity. Convergent validity was supported through comparisons of an

individual's scores correlating to the reported ratings of an individual who knew the

respondent, such as a spouse or work partner. The scores were also compared to specific

job characteristics that would be expected to induce burnout—particularly job satisfaction

and personal accomplishment. Finally, the scores were correlated with various

hypothesized outcomes that supported the onset of burnout such as inappropriate attitudes

toward patients and co-workers, physical and emotional symptoms, and eventually

disconnect from work resulting in exodus or change in professions. According to these

three elements, Maslach and Jackson (1986) reported substantial evidence of validity

supporting the MBI as a good measure of burnout.

Chao et al. (2011) further espoused that this inventory, when used within the field

of human services, had relatively strong factorial validity because the components of the

instrument loaded highly where intended and did not load highly on other components of

the scales. Maslach et al. (1996; N = 1,316) supported the 3-factor measure of burnout.

Lee et al.'s (1993) analysis of the subscales indicated that PA related more with internal

locus of control and supported the theory that EE and DP were highly correlated with

mental and physical signs of burnout with estimations of internal consistency of

coefficients of 0.90 for EE, 0.79 for DP, and 0.79 for RPA. Therefore, the MBI appears

to measure burnout with consistency across various samples of work settings and tasks.

However, per Chao et al. (2011), only 19 of the 22-item list loaded on their corresponding factors as predicted, and three of the items were found to double load on other factors. This is an identified concern when using this measure in any study. Still, other studies have further espoused that the factor structure of the scale is stable and has good psychometric properties when used within the human service field (Ackerly et al., 1988; Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Richardson & Martinussen, 2005). Since this study looked at BHPs' within the human service field, it would conclude that this measurement would be a satisfactorily measurement of burnout.

Demographic Information Form

The demographic information form was a standard demographic form used to collect basic demographic information on participants including age, gender, education level, work status, length of employment, and work-type environment. Based on this questionnaire, participants were classified by gender, age, educational level, work sector type, years in the profession, and valid license to practice.

<div align="center">

Research Questions and Hypotheses

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Multiple regressions were used to determine if there was a predictive relationship between Big Five and the three constructs of burnout – emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Those variables that remained limited in contribution to the prediction were eliminated to leave the best combination of variables that had statistical significance. I considered whether the big five personality traits represented predictors of burnout, as well as what model was the best predictor. The dependent variables (DVs) in this study included burnout, as measured by subsets of

the MBI-HHS (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal

accomplishment). The independent variables (IVs) included the Big Five personality

traits and chosen demographic variables:

- Extraversion

- Neuroticism

- Openness

- Agreeableness

- Conscientiousness

- Age

- Education Level

- Work Sector

- Gender

- Years of Employment

1. What is the relationship between the constructs of the Big Five (extraversion,

   neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) as measured by the

   NEO-Five Factor Inventory-3 (NEO-FFI) and the construct of burnout, as

   measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Health and Human Services (MBI-

   HHS) factors – EE, DP, RPA?

   Null Hypothesis (H_01_a) – BHPs' extraversion, as measured by the NEO-FFI, will

   not have a negative correlation to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the

   MBI-HHS factors – EE, DP, RPA.

Alternate Hypothesis (H_1a) – BHPs' extraversion, as measured by the NEO-FFI, will have a negative correlation to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the MBI-HHS factors – EE, DP, RPA.

Null Hypothesis ($H_0 1_b$) – BHPs' neuroticism, as measured by the NEO-FFI, will not have a positive correlation to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the MBI-HHS factors – EE, DP, RPA.

Alternate Hypothesis ($H_1 1_b$) – BHPs' neuroticism, as measured by the NEO-FFI, will have a positive correlation to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the MBI-HHS factors – EE, DP, RPA.

Null Hypothesis ($H_0 1_c$) – BHPs' openness, as measured by the NEO-FFI, is not significantly correlated to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the MBI-HHS factors – EE, DP, RPA.

Alternate Hypothesis ($H_1 1_c$) – BHPs' openness, as measured by the NEO-FFI, is significantly correlated to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the MBI-HHS factors – EE, DP, RPA.

Null Hypothesis ($H_0 1_d$) – BHPs' agreeableness, as measured by the NEO-FFI, is not significantly correlated to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the MBI-HHS factors – EE, DP, RPA.

Alternate Hypothesis ($H_1 1_d$) – BHPs' agreeableness, as measured by the NEO-FFI, is significantly correlated to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the MBI-HHS factors – EE, DP, RPA.

Null Hypothesis ($H_0 1_e$) – BHPs' conscientiousness, as measured by the NEO-FFI, is not significantly correlated to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the MBI-HHS factors – EE, DP, RPA.

Alternate Hypothesis ($H_1 1_e$) – BHPs' conscientiousness, as measured by the NEO-FFI, is significantly correlated to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the MBI-HHS factors – EE, DP, RPA.

2. To what extent do the Big Five dimensions of personality--extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness—as measured by the NEO-FFI, predict BHPs' burnout as measured by the MBI-HHS factors– EE, DP, RPA?

Null Hypothesis ($H_0 2_a$) – There will be no significant predictive relationship between the Big Five personality factors--extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness—as measured by the NEO-FFI and BHPs' EE as measured by the MBI-HHS.

Alternate Hypothesis ($H_1 2_a$) – There will be a significant predictive relationship between the Big Five personality factor--extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness—as measured by the NEO-FFI, and BHPs' EE as measured by the MBI-HHS.

Null Hypothesis ($H_0 2_b$) – There will be no significant predictive relationship between the Big Five personality factors--extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness—as measured by the NEO-FFI and BHPs' DP as measured by the MBI-HHS.

Alternate Hypothesis (H_12_b) – There will be a significant predictive relationship between the Big Five personality factors--extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness—as measured by the NEO-FFI, and BHPs' DP as measured by the MBI-HHS.

Null Hypothesis (H_02_c) – There will be no significant predictive relationship between the Big Five personality factors--extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness—as measured by the NEO-FFI and BHPs' RPA as measured by the MBI-HHS.

Alternate Hypothesis (H_12_c) – There will be a significant predictive relationship between the Big Five personality factors--extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness—as measured by the NEO-FFI, and BHPs' reduced personal accomplishment as measured by the MBI-HHS.

3. What is the best model that predicts BHPs' burnout?

Null Hypothesis (H_03) – A model using the independent variables of the Big Five, as measured by the NEO-FFI, and demographic variables of age, education level, work sector, gender, and years working as measured by the demographic questionnaire will not significantly predict BHPs' burnout.

Alternate Hypothesis (H_13) – A model containing certain independent variables, including the big five personality traits, as measure by the NEO-FFI and demographic variables of age, education level, work sector, gender, years worked, as measured by the demographic survey will significantly predict BHPs' burnout.

Data Collection

Prior to the start of data collection, institutional review board approval (IRB) was obtained. Once the IRB approval was determined, the next phase started; emails were sent to 5,038 licensed BHPs, as invitations of voluntary participation in the research study. The initial email distribution list was obtained through a mailing list from each licensure board. The email notification included the invitation of participation, a link to the survey site, and a statement of informed consent.

The email included an introduction to the study, as well as a brief biography of the researcher. In addition, the email introduced an overview of the study and its purpose. It also included a statement of voluntary participation and directions to read the attached informed consent. The informed consent was a standard document of introduction of the research project, the researcher, the background of the study, and directions to access the survey site. Within the informed consent, specifications of participation were identified, such as eligibility criteria, description of the surveys, expected time to complete the surveys, and any identifiable risks and/or benefits of participation.

After the initial email was sent, a follow-up email was not required as the minimum of 150 participants were met and exceeded. Due to the anonymity of the study, it was impossible for me to know who participated in the study. In the case in which any prospective participant had completed the surveys, a brief thank you was included in the introduction to the survey site.

Respondents logged on to the survey site anonymously with a randomly generated identity number that neither distinguished nor identified them in any personal manner. After a week of active survey status, I received enough participants to meet the 150-predetermined level plus more. If, at this time, there were those who did not qualify who had submitted surveys, the participants were notified within the survey that they had been excluded with a brief thank you for consideration. Exclusion from the study was derived from participants' behavioral health active licensure to practice in their prospective state and if they were employed for 1 year or longer. The data collection process was projected to take about 4 to 6 weeks for total collection results of all surveys. At the end of the 4-week period, all data was scored and coded by me and entered into a spreadsheet, which then was imported into IBM SPSS. Only fully completed entries were considered participants in this study.

Data Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was performed on NEO-FFI as predictors of burnout as measured by the MBI-HHS utilizing SPSS version 22.0. The individual variables of the MBI-HHS (DP, RPA, EE) were compared to the variables of the NEO-FFI (extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) individually to study the predictive relationship between the two constructs. Pearson Coefficient, multiple linear regression, and multiple stepwise regression tests were used, as well as descriptive statistics of all IVs to evaluate relationships to the criterion variables as identified.

A regression method was appropriate, according to Creswell (2013), when attempting to determine if several variables not manipulated could predict a measured response variable. Per Jaccard and Turrisi (2003), a multiple regression analysis is most commonly used to determine the presence of any moderating effect. In the social and natural sciences, this type of analysis is most often used to answer general questions of predictions. Some of the research in the literature review used a correlational/regression type analysis to predict burnout in the populations that were studied (Abramis, 1994; Bakker et al., 2006; Maslach et al., 1996; Zellars et al., 2006).

The first research question examined the relationship between the Big Five and construct of burnout. Using a simple bivariate correlation, Pearson *r,* I ran five separate *r* tests utilizing the construct of burnout as measured by the total score of each subsection of the MBI-HSS (EE, DP, RPA) as the DV, and the big five personality traits (IVs), as measured by the individual personality profiles of the NEO-FFI (extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness), to show the correlation of the IVs to the DV.

The second research question attempted to examine the extent burnout could be predicted by the BHPs' Big Five. This question addressed through three separate multiple linear regression analyses to assess reported measures of the three dimensions of burnout as identified by the MBI-HHS (EE, DP, RPA). The first multiple linear regression analysis would have EE as the DV, the second multiple linear regression analysis would have DP as the DV, and the third multiple linear regression analysis

would have RPA as the DV. The IVs for all three multiple linear regression analyses were the big five personality traits as measured by the NEO-FFI.

The third research question was addressed through a stepwise multiple linear regression analysis with the DV being burnout, as measured by the individual subset scores of the MBI-HSS (EE, DP, RPA). A stepwise multiple regression analysis combines both a forward and a backward procedure to take into consideration the influences of variables on variances of other variables. This assisted in determining the best combination of predictor variables (IVs) and burnout. The IVs were the Big Five as measured by the NEO-FFI, and the demographic variables of age, education level, work sector, gender, and years working as measured by the demographic questionnaire. The IVs were entered into the multiple linear regression model in a stepwise manner, with the first model having only the big five personality traits, with the addition of each of the demographic variables (age, education level, work sector, gender, and years worked) in the subsequent models. After which, results of each regression model were assessed to determine which model best predicts burnout as measured by the MBI-HHS.

Ethical Considerations

There did not appear to be much risk of ethical issues in this research study because participants chose to take part, and the data was entered anonymously. The proposal was submitted to the Walden University Internal Review Board prior to any participants being contacted. To ensure ethical treatment and participants' anonymity, safeguards were put into place. Information about the proposed study was sent out to all

potential participants with an invitation to fill out the demographic form to meet the criteria of licensure and employment through the survey site.

No identifying material was offered in the demographic survey. There were no penalties or repercussions for non-participation. The participants remained protected from harm, as no interventions were used in this study.

All data collected was maintained on a password-protected secured server maintained by me and will be held for a period of 5 years. Survey Monkey is a standard site used for secure research data collection. All data will be stored on this site for a period of 1 year, at which time it will be deleted. Data downloaded will be stored on an external hard drive for a period of 5 years, as is customary. Data will only be accessible by me and my dissertation committee members. After the 5-year period, all data will be deleted.

Summary

Chapter 3 discussed the methodology suggested in this study. It identified the problem and the research questions and listed each hypothesis that was explored. In addition, the research design was explored along with the approach that was used and sample, setting, instruments, ethical considerations, sample selection methods, data collection, and proposed analysis. This study, IRB number 07-21-16-0328527 which expires July 20, 2017, investigated the potential predictive relationships of the Big Five to burnout that appears to affect a large percentage of BHPs. Chapter 4 will report the results of the study and its data outcomes.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship among BHP burnout (i.e., EE, DP, RPA) and the constructs of the big five personality traits of neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. In Chapter 4, I present the results of the data analysis methods following the collection and organization of the data. This includes details on the research questions and hypotheses, a description of the sample used for statistical analysis, and an exploration of the statistical tests used to observe the research questions and hypotheses.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The study was guided by the following research questions and hypotheses:

1. What is the relationship between the constructs of the Big Five (extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) as measured by the NEO-Five Factor Inventory-3 (NEO-FFI) and the construct of burnout, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Health and Human Services (MBI-HHS) factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment?

   Null Hypothesis ($H_0$1a) – BHPs' extraversion, as measured by the NEO-FFI, will not have a negative correlation to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the MBI-HHS factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.

Alternate Hypothesis (H_1a) – BHPs' extraversion, as measured by the NEO-FFI,
will have a negative correlation to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the
MBI-HHS factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced
personal accomplishment.

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$1b) – BHPs' neuroticism, as measured by the NEO-FFI, will
not have a positive correlation to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the
MBI-HHS factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced
personal accomplishment.

Alternate Hypothesis ($H_1$1b) – BHPs' neuroticism, as measured by the NEO-FFI,
will have a positive correlation to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the
MBI-HHS factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced
personal accomplishment.

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$1c) – BHPs' openness, as measured by the NEO-FFI, is not
significantly correlated to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the MBI-
HHS factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal
accomplishment.

Alternate Hypothesis ($H_1$1c) – BHPs' openness, as measured by the NEO-FFI, is
significantly correlated to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the MBI-
HHS factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal
accomplishment.

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$1d) – BHPs' agreeableness, as measured by the NEO-FFI, is
not significantly correlated to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the MBI-

HHS factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.

Alternate Hypothesis ($H_1$1d) – BHPs' agreeableness, as measured by the NEO-FFI, is significantly correlated to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the MBI-HHS factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$1e) – BHPs' conscientiousness, as measured by the NEO-FFI, is not significantly correlated to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the MBI-HHS factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.

Alternate Hypothesis ($H_1$1e) – BHPs' conscientiousness, as measured by the NEO-FFI, is significantly correlated to BHPs' burnout construct, as measured by the MBI-HHS factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.

2. To what extent do the Big Five dimensions of personality-extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness—as measured by the NEO-FFI, predict BHPs' burnout as measured by the MBI-HHS factors– emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment?

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$2a) – There will be no significant predictive relationship between the Big Five personality factors—extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness—as measured by the NEO-FFI and BHPs' emotional exhaustion as measured by the MBI-HHS.

Alternate Hypothesis (*H*₁2a) – There will be a significant predictive relationship between the Big Five personality factor—extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness—as measured by the NEO-FFI, and BHPs' emotional exhaustion as measured by the MBI-HHS.

Null Hypothesis (*H*₀2b) – There will be no significant predictive relationship between the Big Five personality factors—extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness—as measured by the NEO-FFI and BHPs' depersonalization as measured by the MBI-HHS.

Alternate Hypothesis (*H*₁2b) – There will be a significant predictive relationship between the Big Five personality factors—extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness—as measured by the NEO-FFI, and BHPs' depersonalization as measured by the MBI-HHS.

Null Hypothesis (*H*₀2c) – There will be no significant predictive relationship between the Big Five personality factors—extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness—as measured by the NEO-FFI and BHPs' reduced personal accomplishment as measured by the MBI-HHS.

Alternate Hypothesis (*H*₁2c) – There will be a significant predictive relationship between the Big Five personality factors—extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness—as measured by the NEO-FFI, and BHPs' reduced personal accomplishment as measured by the MBI-HHS.

3. What is the best model that predicts BHPs' burnout?

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$3) – A model using the independent variables of the Big Five,

as measured by the NEO-FFI, and demographic variables of age, education level,

work sector, gender, and years working as measured by the demographic

questionnaire will not significantly predict BHPs' burnout.

Alternate Hypothesis ($H_1$3) – A model containing certain independent variables,

including the Big Five personality traits, as measure by the NEO-FFI and

demographic variables of age, education level, work sector, gender, years worked,

as measured by the demographic survey will significantly predict BHPs' burnout.

Data Collection

Demographics

Data was collected from 305 qualified licensed BHPs (counselors, therapists,

social workers, psychologists, and psychiatrists) from Kentucky and Ohio. Of the study

participants, a large percentage were White/Caucasian females, and the most common

age groups were 25 to 34 and 35 to 44 years old. Additionally, most had a Bachelor's

degree, with active Licensed Psychological Associate (LPA) or Licensed Social Worker

(LSW) licenses. Mental Health Centers were the most common work settings, with more

than half of the sample having 10 or more years in their profession. A full summary of

each demographic variable is seen in Table 1.

Table 1

Summary of Demographics (n = 305)

	n	Percent
Gender		
Female	258	84.6
Male	47	15.4
Age groups		
18 – 24 years old	8	2.6
25 – 34 years old	81	26.6
35 – 44 years old	74	24.3
35 – 54 years old	59	19.3
55 – 64 years old	53	17.4
65 years or older	30	9.8
Race/ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	0.3
Asian/ Pacific Islander	2	0.7
Black or African American	32	10.5
Hispanic	4	1.3
White/Caucasian	259	84.9
Multiple ethnicity/other	7	2.3
Education level		
Bachelor's degree	41	13.4
Master's degree	238	78.1
Doctorate	26	8.5
Current license		
CADC	7	2.3
LCADC	2	0.7
LSW	91	29.8
LPC/LPCC	49	16.1
LPA	106	34.8
MD	3	1.0
LISW	40	13.1
LMFT	7	2.3

	n	Percent
License active		
Yes	305	100
No	0	0
Work setting		
Private small practice	46	15.1
Mental health center	182	59.7
Self-employed	10	3.3
Contractual employee	42	13.8
Military	8	2.6
Medical/hospital	17	5.6
Years worked in profession		
1 – 5 years	77	25.2
5 – 10 years	59	19.3
10+ years	169	55.4

Study Variables

The outcome/dependent variables used for all statistical analyses were BHPs'

burnout constructs, as measured by the MBI-HHS factors–EE, DP, RPA. Scores for EE,

DP, RPA were calculated using an average of items related to each subscale, where a

high degree of burnout is defined if participants have high scores in EE and DP and low

scores in RPA.

Additionally, each MBI-HHS subscale has an individual cutoff score. For EE,

scores between 0 and 16 indicate low burnout, 17 to 26 designate a moderate level of

burnout, and a score of 27 or higher signifies high levels of burnout. For DP, scores of 0

to 6 indicate a low level of burnout, 7 to 12 suggest a moderate level of burnout, and

scores of 13 or higher denote a high level of burnout. In addition, for RPA, scores 0 to 31

indicate a high level of burnout, 32 to 38 imply a moderate level of burnout, and 39 or

greater imply a low level of burnout. Table 2 shows a summary of each burnout

construct. Overall, average EE, DP, and RPA scores were in the range of a moderate

level of burnout.

Table 2

Summary of Dependent Variable

	Mean	*SD*	Min	Max
Emotional exhaustion	24.3	12.3	2	56
Depersonalization	6.4	6.2	0	46
Reduced personal accomplishment	39.3	6.8	3	49

The independent variables used for analysis were the Big Five personality factors,

as measured by the NEO-FFI (extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, and

conscientiousness), and demographic variables of age, education level, work sector,

gender, and years working. Values for the independent variables of 55 or greater are

deemed to indicate a very high score range, 45 to 54 a high range, 34 to 44 an average

range, 24 to 33 a low range, and 23 or below is a very low range for each particular

personality variable.

Table 3 shows a summary of each of the Big Five personality factors' raw scores.

Overall, values for the Big Five personality factors were in the low range with

agreeableness ($M = 34.4$; $SD = 5.7$) being the highest personality variable identified and

neuroticism ($M = 21.8$; $SD = 8.1$) being the lowest personality variable identified within

the participant pool.

Table 3

Summary of Independent Variables

	Mean	*SD*	Min	Max
Extraversion	27.1	6.7	10	44
Neuroticism	21.8	8.1	3	45
Openness	32.6	5.8	13	50
Agreeableness	34.4	5.7	13	50
Conscientiousness	33.8	6.6	13	48

Results

Statistical Model Assumptions

For each analysis, assumptions of correlation and regression were tested. For

Pearson correlation, the variables being correlated must follow a normal distribution. To

determine if the variables were normally distributed, a Shapiro-Wilk test, along with an

observation of the skewness/kurtosis for each variable, was observed. For the regression

models, after running each model, the expectations of normality, homoscedasticity, and

absence of multicollinearity (for multiple regression models) were observed. The

assumption of normality indicates that there is a normal distribution between the

independent and dependent variables. This was assessed by observing a Normal p-p plot

of the model standardized residuals. Finally, the absence of multicollinearity means that

the independent variables are not highly correlated with each other, and this assumption

was confirmed using variance inflation factors (VIF). VIF values over 10 suggested the

presence of multicollinearity.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked about the relationship between the constructs of the Big Five (extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) as measured by the NEO-FFI, and the construct of burnout, as measured by the MBI-HHS factors – EE, DP, RPA. To examine this research question, Pearson correlations were run to determine if each of the constructs of the Big Five were associated with burnout, as measured by the MBI-HHS factors. Before running Pearson correlations, all study variables were checked for normality using a Shapiro's Wilk's test ($p > 0.05$ indicates normality), observation of Skewness (between -3 and +3 indicates normality), and an observation of Kurtosis (between -3 and +3 indicates normality).

Table 4 shows a summary of Shapiro's Wilk's tests and Skewness/Kurtosis for each study variable. Results of these tests determined that although there is some variation of the normal distribution for DP and RPA, for the most part, the variables follow a normal distribution (Table 4). Therefore, Pearson correlation was used to determine the relationship between the constructs of the Big Five (extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness), and the construct of burnout, as measured by EE, DP, and RPA.

Table 4

Checking for Normality Using Shapiro-Wilk, Skewness, and Kurtosis

Variable	*W*	*p*	Skewness	Kurtosis
Burnout				
Emotional exhaustion	0.97	<0.0001	0.40	-0.64
Depersonalization	0.85	<0.0001	1.84	6.09
Reduced personal accomplishment	0.87	<0.0001	-1.83	6.02
The Big Five				
Extraversion	0.99	0.122	-0.07	-0.50
Neuroticism	0.99	0.018	0.25	-0.38
Openness	0.99	0.063	-0.27	0.49
Agreeableness	0.99	0.020	-0.34	0.33
Conscientiousness	0.98	<0.0001	-0.47	0.16

A Pearson's product-moment correlation was run to assess the relationship between the constructs of burnout (EE, DP, and RPA) and Big Five traits (extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness). Preliminary analyses showed the relationship to be linear with all variables normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$), and there were no outliers (Table 5). There was a strong positive correlation between EE and neuroticism, $r(98) = .587$, $p < .0005$, with neuroticism explaining 35% of the variation in EE. There was a moderate negative correlation between EE and extraversion, $r(98) = -.306$, $p < .0005$, with extraversion explaining 9% of the variation in EE. There were small negative correlations between EE and conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness. There was a moderate positive correlation between DP and neuroticism, $r(98) = .387$, $p < .0005$, with neuroticism explaining 15% of the variation in DP. There were small negative correlations between DP and extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness. There was a

moderate positive correlation between RPA and extraversion, $r(98) = .403$, $p < .0005$, with extraversion explaining 16% of the variation in RPA. There was a moderate negative correlation between RPA and neuroticism, $r(98) = -.411$, $p < .0005$, with neuroticism explaining 17% of the variation in RPA. There were small positive correlations between RPA and openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. In conclusion, these results show that all of research question one's null hypotheses can be rejected, where extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness are all significantly correlated with EE, DP (not openness), and RPA.

Table 5

Correlations Between the Big Five and Burnout

	Emotional exhaustion	Depersonalization	Reduced personal accomplishment
Extraversion	-0.31*	-0.18*	0.38*
Neuroticism	0.59*	0.39*	-0.38*
Openness	-0.02	-0.16*	0.18*
Agreeableness	-0.14*	-0.22*	0.12*
Conscientiousness	-0.25*	-0.23*	0.25*

Note. $*p < 0.05$

Research Question 2

Research question two asked, to what extent do the Big Five dimensions of personality - extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness – as measured by the NEO-FFI, predict BHPs' burnout as measured by the MBI-HHS factors – EE, DP, and RPA? To examine this research question, a linear regression was run to understand the effect of burnout (EE, DP, RPA) on the Big Five (extraversion,

neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness). To assess linearity a normal p-p plot of residuals and scatterplot of residuals vs. predicted values was run. Visual inspection of these two plots indicated a linear relationship between the variables. There was homoscedasticity and normality of the residuals.

The linear regression established that extraversion could statistically significantly predict EE, $F(1, 303) = 31.242$, $p < .0005$ and extraversion accounted for 9.3% of the explained variability in EE. The linear regression established that neuroticism could statistically significantly predict EE, $F(1, 303) = 159.045$, $p < .0005$ and neuroticism accounted for 34.4% of the explained variability in EE. The linear regression established that openness could not statistically significantly predict EE, $F(1, 303) = .086$, $p > .05$ and openness accounted for 0.0% of the explained variability in EE. The linear regression established that agreeableness could statistically significantly predict EE, $F(1, 303) = 6.394$, $p < .05$ and agreeableness accounted for 2.1% of the explained variability in EE, and finally the linear regression established that conscientiousness could statistically significantly predict EE, $F(1, 303) = 19.690$, $p < .0005$ and conscientiousness accounted for 6.1% of the explained variability in EE.

For DP, the linear regression established that extraversion could statistically significantly predict DP, $F(1, 303) = 10.378$, $p < .005$ and extraversion accounted for 3.3% of the explained variability in depersonalization. The linear regression established that neuroticism could statistically significantly predict DP, $F(1, 303) = 53.416$, $p < .0005$ and neuroticism accounted for 15.0% of the explained variability in DP. The linear regression established that openness could statistically significantly predict DP, $F(1, 303)$

= 8.124, $p > .05$ and openness accounted for 2.6% of the explained variability in DP. The linear regression established that agreeableness could statistically significantly predict DP, $F(1, 303) = 15.489$, $p < .0005$ and agreeableness accounted for 4.9% of the explained variability in DP, and finally, the linear regression established that conscientiousness could statistically significantly predict DP, $F(1, 303) = 16.829$, $p < .0005$ and conscientiousness accounted for 5.3% of the explained variability in depersonalization.

For RPA the linear regression established that extraversion could statistically significantly predict RPA, $F(1, 303) = 49.498$, $p < .0005$ and extraversion accounted for 14.0% of the explained variability in RPA. The linear regression established that neuroticism could statistically significantly predict RPA, $F(1, 303) = 49.179$, $p < .0005$ and neuroticism accounted for 14.0% of the explained variability in RPA. The linear regression established that openness could statistically significantly predict RPA, $F(1, 303) = 9.583$, $p > .005$ and openness accounted for 3.1% of the explained variability in RPA. The linear regression established that agreeableness could statistically significantly predict RPA, $F(1, 303) = 4.685$, $p < .05$ and agreeableness accounted for 1.5% of the explained variability in RPA, and finally, the linear regression established that conscientiousness could statistically significantly predict RPA, $F(1, 303) = 20.692$, $p < .0005$ and conscientiousness accounted for 6.4% of the explained variability in RPA.

In conclusion, these results showed that all of the Big Five - extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness - significantly predicted DP and RPA. However, for EE, the only Big Five that was not significantly predictive was openness (Table 6). Extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness were

all negatively associated with both EE and DP. Also, neuroticism had a positive

correlation with DP. Oppositely, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and

conscientiousness all had positive correlations with RPA. Finally, neuroticism had a

negative correlation with RPA. Therefore, all of research question two's null hypotheses

can be rejected, concluding that there was a significant predictive relationship between

the Big Five and BHPs' EE, DP, and RPA.

Table 6

Summary of Simple Linear Regression Models, Predicting Burnout

Variable	B	$SE(B)$	β	t	p	R^2
DV = EE						
Extraversion	-0.56	0.10	-0.31	-5.59	<0.0001	0.09
Neuroticism	0.89	0.07	0.59	12.61	<0.0001	0.34
Openness	-0.04	0.12	-0.02	-0.29	0.770	0.00
Agreeableness	-0.31	0.12	-0.14	-2.53	0.012	0.02
Conscientiousness	-0.46	0.10	-0.25	-4.44	<0.0001	0.06
DV = DP						
Extraversion	-0.17	0.05	-0.18	-3.22	0.001	0.03
Neuroticism	0.29	0.04	0.39	7.31	<0.0001	0.15
Openness	-0.17	0.06	-0.16	-2.85	0.005	0.03
Agreeableness	-0.24	0.06	-0.22	-3.94	<0.0001	0.05
Conscientiousness	-0.21	0.05	-0.23	-4.10	<0.0001	0.05
DV = RPA						
Extraversion	0.38	0.05	0.38	7.04	<0.0001	0.14
Neuroticism	-0.31	0.05	-0.37	-7.01	<0.0001	0.14
Openness	0.21	0.07	0.18	9.10	0.002	0.03
Agreeableness	0.15	0.07	0.12	2.16	0.031	0.02
Conscientiousness	0.26	0.06	0.25	4.55	<0.0001	0.06

Note. *DV = Dependent variable

After running each model, model assumptions were tested by observing a normal

p-p plot of standardized residuals and a scatterplot of standardized residuals plotted

against standardized predicted values. All model normal p-p plots and scatterplot of

standardized residuals plotted against standardized predicted values showed that each

model satisfied the linear regression assumptions

Research Question 3

Research question three asked, what is the best model that predicts BHPs'

burnout? To examine this research question, multiple linear regression models were used

to observe the association between each burnout dependent variable, the independent

variables (IV) of the Big Five, as measured by the NEO-FFI, and demographic variables

of age, education level, work sector, gender, and years working. To find the best fit

model, IVs were entered into the multiple linear regression model in a stepwise manner,

with the first model having only the Big Five personality traits, with the addition of each

of the demographic variables (age, education level, work sector, gender, and years

worked) in the subsequent models. After which, results of each regression model were

assessed to determine which model best predicts burnout. Tables 7a through 7c show the

best fitting models for each burnout subscale (EE, DP, and RPA).

For EE, the best fit model included the Big Five, as well as age ($F = 29.41$, $p <$

0.0001; Table 7), where the model accounts for 37% of EE variability ($R^2 = 0.37$).

Extraversion ($\beta = -0.11$, $p = 0.028$), neuroticism ($\beta = 0.50$, $p < 0.0001$), and age ($\beta = -$

0.12, $p = 0.014$) significantly predicted EE, when controlling for the other factors in the

model. Lower scores for extraversion and higher neuroticism were associated with

increased EE burnout. Additionally, as the age groups increase, EE burnout decreases.

Although openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness were included in the best fit

model, they were not predictive of EE burnout (p-values > 0.05).

Table 7

Summary of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for Emotional Exhaustion

Variable	B	$SE(B)$	β	t	p	F	p	R^2
Overall model						29.41	<0.0001	0.37
Extraversion	-0.20	0.09	-0.11	-2.20	0.028			
Neuroticism	0.76	0.09	0.50	8.86	<0.0001			
Openness	-0.05	0.10	-0.02	-0.46	0.645			
Agreeableness	-0.08	0.10	-0.04	-0.80	0.423			
Conscientiousness	-0.01	0.10	-0.01	-0.14	0.889			
Age group	-1.09	0.44	-0.12	-2.47	0.014			
Constant	21.79	6.84		3.19	0.002			

When checking the model assumptions, there were no signs of multicollinearity

(All VIF values ranged from 1.0 to 1.5), and the model normal p-p plots and scatterplot

of standardized residuals plotted against standardized predicted values showed that each

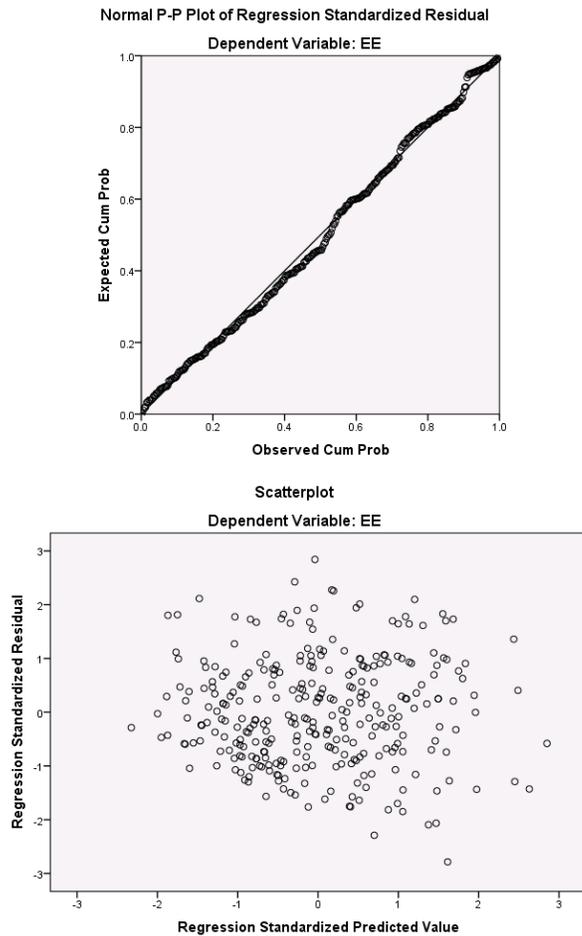model satisfied the linear regression assumptions (Figure 1).

Figure 1. EE: Normal p-p plot of residuals and scatterplot of residuals vs. predicted values.

For depersonalization, the best fit model included the Big Five personality traits, as well as age ($F = 15.54$, $p < 0.0001$; Table 8), where the model explained 23.9% of the variability in DP. Neuroticism ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.0001$), openness ($\beta = -0.16$, $p = 0.004$), agreeableness ($\beta = -0.16$, $p = 0.005$), and age ($\beta = -0.84$, $p = 0.001$) significantly predicted DP, when controlling for the other factors in the model. Lower scores for openness and agreeableness, and higher neuroticism were associated with increased DP burnout. Additionally, as the age groups increase, DP burnout decreases. Although

extraversion and conscientiousness were included in the best fit model, they were not

predictive of DP (p-values > 0.05).

Table 8

Summary of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for Depersonalization

Variable	B	$SE(B)$	β	t	p	F	p	R^2
Overall model						15.54	<0.0001	0.24
Extraversion	-0.03	0.05	0.04	0.66	0.509			
Neuroticism	0.21	0.05	0.27	4.33	<0.0001			
Openness	-0.16	0.06	0.15	2.91	0.004			
Agreeableness	-0.16	0.06	0.15	2.80	0.005			
Conscientiousness	-0.06	0.05	0.06	1.13	0.258			
Age group	-0.84	0.24	0.19	3.43	0.001			
Constant	18.44	3.78		3.98	<0.0001			

When checking the model assumptions, there were no signs of multicollinearity

(All VIF values ranged from 1.0 to 1.5), and the model normal p-p plots and scatterplot

of standardized residuals plotted against standardized predicted values showed that each

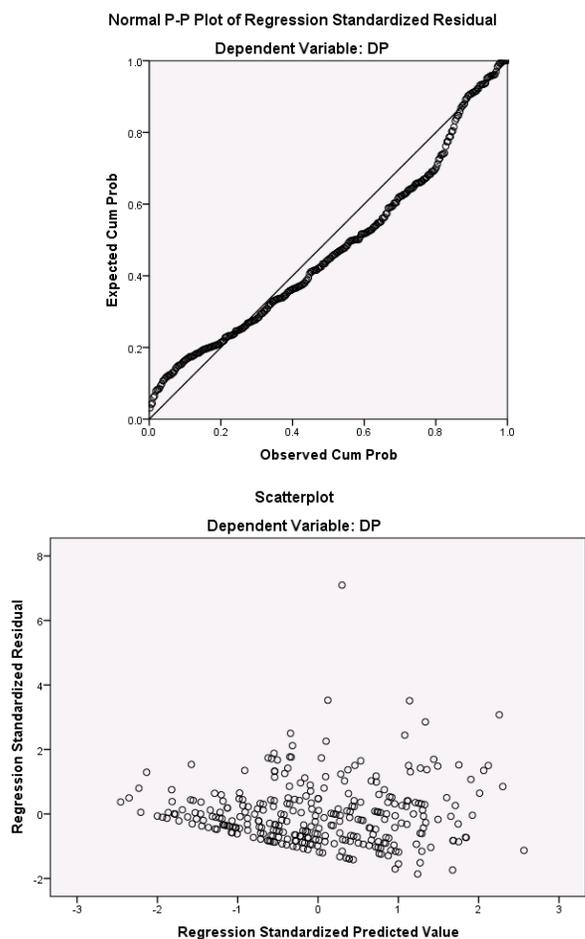model satisfied the linear regression assumptions (Figure 2).

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual
Dependent Variable: DP

Scatterplot
Dependent Variable: DP

Figure 2. DP: Normal p-p plot of residuals and scatterplot of residuals vs. predicted values.

For RPA, the best fit model only included the Big Five ($F = 19.09$, $p < 0.0001$; Table 9), where the model explained 24% of the variability in depersonalization. Extraversion ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.0001$), neuroticism ($\beta = -0.21$, $p < 0.0001$), and openness ($\beta = 0.18$, $p = 0.003$), significantly predicted RPA, when controlling for the other factors in the model. Lower scores for extraversion and openness, and higher neuroticism were associated with increased RPA burnout. Although agreeableness and conscientiousness were included in the best fit model, they were not predictive of RPA (p-values > 0.05).

Table 9

Summary of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for Reduced Personal Accomplishment

Variable	B	$SE(B)$	β	t	p	F	p	R^2
Overall Model								
Overall Model						19.09	<0.0001	0.24
Extraversion	0.25	0.06	0.25	4.49	<0.0001			
Neuroticism	-0.21	0.05	-0.25	-4.19	<0.0001			
Openness	0.18	0.06	0.16	3.03	0.003			
Agreeableness	0.05	0.06	0.04	0.86	0.392			
Conscientiousness	0.10	0.06	0.10	1.78	0.076			
Constant	25.77	3.98		6.48	<0.0001			

When checking the model assumptions, there were no signs of multicollinearity (All VIF values ranged from 1.0 to 1.4), and the model normal p-p plots and scatterplot of standardized residuals plotted against standardized predicted values showed that each model satisfied the linear regression assumptions (Figure 3).
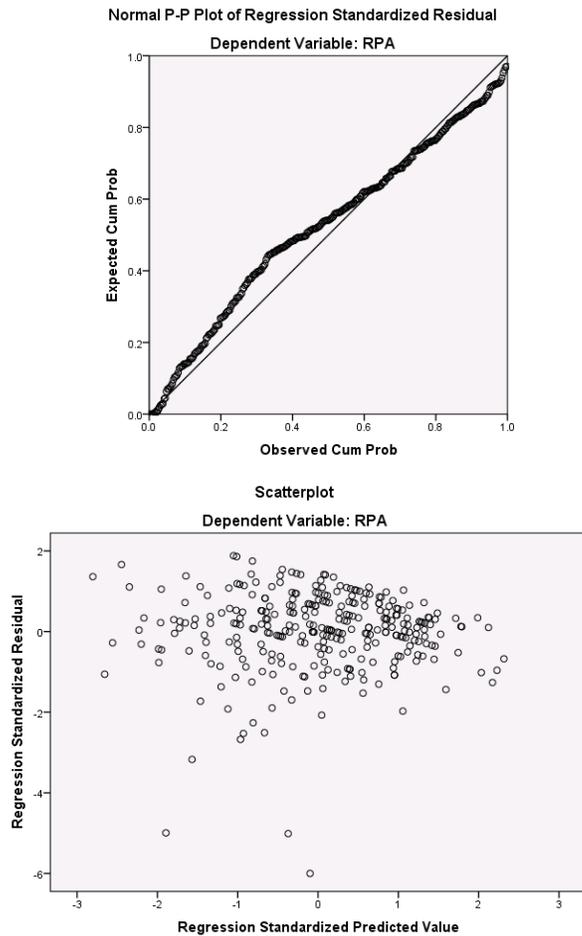
Figure 3. RPA: Normal p-p plot of residuals and scatterplot of residuals vs. predicted values.

Summary

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship among

BHP burnout (i.e., EE, DP, RPA) and the constructs of the Big Five personality traits of

neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Results of the

analyses showed that the Big Five personality traits of extraversion, neuroticism,

openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (univariate models only) were

significantly correlated and significantly predicted BHPs' burnout, as measured by EE, DP, and RPA. Age added extra predictive strength when modeling EE and DP.

Chapter 5 will consist of the interpretations of the findings, the limitations of this study, recommendations for future studies, and the implications. I will discuss in more detail what the data means for the current study and how the results can be used for future studies pertaining to exploring the relationship among BHP burnout (i.e., EE, DP, RPA) and the constructs of the Big Five personality traits of neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between burnout in BHPs (i.e., EE, DP, RPA) and the constructs of the Big Five personality traits of neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. According to Shirom and Melamed (2006), burnout has become a serious mental health problem to which BHPs are susceptible due to their highly interactive work. Additionally, individuals who choose to become BHPs are at a higher risk of burnout due to the stressors associated with patients' mental health care and the personal nature of the work (Laliotis & Grayson, 1985), which means individuals in the behavioral health profession are going into the field very likely underprepared for the experience of burnout. This chapter includes a discussion of the study's results, its implications, any potential limitations, and recommendations for future research.

The results of this study showed that personality is, in fact, related to burnout among BHPs. The Big Five personality traits of extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness were significantly correlated to burnout, and therefore significantly relate to the phenomenon among this population. The results demonstrated that as extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness increased, burnout decreased, indicating that these personalities have some sort of positive link to burnout. Likewise, as neuroticism increased, burnout also increased, indicating that those with more neurotic personality types are at an increased likelihood

of experiencing burnout in this specific profession. Finally, the age of the BHP can

increase prediction strength when modeling EE and DP.

Research Question 1

The first research question that guided the current study was the following: What

is the relationship between the constructs of the Big Five (extraversion, neuroticism,

openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) as measured by the NEO-FFI and the

construct of burnout, as measured by the MBI-HHS factors–EE, DP, and RPA?

The results of this study ultimately showed that personality could play a role in

the development of burnout in BHPs. Specifically, results showed that all five constructs

were significantly associated with burnout, but to varying degrees and levels; whereby

there was a strong correlation to neuroticism. Therefore, based on this finding, those

with these personality types are at an increased risk of developing burnout during their

career. More specifically, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness

all correlated negatively with EE and DP; however, each construct also had a positive

correlation with RPA. This finding shows that when BHPs are higher in extraversion,

openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, they are less likely to experience EE and

DP. However, they are also more likely to experience RPA, which may be due in part to

the tendency of these personality types to set high expectations for themselves that are

difficult to achieve, leading to more disappointment in the level of tasks accomplished.

Research Question 2

The second research question that guided this study was the following: To what

extent do the Big Five dimensions of personality (extraversion, neuroticism, openness,

agreeableness, and conscientiousness), as measured by the NEO-FFI, predict BHP's burnout as measured by the MBI-HHS factors (EE, DP, and RPA)?

Each of the five constructs significantly predicted DP and RPA. The results showed that being more open did not predict EE. However, at a more intense level with each of the constructs, participants experienced less EE and DP. Those who are considered to have more neurotic tendencies experienced DP more intensely. Conversely, when individuals are more extraverted, open, agreeable, and conscientious, they are more likely to experience RPA, which means that these traits predict RPA. Lastly, when individuals score high in neuroticism, they also tend to have lessened scores in personal accomplishment, indicating that they are more prone to developing this specific symptom of burnout.

Research Question 3

The third and final research question that guided this study was the following: What is the best model that predicts BHPs' burnout? In order to answer this question, a multiple linear regression model was used to note the association between each dependent variable and the independent variables of the Big Five, as measured by the NEO-FFI, and the demographic variables of age, education level, work sector, gender, and years working.

Emotional Exhaustion

The best fit model for EE was the Big Five personality traits in addition to age, indicating that extraversion, neuroticism, and age all significantly predicted EE. Those who were less extraverted and more neurotic experienced burnout more specifically in

terms of EE, indicating that this might be an area of focus for future research. The model

also showed that as the participants became older, they experienced less burnout in the

form of EE, showing that age is an important factor in the development of burnout among

BHPs. This phenomenon may be explained because of their own personal emotional

maturity and learned behaviors that assist in coping with stressors. The older BHPs are

the more they may be capable of critical thinking and problem solving skills that assist

with stress management. This could potentially be an important topic for future research

to verify if, in fact, age factors influence behaviors in BHPs and what traits seem to assist

in better coping of the burnout phenomenon

Depersonalization

The best model for DP included the Big Five traits as well as age, similar to EE.

Specifically, it included neuroticism, openness, and agreeableness as being very likely to

experience DP. The less open and agreeable participants were and the higher they scored

for neuroticism, the more likely they were to experience increased burnout through DP.

Similar to EE, as the ages of the participant increased, DP also decreased.

Reduced Personal Accomplishment

The best model fit for RPA is only three of the Big Five traits and no

demographic factors. Those who were more extraverted, neurotic, and open were more

likely to experience burnout in the form of RPA. Those who indicated lower scores for

extraversion and openness but also higher scores for neuroticism were more likely to

experience burnout through RPA.

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings of this study confirm and extend the knowledge currently existing in this discipline in many ways. This study's results confirm the previous finding that individuals in professions that involve supportive care to others are more likely to experience burnout (Francis et al., 2004; Leiter & Harvie, 1996; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach & Leiter, 2008; McVicar, 2003; Moore & Cooper, 1996; Oginska-Bulik & Kaflick-Peirog, 2006; Ogresta et al., 2008; Soderfeldt et al., 1995). The BHPs considered in the current study are very much involved in the supportive care of others on a daily basis. The participants in the current study were shown to be at an increased likelihood of developing burnout depending on their personality traits, which extends the findings of previous researchers in extending the range of those who may be susceptible to developing burnout. The results ultimately point to the importance of the behaviors and traits associated with the five personality types examined in this study.

It is clear that personality factors drive the influence of burnout; however, in this study, I did not delve into the specific personality facets that potentiate clear predictors for burnout. When individuals are more open and extraverted, they feel a sense of focus on the outer world rather than themselves. While in some cases this is a useful trait for a BHP because it allows them to focus more fully on patients, it is also a predictor for burnout because going a long period of time without focusing on oneself would affect emotional health. Similarly, those who have more neurotic personality types will tend to be in a negative emotional state for an extended period of time, which aligns with EE and therefore makes them more at risk to develop burnout.

Other studies have found more generally that job-based stressors such as those discussed in the current study have similar negative outcomes and have also been associated with burnout (Griffith, 1997; Halbesleben et al., 2008; Jackson et al., 2000; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Matteson & Ivancevich, 1987; Ross et al., 1989). For example, a job-based stressor for an individual who rates high in the extraversion and openness constructs will likely lead to burnout because these types indicate that individuals demonstrate certain behaviors that induce stress and increase their risk of burnout. These personality factors combined with job-related stressors such as those that might be experienced by the participants in the current study can be concluded as being a predictor for burnout. Finally, Vredenburgh et al. (1999) posited that although burnout is recognized as being a major problem, the phenomenon is still not fully understood as it relates to BHPs' personalities and organizational functions. The results of this study extend the work of Vredenburgh et al. by considering the phenomenon of burnout as it relates to the personalities of those in the BHP profession and by increasing the general understanding of this issue among this profession.

Much research has been conducted on the phenomenon of burnout and its occurrence in many of the service fields; however, this study extends the scope of the findings by filling the gap in the literature in considering how personality traits play a role in this development of burnout as well as how BHPs specifically are affected in the field of mental health. Other studies indirectly pointed to the fact that personality can in fact influence the occurrence of burnout in general, but not necessarily among this specific profession. For example, Best et al. (2005) surmised that an individual's mental

health state is greatly influenced by his/her personality, which is also confirmed by the

finding in this study that the experience of burnout directly affects the participants'

mental health through EE, DP, and RPA. Additionally, other studies have implied that

further understanding of BHP job-related burnout may assist in understanding how

personality factors contribute to this particular phenomenon (Barak et al., 2001; Ben-

Dror, 1994; Blankertz & Robinson, 1997; Morse et al., 2012). The results of this study

have made progress toward more fully understanding how personality factors contribute

to the phenomenon, but further research is still needed on the more specific behaviors and

facets of these factors, as I only considered them in broad terms.

Other studies have also pointed more specifically to the connection that certain

personality traits have to burnout. For example, Zellars et al. (2006) conducted research

on nurses and their interactions in the workplace and found that a positive correlation

existed between stress and low scores on conscientiousness. The findings of the current

study both confirm and extend these results because I found that as conscientiousness

increases, burnout decreases, just as the previous study showed that low

conscientiousness was related to stress. Ultimately, both studies confirm that those who

ignore their own needs to help others often become more stressed, which is what the

participants in the current study were generally faced with. Zellars and Perrewe (2001)

also confirmed that stress is an element of EE, and EE was one of the variables

considered in this study.

Additionally, Wood et al. (1985) identified personality traits as being a potential

predictor for negative psychological and physical health problems. The results of the

current study confirm this finding in that the Big Five were found to be predictors of

burnout, which is considered a psychological health problem because of its significant

negative effects on job quality. Burnout is associated with DP, EE, and RPA, all of

which can affect the way BHPs interact with their patients. This study also extends the

findings of the previous study in that Wood et al. did not consider this phenomenon

among the specific population of BHPs who can face situations and job tasks that are

unique to their field. Furthermore, Houkes et al. (2003) noted that personality can play a

role in one's mental health but did not look specifically at BHPs. The current study

expands on this finding as well.

Finally, very few researchers have considered this phenomenon of burnout in the

context of demographic variables and influence (Rupert & Kent, 2007). The results of

the current study showed age specifically to be very significant in the development of

burnout. The older participants were, the less likely they were to experience burnout.

The results demonstrate that as age increases, there is extra predictive strength for EE and

DP. This was a factor that was not addressed by previous researchers, but is also not

surprising in that if participants were more prone to burnout, they would likely not

remain in the profession at a more advanced age. Most researchers have focused more

extensively on organizational structure and personality traits (Beck, 1987). Therefore,

the current study extends the knowledge in the existing field by taking the analysis a step

further to include how demographic variables influence burnout among BHPs. This

study's findings may allow organizations to utilize measures of reducing BHP burnout

and early exodus from the profession. It may also support educational institutions in

filtering prospective BHP school candidates in order to protect the profession and the public from potential harm due to the devastating effects of burnout on patient outcomes.

Limitations of the Study

Several different potential limitations arose during the course of this study that may affect generalizability to other populations in terms of its results. Additionally, some potential limitations identified in previous chapters were ultimately determined to not have a significant bearing on the interpretation of the results, such as the use of the NEO-FFI instead of the more in-depth NEO-PI version and the possibility that it may not be the most appropriate tool to gather this specific data in full. The survey ultimately was adequate to gather the results needed for this study and data were rich and abundant. The primary limitation of this study, however, is the use of a self-report survey for measurements of the MBI-HHS and NEO-FFI. Creswell (2015) noted that self-report instruments might limit a study's validity due to relying on assumptions made by the individuals filling out the survey. They may not necessarily answer the questions accurately, as it is ultimately up to the them to gauge their level of association with each survey item. In other words, while completing the surveys, it is unclear how accurate participants were in terms of being able to look introspectively and analyze their own behaviors and habits.

Another potential limitation in this study is the fact that individuals experiencing burnout may not necessarily be willing to participate in a study, as they would likely already be overwhelmed or emotionally exhausted due to work. Therefore, the scores may be an underrepresentation of the phenomenon due to selection bias. In the results,

EE scores averaged at 24.3, which is considered moderate. In addition, DP scores averaged at 6.4, which is considered low to mid-level. Reduced personal accomplishment scores were 39.3 on average, which implies a low level of burnout. These results could indicate an issue with the aforementioned limitation, as those with extremely high levels may not have been willing to participate in the survey.

The demographic data in the results also show that a large number of the participants worked in a mental health center setting (59.7%), whereas smaller percentages of other participants worked in private practices or hospitals. Because a majority of the participants answered the questions as they relate to work in a mental health center, the results may not necessarily be generalizable to BHPs working in other settings. In addition, mental health centers may have increased pressures for these employees as the care is often much more immediate and fast-paced than what is provided in a private practice setting over the course of time. Therefore, these individuals may or may not be exposed to higher levels of work-related stress because of their specific professional setting.

This study may also have been limited by the choice of a quantitative research design. A mixed methods or qualitative approach may have unveiled additional information that cannot be accurately gauged through a survey. Participants in this study were not given the opportunity to discuss their experiences with EE, RPA, and DP. Additionally, it is unclear whether the participants could recognize the occurrence of these issues in themselves. An interview approach would also have allowed the researcher to analyze the characteristics and behaviors of participants in a more hands-on

manner and to make field notes and observations that could be useful to the interpretation

of the results. I also utilized a multiple linear regression analysis with the NEO-FFI to

compare the variables individually.

The final limitation in this study is that I only considered the broad factors of the

Big Five. While this approach was able to fill a gap in the existing research, considering

the individual aspects of each personality trait may reveal even stronger predictors for

burnout. For example, there may be aspects of each trait which are more specific, such as

an individual who is more neurotic generally tends to be in a lower emotional state a

majority of the time. This specific factor as well as others for each trait may prove to be

better predictors for the development of burnout among this population and therefore may

provide greater and more rich data to better understand this phenomenon.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, I am able to make several recommendations

for future research in this field. First, because this study was able to show that certain

personality traits may be more at risk for developing burnout in BHPs, future researchers

might consider conducting more specific research on the identified personality traits in

order to better identify these individuals prior to the occurrence of burnout. Identifying

individuals prone to burnout can help reduce the number of BHPs leaving the profession

prematurely by screening for individuals with less desirable personality traits prior to

hiring, as well as implementing prevention plans such as therapy to address any issues

before the individual develops burnout. For example, as those in this profession are

generally susceptible to burnout in general, but even more so because of specific

personality traits, policies regarding therapy of some form for all BHPs may be beneficial to organizations. The current study was able to add knowledge about whether personality traits play a role in the development of burnout, but future researchers can take these results a step further by utilizing a qualitative study approach. A qualitative approach using interviews with participants could reveal more in-depth descriptions and understandings of BHPs who are prone to burnout. Such research can aid in being able to help this specific, at-risk population before burnout becomes an issue.

Future researchers would also benefit from extending the scope of this study further to include individuals in other similar professions where burnout often occurs, such as the civil service field. Past researchers have shown that burnout can and likely will affect anyone working hands-on with other people as a profession (Laliotis & Grayson, 1985). Additionally, the demographic data gathered in the current study identified that a majority of the sampled participants worked in a mental health center setting. This field would benefit from a closer look into those who work in other settings, as the results of the current study may not necessarily be generalizable to those working in other mental health settings such as a private practice or hospital. Certain types of facilities may inherently have more pressures and an increased workload compared to others, which can influence the onset and development of burnout in BHPs.

An additional recommendation would be to consider in future research whether specific personality traits could influence or predict job satisfaction or even job performance within the mental health setting. The results of the current study have made it clear that one's personality is a predictor for the development of burnout; therefore, it is

probable that personality can also be a predictor for other behaviors as well. The analysis of such a connection would be of value to any employer, but specifically those in the mental health field in order to ensure that BHPs being hired are well fit for the position and are not an increased likelihood of experiencing issues in addition to burnout.

It was also unclear in the current study whether the participants were able to accurately self-report their symptoms and look introspectively in order to analyze themselves. Utilizing an alternate tool for measurement may increase the generalizability of future study results to other populations. For example, this study utilized the NEO-FFI instead of the full, in-depth NEO PI-R, which if used may have provided more significant data or lead to stronger correlations among the variables. Although the inventories used in the current study were valid and largely appropriate for what I chose to explore, future studies may benefit from the use of other types of tools, which may be able to consider additional factors for each participant. Other types of tools include the TIPI, or Ten Item Personality Inventory created by Gosling, Rentfrow, and Swann (2003), which is another tool to measure of the Big Five. For this study, the researcher looked at the individual traits and not the intricate facets that make up each trait. The other inventories are lengthier and more time consuming; although they offer more depth descriptors of each personality facet's variances than the NEO-FFI.

As mentioned in the limitations section of this study, researchers would also benefit from considering the more specific facets of each of the Big Five constructs, such as the behaviors which make an individual neurotic or agreeable. Identifying the correlations among the specific behaviors of each construct and burnout has the potential

to yield fruitful results, which can expand on the findings of the present study even further. Those who are more agreeable by nature tend to be more kind, sympathetic, and cooperative, and these factors themselves may have varying degrees of correlation to burnout. This finding has the potential to further fill the gap that the current study contributed to filling in the existing research on this topic.

Implications

As I initially predicted, the results of this study show that BHPs' development and occurrence of burnout can be predicted by certain personality traits. These results have implications for positive social change at a variety of levels, including the individual, organizational, and policy levels. On the individual level, this study's findings may affect directly how burnout is assessed and treated in BHPs. Organizations may use these results to implement screening policies for BHPs to assess whether they are experiencing burnout and to determine methods to treat it. It is likely that burnout affects each BHP on a personal and individual level. Reducing the prevalence of burnout in BHPs can increase their personal mental well-being, which can in turn be beneficial for their families as well as their patients. A primary experience during burnout is depersonalization, which directly negatively affects BHP's patients and the level of care they are being provided because it leads to a less positive overall mental state (Maslach et al., 1996). Being able to identify those with burnout and in turn provide treatment or preventative trainings or measures to deter its onset will directly help patients receive more high-quality care. When BHPs are mentally healthy, they are able to provide adequate care. BHPs' general mood can influence others, and therefore BHPs who are

stressed have the potential to cause their families to be stressed as well (Cropanzano, Rupp, & Byrne, 2003; Davidson, 2009; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). However, with a reduction in burnout and its early identification, which may be achieved based on the results of the current study, BHPs can live happier lives both on an individual and family level. Therefore, if the BHP is healthy, their family life is more likely to also be healthy. This study's results may also be used to inform stakeholders to make policy changes at the organizational level.

The results of this study have the potential to influence the way organizations that employ BHPs assess and treat incidences of burnout. At present, organizational stakeholders are largely inactive in identifying those most at risk of developing burnout in order to provide preventative care. Stakeholders may utilize these results to make policy-level changes such as requiring early or regular screenings of BHPs in order to treat or even prevent the onset of burnout. Additionally, stakeholders at the organizational level may also utilize these results in their hiring practices by simply being informed of which personality traits are perhaps more desirable for this profession. For example, because those prone to neuroticism have been shown to be at an increased risk for developing burnout, stakeholders conducting interviews for BHP positions that choose to hire such individuals may monitor these employees to identify potential signs of burnout and intervene early.

The results of this study fill an important gap in the existing literature. Much research has previously been conducted on how personality traits may play a role in burnout, but considering this connection among BHPs specifically was very much

necessary. The results of the study also have several methodological implications. First, they have the potential to influence the way personality traits are viewed in the behavioral health profession as a whole. Prior to this study, much of the existing research on the Big Five focused on how these constructs influence and relate to those in general "helping" professions, such as firefighters, police officers, or social workers. However, with the newfound knowledge identified in this study, researchers and stakeholders within this specific field will be able to make new inferences and conclusions based on the findings.

The results of this study also have implications for theory in the field of behavioral health. First, because this specific study expanded on the work and findings of previous studies, many of the theories considered useful in the evaluation of those in the "helping" professions may also hold weight when considered in terms of BHPs specifically. Because the fields are so similar in nature, and because the results of studies on burnout in both fields echo each other, it is likely that many of the theories and theoretical guidelines will be applicable to both types of professionals as well. In addition, because the results of this study echo those of previous studies in terms of finding a link between burnout and personality types, this adds to the existing theory of the connection between the two and provides more validity for accuracy.

It is recommended that organizational stakeholders utilize these results in order to make policy-level changes to work toward the more effective prevention and treatment of burnout among BHPs in order to prevent early exodus from the profession, which is currently plaguing the field (Rupert & Morgan, 2005). The identification and prevention of burnout will also help to improve the treatment of mental health patients within their

care as well as potentially improve the overall healthiness and happiness of those closest

to BHPs experiencing burnout within the profession. Additionally, it is also

recommended that these results be used by future researchers to delve further into other

variables and issues surrounding this specific topic in order to add even further to the

existing body of knowledge. Further research would continue to benefit the

aforementioned populations.

Conclusion

The purpose of this quantitative study was to consider the relationship between

BHPs' burnout and the constructs of the Big Five personality traits of neuroticism,

extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. I began this study with the

anticipation that a connection would be found between personality traits and the

development of burnout among BHPs, primarily because this connection was found and

highlighted in the existing literature among other similar "helping" professions, such as

police, firefighters, or social workers. The results of the study ultimately showed that

there is a significant correlation between the development of burnout in BHPs and certain

personality traits. The more extraverted, open, agreeable, and conscientious BHPs are,

the less likely they are to experience the signs of burnout, including EE, RPA, and DP.

In addition, the more neurotic BHPs tend to be, the more likely they are to experience the

development of burnout. The factor of age also proved to play a major role in the onset

and development of burnout among BHPs, whereas the older BHPs were, the less likely

they were to experience the phenomenon. It is my hope that these results will be utilized

at the organizational level to implement policy changes such as regular or preburnout

screenings in order to prevent the early exodus of individuals from the BHP field and in

order to provide better care to their patients.

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Appendix A: Demographic Form

DEMOGRAPHICS SHEET

Please do not enter your name on this form. Thank you, again, for your help and support in this project.

For the following items, please select the *one* response that is most descriptive of you or fill in the blank as appropriate.

Gender: Female ☐   Male ☐

Age: ☐ 18-24   ☐ 25 - 34   ☐ 35 – 44   ☐ 45 – 54   ☐ 55 – 64   ☐ 65+

Ethnicity:
☐ Asian or Pacific Islander   ☐ Asian Indian
☐ Black/African American (non-Hispanic)   ☐ Caucasian/White
☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native   ☐ Latino/Hispanic
☐ Multi Ethnicity/Other

Education Rank:

☐ Bachelor   ☐ Masters   ☐ Doctorate

Current License:

☐ CADC   ☐ LCADC   ☐ LSW   ☐ LCSW   ☐ LPC/LPCC
☐ LPA   ☐ LPP   ☐ MD/Psychiatrist   ☐ LISW   ☐ LMFT

License Active? ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Work Setting:

☐ Private Small Practice   ☐ Mental Health Center   ☐ Self-Employed
☐ Contractual Employee   ☐ Military   ☐ Hospital

Years worked in profession ☐ 0 – 1   ☐ 1 – 5   ☐ 5 – 10   ☐ 10+

Appendix B: Permission Form for Maslach Burnout Inventory-HSS

mind garden

www.mindgarden.com

To whom it may concern,

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Instrument: *Maslach Burnout Inventory, Forms: General Survey, Human Services Survey & Educators Survey*

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Sincerely,

Robert Most
Mind Garden, Inc.
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Appendix C: Permission Form for NEO-FFI

M Gmail   Alicia Greene

License Agr for NEO-FFI-3, with Profile

                                                 Wed, Apr 20, 2016 at 3:13 PM

To: Alicia Greene

Please find attached your fully executed License Agreement.

When you have your survey ready for administration, please forward a print screen that displays the required PAR Copyright Notice to comply with Section 8 of your License Agreement. You can begin administering the NEO-FFI-3 via Survey Monkey as soon as your website is ready.

Your License Agreement will expire on June 15, 2016. Please contact me if you need an extension for your research or any additional administrations.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.