A Correlational Study of the Relationship Between Holistic Self-Care Practices and Burnout in Middle School Teachers

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A Correlational Study of the Relationship Between Holistic Self-Care Practices and Burnout

in Middle School Teachers

Laura Emily Fitzpatrick

Concordia University–Portland

College of Education

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in

Professional Inquiry, Leadership, and Transformation

Chris Jenkins, Ph.D., Faculty Chair Dissertation Committee

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Concordia University–Portland

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Abstract

Teachers, particularly at the middle school level, are experiencing feelings of burnout, leading to high attrition rates. Wellness initiatives have been implemented in schools to help combat burnout, but few have taken a holistic approach to self-care. The theory of holism supports that teachers who take care of all aspects of self—physical, essential, creative, coping, and social—are ultimately able to be more engaged, effective teachers. The goal of this study was to determine the relationship burnout has with holistic self-care practices, gender, and years within the profession for full-time middle-level educators. A total of 196 full-time teachers of grades six, seven, and eight from the United States were surveyed, using two valid instruments: the Maslach Burnout Inventory–Educator Survey and the Five-Factor Wellness Inventory. A quantitative correlational research design was utilized for this study to examine the direction and magnitude of the relationships. Findings from this study indicated a statistically significant negative correlation between measures of self-care and burnout, and no correlation between burnout and gender, or burnout and years within the profession. The results from this study suggest that educational policies and practices must be adapted to promote wellness for educators at all stages of their careers.

Keywords: burnout, holistic self-care, middle-level educators

Dedication

For Bret. Your limitless grace and tireless encouragement have given me the strength to dream

big dreams and ultimately to fling this monster to the public.

Acknowledgements

I am humbled to think of the countless people whose support has been invaluable to me throughout this process. I would first like to thank Dr. Jenkins for his keen insights and encouragement that have been essential to my growth as a scholar. I am also grateful to Dr. Bindig and Dr. Becker for their time, feedback, expertise, and support. I cannot thank my family enough. Your tears and cheers have carried me. Your love and support are a true source of joy for me. Your time, interest, and care are gifts to me. To everyone else—from friends who continuously checked up on me to the kind baristas who quietly provided countless coffee refills while I wrote—thank you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Problem

No matter the grade level, teachers experience a decrease in enthusiasm throughout the course of a school year and throughout their tenure within the profession (Santoro, 2018). Although this phenomenon is considered commonplace, it can quickly lead to feelings of burnout. When teachers experience burnout, they begin to contemplate quitting and these high levels of burnout create two significant issues within the teaching profession. First, teachers experiencing burnout continue in their jobs and, as a result, can become embittered towards students, lack passion for their craft, and feel they are not making a difference. Some teachers desperately want to, and arguably should, exit the profession; instead, they are stuck. For some, retirement is on the horizon and they cannot afford a career change. For other young teachers experiencing burnout, they push through, not wanting the investment they made into their education to go to waste. These teachers do a disservice to their students and to themselves, as they are neglecting their own wellness.

The second primary issue is that burnout contributes to high attrition rates. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) found that "90% of open teaching positions are created by teachers who leave the profession. Some are retiring, but about two-thirds of teachers leave for other reasons, most due to dissatisfactions with teaching" (para. 1). They also found that teacher attrition rates are roughly twice as high in the United States as they are in high-achieving countries such as Finland and Singapore. These high levels of burnout and attrition amongst teachers cannot be ignored, as they will have significant implications for the teaching profession as a whole. This problem begs the question, what can help to mitigate and even prevent burnout in teachers? The goal of this study is to view burnout through a holistic lens, proposing self-care

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practices (self-initiated actions to take care of the physical, essential, coping, and creative self) as a solution, particularly at the middle school level (Myers & Sweeney, 2014).

Background, Context, History, and Conceptual Framework for the Problem

> **Background.** Issues surrounding burnout are highly personal to me. Now six years into the profession, I have already experienced the debilitating symptoms of burnout. After graduating and getting my first teaching assignment, I fully immersed myself in my work. I placed high and often unrealistic expectations on myself. I learned in college that timely feedback was critical, so I attempted to have all my students' essays graded and returned within three days, no matter the cost. I learned in college that rapport is critical at the middle school level, so I attempted to attend every after school event, no matter the time commitment.

> As I quickly experienced disillusionment during my second year of teaching, I realized that of the cohort of middle school educators I graduated with, there were only two of us left in the profession; the rest had already quit. As I sat with that sobering reality and felt the weighty pull of my own burnout, I realized the need for work–life balance. I saw self-care, for the first time, as a critical component of teaching, not a selfish act of indulgence. Watson, Harper, Ratliff, and Singleton (2010) as well as many other researchers have begun the crucial work of promoting holistic wellness as a necessary aspect of longevity and effectiveness within the profession.

> **Context.** The context of this study is middle schools within the United States during the spring of the 2018–2019 school year. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019), approximately 630,000 full-time middle school teachers are currently employed in the United States. Creswell (2007) defined a population as a group of people who share common characteristics. For the purposes of this study, the common characteristics between the 630,000

teachers are that they teach full-time in middle schools within the same country and are licensed to teach students in the range of grades six through eight.

This group of teachers, who come from a wide range of content-areas and years of experience, serve in the approximately 15,000 middle schools in the United States, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (2018). Of those middle schools, approximately one quarter are considered Title I schools, or are provided financial assistance to ensure that the high percentages of children from low-income families meet challenging state academic standards. Increased demands, class sizes, and socioeconomic needs amongst students have forced these teachers to reconsider their approach to teaching. Increased student needs can leave teachers feeling emotionally exhausted. Utilizing Qualtrics statistical software, the suggested sample size needed for this study was 196 participants and was based on a 95% confidence level.

History. The issues within this study have been addressed throughout research in the last few decades. Macdonald (1999) discussed the unique physical, social, and emotional needs of teachers; nearly two decades later, those needs remain the same. Eccles (1999) explained the unique needs of rapidly developing middle school students. Despite the changes in culture and technology, the core of young adolescent needs has stayed the same. Additionally, Myers (1992) discussed various dimensions of well-being, including the need for occupational wellness. The issues addressed in this study are certainly not new. However, these historical pieces have shown that some issues have made little progress in the last twenty years and require a fresh perspective, perhaps one that a holistic view of education can offer.

Conceptual framework. The phenomenon of burnout and the theory of holism as it pertains to self-care functioned as the framework to determine the relationship between self-care and burnout for middle-level educators. Ultimately, the relationships that are determined in

Chapter 4 may serve as a basis for future professional development in various self-care practices for at-risk teachers. The frame specific to this study was centered on the research set forth by Maslach, Jackson, Leiter, Schaufeli, and Schwab (1996) and their explanation of the burnout phenomena. In their studies, they described the burnout phenomena as a multidimensional syndrome comprised of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The researchers further explained that the unique combination of all three factors provide a complete picture of an individual's overall burnout composition.

The framework for this study was also partially rooted in holism. This theory promotes the development of the whole person and embraces the nurturing of each person's physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being (Becker et al., 2015; Watson et al., 2010). In order to nurture the whole teacher and protect him/her from burnout, holistic self-care strategies are critical. Investing in holistic, therefore, is foundational, for a whole teacher can best care for his or her students (Soloway, 2011). Self-care for teachers involves holistic, varied components of wellness, including occupational wellness (Strout & Howard, 2012). Next, physical wellness (physically active or sedentary lifestyle) impacts teachers and can play a role in mitigating burnout (Braun et al., 2018). Mental and emotional wellness are also critical components for teacher wellness (Hue & Lau, 2015). Social wellness, as researched by Myers and Sweeney (2014) and spiritual self-care, as researched by Csazsar and Buchanan (2015) can lead to whole-person wellness. These two elements—the phenomenon of burnout and the theory of holism as it pertains to self-care—provided needed insight into the relationship between self-care and burnout for middle-level educators.

Statement of the Problem

The problem that has been identified is that there are many middle-level educators who are experiencing burnout. The number of unmotivated educators, rates of attrition, and stress levels are on the rise (Chang, 2013). This phenomenon of teacher burnout drives even passionate educators out of the profession. Even for those educators who stay in the profession, burnout has significant attitudinal, emotional, and physical effects.

Teachers today regularly encounter any of the following that can contribute to burnout: classroom disruptions, excessive paper work, demanding parents, oversized classes, insufficient salaries, or problems with co-workers or administrators. Educators experiencing burnout tend to have poor sleep quality, which also has a negative effect on their productivity and involvement as educators (Harris et al., 2015). Additionally, teachers often experience poor emotional health which may be linked to poor physical health, financial problems, strained family relationships, or other personal problems. Howard and Johnson (2004) even found that nearly 20% of teachers struggle with psychological distress, with an added 9% dealing with severe psychological grief. Teacher burnout and the grief that comes with this disillusionment can be an upsetting and frustrating experience. Ultimately, this phenomenon of burnout leads to attitudes of negativity, anxiety, and powerlessness, and also actions such as isolation, absenteeism, and attrition (Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to explore the relationship between burnout and self-care practices in middle school teachers. High attrition rates and their high-stakes consequences served as the leading motivation for this study. The results of this study primarily determine the relationship between self-care and burnout in middle school

teachers in the United States. Chang (2013) found that the rise in teacher attrition is not a result of teachers fleeing specific conditions or work requirements. Instead, attrition was attributed to teachers' lack of coping skills and self-care practices which could directly relate to decreased levels of burnout.

Decreased burnout has benefits to all school stakeholders. When teachers are valued holistically, they will experience decreased emotional exhaustion (Dicke et al., 2014; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014), decreased depersonalization, and an increase in personal accomplishment (Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Wang, Hall, & Rahimi, 2015). Students will also benefit from teachers practicing self-care. Student benefits include increased motivation, greater self-efficacy, and better self-esteem which inspires them to work to the best of their abilities (Ryan, Kuusinen, & Bedoya-Skoog, 2015; Veldman, Admiraal, Mainhard, Wubbels, & VanTartwijk, 2017; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Further, school districts as a whole benefit when teachers feel energized and fulfilled because they are willing to persevere through difficult circumstances for the benefit of the school and students.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

RQ1: What is the statistical significance of the relationship between middle school teachers' levels of burnout and self-care practices?

RQ2: What is the statistical significance of the relationship between middle school teachers' burnout and gender?

RQ3: What is the statistical significance of the relationship between middle school teachers' burnout and years in the profession?

H1: There is a statistically significant relationship between middle school teachers' perceived sense of burnout as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey

(MBI-ES) and their perceived levels of self-care as measured by the Five Factor Wellness Inventory.

H_0**1:** There is no statistically significant relationship between middle school teachers' perceived sense of burnout as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey (MBI-ES) and their perceived levels of self-care as measured by the Five Factor Wellness Inventory.

H2: There is a statistically significant relationship between middle school teachers' perceived sense of burnout as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey (MBI-ES) and their gender.

H_0**2:** There is no statistically significant relationship between middle school teachers' perceived sense of burnout as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey (MBI-ES) and their gender.

H3: There is a statistically significant relationship between middle school teachers' perceived sense of burnout as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey (MBI-ES) and their years within the profession.

H_0**3:** There is no statistically significant relationship between middle school teachers' perceived sense of burnout as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey (MBI-ES) and their years within the profession.

Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of the Study

Rationale. This study fills two critical gaps in the research. First, this study approaches teacher self-care practices from a holistic perspective. The majority of studies on teacher wellness focus on one aspect of self-care, such as physical well-being (Braun, Roeser, Mashburn, & Skinner, 2018) or meditation (Csazsar & Buchanan, 2015; Hue & Lau, 2015). Looking at

teacher self-care practices as a whole-person issue provides insights that better diminish the effects of teacher burnout. Second, this study provides much-needed insight into risk for burnout specifically for middle school teachers. There is very little research on this unique subset of teachers. The specific developmental needs of middle school students makes this group of teachers susceptible to burnout, perhaps in different ways than previously studied teacher populations. Third, this study provides insight into levels of burnout in correlation to years within the profession. Some studies focused on reducing burnout for young teachers, while others examined wellness programs as a prescription for teachers more advanced in their careers experiencing burnout (Kolbe, Tirozzi, Marx, & Bobbitt-Cooke, 2005). Instead, the purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between burnout and self-care practices in middle school teachers, no matter their number of years within the profession.

Relevance. The need to decrease burnout is relevant in education, as demands within the profession are high and attrition rates are increasing (Rodger et al., 2018). This study adds to research on teacher wellness, self-care practices, and levels of burnout. Evidence of a correlation between self-care practices burnout may help individual teachers see a need for self-care and ultimately replicate those practices. Administrators and even district-wide induction programs can also utilize the findings of this study to implement holistic wellness opportunities for teachers.

Significance. This study is significant because teachers, particularly at the middle school level, need opportunities for practicing self-care to decrease burnout, which will improve the whole school system. Any negative relationship between levels of burnout and self-care practices provides insight so school administrators can use the information to promote self-care and cut down on teacher turnover. District administrators and middle-level educators can make

an effort to develop opportunities for self-care throughout the school year, particularly focusing on preventative measures for at-risk groups of educators.

Teacher burnout has significant consequences, increasing the urgency for finding a way to mitigate it. The future of the profession and the future of students depend on finding the answer. If attrition rates continue to rise, high-quality educators will be in short supply (Vagi, Pivovarova, & Miedel, 2019). Additionally, burned out teachers negatively impact student learning outcomes (Herman, Hickmon-Rosa, & Reinke, 2018). They are often absent from school, and even lack critical qualities such as passion and patience. These consequences of burnout make this a significant study, helping to come one step closer to finding the answer. The understanding that student success is greatly influenced by the teacher reinforces the holistic approach, that a *whole* teacher can best care for the *whole* child (Mankin, Von der Embse, Renshaw, & Ryan, 2018).

Ultimately, this study produces three significant results. First, this study adds to the existing literature addressing teacher well-being. Second, it provides insight that may promote change in teachers' current self-care practices. Finally, it helps to identify at-risk educators, based on grade-levels taught, so that administrators can put preventative measures in place.

Definition of Terms

Burnout. In this study, burnout is a state of chronic stress that leads to emotional exhaustion, decreased personal accomplishment, and depersonalization (Maslach et al., 1996).

Depersonalization. Depersonalization, or a loss of enthusiasm, is defined as a "callous/ uncaring feeling, even hostility, towards others" (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 194).

Emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion, or the loss of energy, is characterized by "feeling tired and fatigued at work," which often results in absenteeism (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 193).

Holistic wellness. Holistic wellness requires accounting for the well-being of the whole self, not just one component, such as mental or physical health (Watson et al., 2010).

Middle school teacher. An educator certified to teach any content area in grades six through eight is considered a middle school teacher.

Personal accomplishment. Defined as positive thoughts and feelings related to feelings as though accomplishing something worthwhile at work (Maslach et al., 1996). When experiencing a heightened sense of personal accomplishment, increased motivation and performance follow. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (1996) described reduced personal accomplishment as one of the tenets of burnout.

Self-care. Self-care requires deliberate, self-initiated actions to improve or preserve health. As defined by Myers and Sweeney (2014), self-care has five components: taking care of the physical, essential, social, coping, and creative self.

Stress. Stress is defined as emotional tension or mental strain caused by demanding or adversarial circumstances (Prilleltensky, Neff, & Bessell, 2016).

Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations

It is important to note the assumptions, delimitations, and limitations of the study. These indicate intentional choices in designing the study, and acknowledging things that were out of the researcher's control. Those items informed decisions, such as data collection processes and participant selection processes, to ensure the study's credibility. Additionally, this section helps to determine whether or not the results can be generalized to other populations.

Assumptions. It is assumed that each survey respondent reflected upon his or her perceived levels or burnout and self-care practices. Respondents evaluated those experiences using Likert scale responses to simple statements from the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey and Five Factor Wellness Inventory. It is also assumed that respondents answered each question honestly and to the best of his or her ability. Finally, it is assumed that the research was not influenced in any way by the values of the researcher.

Delimitations. There are several delimitations that may have affected the outcomes of this study. Delimitations set the boundaries or limits for participants within the study. First, the sample for this study included a minimum of 196 middle school teachers. Although a few states vary in their definition (some include grade 5 or grade 9), the majority consider middle-level education to be grades six, seven, and eight. Delimiting the grades taught allowed me to study the data on burnout specific to this unique population. Second, this study only included full-time middle school teachers who have the time and desire to participate in the study.

Limitations. The limitations of this research study are specific to the study population. First, the timing of when teachers choose to answer the survey questions may have impacted their responses. For example, perceived levels of burnout may vary dependent upon day-to-day building, department, or classroom circumstances. The fact that the survey was distributed during summer break may have impacted participants' answers. Second, the reality that only certain teachers took the time to participate may have affected the data. Teachers who were experiencing symptoms of burnout may have chosen not to take the time needed to participate in the study.

Chapter 1 Summary

As a result of my personal experience with burnout and firsthand understanding of teacher attrition, along with my initial literature review, I developed the research questions to explore a needed area of study. Teacher burnout is affecting more than just teachers themselves. Students and entire schools are feeling the effects of teachers' emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and decreased sense of personal accomplishment. Current attrition rates make this is a critical issue in education. There is limited research pertaining to holistic self-care practices as a mitigating factor against burnout. More specifically, research regarding the causes of burnout and wellness solutions for middle school educators is nearly non-existent.

This study investigated the relationship between self-care practices through the lens of holism, and perceived levels of burnout specifically in middle school teachers. Ultimately, it helps to determine the relationship holistic self-care practices have on those negative effects of burnout. This study adds to the existing literature addressing teacher well-being. It may also help promote change in teachers' current self-care practices. Finally, it helps to identify at-risk educators, based on grade-levels taught, so that administrators can put preventative measures in place. I employed correlational survey research methods to investigate the direction and magnitude of the relationship between self-care practices and perceived levels of burnout. The remainder of this study is organized into several chapters: the literature review, the methodology, the findings, and conclusions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction to the Literature Review

Burnout and high attrition rates have plagued the teaching profession over the past decades (Berg, 1994). Middle school teachers are certainly not exempt. Students in middle school undergo drastic physical, mental, and emotional changes, all while testing the world around them and attempting to define themselves (Eccles, 1999). Middle school teachers often exhaust and neglect themselves in an effort to shape the volatile students in their classrooms, leading to an increase in burnout (Reiser & McCarthy, 2018; Ryan, Kuusinen, & Bedoya-Skoog, 2015; Yu, Wang, Zhai, Dai, & Yang, 2015).

A positivism reductionist worldview helps to best frame this phenomenon, which allows quantitative evidence to reveal the true nature of this burnout phenomenon, and then to reduce it into simpler constructs (Cooper, Glaesser, Gomm, & Hammersley, 2012). Burnout, or deep disillusionment with a career that once brought joy and purpose, stems from three distinct issues. Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter (1996) developed the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), which is now an authority on identifying precursors to and symptoms of burnout in various professions. Maslach's inventory looked at the effects of depersonalization on educators. Depersonalization is characterized as a "psychological withdrawal from relationships and the development of a negative, cynical, and callous attitude" (Hartney, 2008, p. 11). Teaching, known as a "compassion career," quickly lends itself to the second symptom of emotional exhaustion (Wang, Hall, & Rahimi, 2015). Negativity and exhaustion easily deflate an educator's drive, leading to a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. Utilizing the MBI as one piece of quantitative evidence helped to draw correlations between burnout and self-care strategies.

A common perception is that teachers coast through their work, easily brushing off discouragement and exhaustion throughout the school year with the promise of summer. While the summer months are a necessary reprieve throughout the year, the presence of those work-free months has done little to lower attrition rates. I was driven to research self-care strategies that mitigate burnout in teachers because I myself have experienced the weighty pull of burnout, and have seen other colleagues succumb to that pull, leaving the profession altogether. Teacher burnout is significant not just for me, but because the effects of burnout cannot be ignored. On a basic level, teacher burnout leads to increased absenteeism and decreased commitment to their jobs (Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005). Physically, teachers are also at risk for things like chronic stress. Stress is not, however, the only physical demand put on teachers. Teachers spend the majority of the day standing on concrete floors, walking, and crouching. These physical demands can also contribute to occupational fatigue.

Burnout also often leads to decreased communication with parents, the community and colleagues. Most critical, however, is the impact on students. Teachers experiencing burnout are "less sympathetic," "narrow-minded," and provide "less support for learning" (Zee & Koomen, 2016). This psychological phenomenon has significant ramifications if not researched and remedied. If burnout can have such a lasting impact, imagine conversely the potential impact of teachers who are truly well. Wellness for teachers starts with self-care beyond the classroom.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used in this study to examine the relationship between self-care practices and teacher burnout was based on a meshing of the following concepts: the phenomenon of burnout and the theory of holism as it pertains to self-care. As a guide for the study, this conceptual framework functioned as a scaffold to find answers to the identified

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research questions. By using this framework, evidence of a relationship existing between self-care and burnout was expected.

Burnout. The frame specific to this study was centered on the research set forth by Maslach et al. (1996) and their explanation of the burnout phenomena. In their studies, Maslach et al. described the burnout phenomena as a multidimensional syndrome comprised of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. These researchers posited that high levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, combined with a severely reduced sense of personal accomplishment paint a picture of an individual who is suffering from the burnout phenomena. The researchers further explained that the unique combination of all three factors provide a complete picture of an individual's overall burnout composition.

Emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion, the first tenet of burnout, is characterized by feeling emotionally drained, overwhelmed, and fatigued (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Some form of stress is typically the cause; many people, however, may not notice the early warning signs and will allow emotional exhaustion to build up over time. Voss, Wagner, Klusmann, Trautwein, and Kunter (2017) described several effects of emotional exhaustion. First, emotionally exhausted people may have a change in mood. They may lose their motivation to socialize (eat lunch in the faculty room), perform simple tasks (reply to emails) or even work (absenteeism). Emotional exhaustion can cause a sort of "brain fog," sleep issues, and even physical issues, such as significant weight gain or loss. Teachers' work and personal relationships often suffer when they experience emotional exhaustion. This can lead to loneliness which, ironically, can increase emotional exhaustion as there are fewer people with whom to share their feelings/ burdens. Lastly, Dicke et al. (2015) suggested that people who are preoccupied with thoughts about work during leisure time are more at risk. Most teachers spend

time outside of school planning lessons, grading papers, and worrying about students. The stresses and non-stop demands of teaching certainly put teachers at risk for emotional exhaustion.

Depersonalization. The second component of burnout, depersonalization, is characterized by a persistent and distressing alteration in the quality of subjective experience, such that the individual feels estranged from themselves. Depersonalization often goes hand-in-hand with derealization, where there is a sense of alienation from both surroundings and experiences. People experiencing depersonalization often have a reduced capacity for emotional response. This emotional numbing is another aspect of depersonalization known as deaffectualization (Lemche et al., 2016). Overall, people experiencing depersonalization express feeling "damped down," such that emotional life seems to lack spontaneity and subjective validity. When teachers experience depersonalization, they close off to their colleagues, become calloused towards students, and can even carry a sense of hostility towards others. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017) even found that high teacher depersonalization was a strong predictor of classroom disruption.

Personal accomplishment. A decreased sense of personal accomplishment is the final aspect of burnout. This is characterized by the perception of effectiveness and competence that builds feelings of self-esteem. Hartney (2008) found that a teacher's sense of personal accomplishment can be affected by many factors. A teacher's educational philosophy, as well as their attitude and passion towards the career can greatly contribute to their sense of accomplishment, particularly when facing stress and adversity. In addition, personality traits, attitudes, institutional philosophies, resources, litigation, leadership, and decision-making processes can impact an individual's sense of personal accomplishment (Aloe, Amo, &

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Shanahan, 2014). Wang, Hall, and Rahimi (2015) found that, at its core, teacher satisfaction comes from providing an excellent education for students. Anything that gets in the way of caring for and teaching students, therefore, takes away from a sense of personal accomplishment. For example, when teachers receive their students' standardized test scores each year, their countless hours of investment into their students are reduced to an arbitrary number. This, along with other state and institutional mandates, can lead to a decreased sense of personal accomplishment. Additionally, teachers work hard and are critical of themselves, constantly driving to improve. Teachers who celebrate successes—even small successes—are more likely to have an increased sense of personal accomplishment and, conversely, a decreased sense of burnout (Chesnut & Burley, 2015).

Holism. The framework for this study was also partially rooted in holism. This theory promotes the development of the whole person and embraces the nurturing of each person's physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being (Becker et al., 2015; Watson et al., 2010). Holism—the idea that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts—indicates that a teacher enters the building not just as an educator, but as someone who is worried about sick family members, or excited about planning a vacation (Reiser & McCarthy, 2018). Abraham Maslow (1943) was one of the first to "march toward" holism in the field of psychology. His needs-based hierarchy encompassed the whole person—everything from physiological needs to love and belonging. This implies that teachers are a compilation of personal and professional needs and goals that, when met, can lead to the Maslow's pinnacle of wholeness: self-actualization. For teachers to effectively reach this state and fully engage their students, teachers themselves must be continually evolving personally and professionally, engaging and reconciling their inner and outer life (Soloway, 2011). Another theorist, Smuts (1926), focused primarily on the

oneness of mind and body. He described that true holism only arises where "Mind irradiates Body and Body nourishes Mind, and the two are one in their mutual transfigurement" (p. 261). These concepts of the whole self must, then, influence the concepts of self-care.

      Self-care. In order to nurture the whole teacher and protect him/her from burnout, holistic self-care strategies are critical. The "oxygen mask theory," which stems from the directive on aircraft to place your own oxygen mask on before placing it on others, argues that if you do not take care for yourself, you are in no position—physically, mentally, or emotionally— to take care of anyone else (Grant, Kinman, & Baker, 2014). Investing in the whole teacher, therefore, is foundational, for a whole teacher can best care for his or her students (Soloway, 2011). Self-care strategies have been widely accepted as an effective prescription for burnout (Kolbe et al., 2005). Some researchers, however, argue that self-care strategies should be preventative (Hartigan, 2016; McKim & Velez, 2017). For years, teacher preparation programs focused solely on the occupational wellness of their teacher candidates (Yacapsin, 2010). Focus on content knowledge and pedagogy are, no doubt, critical to preparing future educators. The problem lies in the reality that these highly qualified teachers are graduating, entering the work force, and quickly burning out.

      Self-care for teachers involves holistic, varied components of wellness, including occupational wellness (Strout & Howard, 2012). Pedagogy and content knowledge are, after all, critical to the profession. Next, physical wellness (physically active or sedentary lifestyle) impacts teachers and can play a role in mitigating burnout (Braun et al., 2018). Mental and emotional wellness are also critical components for teacher wellness. Teaching educators keys of mindfulness and self-regulation may also help to prevent burnout (Hue & Lau, 2015). Social wellness requires teachers to have the skills to understand their building's culture, acclimate to it,

get involved, resolve conflict, and build rapport with colleagues (Myers & Sweeney, 2014).

Although not all teachers subscribe to a religion, equipping teachers to understand their

spirituality can also lead to whole-person wellness (Csazsar & Buchanan, 2015). The

phenomenon of burnout and the theory of holism as it pertains to self-care functioned as a

scaffold to determine the relationship between self-care and burnout for middle-level educators.

Ultimately, the relationship that was determined will serve as a basis for professional

development in various self-care practices for at-risk teachers.

Review of Research Literature and Methodological Literature

Despite the hundreds of voices on the topics of wellness and burnout, specific studies

provide direction and clarity for further research. This review of the research literature explores

an overview of the foundation for my own research. The review will demonstrate the findings of

both empirical research literature and seminal literature. Additionally, the review will denote the

gaps in research which this study serves to fill.

Methodological literature. Research on burnout and self-care employed various

methodological approaches, both qualitative and quantitative. Some qualitative studies utilized

interviews (Üstün, 2017) and observations (Tobin, King, Henderson, Bellocchi, & Ritchie, 2016)

to gather data. These studies gathered data on qualitative variables, such as school culture and

classroom management. Many of the quantitative studies utilized pre- and post-tests (Saul-

Neves & Conboy, 2011) and questionnaires (Szigeti, Balázs, Bikfalvi, & Urbán, 2017) to

determine the relationships between variables. Pre- and post-tests were most effective in

determining the effectiveness of wellness and mindfulness programs. In order to determine the

relationship between self-care and burnout in middle school teachers, this quantitative study used

a correlational design, with the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey (MBI-ES)

measuring burnout, and the Five-Factor Wellness Inventory (FFWI) measuring self-care. The

following sections detail the research literature surrounding the issues in this study.

Attrition. High turnover rates in the field of education have caused alarm over the last

few decades. Macdonald (1999) explained in his seminal work that many studies focus on "the

wastage of resources and expertise, as well as teachers' lowly status and poor working

conditions" (p. 835). While this work found causes of attrition inconclusive, more recent

research has provided insight. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) found that "90%

of open teaching positions are created by teachers who leave the profession. Some are retiring,

but about two-thirds of teachers leave for other reasons, most due to dissatisfactions with

teaching" (para. 1). They also found that teacher attrition rates are roughly twice as high in the

United States as they are in high-achieving countries such as Finland and Singapore. These

studies illustrated the need to determine causes of attrition, such as burnout, as well as strategies

to lower teacher attrition rates.

Burnout. Teacher burnout is one of the leading causes of attrition. This reality requires

investigation into what is causing this burnout. Researchers have published dozens of studies

that reveal the believed causes of burnout. Maslach et al. (1996) attributed burnout to three main

causes: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Their work laid

the foundation for other studies' findings of additional causes of burnout.

Emotional exhaustion. According to some, emotional exhaustion—one of the major

tenets of burnout—is inevitable in the profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). The Maslach

Burnout Inventory defines emotional exhaustion as "feelings of being emotionally overextended

and exhausted by one's work" (Maslach & Jackson, 1981, p. 101). Chang (2009) explored the

significance of emotional exhaustion, finding that "the habitual patterns in teachers' judgments

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about student behavior and other teaching tasks may contribute significantly to teachers' repeated experience of unpleasant emotions and those emotions may eventually lead to burnout" (p. 193). Chang further expressed the need for teachers to understand the antecedents to their emotions, as well as to learn self-regulation techniques.

Emotional exhaustion can also take other forms. Murphy (2017) explains psychologist Roy Baumeister's concept of ego depletion, or the notion that humans have a limited supply of willpower. This psychologist's research supported that self-control causes a significant drop in blood-sugar levels, which ultimately leads to feelings of emotional fatigue. Teachers exert willpower on a daily basis, remaining cordial to a less than friendly parent email, or walking away from a disrespectful student. Murphy asserted that the most significant way teachers exert willpower is through decision making, or "decision fatigue." Researchers found that an increase in decision making ultimately leads to a decrease in willpower (Polman & Vohs, 2016). For example, a student's paper that is graded first is more fairly scored than one that is graded last. Decision fatigue has simply depleted teachers of the energy to continuously make good decisions. After a day filled with hundreds of decisions—choosing the correct consequences for a child, deciding how to teach the lesson, and prioritizing how to use the planning period— decision fatigue takes over, leaving teachers emotionally exhausted. Compound that fatigue over the course of 180 school days and teachers can experience symptoms of burnout.

The high-intensity emotions associated with teaching can also lead to feelings of burnout. Murphy (2017) found that high-intensity emotions arouse the body's physiological stress response with reactions such as increased heart rate and activated sweat glands. He found, however, that negative high-intensity emotions, such as anger or frustration, elicit the same reaction as positive high-intensity emotions, such as excitement and elation. The combination of

high-intensity emotions, such as frustration over student behavior and exhilaration from high-energy lessons, leads to emotional depletion. Once again, this cycle of exhaustion from high-intensity emotions can lead to feelings of burnout. Despite the existing research on emotional exhaustion, this is not the sole factor contributing to burnout, as depersonalization plays a role as well.

Depersonalization. Depersonalization is the second key factor of occupational burnout. This component is characterized as "an unfeeling and impersonal response toward recipients of one's service, care treatment, or instruction" (Maslach et al., 1996, para. 3). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017) found that the stressors most closely associated with feelings of depersonalization were "discipline problems, low student motivation, and value dissonance" (p. 775). This sense of depersonalization often causes teachers to act cynical, or have a negative, detached, and callous response to various aspects of teaching. Often, burned out teachers will blame and complain about their students. In addition, teachers may express negativity towards parents, colleagues, and administration, and feel cynical towards the mission of the district, the goals of the team, and even the responsibilities of the profession. Depersonalization also contributes to the third component of burnout: lowered sense of personal accomplishment.

Personal accomplishment and self-efficacy. A large body of research focuses on the relationship between perceived self-efficacy and burnout in teachers. Self-efficacy, or a person's belief in his or her ability to achieve goals, is closely related to the concept of personal accomplishment, or "feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work," as defined in the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach et al., 1996). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2014) researched the impact of perceived self-efficacy in teachers and found that teacher engagement and job satisfaction were directly impacted by the level of personal accomplishment.

Additionally, levels of self-efficacy and burnout have been tied to teacher illness and quitting intentions (Wang, Hall, & Rahimi, 2015). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2016) even found self-efficacy to be a strong predictor of emotional exhaustion, one of the previous tenets of burnout. Self-efficacy was also a strong predictor of commitment to the teaching profession (Chesnut & Burley, 2015). This correlation between self-efficacy and commitment was established as early as preservice experiences for student teachers (Akyol, 2016).

Low teacher self-efficacy impacts more than just levels of burnout. Classroom processes and student achievement were also impacted by low self-efficacy (Zee & Koomen, 2016). Self-efficacy also directly impacted classroom management efficacy and observed classroom quality (Ryan, Kuusinen, & Bedoya-Skoog, 2015; Veldman et al., 2017). Teachers who feel they are not achieving goals within their profession often begin to lack passion. That lack of passion directly translates to the student behaviors and student achievement. Yu, Wang, Zhai, Dai, and Yang (2015) were convinced in their research that a strong sense of self-efficacy is a significant factor in mitigating burnout.

Stress. Teachers experience high levels of stress on a daily basis. Educators are asked to plan, instruct, assess, document, collaborate with colleagues, and communicate with parents and administrators. This, however, is only the official job description. Differentiating for students, managing high-need students, teaching social skills, and building rapport with each individual student also require intentional time and planning. Herman, Hickmon-Rosa, and Reinke (2018) revealed that 93% of teachers experience moderate to severe stress on a daily basis. This study also found that highly stressed teachers have "more instances of disruptive behaviors and lower levels of prosocial behaviors" (p. 93). This stress affects more than just students; teachers are not invulnerable to the physical impacts of chronic stress. The Mayo Clinic found that chronic

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stress puts teachers at risk for the following: anxiety, depression, digestive problems, headaches, heart disease, sleep problems, weight gain, and memory/concentration impairment (Harris et al., 2015). Worry, another trigger for elevated stress levels, activates teachers' fight-or-flight responses. Whether worrying about an upcoming observation, a parent email, or students' academic performance, the body's physiological reaction leaves teachers feeling exhausted (Murphy, 2017).

Stress has more than physiological effects. Many researchers have studied the need for stress reduction amongst teachers in order to prevent burnout and promote retention (Curry & O'Brien, 2012; Kipps-Vaughan, 2013; Prilletensky, Neff, & Bessell, 2016). Watson et al. (2010) even found perceived levels of stress as a strong predictor of job satisfaction. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2016), on the other hand, found that stress has a direct impact on a teacher's emotional exhaustion and probability of leaving the profession.

Some studies revealed that mindfulness improved stress (Hartigan, 2017), while others promoted colleague support systems as the answer (Wolgast & Fischer, 2017). Although necessary, teacher evaluation can contribute to stress and undermine a positive work environment. Ford, Van Sickle, Clark, Fazio-Brunson, and Schwwen (2017) found that high-stakes teacher evaluation systems had an opposite effect than was intended. The primary purpose of these evaluation systems is to increase teacher motivation and improvement. Instead, they found that teachers experienced "significant negative arousal events and profound losses of satisfaction and commitment to the profession—this despite most being rated as 'highly effective'" (p. 202). Evaluation systems can quickly undermine the sense of community support, giving way to comparison and competition. Schools which implement peer evaluation are particularly at risk for teachers having increased stress levels. Peer review can produce

incredible results for some schools. In other cases, however, educators feel this practice

"violates the professional norm of egalitarianism—the assumption that 'we're all equal'" (Moore

Johnson, & Fiarman, 2012, p. 20). This attitude can lead to teachers feeling defensive, paranoid,

and disconnected from their peers. The type of evaluation process a school district adopts can

have weighty consequences. Ultimately, it is clear that teachers undergo significant levels of

stress that can contribute to perceived levels of burnout. Another factor contributing to stress

and burnout is teacher salaries.

    Financial needs. Teacher salaries can contribute to teacher attrition. Since 2008, teacher

salaries have largely remained stagnant. After being adjusted for inflation, teachers in 38 states

earned less in 2016 than they did in 2010 (Goldring, Taie, & Riddles, 2014). In addition, costs

for health insurance and retirement pension plans have risen over the past 10 years. These

financial strains have led to attrition. Seven percent of teachers leaving the profession credit it to

poor salaries and benefits (Goldring, Taie, & Riddles, 2014).

    A 2016 survey found that 49% of teachers worked summer jobs to supplement their

income, while 31% held jobs throughout the school year (Maninger, Sullivan, Creghan, &

Johnson, 2016). The much-needed respite and recovery of summer is, for many teachers,

consumed with providing for their families through other means, attending professional

development trainings, or planning for the following school year. The financial strain that forces

many teachers to work throughout the summer cuts down on their ability to refuel emotionally,

sending them in to the next year already drained. Teachers feeling that their work is not being

fairly compensated can ultimately lead to burnout. Additionally, a lack of resources within the

school can lead to financial stress and burnout.

Lack of resources. For some teachers, a lack of resources can lead to financial stress.

According to a recent survey, teachers "spent an average of $656 a year out of their own pockets

for classroom supplies" (Maninger et al., 2016, para. 3). Teachers want to provide the best

learning opportunities for their students, and additional resources are often required to bring

those opportunities to life. This lack of resources for classroom funding can lead to additional

stress for teachers.

Burnout more commonly stems from a lack of resources at the district-level. Teachers

are asked to cover for other teachers because substitute teachers are unavailable. Teachers have

limited aids for the students in their classrooms and limited access to curriculum coaches. These

resources—substitutes, aids, coaches—are all supports that help alleviate work load and stress.

When missing, teachers have additional responsibilities which can lead to a decreased sense of

personal accomplishment and increased sense of emotional exhaustion (McCarthy, Lambert,

Lineback, Fitchett, & Baddouh, 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). A lack of resources

combined with high expectations for student achievement compounds stress and increases the

likelihood of burnout.

High-stakes testing. High-stakes testing greatly influences job-related stress and

perceived levels of burnout. Teachers are evaluated based on students' performances on a

particular day. Student motivation and life circumstances the day of the test are not taken into

consideration. The results are reviewed and the teacher is evaluated, leaving teachers stressed

not only about teaching their content, but also about outside factors they cannot control

(Gonzalez, Peters, Orange, & Grigsby, 2017). Although test-based accountability can

occasionally help to discern which teachers may not be meeting the academic needs of their

students, more often it increases stress for high-quality teachers (Von, Schoemann, Kilgus, Wicoff, & Bowler, 2017).

Even without high-stakes testing, teachers feel the weight of student achievement. Particularly as the social, emotional, and academic needs of students evolve, teachers will continue to adjust to those needs to help students achieve whole-person growth (Zee & Koomen, 2016). Part of helping students grow in a safe, structured environment is having good classroom management skills. Classroom management is one of the leading contributors to burnout in teachers.

Classroom management. Classroom management is directly linked to burnout in teachers. If the classroom is chaotic and disrespectful, the teacher is sure to experience increased emotional exhaustion and decreased personal accomplishment. Aloe, Amo, and Shanahan (2014) discovered a direct correlation between classroom management and personal accomplishment. Better classroom management correlated to increased self-efficacy and decreased burnout (Veldman et al., 2017). Other factors of burnout are also directly tied to classroom management. Dicke et al. (2014) found that decreased classroom disturbances led to decreased emotional exhaustion. Additionally, depersonalization, or a sense of detachment or even resentment, towards the students can easily slip in when the classroom is not well-managed. The research literatures listed above show clear causes and factors contributing to burnout in teachers. The effects—absenteeism, stress, depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, decreased sense of personal accomplishment, and decreased commitment to the profession—cannot be ignored and are only amplified in the middle school setting.

Middle school. Middle school years, Grades 6 through 8, are often volatile. Students undergo changes and make choices that will shape who they become. This period of life brings

with it a set of very unique needs for students. Those needs permeate and inform the needs of

the teachers, making middle school teachers at an increased risk for burnout.

Student needs. Middle childhood needs are unique, situated and fluctuating between

childhood and adulthood. In her seminal research, Eccles (1999) explained that it is during these

years that:

> Children make strides toward adulthood by becoming competent, independent, self-
>
> aware, and involved in the world beyond their families. Biological and cognitive changes
>
> transform children's bodies and minds. Social relationships and roles change
>
> dramatically. During middle school, children develop a sense of self-esteem and
>
> individuality, comparing themselves with their peers. (p. 33)

The Center for Early Adolescence established seven needs specific to this age (Scales, 1991).

First, students have specific physical needs as they enter puberty. Nutrition and physical activity

are critical during this developmental stage. Second, students need to experience feelings of

competence and achievement. It is during these years that students will gravitate towards an

activity where they experience success. Often, they will stay involved in this activity and it will

become part of their identity as a young adult. This desire for self-definition is the third need.

Fourth, students need opportunities for creative expression as their brains continue to develop.

Students at this age undergo drastic changes in family roles (less dependent on parents) and

social relationships (meaningful friendships, discovering sexuality). This desire for positive

social interaction is the fifth need. Although they would not articulate this, the sixth need is for

structure and clear limits both at home and at school. Lastly, students at this age crave

meaningful participation. In other words, they need to understand the real world context of their

learning and have opportunities to identify, develop, and use their individual talents, skills, and interests in a relevant way (Scales, 1991).

The needs of middle school students are vastly different from the needs of students in elementary schools and high schools. Eccles (1999) explained, "the tumultuous physical and social changes that accompany puberty, the desire for autonomy and distance from the family, and the transition to middle school can all cause problems for young people" (p. 30). Responsive teaching requires educators to see these needs and respond appropriately. Acknowledging, planning for, and meeting these physical, emotional, and social needs contributes to teacher burnout in the middle school level.

Teacher needs. The needs identified by the Center for Early Adolescence (Scales, 1991) corresponded to the unique needs of middle school teachers. First, middle school teachers battle a shift in students' priorities and motivation (Romero, Master, Paunesku, Dweck, & Gross, 2014). In their transition to adolescence, many students have lost the innate desire to do well simply to please their teachers. They also are not yet in high school, where graduation requirements become a motivator for even the least motivated.

In order to create a rich learning environment, teachers must create opportunities for competence and achievement—giving students time to achieve mastery. Teachers must also plan for meaningful participation—giving students choices, making relevance explicit, and giving their work an audience beyond the classroom. This requires time and purposeful planning. Middle school teachers can often experience decreased personal accomplishment when, even after thorough planning, students are still unmotivated, or despite being given time for mastery, the learning is still not a priority for the students.

Middle school teachers are also at risk for emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. During these years, students need positive social interactions, yet often struggle to do so. The teacher serves as much more than just an educator. The middle school teacher mediates for friend groups, reminds about hygiene, teaches about appropriate responses, and counsels broken hearts. The tumult that comes from students navigating new social relationships and defining themselves can leave teachers feeling the effects of burnout. As students define themselves, they can seemingly present multiple personalities and extreme attitude shifts throughout the course of a week. This volatility can cause depersonalization, with middle school teachers withdrawing from relationships with their students, and even becoming cynical.

Despite their desire for autonomy and self-definition, middle school students need structure and clear limits. As students are discovering their own identity, they will continually test boundaries throughout the school year. Staying consistent even when being worn down with the same actions or requests can become emotionally exhausting and lead to a decreased sense of personal accomplishment. Despite the body of research on the unique needs of middle school students, research on the needs and burnout levels of middle childhood educators is lacking. This study serves to help fill that gap and identify specific patterns in burnout amongst middle school teachers.

Holism. Holism comes from the Greek, meaning entire or total (Schemmann, 2008). Aristotle first captured this concept, asserting that a whole is more than the sum of its parts. The actual term "holism" was first introduced in the 1926 book, *Holism and Evolution,* by Jan Smuts, a South African statesman. Since that time, holism has been widely accepted as the idea that properties of any given system cannot be explained by its components alone. Instead, the system as a whole significantly determines how the parts behave and react (Mahmoudi, Jafari,

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Nasrabadi, & Liaghatdar, 2012). This holistic theory can be applied to students, teachers, and entire schools.

   Students. A holistic view of education deeply impacts *what* and *how* students learn. For students to excel and deeply engage with the learning, they must be engaged as a whole person—physically, socially, emotionally, and certainly cognitively (Scales, 1991). Previously, education focused solely on students' cognitive needs. This led to a serendipitous approach, hoping that students would absorb content, rather than intentionally planning for whole person, transformative learning.

   Before students can experience profound and lasting shifts in their thinking, basic needs must be met. "You can't do the Bloom's stuff, until you take care of the Maslow's stuff," is a common phrase used in current educational jargon, as credited to educator Allen Beck (Vera, 2017, para. 4). The heart of this phrase speaks to the need for a holistic approach to education. Students' whole person needs ("Maslow's stuff") supplant students' cognitive needs/ abilities ("Bloom's stuff").

   Abraham Maslow (1943), an American psychologist, created a hierarchy of needs. First, students require basic physiological needs—food, water, shelter, clothing, and sleep. Next, students need to experience safety and security in the forms of health and family stability. The third need is for love and belonging with friends, family, and a sense of connection. Only then can students move on to self-esteem, where they experience confidence, achievement, and respect. Lastly, students arrive at self-actualization where they can express creativity and experience acceptance and a sense of purpose (Maslow, 1943). A holistic view of education acknowledges that a hungry child most likely cannot experience transformational learning. The needs of the whole child supersede the need to absorb algebraic concepts.

Many educational researchers have different interpretations regarding the implications of holism in education. According to Grauerholz (2001), holistic teaching is:

> A pedagogical approach that consciously attempts to (*a*) promote student learning and growth on levels beyond the cognitive, (*b*) incorporate diverse methods that engage students in personal exploration and help them connect course materials to their own lives, and (*c*) help students clarify their own values and their sense of responsibility to others and to society. (p. 44)

In this sense, teaching students holistically requires much more than teaching content. In this understanding of holistic education, the teacher does not simply teach reading. Instead, the educator teaches transferrable, whole-person skills through a variety of content, learning processes, and relevant assessments. Students learn how to become resilient, self-directed learners. They learn how to be critical and creative thinkers. Students learn how to be effective communicators and collaborative team players. They learn what it means to be responsible and productive citizens. This type of learning requires teachers to know their students' needs in Maslow's hierarchy, then help students to grow as whole people, not just as readers, mathematicians, or scientists.

Teachers. Teachers often become so focused on the needs of the whole child in their classroom that they forget that they, too, are whole people. Just as the student is not defined by his or her skills as a writer, teachers are not defined solely by their profession. Teachers must also be engaged physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively to excel. Watson et al. (2010) found that teachers' holistic wellness was a direct indicator of their stress levels and ultimately their job satisfaction. Zee and Koomen (2016) found that teachers' whole person wellness has an even broader impact. These teachers had increased classroom quality, improved student

outcomes, and decreased burnout. When teachers see themselves as whole people not just educators, students benefit. Korn (2018) took it even further, expressing that the holistic self-care of the teachers affects the holistic health of the entire school.

     Schools. The premise of holism—that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts—is best exemplified in the whole school. The health and effectiveness of an entire school is not reliant on one singular factor. Instead, it must be seen as a whole system. Educators, administrators, support staff, students, procedures, school culture, and community expectations are intimately interconnected and cannot be understood without reference to the whole.

     Similarly to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the whole school system is built on basic needs. Administrators need to take care of themselves as whole people so they can best support their teachers. Teachers need to do the same so that they can best meet the needs of their students. Students must develop as whole people to engage in lasting, transformational learning. The building infrastructure, procedures, and climate must be conducive to learning. Each of these elements is critical to the health of the whole school.

     Mogren, Gericke, and Scherp (2018) asserted that a critical component to a healthy and effective school system is to develop and implement a holistic vision. The purpose of a vision is to articulate the ideal state that the school wishes to achieve. It answers questions such as "Where are we headed?" and "What is our dream for this school?" A holistic vision compels and unifies every component of the school. Pedagogy, procedures, hiring practices, and professional development are all affected by writing and continually revisiting a vision. The interdependent parts of the school, when also seen through the lens of holism, contribute to a highly effective and coherent school system capable of supporting educators and students as whole people.

Mitigating burnout. A large body of research exists regarding the occurrence of burnout among teachers. However, little is known about which groups are most at-risk for burnout, and research regarding causes and cures for burnout contains gaps. More research is required to determine factors that help to mitigate teacher stress and burnout. The majority of existing research on the mitigating factors can be categorized as pertaining to teachers' mental, physical, social, or emotional health.

Mindfulness and meditation. Many researchers have explored the role mindfulness and meditation play to ameliorate stress and burnout levels amongst teachers. Hue and Lau (2015) found that, after participating in a mindfulness program, teachers experienced an increase in well-being, and a decrease in stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms. Csazsar and Buchanan (2015) postured that mindfulness and meditation, above all other wellness measures, are the solution to burnout. This practice helps with the emotional and even spiritual wellness of teachers. They found that practicing meditation increases teacher empathy, compassion, calm, clarity and concentration. Additionally, meditation decreases stress levels—a contributing factor to burnout (Csazsar & Buchanan, 2015).

Other studies echoed this conclusion, showing how mindfulness and mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques help to mitigate stress for both teachers and students (Hartigan, 2017). Saul-Neves and Conboy (2011) are proponents of providing stress management courses for teachers. They noted that "participating teachers showed a significant decrease in their irrational beliefs and professional distress, as well as an increase in professional motivation and the perception of well-being" (p. 131). While these studies show clear benefits of attending to mental health, other studies focus primarily on teachers' physical health.

Physical health. Several studies promote physical health as one of the primary factors to mitigate burnout. Zhong, You, Gan, Zhang, Lu, and Wang (2009) noted a correlation between teachers' physical health and their levels of stress, burnout, and depression symptoms. Various researchers have named nutrition, sleep, or exercise as the missing component in the wellness equation for teachers. Cropley, Dijk, and Stanley (2006) found that sleep plays a significant role in teacher wellness. When teachers are stressed and experience burnout at work, they experience decreased sleep quality. Sleep is a significant component of physical health for teachers, and quality sleep can help alleviate feelings of burnout.

Tkachuk and Russell-Mayhew (2017) found that levels of teacher exercise affected stress management and body satisfaction. In addition to improving quality of life for teachers themselves, exercise allowed teachers to "model health attitudes and behaviors to their future students" (p. 286). These studies illustrate the positive effect physical health can have on teachers' wellness, ultimately decreasing perceived levels of burnout. Not all researchers agree that physical health is the answer, however. Others see social wellness and the workplace environment as the primary factor that can mitigate teacher burnout.

Workplace environment. Various research studies name social wellness as a primary mitigating factor against teacher burnout (Amini-Faskhodi & Siyyari, 2018; Avanzi, Schuh, Fraccaroli, & Van Dick, 2015; Kinman, Wray, & Strange, 2011; Parker, Martin, Colmar, & Liem, 2012; Perie & Baker, 1997). Social wellness is so much more than having a friend at work. It requires teachers to have the skills necessary to thrive within their work place. Teachers need the skills to understand their building's culture and acclimate to it. Only then can they truly get involved, build rapport with colleagues, and ultimately resolve conflicts as they arise.

Beyond teachers' social skills, social wellness is built through a positive workplace environment. Lambersky (2016) found that administrators play a significant role in establishing a sense of wellness within the workplace. Wolgast and Fischer (2017), however, found that connections between colleagues best creates a positive workplace environment that can help eliminate or diminish the factors that lead to burnout. When they have developed friendships within the context of a positive school culture and established a sense of belonging, teachers are less likely to experience the disconnect that comes with burnout.

Kolbe et al. (2005) found that having a positive environment may not be enough. Worksite wellness programs are a more intentional and, according to their study, effective way to mitigate teacher stress. Wellness programs can promote physical wellness, such as creating a competition for who exercises the most minutes during a month. They can also promote social wellness, by organizing teacher events that help to boost morale.

This sense of morale and social support is, according to Kinman, Wray, and Strange (2011) a powerful factor in decreasing burnout and increasing job satisfaction. Teachers who develop a social network at school create a sense of place for themselves and can experience energy, enthusiasm, and confidence—three things which, when diminished, characterize burnout. For some researchers, social wellness is not the answer. Others found that emotional wellness, particularly levels of resiliency, are the critical component to combating burnout.

Emotional well-being. Many studies attributed teacher burnout to various elements of emotional well-being. Several studies described emotional well-being as a professional practice skill that needs to be cultivated and developed for teachers (Grise-Owens, Miller, Escobar-Ratliff, & George, 2018; Lucas, 2018). Several studies indicated that resilience was the most critical emotional well-being skill that needs to be cultivated in teachers (Bowles & Arnup, 2016;

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Richards, Levesque-Bristol, Templin, & Graber, 2016; Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2014). Potter, Pion, and Gentry (2015) argued that resiliency and independence as a teacher are essential to cut down on perceived levels of burnout.

Other researchers found that emotional well-being and decreased stress came from emotionally healthy interpersonal relationships at work. This type of wellness requires effective problem solving strategies amongst colleagues, parents, administrators, and students (Reiser & McCarthy, 2018). Additionally, authentic, mature collaboration in the workplace is critical (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2015; Veldman et al., 2017). These elements of an emotionally well teacher can decrease work-related stress and burnout.

Lastly, many studies named self-efficacy as the cure for burnout. When teachers experienced feelings of self-efficacy, or believing in their innate ability to achieve their goals, they had decreased levels of burnout (Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Wang, Hall, & Rahimi, 2015). Although extensive research exists regarding various factors that mitigate burnout, little research investigates the overall effect of holistic self-care practices. This study will fill that gap by investigating self-care practices from a whole-person perspective.

Self-care practices. Self-care is the intentional act of putting time and effort towards personal wellness. It requires taking time to purposefully engage in activities which bring life and refreshment. These efforts, when practiced from a holistic perspective, should strongly correlate to lower teacher burnout. Although the Five Factor Wellness Inventory was implemented in this study, it is important to look at how wellness is defined in the other literature.

In his seminal writing on wellness, Myers (1992) referenced eight dimensions of well-being. First is emotional well-being, or the ability create satisfying relationships and cope with life effectively. Second is environmental wellness, or achieving wellness by "occupying pleasant, stimulating environments that support well-being" (p. 136). Physical, social, and intellectual wellness are the next three types identified. Sixth is occupational wellness, or finding meaning and satisfaction within the work place. Seventh, spiritual wellness is identified as one component, and is differentiated from religiosity. The final component of wellness identified is financial wellness, or being at peace with financial choices. Not all studies, however, adopted the eight dimensions of well-being, often eliminating certain components. The seven dimensions of wellness simply eliminate financial well-being (Swarbrick, 2006), and the six dimensions of wellness eliminate financial and occupational wellness (Strout & Howard, 2012).

This study utilized the Five Factor Wellness Inventory, which differs from the other wellness models. Instead of simply eliminating one more component, the five factors shift to still encompass the whole person. The first component of wellness includes the Creative Self, or thinking, emotions, humor, and even occupational well-being. The second component, or Coping Self, evaluates beliefs, stress management, and self-worth. Social Self, the third component, looks at wellness in terms of friendship and love. Fourth, the Essential Self involves spirituality and identity. Lastly, the physical self includes exercise and nutrition. Although the verbiage shifted, the components of the whole self are present when measuring the five factors of wellness. The goal of this study was to prove that practices of self-care in all five domains are directly correlated to levels of burnout.

Prevention versus prescription. For years, teacher preparation programs focused solely on the occupational wellness of their teacher candidates (Mihaly, McCaffrey, Sass, & Lockwood, 2013). Focus on content knowledge and pedagogy are, no doubt, critical to preparing future educators. The problem lies in the reality that these highly qualified teachers are graduating, entering the work force, and quickly burning out. To better prepare teachers, a holistic approach must be implemented, to equip them with coping strategies conducive to longevity within the profession.

Despite the hundreds of voices on the topics of self-care and burnout, this review of the research literature explored an overview of the foundation for my own research. The first dichotomy within the research was the underlying belief as to whether or not burnout is preventable. According to some, emotional exhaustion—one of the major tenets of burnout—is inevitable in the profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). Because the demands of student achievement will never change, burnout will never disappear (Zee & Koomen, 2016). Still others argued that teachers feeling motivated to leave—due to stress, financial needs, burnout, lack of resources, etc.—is expected, and the only question is if those quitting intentions turn into quitting actions (McCarthy et al., 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016; Wang, Hall, & Rahimi, 2015). Other researchers took a more redemptive approach by turning to self-care as a prescriptive solution to the inevitability of burnout (Sneyers, Jacobs, & Struyf, 2016).

Another line of research, however, looked at teacher burnout through the lens of preventability. Some of the research described self-care as a professional practice skill (Grise-Owens, Miller, Escobar-Ratliff, & George, 2018), and others encouraged teachers who are new to the profession to seek self-care strategies before burnout creeps in. Still others found value in teaching self-care strategies earlier, incorporating self-care into induction programs or preservice

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coursework (Akyol, 2016; Hartigan, 2016; Hue & Lau, 2015; McKim & Velez, 2017; Soloway, 2011; Yacapsin, 2010). Despite this existing body of research, gaps still remain when exploring preventative strategies for teacher preparation programs and induction programs.

Teacher preparation programs. Teacher preparation programs equip preservice teachers with pedagogical theory, content knowledge, and practical experience. The attrition rates for new teachers, however, suggest that these preparations are not enough. Teachers enter their first job assignment, then encounter stress and feelings of disillusionment. Without effective coping strategies and self-care practices, new teachers are not persevering within the profession.

The body of research regarding this issue of teaching wellness as part of teacher preparation primarily suggests that the mental wellness of preservice teachers is the missing component. Hartigan (2016) as well as Hue and Lau (2015) suggested that equipping preservice teachers with mindfulness skills significantly reduced stress in these new teachers. This stress reduction through mindfulness ultimately led to decreased feelings of burnout (Soloway, 2011). McKim and Velez (2017) proposed that equipping student teachers with these mental wellness strategies led to an increased sense of self-efficacy, and therefore decrease in burnout. Vagi, Pivovarova, and Miedel (2019) even advised that wellness for preservice teachers is non-negotiable in keeping quality student teachers within the profession.

Despite these various studies on the mental wellness of preservice teachers, research is extremely limited in promoting the teaching of holistic self-care practices. Yacapsin (2010) also noted this gap in research, remarking in her study that whole person self-care strategies must be taught to preservice teachers. Not only do those skills help to improve their student teaching experiences, but also equips them with the skills needed when entering their first teaching

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assignment. If taught self-care strategies in tandem with their teacher preparation curriculum,

burnout could be less prevalent within the profession, and even preventable.

Induction programs. Instead of addressing self-care through teacher preparation

programs, other research suggests it should be implemented within induction programs. Feelings

of burnout and emotional exhaustion can, for some, begin as early as the induction phase (Voss

et al., 2017). This early onset of burnout needs to be addressed within the context of induction

training and supervision. Kutsyuruba and Treguna (2014) found that addressing the whole

person needs of new teachers significantly curbed teacher attrition. They accomplished this

through specific trainings as well as a mentorship program throughout the induction phase. The

new teachers' mentors served as a check-point, monitoring the new teachers' holistic well-being

and watching for early signs of burnout. Discovering the relationship between years in the

profession and levels of burnout helps administrators identify at-risk teachers and intentionally

provide self-care opportunities for those educators.

Implications for middle school teachers. The specific and intense needs of middle

school students, as well as middle school teachers, require intentional planning for holistic self-

care (Braun et al., 2018). Teachers at the middle school level need to be equipped with self-care

practices. Perhaps middle childhood teacher preparation programs need to incorporate the

teaching of holistic wellness and self-care practices into the curriculum to set preservices

teachers up for success. Or, perhaps, middle school inductees may need to be paired with a

mentor who can serve as a monitor for wellness and burnout, checking in regularly with the new

teacher. No matter the approach to mitigating burnout, it was critical to determine whether or

not a relationship exists between self-care practices and levels of burnout. When a relationship

between the two is uncovered, steps can be taken to perhaps promote specific elements of self-

care. Promoting and practicing wellness may help mitigate burnout among middle school educators.

Review of Methodological Issues

Determining whether or not self-care is correlated to burnout in middle school teachers requires an in-depth look at methodologies. A large portion of the scholarly literature on this subject takes a quantitative approach (Bauer et al., 2006; Goldring, Taie, & Riddles, 2014; Sass, Seal, & Martin, 2011; Shen et al., 2015; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010, 2017). Perhaps this is the case because burnout and self-care can be such subjective topics, that a quantitative approach provides more concrete data from which to draw conclusions. A large body of research is correlational, using statistical data to determine the extent of a relationship between two or more variables. For example, Yu, Wang, Zhai, Dai, and Yang (2015) examined the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and stress, and Dicke et al. (2014) looked at the relationship between self-efficacy and classroom management. Others looked at the correlation between stress and mindfulness (Hartigan, 2017), and stress and self-care (Yacapsin, 2010). Still others examined the relationship between teacher burnout and teacher attitudes/ engagement (Amini-Faskhodi & Siyyari, 2018).

An even larger body of the research is causal-comparative, establishing cause and effect relationships among the variables. Some look at the effect teacher burnout has on students (Herman, Hickmon-Rosa, & Reinke, 2018; Hyde, 2012; Shen et al., 2015), while others look at how the work place affects teacher burnout (Amini-Faskhodi & Siyyari, 2018; Parker, Martin, Colmar, & Liem, 2012; Reiser & McCarthy, 2018). Certain literature determines the effect teacher well-being has on burnout (Bermejo-Toro, Prieto-Ursúa, & Hernández, 2016;

Pishghadam & Sahebjam, 2012; Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2014; Watson et al., 2010), and the effect self-efficacy has on well-being (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016; Zee & Koomen, 2016).

The relationship resilience has with burnout (Bowles & Arnup, 2016; Potter, Pion, & Gentry, 2015; Richards, Levesque-Bristol, Templin, & Graber, 2016) and the correlation between self-efficacy and burnout (Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Wang, Hall, & Rahimi, 2015) are clearly correlational studies. Other studies examined the effect Teacher Preparation Programs have on teacher success (Curry & O'Brien, 2012; Mihaly et al., 2013), and the effect of mindfulness on stress reduction once teaching (Hartigan, 2017; Hue & Lau, 2015; Saul-Neves & Conboy, 2011).

The conceptual frameworks informed the methods these researchers used. Several studies utilized interviews as their primary qualitative method. For example, Üstün (2017) interviewed everyone from administrators to aids to determine school culture, specifically as an indicator of burnout. Other studies utilized observations as their primary method. For instance, Tobin et al. (2016) observed teachers' emotional and physiological changes while teaching to determine teachers' stress levels. Still other studies utilized pre-post tests for their methods. For example, Saul-Neves and Conboy (2011) had teachers participate in a stress management course. Teacher stress levels were measured before and after the course to determine its effectiveness. Additionally, Reiser and McCarthy (2018) measured teachers' stress levels before joining a mindfulness group, then tested the teachers again afterwards. Although the literature on teacher well-being employs a vast number of methods, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), Teacher Subjective Well-being Questionnaire (TSWQ), Five-Factor Wellness Inventory (FFWI), and Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) were most frequently used. These tools effectively provided

quantitative data to look for relationships between different variables, such as the study by

Szigeti et al. (2017) on the relationship between burnout and depressive symptoms.

These methodological issues carry practical implications. In order to determine the

relationship between self-care and burnout in middle school teachers, this quantitative research

study utilized a correlational design. The Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey (MBI-

ES) measured burnout, and the Five-Factor Wellness Inventory (FFWI) measured self-care

practices. These two generators of quantitative data served as the basis for determining the

correlation between self-care and burnout in middle school teachers.

Synthesis of Research Findings

Synthesizing this research revealed four primary methods for data analysis. Some used

exploratory methods, analyzing data sets to discover new connections, or to find previously

unknown relationships. For example, the specific needs of middle school students are connected

to the levels of burnout of middle school teachers. Some researchers utilized predictive methods,

analyzing current and past trends in teacher attrition rates to make predictions about the future of

the profession (Roffey, 2012). Several researchers used inferential methods, testing theories

about a sample population in order to say something about a bigger population. For example,

Curry and O'Brien (2012) discovered the significance of the role of one Teacher Preparation

Program and used that data to draw conclusions about the larger spectrum of Teacher Preparation

Programs. Not surprisingly, the largest number of researchers utilized causal methods, finding

out what happens to one variable, such as burnout, when another variable, such as wellness, is

changed (Pishghadam & Sahebjam, 2012). The literature provides several generalizations. For

example, the fact that teaching is demanding and teacher attrition rates are high are givens

(Rodger et al., 2018). The understanding that student success is influenced by the teacher

reinforces the holistic approach, that a *whole* teacher can best care for the *whole* child (Mankin et al., 2018). The literature also makes generalizations about the effects burnout has on teachers physically, mentally, and emotionally (Lindqvist, Weurlander, Wernerson, & Thornberg, 2018; Santoro, 2018; Szigeti et al., 2017).

Although many researchers studied burnout, one study examined the relationship between teachers' personalities, job stressors, and burnout (Kokkinos, 2007). This study is noteworthy, as it is foundational for research regarding the transactional model of burnout—that environmental triggers and personality traits interact. The researcher emphasized, "The manifestation of burnout is a function of stressors engendered at both the environmental-organizational and personal levels" (p. 230). Kokkinos identified environmental demands such as workload, paperwork, and time pressure, and interpersonal demands such as classroom management, professional recognition, and administrative bureaucracy. In order to identify personality, Kokkinos utilized the NEO-Five Factor Inventory. This inventory identifies the traits of neuroticism (susceptibility to mental distress), openness (curiosity and intellectual flexibility), extraversion (energy and sociability), agreeableness (trust in and consideration for others), and conscientiousness (organization and diligence).

Nearly a decade before Kokkinos' work, Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) conducted a meta-analysis of over 250 studies on burnout and determined that neuroticism was the trait most strongly correlated with burnout—particularly the quality of emotional exhaustion. Unlike this seminal work, however, Kokkinos found that emotional exhaustion was most closely correlated to years within the profession, particularly for those teaching more than 10 years. The study also revealed that females as a whole were more emotionally exhausted than their male counterparts, which has been confirmed in other studies (Bauer et al., 2006; Calgar, 2011; Grossi, Perski,

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Evengård, Blomkvist, & Orth-Gomér, 2003). Decreased personal accomplishment, one of the three tenets of burnout, was most closely correlated with educators who have taught less than 10 years. The study ultimately revealed that the burnout dimensions of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were more related to environmental stressors than they were to the teachers' own personalities.

A study by Bauer et al. (2006) examined the correlation between burnout and psychological and psychosomatic symptoms in teachers. Similar to Kokkinos (2007), researchers found gender specific results—that female teachers experienced elevated levels of burnout. In this study, however, years in the profession did not have an effect on levels of burnout. The prominent external variables cited by participants as leading to burnout were class size and student behavior. In this German study, 32.5% of respondents met the criteria for experiencing burnout. Just slightly less than half of that group met the diagnostic criteria for clinical mental illness. The most common symptom experienced by these teachers was depression. Psychological distress has been a persistent symptom of burnout, as noted in the historical development of this phenomenon (Freudenberger, 1974; Freudenberger & Richelson, 1981; Shin, Noh, Jang, Park, & Lee, 2013).

Researchers found that burnout was negatively associated with job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and psychological symptoms, particularly for new teachers experiencing higher levels of work pressure (Goddard, O'Brian, & Goddard, 2006), job dissatisfaction, (Perie & Baker, 1997), and even burnout (Fernet & Austin, 2014; Fernet, Trépanier, Austin, & Levesque-Côté, 2016; Fives, Hamman, & Olivarez, 2007). A German study investigated the impact a classroom management intervention could have on teacher well-being and found that teachers who received the training showed significantly lower levels of emotional exhaustion and

management issues, and higher levels of achievement and positive feedback (Dicke, Elling, Schmeck, & Leutner, 2015). These findings suggested that this type of intervention can have a significant effect on new teachers' well-being, classroom management skills, and ultimately their retention.

Many researchers tie lack of retention to the high levels of stress teachers face on a daily basis (Shin, Noh, Jang, Park, & Lee, 2013) as well as lack of job satisfaction (Bauer et al., 2006). Reported teacher attrition rates in the United States range from 30 to 50% within the first five years of teaching (Pas, Bradshaw, & Hershfeldt, 2012). The financial costs associated with these high attrition rates alone have been conservatively estimated at millions of dollars per year nationwide (Sass, Seal, & Martin, 2011). Certainly teachers with the highest levels of burnout are at higher risk for attrition. A 2015 study by Clandinin et al. conducted in Alberta, Canada, approached attrition as an interaction between individual factors (burnout and feelings of belonging) and contextual factors (salary and instructional support). Through semistructured interviews, researchers revealed seven factors most likely to predict new teachers' future plans of retention or attrition: support, belonging, tension around contracts, pressure to do anything asked due to newness, work-life balance, struggle to remain distinct from their work, and feasibility continuing in the position. Other factors have been studied as individual precursors to burnout, such as teachers' emotional regulation (Ghanizadeh & Royaei, 2015; Mearns & Cairn, 2003), professional identity (Hong, 2010), levels of professional knowledge (Dicke et al., 2015), and self-efficacy in teaching methodologies (De Neve, Devos, & Tutyens, 2015).

In an effort to determine predictors of burnout, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) measured ten variables in a stratified random sample of 2,569 Norwegian teachers from 127 elementary and middle schools. Results of this study demonstrated that value consonance, supervisory

support, relationships with colleagues, and relationships with parents were all significant and independent predictors of feelings of burnout. Earlier, a large longitudinal study on burnout conducted by Berg (1994) in Washington State found that, on average, teachers use between zero and 25 strategies to ameliorate burnout. The top strategies reported were as follows: engaging in non-work hobbies, keeping perspective, getting sleep, eating right, associating with emotionally healthy colleagues, getting away during the summer and on weekends, exercising regularly, setting boundaries, and developing time-management skills. The majority of these strategies involved manipulation of non-work aspects of the individual's life. When Berg asked for work-related ways to improve teacher well-being, respondents suggested increasing teachers' salaries, taking annual staff retreats, putting workout centers at or near school, hiring more paraprofessionals, and providing flextime opportunities. A similar study in Japan found that the implementation of "the teacher's room" helped best mitigate burnout (Ahn, 2016). This room allows teacher to have their desks in a centralized location and provides opportunities for teachers to easily converse, plan, and collaborate, both formally and informally. This, Ahn explained, is one of the primary factors contributing to Japan's impressively low turnover rate of 1.35% of first year teachers in 2006.

Additionally, an Italian study (Avanzi et al., 2015) looked at work environment as a way to mitigate teacher burnout. Previous researchers have studied the effects of self-efficacy (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010) but this study took the unique approach of identifying group efficacy for 192 high school teachers. As predicted, shared organizational efficacy significantly and negatively correlated with all three variables of burnout. Research from Desrumaux et al. (2015) also emphasized that a person's work environment plays a critical role in occupational

health. Although this overview of literature is not exhaustive, limitations in the research still remain that require critique and provide insight into the gaps this study seeks to fill.

Critique of Previous Literature

Despite the large body of valuable research on both what causes and cures burnout in teachers, gaps still remain. Over the past decade, much of the literature on teacher burnout has focused solely on new teachers (Wang, Hall, & Rahimi, 2015), rather than addressing the problem of stress and burnout on all educators, including veteran teachers. For example, the implementation of No Child Left Behind required schools to be staffed with highly qualified teachers who were certified in each subject area taught by 2006. Many middle school educators who were certified in one subject area, but for years taught more than that subject to meet their school's needs were no longer considered qualified. These types of mandates created increased pressure for veteran teachers, causing many to leave the profession (Ravitch, 2010). Little longitudinal research exists in tracking the burnout trends from the time they enter the profession to the time they exit as a veteran teacher.

The literature also revealed a trend in research towards a "quick fix" method for eliminating teacher burnout. These studies argued that the adoption of a specific program or method would lead to higher teacher retention rates and improved student achievement (Kolbe et al., 2005; Saul-Neves & Conboy, 2011). For example, researchers such as Bower and Carroll (2017) published studies that are based on a small population and the use of a "fix it" program. That particular study looked at only 11 teachers, and based the measurement of teacher well-being on the effectiveness of a specific web-based program that the district purchased. Singular programs or methods are not always viable prescriptions for teacher burnout.

Another trend in the literature from the past decade was a focus on the inadequacy of teacher preparation programs in preparing their graduates for the realities of the profession. Researchers such as Goldhaber, Liddle, and Theobald (2013) found that new teachers had little to no incentive to remain in education. Additionally, Harris (2011) and Lindqvist et al. (2018) examined the existence of burnout already in preservice teachers and coursework that could remedy the early onset of this phenomenon. Gaps remain, however, in examining the role that induction programs play in equipping teachers and setting up safeguards against burnout for new teachers.

Many studies provided valuable insights, but the population varied greatly from this study. For example, Csaszar and Buchanan (2015) uncovered the relationship between meditation-based mindfulness and teacher stress. Their study, however, took place in a completely urban setting. Similarly, Herman, Hickmon-Rosa, and Reinke (2018) studied the relationship between teacher burnout and self-efficacy—concepts tied closely to the ones in this study. That study was also conducted in a completely urban setting, making the findings potentially vastly different from what might be found in other settings, such as is the case in this study.

Perhaps the most significant trend in the literature is the fact that little is known about middle-level educators specifically. Even Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2014) who have published some of the most salient studies in the areas of teacher self-efficacy and burnout have studied elementary and middle school teachers together as one population. This was common in the literature as Renshaw, Long, and Cook (2015), Ryan, Kuusinen and Bedoya-Skoog (2015), and others also meshed middle-level educators into one population with elementary teachers. Although their studies produced valuable insights into aspects of burnout and potential solutions

for burnout, the needs of middle school teachers are, I speculate, quite different from the needs and burnout levels of elementary school teachers. Therefore, separating middle school teachers into their own population offers more pointed insights. One of the few studies on only middle-level educators focused on the relationship between self-efficacy—one potential outcome of practicing self-care—and emotional exhaustion—one of the three tenets of burnout (Reiser & McCarthy, 2018).

In addition to gaps in the research, many studies had limited generalizability due to the sample size or the chosen independent variable. For example, Tobin et al. (2016) looked at the physiological changes that occur when teaching as a possible indicator for burnout. Not only did this study only focus on one aspect of wellness, but the researchers only observed one participant for their study. Although the findings were intriguing, they were unable to be generalized to other settings.

Besides evaluating generalizability, the previous literature must also be critiqued in regards to bias. Hyde (2012), for example, studied the value of self-care, specifically through the practice of yoga in schools. Her findings displayed results to support her research expectations. Researchers in such studies have to be careful to maintain a non-biased perspective and justify their conclusions by describing efforts to reduce bias. In this case, Hyde herself is a yoga teacher and a consultant for the Yoga in Schools program out of Pittsburg. Because of this, there would be a greater risk of bias in the findings. Hyde's work, along with others', must be screened for researcher confirmation bias, sponsor bias (when respondents suspect the sponsor of the research), acquiescence bias (yea-saying), or the halo effect (when respondents see something or someone in a certain light because of a single, positive attribute known of beforehand).

Other researchers, such as Grise-Owens, et al. (2018) studied holistic wellness and self-care practices within the context of another profession—social work. These types of studies provide helpful insights, but cannot draw a direct parallel to middle-level educators. Additionally, studies on teacher burnout conducted in other countries, such as Szigeti, et al. (2017) in Hungary, Kinman, Wray, and Strange, (2011) in the United Kingdom, and Lau, Wang, and Myers (2017) in China may not provide accurate insights into levels of burnout and self-care practices for educators in the United States. Varying laws, standards, class sizes, cultural norms, etc. for each country greatly influence the findings of those studies.

Overall, the previous research did not address three unique components that this study addresses. First, no studies have focused specifically on the relationship between burnout and holistic self-care practices. Second, researchers have not explored the relationship between years in the profession and levels of burnout. Lastly, researchers have not evaluated the specific needs of middle school teachers in regards to self-care and burnout. The fact that the previous researchers did not address the unique and heightened needs of middle-level educators demonstrated a direct need to investigate my research questions.

Chapter 2 Summary

As evidenced throughout the last chapter, burnout and attrition rates continue to plague middle school teachers who often neglect their own self-care in the pursuit of meeting their students' needs. The quantitative and qualitative evidence revealed the true nature of this phenomenon by unpacking the major characteristics, causes, and preventions of burnout, as well as the components of wellness. The research deviated on whether teacher self-care is preventative or prescriptive, and what causes and cures teacher burnout. Despite these differences, the majority of the research investigated what happens to one variable, such as

burnout, when another variable, such as wellness, is changed. The research points to this overarching idea: a *whole* teacher is the best kind of teacher. Even though the research points to this sole ideal, gaps remain, particularly regarding the identification of teacher groups most at-risk for burnout, and self-care practices of middle school teachers.

Based on this review of literature, a unique conceptual framework built on the phenomenon of burnout and theory of holism in the context of self-care was developed. Quantitative, correlational methods were then utilized to understand the relationship self-care practices have to burnout; there was sufficient reason for thinking that an investigation examining the impact of self-care would yield significant findings through the use of the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey and Five Factor Wellness Inventory. This literature review provided strong support for pursuing a research project to answer the following multi-part research question: What is the nature of teacher burnout, how does self-care influence burnout, and what are the effects of gender and years in the profession on levels of burnout?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction to Chapter 3

This study explored the relationship between teacher self-care practices and burnout in middle school teachers in the United States. Chapter 3 includes the research methodology and procedures used for the survey research. Additionally, the purpose of the study, target population of educators, and variables are explained. The chosen instrumentation—the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey and Five Factor Wellness Inventory—are described. Lastly, the limitations, validity, and ethical issues of informed consent and confidentiality are explored. The objective of this study was to discover if there is a statistically significant relationship between levels of burnout and levels of self-care. Quantitative survey instruments were used to discover both the levels of burnout and self-care practices of middle school teachers in various regions across the United States. This study provides insight into future research and educator practices. Specifically, discussion surrounding the need for self-care strategies as a preventative measure against burnout for teachers in all stages of their career may ensue based on this research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to explore the relationship between burnout and self-care practices in middle school teachers. High attrition rates and their high-stakes consequences serve as the primary motivation for this study. The results of this study indicate the relationship between self-care and burnout in middle school teachers in the United States. This study produced three significant results. First, this study adds to the existing literature addressing teacher well-being. Second, it helps promote changes in teachers' current

self-care practices. Finally, it helps to identify at-risk educators, based on grade-levels taught, so that administrators can put preventative measures in place.

Chang (2013) found that the rise in teacher attrition is not a result of teachers fleeing specific conditions or work requirements. Instead, attrition was attributed to teachers' lack of coping skills and self-care practices which could directly relate to decreased levels of burnout. Decreased burnout has benefits to all school stakeholders. When teachers are valued holistically, they will experience decreased emotional exhaustion (Dicke et al., 2014; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014), decreased depersonalization, and an increase in personal accomplishment (Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Wang, Hall, & Rahimi, 2015). Students will also benefit from teachers practicing self-care. Student benefits include increased motivation, greater self-efficacy, and better self-esteem which inspires them to work to the best of their abilities (Ryan, Kuusinen, & Bedoya-Skoog, 2015; Veldman et al., 2017; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Further, school districts as a whole benefit when teachers feel energized and fulfilled because they are willing to persevere through difficult circumstances for the benefit of the school and students.

This study is significant because teachers, particularly at the middle school level, need opportunities for practicing self-care to decrease burnout, which will improve the whole school system. The results of this study show a relationship between levels of burnout and self-care practices, such that school administrators can use the information to promote self-care and cut down on teacher turnover. District administrators and middle-level educators can make an effort to develop opportunities for self-care throughout the school year, particularly focusing on preventative measures for at-risk groups of educators.

Research Questions

The following question guided the research:

RQ1: What is the statistical significance of the relationship between middle school teachers' levels of burnout and self-care practices?

RQ2: What is the statistical significance of the relationship between middle school teachers' burnout and gender?

RQ3: What is the statistical significance of the relationship between middle school teachers' burnout and years in the profession?

Hypotheses

The hypotheses and null hypotheses for this study were as follows:

H1: There is a statistically significant relationship between middle school teachers' perceived sense of burnout as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey (MBI-ES) and their perceived levels of self-care as measured by the Five Factor Wellness Inventory.

$H_0 1$: There is no statistically significant relationship between middle school teachers' perceived sense of burnout as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey (MBI-ES) and their perceived levels of self-care as measured by the Five Factor Wellness Inventory.

H2: There is a statistically significant relationship between middle school teachers' perceived sense of burnout as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey (MBI-ES) and their gender.

H₀2: There is no statistically significant relationship between middle school teachers' perceived sense of burnout as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey (MBI-ES) and their gender.

H3: There is a statistically significant relationship between middle school teachers' perceived sense of burnout as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey (MBI-ES) and their years within the profession.

H₀3: There is no statistically significant relationship between middle school teachers' perceived sense of burnout as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey (MBI-ES) and their years within the profession.

Research Design

This correlational study determined the relationship between self-care and burnout in middle school teachers in the United States. Strongly embedded in correlational studies is the determination of whether or not a relationship exists between two or more variables, and if so, to what degree the relationship occurs (Ahlgren, Jarneving, & Rousseau, 2003). Correlation is not intended to imply causation; even if strong associations exist between two variables, there can be no assumption that one causes the other. When considering the correlational study, it is critical to gather an adequate sample size for hypothesis testing, as well as plan how best to communicate the direction and magnitude of the correlation between the two variables (Huck, Ren, & Yang, 2007).

Studies exploring the concepts of teacher wellness and burnout lean toward this method because of the nature of these seemingly intertwined phenomena. Some examined the correlation between stress and mindfulness (Hartigan, 2017), or stress and self-care (Yacapsin, 2010). Still other studies examined the relationship between teacher burnout and teacher

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attitudes/ engagement (Amini-Faskhodi & Siyyari, 2018; Folk, 2015). Of all the correlational literature reviewed, none examined the relationship between holistic self-care and burnout. The nature of the study and the precedent set by the existing body of literature all aligned with the need for a correlational study.

Although another large portion of the literature was causal-comparative, this unique combination of self-care practices and perceived burnout could not align with that research design. A causal-comparative study would require manipulation of an independent variable. Both wellness and burnout are highly personal and even subjective, making manipulation of pertinent variables potentially unethical (Huck, Ren, & Yang, 2007). For example, I chose not to manipulate variables related to self-care, such as amount of exercise, food consumption, and mindfulness. While participants could be encouraged to change their wellness patterns, it is challenging to mandate a systematic implementation of self-care practices. The correlational design was chosen in an attempt to add to the existing literature addressing teacher well-being, as well as to promote change in current practices of educators to prevent burnout, thus lowering attrition rates.

Correlational research involves five basic steps. First, the individuals in the study must be identified; in this case, the individuals were full-time middle school teachers across the United States. Next, two or more measures for each individual—self-care practices and perceived level of burnout—must be identified. Then, data must be collected and monitored for potential threats. Next, data are analyzed and results are interpreted. Finally, results are presented. When working with the correlational data, the pairs were graphed to identify the form of association (relationship), the direction of the association, and the degree of association (Huck, Ren, & Yang, 2007).

If both variables tend to increase, this is known as a positive correlation. For example, when an employee increases his hours, his pay also increases. If one variable tends to increase as the other tends to decrease, this is known as a negative correlation. For instance, increasing the speed while driving decreases the amount of time to reach the destination. When there is seemingly no relationship between the variables, this is known as a zero correlation. For example, there is no relationship between ice cream consumption and SAT scores. In this study, the hypothesis involved a negative correlation: high self-care practices were predicted to be met with low burnout rates. Each type of correlation can be expressed through scatter plot, where the emergence of positive, negative, or zero correlation can be identified visually. A correlation can also be expressed numerically through a correlational coefficient (r), ranging from -1 to +1. Values over zero indicate positive, and values under zero indicate negative correlation (Ahlgren, Jarneving, & Rousseau, 2003).

This study was explanatory, rather than predictive. As an explanatory study, data were collected at one point in time, and all participants were analyzed as a single group (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006). This choice best fit this study, as the goal was only to look at the relationship between both variables in their present state, rather than make predictions about future performance. Additionally, self-care practices and perceived levels of burnout are fluctuating factors for educators. This study simply captured the correlation between burnout and self-care at one moment in time.

Surveys were used to collect data on subjects' self-care practices and burnout levels. The Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey and Five Factor Wellness Inventory were used in conjunction to correlate the data. Both inventories have been widely accepted and utilized in the existing body of research, as is outlined in the Internal and External Validity section. The

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Maslach Burnout Inventory, in addition to the modified Educator Survey edition, has been

employed when determining various forms of burnout in the work force, as well as for various

forms of educators (Kulavuz-Onal & Tatar, 2017; Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2016; Skaalvik &

Skaalvik, 2014; Szigeti et al., 2017). Likewise, the Five Factor Wellness Inventory has been

adopted and utilized in countless studies regarding the well-being of educators (Lau, Wang, &

Myers, 2017; Myers, Trepal, Ivers, & Wester, 2016; Riley & Rouse, 2015). The use of both

tools produced the quantitative data to determine the relationship between self-care and burnout

in middle school teachers.

Target Population, Sampling Method (power) and Related Procedures

To best understand the relationship between burnout and self-care specifically in middle

school teachers, the study focused on the teachers in the approximately 15,000 middle schools in

the United States, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (2018). These

15,000 schools employ approximately 630,000 full-time certified teachers during the spring of

the 2018–2019 school year and served as the population for this study. Creswell (2007) defined

a population as a group of people who share common characteristics. For the purposes of this

study, the common characteristics between the 630,000 teachers were that they teach full-time in

middle schools within the same country and are licensed to teach students in the range of grades

six through eight.

The teachers in this population, whose average national salary is 58,600 dollars according

to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019), span all content-areas and years of experience. These

educators teach in a wide variety of schools. Rural, urban, and suburban regions, as well as

public, private, and charter schools are all included in the population. Approximately one

quarter of those 15,000 middle schools are considered Title I schools, or are provided financial

assistance to ensure that the high percentages of children from low-income families meet challenging state academic standards. Increased teacher demands, class sizes, socioeconomic demands, and social-emotional needs amongst students have forced these teachers to reconstruct their approach to teaching.

Utilizing Qualtrics statistical software, the suggested sample for medium effect size with a statistical power of .7 and an alpha of .05, was a minimum of 196 participants. A 95% confidence level provided a high probability that the sample accurately reflects the attitudes of the population. The margin of error represents the range that the population's responses may deviate from the sample's. Convenience sampling was utilized for this study.

After gaining Concordia University–Portland Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and prior to conducting this study, I worked with Qualtrics to create the survey and establish the target (full-time middle school teachers) for the sampling of the United States population. The Qualtrics Sample Service took care of sourcing and managing respondents so that I did not manage any contact information, thus providing complete confidentiality. Qualtrics electronically sent information about the intent of the study, the context, participants' rights, and the protection of their confidentiality. Additionally, it contained the estimated time required for completion and link to the actual survey. When Qualtrics secured 196 respondents who clicked to consent, the survey link was closed, and data analysis began. All surveys remained anonymous; not identifying respondents' names and participating schools protected the confidentiality of the subjects. Teachers were also given the option to request the results of the study upon completion.

Instrumentation

According to Frey, Botan, and Kreps (2013), data collection for a correlational study is best accomplished through the use of a questionnaire. To investigate the feelings of burnout and practices of self-care for middle school teachers, a survey protocol was used as the sole data-collection instrument. The questionnaire allowed the collection of data on the elements of burnout in relationship to the various areas of wellness through the use of closed-ended items (Frey, Botan, & Kreps, 2013). Through MindGarden, licensing was purchased for the use of The Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey and Five Factor Wellness Inventory. Both instruments were used in conjunction to correlate the data.

For this study, a minimum of 196 participants took the 117-question online survey. Because the survey items were closed-ended with Likert scale-based questions, participants were able to complete the survey in approximately 15 minutes. This approximation was based on the average time it took 10 educators to complete the questions in a trial distribution of the survey. Because of the length of the survey, the Qualtrics Online Sample service was utilized. This service found the target demographic and launched the study, guaranteeing the required number of respondents. The teacher responses were then recorded and analyzed for patterns and relationships. The first two questions were screening questions, determining participants' eligibility. The third and fourth questions were based on demographics—asking participants for their biological gender and number of years within the profession. The answers to these questions guarded the participants' confidentiality by not asking for names or even the name of the school district or state. The answers to these questions did, however, provide insight into possible trends. These initial questions also provided insight into the external validity of the study. For example, if only females participated in the survey, the results would not be an

accurate representation of the population as a whole. The demographic information, therefore, helped to safeguard against any threats to the external validity, such as a skew in gender that would interfere with the conclusions being generalized to the greater population.

After the non-identifying demographic questions, the following 22 questions came directly from the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey. These questions are divided into three categories: gauging levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The combination of scores in each of those three categories determines where an educator falls on the burnout scale. If experiencing low emotional exhaustion and depersonalization concurrently with high personal accomplishment, the educator is considered engaged. As educators move down the scale away from engagement, educators next are ineffective, then overextended, then disengaged. At the opposite, bottom of the spectrum, when teachers experience high exhaustion and high depersonalization accompanied by low personal accomplishment, they are experiencing burnout.

The final 91 items were directly from the Five Factor Wellness Inventory. The Five Factor Wellness Inventory contains 98 questions. However, the last seven questions were demographic-specific questions that were not needed for this study. This survey examined five elements of "self" and the self-care practices associated with each (Myers & Sweeney, 2014). The first element, the Creative Self, asked participants to examine self-care practices related to their thinking, emotions, control, work, and sense of humor. The second, or Coping Self, looked at participants' leisure, stress management, self-worth, and realistic beliefs. The third element, the Social Self, examined friendship and love as self-care practices. The fourth, or Essential Self, asked participants about their spirituality and identity. The fifth element, or Physical Self, examined educators' exercise and nutrition as practices of self-care.

Both inventories utilize Likert scale-based answer systems. The Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey uses this set of answers: A few times a year or less, once a month or less, a few times a month, once a week, a few times a week, every day. The Five Factor Wellness Inventory uses this set of answers: Strongly agree (true most or all of the time), agree (true some of the time), disagree (usually not true), strongly disagree (almost never or never true). The convergence of these two reliable, valid, and widely-accepted inventories, as seen in Appendices A and B, provided a holistic view of teachers' perceived levels of burnout and self-care practices. The reliability statitistics for both inventories are fully articulated in the subsequent section, Internal and External Validity.

Data Collection

Data collection through surveys, according to Creswell (2014) involves a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population. The researcher then generalizes or draws inferences to the population based on those results. As is evidenced through recent research, questionnaires were the most common data collection method for quantitative studies (Mee & Haverback, 2017; Renshaw, Long, & Cook, 2015; Shen et al., 2015; Veldman et al., 2017). After gaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and prior to conducting this study, I worked with Qualtrics Online Sample service to build the survey and find respondents. Qualtrics provided the link to the survey, as well as descriptions of the study and rights to the full-time middle school teachers in the United States. When enough surveys were completed, the survey link was closed, and data analysis began. All surveys remained anonymous; not identifying the participating schools protected the confidentiality of the subjects.

Data collection through surveys was most effective for this study, primarily because of the ability to identify attributes of a large population from a small group so that both time and resources were used efficiently. This cross-sectional survey collected data at one point in time, delivering a rapid turnaround time in both collection and analysis of the data. The conjunction of two pre-established survey instruments ensured the content validity of scores (Creswell, 2014). Surveys ultimately garnered participants' accounts of their levels of burnout and practices of self-care. These attributes directly aligned to the study, data collection methods, and analysis of full-time middle school teachers in the United States.

Operationalization of Variables

The two primary variables were identified and operationalized in the study. The variables included burnout and self-care. Participants also answered non-identifying demographic questions (control variable). These items—gender and years in the profession— were analyzed for any significant relationships with the burnout dimensions.

Burnout. The Maslach Burnout Inventory identified three losses that come with burnout: lost energy, lost enthusiasm, and lost confidence. The lost energy, or emotional exhaustion, is characterized by "feeling tired and fatigued at work," which often results in absenteeism (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 193). The loss of enthusiasm, or depersonalization, is characterized by a "callous/ uncaring feeling, event hostility, towards others" (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 194). For teachers, this could involve callous feelings towards students, students' parents, colleagues, administrators, and even curriculum. A loss in confidence, or reduced personal accomplishment, is characterized by an employee feeling as though he or she is "not accomplishing anything worthwhile at work" and can lead to "lack of motivation and poor

performance" (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 194). Burnout, the dependent variable, was measured by teachers' self-reported levels of these three factors.

Self-care. Self-care, as defined by Myers and Sweeney (2014), holds five key tenets: taking care of the physical, essential, social, coping, and creative self. A teacher's physical self-care will be measured by only two factors: nutrition and exercise. Wellness for the Essential Self is measured by teachers' self-reported levels of spirituality and cultural identity/ connectedness. Social self-care is measured by teachers' self-reported experiences with friendship and love. Well-being for the Coping Self is measured by teachers' self-reported levels of leisure, stress management, self-worth, and ability to hold realistic beliefs. Lastly, creative self-care is measured by teachers' self-reported wellness with their thoughts, emotions, humor, and feelings towards work. Self-care, the independent variable, was measured by teachers' self-reported practices in these five domains.

Data Analysis Procedures

Specific data analysis procedures aided with deciphering the quantitative results from participants' responses. The data were ultimately used to analyze the relationship between perceived burnout and self-care practices. Prior to starting the survey, participants had to qualify as eligible for the study with screening questions. In order for a data set to be included in the analysis, participants had to identify as a full-time educator who teaches students in grades six through eight within the United States. The participants were required to complete the demographic questions, as well as complete both survey instruments in their entirety. Any participants not meeting those requirements were excluded from the analysis. After gathering the data, they were uploaded in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. At this stage, the data within the SPSS program were checked for consistency with the numerical

codes used for both the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey and the Five Factor

Wellness Inventory. This step was critical as both inventories required elements of reverse

coding as described in Chapter 4.

Next, a bivariate correlation coefficient was used because it is a statistic that enables the

researcher to describe in mathematical terms the strength of the relationships between two

variables (Gall et al., 2007). Continuous data from both scales were used. The Pearson product

moment coefficient was applied for this study because it is used with interval or ratio data (Gall

et al., 2007). The Pearson product moment coefficient operates on the four following

assumptions (Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2013, p. 24). First is the assumption of normality—that the

population distributions will be normal. Normality can be assumed when normality tests, such as

the Shapiro-Wilk, indicate a symmetrical, bell-shaped curve, and provide non-significant results

(a significance level more than .05). Second is the assumption of independent observations—

that the observations within each variable must be independent. The third assumption is of

linearity, or assuming the relationship between the two variables is linear. This assumption is

tenable when, on a scatterplot, the two variables form roughly a straight line (no curve).

Homoscedasticity is the final assumption—that the variability of both variables' scores should be

similar.

This quantitative correlational study investigated the relationship between levels of

burnout and self-care practices in middle school teachers. The teachers participated in the study

by answering online survey questions conjoining the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator

Survey and the Five Factor Wellness Inventory. The results helped to answer the research

questions regarding correlation between self-care practices and burnout.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Research Design

In order to maintain the integrity of the research and potential findings, it is important to discuss the limitations, or influences the researcher cannot control, of this research study (Osieja, 2016). Although the questionnaire was only about 15 minutes in length, some teachers may have been unwilling to spend the time required. The purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between burnout and self-care practices in middle school teachers. Teachers experiencing true burnout may have, in fact, decline participation in the study because it was simply "one more thing to do." The willingness of recipients of the survey may have impacted the findings of the study. Also, the fact that the survey was distributed during summer break may have skewed results as teachers' levels of burnout may have been presented as lower than they would have during the school months.

Delimtations serve as boundaries that the research chose to employ (Osieja, 2016). This study was delimited to teachers from the United States. Those teachers were required to first be full-time employees, and also to only work with middle school students. The fact that the questionnaire was sent to schools all across the United States (delimitation) led to other limitations outside the researcher's control. For example, the goal was that the sample would represent teachers from various ethnic backgrounds, and would represent various school settings (rural, urban, suburban, public, private, etc.); however, quota sampling was not employed. These factors may have impacted the findings in the study by not having various experiences represented. However, the sample size does not affect the ability to generalize about other middle school teachers' self-care practices and perceived burnout.

Internal and External Validity

Internal validity, or "the condition that observed differences on the dependent variable are a direct result of the independent variable, not some other variable," were ensured (Onwuegbuzie, 2000, p. 6). In this study, I hoped to observe a change in burnout (dependent variable) based on the level of self-care practices (independent variable). Certainly feelings of burnout can spike at specific points throughout the school year. However, the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey utilizes three scales—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment—to create a complete picture of perceived burnout beyond just one moment in time. This inventory also seeks to isolate participants' feelings of burnout only in relation to work, not external personal factors. This survey was validated most recently by Chang (2013). Cronbach's alpha reliability scores are below.

- Overall ($\alpha = 0.82$)

- Emotional Exhaustion ($\alpha = 0.87$)

- Depersonalization ($\alpha = 0.76$)

- Personal Accomplishment ($\alpha = 0.84$)

Additionally, the Five Factor Wellness Inventory looks holistically at teachers' self-care practices. Both measures ensure strong internal validity, that the level of perceived burnout is influenced by self-care practices. This survey was validated by Hattie, Myers, and Sweeney (2004). Cronbach's alpha scores are below.

- Overall ($\alpha = 0.92$)

- Creative Self ($\alpha = 0.93$)

- Coping Self ($\alpha = 0.92$)

- Social Self ($\alpha = 0.94$)

- Essential Self ($\alpha = 0.91$)

- Physical Self ($\alpha = 0.90$)

- Total Wellness ($\alpha = 0.94$)

External validity, or "the extent to which the results of a study can be generalized to and across populations, settings, and times," was equally a priority (Onwuegbuzie, 2000, p. 6). The two primary obstacles to external validity were mentioned under limitations. The first was the potential interference of the timing of the survey. The findings from this study may not have produced an accurate generalization for teachers' burnout levels during the school year. Also, the use of convenience sampling may not have represented teachers from all school types and all ethnic backgrounds.

Expected Findings

I anticipated that the research would reveal three primary trends. First, I predicted that middle school teachers would have low scores on the Five Factor Wellness Inventory, with few self-care practices. Second, I expected to find that middle school teachers would present high levels of burnout on the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey. This prediction aligned with the research indicating the high needs present in middle schools—needs which take their toll on the teachers ("Middle School Malaise," 2018). Third, I expected that the greater the self-care practices, the lower the perceived level of burnout. For example, I expected that teachers who exercise regularly and have opportunities to express themselves creatively would fall closer to the "engaged educator" end of the burnout spectrum. Consequently, I also anticipated that this study would help other researchers and educators examine the need for equipping teachers with self-care strategies throughout the course of their career.

Ethical Issues in the Study

Ethical issues in research, at their foundation, revolve around protecting research participants. Before proceeding with the survery, approval was gained from the Institutional Review Board to ensure their protection. For this study, this required protecting the educators in the approximately 15,000 middle schools under study in the United States. Confidentiality is a key tenant of ethical research in education (Abed, 2015). To protect each participant, no identifying information was gathered on the questionnaire. Teacher names and research site names were certainly excluded. Gender and years in the profession were gathered for the sole purpose of validating the instrument responses and answering the research questions. However, those answers did not link responses to any specific educators. Confidentiality was protected because the Qualtrics Sample Service took care of sourcing and managing respondents so that I did not manage any contact information or have any exposure to participant identities.

Informed consent is another critical component of ethical research (Abed, 2015). All participants in the study were informed of potential risks and benefits based on their involvement. This established each participant's autonomy in determining whether or not to participate in the research. When Qualtrics reached out to potential respondents, each person was made aware of both the requirements and objectives for the study. Based on this knowledge, potential respondents were able to make an informed decision regarding participation. By protecting respondents' confidentiality and gaining their informed consent, the study was able to proceed as ethically sound. Data were then securely stored in the Qualtrics database. Each respondent's answers corresponded to their respondent number with no identifying information being stored. These measures ensured respondent confidentiality during and after their participation.

Chapter 3 Summary

Occupational burnout continues to plague teachers who have little time for self-care or are unaware of how to cope with the demands of the occupation. To determine the correlation between self-care and burnout, a survey based on two established, valid instruments—the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey and the Five Factor Wellness Inventory—were sent to middle school educators. A correlational analysis of the data answered the research questions. The results show the relationship between self-care practices and burnout for middle school educators, as outlined in Chapter 4.

The research design methods developed for this study were chosen with the intent to investigate the relationship teacher self-care practices have with burnout. The study examined five elements of self-care, as well as perceived levels of the three dimensions of burnout. Survey research was appropriate to gather participants' self-evaluations, as self-care practices and perceived levels of burnout are personal and not always observable. Qualtrics Online Sample service enlisted 196 full-time middle school educators in the United States, then utilized convenience sampling, or sampling the first available primary data sources.

Data from participant surveys was gathered, run through correlation testing in SPSS various times, and analyzed through various lenses to protect the integrity of the study's findings. I expected to find that while middle school teachers are experiencing burnout, there would be a relationship between self-care practices and levels of burnout in most middle school teachers. I ensured the validity of this study so that it can be utilized to aid in future planning for teachers. The goal is for administrators and educators to see the value in making time for self-care strategies so as to prevent burnout. I continue to maintain awareness that this quantitative study

has certain limitations, such as the reality that teachers experiencing burnout may be less likely

to use their time taking a survey.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction to Chapter 4

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between burnout and self-care practices in middle school teachers. A quantitative correlational research design was utilized for this study. The chosen method was best suited for this study because it allowed for effective examination of the relationship between two measures. The data from the study helped determine the relationship between burnout and the following three factors: self-care practices, gender, and years in the profession for middle school teachers.

The participants were full-time teachers in the United States, educating students in grades six, seven, or eight at the time of the survey. To address the research questions in this study, I utilized Qualtrics to find qualified respondents nationwide who then took a web-based questionnaire. The survey questions that were used for this research were from the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey and the Five Factor Wellness Inventory. The two sets of questions were combined to create one survey tool. There were a few delimitations associated with this study. First, data were only collected from full-time teachers in the United States. Second, the study was limited to middle-level educators, as defined by teaching students in grades six, seven, or eight. The rationale for only collecting data from this population was to focus on the goal of the study—capturing the relationship burnout has to other factors affecting middle school teachers. In this chapter, I will discuss and describe the data analysis and results of the research study. I will provide a description of the sample, summary of the results, and provide a detailed analysis of the findings.

Description of the Sample

The sample for this study was obtained by using a convenience sampling design, as each participant had a choice by clicking to consent to their participation. The survey link remained open until Qualtrics obtained the appropriate sample size. There are approximately 630,000 full-time middle-level educators in the United States as of the 2018–2019 school year (*Bureau of Labor Statistics*, 2019). Utilizing Qualtrics statistical software, the suggested sample size needed for this study was 196 participants and was based on a 95% confidence level. In total, 196 full-time middle-level educators in the United States completed this survey. There were 120 female and 76 male respondents. Table 1 shows how the sample of teachers is distributed based on their number of years within the profession. Burnout and self-care practices are the two primary measures that were reviewed for this study.

Table 1

Frequencies for Number of Years as an Educator

		Frequency	%
Valid	0–2 Years	15	7.7
	3–5 Years	54	27.6
	6–10 Years	62	31.6
	11–15 Years	38	19.3
	16–20 Years	15	7.7
	21+ Years	12	6.1
Total		196	100.0

Summary of the Results

      The data sets were exported from Qualtrics directly into the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). I examined the self-reported self-care practices of the sample at one period in time, and explored the relationship between two primary variables: self-care practices and levels of burnout. This study does not contain a comparison group. A correlational analysis was used to assess the relationship between self-care and burnout, as well as how both years in the profession and gender correlate to burnout.

      Validity. Correlational analysis studies, by their very nature, are often prone to threats of both internal and external validity. Validity is the degree to which the collected data accurately captures what it intends to measure (Johnson & Christensen, 2007). In this correlational design, there is no manipulation of variables, as there is no experimental or treatment condition. The study design does not permit implication of causality, so most threats to internal validity are not applicable. Randomization of the sampling helps to maintain validity, and using widely-accepted pre-existing instruments also guards instrument validity (Johnson & Christensen, 2007).

      Many factors can jeopardize external validity, which is the extent to which the results are generalizable (Onwuegbuzie, 2000). A factor that affected external validity in this study was the time of year the survey was distributed. Participants received the survey and answered the questions during the summer months. For many teachers, summer is the least stressful time of the year. It can be hard to remember intense feelings of burnout that come throughout the school year in the midst of a relaxing summer break. Additionally, teachers who were still experiencing feelings of burnout may have simply opted not to participate in the survey, regardless of the time of year.

Reliability. Because the group of full-time middle school teachers were part of a nationwide convenience sampling, it is reasonable to assume that any other convenience sample of full-time middle school teachers from the United States would achieve similar scores. A quantitative correlational research design was utilized for this study, as this method focuses on measurements that are objective with statistical analysis or numerical data collecting. This approach is centered on gathering statistical data, in this case with a questionnaire, to generalize it across groups of people to provide insight about a particular phenomenon. This method was best suited for this study because I could primarily examine the relationship between burnout and self-care practices.

Using a quantitative analysis allowed more teachers to participate in the study, and provided the opportunity to receive more responses from schools nation-wide. I used Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) to run a Pearson's correlation coefficient test to find the relationship between burnout and the following other variables: gender, years in the profession, and self-care practices. Denoted by r, the Pearson's correlation coefficient is a measure of the strength of a linear relationship between two variables. This statistical test was best suited for this study because it measures the correlation between two variables, X and Y. The three types of correlation, as described in detail in Chapter 3, are positive correlation, negative correlation, and no correlation. A Pearson correlation coefficient ranges between +1 and -1. A strong positive correlation is a value close to +1 and a strong negative correlation is value close to -1; if variables are uncorrelated a value near zero will be shown (Creswell, 2014).

Detailed Analysis

The survey contained 117 items with Likert scale-based responses. The first two questions were screening questions, determining participants' eligibility. The third and fourth

questions were based on demographics—asking participants for their biological gender and number of years within the profession. The next 22 questions came directly from the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey and were related to the three components of burnout. The last 91 questions came directly from the Five Factor Wellness Inventory and were related to participants' self-care practices.

Respondents' perceived sense burnout is made up of three individual elements. The average scores for these elements on a scale from zero to six were as follows: emotional exhaustion was 2.56, depersonalization was 1.79, and personal accomplishment was 4.63. After reverse coding Q4, Q7, Q9, Q12, Q17, Q18, Q19, and Q21 to determine the personal accomplishment scores, the average composite burnout score was 1.96. Each respondent received three burnout scores for the three separate components of burnout that make up their unique profile. Depending on respondents' scores related to exhaustion (emotional exhaustion category), cynicism (depersonalization category) and efficacy (personal accomplishment category), their unique set of scores determines their burnout profile, or where they fall on the scale from engagement to burnout (Maslach et al., 1996). Engaged educators are characterized by the following scores: Exhaustion ≤ 0.50, Cynicism ≤ 1.25, and Efficacy > 0.10. Ineffective educators are identified with these scores: Exhaustion ≤ 0.50, Cynicism ≤ 1.25, and Efficacy ≤ 0.10. Overextended teachers score in this range: Exhaustion > 0.50, Cynicism ≤ 1.25, and Efficacy can fall in any range. Disengaged teachers are identified as such: Exhaustion ≤ 0.50, Cynicism > 1.25, and Efficacy can fall in any range. Lastly, teachers identified as Experiencing Burnout score as follows: Exhaustion > 0.50, Cynicism > 1.25, and Efficacy is not specified. Respondents' scores for each of the three categories of burnout were averaged individually to determine their burnout profile. Nine percent of respondents were identified as engaged, 0% met

the descriptors for being ineffective, 36% were considered overextended, 2% were classified as disengaged, and 53% qualified as experiencing burnout. Later in this chapter, I will discuss respondents' composite burnout scores by reverse coding all questions related to personal accomplishment and averaging the totals from the three categories together to find their correlation to respondents' self-care practices.

For each respondent, the total score for their self-care practices was calculated by averaging each score for the five areas of wellness to create one composite wellness score. The total wellness average score for this sample was 78.65 out of 100. Six items from the Five Factor Wellness Inventory were reverse coded: Q12, Q28, Q39, Q46, Q56, and Q80. Table 2 in Appendix A illustrates the item mean, standard deviation, and distribution of responses for each item in the burnout questions. Because of the instrument's copyright, only three of the items are released for publication. However, the other items are labeled based on which of the three components of burnout they were measuring. Table 3 in Appendix B displays the same information for the self-care questions. Similarly, only four of the items are released for publication, but all are labeled based on which element of self-care they measured. As noted, each item with asterisks is reverse coded and thus reflected as such in the mean scores.

Emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion, the first aspect of burnout, demonstrates how fatigued and emotionally drained teachers feel about their work. A high emotional exhaustion score is a sign that the respondent may be experiencing heightened levels of burnout. After analyzing the data with Pearson's correlation coefficient, I discovered a statistically significant negative relationship between middle school teachers' sense of emotional exhaustion and their total wellness score, $r = -.229$, $p < .001$. Figure 1 displays a scatter plot, with

individuals' total wellness score on the X-axis and mean emotional exhaustion score on the Y-axis. The plot shows a negative relationship.

Figure 1. Self-care practices and emotional exhaustion correlation analysis.

There was not a statistically significant relationship between emotional exhaustion and gender ($r = .001$, $p < .988$) or emotional exhaustion and years within the profession ($r = .030$, $p < 0.680$). In addition to looking at the relationship between each component of burnout and respondents' overall wellness score, there are also noteworthy findings in breaking down the relationship to each of the five specific components of wellness. There was a statistically significant negative correlation between teachers' emotional exhaustion and their coping self-care, or ability to manage stress, take time for leisure, and have a strong sense of self-worth ($r = .372$, $p < .000$). A negative correlation also existed between emotional exhaustion and

creative self-care, or the ability to express thoughts and emotions, have a sense of humor, and express creativity in the workplace ($r = -.177, p < .013$). Teachers' physical self-care, or exercise and nutrition practices, had a negative relationships with emotional exhaustion ($r = -.236, p < .001$), as did social wellness, or the ability to maintain friendships and feel loved ($r = -.146, p < .041$). There was no statistically significant correlation between emotional exhaustion and the essential self, or sense of identity in culture, gender, or spirituality ($r = -.100, p < .162$).

Depersonalization. Depersonalization, the second component of burnout, indicates whether or not teachers have developed callous feelings towards their careers and people they come in contact with. A high depersonalization score contributes to the profile of someone experiencing high levels of burnout. After running a Pearson correlation analysis, I discovered a statistically significant negative relationship between middle school teachers' sense of depersonalization and their total wellness score ($r = -.215, p < .002$). Figure 2 displays a scatter plot, with individuals' total wellness scores on the X-axis and mean depersonalization scores on the Y-axis. The plot shows a negative relationship.
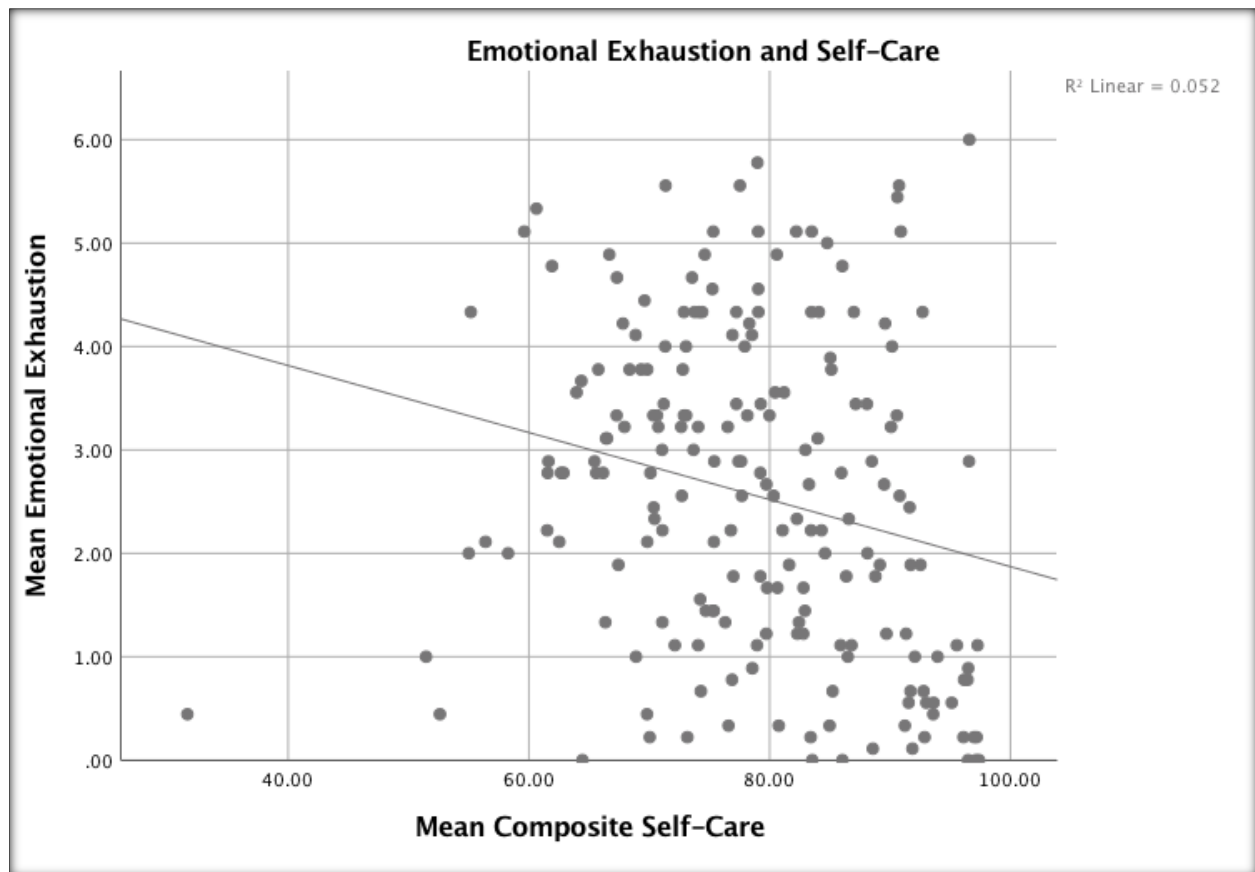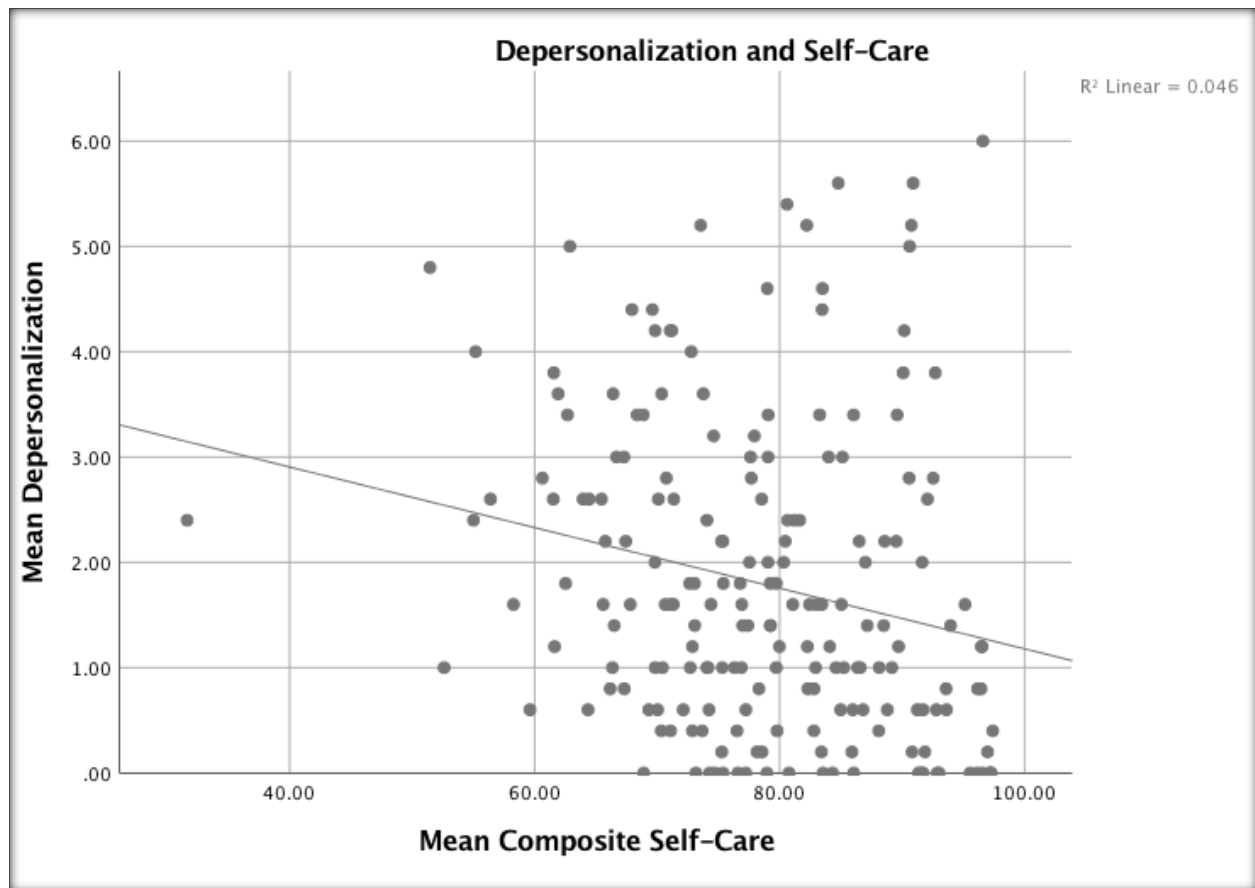
Figure 2. Self-care practices and depersonalization correlation analysis.

There was a statistically significant relationship between depersonalization and gender (r = -.218, p < .002), with males experiencing higher levels of depersonalization than their female counterparts. There was no relationship between depersonalization and years within the profession (r = .034, p < .639). When looking at the five specific components of wellness, most were negatively correlated to the teachers' sense of depersonalization. A negative relationship existed between depersonalization and the coping self (r = -.290, p < .000), creative self (r = -.214, p < .003), social self (r = -.304, p < .000), and essential self (r = -.155, p < .030). There was no statistically significant correlation between teachers' depersonalization and care for their physical self (r = -.118, p < .099).

Personal accomplishment. Personal Accomplishment, the third tenet of burnout, is rated on an inverse scale. Whereas a high score for depersonalization or emotional exhaustion would suggest high burnout, a high score for personal accomplishment would conversely suggest low burnout. The Pearson's correlation analysis conducted revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between middle school teachers' sense of personal accomplishment, or sense that their work is making a difference, and their total wellness score ($r = .456, p < .000$). Figure 3 provides a scatter plot, with individuals' total wellness score on the X-axis and mean personal accomplishment score on the Y-axis. The plot shows a positive relationship.

Figure 3. Self-care practices and sense of personal accomplishment correlation analysis.

There was not a statistically significant relationship between personal accomplishment and gender ($r = .042, p < .563$), or personal accomplishment and years within the profession ($r = .140, p < .051$). When looking at the five specific components of wellness, each was

positively correlated to the teachers' sense of personal accomplishment. Teachers identified wellness for their coping self $(r = .483, p < .000)$, creative self $(r = .531, p < .000)$, physical self $(r = .335, p < .000)$, social self $(r = .514, p < .000)$, and essential self $(r = .347, p < .000)$ in relation to their sense of personal accomplishment.

Composite burnout. In addition to examining the three individual components of burnout, it is critical to identify respondents' composite burnout scores. In order to do so, each respondents' scores for personal accomplishment were reverse coded before averaged with the other two categories. When running a Pearson's correlation analysis on composite burnout scores and gender, there is no statistical significance $(r = -.134, p < .061)$. Additionally, there is no correlation between teachers' levels of burnout and their number of years within the profession $(r = -.021, p < .771)$. Figure 4 demonstrates the distribution of educators' levels of burnout in all stages of their careers.
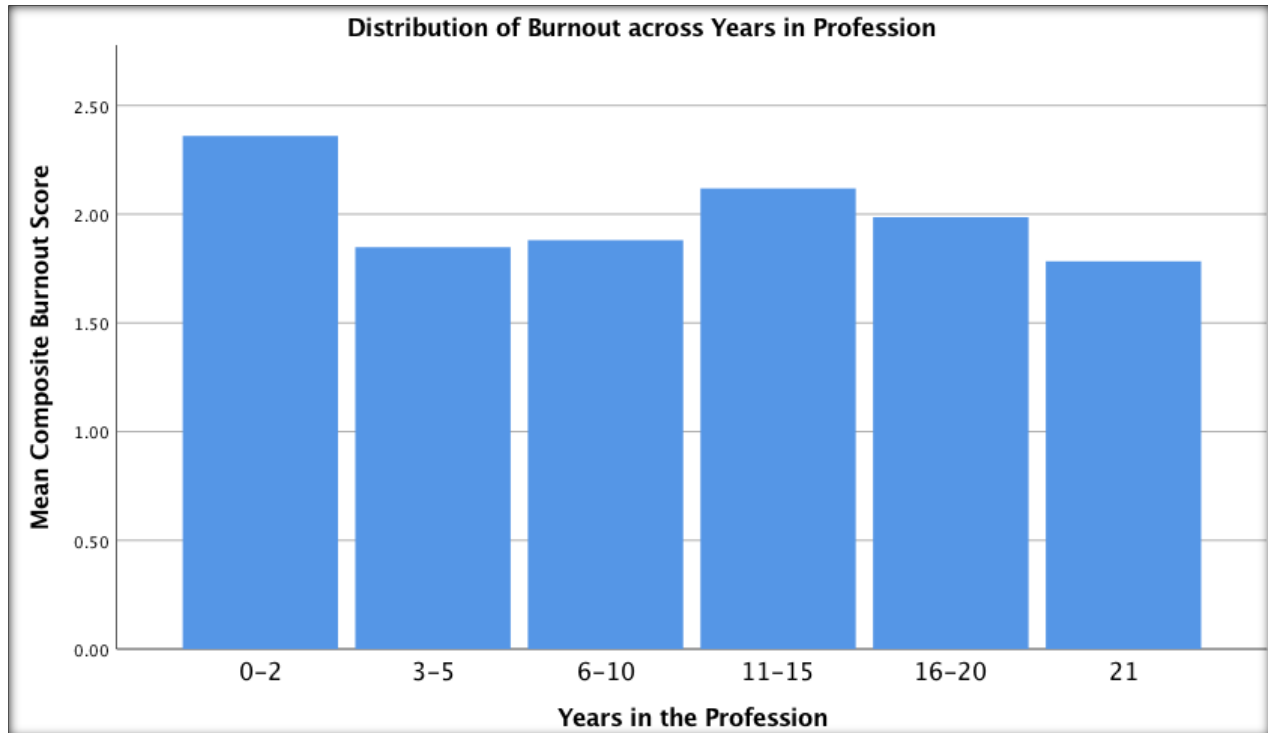
Figure 4. Distribution of mean composite burnout scores by years within the profession.

Additionally, when correlating composite burnout scores to composite wellness scores, there was

a statistically significant negative relationship ($r = -.357$, $p < .000$) as is indicated in Figure 5.
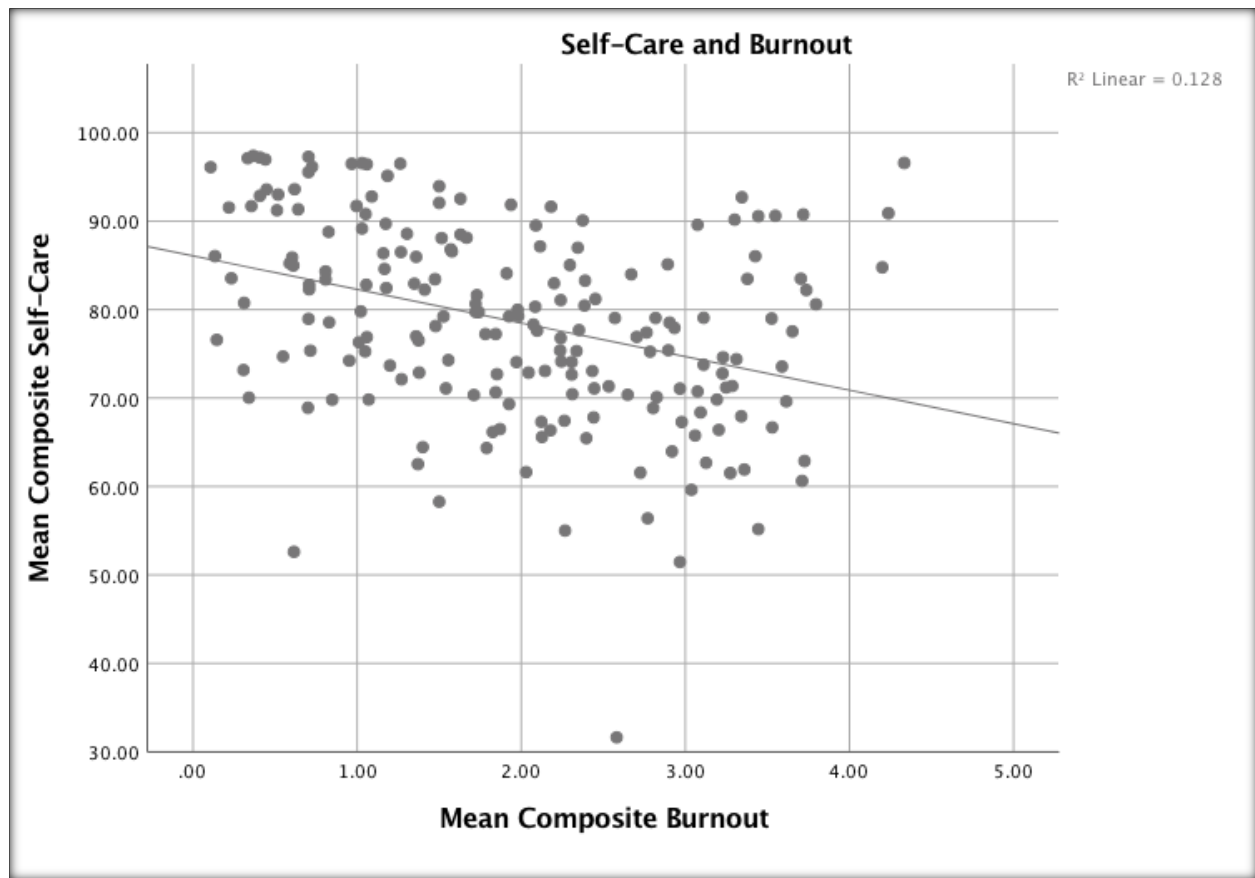
Figure 5. Self-care practices and composite burnout correlation analysis.

Null hypotheses. Given these findings, we can reject this null hypothesis:

There is no statistically significant relationship between middle school teachers'
perceived sense of burnout as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey
(MBI-ES) and their perceived levels of self-care as measured by the Five Factor Wellness
Inventory.

The research clearly indicated that a statistically significant relationship between burnout
and self-care was evident. The results showed $r = -.357$, $p < .000$. According to Johnson and
Christensen (2007), a p-value of less than 0.05 implies significance and a p-value of less than
0.01 implies high significance. Therefore, there is a statistically significant relationship between
both variables, with a negative correlation. As burnout in middle-level educators increases, self-

care decreases. Alternatively, as self-care levels increase, burnout levels decrease. Because of this statistically significant relationship, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Additionally, we can accept the following null hypothesis:

There is no statistically significant relationship between middle school teachers' perceived sense of burnout as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey (MBI-ES) and their gender.

The research showed that there was no statistically significant relationship between burnout and gender. The results indicated $r = -.134$, $p < .061$. Because the p-value was greater than 0.05, the correlation is not considered statistically significant. When breaking down the components of burnout, men experienced higher depersonalization than women. Women, however, experienced heightened emotional exhaustion and a stronger sense of personal accomplishment. Overall, however, there is not a statistically significant correlation between gender and burnout, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

Lastly, we can also accept the following null hypothesis:

There is no statistically significant relationship between middle school teachers' perceived sense of burnout as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory: Educator Survey (MBI-ES) and their years within the profession.

Of all the factors correlated to composite burnout scores, years within the profession provided the weakest correlation ($r = -.021$, $p < .771$). Emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and sense of personal accomplishment showed no significant relationship with years in the profession—each affected educators new to the profession and seasoned veterans nearly equally. Because of this lack of a statistically significant relationship, we can accept the third null hypothesis.

Chapter 4 Summary

In summary, the purpose of this study is to determine the relationship burnout has to self-care practices in full-time middle school teachers in the United States. The study also explored the relationship burnout has to gender and years in the profession. Understanding the relationship between burnout and self-care practices could help determine if self-care practice strategies could be a viable option for school leaders to help decrease burnout for staff and ultimately lower attrition rates.

To examine the research question surrounding the relationship between burnout and self-care practices, a quantitative design and a Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis were used to investigate these relationships from a convenience sample of middle-level educators. Overall, 196 full-time middle school teachers completed the survey. Results from the correlational analysis indicate a negative correlation between measures of self-care practices and feelings of burnout as measured by the scales used in this study. Additionally, the analysis revealed that no statistically significant relationship exists between burnout and the factors of gender and years within the profession. These findings contribute to the field of education as they provide a rationale for future studies to better understand the pervasive phenomenon of burnout and the potential of self-care practices to increase wellness and decrease burnout in middle school educators.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction to Chapter 5

Teacher burnout is often extensively discussed in one-dimensional terms—high-stakes testing as the primary cause (Gonzalez et al., 2017), or mindfulness as the exclusive solution (Hue & Lau, 2015). Instead of looking at singular causes or solutions to burnout, I sought to discover the relationship between burnout and holistic self-care practices in middle school teachers in the United States. The survey responses revealed that a statistically significant relationship does exist, and still allows for further discussion and extended research. In this chapter, I will elaborate on the results of this correlational study examining self-care practices and burnout levels in middle school teachers. I will evaluate the results, add personal insights, and share possible implications for the practicing community. I will also discuss how this research connects to the literature and how it adds new knowledge to the community of scholars. Ultimately, this chapter concludes the research study and gives recommendations for further research. It is my intention to state the necessary implications and conclusions that could support another researcher interested in studying the burnout phenomenon in middle-level educators, or any other subset of educators.

Summary of the Results

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between self-care practices and levels of burnout in full-time, middle-level educators in the United States. The study also explored other factors potentially affecting levels of burnout. The following research questions guided the study: What is the statistical significance of the relationship between middle school teachers' levels of burnout and self-care practices? What is the statistical significance of the relationship between middle school teacher burnout and gender? And what is the statistical

significance of the relationship between middle school teacher burnout and years in the profession? A quantitative correlational research design was utilized for this study.

The participants were selected through convenience sampling, as Qualtrics Online Sample Service found respondents matching the population criteria. For this study, convenience sampling was ideal because I needed responses from middle-level educators from all across the United States who taught in grades six, seven, or eight. Qualtrics kept the survey link open until the appropriate sample size responded. I then examined the self-reported levels of burnout of the sample (196 full-time middle school teachers) at one period in time, and explored the relationship burnout had to the following variables: self-care practices, gender, and years within the profession. In this correlational design, there were no manipulations of variables, as there were no experimental or treatment conditions. The study design did not permit inference to causality, so most threats to internal validity are not applicable (Johnson & Christensen, 2007). Johnson and Christensen (2007) define validity as the degree to which the data collection method accurately captures what it intends to measure.

The results from the correlational analysis indicated that there is a statistically significant negative correlation between measures of burnout and self-care practices, as measured by the scales used in this study ($r = -.357$, $p < .000$). The analysis also revealed that 53% of middle-level teachers were categorized as experiencing burnout, as qualified by the burnout spectrum identified by Maslach et al. (1996). Additionally, the Pearson's correlation analysis revealed no relationship between burnout and gender ($r = -.134$, $p < .061$). There was also not a statistically significant correlation between burnout and years within the profession ($r = -.021$, $p < .771$). Given the findings, I accepted two of my null hypotheses, that there is no relationship between

burnout and gender, or burnout and years in the profession. Additionally, I rejected my final null

hypothesis, that there is no relationship between burnout and self-care.

Discussion of the Results

The study explored the role self-care practices, gender, and years within the profession

play in determining levels of burnout in middle-level educators. Participants completed a survey

containing 117 items. The first four questions determined eligibility and demographics. The

following 22 questions addressed the three components of burnout, and the final 91 questions

asked participants to evaluate their self-care practices. Based on the results from the

correlational analysis, the study indicated that there is a statistically significant negative

correlation between self-care practices and burnout. This negative correlation suggests that

higher levels of self-care indicate lower levels of burnout. Table 2 and Table 3 illustrate the item

mean, standard deviation, and distribution of responses for each item in both variables (self-care

practices and burnout).

The average score for the self-care practices questions was 78.65 out of 100, indicating

that many middle-level educators are, in fact, practicing holistic self-care and experiencing

wellness. The average composite score for burnout was 1.96 out of a total score of six, where a

high score indicates high levels of burnout. Burnout affects teachers at all stages in their careers,

as well as both genders, to a similar degree, indicating no relationship. These findings contribute

to the field of education as they provide a rationale for future studies designed to better

understand the role of self-care and wellness in the drive to decrease burnout and teacher

attrition. As mentioned throughout this study, burnout is a pervasive phenomenon affecting

countless teachers, particularly at the middle-level. Examining the relationship of self-care

practices and burnout gives research-based evidence to educators on this positive wellness practice.

Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature

This study adds to the existing body of literature on teacher burnout and wellness, as it shows a statistically significant negative relationship between burnout and self-care. The literature makes it clear that middle school teachers often exhaust and neglect themselves in an effort to grow the students in their classrooms, leading to an increase in burnout (Reiser & McCarthy, 2018; Ryan, Kuusinen, & Bedoya-Skoog, 2015; Yu, Wang, Zhai, Dai, & Yang, 2015). Burnout, or deep disillusionment with a career that once brought joy and purpose, creeps in throughout this "compassion career" (Wang, Hall, & Rahimi, 2015). Rosenblatt and Shirom (2005) described how, at its most basic level, teacher burnout leads to increased absenteeism and decreased commitment to their jobs. Two-thirds of teachers who leave the profession are leaving due to dissatisfaction with the profession (Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond, 2017). Perhaps more important than these managerial issues associated with burnout, teachers experiencing burnout are also "less sympathetic," "narrow-minded," and provide "less support for learning" (Zee & Koomen, 2016).

Much of the literature focused on specific tenets of burnout and their relationship to other factors. For example, Murphy (2017) discussed the role ego depletion, decision fatigue, and high-intensity emotions play in causing emotional exhaustion. Others like Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017) focused on the factors, such as discipline issues, student motivation, and value dissonance that led to feelings of depersonalization. A large portion of the existing literature focused on the factor of personal accomplishment, also identified in some studies as self-efficacy. Several studies found that self-efficacy was a strong predictor of commitment to the teaching profession

(Chesnut & Burley, 2015), even for preservice teachers (Akyol, 2016). Other studies determined the effect low self-efficacy had on classroom management and student achievement (Ryan, Kuusinen, & Bedoya-Skoog, 2015; Veldman et al., 2017; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Yu et al. (2015) were convinced in their research that a strong sense of self-efficacy is a significant factor in mitigating burnout. This study varies from the existing literature because of its focus on respondents' composite burnout scores as well as looking at all three components of burnout and their relationship to self-care. This holistic approach allowed for an overall understanding of burnout in middle-level educators and allowed for an understanding of each participant's burnout profile, based on their scores from the three components of burnout.

Additionally, many existing studies looked at singular causes of burnout in teachers. Some cited stress as a leading cause of burnout (Curry & O'Brien, 2012; Kipps-Vaughan, 2013; Prilletensky, Neff, & Bessell, 2016), indicating that stress levels are a strong predictor of job satisfaction and retention (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016; Watson et al., 2010). With 93% of teachers experiencing moderate to severe stress each day (Herman, Hickmon-Rosa, & Reinke, 2018), it is no surprise that many studies have looked to mindfulness (Hartigan, 2017) and colleague support systems (Wolgast & Fischer, 2017) to help alleviate stressors. Other studies claimed that financial stressors and lack of resources were a primary cause of teacher burnout (Maninger et al., 2016). Gonzalez et al. (2017) and Von et al. (2017) promoted that high-stakes testing was a cause of burnout, whereas Aloe, Amo, and Shanahan (2014) looked to classroom management issues as a primary cause. This study is different in the sense that no causation could be implied; I could only determine the relationship between the variables. Instead of looking at causes of burnout, I only sought to identify levels of burnout in middle-level educators.

One area this study addressed was the gap in research regarding middle-childhood education. Scales (1991) and Eccles (1999) published research on the tumultuous emotions and high needs at the middle school level, which still holds true for young adolescents today. These unique needs impact the teachers as well (Braun et al., 2018). This study sought to determine burnout levels in middle-level educators and then to find the relationship that burnout had to other factors. Ultimately, when burnout is decreased for middle-level educators, Zee and Koomen (2016) found there is an increase in classroom quality, improvement in student outcomes and even can affect the holistic health of the entire school system (Korn, 2018).

This study also deviates from the trend in existing literature in the sense that self-care was looked at through a holistic lens. Much of the existing literature studies only one element of wellness, then seeks to determine if that one factor can mitigate burnout. Some studies focused primarily on mindfulness and meditation as a solution (Csazsar & Buchanan, 2015; Hartigan, 2017; Hue & Lau, 2015; Saul-Neves & Conboy, 2011). Others studied physical health as a factor to ameliorate burnout (Cropley, Dijk, & Stanley, 2006; Tkachuk & Russell-Mayhew, 2017; Zhong et al., 2009). Workplace environment—from supportive administration (Lambersky, 2016) to worksite wellness programs (Kolbe et al., 2005) to a sense of social support (Kinman, Wray, & Strange, 2011)—is cited as a way to decrease burnout. Lastly, several studies looked at teachers' emotional well-being as a skill that could be cultivated to decrease burnout (Bowles & Arnup, 2016; Grise-Owens et al., 2018; Lucas, 2018; Reiser & McCarthy, 2018; Richards et al., 2014). By looking at participants' composite burnout and scores and composite wellness scores, an overall sense of the relationship between both factors was determined in this study. However, some gaps still exist in the literature.

For example, a divide still exists over the preventative versus prescriptive nature of self-care. Some researchers see burnout as essentially inevitable within the profession (McCarthy et al., 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016; Sneyers, Jacobs, & Struyf, 2016; Wang, Hall, & Rahimi, 2015). Others look at burnout through the lens of preventability (Akyol, 2016; Grise-Owens et al., 2018; Hartigan, 2016; Hue & Lau, 2015; McKim & Velez, 2017; Soloway, 2011; Yacapsin, 2010). Additionally, research still needs to be done to determine effectiveness of self-care practices being implemented in teacher preparation programs and induction programs. Researchers suggested that equipping preservice teachers with wellness skills significantly reduced stress and feelings of burnout in new teachers (Hartigan, 2016; Hue & Lau, 2015; McKim & Velez, 2017; Soloway, 2011; Vagi, Pivovarova, & Miedel, 2019). Others promoted wellness as part of induction programs for new teachers (Kutsyuruba & Treguna, 2014; Voss et al., 2017). Although these researchers promote wellness strategies for new teachers in order to help prevent burnout, my research revealed that burnout affects teachers nearly equally at all stages of their careers. No one bracket of years within the profession (zero to two, three to five, six to 10, 11 to 15, 16 to 20, or 21 or more years) experienced higher rates of burnout than any other. This requires pause for consideration of how to help prevent and treat burnout for educators at all stages in their careers, as all are nearly equally susceptible to feelings of burnout.

Limitations

For this study, there were several limitations. First, a single quantitative research study does not account for all factors associated with self-care practices and burnout. The study was limited to the voluntary responses of full-time middle-level educators in the United States who completed a survey on the research topic. Although a correlational research design was appropriate for this study, it cannot imply causation. Therefore, there was no way to verify or

confirm a cause and effect relationship between the variables in this study. A linear regression analysis, where one variable is considered dependent and one is considered explanatory, could also have been conducted for this study. Linear regression is most commonly used to make predictions, and to examine which variables are significant predictors of the dependent variable (Creswell, 2014). In this study, convenience sampling was utilized to gather the 196 respondents from across the United States. Quota sampling, ensuring representation from various types of schools (rural, urban, suburban, public, private, etc.) could be conducted in future studies to guarantee an accurate representation of all types of middle-level experiences. Although the questionnaire was only about 15 minutes in length, some teachers may have been unwilling to spend the time required. Teachers experiencing particularly high levels of burnout may have declined participation due to a sense of overwhelm. Also, the fact that the survey was distributed during summer break may have skewed results as teachers' levels of burnout may have been presented as lower than they would have during the school months.

Implication of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory

  Practice. Schools are responsible for hiring educators who are highly committed to the profession, are passionate about their students, and knowledgeable in their content area. Existing research shows time and time again that teachers who are experiencing burnout are not able to give students all they deserve—a structured yet relational classroom full of engaging learning opportunities (Ryan, Kuusinen, & Bedoya-Skoog, 2015; Veldman et al., 2017). Schools that have a positive culture amongst students, faculty, and staff seem to have found balance and even enjoyment in their work (Üstün, 2017). The goal of this study was to determine whether or not a relationship exists between burnout and self-care. Although these two variables cannot be

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determined to have a cause and effect relationship, it provides an indication of the negative relationship between the two measures of burnout and self-care.

This information is useful to individual teachers who may implement holistic self-care practices into their personal and professional lives. For example, teachers may take the initial step of looking at the five areas of self to evaluate where they may need to increase self-care practices. If not eating well or excercising, perhaps a first step would be self-care for the physical self. If feeling isolated, a first step might be reaching out to a friend as a form of self-care for the social self. For others, it may be taking time to laugh or play (creative self and coping self) or practice meditation (essential self). For each teacher, first steps for self-care will be different, but the goal is to practice self-care in all five areas, rather than just focusing on one.

Additionally, this information is useful to educational institutions who want to decrease attrition rates and teacher burnout. Most notably, the fact that teachers of both genders and in all stages of their careers were affected by burnout to nearly the same degree indicates that schools should be investing into the wellness of *all* teachers within their buildings. Overall, this research is of interest because it adds to the body of knowledge in the education field. This study will contribute to ongoing research in education because it examines a high-priority topic—one that, if not remediated, will lead to even more teachers stepping away from a career they once loved. Strategies for mitigating burnout are being pursued more readily, and this study provides a piece to the puzzle of discovering the phenomenon of burnout and the need for self-care practices, particularly at the middle-level.

Policy. Managing teacher stress and finding ways to improve teacher wellness has been a crucial discussion for educators for many years. Ultimately, many school, state, and nation-

wide policies work directly against the idea of teacher wellness. Rosales (2012) argued that

many policies lead to teacher demoralization, explaining:

> Examples of policies that may demoralize teachers are scripted lessons that divest
>
> teachers of using their talents in planning, mandated curriculum that allows no space for
>
> teachers to respond to students' academic needs and interests, and testing practices that
>
> make teachers feel complicit in doing harm to their students. (para. 8)

Some policies, such as state-mandated testing, have increased teacher accountability based on

student achievement scores, but fail to take into account factors such as student absenteeism and

socio-economic status. Ravitch (2010) showed how teacher tenure and retention are, in some

schools, based on student performance scores on those state-mandated tests. Pressures that come

from state-wide and nation-wide mandated policies, unfortunately, cannot be rectified overnight.

Rosales (2012) suggested naming and resisting policies that stand in the way of doing good for

students. Certainly individual school policies that demoralize teachers and do not promote their

wellness and sense of professionalism need to be addressed.

Policies need to be in place to support, train, and pay teachers like professionals.

Mandatory induction and mentorship programs are one step towards giving teachers support they

need in their careers. Increasing pay and staff also helps to value the work teachers are doing.

Increased supports, such as additional social workers, scool counselors, and school

psychologists, helps to alleviate some of the social/ emotional student need from the teachers'

shoulders. For this infrastructure to change, education must be a priority. The future of these

students—and the teachers who help guide them—must be at the forefront of policymakers'

minds for necessary funding and policies to take hold. This research on the relationship between

burnout and self-care simply underscores the value of teachers who are supported and experiencing wellness, both personally and professionally.

Theory. In order for teachers, students, and schools as a whole to thrive, a holistic approach must be taken. The theoretical framework for this study was rooted in holism; developing each person's physical, mental, social and emotional well-being (Becker et al., 2015; Watson et al., 2010). The idea that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts addresses the idea that teachers are much more than just their profession (Reiser & McCarthy, 2018). However, in order to be the best possible teacher they can be, they must practice self-care in all components—physical self, coping self, creative self, emotional self, and essential self. As mentioned in Chapter 3, teachers must adopt the "oxygen mask theory" of ensuring their own wellness before they are able to take care of others.

Abraham Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs holds true not only for the students sitting inside the classroom wishing for a warm meal instead of concentrating on math problems. That hierarchy speaks also to the needs of the teachers and the school as a whole. The fact that this study revealed 53% of middle-level educators are identified as experiencing burnout shows the high level of need for teachers to understand and practice self-care. These basic needs, such as care for the physical self, needs to be in place before a teacher can thrive in other areas, such as the creative self. This study revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship between burnout and holistic self-care practices. This provides a foundation which they can be built upon to determine causation between the two variables and help to better inform the theory of holism as it pertains to teacher wellness.

Recommendations for Further Research

There is inadequate educational research looking at self-care as holistic and preventative, rather than a prescriptive "quick fix" to teacher attrition. There is also a lack of rigorous examination of burnout in middle-level educators specifically. Research on teacher wellness is often limited by small sample sizes; to demonstrate statistically meaningful findings, researchers must obtain appropriate sample sizes. This study contributed to research on middle school teachers by examining their levels of burnout and self-care practices at one point in time. It focused on the composite burnout scores' relationship to five components of self-care, gender, and years within the profession. There has been very little research that focuses exclusively on teachers at the middle-level. Examining the relationship burnout has to holistic self-care (as opposed to one component of self-care) has also had limited research.

This study may serve as a model for teacher wellness, by opening the door for future researchers to examine a more holistic approach to mitigating burnout. There is limited research where school staff and administration who are experiencing high levels of burnout had the opportunity to give input on their experiences regarding causes and mitigating factors. Many previous studies focused on raw numbers, such as the pre-and post-tests for worksite wellness programs. Further research on self-care practices and burnout still needs to be conducted, particularly in middle school. This study represented an essential step in the research into holistic self-care practices and burnout in middle schools. It provides more research on whole-person wellness and the results found a negative correlation between measures of self-care and burnout. These findings contribute to the field of education as they provide a rationale for future studies designed to better understand the potential of self-care practices to drive down burnout

and attrition rates. The negative correlation found in this study provides an estimate for the suggested predictive relationship between self-care practices and burnout.

Future studies should consider a quasi-experimental design. This would allow for the researcher to create comparison groups and determine causality between variables (Creswell, 2014). A linear regression analysis, which contains an explanatory variable and a dependent variable, could also be considered for future studies. Linear regression is most commonly used to make predictions regarding cause and effect (Creswell, 2014). Future studies may also consider utilizing the same survey instruments but perhaps completing quota sampling, ensuring that rural, urban, and suburban school districts are equally represented in the data. Future research is needed to determine the relationship between self-care practices and burnout in various types of schools, as teachers in urban versus rural schools experience very different challenges. Also, future studies should be conducted at various times throughout the year, particularly at the beginning, middle, and end of the year to see if this affects levels of burnout. Lastly, future research needs to be conducted regarding burnout and years within the profession. This study determined that burnout affects teachers at all stages of their careers at a relatively similar rate. Other researchers could determine if the factors causing these levels of burnout are the same for each stage of the career, or if the burnout factors shift with experience. This would help schools to better serve their staff and guard certain groups of teachers from different burnout triggers.

Conclusion

The study accomplished its purpose, to examine the relationship burnout has to the following variables: self-care practices, gender, and years in the profession for full-time, middle-level educators in the United States. Understanding the relationship between holistic self-care

practices and burnout will be helpful to determine if the self-care practices approach is a viable option for educational institutions to help decrease teacher burnout and lower attrition rates for teachers. Teachers who are truly well provide incredible learning opportunities for students and build positive relationships with those learners. Teachers who have low emotional exhaustion, low depersonalization, and high sense of personal accomplishment create more productive learning environments (Zee & Koomen, 2016). The culture and climate of the school building will plummet if the teachers are experiencing burnout. Conversely, teachers who are truly well help their students and their school as a whole to thrive. Establishing holistic wellness for teachers involves much more than one quick-fix strategy. Holistic self-care must be practiced independently and promoted corporately for teachers to be truly well.

A strong negative correlation was found between measures of self-care practices and burnout in middle schools across the United States. This finding contributes to the field of education as it provides a rationale for future studies designed to better understand the potential of self-care practices to decrease burnout rates for teachers in all stages of their careers. The finding of this negative correlation provides an estimate for the suggested predictive relationship between self-care practices and burnout. Future studies should consider quasi-experimental designs that would allow for causality to be established, and may also consider diving deeper into aspects of burnout for teachers are various stages in their careers. This study represents an essential step in the endeavor to understand the phenomenon of burnout and ultimately to promote teacher wellness.

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Appendix A: Maslach Burnout Inventory Items

Table 2

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Distribution of Responses for Burnout Questions

	Descriptive Statistics			Responses						
Burnout Questions	*N*	Mean	Std. Dev.	Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
1.I feel emotion-ally drained from my work. (EE)	196	2.80	1.89	14%	18%	10%	24%	9%	16%	9%
2. EE	196	3.06	1.91	14%	13%	10%	20%	14%	20%	9%
3. EE	196	2.76	1.92	17%	16%	12%	20%	11%	15%	9%
4. PA**	196	1.05	1.39	1%	2%	3%	8%	12%	26%	48%
5. DP	196	1.30	1.90	59%	12%	4%	7%	6%	9%	3%
6. EE	196	4.95	1.52	3%	4%	2%	6%	8%	27%	50%
7. PA**	196	3.14	1.96	16%	15%	13%	18%	12%	16%	10%
8. EE	196	4.88	1.50	2%	3%	4%	7%	12%	23%	49%
9. PA **	196	3.70	2.08	28%	19%	8%	14%	11%	9%	11%
10. DP	196	1.86	1.96	37%	18%	11%	11%	7%	11%	5%
11. DP	196	4.30	1.67	3%	6%	7%	11%	14%	33%	26%
12. PA **	196	3.36	1.96	20%	13%	15%	16%	16%	10%	10%
13. EE	196	2.26	1.92	28%	16%	10%	15%	14%	14%	3%
14. EE	196	2.65	2.10	26%	10%	12%	14%	15%	11%	12%

Table 2 continued

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Distribution of Responses for Burnout Questions

Burnout Questions		Descriptive Statistics			Responses						
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day
15. I don't really care what happens to some students. (DP)	196	0.98	1.72	67%	10%	6%	4%	5%	6%	2%
16. EE	196	1.97	1.92	31%	22%	10%	11%	12%	9%	5%
17. PA **	196	1.23	1.49	3%	3%	2%	9%	14%	29%	40%
18. PA **	196	1.99	1.97	10%	7%	5%	10%	14%	28%	26%
19. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job. (PA)**	196	1.41	1.60	4%	4%	5%	6%	14%	32%	35%
20. EE	196	2.07	1.99	31%	20%	10%	12%	10%	10%	7%
21. PA **	196	1.38	1.61	3%	5%	3%	9%	13%	30%	37%
22. DP	196	2.52	2.02	27%	11%	10%	14%	18%	12%	8%
Average Scores		1.96	1.82							

Note. **Items Q4, Q7, Q9, Q12, Q17, Q18, Q19, and Q21 are reverse coded. The mean reported here is adjusted for the reverse coding.

(EE – Emotional Exhaustion, PA – Personal Accomplishment, DP – Depersonalization)

Appendix B: Five Factor Wellness Inventory Items

Table 3

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Distribution of Responses for Self-Care Questions

Self-Care Questions	Descriptive Statistics				Responses		
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I engage in leisure activity in which I lose myself and feel like time stands still.	196	2.80	1.00	14%	21%	37%	28%
2. I am satisfied with how I cope with stress.	196	2.97	0.83	5%	22%	45%	28%
3. I eat a healthy amount of vitamins, minerals, and fiber each day.	196	2.98	0.89	7%	21%	40%	32%
4. I often see humor even when doing a serious task.	196	3.03	0.81	5%	16%	50%	29%
5. Physical	196	2.94	0.91	8%	20%	42%	30%
6. Essential	196	3.09	0.89	7%	13%	43%	37%
7. Creative	196	3.29	0.76	5%	4%	48%	43%
8. Physical	196	2.76	1.20	24%	16%	21%	39%
9. Physical	196	3.14	0.90	8%	13%	38%	41%
10. Coping	196	3.33	0.76	4%	7%	43%	46%
11. Social	196	3.30	0.78	3%	12%	38%	47%
12. Coping**	196	1.98	0.89	30%	45%	17%	8%

Table 3 continued

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Distribution of Responses for Self-Care Questions

Self-Care Questions	Descriptive Statistics				Responses		
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
13. Creative	196	3.15	0.78	5%	8%	53%	34%
14. Physical	196	3.02	0.82	3%	22%	44%	31%
15. Physical	196	3.41	0.90	6%	11%	19%	64%
16. Essential	196	3.12	0.79	5%	12%	49%	34%
17. Creative	196	2.92	0.86	6%	25%	42%	27%
18. Coping	196	3.07	0.79	5%	13%	52%	30%
19. Physical	196	2.83	0.90	7%	29%	38%	26%
20. Creative	196	3.20	0.70	3%	7%	57%	33%
21. Creative	196	3.31	0.74	2%	11%	41%	46%
22. Essential	196	3.16	0.83	6%	9%	48%	37%
23. Coping	196	3.33	0.80	3%	11%	35%	51%
24. Creative	196	3.30	0.81	4%	10%	37%	49%
25. Social	196	3.32	0.80	5%	6%	40%	49%
26. Social	196	3.37	0.80	4%	9%	33%	54%
27. Creative	196	3.27	0.78	5%	7%	46%	42%
28. Coping**	196	1.33	0.93	12%	29%	39%	20%
29. Creative	196	3.05	0.76	5%	12%	56%	27%
30. Coping	196	3.20	0.74	3%	11%	50%	36%
31. Essential	196	3.27	0.82	6%	7%	43%	44%
32. Creative	196	3.23	0.71	2%	10%	51%	37%

Table 3 continued

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Distribution of Responses for Self-Care Questions

	Descriptive Statistics				Responses		
Self-Care Questions	*N*	Mean	Std. Dev.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
33. Physical	196	3.19	0.78	4%	11%	47%	38%
34. Coping	196	3.19	0.80	4%	12%	45%	39%
35. Essential	196	2.93	1.04	12%	20%	30%	38%
36. Coping	196	3.10	0.84	5%	14%	46%	35%
37. Essential	196	2.81	1.09	17%	18%	31%	34%
38. Creative	196	3.30	0.70	3%	6%	50%	41%
39. Coping**	196	1.27	0.91	11%	27%	42%	20%
40. Creative	196	2.98	0.82	5%	20%	47%	28%
41. Coping	196	3.18	0.80	3%	16%	41%	40%
42. Creative	196	3.32	0.73	2%	8%	45%	45%
43. Essential	196	3.26	0.78	4%	8%	46%	42%
44. Coping	196	3.34	0.66	1%	7%	49%	43%
45. Essential	196	3.18	0.77	3%	14%	45%	38%
46. Coping**	196	1.66	0.92	19%	40%	29%	12%
47. Social	196	3.39	0.71	1%	9%	39%	51%
48. Creative	196	3.39	0.68	2%	5%	45%	48%
49. Social	196	3.26	0.78	5%	6%	47%	42%
50. Coping	196	3.10	0.73	2%	16%	52%	30%
51. Essential	196	2.98	1.00	12%	15%	36%	37%
52. Social	196	3.41	0.72	2%	8%	38%	52%

Table 3 continued

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Distribution of Responses for Self-Care Questions

	Descriptive Statistics				Responses		
Self-Care Questions	*N*	Mean	Std. Dev.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
53. Physical	196	3.06	0.85	7%	12%	49%	32%
54. Creative	196	3.21	0.76	4%	10%	49%	37%
55. Coping	196	3.03	0.83	3%	24%	40%	33%
56. Coping**	196	1.89	0.82	22%	50%	22%	6%
57. Essential	196	3.23	0.69	2%	9%	53%	36%
58. Creative	196	3.16	0.77	4%	10%	51%	35%
59. Coping	196	3.21	0.71	3%	8%	54%	35%
60. Coping	196	3.33	0.62	1%	7%	51%	41%
61. Coping	196	3.16	0.84	5%	13%	43%	39%
62. Physical	196	2.88	0.88	8%	22%	44%	26%
63. Physical	196	3.08	0.89	6%	18%	38%	38%
64. Physical	196	3.97	0.17	0%	0%	3%	97%
65. Essential	196	3.11	0.99	11%	12%	33%	44%
66. Creative	196	3.29	0.76	4%	8%	45%	43%
67. Coping	196	3.34	0.72	2%	9%	43%	46%
68. Physical	196	3.12	0.90	7%	15%	37%	41%
69. Essential	196	3.02	0.96	10%	16%	37%	37%
70. Social	196	3.28	0.74	4%	6%	49%	41%
71. Essential	196	3.28	0.74	2%	10%	45%	43%

Table 3 continued

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Distribution of Responses for Self-Care Questions

Self-Care Questions	Descriptive Statistics				Responses		
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
72. Physical	196	3.18	0.78	5%	9%	49%	37%
73. Social	196	3.42	0.72	2%	8%	37%	53%
74. Coping	196	3.24	0.75	3%	11%	46%	40%
75. Coping	196	2.92	0.92	8%	21%	41%	30%
76. Coping	196	3.31	0.69	2%	6%	50%	42%
77. Coping	196	3.22	0.77	3%	13%	43%	41%
78. Coping	196	3.26	0.74	3%	7%	50%	40%
79. Coping	196	3.34	0.69	3%	5%	49%	43%
80. Coping**	196	1.89	0.82	22%	50%	22%	6%
81. Coping	196	3.31	0.69	1%	8%	49%	42%
82. Essential	196	2.59	0.94	12%	36%	32%	20%
83. Essential	196	3.32	0.76	3%	9%	41%	47%
84. Essential	196	3.02	1.02	13%	12%	35%	40%
85. Creative	196	3.21	0.71	1%	15%	46%	38%
86. Physical	196	2.78	0.95	11%	25%	39%	25%
87. Coping	196	3.17	0.84	6%	10%	45%	39%
88. Essential	196	3.20	0.71	1%	14%	49%	36%
89. Coping	196	2.96	0.84	4%	26%	41%	29%
90. Creative	196	3.23	0.74	2%	11%	48%	39%

Table 3 continued

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Distribution of Responses for Self-Care Questions

	Descriptive Statistics			Responses			
Self-Care Questions	*N*	Mean	Std. Dev.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
91. Creative	196	3.34	0.69	2%	6%	48%	44%
Average Scores		3.07	0.81				

Note. **Items Q12, Q28, Q39, Q46, Q56, and Q80 are reverse coded. The mean reported here is adjusted for the reverse coding.

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In my opinion, I am good at my job.
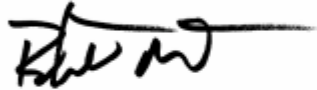I doubt the significance of my work.

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Sample Items:

I engage in a leisure activity in which I lose myself and feel like time stands still.

I am satisfied with how I cope with stress.

I eat a healthy amount of vitamins, minerals, and fiber each day.

I often see humor even when doing a serious task.

Sincerely,

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Appendix D: Statement of Original Work

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- Inappropriate collaboration in preparation and/or completion of a project
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