THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

TEACHER BURNOUT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SOCIAL SUPPORT

by

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The purposes of this study were to examine the nature of burnout and social support among Victorian Government high school teachers, and to describe the extent to which sources and types of social support were statistically significant predictors of teacher burnout.

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected by a 52-item questionnaire which was mailed through school principals to a random sample of 550 Victorian Government high school teachers. The 491 usable returns represented an 89 percent response rate from teachers, and 229 or 82 percent of government high schools.

The questionnaire developed for this study and entitled, Job Survey for Victorian Government High School Teachers contained four sections: Section A, Background Information; Section B, Social Support; Section C, Human Services Survey; and Section D, Personal Comments.

The study was descriptive and used statistical techniques such as means, standard deviations and frequencies in the analysis of data. The study was also exploratory and used step-wise multiple linear regression analysis, analysis of variance, t-tests and factor analysis in data analysis.

Victorian Government high school teachers recorded low to moderate mean scores for Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization burnout compared with the established norms, but a higher than average level of Personal Accomplishment burnout. Male teachers reported higher levels of Depersonalization burnout compared with female teachers. Higher levels of burnout across all sub-scales were recorded by teachers who stated a preference to
leave education, who indicated their work was not at all or seldom interesting, and who perceived their work to be considerably to extremely stressful.

The youngest teachers recorded the highest levels of Emotional Exhaustion burnout, and the most experienced teachers recorded the lowest on this sub-scale and on Depersonalization burnout. Higher levels of Personal Accomplishment burnout were recorded by teachers who had been in their current position for more than six years, who reported a fifty percent consistency between teacher training and task, and who desired to leave education.

Teachers considered types of social support were more helpful in coping with burnout than sources of support. Listening/concern/trust was identified as the most helpful type, and peer group teachers the most supportive source. The youngest teachers reported the principal provided the least support, and female teachers provided more support and considered social support more helpful to them than did male teachers.

The principal as a source of support was the statistically significant predictor of each of the burnout sub-scales. Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization burnout were best predicted by listening/concern/trust and time as types of support, while Personal Accomplishment was best predicted by advice/information, listening/concern/trust and feedback.

Sources and types of social support identified by teachers as the most helpful to them in coping with burnout were peer group teachers, listening/concern/trust, and feedback.

It was concluded that the high level of Personal Accomplishment burnout in Victorian Government high school teachers was related to insufficient recognition and rewards, and inadequate administrative support.
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Chapter I
OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

A. INTRODUCTION

Burnout is the result of prolonged work stress (e.g., Cherniss, 1980b:21) and is described by Freudenberger (1974:160) as "... the state of physical and emotional depletion resulting from conditions of work." Research has focused on the helping service professional as a high risk candidate for burnout because of close and constant work contact with people (e.g., Maslach, 1982b:20), but specific research in an educational context has been limited. Blase (1982:94) recommended the need to further develop and expand knowledge on the concept of burnout among educators.

Various strategies can be used to help individuals cope with stress and burnout. Social support is one strategy that is critical for coping with various types of stress (e.g., Cobb, 1976). Research by Sarason, Levine, Basham and Sarason (1983:127) has confirmed that individuals who perceive strong social support experience more positive events in their lives and have a healthier psychological attitude to life and work, compared to those without these support systems. More specifically, social support has been acknowledged as a valuable resource in helping an individual cope with work stress and burnout (e.g., Pines, Aronson and Kafry, 1981:133; Shinn and Mørch, 1983:237). For example, Diamond (1986:22) confirmed that "... highly stressed teachers wrote of their desperate need for such [social] support." However, few studies have examined the extent to which social support and educator burnout are related.

The research on burnout and its relationship to social support has not focused in detail on the classroom
Teacher. Teaching is a stressful occupation which, in some cases, may lead to burnout (e.g., Anderson and Iwanicki, 1984; Blase, 1982, 1986; Cedoline, 1982; Farber, 1983, 1984a,b; Ratsoy and Friesen, 1985). For instance, Farber (1983:14) described teacher burnout as the result of "... unmediated stress... of being stressed and having no 'out', no buffer, no support system." Thus, an adequate and effective social support system may reduce work stress and burnout as it occurs in the school setting. Pines et al. (1981:121) commented that:

... (1) conflictual demands from various systems, or the ambiguity of such demands are a major source of burnout, and (2) the efficient and creative use of a social support system is among the most effective ways of coping with burnout.

Nonetheless, although studies have shown that social support may be a moderator of certain types of work stressors (e.g., Abdel-Halim, 1982; Gore, 1978; House, McMichael, Wells, Kaplan and Landerman, 1979; LaRocco, House and French, 1980; Seers, McGee, Serey and Graen, 1983), relatively little research has investigated the relationship between burnout and social support. Moreover, the relationship between educator burnout and social support has had minimal attention in the literature and research. For these reasons, further examination of this relationship is warranted.

B. PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

The purposes of this study were to examine the nature of burnout and social support among Victorian Government high school teachers, and to describe the
extent to which sources and types of social support were statistically significant predictors of teacher burnout.

Specific Objectives

The following objectives were established to fulfill these purposes:

1. To describe the nature of burnout among high school teachers;

2. To describe the nature of social support (i.e., sources and types) among high school teachers;

3. To explore the extent to which sources and types of social support were statistically significant predictors of burnout in high school teachers; and

4. To describe the aspects of social support personally identified by teachers as helping them most cope with each type of burnout as defined by Maslach and Jackson (1981a,b).

C. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Maslach and Jackson (1981a:1) conceptualized burnout as "... a continuous variable, ranging from low to moderate to high degrees of experienced feeling." These feelings are represented by the three sub-scales of Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment burnout as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach and Jackson, 1981a,b).

Maslach (1982b:3) described burnout as "... one type of job stress." The connection between prolonged work stress and burnout is well represented in the theory
and research. For instance, Selye (1974:14) identified distress as the negative response to stress. Distress often is associated with symptoms of emotional and physical exhaustion, similar to the correlates of burnout. Further, Carroll and White (1982:133) maintained that burnout develops over time and is caused by "... prolonged exposure to stress and frustration." Such prolonged exposure to a demand which threatens the individual's capabilities and resources results in physiological, psychological and behavioural consequences (McGrath 1976:1352), and may be indicative of burnout. Similarly, Kamis (1980:4) asserted that "... the characteristic work environment in which burnout can be observed is highly stressful."

Maslach (1976:18) asserted that those who work in the helping service professions, such as teachers, counsellors, therapists, and social workers, are susceptible to burnout. The nature of work in the helping services places a heavy demand on an individual's emotional and physical resources because of the constant interactions with clients. According to Maslach (1978b:56), this "... people-oriented [work] ... is often emotionally difficult to handle on a continuous basis ..." and for this reason helping professionals are prone to burnout.

Farber (1983:4) commented that those who are attracted to teaching often have a self-concept "... too exclusively [based] on the attainment of unrealistic, albeit humane goals ..." and consequently they are vulnerable to burnout. Similarly, Welch, Medeiros and Tate (1982:4-5) suggested that burnout among educators is "... gradual ... [and involves] the loss of meaning in what was once a dream." However, because the research on teacher burnout is in its infancy, Anderson and Iwanicki (1984) and Schwab and Iwanicki (1982a,b), among others, have concluded that research findings on educator
burnout generally are inconsistent, inconclusive and in need of further clarification. This present study was undertaken in order to explore further the nature of burnout among teachers, and in particular its relationship to social support.

Social support is difficult to define and even more difficult to measure, but research suggests that "... other things being equal, people will have better morale and health, and function better if they receive or believe they receive social support when it is needed" (e.g., Lazarus and Folkman, 1984:250). A common sense view suggests that, in everyday life, people who have a strong social support system are both psychologically and physiologically healthier and less prone to stress than those without the benefits of some form of social support.

Wells (1984:114) catalogued the wide range of "... creative and enlightening ..." research which points to the health-promoting character of primary social relationships. Social support is a facet of these relationships, and studies have shown the positive value of social support in the life of an individual, and in the work setting in particular (e.g., Cobb, 1976; Gore, 1973; House, 1981; Kaplan, Cassel and Gore, 1977; Maslach, 1982a,b,c). These studies document the positive benefits of social support for an individual. For instance, House (1981:43) maintained that "... both scientists and lay persons view social support as a potential means of reducing stress, improving health and buffering people against the deleterious effects of stress on health." The importance of social support in the work-stress relationship (e.g., Caplan, Cobb, French, Harrison and Pinneau, 1975; House et al., 1979) suggests that social support also could have implications in the work-burnout relationship. For example, Maslach (1982c:52) observed that:
... people with access to a social professional support system would: display more situational attributions relative to dispositional ones, have a less negative perception of recipients, and report less emotional exhaustion and callousness than would people who were isolated from such peer support.

House (1981:9) noted that the lack of adequate social support has deleterious effects on both the individual and the organization in which the individual works. Consistent with this belief, Maslach (1982b:111) commented that "... the power of your peers to help you handle burnout should not be underestimated... the social and emotional support provided by peers can be critical for survival on the job." Similarly, Russel, Altmaier and Van Velzen (1987:269) found that "... teachers who had supportive supervisors and indicated that they received positive feedback concerning their skills and abilities from others were less vulnerable to burnout." Resources in the work environment which can ameliorate pressures when work demands are most severe are important in helping an individual cope with work stress and burnout. This study examined teacher burnout and its relationship to social support from this organizational perspective.

Recent research on the relationships among social support, work stress and burnout has been inconsistent. Some studies reported that social support moderated the effects of work stress (e.g., LaRocco et al. 1980; Caplan et al., 1975). Others however found that social support had a main effect; that is, it did not moderate the stressor-stress relationship, but rather social support had a direct effect on the well-being of the individual in the presence of stress and burnout (e.g., Aneshensel and Stone, 1983; Blau, 1981; Ganster, Fusilier and Mayes, 1986; Turner, 1981). Conversely, other investigations have reported that social support appeared to exacerbate
the effects of work stress and burnout (e.g. Brenner et al., 1985), where sources of social support were potential stressors.

The foregoing review reveals that the literature and research cannot provide any definitive conclusions about the relationship between work stress/burnout and social support. An over-riding problem is that studies have measured different stressors in a wide variety of work settings, and have applied just as varied a set of definitions and conceptual frameworks in studying the influence of social support on work stress and burnout. Taking into account both these conceptual and methodological difficulties, and the lack of empirical evidence on the nature of social support and teacher burnout in a Victorian context, this study was delimited to an examination of the relationships between social support and burnout as opposed to a moderating effect between work stress and teacher burnout. This perspective is consistent with the definition of burnout as a stress response, where social support is considered in a predictive rather than an interactive or moderator relationship.

Generally, the theory and research on both burnout and social support reveal a complex and closely-woven pattern of work-life, and emphasize that social support is as much a work-related resource as it is an extra-organizational resource. Moreover, teacher burnout needs attention because it has implications for the nature of teachers' work, the physical and emotional costs to the individual, the structure of the organization, and the needs of clients. For these reasons, the nature of social support as a work-related resource that Victorian Government high school teachers may use to cope with burnout, was the focus of this study.
D. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

Contribution to Research and the Literature

The literature and research indicate that social support is a potential resource for reducing life stress and work stress (e.g., Caplan, 1974; Caplan et al., 1975; Cobb, 1976; Gore, 1973, 1978; House, 1981; LaRocco et al., 1975). However, confusing conceptual definitions, and difficulties with measurement have clouded research results (e.g., Thoits, 1982; Wheaton, 1983). Consequently, cross-sectional studies and comparisons of findings have not been consistent (e.g., Ganster et al., 1986; LaRocco et al., 1980). Brenner et al. (1985:10-11) recognized the complexity of the relationship and advised:

... it is not unreasonable to assume that the all-embracing concepts of coping and social support contain diverse and conflicting processes and phenomena. More precise operationalization of these concepts could result in better explanations of the great variation in the experience of teacher stress [and burnout] and a more profound understanding of these phenomena.

Moreover, Henderson and Argyle (1985:238) recommended that "... further studies are needed to examine the relationship between type and source of social support ..." This present study in part was undertaken in response to this recommendation.

House's (1981:39) typology of social support has been cited as exhaustive and progressive (e.g., Thoits, 1982; Wells, 1984) and has been used in recent research by Russell et al. (1987) on teacher burnout. For these reasons it was used in this study to examine the relationship between sources and types of social support and teacher burnout. A further purpose was to operationalize House's (1981) typology of social support
in an Australian educational context.

The measurement of social support remains a debatable issue, because theory and research are in the developmental stage. For instance, Beehr (1985:391) cautioned against claiming that social support is a moderator of stress and burnout; he advised that "... the research ... can only show that social support and strain [burnout] are related." Further, Beehr (1985:395) maintained "... there is too little evidence at present to conclude that one type of social support is more effective than the other in alleviating the effects of job stress." Similarly, Russell et al. (1987:269) asserted that "... empirical evidence regarding the moderating hypothesis [of social support] is mixed." However, researchers have consistently found that individuals with higher levels of social support are in better physical and mental health.

Schwab et al. (1984) found that higher levels of social support were associated with lower levels of burnout in a random sample of New Hampshire teachers. Similarly, Zabel and Zabel (1982) reported that special education teachers who perceived greater administrative, peer and parental support were less burned out. Belcastro, Gold and Grant (1982) in a study of correctional teachers indicated that those teachers who were classified as burned out were more isolated from their fellow teachers and spent less time with their colleagues than did other teachers. Although the nature of social support as a moderator of work stress and burnout is methodologically and conceptually unclear, there is nonetheless a need for further examination of social support in its relationship with burnout.

Recent studies have explored this relationship, but results remain specious and unresolved. For example, the study of 248 teachers in New Hampshire by Jackson, Schwab and Schuler (1986:639) identified that supervisor support
was a "... variable worth exploring in [burnout-related research] in the future, but ... better theory appears to be needed." The authors claimed that the indeterminate nature of social support and its relationship with burnout indicate that their findings can be only tentative at present.

In this study, social support is conceptualized as one form of coping resource. Etzion (1984:621) has asserted that "... it is crucial to investigate further the dynamics of social support and the conditions in which social support groups are functional." From this perspective, the present study examined teacher burnout as a condition of a stressful work environment, and explored the relationship between social support and burnout as a stress response.

A recent study by Ainley, Reed and Miller (1986:96) of 1646 teachers in Victorian Government Secondary Schools found that a serious concern of teachers is lack of "... provision [for] useful advice about teaching problems." The implication of this finding is that teachers perceive inadequate levels and types of social support in schools, and the authors (1986:88) recommended that "... within school support for teachers is in need of attention."

The impact of individual characteristics on burnout and social support also deserves attention. For example, Ratsoy and Friesen (1985:128) found that the demographic variables of 2829 central office and system-based educators in Alberta were not significant predictors of burnout among teachers. However, MacPherson's (1985:160) study of 272 school administrators in Nova Scotia found that "... the personal variables accounted for a small but significant percentage of the variance [in] the ... sub-scales of burnout." Between-sex differences have been a particular focus of attention and Maslach (1982b:58) found that "... men [were] more likely [than
women) to have depersonalized and callous feelings about the people they work with."

Etzion (1984:620) also found differences between men and women in her study. Men used supportive relationships in their work environment to help them cope with burnout, whereas women used family or life sources. Further, Etzion (1984:615) found that "... women experienced more burnout and more stress ... than men." Pines et al. (1981:91) had similar findings, and maintained that overall, research indicates "... greater burnout ... among women."

Russel et al. (1987:273) reported that the age and sex of the teacher together with grade level taught "... were found to be predictive of burnout scores." In addition the study reported marital status to be "... predictive of scores on personal accomplishment [burnout] ...," and suggested that the examination of these background variables "... indicate the types of teachers and teaching situations in which burnout is most likely to occur."

The present study examined the extent to which burnout was related to the selected background variables of teachers, as there is sufficient evidence in the literature and research to suggest that individual and environmental characteristics have different and specific relationships with burnout.

**Practical Significance**

Maslach (1982b), Pines et al. (1981) and Shinn and Mørch (1983) recommended the importance of social support as a means of coping with burnout. Based on these recommendations, a justification for this research may be the practical application by teachers of the sources and types of social support they identify as constructive strategies for coping with burnout. Rathbone and
Benedict (1980) discussed the negativism that can develop among staff in a school, and Otto (1986) mentioned the feelings of isolation teachers had if they perceived lack of support from colleagues. These findings reveal that social support can be an effective strategy for dealing with job burnout, and that it may be both a group strategy as well as an individual one. For this reason, the effectiveness of social support as a coping resource warrants both an individual and organizational commitment.

There is a practical implication of this research for school administrators by helping make them aware of the benefits of social support and the need to develop staff morale and collegiality through a sharing of problems. Maslach (1982b) asserted that there is a need for teachers to provide feedback and recognition to each other in their work. Further, supervisor support has been cited in the research (e.g., Jackson et al., 1986; Ganster et al., 1986) as particularly important in dealing effectively with job stress and burnout.

An understanding of the nature of burnout among teachers may help develop a more productive and healthy organizational climate in schools. Policy makers should find such data valuable in the design of policy which directly influences the nature of teachers' work in schools. A more enlightened knowledge of the nature of burnout and social support among Victorian Government high school teachers may contribute to policy initiatives designed to alleviate burnout in teachers, and to stimulate further use of specific sources and types of social support.
E. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

The following operational definitions provide a basis for clarity and uniformity of understanding of terms which are used continuously throughout the study. Supplementary terms are defined as they occur in the study.

**Stress.** The definition of stress by McGrath (1976) was adopted for the purposes of this study. McGrath (1976:1352) defined stress as an individual response to a situation that is perceived as presenting a demand which threatens to exceed the individual's resources and capabilities for meeting that demand.

**Burnout.** The definition of burnout by Maslach and Jackson (1981a:1) was adopted for this study. Maslach and Jackson (1981a:1) defined burnout as:

... a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do 'people-work'. A key aspect of the burnout syndrome is increased feelings of emotional exhaustion ... the development of negative, cynical attitudes and feelings about one's clients ... [and] the tendency to evaluate oneself negatively, particularly in regard to one's work with clients.

**Social support.** The definition by House (1981) was adopted for this study. House (1981:39) defined social support as:

... an interpersonal transaction involving one or more of the following: (1) emotional concern (liking, love, empathy), (2) instrumental aid (goods or services), (3) information (about the environment), and/or appraisal (information relevant to self-evaluation).
Selected background variables refer to the demographic characteristics of teachers. These twelve characteristics include the personal variables of sex, age, marital status, total number of years as an educator, and the situational variables of total number of years in current position, degree to which major teaching assignment was consistent with training, grade level at which most teaching is done, desire to leave school or field of education, frequency of interesting work, overall work stress, size of school, and location of school.

Overall work stress is a single-item measure of stress ranging from "Not Stressful" to "Extremely Stressful" as perceived by teachers.

Teacher refers to any full-time classroom teacher in a Victorian Government high school who participated in the study.

F. DELIMITATIONS

The following delimitations applied to this study:

1. The study was confined to a random sample of classroom teachers from Victorian Government high schools.
2. The study was delimited to an examination of burnout as a consequence of unrelieved work stress.
3. The study was delimited to an examination of the relationships among burnout, social support and the selected background variables of classroom teachers.
4. The study was delimited to an examination of social support as it is provided in the work-place and in social life. No investigation of formal (or
professional) sources of social support was made.

5. The study was restricted to a random sample of Victorian Government high school teachers. Because this sample was representative of the population of Victorian Government high school teachers, the findings, interpretations and conclusions are limited to the respondents of the study but may be inferred as representative of teachers in Victorian Government high schools. The findings do not apply to teachers from Independent and Catholic schools.

6. The study examined burnout as the result of unrelieved job stress within an organizational context, and its relationship to social support as a coping resource. The study did not explore the impact of teacher personality characteristics or non-organizational factors on teacher burnout and social support.

G. ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions applied to this study:

1. That all respondent teachers were able to comprehend all items in the research instruments in the sense intended by the researcher.

2. That the responses given to the questionnaire were sincere and as accurate as possible.

3. That burnout and social support are quantifiable as indicated by previous researchers (e.g., Maslach and Jackson, 1981a,b; Caplan et al., 1975; House, 1981).
H. LIMITATIONS

1. This study was designed to examine the relationship between teacher burnout and social support, and the extent to which background variables are related to the degree of burnout experienced and the sources and types of social support utilized. Since this study was primarily descriptive, cause and effect relationships cannot be established.

2. The study was limited by the extent to which teachers responded honestly, carefully and independently to all items in the questionnaire.

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This chapter presented: (1) an introduction to the study, (2) purposes of the study, (3) background to the study, (4) justification for the study, (5) operational definitions of terms, (6) delimitations, (7) assumptions, and (8) limitations.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature and research considered relevant to the delimited aspects of the study, and includes the major topics of stress, burnout, coping, and social support. The conceptual model and conceptual framework for the study also are presented in this chapter.

The research and design methodology are presented in chapter 3. The nature of the study, the research problems which guided the investigation, and the sample selection procedure are described. The research methodology outlines the techniques used to analyze both quantitative and qualitative data, and the data collection procedure. Research instrument development and procedural tests of validity and reliability are
Chapter 4 presents the profile of the respondents, based on demographic characteristics. In Chapter 5, the nature of burnout in Victorian Government high school teachers is examined. Chapter 6 examines the nature of social support in these teachers.

The extent to which social support and burnout are related is described and examined in Chapter 7. The qualitative data based on teachers' written comments describing the sources and types of social support they use most in coping with burnout are presented in Chapter 8.

Chapter 9 completes the study with a summary of the findings, their implications for research and practice, and makes recommendations for further research.
Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The literature review for the study is presented in this chapter. The nature of teacher burnout and its relationship to social support was the focus of this study, hence it was necessary to provide a review of the literature which was broad enough both to identify a conceptual framework for the study and to locate inadequacies in information available, yet specific enough to identify and justify the research problems of the study. The review of the literature includes the following topics:

A. The theory and research on stress,
B. The theory and research on burnout,
C. The theory and research on coping,
D. The theory and research on social support.

A. THEORY AND RESEARCH ON STRESS

An examination of the stress literature is necessary if the nature of burnout is to be understood. Many of the leading researchers on burnout (e.g., Cherniss, 1980a; Maslach, 1982a,b; Pines, Aronson and Kafry, 1981) have written of this phenomenon as the development of physiological, psychological and behavioural responses to chronic, unrelieved stress. Maslach (1982b:3) asserted that burnout "... can be considered one type of job stress ...", hence a review of the theory and research on stress is included.

Conceptual Definitions and Difficulties

The literature on stress presents a broad choice of definitions, models and conceptualizations because the
The concept of stress is elusive and writers do not agree on any one definition. For instance, Cox (1978:1) pointed out that stress as a term is "... familiar to both laymen and professionals alike; it is understood by all when used in a general context but by very few when a precise account is required."

A definitive physiological study of stress was conducted by Selye (1956). Considered to be the founding father of stress research, Selye (1980:128) believed that stress cannot be avoided and in fact, ". . . during every moment of our lives some demand for life-maintaining energy exists. Complete freedom from stress is death." Selye began experimentation on animals in the 1930s and identified response characteristics of the organism which could be both physiological or psychological in origin. From this basis, Selye (1974:14) presented a definition of stress as ". . . the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it." Furthermore, the body responds in a similar fashion irrespective of the stressor being harmful or benign; it merely strives to adapt and readjust, and "all that counts is the intensity of the demand for readjustment or adaptation" (Selye, 1974:15). If stress becomes chronic, diseases of adaptation may result (Selye, 1976:83) with serious physiological, behavioural and psychological consequences for the person. Burnout as understood by Cherniss (1980a,b), Freudenberger (1974), Maslach (1976) and others is conceptualized as the development of these physiological, behavioural and psychological responses to chronic, ongoing and unrelieved stress.

Lazarus (1966:5) defined stress in terms of ". . . transactions between individuals and situations, rather than of either one in isolation." This transactional model has been expanded and modified by other researchers. For example, French, Rogers and Cobb (1974:72) focused on job stress in the organization by claiming it is a ". . . misfit between a person's skills
and abilities and demands of the job, and a misfit in terms of a person's needs supplied by the environment." Similarly, McGrath (1976:1352) perceived that "... stress involves an interaction of person and environment. Something happens 'out' there which presents a person with a demand, or a constraint or an opportunity for behavior." The transactional perspective takes into account both the psychological and physiological dimensions, where the individual's reaction to a given situation determines the extent to which that situation is perceived as stressful. From this perspective, Hiebert (1984:6) asserted that stress results from a situation that "... approaches or exceeds a person's self perceived ability to cope with it." Schuler (1980:203) suggested a "... multidisciplinary approach to the study of stress ..." because stress symptoms cover a wide range of perceptions and behaviours from loss of self-esteem, to depression and psychological fatigue.

In contrast Baum, Singer and Baum (1981:12) proposed a three dimensional perspective of stress. They suggested that stress has a source (the various stressors), transmission (the individual's perception of there being a threat), and audience (the response of the organism to stressful situations).

The varied and numerous perspectives of stress which have evolved are incorporated by Ivancevich and Matteson (1980:33) into eight different models: the biochemical model, psychosomatic model, combat model, adaptation model, disaster model, occupational model, social model and process model. Each model provides a different perspective for examining the area of stress.

Despite the various models, the three which encompass the major features of the above perspectives reside in (1) the engineering model, (2) the physiological model, and (3) the transactional model as identified by Cox (1975).
**Engineering model.** This model is taken from the physical sciences, namely Hooke's Law of Elasticity, which describes the effect of a heavy load or object placed on metal. According to Cox (1975:493), if the strain exerted is within the elastic limit of the metal, then like a rubber band, the metal will return to its original shape and leave no mark or sign of damage. If on the other hand, the strain is too great and exceeds the limit of elasticity, then some permanent damage will occur. Permanent physiological and/or psychological damage to an individual may result if the pressure is too great. Cox (1975:493) emphasized that in this model, "... stress is firmly located in the stimulus characteristics of the environment..." where the person is exposed to external stressors which result in a stress reaction.

**Physiological model.** Stress involves a physiological response in the body where resources to cope with the rapid need for energy are mobilized. Selye (1980:129) described this reaction as a "... syndrome produced by various noxious agents." Figure 2.1 describes the phases of the General Adaptation Syndrome (G.A.S.). The reaction has three phases (Selye, 1974:26; 1976:79). Included in the G.A.S. is the first stage or alarm reaction where the immediate physiological response to a stressor occurs, the second stage of resistance where the body adapts to the stressor, and finally the stage of exhaustion or burnout where the organism's responses cease to be effective for the body has lost its ability to adapt (Selye, 1980:129).

Adaptation energy is called upon each time the body is mobilized by the alarm reaction. This energy is finite, and according to Selye (1976:82) "... there is just so much of it, and [one] must budget accordingly."
Farber (1983:15) clarified the stress-burnout connection in terms of the third stage of exhaustion: "... burnout can be regarded as the final step in a progression of unsuccessful attempts to cope with a variety of negative stress conditions." The human body like any machine sooner or later feels the effect of constant wear and tear, and runs down. Whether the stress is good stress (eustress) or bad stress (distress), the body's response is identical.

The discharge of adrenalin is only one phase of the initial alarm reaction, for equally important is the maintenance of homeostasis, the body's attempt to keep internal balance. Figure 2.2 illustrates the principal pathways which mediate the response to a stressor.
The stressor excites the hypothalamus (a region of the brain at the base of the skull) to produce the corticotrophin releasing factor (CRF) which stimulates the pituitary gland to discharge the adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH) into the blood. The effect is to elicit thymus shrinkage, atrophy of the lymph nodes, inhibition of inflammatory reactions and the production of sugar as a ready supply of energy (e.g., Selye, 1974:30). Persistent excitement of the hypothalamus-pituitary-adreno-cortical axis eventually leads to the breakdown of the body's resistance and homeostasis, and results in diseases of adaptation. Selye (1974:31) noted "... objective indices of stress such as adrenal enlargement, thymus atrophy and gastrointestinal ulcers ..." indicate a breakdown of the
body's protective and coping mechanisms.

Too much stress (hyperstress) or too little stress (hypostress) is equally destructive and Selye (1980:141) recommended that the individual learn to recognize when the "limit of adaptability" has been exceeded. The goal should be to strike and maintain a balance.

Transactional model. The study of stress in organizations generally uses the transactional model. In this model and according to Schuler (1984:38), stress is perceived as a dynamic state of uncertainty, and one most people wish to avoid or resolve. The transactional approach indicates that relationships are reciprocal rather than linear, that is, where relationships are constantly changing in response to demands. An individual's abilities and needs are assessed within the context of the demands and resources of the environment. So, what could be a stressor for one person, need not be for another (Schuler, 1984:38).

The basic components of the transactional model consist of personal resources and internal needs and values, and the external environmental resources and demands. Cox and Mackay (1981:102) suggested that a:

... person is continually appraising the demands being made on him by his situation and his ability to meet those demands [and] his environment may or may not provide the opportunity for him to satisfy his needs.

The model takes account of the active and adaptive process of the transaction between the individual and the work environment.

In a further interpretation of transactional models of stress, McGrath (1976:1352) stated that stress occurs "... when an environmental situation is perceived as presenting a demand which threatens to exceed the person's capabilities and resources for meeting it." This "... poor fit between individuals and their
environment . . ." (Schuler, 1980:188) is the source of stress (e.g., French et al., 1974: Lofquist and Dawis, 1969). In actuality, two kinds of "fit" are described: the interaction between how well the individual is suited to his or her job, and how well the job is described in meeting the individual's needs. Any misfit will cause friction, and over a prolonged period can be a threat to that person's well-being (e.g., Van Harrison, 1976). The consequences of anxiety, depression and physiological illness, similar in part to burnout, may occur.

Cox (1975:494) emphasized that "... the important balance is not between actual demand and actual capability but between perceived demand and perceived capability." The individual's perception of the situation presenting a demand which threatens to exceed individual resources is the critical element in transactional stress models.

McGrath (1976:1356) further explained that a stressful event can be determined by a four-stage cycle. There is an initial environmental demand which is perceived by the individual as stressful. A choice exists in the response. If the situation is modified, then undesirable effects may be avoided. The response selection has consequences for both the individual and the situation, for the individual is intent upon changing his relationship to the situation. These consequences McGrath (1976:1356) stated, may "... not necessarily [be] the intended ones . . ." for the very nature of the dynamic transaction between person and environment is unpredictable.

McLean (1979) also examined the dynamic relationship between person and environment in the transactional model and emphasized the person's vulnerability during a stressful encounter. McLean (1979:38) maintained that vulnerability is in a state of flux, both over time and intensity. In addition, stressors in the work setting are perceived differently by each person exposed to the
situation, so that "... one person's stressor seems to be another person's stimulus" (e.g., McLean, 1979:15). What is critical to a person's vulnerability is that point of overlap between the stressful event, the external environment and the individual's vulnerability at the time.

Teacher Stress

The last decade has seen consistent research findings that teaching is a stressful occupation, and that increasing numbers of teachers are experiencing severe stress (e.g., Andrews, 1977; Blase, 1985, 1986; Cox and Brockley, 1984; Dunham, 1976; Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1978a,b; Leach, 1984; Otto, 1986; Tellenback, Brenner and Lofgren, 1983).

A Swedish study by Wahlund and Nerrelli (1976) found that among white-collar occupational groups, teachers were the most exposed to job-related stress. Needle, Griffin and Svendsen (1981) in a study of 937 Minnesota public school teachers confirmed the high risk levels of stress in teaching. Similarly, Laughlin's (1984a) study of 1,800 primary and secondary teachers in metropolitan and rural New South Wales indicated that one third of the respondents perceived their jobs were extremely stressful. Laughlin (1984a:305) commented that "... the poor mental health of teachers ... gives rise to some considerable concern." Further, a Victorian Ministry of Education Report (WorkCare, 1987:ix) stated that, "... in the eighteen months from the beginning of WorkCare to end-March, 1987, Government teachers lodged just under 850 claims for mental disorders - the majority stress related claims."

Research on teacher stress has followed a similar pattern and can be viewed in similar terms to stress research in general in that the focus has been on identifying the most stressful sources in the teaching environment and the ill-effects associated with teaching.
(e.g., Brown, Finlay-Jones and McHale, 1984:32; Hosking and Reid, 1985:4-5). Brenner and Bartell (1984:183) identified the susceptibility of teachers to work stress in a description of the nature of teacher's work:

... The working conditions of teachers are quite unique in as much as they involve continuous and intense interaction with groups of children. Teachers are society's agents entrusted with transmitting traditional values and guiding the lives of groups of restless young people in preparation for an ever-changing and ambiguous future; their influence has far-reaching consequences, secondary only to that of the family.

In addition to these intense moral responsibilities, teachers are under frequent public scrutiny from the media, pressure from parent groups, and the demands of an emotionally exhausting job.

In a meta-analysis of four separate studies conducted in the United States and involving 717 teachers, Blase (1983:1) identified four major stress areas in teaching. All four were associated with the problem of student discipline. Teachers reported anxiety, fear, anger and powerlessness in dealing with student misbehaviour, and as a result interpersonal relationships between teachers were affected. The irresponsibility of some teachers in failing to control their classes led to feelings of negativism and resentment from other staff members. Two principal-related behaviours, lack of support and lack of consistency, led to conflict between principal and teacher. Parent perception of how a teacher handled discipline was a contentious issue in teacher-parent relations. Otto (1983:29) and Laughlin (1984b:12) also identified student attitudes and student behaviour as sources of stress for teachers in schools. A more recent study on stress among 1,370 Victorian Government primary school teachers, all members of the Victorian Teachers' Union, by Chiu, Hosking, Fitzwater and McKenzie (1986:5)
found that the highest stress factors were role overload - having too much to do, discipline problems, too many policy changes too quickly,' and lack of support from senior staff.

These sources of teacher stress are important to delineate for while more general stressors exist such as job demands, career and training (e.g., Cox, 1978), and poor working conditions and time pressures (e.g., Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1978b), it is the front-line, face-to-face contact with students, other teachers, administrators and parents that are the major sources of stress for teachers (e.g., Sampson, 1983:39). According to Maslach (1982b:3), this "... chronic emotional strain of dealing extensively with other human beings .. ." can result in burnout.

Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978a:5) maintained that the available data indicate that stress within the teaching profession may affect the school as an organization, teaching performance, and the physical and emotional well-being of the teacher. According to Harris, Halpin and Halpin (1984:356), levels of high teacher stress may result in frustration, aggression, anxiety, absenteeism, avoidance behaviours, and decreased levels of teacher performance, creativity, and classroom management.

Teachers who strive the hardest and perceive their situation as highly stressed are often those most at risk. For instance, Otto (1986:65) asserted:

...those who care more are likely to suffer more, and are also likely to take on extra burdens and responsibilities, to try and solve problems against all odds.

Lazarus and DeLongis (1983:249) suggested that individuals appraise situations according to the capacity of a situation to become threatening, harmful, benign or challenging: in other words any situation can be perceived as a threat or a challenge. The extent to
which a situation is perceived as stressful, and the duration and intensity of stress, have important implications for burnout. For instance, Veninga and Spradley (1981:31) claimed that "... high stress perceivers will find less relief and burn out more easily; low stress perceivers run less risk." In support, Iwanicki (1983:27) contended that "... stress is a reality of teaching which can be beneficial or harmful, depending on how a teacher responds." These and other comments show that teacher stress has implications for school organization, student education, and teacher burnout.

Summary

The literature and research describe stress as consisting of potential stressors, appraisal and coping abilities, the experience of stress, a stress response, and, if stress is prolonged, chronic stress symptoms. Farber (1983:14) identified burnout as a chronic symptom of "unmediated stress." Consistent with this perspective, Paine (1982b:7) maintained that high and continuing levels of perceived job stress and maladaptive coping mechanisms resulted in burnout. Ivancevich and Matteson (1980:42) identified anxiety, depression, apathy, and nervous exhaustion as consequences of stress and these indices are consistent with Maslach's (1978a:113) correlates of burnout. For instance, emotional exhaustion "... is often accompanied by physical exhaustion, illness and psychological symptoms" (e.g., Maslach, 1978a:113; Hosking, 1985:9). The stress-burnout connection is well documented, and this study was delimited to research on teacher burnout from this perspective.
B. BURNOUT

Conceptual Definitions and Difficulties

Despite progress in the literature and research, the study of the burnout syndrome remains largely developmental. For instance, Heifetz and Bersani (1983:47) claimed that the concept of burnout has been criticized as a "... diagnostic black hole that encompasses almost any aspect of work that has some modest quotient of querulousness." Further, Cherniss (1980b:9) commented on the growing interest in occupational burnout among human service professionals and asserted that the numerous and superficial articles appearing in the popular press have led many to "... consider burnout a 'fad'." For example, an article in Time magazine (Morrow, 1981) epitomized the universal uselessness of the concept in an essay entitled "The Burnout of Almost Everyone." As if in agreement, Maslach (1982a:34) has commented that "if burnout means everything, then it means nothing at all."

Heifetz and Bersani (1983:47) highlighted the importance of conceptualizing burnout from a multi-dimensional aspect and not, as in the fable of the six blind men and the elephant, by grasping a different part of the elephant and attempting to describe the whole animal accordingly. In this instance, the underlying commonalities that tied together the separate features were overlooked, so that what got lost was the "unifying core."

Operational definition. The definition of burnout by Maslach and Jackson (1981a,b) was adopted for purposes of this study. Maslach and Jackson (1981a:1) conceptualized burnout as a "continuous variable, ranging
from low to moderate to high degrees of experienced feeling." The syndrome is not viewed as being either present or absent, but as being on a continuum of intensity. Maslach and Jackson (1981a:1) defined burnout as

... a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do 'people work.' A key aspect of the burnout syndrome is increased feelings of emotional exhaustion ... the development of negative, cynical attitudes and feelings about one's clients ... [and] the tendency to evaluate oneself negatively, particularly with regard to one's work with clients.

This definition was used by Maslach and Jackson (1981a,b) in the formulation of their burnout instrument, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). The MBI measures three sub-scales of burnout identified as Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment, over degrees of frequency and intensity. Savicki and Cooley (1982:146) indicated a widespread support for this definition in the research and stated that "... to date, the Maslach Burnout Inventory offers the most research-based definition of burnout."

The emphasis in research has been on those working in the helping professions: psychologists, social workers, therapists, teachers and counselors. The work these people do, according to Maslach (1978b:56) "... is often emotionally difficult to handle on a continuous basis ... difficult because hour after hour, day after day, year after year, they are dealing with people's problems."
Burnout and Work Stress

Various sources of work stress have been implicated in the development of burnout and from a multitude of perspectives including the loss of creativity, boredom and job dysfunction. Although Kamis (1982:55) asserted that "... burnout manifests itself in numerous ways and varies in the typology and severity of its symptomology", the general consensus is that burnout is a negative stress response that has severe and debilitating psychological, physiological and behavioural consequences for the individual.

Mattingly (1977:121) called burnout "... a painful and personally destructive response to excessive stress." The individual feels personal distress and this manifests itself in a variety of ways, both physical and psychological. Consistent with this view is the definition by Baum et al. (1981:24) who claimed that "... the consequences of unabated stress or repeated exposure to stress ... are decrements in ability to cope with subsequent stress after effects ... physiological dysfunctions ... and diseases of exhaustion." Paine (1982b:7) has identified these "... commonly employed set of maladaptive coping reactions to high and continuing levels of perceived job stress and personal frustration" as symptoms of burnout.

Veninga and Spradley (1981:6) defined burnout as a "... debilitating psychological condition brought about by unrelieved work stress." This stress results in (a) depleted energy resources, (b) lowered resistance to illness, (c) increased dissatisfaction and pessimism, and (d) increased absenteeism and inefficiency at work. Similarly, Cherniss (1980b:21) defined burnout as "... [a] process that begins with excessive and prolonged levels of job stress." From this perspective workers feel
tension, irritability and fatigue and in an attempt to defensively cope with the job stress they "... psychologically [detach] themselves from the job and [become] apathetic, cynical or rigid." Cherniss (1980b:21) concluded that "... burnout is an adaptation to stress."

MacNeill (1982:68) claimed "... much of the early literature dealing with 'burnout' is anecdotal in nature." He (1982:68) suggested that "... rather than viewing burnout as a separate and distinct phenomenon ... an approach that defines burnout as a 'special' case of occupational stress" would expand the field for broader investigation. MacNeill argued that studies in occupational stress have already isolated stressors which result in physical, social, psychological and behavioural symptoms similar to those identified in burnout.

Concepts of Burnout

Psychological. Freudenberger (1974:159), a pioneer of burnout-related research, conceptualized the syndrome as the result of becoming "... exhausted by making excessive demands on energy, strength or resources", and where the individual "... becomes inoperative to all intents and purposes." This conceptual model identifies the psychological state of the individual and was derived from Freudenberger's observations of the idealistic young men and women with whom he worked. Freudenberger (1974:161) concluded that it was "... the dedicated and committed ... [those who] work too much, too long and too intensely" who are most prone to burnout.

Consistent with this psychological perspective, Edelwich and Brodsky (1982:135) defined burnout as "... an ongoing process that varies both in severity and frequency of repetition." The pattern they described
consists of predictable stages of the worker's experience: enthusiasm, stagnation, frustration, and the final stage, apathy. They argued that frustration is "... the experience of learning to cope with limitations", while burnout means apathy, which is "... characterized by denial ... [and] diminished performance."

Burnout and depression, according to Freudenberger (1982:178) and Maslach (1982b:75), are inter-related. Specifically, Maslach (1982b:75) asserted "... one phase of the burnout syndrome is a sense of reduced personal accomplishment and a loss of self-esteem ... [where] a breakdown in self-esteem is a central characteristic of depression." Depression associated with burnout is a reaction to a sense of failure or loss. In the case of burned-out workers, the loss may be one of ideals, and failure the result of not meeting their own high standards. Freudenberger and Richelson (1982:67) explained that depression associated with burnout often is recognized for its anger, while depression arising from everyday situations is accompanied by a profound sense of guilt.

Social-psychological. From the social-psychological perspective, researchers have emphasized the interaction between individual needs and organizational needs as contributing to burnout. For instance, Jackson and Maslach (1982:64) stated that "... research on emotional burnout has focused attention on feelings experienced by people whose jobs require repeated exposure to emotionally charged interpersonal situations." Although empirical studies on burnout in the human services have been neglected (e.g., Einsiedel and Tully, 1982:91), those most recognized and frequently cited have been carried out by Maslach and colleagues.
from this social-psychological orientation (e.g., Maslach, 1976, 1978a,b, 1979; Maslach and Pines, 1977; Maslach and Jackson, 1978a, 1981a,b; Maslach and Solomon, 1976). The models in these studies addressed the work situation as a major contributor to burnout responses. From the same perspective, Pines et al. (1981:10) asserted "... the problem is largely a function of the situation rather than a function of one's own dispositional inadequacy."

According to Freudenerberger and Richelson (1981:175), burnout "... sets in when the effort spent is in inverse proportion to the reward received, [and] it becomes imperative to balance the equation." The nature of work in the helping professions necessitates an intense involvement with people on a daily basis which makes heavy demands on an individual's emotional resources. In these professions Pines et al. (1981:15) identified that burnout is

... characterized by physical depletion, by feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, by emotional drain, and by the development of negative self-concept and negative attitudes towards work, life, and other people.

Perlman and Hartman (1982:293) conducted a content meta-analysis of forty-eight research articles and concluded "... burnout [is] a response to chronic emotional stress with three components." The components of (a) emotional and/or physical exhaustion, (b) lowered job productivity, and (c) over-depersonalization are synonymous with the emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment sub-scales of the Maslach Burnout Inventory.

Paine (1982b:6-7) examined the definitional problem in detail, and outlined five separate components of
burnout:

1. The Burnout Stress Syndrome (BOSS), which has identifiable clusters of feelings and behaviours most commonly found in stressful and highly frustrating work environments;

2. The Burnout Mental Disability (BOMD), which often is a serious, clinically significant pattern of the personal distress and diminished performance that is an end state of the burnout process;

3. The Burnout Process (BOP), which is the usual sequence of different stages or phases occurring in individuals, each stage indicating an increase in distress and disability;

4. Burnout Etiology, which is the study of the factors in and outside the work environment that contribute to an individual's BOSS; and

5. Burnout Organizational Outcomes, which are the short- and long-term impact of the BOSS and the BOMD on organizational functioning and performance.

Burnout: Individual and Situational Aspects

Freudenberger (1975:2-10) described the people who burn out as "... overly committed and excessively dedicated [who] worked long hours for minimal financial compensation [and] ignored their own discomforts and preferences." Burnout was the loss of idealism in work and the consequence of extraordinarily demanding situations (e.g., Freudenberger, 1974, 1975; Freudenberger and Robbins, 1979). Maslach (1978a:114) supported this situational perspective when she stated that "... the search for causes [of burnout] is better directed away from identifying the bad people and toward uncovering the characteristics of the bad situations where many good people function."
Maslach (1982c:40) asserted that all too often, whether it be the staff or the clients, people are blamed instead of their work environment. Personality variables are not irrelevant according to Maslach (1978a:15), as ". . . what is most emotionally painful for one staff person may not pose any special problems for the next." However, the weight of Maslach's (1982c:41) research suggests that the problem is one of social and situational sources because of the widespread incidence of burnout across a variety of occupations. Maslach (1982c:41) stated that ". . . we have reached the point at which the number of rotten apples in the barrel warrants examination of the barrel itself."

Chance (1981:89), in a review of current literature, found a consensus that burnout is a response to both organizational and societal stress. The role of environmental factors, particularly lack of organizational support, has been emphasized by Farber and Heifetz (1982) and Farber and Miller (1981) as precipitating burnout. Cherniss (1980b:63) also asserted that burnout must be recognized within a framework of the inter-relationships among societal, organizational and individual levels. However, he (1980b:63) pointed out ". . . differences in jobs and organizations probably are more powerful sources of burnout than are differences in individuals." Consistent with this perspective, Pines et al. (1981:33) argued that it is the individual's cognitive appraisal which will mediate environmental pressures, but emphasized that:

. . . if chronic pressures are put on the individual without adequate support, everyone will experience a certain degree of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion. Thus a focus on the environment is more useful, both theoretically and practically, than a focus
on the individual.

To illustrate the importance of the work setting, Mattingly (1977:129) described the working conditions of the professional child care worker as highly complex and stress-filled which require the worker to deal with situations on many levels simultaneously. She concluded that "... the child care worker practices in the proverbial 'pressure cooker' with an extreme intensity of interaction being part of the structure of his daily work."

Burnout and the Helping Professional

The research on burnout, and the extensive literature now available, have identified a variety of helping professionals who are most vulnerable to burnout. Various studies have been conducted of burnout as experienced by lawyers (e.g., Maslach and Jackson, 1978b), police (e.g., Maslach and Jackson, 1979), child care and day care workers (e.g., Freudenberger, 1977; Mattingly, 1977; Maslach and Pines, 1977a), child protective workers (e.g., Daley, 1979; Martin and Klaus, 1979; Shannon and Saleeby, 1980), mental health professionals (e.g., Maslach and Pines, 1977b; Pines and Maslach, 1978) and educators (e.g., Anderson and Iwanicki, 1984; Blase, 1982; Cedoline, 1982; Farber, 1984a,b; Schwab and Iwanicki, 1982a,b).

The helping professions deal directly with the needs of people, and Maslach (1976:20) claimed that the structure of the relationship with the client in the helping professions actually helps to promote and maintain negative perceptions of the recipients. The emphasis of the interaction is the focusing of the problem, there is little positive feedback, the level of emotional stress is high, and the probability of change
or responsiveness by recipients is low.

The helping professions occur in a wide variety of environments which in turn vary widely in the supportiveness and resources available to the worker. Harrison (1980:42) claimed that what workers in the helping professions need is an ability to

. . . affect the environment and meet its challenges [because] workers are able to develop positive affective responses to their jobs only if there is some certainty that what they do is valuable and makes a difference in the lives of clients.

Farber (1983:8-9) maintained that the greatest job satisfaction for human service professionals is related to their personal sense of accomplishment, the " . . . feeling that you've made a significant difference in the life of another human being." Harrison (1983:38) supported this view when he suggested that burnout results from the alienation of one's initial role; that is, to help people. Furthermore, Green (1982) claimed the bureaucratization of many of the helping professions has resulted in professional tasks being divided into monotonous routine jobs. The process has taken away the sense of collegiality, and Green (1982:7) asserted " . . . this loss is critical for the helping professions where a sense of solidarity, team-work and mutuality of purpose is essential to the effectiveness of the worker." What occurs is that in making the system work, the task itself and its importance become lost. The sense of disillusionment, combined with " . . . the loss of idealism and commitment in response to stressful working conditions" (e.g., Cherniss, 1980a:8) tends to occur relatively quickly in the careers of helping service professionals, which studies by Bloch (1977), Crane
Kalker (1984), and Ratsoy and Friesen (1985) have validated.

Perlman and Hartman (1982:283) proposed that burnout results from the interplay of several factors associated with the helping professions: (1) the intrinsic characteristics of these professions, (2) the growing importance of human-service delivery, (3) the characteristics of public sector organizations, which may further place a burden on service deliveries and administrators, and (4) the physical and psychological effects of stress for all workers. Cherniss (1982:86) suggested that helping professionals are subjected to high expectations from the public. When expectations are not met, according to Cherniss (1982:86), "... professionals [can] not easily develop a sense of competence", and become burned out instead.

Wilder and Plutchik (1982) also identified intrinsic characteristics in the helping professions which made them more vulnerable to burnout. However, they (1982:114) focused on inadequacies in the training programs of individuals as contributing to burnout in the helping professions. A review of the literature by Wilder and Plutchik (1982:114) identified five major problems in the training programs:

... (1) They tend to create unrealistic expectations. (2) They are often not practical, thorough, or relevant enough. (3) They do not train professionals in interpersonal skills to a sufficient degree. (4) They do not provide adequate knowledge of the nature of bureaucratic organizations and of how to function effectively within those constraints. (5) They do not train professionals on how to cope with uncertainty, change, conflict, stress and burnout.
Correcting these weaknesses, Wilder and Plutchik asserted, may reduce burnout. Similarly, Smith (1982:16) cited lack of adequate preparation of the young professional as contributing to burnout. The critical phase, he asserted, is in the early stage, when the training institution is left behind and the real work commences. The over-night transition from student to worker, "... with very little general work preparation [given], never mind professional acclimatization, contribute[s] to disillusionment and burnout." Cherniss (1980a:256) supports this view, claiming

... the new professional is unprepared for and unsupported in the first confrontation with the world of work, and career development is strongly influenced by the stress and burnout that so frequently occur.

The helping professional is in a work setting that has been shown to be highly stressful (e.g., Pines et al., 1981) but not all helping service workers burn out. Pines et al. (1981:53) explained that some professionals need to detach themselves more than others and that it is imperative to strike a balance in protecting oneself from the demands of the job. The authors (1981:55) claimed that those individuals who "... are the most idealistic and highly committed 'social servants' are the ones who have the greatest difficulty detaching themselves and as a result tend to burn out relatively soon."

In addition, Pines et al. (1981:48) commented that the individuals who seek to work in the helping services can be identified by three characteristics which make them more susceptible to burnout: (1) they do emotionally taxing work, (2) they share personality characteristics that make them choose human-service work as a career, and (3) they have a client-centred orientation.
Smith (1982:13) argued that burnout among helping professionals is a symptom of the philosophical base of professionalism being at odds with the milieu in which the professional works. The increasing complexity of the work environment may be a source of continual stress where conflict arises from the professional's actual practice behaviour and self-expectations. Smith (1981:13) suggested that "... a main mechanism used becomes one of denial and personal guilt", resulting in a loss of idealism and self-esteem, and ultimately burnout.

Societal expectations of professional service are an added pressure. Maslach (1977:22) argued that society's expectations are "... so unrealistically high that [they are] virtually impossible to attain." Cherniss (1980a:256) concurred when he asserted that the "professional mystique" of helping-service professionals is unrealistic, and "... society and the work setting collude in obscuring the gap" between myth and reality. In addition, Maslach (1977:22) claimed that "... the professional's work is taken for granted by the recipients", with no positive feedback to the provider of the service. Ryerson and Marks (1982:153) also contended that in the human service field "... there is a built-in non-reciprocal balance of giving. The professional gives; the client takes." They asserted that this imbalance is generally accepted and those who enter the service professions have altruistic motives, but what leads to feelings of negativism and ultimately burnout are the lack of sufficient job rewards. According to Ryerson and Marks (1982:153), the "... 'dixie cup attitude' (use 'em up and throw them away)" aggravates the feelings of loss of self-esteem and self-worth that the service professional may develop.

Yet another characteristic of the service
professional deserves mention. According to Maslach (1977:15), professionals in the human service occupations "... display a strong bias towards dispositional interpretations", and tend to take personal responsibility for failures even when circumstances may have prevented other outcomes. Freudenberger and Richelson (1980:152) stated that "... it is not easy for the men and women in the helping professions to discount a failure." Cherniss (1980a:21) identified the professional's "... concern about the adequacy of his or her performance" which ultimately may become "... a potential cause of burnout." Freudenberger (1982:179) added a further dimension and suggested that the helping professionals most prone to burnout "... believe that in the final analysis they can only rely on themselves." He described the individual as "... selfless in giving to the point of being drained, and, because of a seeming need to make sure that they are not perceived as 'less than' work extra hard to deny their human frailties."

Burnout: The Process

Cherniss (1980b:19) stated that "... burnout is a process that is self-enforcing." Paine (1982b:7) defined the burnout process (BOP) as "... different stages or phases occurring in individuals ... [where] each stage or phase presumably has different indications of distress and possibly of developing disability." Edelwich and Brodsky (1980:14) conceptualized the process of burnout as a "... progressive loss of idealism, energy [and] purpose", a similar view to that by Pines et al. (1981:52-53) who discussed burnout as a process where idealistic, sensitive beginning practioners lose their commitment. Paine (1982b:6-7) suggested that burnout is not an end state, but instead a progressive growth over a
period of time, and this view is supported by Farber (1983:3).

Einsiedel and Tully (1982:95) claimed that "... the burnout phenomenon is a process involving the progressive deterioration of the individual rather than a static psychosomatic condition." The process is not identical for each individual, for as Mattingly (1977:131) observed, burnout "... is a subtle pattern of symptoms, behaviors, and attitudes that are unique for each person." In addition, Farber (1983:3) pointed out that although there is consensus on some of the characteristics of burnout, it is often difficult to determine whether a worker is burned out or not, because burnout is a process that moves through stages, and these stages may be experienced in different ways and at a varied pace by individuals.

Edelwich and Brodsky (1980:42) argued that burnout occurs over five stages which they labelled the periods of (a) enthusiasm, (b) stagnation, (c) frustration, (d) apathy, and (e) intervention. Veninga and Spradley (1981:38-67) described the stages more graphically as (a) the Honeymoon, the period of high energy and job satisfaction, (b) the Fuel Shortage where physical and mental energy are dissipated resulting in boredom, fatigue and inefficiency, (c) Chronic Symptoms, the stage where chronic exhaustion, physical illness, anger and depression are recognized, (d) Crisis, the stage when individuals become obsessed with their problems, and develop pessimistic attitudes, and (e) Hitting the Wall, the final stage where the burnout victims can no longer function in their jobs and their lives begin to visibly and quickly deteriorate.

This concept of the burnout process is consistent with Maslach and Jackson's (1981a:1) conceptualization of
burnout as being neither present nor absent, but rather as located on a continuum of intensity ranging from low to high.

**Burnout: The Syndrome**

Paine (1982b:5) claimed it is appropriate to refer to burnout as a syndrome because it fits the definition proposed by the American Psychiatric Association in their *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. A syndrome is defined as "... a grouping of symptoms that occur together and that constitute a recognizable condition" (Paine, 1982b:5). Descriptions of burnout which appear in the literature (e.g., Cherniss, 1980a,b; Freudenberger, 1981; Pines et al., 1981) indicate that it fits the definition of a syndrome and can be recognized as particularly prevalent among workers in the helping professions. Maslach and Jackson (1981b) claimed that burnout is a syndrome when they described the research from which the Maslach Burnout Inventory was developed. They (1981b:100) stated that "... the generally consistent pattern of findings that emerged from these studies led us to postulate a specific syndrome of burnout."

Maslach (1982b:3) defined burnout as a "... syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment", but emphasized that the "... heart of the burnout syndrome [is] a pattern of emotional overload." Pines et al. (1981:15) concurred with the definition of burnout as a syndrome, for in explaining the concept of tedium they stated "... the experience of tedium is almost always a part and parcel of the burn-out syndrome."

Kamis (1981:57) presented an epidemiological model of burnout, equating the phenomenon with work in the
mental health area and comparing burnout with the more medical notion of disease. Cherniss (1981b:16) suggested that as it relates to emotional exhaustion caused by work overload, "... burnout appears to be a disease of overcommitment." Burrows (1982:21) supported a 'disease model' when he suggested that medical treatment was appropriate for the individual whose depression and cynicism have overflowed from work into home.

In comparison, Carroll (1980:223) claimed that the disease model is not appropriate since "... burnout simply stated, is not an individual disease. It is an ecological dysfunction and must be dealt with as such." Further, Carroll and White (1982:46) in repudiating the medical model nonetheless accept that "... physical disorders may arise as a consequence of burnout."

**Burnout: The Causes**

Perlman and Hartman (1982:302) claimed that the literature and research on burnout primarily have been descriptive, and that there has been limited progress "... into explaining its causes, prevention and cures." In the broadest sense, Freudenberger and Richelson (1980:200) maintained that burnout is produced by "... an incompatibility in the relationship of an individual to the society of which he is a part." In an Australian context, Green (1982:4) outlined a multi-dimensional model where burnout "... describes a constellation of worker reactions to the impact of stress deriving from organizational, societal as well as personal and professional factors." The following sections identify some of the causes of burnout from both an organizational and individual basis.
Organizational characteristics. The extensive research by Maslach (1976, 1978a,b, 1982a,b,c) and her associates focused on the work situation as the prime cause of burnout. In particular, Maslach (1982b:9) stated "... the nature of the job may precipitate burnout and not just the nature of the person performing that job." Consistent with the belief that burnout is as much a consequence of environmental as well as of individual factors, Pines (1981:364) stated that the social-psychological perspective of burnout "... does not deny the importance of individual traits, characteristics and disposition; rather it suggests that burnout has a major environmental component." Cherniss (1980a:264) found similar relationships and suggested that the "... larger social structures ... [and] the basic cultural ideas and attitudes that define our social reality must be considered in any evaluation of the origins of burnout." Heifetz and Bersani (1983:60) stated simply "... the greatest single cause of burnout is being in situations where one is overwhelmed." The individual feels swamped and is unable to function adequately.

In an attempt to outline some of the causes of burnout, Savicki and Cooley (1982:416) differentiated between environmental and individual contributors to burnout. They claimed that there are two environmental contributors: (a) factors related to the organization, such as intensity required on the job, perceived control of the work environment, availability and use of social supports and feedback, organizational structure and management qualities; and (b) factors related to the nature of client-helper interactions, such as degree of negativity or uncooperativeness encountered, and client characteristics. There are three individual contributors
to burnout: (a) identification with the client, including overidentification or depersonalization; (b) the attributional process, which indicates the degree to which the individual feels that he has control over reinforcers or outcomes or is controlled by luck and coincidence; and (c) the coping styles and needs of the individual.

Farber (1983:5) claimed that an almost endless list of work-related stresses exist as causes of burnout among human service professionals, such as:

... long hours, isolation, lack of autonomy, client 'neediness', public misunderstanding of the nature of their work, insufficient resources, lack of criteria to measure accomplishments, excessive demands for productivity, inadequate job training, and administrative indifference to, or interference with their work.

Green (1982:4-8) delineated some of the same stresses: (1) competing and often contradictory demands made by the organization, (2) problems of ambiguity, (3) conditions of hopelessness, (4) crises of professional competence which lead to a sense of inadequacy and self-doubt, and (5) the loss of collegiality.

Stressors endemic to organizational structures, notably role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload (e.g., Caplan and Jones, 1975; French and Caplan, 1972; Kahn, 1974) have been identified frequently as predictors of burnout (e.g., Cedoline, 1982; MacPherson, 1985; Schwab and Iwanicki, 1982a). The common element underlying these work stressors is that each "... promotes a feeling of inconsequentiality, a feeling on the part of the professionals that no matter how hard they work, the payoffs in terms of accomplishment, recognition, advancement or appreciation are not there"
Individual motivational needs. Lack of autonomy in the job has been identified by Maslach (1982b:146) and Pines et al. (1981:70) as an antecedent of burnout. An earlier study by Heckman (1980) also supported this view. The frustration of having responsibility without authority or the necessary resources, and without commensurate financial or psychological rewards for responsibility, are factors that may contribute to burnout.

Maslach (1982b) also identified lack of positive feedback as a main contributor to burnout for the service professional. In dealing closely with peoples' problems and needs, and particularly within the confines of a bureaucracy, the individual worker is often taken for granted, as is the service performed. In these circumstances Maslach (1982b:19) stated, "... feedback is either non-existent or is almost exclusively negative. They [workers] don't hear much when things are going right, but they sure hear plenty when things are going wrong."

According to Freudenberger (1974:162) and Cherniss (1982:88), boredom and routinization may contribute as much to burnout as do too much work and too much variety. Similarly, Pines et al. (1981:35) stated that "... people burn out not only from being overstressed with a great deal of work to do, but they can burn out from being underchallenged." Heifetz and Bersani (1983:60) asserted there is a need to grow personally on the job but when one is bored "... professional growth is at a standstill." Similarly, Meléndez and de Guzmán (1983:11) maintained that:

(e.g., Farber, 1983:6).
... an individual can have a low stress job or no job at all and still burn out. Such is the case when an individual ... feels overlooked in his work and experiences little stimulation, no challenge, and few opportunities for growth.

The implication is that there is need for a balance between individual needs and organizational demands, where an individual is neither overwhelmed nor underutilized. Gmelch (1983:7) recognized the dangers of boredom, and claimed it "... can be just as lethal as the popularized burnout syndrome."

Consistent with this belief, Veninga (1979:45) defined the individual perspective, rather than the organizational view when he stated that burnout is "... the failure to realize one's expectations." Veninga (1979:45) maintained that those who burn out are idealistic individuals whose "... realism is rooted in positive perceptions about themselves and about what they believe they can accomplish", and in this he is supported by Freudenberger (1975:74-78), among others.

There seems to be general agreement (e.g., Bloch, 1977; Cherniss, 1980a,b; Edelwich and Brodsky, 1980; Farber, 1983, 1984a,b; Freudenberger and Richelson, 1980; Pines et al., 1981) that burnout-prone individuals are empathetic, humane, dedicated, idealistic and "people oriented" but also that they are anxious, obsessional and subject to over-identification with others. Those in human-service work often desperately want to help others and want to make a difference, and Farber (1983:4) maintained that "... these individuals may base their self-esteem too exclusively on the attainment of unrealistic, albeit humane goals."

In summary, the causes of burnout are found in work stress (e.g., Cherniss, 1980a,b, 1982; Maslach, 1978,
1982a,b), in dispositional characteristics (e.g., Farber, 1983; Freudenberger, 1974; Pines et al., 1981), and in outside intervening variables (e.g., Green, 1982; Veninga and Spradley, 1981). At present however, the identification of specific stressors is largely speculative. As Maslach (1982b:145) noted, burnout "... is a complex interaction between individual, interpersonal and institutional factors and ... all of them have to be taken into account." The suggestion in the literature is that the causes of burnout are an accumulation of organizational, personal and societal pressures which threaten to overwhelm the individual.

**Burnout: Indicators and Components**

Freudenberger (1982:174) claimed the prognosis for recovery from burnout is optimistic, provided symptoms are identified early and constructive remediation and intervention procedures are implemented. However, Meléndez and de Guzmán (1983:76) asserted that individuals do not fully recover from burnout, while Carroll and White (1982:46) stated that an individual may burn out more than once, which suggests some degree of recovery. However, Carroll and White (1982:46) asserted burnout is infectious to the extent that one person's burnout increases the pressure and stress on others in the work environment.

Research by Carroll and White (1982), Cherniss (1980a,b), Edelwich and Brodsky (1980), Farber (1983, 1984a,b), Freudenberger (1974), Maslach (1976, 1978a,b, 1982 a,b), and Pines et al. (1981), has found that recognizable signs of burnout can be sub-divided into health-related, behavioural, emotional, relational, and attitudinal components.
Health indicators. Fatigue, chronic exhaustion, frequent colds and 'flu, headaches, sleep disturbances, ulcers, gastrointestinal disorders, sudden weight loss or gain, lower back or neck pain, increased premenstrual tension or missed cycles, flare-ups of pre-existing medical disorders.

Excessive behaviour indicators. Increased alcohol consumption and/or drug abuse, high risk-taking behaviour, general proneness to accidents and injuries, extreme mood and behavioural changes, more violent and aggressive behaviour, eating disorders, hyperactivity.

Emotional adjustment indicators. Paranoia, depression, decreased emotional control, martyrdom, frequent daydreaming, feelings of being 'trapped', nervous tics, inability to concentrate, increased anger, fear and tension.

Relationship indicators. Isolation from or overbonding with other staff, responding to clients mechanically, isolation from clients or using clients to meet personal and social needs, increased interpersonal conflicts with other staff and with family.

Attitude indicators. Boredom, cynicism, sick humour, distrust of management and supervisors, expressions of hopelessness, powerlessness, meaninglessness.

The above indicators can be recognized in Perlman and Hartman's (1980:4) concept of burnout as consisting of three components. These components are (a) physiological, focusing on physical symptoms, (b)
affective-cognitive, focusing on attitudes and feelings, and (c) behavioural, focusing on behaviour symptomatic of burnout. The indicators also are representative of the sub-scales of Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment burnout identified by Maslach and Jackson (1981a,b). Although independent researchers have found similar indicators in their studies (e.g., Levinson, 1981; Cherniss, 1980a,b; Forney, Wallace-Schutzman and Wiggers, 1982), the general belief is that burnout is a multidimensional concept and that an identification of some of its components does not mean the concept has been fully described. For instance, Maslach (1982b:144) asserted that contributing factors cut across "... the individual, interpersonal and institutional, [and burnout occurs at] all of these levels, and not just one."

Teacher Burnout

The apparent increasing incidence of teacher burnout in recent years is in part the result of "... the many different types of stress that impinge on [teachers] during a given day" (Rottier, Kelly and Tomhave, 1983:72). Studies have found that classroom teachers experience burnout to a greater degree and to a larger extent than principals or administrators (e.g., Anderson and Iwanicki, 1984; Cedoline, 1982; Farber, 1984a,b; Litt and Turk, 1985; MacPherson, 1985; Ratsoy and Friesen, 1985; Schwab and Iwanicki, 1982a,b). McGowan (1984:89) reported the findings of a study carried out among 619 Queensland teachers where an estimated 10%-25% of the teaching profession were "... experiencing acute stress or burnout." A recent study of 248 teachers in New Hampshire by Jackson, Schwab and Schuler (1986:639) supported an earlier conclusion that teacher turnover is
predicted by emotional exhaustion burnout (e.g., Cherniss, 1980a,b; Gaines and Jermier, 1983; Jackson, 1984; Maslach and Jackson, 1982), but an even more important finding of their study was that many teachers who scored high on burnout remained in their jobs despite their stated preferences to leave the field of education. As a consequence, the authors (1986:639) maintained that "... a large percentage of teachers are in their current jobs involuntarily ... causing negative consequences for both individuals and educational institutions."

Rathbone and Benedict (1980:56-57) conducted a qualitative study of teacher burnout in a large junior high school in the Eastern United States. The major causes of burnout they discovered were (1) negative staff-room talk, (2) isolation, (3) lack of feedback, (4) behavioural problems with students, (5) powerlessness, (6) school rules not enforced, (7) conservative community attitudes, (8) lack of parental support, (9) boredom, (10) workload, (11) lack of adequate training, (12) maximum output with minimum return, and (13) the gulf between the reality of teaching and personal ideals. Similar to these findings, Jackson et al. (1986:631) claimed that burnout studies emphasize the "... prevalence of unrealistic job expectations among human service professionals" as a major contributor to burnout. Similarly, Anderson and Iwanicki's (1984:124) study of 375 teachers in Hartford, Connecticut found that the lower the feelings of self-actualization and esteem on the job, the greater the Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment burnout of teachers. Other research (e.g., Rottier et al., 1983:72; Welch, Medeiros and Tate, 1982:19-24) has confirmed that factors such as lack of appreciation and feedback,
student behaviour, isolation and working conditions are major causes of burnout for teachers.

Welch et al. (1982:4-5) claimed that burnout among educators "... is gradual [and involves] the loss of meaning in what was once a dream." Teaching as a profession may attract those individuals described by Freudenberger (1974:161) as the "... dedicated and the committed ... [those who] work too much, too long and too intensely", and who are most prone to burnout. Epstein (1986:55) maintained of the teachers he had treated for burnout:

... teachers in this category [burnout] are people who have loved teaching and have a very good record. Many of them are in their late twenties or early thirties and have had a number of years of successful teaching ... they have thrown themselves enthusiastically into their work ... [but] these people exhaust themselves. They run out of stamina.

Teaching is regarded to be a very stressful occupation (e.g., Dunham, 1976; Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1978a,b; Otto, 1986) because it involves close and constant contact with people all day, every day. These daily interactions can contribute to burnout. For instance, Maslach (1982b:41) asserted "... the more hours of direct unrelieved contact with people, the greater the risk of burnout."

The study by Rathbone and Benedict (1980:28) revealed that idealism is a strong motivator for young teachers who believed they could "... go out and change the world because [they] had the right ideas and [they] would try hard." This naivety almost certainly sets up an individual to be a failure to some extent. Such high expectations cannot be fulfilled realistically, and the
loss of idealism which results is an important element in burnout (e.g., Pines et al., 1981:4).

Maslach (1982b:113) asserted "... the most important (and perhaps only) source of praise, compliments, and recognition for a job well done may be your fellow workers." Recognition and feedback from either client, colleague or supervisor that a job is well done is very important for an individual. For instance, Cherniss (1980b:96) maintained "... feedback and information are critical 'resources' without which a worker cannot adequately perform his/her role." Without this adequate positive recognition and social support, teachers develop a low sense of self-esteem, and become progressively dissatisfied with their work. According to Anderson and Iwanicki (1984:109), "... teachers are struggling to find job satisfaction through fulfillment of their professional needs", and this the authors claim is what is driving teachers from the classrooms.

A sense of one's own worth is essential to psychological well-being, and acts as a buffer to burnout. In contrast, "... reduced personal accomplishment and a loss of self-esteem," according to Maslach (1982b:75) are indicators of self-blame that one has failed to live up to personal expectations, and this is one phase of the burnout syndrome. In support of Maslach, Fisher's (1984:231) study of 787 Northern Territory teachers found that lack of motivation in students and discipline problems severely affected teachers' feelings of achievement, and predicted personal accomplishment burnout.

The quality of the response from students seems to be at the root of burnout for many teachers. For example, Bardo (1979:252) described the "hopelessness of burnout," the feelings of despair when nothing could motivate
students to learn:

. . . No matter how brilliant the lessons I prepared, no matter how much I personally cared for learning, no matter how expensive the tools I brought to my classroom, little learning could occur which the students didn't care to learn. Unable to learn for them, unable to sit at my desk and ignore them, I found the only solution for me was to quit teaching.

Similarly, Farber's (1984b:331) study of 693 urban and suburban public school teachers in New York State reported that "... a primary source of satisfaction for teachers is their sense of helpful intervention in the lives of their students." Once this sense of purpose is lost, burnout becomes a greater threat. The implications of teacher burnout for students, administrators, schools, and communities is as yet unknown, but Farber (1984b:336) predicted that this is a growing social problem and it will have far-reaching consequences, not least for students whose experiences at school have been influenced by teacher burnout. Hatchard and Thomas (1987:42) support this view and emphasize there "... is an urgent need . . . for baseline data about [the] frequency [of burnout, its] occurrence in teaching and other helping professions."

Summary

In this research, burnout was examined in the context of organizational stress. This model of burnout in an organizational setting is represented most adequately in the transactional model of stress by Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978a) with its emphasis on what happens to the individual in the work environment. Perlman and Hartman (1980:4) recommended that burnout be
studied within this context. This study used the three component conceptualization of burnout by Maslach and Jackson (1981a,b) in order to describe the nature of burnout among Victorian Government high school teachers, and to explore the relationship of social support to burnout.
C. COPING

Conceptual Definitions and Difficulties

Stress, burnout and coping. The relationship between stress and burnout as defined by Maslach (1982b:9) ". . . is best understood (and modified) in terms of situational sources of job-related, interpersonal stress." Maslach (1982b:3) further clarified that burnout could be viewed as a particular type of job stress unique to those who have close and demanding contact with people in the course of their work. Most of the literature and research on coping deals with stress, and not specifically with burnout. However, Needle, Griffin and Svendsen (1981:179) asserted that the link between stress and burnout has been sufficiently established to draw inferences from coping with stress, to explain and identify strategies used in coping with burnout. Jackson (1984:98) also stated "... because burnout is a type of stress response . . . [stress] coping strategies can be used by burnout victims."

Perception is a crucial moderating influence on the degree of stress and burnout experienced (e.g., Hiebert, 1983; Holroyd and Lazarus, 1982). Hiebert (1983:52) stated that the cognitive component of a stress reaction "... typically involves an appraisal of the degree of threat, or the amount of demand that a situation contains." The emphasis is on the individual's perception of the original stressor, where coping, according to Holroyd and Lazarus (1982:24) reflects the effort "... to manage environmental and internal demands and conflicts among demands." Coping therefore involves the evaluation and use of appropriate strategies and techniques designed to mitigate individual responses to threatening and stressful situations.

According to Lazarus (1966:151), when a situation is perceived as a threat, coping strategies are employed
"... for dealing with [that] threat." Similarly, Folkman and Lazarus (1980:223) asserted "... the person and the environment are seen in an ongoing relationship of reciprocal action, each affecting and in turn being affected by the other."

Key definitions of coping. The two processes of appraisal and coping are central to our understanding of the transactional model of stress and burnout adopted for the purposes of this research. Appraisal is the process of realizing what is at stake and what resources and options are available, while coping is the effort to "... master, tolerate or reduce external and internal demands and conflicts among them" (e.g., Folkman and Lazarus, 1980:223). From this perspective, social support represents a form of coping.

Pearlin and Schooler (1978:2) defined coping as "... the things that people do to avoid being harmed by life-strains. At the very heart of this concept is the fundamental assumption that people are actively responsive to forces that impinge on them." Lazarus and Launier (1978) concurred with this transactional perspective of coping. They (1978:320) stated "... to think fruitfully of stress and coping, these must be seen as a special kind of transaction between a person of a particular sort and an environment with its own characteristics." Similarly, Cameron and Meichenbaum (1982:695) asserted that "... persons actively define and shape stressful transactions by means of their cognitive appraisals and their coping responses."

Schuler (1984:46) incorporated the definitions of Lazarus (1966), McGrath (1970) and Pearlin and Schooler (1978) in defining coping as:

... a process of analysis and evaluation to decide how to protect oneself against the adverse effects of any stressor and its
associated negative outcomes, and at the same time take advantage of its positive outcomes.

Haan (1982:256) differentiated between coping and defense. She stated that coping is not a defense mechanism, but rather "... an attempt to overcome difficulties on equal terms", where people tap resources in the environment and within themselves to come to terms with the difficulties presented. Consistent with this interpretation, Gmelch (1977:60) contended that coping is not the avoidance of stress but rather "... learning to use adaptive energy wisely." In addition, he (1977:52) recommended a person's ability in learning new skills to enable greater flexibility and versatility in facing pressures is critical to coping. This development of a "coping repertoire" is also cited by Pearlin and Schooler (1978:5) who maintained that people must be aware of the resources available to them and how to utilize these.

Direct Action and Palliative Modes

Monat and Lazarus (1977:8-9) suggested a taxonomy of coping, which emphasized two major categories:

1. ... (1) direct actions [which] are behaviors, such as fight or flight, that are designed to alter a troubled relationship with one's social or physical environment.
2. [and] (2) palliative modes of coping [which] refer to thoughts or actions whose goal is to relieve the emotional impact on stress.

Monat and Lazarus suggested that while one process of coping is not necessarily better or used more frequently than the other, palliative modes are used when direct actions fail or are inappropriate. They (1977:9-10) claimed such modes are often and erroneously viewed in depreciatory terms:

Palliative modes of coping have been viewed as pathological or maladaptive...
Palliative modes of coping may be damaging when they prevent essential direct actions but may also be extremely useful in helping a person maintain a sense of well-being, integration or hope.

Kyriacou (1981:55) has distinguished between psychic and somatic palliative coping techniques. Psychic techniques are directed towards the cognitive aspects of stress, such as emotionally detaching oneself from the situation. Somatic techniques are aimed at the bodily aspects of stress, such as drinking or recreational pursuits.

Meichenbaum, Turk and Burstein (1975:349) claimed that coping processes involve both direct action modes and intrapsychic coping modes. Direct action is the physical preparation for stressors and manipulation of the environment. Intrapsychic preparation includes the mental readiness to cope when a threat arises. Meichenbaum et al. (1975:339) claimed "... anticipatory fear and mental rehearsal . . . are essential for developing self-delivered reassurances. The absence of such cognitive rehearsal leads to feelings of helplessness when the danger materializes." Their intrapsychic model of coping is similar in content to the psychic model outlined by Kyriacou (1981).

Pines et al. (1981:156) defined coping with burnout and job-related stress as "... the efforts to master conditions of harm, threat or challenge when an automatic response is not readily available." They emphasized that coping is the link between stress and adaptation and as such coping in itself does not imply success, but effort. The taxonomy Pines et al. (1981:157) present is a variation of the direct-action palliative-action mode. Direct action is seen as either active, such as changing or confronting the source of stress, or inactive, such as avoiding or ignoring the source of stress. Palliative action can be active, such as talking about and adapting to the source of stress, or inactive, such as alcohol
consumption, drug abuse or cigarette smoking. It is this palliative-inactive mode of coping that according to Monat and Lazarus (1977:10) has come to be viewed as "pathological or maladaptive."

Consistent with this belief, Blase and Greenfield (1985:3) suggested that palliative techniques may provide temporary relief, but in the long-term can be destructive and harmful for the individual. Maslach (1982b:89) described such modes as "techniques gone awry" and that using alcohol or drugs, or avoiding people will have "detrimental consequences."

In general, coping may be defined as a process of gathering information, weighing alternatives, and implementing and evaluating the appropriate strategy to deal with a potentially threatening situation.

**Coping Effectiveness and Techniques**

**Coping effectiveness.** Maslach (1982b:89) suggested that coping can and does occur on several different levels — individual, social, and institutional. Moreover, Lazarus (1971:54) contended that the effectiveness of coping depends upon psychological (individual), sociological (social), and situational contexts. However, Pearlin and Schooler's (1978) study of individual coping in marriage, parenting, household economics, and work found that coping reduced stress in the first three cases, but had little effect on work-related stress. Other studies have shown that individual coping explains relatively little variance in work-related burnout (e.g., Shinn and Mørch, 1982; Shinn, Rosario, Mørch and Chestnut, 1981).

Newman and Beehr (1979:38-39) contended that the effectiveness of coping strategies is determined by the interactions between individuals and situational factors, and that there appears to be no single coping style that can be recommended for all individuals in all situations. The authors explained that an individual may cope...
differently with the same source of stress on different occasions, and different individuals may cope differently with the same stressor.

Pearlin and Schooler (1978:8) asserted that the most effective coping strategy was prevention. They asserted coping is not solely a matter of the ability to solve individual problems, but to prevent potential sources of stress from becoming actual stressors. Schuler (1980:192-193) presented a similar view by suggesting that coping effectiveness to some extent is determined by the individual's perception of his/her own ability in responding positively to a stressful situation.

McGrath (1976:1353) believed that past experience of the stressor "... can operate to affect the level of subjectively experienced stress from a given situation, or to modify reactions to that stress." The perception of stress and the ability to cope in the past strongly influence the individual's appraisal and coping response to a present stressor. Cherniss (1980b:136) concurred with this view, and stated that "... prior experience with the task, the stressor, and/or the situation attenuates the effects of stress." Monat and Lazarus (1977:9) stated "... what is considered to be an optimal or beneficial response is highly dependent on individual perceptions and judgements of the situation." Further, Cameron and Meichenbaum (1982:699) suggested that choice of a coping strategy will depend upon the adequacy of the individual to interpret experience. An appraisal of a situation may be adaptive and thereby therapeutic, or maladaptive and thus threatening.

Coping techniques. Pines et al. (1981:158), in their study of 84 subjects in various helping professions, found that active coping strategies were used more often to cope with work stress and were reported the most successful. The authors (1981:158) stated that "... active strategies are likely to change
the source of stress." Active coping techniques include changing the source of stress, confronting the source of stress, talking about stress, and adapting to the source of stress.

Wilder and Plutchik (1982:127) reported a number of coping techniques to reduce stress: avoiding the stressor, asking others for help, engaging in direct stress-reducing activities, collecting more information, acting the opposite of the way one feels, and minimizing the importance of a stressful event. They emphasized that not one of these strategies is better than another, and that their utility depends on what will work best in a given situation, and how a strategy is used. These and other strategies have been validated in research by Farmer, Monahan and Hekeler (1984:65-74), Maslach (1980b:87-105), Pfeifferling and Eckel (1982:262), and Veninga and Spradley (1981:100).

The individual has some ability to control his/her reaction to job stress by choosing an appropriate coping technique (e.g., Schuler, 1984). However, individual coping efforts alone are not usually sufficient to markedly reduce job stress, as indicated in a study of 392 teachers in the United States by Blase and Greenfield (1985:4):

"... Teachers too often define stress as an individual problem rather than an organizational or group problem, and respond with individual coping strategies that fail to affect the basic source of the stress and that may ultimately result in making the organizational situation worse.

These findings support Mechanic's (1974) claim that many of the problems with which people must cope are too large and complex for individual efforts, and that these problems may better be amenable to organized, co-operative efforts. Similarly, Shinn (1982:71) maintained:
... coping is too often confined to the individual level, where its effectiveness in dealing with burnout is questionable, and the demonstrated and potential effects of social support ... [as a form of] coping are too often ignored.

Summary

Coping responses generally are defined in terms of direct-action or palliative modes (e.g., Monat and Lazarus, 1977) and include action at the individual, social and institutional levels (e.g., Maslach, 1982b). Research suggests that coping with work stress at the group level is more effective than the individual attempting to cope alone (e.g., Mechanic, 1974; Shinn, 1982). Failure to cope adequately with stressful work situations may have important implications for burnout, and the sources and types of social support used.
D. SOCIAL SUPPORT

The following section reviews the research and literature on social support as a coping resource designed to deal with stressful work conditions.

Conceptual Definitions and Difficulties

The concept of social support is one that many researchers understand in a general sense, but conflict and confusion arise when attempts are made at a specific definition (e.g., House 1981:13). In a major review of the impact of social support on stress and health, Cassel (1976:113) highlighted the benefits of social support but failed to provide an explicit definition:

[There may exist] protective factors buffering or cushioning the individual from the physiologic or psychologic consequences of exposure to the stressor situation. It is suggested that the property common to these processes is the strengths of the social supports provided by the primary groups of most importance to the individuals.

From this statement, it can be inferred that social support is related to "... the primary groups of most importance to the individuals." Consistent with this perspective, Lin, Ensel, Simeone and Kuo (1979:109) defined social support as the "... support accessible to an individual through ties to other individuals, groups and the larger community." Similarly, Maslach (1982b:111) was convinced that

... the power of your peers to help you handle burnout should not be underestimated. Indeed, they can be your most valuable resource, [and] the social and emotional support provided by your peers can be critical for survival on the job.

Nonetheless, like the other definitions, this concept
explains what social support does, rather than what it is.

A more elaborate definition of social support that takes into account both group-related and individual variables was proposed by Cobb (1976). He (1976:301) suggested that the "... concept [of social support] can be expressed in person-environment fit terms, or as the extent to which the relevant needs are met." Cobb (1976:100) defined social support as information leading the subject to believe that: (1) he or she is cared for or loved, (2) he or she is esteemed or valued, and (3) he or she belongs to a network of communication and mutual obligation. These three aspects of social support Cobb identified as (1) emotional support, (2) esteem support, and (3) network support. Although this definition focuses on the critical dimension of emotional social support, it neglects the other aspects which Cobb later defined (1979:93-94) as (a) instrumental support or counselling, (b) "active" support or mothering, and (c) "material" support or goods and services.

Kahn and Antonucci (1980:267-268) in contrast defined social support as interpersonal transactions that included one or more of the following key elements: affect, affirmation and aid. Affect is defined as "... expressions of liking, admiration, respect or love", which includes under a single heading what Cobb termed the separate areas of "emotional" support and "esteem" support. Affirmation refers to "... expressions of agreement or acknowledgements of the appropriateness or rightness of some act or statement of another person." Aid refers to transactions in which "... direct aid or assistance is given, including things, money, information, time and entitlements." Cobb labelled these transactions as "material," "active" and/or "instrumental" support rather than social support. Although there is some overlap in these two definitions,
there still is considerable disagreement as to how elements of social support are specifically labelled.

**Social Support and Social Networks**

Freeman and Sheldon (1984:393) stated that social support "... is generally defined as the ability of a social network to sustain an individual." The concept of a 'social network' is the widest range of people who affect or influence the life of an individual. From this perspective, social support can be viewed as an intrinsic and necessary element in what may be described as the social network. For example, Walker, MacBride and Vachon (1977:35) defined an individual's support network as "... that set of personal contacts through which the individual maintains his social identity and receives emotional support, material aid and services, information, and new social contacts." Similarly, d'Abbs (1982:7) asserted that the social network is the "structure" or means by which an individual gives or receives social support. However, Lazarus and Folkman (1984:247) caution against confusing social support with social networks. According to the authors (1984:249), social networks refer to "... the number of people involved and the number who know one another well," whereas social support is defined as the "... nature of the interactions occurring in social relationships ... [and] how these are evaluated by the person as to their supportiveness." The former implies the size of the relationship, while social support refers to the quality of these relationships.

Lieberman (1982:766) also differentiated between social networks and social support where a "... social network is the context in which social resources are contained." In comparison, social support is a form of social resource contained within a social network. Lieberman (1982:776) stated that:
social support, or social resource, represents a much narrower concept than network. The assessment of social support depends upon an assessment of people's perceptions of their social network as containing individuals in whom they can confide, on whom to rely, and so forth.

Further dimensions of social support are outlined by Pinneau (1975:2). In his definition, the elements of social support are distinguished as tangible, appraisal (or information), and emotional support. Pinneau (1975:2) stated that

. . . Tangible support is assistance through an intervention in the person's objective environment or circumstances, for example: providing a loan of money or other resources . . . Appraisal or information support is a psychological form of help which contributes to the individual's body of knowledge or cognitive system, for example informing the person about a new job opportunity. . . . Emotional support is the communication of information which directly meets basic social-emotional needs, for example: a statement of esteem for the person, attentive listening to the person.

Pinneau's definition of social support is more discrete than others which generalize about the wider dimensions of a social network. Similarly, Caplan and Killilea (1976:41) defined social support as:

. . . attachments among individuals or between individuals and groups that serve to improve adaptive competence in dealing with short-term crises and life transitions as well as long-term challenges, stresses and privations.

The key elements the authors noted were (1) promoting emotional mastery, (2) offering guidance, and (3) providing feedback. Further, the social support system consists of professions and formal institutions, natural
systems (such as the family), informal social units, and individual care-giving efforts.

Support Resources

A number of researchers have conceptualized social support as a measure of social resources available and how these resources are utilized. For instance, Sarason, Levine, Basham and Sarason (1983:127) defined social support as "... the existence or availability of people on whom we can rely, people who let us know that they care about, value and love us." Bowlby's (1969, 1973, 1980) interpretation of social support and his theory of attachment are consistent with this perspective. Bowlby believed that when social support, in the form of an attachment figure was available in early life, then children became self-reliant, and learnt to function as supports for others. Similarly, Kahn and Antonucci (1980:258) maintained that "... the attachment relationship in infancy may be both a prototype and a precursor of supportive interactions in adulthood." Vaillant (1974), in a 30-year longitudinal study of Harvard University male under-graduates, found that a supportive early family environment was correlated with positive adult adjustment and lack of psychiatric disorder.

Kaplan, Cassel and Gore (1977:50) suggested that social support "... is defined by the relative presence or absence of psychological support resources from significant others." Underlying the discussion of support is a more general definition that takes into account the support resources available. That is, social support is the degree to which an individual's needs for affection, approval, belonging and security are met by significant others.
Importance of social support. The positive roles played by social attachments have been highlighted in a wide variety of settings. The emphasis of research has been on the perception of the individual as having effective social supports which contribute to psychological adjustment and health. For example, Sarason et al. (1985:127) observed that soldiers develop strong reinforcing ties with each other that contribute to their success and more importantly, their survival. Observations of this nature may lead to the conclusion that social support contributes to positive adjustment and personal development, and that it is an important resource for coping with life stress. Lin, Ensel, Simeone and Kuo (1979) in a study of life stress, social support and illness symptoms among a sample of 170 Chinese-Americans in Washington D.C. concluded that the relationship between support and illness was a function of the level of stress. This perspective is consistent with the notion of social support as a coping mechanism that individuals would be more likely to use under stressful conditions. Similarly, Jenkins (1979) categorized social support as an adaptive defense mechanism used by individuals undergoing a stressful event and experiencing an alarm reaction.

Wells' comment (1984:137) that "... coping is what people do, either behaviorally or psychologically, to deal with stress in their lives, and social support is what others do to help people cope," identifies social support as a coping resource. Further, Pearlin and Schooler's (1978:5) claim that a social support group is a "... potential source of crucial support" in coping with stress and burnout is consistent with this definition.

A seminal experiment by Schacter (1959) on affiliation identified the importance of social support in coping with stress. This experiment involved college
students who were waiting to be shocked with electricity. It was found that they preferred to wait together rather than alone. Schacter (1959:19) asserted that "... affiliative desires increase with anxiety" and "group membership satisfies needs such as approval, status and help." While this experiment has little in common with the endless variety of life stresses experienced by individuals (in Schacter's experiment all were undergoing the same stress at the same time), it nonetheless indicated the social need that people have to belong, and to feel they have support when it is needed.

Social support and physical health. Studies of the relationship between social support and health have found promising results. De Araujo, Van Arsdel, Holmes and Dudley (1973) reported that asthmatic patients with good social supports required lower levels of medication to produce clinical improvement than did asthmatics with poor social supports.

A study of first pregnancy by Nuckolls, Cassel and Kaplan (1972) found a significant positive correlation between complications in pregnancy and low social support. Further, Sosa, Kennell, Klaus, Robertson and Urrutia (1980) found that the presence of a supportive person had a favourable effect on length of labour, and on mother-infant interaction after delivery. Cobb (1976:310) also advocated the importance of social support in protecting people "... in crisis from a wide variety of pathological states." He believed in the benefits of social support to health. He (1976:310) stated that "... social support can reduce the amount of medication required and accelerate recovery."

Social support and psychological health. In a comparative study of those living alone or unmarried, and those living with others and married, Eaton (1978)
reported that the occurrence of stressful life events was associated with more psychiatric disorder among individuals living alone. Andrews, Tennant, Hewson and Schonell (1978) found that the combination of recent stressful life events, low levels of social support and adverse childhood experiences, successfully predicted the incidence of maladjustment in adults.

Sarason et al. (1983:137) suggested "... people high in social support seem to experience more positive (desirable) events in their lives, have higher self-esteem, and take a more optimistic view of life than do people low in social support." Further studies by Cobb (1976), Dean and Lin (1977) and Kaplan, Cassel and Gore (1977) have shown the benefits of social support for psychological and physical health in the face of general life stressors. Cobb (1976:311) conceptualized the function of social support as the mobilization of psychological resources for coping: "... it would not be unreasonable to suppose that esteem support would encourage a person to cope, i.e., to go out and attempt to master a problem."

Therapeutic benefits of social support. House (1981:9) asserted that "... social support provides an attractive strategy . . . for promoting beneficial effects of the social environment on health," particularly in the "quantity and quality" of people's relationships with their co-workers, supervisors, spouses and friends. The quality of social support, according to House, appears to have an important bearing on the amount of stress experienced, and on overall well-being. Otto (1985:3) similarly stated "... stress is likely to be intensified where people are denied the chances to discuss their problems with others in a climate of social acceptance and understanding."

Cobb (1976:301) conceptualized social support in
terms of person-environment fit, or the extent to which relevant needs are met. As a coping resource, social support facilitates coping with a demand, and adaptation to change. In Cobb's (1976:11) definition "... coping means ... manipulation of the environment in the service of self and adaptation means change in the self in an attempt to improve person-environment fit." Social support is hypothesized as being such an important resource for the individual to utilize that Cobb (1976:12) advocated "... we should start now to teach all our patients, both well and sick, how to give and receive social support."

Consistent with these beliefs, Sarason et al. (1983:135) found that positive relationships with significant others foster self-reliance and the ability to persevere in the face of obstacles and distractions. Thoits (1982:154) agreed that the importance of the individual's psychological well-being is assessed through the need for self-evaluation, and social identity, which originate in social interaction. Thoits (1982:154) believed the implication is that "... social support as an aspect of social integration should have a main effect upon an individual's well-being."

**House's (1981) Definition of Social Support**

Although the literature and research indicate a general consensus about the nature and extent of interpersonal relationships that constitute one or more forms of social support, there is considerable disagreement as to what type of relationship and support is the most important. Nonetheless, Katz and Kahn (1978:602) suggested that although concepts of social support are not readily agreed on, the core idea "... is the communication of positive affect - liking, trust and respect - by significant other people in one's life."

Some analyses of social support (e.g., Caplan and
Killilea, 1976) have emphasized more formal sources of support, such as professional help and self-help groups, while others (e.g., Cassel, 1976; Cobb, 1976) have emphasized more informal sources like the family, friends and co-workers. Some sources will be more important than others, and this importance may be determined by the nature of the person and the type of problem needing support.

A fairly well-known definition of social support and the one adopted for the purposes of this study was proposed by House (1981). House (1981:39) defined social support as an:

... interpersonal transaction involving one or more of the following: (1) emotional concern (liking, love, empathy), (2) instrumental aid (goods or services), (3) information (about the environment), or (4) appraisal (information relevant to self-evaluation).

This typology contains four separate and distinct types of social support: emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal. It is important to distinguish between these as they have different causes and consequences. The four separate types of support are discussed and clarified by House (1981:24-25):

1. **Emotional support** involves providing empathy, caring, love, and trust. Most often, when individuals consider people as being "supportive" towards them, they think mainly of emotional support.

2. **Instrumental support** is most clearly distinguished from emotional support. This type of support may directly help a person in need. For example, one could help another
with work, spend time and take care of a person, or help a person pay their bills.

3. **Informational support** is giving advice or information that the person may use to cope with personal and environmental problems. In contrast to instrumental support, such information is not in and of itself helpful, rather it helps people to help themselves.

4. **Appraisal support** involves the transmission of information. This information is relevant to self-evaluation or social comparison where other people are sources of information that individuals can use in evaluating themselves. Such information can be implicitly or explicitly evaluative.

This definition by House is one of the most inclusive and exhaustive developed. For instance, Thoits (1982:147) argued that in any conceptualization of social support ".. not only is the amount important .. but [so are] types of support .. and sources of support." House's (1981) typology clearly distinguishes between types, and is representative of many conceptualizations of social support.

**Work Stress and Social Support**

The relationship between occupational stress and social support has received much attention in the literature (e.g., Caplan, 1974; Caplan, Cobb, French, Harrison and Pinneau, 1975; House, 1981; LaRocco, House and French, 1980; Wheaton, 1983). In addition, studies on the relationship between work stress in the human services and social support have emphasized the
importance of positive social support (e.g., Cherniss, 1980b; Lenrow, 1978a,b; Pines et al., 1981) while others have presented data on its negative relationship with burnout (e.g., Pines et al., 1981; Shinn et al., 1981; Shinn and Mørch, 1983). The general consensus however appears to be that social support is a valuable resource in coping with work stress and burnout. As Pines et al. (1981:132) stated:

. . . The nature of the relationships with one's boss, subordinates, and colleagues can be a major source of stress at work; good work relations between members of a group is a central factor in individual and organizational health.

Pines et al. (1981:132) and Maslach (1982b:111) asserted the importance of individuals in the work place, caring for, supporting, complimenting, and acknowledging each other's efforts. In reporting studies of burnout and social support, Pines et al. (1981:133) noted that "... burnout was ... reduced for individuals who had effective social networks or support systems at work."

Litt and Turk (1985:184) reported in a study of 291 Connecticut Public high school teachers that support from the principal was significant in reducing teacher stress. Further, in reporting effective coping strategies, Litt and Turk (1985:144) found that "... seeking more information about the problem through talking to other teachers" was of positive benefit to teachers. The authors concluded that social support was an important coping strategy, with peer support in particular being most effective.

House (1981:9) maintained that the "... quantity and quality" of people's relationships with those in the work setting and with family and friends "... have an important bearing on the amount of stress" experienced. Social support is hypothesized to reduce the level of
some occupational stressors and directly promote aspects of health.

McLean (1979:1) has emphasized that for most adults the work place constitutes a large investment in time and importance in their lives, and consequently the job may have pervasive effects on health and well-being. Efforts should be made to reduce levels of occupational stress, and in this regard, House (1981:9) suggested that "... social support, especially from others at work, is an especially appealing mechanism [because it] may buffer people against the impact of irreducible crises and stresses of work."

The benefits of social support are numerous, and include individual, group, and organizational factors. For instance, La Rocco et al. (1980:213) found that social support has a direct effect on improving job-related outcomes such as satisfaction. Shinn and Mørch (1983:238) reported that "... individual coping had little impact on job-related strain," but that group efforts were much more effective in combating burnout. In addition, social support as a group coping resource in the work place can be mobilized without the organization's participation. Caplan and Killilea (1976) suggested that support systems may aid members to mobilize their psychological resources, master strain, share tasks, and obtain necessary supplies such as information and skills.

House (1981:85) asserted that there is sufficient empirical evidence to conclude that "... work-related sources of support are most effective in reducing occupational stress ... [and] in some occupational settings supervisors are likely to be the most effective sources of support, while coworkers are most effective in others." Similar to this, Wells (1984:120) suggested that supervisor support may be more effective than coworkers "... specifically because they [the
supervisors] are the carriers of organizational demands and rewards whose impact they are in a position to ameliorate."

Teacher Burnout and Social Support

This study is concerned with teacher burnout and its relationship to social support, and for this purpose a brief outline of the research is presented.

Maslach (1982b:111) outlined the benefits to be gained from supportive others:

. . . People can provide many things that you cannot provide for yourself - new information and insights, training in new skills, recognition and feedback, emotional support, advice, and help of various kinds.

In teaching, as in most helping service professions, the importance of recognizing and utilizing a social support system can be a positive step in alleviating burnout (e.g., House, 1981). Pines et al. (1981:124) claimed that ". . . the creative use of social support systems provides an effective prevention mechanism against burnout . . . [but] most people do not make adequate use of potential social support." Social support as a coping strategy has gained increasing recognition in the stress-burnout literature but as Kyriacou (1987:149) noted ". . . the culture of the school and a reluctance to admit to colleagues that one is having difficulties often means that many teachers are unable to make use of such support." Mattingly (1977:136) suggested that support from colleagues and the opportunity to express feelings was a means of reducing burnout, but that this required ". . . willingness, confidentiality and careful response to one's colleagues."

Otto (1985:10) reported approximately 50 per cent of teachers in the sample of 106 secondary school teachers in Victoria stated a lack of social support in helping
them deal with work stress. Further, men more than women felt that they had to cope on their own more often. Otto (1988:10) concluded, "... lack of support implied intensified feelings of stress." Similarly, the study of stress among Victorian Government primary school teachers by Chiu et al. (1986:9) reported

... the common experience of clinicians [was] that the most at risk group of teachers seems to be the conscientious high achieving obessional teachers who struggle against odds to do the best for the children. These teachers when not supported by colleagues and principals, seem to break down readily.

Other research has revealed similar findings. For instance, the study of 248 teachers in New Hampshire by Jackson et al. (1986:636-637) found that personal accomplishment burnout decreased "... for teachers in supportive environments, with support from one's principal appearing to be particularly important." The study also found that lack of principal support was a predictor of depersonalization burnout. Russell et al. (1987:271) in a study of 316 Iowa teachers reported that the amount of "... social support received from supervisors was ... a significant predictor of burnout" among teachers.

Consistent with these findings, Otto (1986:174) asserted that having a supportive "other" was judged by teachers to be a "moderately to highly" effective method of coping with stress and burnout, and also helped the individual to confront the same situation again on the following day. Otto (1986:174) maintained "... many teachers seek relief through talking about their problems to others 'who can understand' be they colleagues, family members or friends who can give emotional support." The value of social support as a work-related resource also was confirmed by Anderson and Iwanicki (1984) who found
that younger and less experienced teachers were more susceptible to burnout. They (1984:123) asserted that "... it is important to provide a support system for younger and less experienced teachers to help them cope."

**Mentoring: A coping resource for teachers.** Clawson (1980:146) defined a mentor as an advisor and a counselor, and from this perspective mentoring can be seen as one specific form of social support. While not every person is suited to, or desires the kind of support a mentor can provide (e.g., Gehrke and Kay, 1984:23), those for whom this type of professional relationship develops can find their career paths cleared of many frustrations and hurdles, particularly at the beginning. Bova and Phillips (1984:9) asserted that "... organizations need to be made aware of the benefits of mentoring and should encourage their senior employees to help cultivate the skills and talents of newcomers."

Carruthers (1986:3,4) maintained that in many instances there are expectations on new staff to perform at the same level as their more experienced counterparts, and this increases stress and anxiety. Specifically, a young teacher finding it difficult to cope may feel reluctant to approach the principal for fear of being seen as "... weak and incompetent" (e.g., Stone, 1987:33) but in a school where a mentoring or 'buddy' system is encouraged, help may be provided through a more experienced teacher. Stone (1987:35) emphasized however, that "... mentors need to be collaborative problem solvers rather than authoritarian consultants."

The type of support most commonly associated with a mentor is that of counsellor (e.g., Gray, 1988:54), and in terms of social support, such a resource would be of great benefit to a new teacher. Carruthers (1987:1) described the important qualities of a mentor as:
In a study of 102 beginning teachers in Canada, Carruthers (1986:218) found that the 'preferred' mentor was a fellow teacher but that next in line was the principal. It seems that young teachers desire the help and guidance of colleagues and senior administrative staff, and if this was given willingly and without censure, a great deal of anxiety and distress could be alleviated for the new teacher. Houston and Felder (1982:460) maintained that "...the profession must not forget that entering the world of teaching is difficult, complex, and traumatic." The research and literature suggest that the social support of a mentor for beginning teachers can be a unique and effective means of inducting the neophyte into the profession.

Social Support: The Problem of Measurement

The research on social support has been confounded by the issue of measurement. According to Wells (1984:121), social support exhibits two different and distinct effects. In the first instance, an increase in social support may lead directly to a reduction in perceived stress and burnout. This is identified as a main effect. Alternatively, an increase in social support may lead to a reduction in the strength of the relationship between two variables, such as stress and health outcomes. This is identified as a buffering or moderating effect. Much of the research on social support has been concerned in identifying which of the two types of effects, main effect or buffering effect, is more significant in its relationship with work and life stress.
The buffering hypothesis of social support proposes that if social support moderates the effect of stress on health, then social support will be most pertinent for those persons under stress at a particular time. Wells (1984:123) argued that in this research design, social support is viewed in terms of what it "... does to the stress-outcome relationship, and not what it does to the components of that relationship." The theory of social support as a moderator in the stress-health relationship and the implications of this, has led to a greater concentration in research efforts to investigate the evidence of buffering. In contrast, main effects have been relegated to a minor role, or ignored altogether. Wells (1984:139) asserted that "... buffering and main effects are not mutually exclusive", and much of the research on social support has become "bogged down" in debate over the issue.

It is important to identify the various conceptualizations and operationalizations of social support. For instance, the majority of studies have assessed support from specific sources, for example, supervisor and coworkers, while others have ignored support from family and friends altogether (e.g., Beehr, 1976; LaRocco and Jones, 1978). Moreover, there has been little consistency in the operationalization of stress and social support among the studies.

Further, findings from recent studies on the relationship between social support and experienced work stress or burnout have been inconsistent. These studies have explored both main effects and buffering effects. For example, studies by Abdel-Halim (1982), Core (1978), House, McMichael, Wells, Kaplan and Landerman (1979), Kobasa and Pucetti (1983), La Rocco et al. (1980), Sandler and Lakey (1982), Seers, McGee, Serey and Graen (1983), and Wilcox (1981) reported evidence of the moderating effect of social support. However, many of
these investigations did not find consistent effects across (a) stressors and indices of strain, (b) sources of support, and (c) personal characteristics of the subjects. For example, La Rocco et al. (1980:213) in a study of a stratified random sample of 636 men from 23 occupations in the United States reported that social support moderated the effects of stressors on health outcomes such as depression and somatic complaints, but they found no evidence of the buffering effect on job-related stressors such as job dissatisfaction and boredom.

Other research indicates inconsistencies in social support as a main or moderating effect. For instance, Kobasa and Pucetti (1983) reported that support from the supervisor buffered the effect of critical life events on illness and symptoms, but that support from the family did not. Similarly, House and Wells (1978) found evidence for buffering effects with leader support, but not with co-worker support. Pinneau (1975) reported that social support had direct effects on reducing strain or burnout. However, when the data from this study were re-analyzed by La Rocco et al. (1980), evidence for buffering effects on specific mental and physical outcomes were found, but not on general job stressors, such as dissatisfaction. On the other hand, Laughlin (1984) reported that social supports were particularly influential as main effects, but the buffering effects were particularly selective. Generally, most of the evidence supporting the existence of moderating effects has occurred when more specific outcomes were studied (e.g., Gore, 1973; La Rocco et al., 1980).

These studies on work stress and social support cannot be considered replications of each other, because a variety of research methodologies and conceptualizations in an examination of work stress and social support were employed. Nonetheless, these
conflicting methodologies and definitions have been rationalized by Seers et al. (1983:275) who maintained that

. . . to the extent that overall patterns [in the research] may be discerned, it is clear that job stress has been found to have a generally unfavorable impact on workers, and that social support has been found to have a generally favorable impact . . . [but] the interaction of stress and support remains unclear.

Conversely, Kaufman and Beehr's (1986:522) study of 102 hospital nurses in the United States illustrates the complex role of social support. Their results contradicted most theories and models of job stress and social support. Several interactions were found, but in an opposite direction to predictions; that is, social support increased perceived job stress. The authors offered explanations for their findings, namely that if the source of stress, such as a supervisor, offers support to a subordinate, then the approach may be perceived as stressful. Further, supportive communication between coworkers may not always alleviate stress. In fact, stressed workers may reinforce the feeling that the situation is terrible. Consistent with these findings, Argyle and Furnham (1983) in a study of different work relationships found that colleagues were a source of emotional conflict, as were work superiors. Studies by Marshall and Cooper (1979) and Argyle and Henderson (1985) also found work relationships to be a major source of stress.

Further evidence of the intricate and confusing relationship between work stress and social support was found by Brenner, Sörbom and Wallius (1985) in their study of 63 teachers near Stockholm. The authors found that social support was a source of stress rather than a
moderating factor. Brenner et al. (1985:10) concluded that "... different kinds of work-related social support play different roles in the teacher stress process." A possible explanation for these differences was offered by Ivancevich and Matteson (1980:127), who indicated that not all individuals prefer or value group support, while others do not experience an easing of stress experiences from the social support of colleagues. Rathbone and Benedict's (1980:13) qualitative study of teacher burnout among junior high school teachers in New England corroborates this research. In their study, some teachers avoided their colleagues and felt sharing negative experiences exacerbated rather than reduced their feelings of burnout.

The popular assumption of social support as a coping resource which may protect or buffer individuals from the adverse effects of stress, was discussed by Cronkite and Moos (1984:374). While such an assumption is intuitively appealing and may be supposed to have beneficial effects, Cronkite and Moos (1984:388) cautioned against premature conclusions and emphasized the need to "... identify the conditions under which moderating factors have stress-buffering/exacerbating effects."

There are also differences among observers in their conclusions regarding social support as a moderator of stress. For instance, House (1981), Kessler (1982), and Thoits (1982) concluded that there is evidence of stress buffering. In comparison, Aneshensel and Stone (1983), Gore (1981), and Lin et al. (1979), concluded that the evidence does not suggest stress buffering. And Turner (1983:139) believes, and perhaps appropriately, that the issue is "... impossible to resolve at this juncture of research progress."

Etzion (1984:615) added another important dimension to the debate when her study of 657 managers and human service professionals in Israel found that "... the
relationship between work stress and burnout was moderated by social support in life for women and by social support in work for men." These findings emphasize the need for caution in prescribing the development of social support groups in the work place as a means of both combating stress and alleviating burnout. In view of Etzion's study this may benefit men, but may actually increase stress for women. Etzion (1984:621) asserted such a prescription "... might conflict with [women's] investment in developing social relationships outside work and impair the source of support that is most beneficial for them."

A critical factor in understanding more completely the debate about the appropriate measures of social support, is whether the focus of social support is on life events or work stressors. From this perspective, Ganster et al. (1986:109) asserted that "... support for the buffering hypothesis appears to be more prevalent in studies concerning life events as sources of stress, than in studies concerning work stressors." This study like many others (e.g., Etzion, 1984; House and Wells, 1978; Turner, 1981) further illustrated the difficulty involved in proving conclusively the extent to which social support buffers stress and burnout for various occupational groups. For this reason, the best that researchers can do for the present is to indicate that a relationship exists among social support, stress, and burnout, and to examine facets of this relationship in more detail.

Summary

Social support has been recognized as having a positive effect on life stress (e.g., Cobb, 1976). Further, research has found that an individual's perception of high levels of social support in the work place may reduce work stress and burnout (e.g., La Rocco
et al., 1980). In this study, social support is conceptualized as a coping resource which is present in the social and work environment and which has been shown by the research and literature to be a valuable means of coping with work stress and burnout (e.g., Pines et al., 1981).
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study examined the relationships among the selected background variables of teachers, burnout, and sources and types of social support. Further, teacher burnout was examined in relation to the individual's perception of him/herself as a supportive other.

The following explanation of the research variables and the relationships among them is represented diagrammatically by Figure 2.3.

Research Variables

Selected background variables. Based on the literature and research, this study identified twelve independent variables which relate to teacher burnout and social support. These selected variables were categorized as personal and situational background variables. The personal variables are those of sex, age, marital status, and the total number of years as an educator. The situational variables relate to the particular school in which the teacher works, and consist of the total number of years in current position, the amount of teaching time which is consistent with training, the grade level at which most teaching is done, the desire to leave the job, the extent to which work is interesting, the extent to which work is stressful, the size of the school, and the location of the school.

Social support. Social support consists of the sources and types of support offered by others and by oneself. Sources of social support include Principal, Deputy Principal, Level Co-ordinator, Faculty Head, Peer Group Teachers, Friends in/out of school and Family, spouse/relatives. Types of social support are Listening/Concern/Trust, Feedback, Advice/Information and
TEACHER
BACKGROUND
VARIABLES
Personal and
Situational

COPING
Direct &
Indirect Modes

SOCIAL
SUPPORT
Sources & Types

TEACHER
STRESS

TEACHER
BURNOUT

Figure 2.3
Conceptual Framework
Time. Types of support teachers themselves provide for other teachers are Listening/Concern/Trust, Feedback, Advice/Information and Time, the same categories as in section two.

Teacher burnout. Burnout was measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach and Jackson, 1981a,b). This instrument lists 22 items, nine of which constitute Emotional Exhaustion burnout, five constitute Depersonalization burnout, and eight constitute Personal Accomplishment burnout. Emotional Exhaustion burnout represents the feeling of being physically and emotionally drained from teaching. Depersonalization burnout is characterized by feelings of cynicism and detachment from students and co-workers. Personal Accomplishment burnout occurs when teachers feel that work is of little consequence, and develop feelings of low self-esteem.

Teacher stress is included in the conceptual framework, with the broken lines indicating that teacher stress is not a major focus of the study. Nonetheless, it is important to include stress in the conceptual framework, as burnout is conceptualized as the result of prolonged work stress in this study. This conceptualization is consistent with current research findings (e.g., Cherniss, 1980b; Maslach, 1982a,b; Schwab, Jackson and Schuler, 1986).

Coping is included in the conceptual framework where the broken lines indicate that coping is not a major focus of the study. Coping is included in the framework, because social support is conceptualized as a type of coping resource that is present in the work environment and which can be activated by any teacher in
order to deal with stress and burnout (e.g., Jackson, Schwab and Schuler, 1986; Kyriacou, 1981). This form of support, Pines at al. (1981:21) and Maslach (1982c:52) claimed has a negative relationship with burnout which occurs as a consequence of work stress.

Relationships Among Research Variables

In this study, social support is conceptualized as distinct from coping mechanisms such as direct-action or palliative techniques which deal primarily with individual responses to stress (e.g., Holroyd and Lazarus, 1982; Lazarus and Launier, 1978). Kyriacou (1981:58) asserted that while social support underlies both direct-action and palliative techniques, it is a resource which may be used independently of, or in conjunction with other coping strategies. Further, Pines (1983:157) asserted that the perception of high social support has reduced work stress and burnout for the individual.

According to Kyriacou (1981:59), ". . . it is important that the different types of social support are available in a school." One purpose of this study was to identify and describe the types of social support teachers use and also their sources of support. Both in-school and out-of-school sources were investigated based on previous research findings that men and women varied in their use of social support (e.g., Etzion, 1984).

The research relationships as illustrated in the conceptual framework take into account Beehr's (1985:386) claim that the research on social support has just begun and ". . . can only show that social support and stress [and burnout] are related." Further, Henderson and Argyle (1985:283) recommended that ". . . further studies are needed to examine the relationship between type and
source of social support." In light of these suggestions, this study described and explored the relationships among teacher burnout and the sources and types of social support teachers use in coping with burnout.
Chapter III

RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUMENTATION

This chapter is divided into three sections and provides an outline of the study including (a) research design, (b) research methodology, and (c) instrument development and validation. An assessment of the research instruments is also provided.

A. RESEARCH DESIGN

Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study were to examine the nature of burnout and social support among Victorian Government high school teachers, and to describe the extent to which sources and types of social support were statistically significant predictors of teacher burnout.

Specific Objectives

To achieve these purposes, four specific objectives were established:

1. To describe the nature of burnout among high school teachers;
2. To describe the nature of social support (i.e. sources and types) among high school teachers;
3. To explore the extent to which sources and types of social support were statistically significant predictors of burnout in high school teachers; and
4. To describe the aspects of social support personally identified by teachers as helping them most cope
with each type of burnout as defined by Maslach and Jackson (1981a,b).

**Nature of the Study**

The lack of empirical and theoretical justification of a burnout model, according to Jackson et al. (1986), has implications for research design. The authors (1986:631) argued that non-experimental design techniques are most appropriate in any analysis of burnout and related occupational and personal factors at this stage of research. The implication of such research designs, according to the authors (1986:631) is the inappropriateness of conducting tests of causal relations among research variables. This present research takes these observations into account, and thereby states the study objectives and research problems in terms of relationships among research variables. No sense of causality can be inferred until more conceptually and methodologically rigorous models of burnout in an organizational setting are developed. The study by Russell et al. (1987:273) contained similar limitations: "... [we] cannot infer from our findings that job-related stress and social support are causally related to teacher burnout."

From this perspective, this study was both exploratory and descriptive. It was exploratory in that it explored the relationships among research variables and provided information for further research and more rigorous testing of research hypotheses (e.g., Kerlinger, 1967:388). The study focused on the nature of burnout experienced by Victorian Government high school teachers and explored the extent to which sources and types of social support were statistically significant predictors of teacher burnout. Selected background variables were examined as they related both to the nature of burnout
experienced, and to the sources and types of social support utilized.

The study was descriptive in that it (1) identified and described the selected background variables of a random sample of Victorian Government high school teachers, (2) described the nature of burnout among these teachers, and (3) identified the social support provided for and by teachers.

Research Problems

The major purposes of the study and the four specific objectives were addressed through an examination of the following four research problems, and related sub-problems:

Research problem 1: burnout among teachers. The first objective of the study was to describe the nature of burnout among teachers.

1. What is the nature of burnout among teachers and its relationship to selected background variables?

The following sub-problems were examined:

1.1. What is the nature of burnout among teachers, and how does it compare with the established norms for each sub-scale of burnout?

1.2. What is the relationship between each of the sub-scales of burnout and the selected background variables of teachers?
Research problem 2: social support among teachers. The second objective of the study was to describe the nature of social support among teachers.

2. What is the nature of social support among teachers and its relationship to selected background variables?

The following sub-problems were examined:

2.1. What is the rank order distribution of the sources of social support, the types of social support and the type of social support offered to others by teachers themselves?

2.2. What is the relationship between sources of social support and the selected background variables of teachers?

2.3. What is the relationship between types of social support and the selected background variables of teachers?

2.4. What is the relationship between types of social support offered to others by teachers themselves and the selected background variables of teachers?

Research problem 3: social support as a predictor of teacher burnout. The third objective of the study was to explore the extent to which sources and types of social support were statistically significant predictors of the three sub-scales of burnout in teachers.

3. What sources and types of social support are statistically significant predictors of teacher burnout?
The following sub-problems were examined:

3.1. To what extent are sources of social support statistically significant predictors of Emotional Exhaustion burnout in teachers?

3.2. To what extent are sources of social support statistically significant predictors of Depersonalization burnout in teachers?

3.3. To what extent are sources of social support statistically significant predictors of Personal Accomplishment burnout in teachers?

3.4. To what extent are types of social support statistically significant predictors of Emotional Exhaustion burnout in teachers?

3.5. To what extent are types of social support statistically significant predictors of Depersonalization burnout in teachers?

3.6. To what extent are types of social support statistically significant predictors of Personal Accomplishment burnout in teachers?

3.7. To what extent are types of social support offered by teachers themselves statistically significant predictors of Emotional Exhaustion burnout in teachers?

3.8. To what extent are types of social support offered by teachers themselves statistically significant predictors of Depersonalization burnout in teachers?

3.9. To what extent are types of social support offered by teachers themselves statistically significant predictors of Personal Accomplishment burnout in teachers?
Research problem 4: teachers' personal comments. The fourth objective of the study was to investigate the sources and types of social support teachers identified personally as helpful in coping with each form of burnout as defined by Maslach and Jackson (1981a,b).

4. What sources and types of social support personally identified by teachers are used most in helping them cope with burnout?

The following sub-problems were examined:

4.1. What are the sources and types of social support teachers identified as helping them most cope with feelings of overextension and exhaustion, and how are they related to the significant predictor(s) of Emotional Exhaustion burnout?

4.2. What are the sources and types of social support teachers identified as helping them most cope with the development of negative attitudes and impersonal responses towards the people with whom they work, and how are they related to the significant predictor(s) of Depersonalization burnout?

4.3. What are the sources and types of social support teachers identified as helping them most cope with feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment on the job, and how are they related to the significant predictor(s) of Personal Accomplishment burnout?

The Sample

The study was conducted in June 1987 during the second term of the school year and with the co-operation of the Statistics Section, Policy and Planning Unit.
In April 1987, the Statistics Section of the Policy and Planning Unit (Schools Division) generated a random sample of 550 full-time classroom teachers in Victorian Government high schools based on the pay-roll statistics of the pay period, April 14, 1987. For each element of the population a pseudo-random number uniformly distributed between 0 and 1 was generated using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS). The cases which corresponded to the smallest 550 random numbers were selected.

Kish (1965:82) advised that sampling procedures should provide a representative sample of the population, so that "... samples are mixtures of the population [thus] different parts of the population should be appropriately represented in the sample." The random sample generated for this study was a close representation of the characteristics of the population as a whole, as illustrated in Table 3.1. For this reason, a stratified random sample was not selected as it would not provide a more representative sample. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970:607-610), a random sample of approximately 380 from a population of 13,000 (the total number of Victorian Government high school teachers at the time of the study) is adequate for the use of inferential statistics. A total of 550 was chosen in the event that some teachers failed to return the questionnaire. As can be seen in Table 3.1, in each case the chi-square value was not statistically significant at the .05 level. Thus, the achieved sample was not significantly different to the population on the distributions by sex, age, and school location.

The sample was organized by the code number assigned to each teacher from 001 to 550. Schools were grouped alphabetically and the corresponding teachers' numbers
Table 3.1
Comparison of Sample with Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Population f</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Achieved Sample f</th>
<th>$X^2$</th>
<th>d.f.</th>
<th>p*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4950 38.1</td>
<td>208 37.8</td>
<td>193 39.3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8049 61.9</td>
<td>342 62.2</td>
<td>298 60.7</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≤30</td>
<td>3330 25.6</td>
<td>146 26.5</td>
<td>136 28.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>7374 56.7</td>
<td>312 56.7</td>
<td>250 51.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>1692 13.0</td>
<td>69 12.5</td>
<td>77 15.8</td>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥50</td>
<td>603 4.6</td>
<td>23 4.2</td>
<td>23 4.8</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
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<td>386 70.2</td>
<td>341 69.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
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<td>164 29.8</td>
<td>121 24.6</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-- --</td>
<td>-- --</td>
<td>29 5.9</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The values of Chi-square ($X^2$) result from comparisons made between the population and the achieved samples.

*p > .05
were listed with each school. Teachers' names then were matched with the coded numbers so that the principal of each school in the study was provided with a list of participating teachers from his/her school. This procedure enabled the follow-up of teachers who did not respond to the initial mailing of the questionnaire.

Of the 550 questionnaires distributed throughout Victoria, 491 were completed resulting in a return rate of 89 per cent. Seven questionnaires were received after the cut-off date, and therefore were not included in the statistical analyses of the data. Of the 281 Government high schools in Victoria, 229 or 82 per cent were represented in this study.

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Quantitative and Qualitative Methods

Traditionally, educational research has utilized the scientific quantitative approach as described by Campbell and Stanley (1963). In the scientific approach the world is viewed as a series of real entities and steady processes. All of these may be fragmented into independent subsystems: dependent and independent variables. The relationships between the variables are sought for the purpose of prediction and control. Thus, the scientific approach tends to view phenomena as existing and discoverable in the real world so that the relative truth may be identified. Further, scientific theory leads to the development of a nomothetic knowledge base; that is, one focusing on the development of general laws.

These scientific assumptions were confirmed by Textor (1977:38) and for adherents to quantitative methodology, this method of research is the best route to
follow (e.g., Campbell and Stanley, 1963). Fienberg (1977:50), in arguing the merits of the scientific paradigm for educational research, suggested that the significant advantage of this methodology "... was the inference [that can be drawn from] psychostatistical educational data", and although new statistical models may be necessary "... nevertheless statistics are the key."

Quantitative data for this study were collected by a 52-item questionnaire which was posted to the randomly selected teachers through the principal of their respective schools. Borg and Gall (1983:415) recommended the questionnaire is a "... very valuable research tool in education", as it is a systematic method of data collection. Further, questionnaires are convenient, comprehensive, and cost effective to use and help preserve anonymity in the reporting of results.

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of (1) a closed item alternative response set, and (2) an open-ended response section. Mouly (1978:172) suggested that there may be advantages in having both the closed and open response formats as

... The closed questionnaire generally makes for greater coverage, more likely returns and more systematic tabulation. On the other hand there may be a need for the respondent to clarify his position with regard to some of the items, and it is generally advisable to include an open question or two for general reaction or comment at the end.

The questionnaire developed for this study and entitled Job Survey for Victorian Government High School Teachers contains four sections: Section A, Background Information; Section B, Social Support; Section C, Human Services Survey (Burnout); and Section
D. Personal Comments. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix A.

Three open-ended questions were included to complement the quantitative sections of the questionnaire. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies can be used to complement each other, according to Turner (1981:243), while Jick (1979:603) asserted that the combination of the two methodologies "... [may] uncover some unique variance which otherwise may have been neglected by other methods." Eisner (1981) supported this triangulated approach to enquiry in educational research. He (1981:9) asserted that by utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods, "... we can achieve binocular vision [because] looking through one eye never did provide much depth of field."

The questions in the open-ended response section of the questionnaire asked teachers to explain how both sources and types of social support helped them cope with feelings of overextension and exhaustion, the development of negative attitudes towards the people with whom they worked, and the feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment in their work.

Permission to Conduct the Research

A detailed proposal of the present research was submitted to Dr. P.J. Creed, Director of the Policy and Planning Unit (Schools Division), Ministry of Education, in accordance with the guidelines contained in the "Education Gazette and Teachers' Aid" (July 5, 1984:427). Permission was granted to conduct the study and the suggested time for collection of data was July, 1987. A copy of the letter of permission is included in Appendix B. However, in April 1987, Dr. Creed (personal contact) suggested that early June would be a more suitable time rather than July as the Ministry of Education was
conducting several research projects throughout July. He suggested that the response rate for the present research could be affected by the numerous demands made on schools in July, so it was decided that June was a more appropriate month to collect the data. Accordingly, all randomly selected teachers received the questionnaire at the end of May, early June 1987.

Respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity in reporting of all results, and the findings were made available to all schools that participated in the study.

Data Collection Procedures

Questionnaires were mailed to principals of participating schools with a covering letter asking that the teachers selected from that school be given a package. Included in the package for each teacher was (1) a covering letter addressed personally to the teacher, (2) the questionnaire and (3) a post-paid and addressed envelope for return of the questionnaire.

A total of 550 questionnaires was mailed through the principals to the participating teachers on Friday May 22, 1987. Appendix B includes a copy of the letter explaining the study and requesting that the teachers selected in the random sample be given a package, and a copy of the covering letter attached to each questionnaire for teachers.

Within one week of the questionnaires being mailed, the principals of the 229 schools in the study were telephoned to (1) confirm that the package of questionnaires had arrived in the school, and (2) request the principal's co-operation in encouraging the teachers to return their completed questionnaires.

Further telephone calls were made to schools on June 15 and 16 to request that teachers be reminded to
complete and return the questionnaire as soon as possible. Principals of the participating schools were very co-operative in encouraging teachers to forward completed surveys. On June 22, seventy-two reminder letters were posted directly to teachers who had not yet replied. A replacement questionnaire and post-paid addressed envelope were also included in case the teacher had misplaced the original survey. A copy of the reminder letter to teachers is included in Appendix B.

Because June 26, 1987 was the final day of term it was decided to make this date the final day for the collection of data. In total 491 usable questionnaires were returned for analysis by this cut-off date.

Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The qualitative data, represented by the respondents' comments and views of their jobs, were intended to supplement the quantitative information given in the first three sections of the questionnaire.

Quantitative analysis. The study was both descriptive and exploratory. The study was descriptive in that it sought to describe and identify the nature of burnout and social support among Victorian Government high school teachers and the relationships among burnout, social support and the selected background variables of teachers.

In this regard, descriptive statistical techniques such as means, standard deviations and frequencies were used for the analysis of the data.

The study was exploratory in that it sought to explore the extent to which social support was a statistically significant predictor of teacher burnout, and the extent to which the type of social support a
teacher offers to others was a statistically significant predictor of burnout in teachers.

To facilitate exploratory analysis of the data, statistical techniques such as multiple linear regression analysis, analysis of variance, and t-tests were used. To confirm that the MBI factored in the same way for the sample in this study of Victorian Government high school teachers as it had for the samples used in studies by Maslach and Jackson (1981a,b), a factor analysis of the MBI was conducted.

Stepwise multiple linear regression analysis was used to examine the extent to which the sources and types of social support were statistically significant predictors of the criterion variable, which in this case was each of the independent sub-scales of burnout, namely Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment. Kerlinger and Pedhazur (1973:4) asserted "... the results of multiple regression analysis fit well into a prediction framework." Maslach and Jackson (1981a:3) recommended that MBI scores may

... be correlated with other information obtained from respondents such as demographic data ... job characteristics ... or attitude measures [and] ... factors that best predict MBI scores can be assessed by multiple regression techniques.

Stepwise multiple linear regression analysis was used in this study. Pedhazur (1982:160) recommended the advantages of this technique. He described the procedure thus:

... tests are performed at each step to determine the contribution of each predictor already in the equation ... it is thus possible to identify predictors which were considered to be "good" at an earlier stage but have lost their usefulness when additional predictors were brought into the
equation and may therefore be removed from it.

Variables are added to the regression equation based on their partial correlations with the criterion variable. As variables are added, their contribution to the multiple correlation is re-computed until the multiple correlation coefficient (R) is no longer statistically significant.

One-way analyses of variance were used to examine statistically significant differences among sub-groups of teachers classified by selected background variables in relation to each burnout sub-scale. One-way analyses of variance were also used to examine statistically significant differences among sub-groups of teachers on each of the sources and types of social support according to classification by the selected background variables. A significance level of .05 was set for the various analyses. The level of statistical significance for analysis of variance results was based on the Bonferroni procedure (e.g., Wilkinson, 1987: MGLH27). According to Bonferroni, a significance level for comparisons among sub-groups in an ANOVA is established by dividing .05 by the number of degrees of freedom in the analysis (e.g., .05 divided by 3 d.f.=.017). Any alpha value established as a comparison between two groups and which is equal to or less than the Bonferroni level of significance (which in the example is .017) is considered to be a statistically significant result.

The t-test was used to test for statistically significant differences in burnout among sub-groups of teachers classified by sex.

Qualitative analysis. The use of an open-ended response section in the questionnaire is consistent with
Carney's (1979:64) assertion that qualitative data can be used "... to complement some other kind of data during an inquiry into attitudes." In section D of the questionnaire, teachers were asked to explain how specific types of support (e.g., Feedback, Time) offered by one or more sources of support (e.g., Principal, Family) helped them to cope with (1) feelings of over-extension and exhaustion on the job, (2) negative attitudes and impersonal responses toward people with whom they work, and (3) their feelings of lack of personal accomplishment on the job.

To ensure objectivity and to strengthen reliability, all open-ended responses were coded by the researcher and an independent coder. The inter-rater reliability coefficients were calculated by dividing the number of coding agreements between each coder by the number of coding agreements added to the number of coding disagreements (e.g., Goodwin and Goodwin, 1985:7). The inter-rater reliability coefficients established for coding of the open-ended responses of this study were as follows:

1. Feelings of overextension and exhaustion - .79,
2. Negative attitudes and impersonal responses - .78,
   and
3. Feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment - .73.

The method of content analysis of the open-ended responses was similar to that described by Bogdan and Biklen (1982:165-169). The following procedure was used:

1. All questionnaires in which Section D had been completed were used in the content analysis.

2. Each sub-section of Section D was coded
with the identification number of the respondent. These sub-sections then were coded according to the background variables of sex, marital status, years of teaching experience, and grade level taught.

3. A photocopy of each set of open-ended responses was made upon completion of the coding as described above. The master copies were retained for reference purposes.

4. The photocopies were then cut so that the responses for each of the categories representative of each burnout sub-scale could be examined separately.

5. Each response category was treated independently but in the same manner as the other two. Responses were grouped together according to sources and types of social support teachers identified as helping them most cope with feelings and attitudes representative of burnout.

6. Coded units of data were placed in identically coded manila folders so that any particular manila folder contained all the comments and responses from teachers to a particular category.

7. The contents of each manila folder were examined for a common descriptor and for underlying patterns and themes.

8. A frequency count of all responses in each category was conducted and the results tabulated.

All the information generated from this coding process and the accompanying content analysis of data is
presented in Chapter 8 of the study.

C. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTATION

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire used to collect data in this research consists of four sections.

Section A: background information. This section consists of questions related to the selected background characteristics of the respondents and includes both personal and situational characteristics. The twelve characteristics are sex, age, marital status, total number of years as an educator, total number of years in current position, percentage of teaching time consistent with training, grade level most taught, desire to leave present school or job, frequency of interesting work, overall work stress, size of school, and location of school.

Section B: social support. This section of the questionnaire consists of three sub-sections. Sub-section one - sources of social support - required respondents to indicate the extent to which the Principal, Deputy Principal, Level Co-ordinator, Faculty Head, Peer Group Teachers, Friends in/out of school, and Family/spouse/relatives were helpful to them in dealing with work stress and/or burnout. Sub-section two - types of support - required respondents to indicate the extent to which Listening/concern/trust, Feedback, Advice/information, and Time were important in helping them deal with work stress and/or burnout. Sub-section three - types of support offered by teachers themselves - required respondents to indicate the extent to which they
provided Listening/concern/trust, Feedback, Advice/information, and Time to other teachers in order to help them cope with work stress and/or burnout. For all three sub-sections, item responses were as follows: zero (0) "Not At All", one (1) "A Little", two (2) "Somewhat", three (3) "Considerable", and four (4) "Very Much". In total, Section B consists of 15 items.

Section C: burnout. This section of the questionnaire consists of 22 statements relating to burnout as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach and Jackson, 1981a,b). The original name of the inventory, "Human Services Survey", was retained.

The MBI measures both the frequency and intensity of respondents' feelings to specific work-related items. Responses are measured on an eight-point intensity scale ranging from zero (0) for "Never" to seven (7) for "Major, Very Strong", and on a seven-point frequency scale ranging from zero (0) for "Never" to six (6) for "Every Day".

In a cross-validation of the MBI for use with educators, Iwanicki and Schwab (1981:1172) found that the correlations between the two ratings of frequency and intensity ranged from .75 to .94. The authors suggested that, in view of the relatively high correlation between the two measures, "... serious consideration should be given to whether the two dimensional format is necessary when using the MBI." Recent studies by Jackson, Schwab and Schuler (1986:633), and Russel, Altmaier and Van Velzen (1987:271) used one dimension only of the MBI in view of the high correlation between the two ratings of intensity and frequency. Similarly, in this study, the intensity dimension only of the MBI was used. Permission to use this single dimension of the inventory was obtained from the publisher, Consulting Psychologists
Press. Copies of the letters of permission are included in Appendix C.

The MBI has been factor analyzed by Maslach and Jackson (1981:1) to yield three distinct sub-scales of burnout, labelled Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment burnout. Each sub-scale is independent of the others, and the feelings of burnout related to each sub-scale are different. Persons perceiving themselves to be burned-out will score high on Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization, and low on Personal Accomplishment.

The inventory is not designed to establish a cut-off score for burnout. Instead, the inventory measures perceived feelings of Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and lack of Personal Accomplishment. Overall norms for each sub-scale have been established (Maslach and Jackson, 1981:3), and these provide a useful comparison for research currently using the MBI. The sub-scales of the MBI are presented in Table 3.2.

Section D: personal comments. This section of the questionnaire consists of three open-ended response questions. In this section, teachers were asked to explain how both the sources and types of social support listed in Section B of the questionnaire helped them cope with feelings of over-extension and exhaustion on the job (Emotional Exhaustion burnout), negative attitudes and impersonal responses toward people with whom they worked (Depersonalization burnout), and feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment on the job (Personal Accomplishment burnout).

Instrument Development

The social support instrument. The social
Table 3.2
Sub-scales of the Maslach Burnout Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Sub-scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I feel emotionally drained from work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I feel used up at the end of the work day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Working with people all day is really a strain for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I feel burned out from my work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I feel frustrated by my job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I feel I'm working too hard on my job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Working directly with people puts too much stress on me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I feel like I'm at the end of my rope</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Emotional Exhaustion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Sub-scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I feel I treat some recipients as if they were impersonal 'objects'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I've become more callous toward people since I took this job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I don't really care what happens to some recipients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I feel recipients blame me for some of their problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Depersonalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Sub-scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I can easily understand how my recipients feel about things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I deal very effectively with the problems of my recipients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I feel very energetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my recipients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I feel exhilarated after working closely with my recipients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>In my work, I deal with emotional problems very calmly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Personal Accomplishment
support instrument used in this study consists of three sections which relate to sources of support, types of support, and support teachers themselves offered to others. The instrument was intended to fill some of the gaps in the research base on social support, as identified by Caplan (1974), d'Abbs (1982), House (1981) and Wells (1984).

The section on sources of support was developed in response to Wells' (1984:118) observation that "... few studies answer the question of which source provides the most support." Sources of social support based both on the various levels of responsibility of post primary school staff and non-school persons were identified. The sources of social support in this study were Principal, Deputy Principal, Level Co-ordinator, Faculty Head, Peer Group Teachers, Friends in/out of school and Family/spouse/relatives. Both in-school and out-of-school sources were included to maintain consistency with the literature and research (e.g., Caplan et al., 1980; Gore, 1973; Pines et al., 1981; Russel et al., 1987). These studies covered a wide range of occupations and were not necessarily education-based. For instance, Caplan et al. (1980:12-13) found that the immediate supervisor, other people at work, and wife, friends and relatives provided different types of support, and for this reason they were included in sub-section one of the instrument used in this research.

Social support is a dynamic variable that may be a product of - if not, in some cases, operationally identical with - the occurrence of certain types of life events. Thus, Thoits (1982:147) argued that the conceptualization of social support must include elements of both sources and types and not merely the amount of support an individual feels he or she is given. Types of social support included in the present instrument were
based on Thoits' (1982) observations, and were derived from the detailed typology constructed by House (1981). This typology incorporated the major elements of social support suggested by earlier researchers (e.g., Caplan, 1974; Cobb, 1976; Gore, 1973; Kaplan et al., 1977; Pinneau, 1975). The types of support in the present instrument were categorized on the basis of what House (1981:39) asserted to be a transaction involving one or more of the following: (1) emotional concern, (2) instrumental aid, (3) information, and (4) appraisal. House (1981:24) explained the way in which these four types of social support could be operationalized. The items on the social support instrument used in this study were derived from House's recommendations. In this study, emotional concern consists of listening, concern and trust; instrumental aid contains the single item of time; information refers to the items of advice and information; and appraisal contains the single item of feedback. These four separate and distinct types of social support comprise sub-section two of the instrument.

Sub-section three of the social support instrument was based on d'Abbs' (1982:63) suggestion that social support instruments should consider the two-way interaction where the recipient also provides support services. d'Abbs asserted that informal support by its very nature implies a mutual relationship. Consequently, the instrument used in this research provides the respondent with the opportunity to identify the extent to which he or she is a supportive other.

In total, the instrument contains 15 items over three sub-sections. Sub-section one contains seven items which describe the sources of social support available to the respondent. Sub-section two contains four items which describe the types of social support received, and
Sub-section three contains four items which describe the types of support the respondent gives to others. The instrument was designed with educators in mind, but as it was developed from current research and literature in the social sciences it could be adapted for use in related research in other organizational contexts.

The extent to which sources and types of social support are provided is measured on a five-point scale which ranges from zero (0) for "Not At All" to four (4) for "Very Much." A missing values score (e.g., 5 or more) was assigned to missing data or for items not answered.

**Validity and Reliability**

The social support instrument. Based on Nunnally's (1978:86) observations that "... in a very general sense, a measuring instrument is valid if it does what it is intended to do," both construct and content validity were tested.

To ensure construct validity, the instrument was compiled from a detailed and varied base of research and literature on social support. Well-documented studies have used similar instruments (e.g., Caplan et al., 1980; House, 1981; Pines et al., 1981; Wells, 1984).

To ensure content validity Nunnally (1978:92) recommended ". . . (1) a representative collection of items and (2) 'sensible' methods of test construction." The following procedure was adopted based on these suggestions:

1. The social support instrument listed discrete sources and types of support by identifying staff positions in the school and external sources of support. Types of support such as listening, information, time and feedback also were included. The instrument was designed to be understood easily and capable of being completed
relatively quickly.

2. A pilot study of the social support instrument so devised was conducted in November, 1986. Included in the test were 17 primary and post-primary teachers.

3. Revisions were made to the instrument based on recommendations from participants in the first pilot test. Items were checked for clarity and ambiguity, and modified where needed. Nunnally (1978:94) asserted "... content validity primarily rests upon an appeal to the propriety of the content and the way it is presented." The social support instrument appears to conform with these criteria.

The reliability of the social support instrument was established as follows:

1. Test-retest reliability was carried out. Following the first pilot test, a second pilot test was administered to the same 17 participants in December, 1986, after an interval of approximately two weeks. This interval was decided upon as the end of the school year was approaching and it was not possible to collect data from the original participants once the school vacation had commenced. Other revisions were made where needed.

2. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (e.g., Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, and Bent, 1975:279) was used to test the extent to which responses by the same teachers in each case were similar. A relatively high correlation coefficient would indicate a consistency in respondents' interpretations of the social support instrument, which gives some indication of its reliability as a measure of social support for school teachers.

A correlation coefficient of .80 was established as a measure of reliability of teachers' responses to both pilot tests of the instrument. Thus the social support instrument appears to be a fairly reliable measure of the
sources and types of social support that are relevant to school-based teachers.

3. As a further test of reliability (i.e., internal consistency), Cronbach's coefficient alpha was calculated for each of the three sub-sections of the Social Support instrument. Nunnally (1978:230) recommended that coefficient alpha be used as it "... provides a good estimate of reliability . . . since the major source of measurement error is because of the sampling of the content." Further, coefficient alpha sets an upper limit to the reliability of the test constructed.

Sub-section one which contains the seven items of sources of support yielded a coefficient of .77. Sub-section two which describes the four types of support available to the respondent had an alpha coefficient of .70. Sub-section three which contains the four types of support the respondent may offer to others yielded an alpha coefficient of .87.

Nunnally (1978:230) asserted that the importance of obtaining a coefficient of reliability "... should be applied to all new measurement methods." The relatively high coefficients for each sub-section of the social support instrument indicate an instrument that is both internally reliable, and is consistent with Nunnally's recommendation.

The Maslach burnout inventory. The MBI used in Section C of the questionnaire was developed by Maslach and Jackson over several years of research. Maslach and Jackson (1981b:99) reported that the scale has "... both high reliability and validity as a measure of burnout." Iwanicki and Schwab (1981:1167) similarly reported that "... when used in education, the Maslach Burnout Inventory measured the same basic constructs as those identified by Maslach and Jackson in
their work in the helping professions." Jones (1982:109) in referring to the MBI sub-scales, stated that they "...have been proven highly reliable and have been validated against numerous criteria under a variety of different validation strategies."

Maslach and Jackson (1981a:7) reported reliability data on the MBI. Internal consistency was calculated using Cronbach's coefficient alpha for each sub-scale. The results were as follows: Emotional Exhaustion frequency .90 and intensity .87; Depersonalization frequency .79 and intensity .76; and Personal Accomplishment frequency .71 and intensity .73.

Test-retest reliabilities for sub-scales also were reported. They are as follows: Emotional Exhaustion frequency .82 and intensity .53; Depersonalization frequency .60 and intensity .53; and Personal Accomplishment frequency .80 and intensity .68. All coefficients were significant beyond the .001 level.

Concurrent validity was reported by Maslach and Jackson (1981a:7), indicating that the correlations provide substantial evidence for the validity of the instrument. Maslach and Jackson (1981a:7) also tested discriminant validity of the MBI in relation to job dissatisfaction, and found that less than six percent of the variance in burnout was accounted for by job dissatisfaction.

Presentation of the Findings

The findings of the study are presented in the following five chapters. The profile of the respondents is presented in chapter 4 and included here is the result of the factor analysis of the MBI.

Chapter 5 presents the data analysis on the nature of burnout and its relationship to the selected background variables of teachers.
Chapter 6 presents the data analysis on the nature of social support and its relationship to the selected background variables of teachers.

Results of the regression analyses that examined the extent to which the sources, types and types of social support teachers themselves offered to others were statistically significant predictors of burnout, are presented in chapter 7.

Chapter 8 presents the analysis of teachers' written comments concerning the sources and types of social support they considered best helped them cope with feelings and attitudes representative of burnout.

A summary of findings is presented in chapter 9, together with a discussion relating these findings to the literature and research, as well as conclusions, implications and recommendations for future research and practice.

D. SUMMARY

This chapter contains an outline of the research design, methodology and instrumentation used in this study. Data were collected from a random sample of 550 assistant class teachers in Victorian Government high schools. The return of 491 usable questionnaires represented a response rate of 89 percent. The questionnaire used in this study contains 52 items over four sections: (a) respondent background information, (b) the social support instrument, (c) The Maslach Burnout Inventory (Human Services Survey) and (d) a personal comments section. The study was descriptive and data were analyzed using means, standard deviations, frequency distributions and correlation analysis. The study also was exploratory and used the statistical techniques of
stepwise multiple linear regression analysis, t-tests, analysis of variance, and factor analysis. Open-ended responses were subjected to content analysis.
Chapter IV

PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The twelve selected background variables of the sample are described in this chapter, together with the results of the factor analysis conducted on the Maslach Burnout Inventory used in this study.

A. SELECTED BACKGROUND VARIABLES

The twelve selected background variables of the 491 respondents were: sex, age, marital status, total number of years as an educator, total number of years in current position, percentage of teaching time consistent with training, grade level most taught, desire to leave school or education, frequency of interesting work, overall work stress, size of school and location of school. There is a variable N for all tables as a consequence of missing data.

Sex

Table 4.1 illustrates that approximately 61 percent of the sample were female teachers. The ratio of three females to every two male teachers is representative of the Victorian Government high school teaching population.

Age

As shown in Table 4.2, 27.98 percent of all teachers were in the 20 to 29 years age category; 51.44 percent were aged 30 to 39 years. The majority of teachers (79.42 percent) were in the 20 to 39 years age category. About 21 percent were 40 or more years old.
Table 4.1

Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distributions of Respondents Classified by Sex (N=491)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>39.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>60.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2  
Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distributions of Respondents Classified by Age 
(N=486)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 - 29 years</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>27.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 39</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>51.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 49</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>15.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 or more</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Marital Status

As shown in Table 4.3, 30.39 percent of teachers were single. About 9 percent of teachers were divorced, widowed, separated or living in a defacto relationship.

Years of Teaching Experience

As illustrated in Table 4.4, 54.79 percent of teachers had ten or fewer years experience as a teacher; 27.09 percent reported eleven to fifteen years experience, 11.81 percent had sixteen to twenty years experience, and 6.31 percent had twenty-one or more years of teaching experience.

Years in Current Position

As shown in Table 4.5, the majority of teachers (59.06 percent) had been in their current position for five or fewer years; 25.05 percent reported six to ten years, and 14.87 percent eleven to twenty years. A little over one percent had been in their current position for twenty-one or more years.

Consistency Between Teaching Assignment and Training

As shown in Table 4.6, 21.21 percent of teachers indicated a zero to twenty-five percent consistency between their present teaching assignment and their professional training. Moreover, more than one third of all respondents indicated between 50 and 100 percent inconsistency between their present assignment and professional training and only 43.50 percent claimed in excess of 75 percent of such consistency.
Table 4.3
Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distributions
of Respondents Classified by Marital Status
(N=487)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>30.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>60.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (e.g., separated,</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defacto)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4.4

Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distributions of Respondents Classified by Number of Years as an Educator (N=491)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years as an Educator</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5 years</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>23.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>31.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>27.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>11.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 or more</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.5  
Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distributions  
of Respondents Classified by Total Number of Years  
in Current Position (N=491)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years in Current Position</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5 years</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>59.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>25.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>11.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 or more</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.6
Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distributions of Respondents Classified by Teaching Assignment Consistent with Training (N=462)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consistency (%)</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 25%</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>17.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 to 50%</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>13.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 75%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>21.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76 to 100%</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>43.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grade Level Taught

Table 4.7 illustrates that 37.96 percent of teachers taught levels 7 to 9, 41.02 percent levels 10 to 12, and 21.02 percent indicated other combinations, such as levels eight, nine and ten.

Desire to Leave School

As shown in Table 4.8, the greatest single response category (41.90 percent) were teachers stating a preference to stay in the same school. Approximately 11 percent would prefer to change schools, 12.45 percent would change to another job within education, and 34.45 percent indicated the preference to change into another professional field completely.

Frequency of Interesting Work

As shown in Table 4.9, the majority of teachers (71.22 percent) found their work was frequently interesting to interesting most of the time. Alternatively, nearly 29 percent found their work to be interesting only occasionally or less often, and almost two-thirds of all teachers described their work as interesting only frequently, or less often.

Overall Work Stress

As shown in Table 4.10, only 24.49 percent of teachers reported their work was either not stressful or only mildly stressful. The majority (60.8 percent) described their work as moderately to considerably stressful, and 14.68 percent found their work very to extremely stressful. By aggregation, approximately 75 percent of all teachers surveyed described their professional responsibility as teachers to be moderately to extremely stressful.
Table 4.7
Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distributions of Respondents Classified by Grade Level Taught (N=490)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level Taught</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 to 9</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>37.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 12</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>41.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>21.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>490</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 4.8
Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distributions of Respondents Classified by Desire to Leave School (N=482)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desire to Leave</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stay in same job</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>41.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change schools</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>11.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change to another job in education</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>12.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change fields completely</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>34.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.9
Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distributions of Respondents Classified by Frequency of Interesting Work (N=490)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Interesting Work</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not At All</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>26.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>35.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>36.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.10
Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distributions of Respondents Classified by Overall Work Stress (N=490)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Work Stress</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Stressful</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildly Stressful</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Stressful</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>35.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considerably Stressful</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>24.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Stressful</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Stressful</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School Size

Data related to school size are shown in Table 4.11. Approximately 13 percent of teachers were in schools of fewer than four hundred students; 44.14 percent were in schools of four hundred to eight hundred pupils; 23.51 percent were in schools of between eight hundred and one thousand students, and 18.4 percent were in schools with student enrolments of one thousand or more.

School Location

As shown in Table 4.12, the majority of teachers (69.45 percent) taught in urban schools, 24.64 percent taught in rural schools, and 5.91 percent were in other type schools, such as schools in regional locations.

B. FACTOR ANALYSIS

The purpose of this section is to report the results of the factor analysis conducted for the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Items were considered to contribute to a factor if item loadings were greater than or equal to 0.40, which was the arbitrary criterion set to determine factor loadings (e.g., Maslach and Jackson, 1981a:5). The results of the factor analysis for the intensity dimension of the MBI are illustrated in Table 4.13. A principal components factor analysis using varimax rotation and iterations resulted in three factors. The three factors of Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and lack of Personal Accomplishment accounted for 49.9 percent of the variance in burnout for classroom teachers. All of the 22 items of the MBI loaded above 0.40 on the factor indicated by the test developers except for items 21 (-.33) and 22 (.34).
Table 4.11
Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distributions of Respondents Classified by Size of School (N=489)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 200</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201 to 400</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>10.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401 to 600</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>18.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>601 to 800</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>25.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>801 to 1000</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>23.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 or more</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>18.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.12

Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distributions
of Respondents Classified by School Location
(N=491)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Location</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>69.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>24.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>491</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 4.13
Varimax Factor Matrix of the Maslach Burnout Inventory for Emotional Exhaustion, Personal Accomplishment and Depersonalization Intensity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burnout Items</th>
<th>Factors and Factor Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I feel burned out from my work</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 'I feel emotionally drained from my work</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I feel used up at the end of the work day</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I feel like I'm at the end of my rope</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I feel frustrated by my job</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I feel I'm working too hard on my job</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Working with people all day is really a strain for me</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Working with people directly puts too much stress on me</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job</td>
<td>-.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives in my work</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my students</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I feel exhilarated after working closely with my students</td>
<td>-.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I deal very effectively with the problems of my students</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I feel very energetic</td>
<td>-.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I can easily understand how my students feel about things</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. In my work I deal with emotional problems very calmly</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 4.13 (Continued)

Varimax Factor Matrix of the Maslach Burnout Inventory for Emotional Exhaustion, Personal Accomplishment and Depersonalization Intensity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burnout Items</th>
<th>Factors and Factor Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal objects</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I don't really care what happens to some students</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I've become more callous towards people since I took this job</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I feel students blame me for some of their problems</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eigenvalues  
Percentage of Total Variance  
Percentage of Common Variance
Items 16, 11 and 4 loaded on more than one factor. These minor differences may indicate some culturally specific aspects of the original instrument which was developed in North America.

The eigenvalues of 5.28 for Emotional Exhaustion, 3.03 for Personal Accomplishment and 2.67 for Depersonalization are sufficiently high to indicate that the three sub-scales are justified as factors. The eigenvalue is the squared sum of the factor loadings and theoretically must exceed one to ascertain a factor in analyses such as this (e.g. Williams, 1979:175).

The percentage of total variance indicates that the factor of Emotional Exhaustion contributed 23.98 to the variance, Personal Accomplishment contributed a further 13.76 and Depersonalization another 12.16. In essence, Emotional Exhaustion is the strongest factor in the solution, and Depersonalization is the weakest. The percentage of common variance is the sum of the total variance for each factor, and this means that 49.9 percent of the variance in burnout for classroom teachers is accounted for by the three sub-scales.

C. SUMMARY

The main purpose of this chapter was to describe the selected background variables of the sample in this study. An additional purpose was to examine the extent to which the revised Maslach Burnout Inventory was similar to the original instrument developed in North America by Maslach and Jackson (1981a,b). The item factor loadings of the original inventory (Maslach and Jackson 1981b:102) for Emotional Exhaustion were numbers
1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16, 20; for Personal Accomplishment item numbers 4, 7, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19 and 21 and numbers 5, 10, 11, 15 and 22 for Depersonalization. As indicated by the results of the factor analysis of the respondents in this study (Table 4.13), there were no major differences found when using the instrument in an Australian context.

The characteristics of teachers outlined in this chapter were used for further data analysis in the remainder of this study. Approximately 60 percent of respondents were female teachers, and the majority of teachers were between thirty and thirty-nine years of age. About sixty-one percent of respondents were married. Fifty-five percent of teachers had 10 or fewer years of teaching experience, and fifty-nine percent had been in their current position for five years or less.

Sixty-five percent of teachers indicated a 51 to 100 percent consistency between teaching assignment and training. Approximately forty-one percent taught levels 10 to 12. Many teachers (41.9 percent) reported a preference to stay in their same school. Seventy-one percent of teachers indicated their work was frequently interesting or interesting most of the time. About 61 percent described their work as moderately to considerably stressful, and 14.68 percent of teachers found their work very to extremely stressful. The majority of teachers (67.47 percent) taught in schools with student numbers greater than six hundred. Sixty-nine percent of teachers taught in urban areas.

The factor analysis of the Maslach Burnout Inventory resulted in the three factors of Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment burnout, as indicated by the test developers.
Chapter V

TEACHER BURNOUT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SELECTED BACKGROUND VARIABLES

The nature of burnout among Victorian Government high school teachers is reported in this chapter, along with an examination of differences among sub-groups of teachers classified by selected background variables.

The Nature of Burnout Among Teachers

1.1 What is the nature of burnout among teachers, and how does it compare with the established norms for each sub-scale of burnout?

Maslach and Jackson (1981a:1) described the three aspects of the burnout syndrome as follows: Emotional Exhaustion burnout refers to feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted both in engaging in, and as a result of, one's work. Depersonalization burnout refers to the communication of an unfeeling and impersonal response toward recipients of one's service, care, treatment or instruction. Personal Accomplishment burnout refers to reduced feelings of successful achievement or satisfaction in one's work with both clients and co-workers. In their development of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), Maslach and Jackson (1981a:6) studied 2118 helping-service professionals. Included in their research were 845 Social Security Administration public-contact employees, 142 police officers, 231 nurses, 125 agency administrators, 222 teachers, 97 counsellors, 91 social workers, 68 probation officers, 63 mental-health workers, 86 physicians, 40 psychologists and psychiatrists, 31 attorneys, and 77
others. From these studies, the authors developed a normal distribution of scores on each of the three burnout sub-scales. Cut-off points were established to indicate respondents experiencing low, moderate, and high levels of burnout. In addition, Maslach and Jackson (1981a:3) established norms for each sub-scale of burnout. Table 5.1 illustrates the mean scores and percentage frequency distributions of teachers in the present study in relation to the cut-off points for each burnout sub-scale, and in comparison with the established norms of the MBI.

**Emotional exhaustion burnout.** As previously indicated, Maslach and Jackson (1981a:1) defined Emotional Exhaustion burnout as the feelings of emotional overload, of being emotionally drained from the excessive demands of one's work. Freudenberger (1974:160) had earlier identified similar feelings which he described as "... the state of physical and emotional depletion resulting from conditions of work."

As shown in Table 5.1, the mean score of 28.4 for Emotional Exhaustion burnout recorded by teachers was less than the norm of 31.7. Therefore, Victorian Government high school teachers were experiencing a lower than average level of Emotional Exhaustion burnout compared with other helping service professionals. In the sample, the majority of teachers (78.6 percent) were in the moderate to lower categories of burnout, with 21.4 percent in the highest burnout category.

**Depersonalization burnout.** According to Maslach and Jackson (1981a:1), a key aspect of Depersonalization burnout is "... the development of negative, cynical attitudes and feelings about one's clients." Similarly, Cherniss (1980b:21) noted the onset of psychological
Table 5.1
Comparison of Teacher Sample with Established Norms on Burnout Intensity (N=491)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burnout Sub-scale</th>
<th>Lower Third</th>
<th>Middle Third</th>
<th>Upper Third</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>MBI Norm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td>46.4&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depersonalization</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Accomplishment</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>58.1&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>39.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>This means that 46.4 percent of teachers indicated a low degree of Emotional Exhaustion burnout.

<sup>b</sup>This means that 58.1 percent of teachers indicated a high degree of Personal Accomplishment burnout.
detachment from the job where the helping professional becomes "... apathetic, cynical or rigid."

Table 5.1 illustrates that the mean score of 9.7 for teachers was less than the norm of 11.7. Similar to the results on the Emotional Exhaustion sub-scale, the majority of teachers (78 percent) registered low to moderate levels of Depersonalization burnout. Twenty-two percent were in the upper third category. These findings reveal that although teachers were experiencing various degrees of Depersonalization burnout, the overall level was lower than the established norm. However, 40 percent of teachers recorded in the middle third on this subscale.

Personal accomplishment burnout. Maslach and Jackson (1981a:1) described Personal Accomplishment burnout as "... the tendency to evaluate oneself negatively, particularly with regard to one's work with clients." Farber (1983:8-9) maintained the greatest job rewards for human service professionals is related to their personal sense of accomplishment, the "... feeling that you've made a significant difference in the life of another human being."

As indicated in Table 5.1, the mean score of 34.9 on Personal Accomplishment for teachers was less than the norm of 39.7. Because the Personal Accomplishment sub-scale is reverse scored, a reduced score indicates a higher level of Personal Accomplishment burnout. This finding indicates that Victorian Government high school teachers were experiencing a higher level of Personal Accomplishment burnout compared with the norm. Further, the greatest percentage of teachers (58.1 percent) were in the upper third of the distribution. In comparison, 13.4 percent and 28.5 percent of respondents fell into the lower and middle third categories, respectively.
This indicates that the majority of teachers recorded a higher level of Personal Accomplishment burnout than the other groups of helping service professionals whose responses helped to establish the norm for this sub-scale.

Summary

Teachers recorded lower than average levels of Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization burnout, and a higher than normal level of Personal Accomplishment burnout. Comparing the teacher distribution to the normative distribution for each sub-scale, the majority of teachers were in the lower to middle thirds on Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization burnout, but were over-represented in the upper-third on Personal Accomplishment burnout. These findings indicate that feelings of Personal Accomplishment burnout are of greater concern to Victorian Government high school teachers than are feelings of Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization burnout.

A. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BURNOUT AND THE SELECTED BACKGROUND VARIABLES OF TEACHERS

Between Group Differences

1.2. What is the relationship between each sub-scale of burnout and the selected background variables of teachers?

The twelve selected background variables of the respondents included both personal and situational characteristics. These variables were sex, age, marital status, total number of years as an educator, total number of years in current position, percentage of
teaching time, consistent with training, grade level most taught, desire to leave present school or job, frequency of interesting work, overall work stress, size of school, and location of school.

A one-way analysis of variance with the Bonferroni procedure (Wilkinson, 1987: MGLH27) was used to test for statistically significant differences in burnout among sub-groups of teachers classified by the selected background variables. If any response category had a low number of respondents, categories were combined so that results could be interpreted more meaningfully. The selected background variables of marital status, grade level taught, school size and school location registered no statistically significant differences among sub-groups of teachers on each burnout sub-scale. The remaining eight selected background variables and the related analysis of variance results are reported below.

A t-test was used to test for statistically significant differences in burnout scores between male and female teachers, and the results are reported along with the other findings.

Sex. Table 5.2 reports the results of t-tests conducted on the mean burnout scores of male and female teachers. The t-value of 0.49 for Emotional Exhaustion burnout and its associated probability value of 0.62 indicated no statistically significant difference in levels of Emotional Exhaustion burnout between male and female teachers.

For Depersonalization burnout, the mean score of 11.13 for male teachers was significantly higher than the mean score of 8.76 for female teachers. The t-value of 3.8 was statistically significant beyond the 0.01 level. Male teachers were experiencing more Depersonalization burnout compared with female teachers, and this finding
### Table 5.2

T-tests for Mean Scores of Teachers Classified by Sex on Burnout Sub-scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burnout Sub-scale</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>D.F.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>28.75</td>
<td>13.43</td>
<td>28.15</td>
<td>12.99</td>
<td>484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=) (192)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(294)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEP</td>
<td>11.13</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>8.76</td>
<td>6.39</td>
<td>488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=) (192)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(298)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>34.88</td>
<td>8.15</td>
<td>34.96</td>
<td>7.56</td>
<td>478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=) (189)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(291)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EE = Emotional Exhaustion burnout  
DEP = Depersonalization burnout  
PA = Personal Accomplishment burnout
is consistent with research by Maslach (1982b:58) who asserted that men tended to have more negative and callous feelings about the people with whom they work, compared with women. Further, the mean score on Depersonalization burnout for male teachers was close to the MBI norm of 11.7.

For Personal Accomplishment burnout, the t-value of 0.08 with an associated probability of 0.94 indicated no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers on this sub-scale.

**Age.** As shown in Table 5.3, statistically significant differences on Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization burnout were obtained among sub-groups of teachers classified by age.

For Emotional Exhaustion burnout, the youngest teachers experienced the highest level of burnout, with almost the same mean scores for the 20-to-29 years age group and the 30 to 39 years age group. Feelings of Emotional Exhaustion burnout decreased with age, which suggests that teachers may learn to cope with the emotional demands of their work.

There is a similar pattern on Depersonalization burnout, with a slightly higher mean score for teachers in the 30 to 39 years age category. Teachers in this category and those 20 to 29 years of age registered significantly more Depersonalization burnout than did teachers 50 years old and over.

These findings are consistent with current research by Russell et al. (1987:273) who reported "... the age and sex of the teacher ... were found to be predictive of burnout scores." Further, Cherniss (1980a,b) and Freudenberger (1974) in earlier studies found that the young, dedicated and committed were the most vulnerable to burnout.
Table 5.3
One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers Classified by Age on Burnout Sub-scales (N=486)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burnout Sub-scale (N=)</th>
<th>A 20-29 years (136)</th>
<th>B 30-39 years (250)</th>
<th>C 40-49 years (77)</th>
<th>D 50+ years (23)</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td>29.16^a</td>
<td>29.15</td>
<td>27.55</td>
<td>19.39^b</td>
<td>26.31</td>
<td>A-D, B-D, C-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depersonalization</td>
<td>9.98</td>
<td>10.02^a</td>
<td>9.40</td>
<td>6.00^b</td>
<td>8.85</td>
<td>A-D, B-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Accomplishment</td>
<td>34.84</td>
<td>34.77^b</td>
<td>35.04</td>
<td>35.35^a</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^aHighest mean for this burnout sub-scale.
^bLowest mean for this burnout sub-scale.

Emotional Exhaustion: F(3, 477)=4.17, p<.01
Depersonalization: F(3, 481)=2.37, p<.05
Personal Accomplishment: F(3, 471)=0.05, p>.05
There were no statistically significant differences among sub-groups of teachers on Personal Accomplishment burnout. However, in each case, teachers registered a higher than normal level of Personal Accomplishment burnout.

**Total number of years as an educator.** As indicated in Table 5.4, the analysis of variance results revealed statistically significant differences in Emotional Exhaustion burnout for sub-groups of teachers classified by the number of years as an educator. Teachers with 21 or more years as an educator registered a statistically significant lower level of Emotional Exhaustion burnout compared with all other sub-groups. Teachers with 11 to 15 years as an educator recorded the highest level of Emotional Exhaustion burnout. No statistically significant differences were registered for the remaining two burnout sub-scales.

**Years in current position.** Table 5.5 illustrates the results of the analysis of variance on burnout scores of teachers classified by the number of years in current position.

For Emotional Exhaustion, teachers who had been in their current position for six to 15 years recorded significantly higher levels of burnout compared with those who had been in their current position for 21 or more years. Similarly, teachers with six to 10 years in their current position reported a significantly higher level of Depersonalization burnout than did teachers with 21 or more years in their current position. Teachers in their current position for one to five years registered a statistically significantly lower level of Personal Accomplishment burnout compared to teachers with six to ten years in their current position.
Table 5.4
One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers
Classified by Total Number of Years as an Educator on Burnout Sub-scales (N=491)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burnout Sub-scale (N=)</th>
<th>A: 1-5 years (114)</th>
<th>B: 6-10 years (155)</th>
<th>C: 11-15 years (133)</th>
<th>D: 16-20 years (58)</th>
<th>E: 21+ years (31)</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td>27.56</td>
<td>29.06</td>
<td>30.27&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>22.19</td>
<td>20.65&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>27.14</td>
<td>A-E, B-E, C-E, D-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depersonalization</td>
<td>9.34</td>
<td>9.47</td>
<td>10.48</td>
<td>10.49&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7.13&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>9.38</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Accomplishment</td>
<td>35.78</td>
<td>34.23&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>34.72</td>
<td>35.45&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>34.97</td>
<td>35.02</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Highest mean for this burnout sub-scale.
<sup>b</sup> Lowest mean for this burnout sub-scale.

Emotional Exhaustion: $F(4,481)=3.65$, $p < .01$
Depersonalization: $F(4,485)=1.85$, $p > .05$
Personal Accomplishment: $F(4,475)=0.72$, $p > .05$
### Table 5.5

One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers Classified by Total Number of Years in Current Position on Burnout Sub-scales (N=491)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burnout Sub-scale (N=)</th>
<th>A 1-5 years (290)</th>
<th>B 6-10 years (123)</th>
<th>C 11-15 years (56)</th>
<th>D 16-20 years (22)</th>
<th>E 21+ years (5)</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td>27.62</td>
<td>29.92</td>
<td>30.87&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>26.71</td>
<td>13.80&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>25.78</td>
<td>B-E, C-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depersonalization</td>
<td>9.27</td>
<td>10.85&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>10.13</td>
<td>9.06</td>
<td>2.60&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>8.38</td>
<td>B-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Accomplishment</td>
<td>35.45</td>
<td>33.02&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>36.13</td>
<td>34.71</td>
<td>37.00&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>35.25</td>
<td>A-B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Highest mean for this burnout sub-scale.

<sup>b</sup>Lowest mean for this burnout sub-scale.

Emotional Exhaustion: \( F(4,481)=2.78, p < .05 \)
Depersonalization: \( F(4,485)=2.64, p < .05 \)
Personal Accomplishment: \( F(4,475)=2.55, p < .05 \)
Teaching assignment consistent with training. As shown in Table 5.6, there were no major differences on Emotional Exhaustion burnout among sub-groups of teachers classified by percentage consistency between teaching assignment and training.

On Depersonalization burnout, teachers who reported one to 25 percent and 51 to 75 percent consistency between teaching assignment and training registered statistically significant higher levels of burnout compared with teachers whose training was 76 to 100 percent consistent with their teaching task.

On Personal Accomplishment burnout, teachers who reported between one and 50 percent consistency between training and teaching task, registered significantly higher levels of Personal Accomplishment burnout compared with those who reported a 76 to 100 percent consistency. Wilder and Plutchik (1982:114) have focused on the inadequacy of training as contributing to burnout among helping professionals. The results of this current research support the contention that inadequate training and burnout are related.

Desire to leave school. Table 5.7 reports the results of the analysis of variance on burnout scores of teachers classified by their desire to leave school and the teaching service.

On Emotional Exhaustion, teachers who reported they would leave education completely registered a statistically significant higher level of burnout compared with teachers who chose to stay in the same job, change schools, or change to another job in education. Further, those teachers who stated preferences to change schools or move to an alternative job in education registered statistically significant higher levels of
Table 5.6

One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers Classified by Teaching Assignment Consistent with Training on Burnout Sub-scales (N=462)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burnout Sub-scale (N=)</th>
<th>A None (18)</th>
<th>B 1-25% (80)</th>
<th>C 26-50% (63)</th>
<th>D 51-75% (100)</th>
<th>E 76-100% Average (201)</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td>28.00</td>
<td>29.39\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>29.14</td>
<td>29.01</td>
<td>26.57\textsuperscript{b}</td>
<td>28.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depersonalization</td>
<td>9.61</td>
<td>11.21\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>10.88</td>
<td>8.44\textsuperscript{b}</td>
<td>10.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Accomplishment</td>
<td>36.83\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>32.84\textsuperscript{b}</td>
<td>33.27</td>
<td>36.64</td>
<td>35.29</td>
<td>34.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a}Highest mean for this burnout sub-scale.
\textsuperscript{b}Lowest mean for this burnout sub-scale.

Emotional Exhaustion: $F(4,452) = 1.08$, $p > .05$
Depersonalization: $F(4,456) = 3.51$, $p < .01$
Personal Accomplishment: $F(4,447) = 3.74$, $p < .01$
Table 5.7
One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers
Classified by Desire to Leave School on Burnout Sub-scales (N=482)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burnout Sub-scale (N=)</th>
<th>A Stay in Same Job (202)</th>
<th>B Change Schools (54)</th>
<th>C Another Job in Edn (60)</th>
<th>D Leave Edn (166)</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td>22.08^b</td>
<td>29.20</td>
<td>29.25</td>
<td>35.46^a</td>
<td>28.99</td>
<td>A-B, A-C, A-D, B-D, C-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Accomplishment</td>
<td>36.58^a</td>
<td>34.45</td>
<td>35.17</td>
<td>32.88^b</td>
<td>34.77</td>
<td>A-D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^aHighest mean for this burnout sub-scale.
^bLowest mean for this burnout sub-scale.

Emotional Exhaustion: F(3,473)=38.36, p < .001
Depersonalization: F(3,477)=14.47, p < .001
Personal Accomplishment: F(3,467)= 6.98, p < .001
burnout than those who preferred to stay in their same job. These results are consistent with other research (e.g., Jackson et al., 1986:639) which found that Emotional Exhaustion burnout is closely related to teacher turnover.

For Depersonalization burnout, teachers who chose to stay in their same job exhibited statistically significant less burnout compared with those who advocated a change of school or a preference to leave education completely. Teachers who chose to leave education completely also recorded a significantly higher level of Depersonalization burnout compared to those who chose an alternative job in education.

On Personal Accomplishment, teachers who desired another job entirely recorded a significantly higher level of burnout compared with teachers who opted to stay in their same job.

**Frequency of interesting work.** Research by Pines et al. (1981) and Cherniss (1980b) has emphasized the need for an individual's work life to provide challenge, variety and meaning, and for a healthy interest to be maintained in order to combat burnout. As indicated in Table 5.8, the frequency of interesting work was closely related to levels of burnout among teachers. For each burnout sub-scale, teachers who indicated their work was interesting most of the time reported statistically significant less burnout compared to teachers who found their work was not at all or seldom interesting. Teachers who reported their work was occasionally or frequently interesting also experienced higher levels of burnout compared to those whose work was interesting most of the time. These findings reveal a direct relationship between frequency of interesting work and burnout. As frequency of interesting work increased,
Table 5.8
One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers Classified by Frequency of Interesting Work on Burnout Sub-scales (N=490)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burnout Sub-scale (N=)</th>
<th>A (13)</th>
<th>B (128)</th>
<th>C (172)</th>
<th>D (177)</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td>46.65&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>34.04</td>
<td>28.50</td>
<td>23.06&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>33.06</td>
<td>A-B, A-C, A-D, B-D, C-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depersonalization</td>
<td>19.40&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>13.27</td>
<td>9.36</td>
<td>6.77&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>12.19</td>
<td>A-B, A-C, A-D, B-D, C-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Accomplishment</td>
<td>23.61&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>30.98</td>
<td>34.70</td>
<td>38.78&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>32.02</td>
<td>A-B, A-C, A-D, B-D, C-D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Highest mean for this burnout sub-scale.

<sup>b</sup> Lowest mean for this burnout sub-scale.

A=Not At All-Seldom; B=Occasionally; C=Frequently; D=Most of the Time.

Emotional Exhaustion: \( F(5,479)=18.24, p < .001 \)
Depersonalization: \( F(5,483)=22.87, p < .001 \)
Personal Accomplishment: \( F(5,473)=27.70, p < .001 \)
levels of burnout decreased. For each sub-scale, teachers who found their work was not at all to occasionally interesting recorded higher levels of burnout compared with the burnout norms.

**Overall work stress.** The relationship between work stress and burnout is well documented (e.g., Cooper and Marshall, 1976; Cox and Mackay, 1981; Baum et al., 1981). The general consensus is that burnout is a negative stress response that has severe and debilitating psychological, physiological and behavioural consequences for the individual (e.g., Kamis, 1982; Paine, 1982b). The responses by teachers in this study support the findings that burnout and work stress are related.

As indicated in Table 5.9, teachers who reported their work was very to extremely stressful recorded a significantly higher level of Emotional Exhaustion burnout compared with teachers from all other categories. Higher levels of burnout were also recorded by teachers whose jobs were moderately to considerably stressful, compared with those who reported mild to no stress in their job. Further, teachers whose work was considerably stressful reported a higher level of burnout compared with teachers whose work was moderately stressful. These findings indicate a high correlation between Emotional Exhaustion burnout and overall work stress, and support the claim by Cherniss (1980b:21) that "... burnout is an adaptation to stress." Further, Maslach (1982b:3) emphasized that the "... heart of the burnout syndrome [is] a pattern of emotional overload."

Cherniss (1980b:21) suggested that excessive and prolonged levels of job stress call for defensive coping mechanisms where individuals "... psychologically [detach] themselves from the job and [become] apathetic, cynical or rigid." Teachers who reported their jobs were
Table 5.9
One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers Classified by Overall Work Stress on Burnout Sub-scales (N=490)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burnout Sub-scale (N=)</th>
<th>A (120)</th>
<th>B (176)</th>
<th>C (122)</th>
<th>D (72) Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td>14.51b</td>
<td>25.54</td>
<td>34.94</td>
<td>44.15a 29.79</td>
<td>A-B, A-C, A-D, B-C, B-D, C-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Accomplishment</td>
<td>38.04a</td>
<td>34.66</td>
<td>33.74b</td>
<td>34.52 35.24</td>
<td>A-B, A-C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A=Not Stressful-Mildly Stressful; B=Moderately Stressful; C=Considerably Stressful; D=Very-Extremely Stressful.

aHighest mean for this burnout sub-scale.
bLowest mean for this burnout sub-scale.

Emotional Exhaustion: F(5,479)=81.68, p<.001
Depersonalization: F(5,483)=11.21, p<.001
Personal Accomplishment: F(5,473)=4.12, p<.01
very to extremely stressful registered statistically significant higher levels of Depersonalization burnout compared with teachers whose work was a little to moderately stressful. Statistically significant differences were also found among teachers whose work was not stressful, mildly stressful, moderately stressful and considerably stressful. In each case, levels of Depersonalization burnout increased in response to levels of work stress.

On Personal Accomplishment, teachers who reported their work was moderately to considerably stressful recorded higher levels of burnout compared to those who perceived their job was not stressful or mildly stressful.

B. SUMMARY

This chapter presented the findings on the nature of burnout among teachers and its relationship to selected background variables.

Teachers recorded a lower mean score for Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization burnout, and a higher mean score for Personal Accomplishment burnout compared with the established norms. In comparison with the normative distribution, teachers were over-represented in the upper third category on Personal Accomplishment burnout, and were over-represented in the middle to lower third categories on Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization burnout.

Analyses of variance results revealed statistically significant differences on each sub-scale of burnout among sub-groups of teachers classified by total number of years in current position, desire to leave school, frequency of interesting work, and overall work stress.
Further, statistically significant differences on Emotional Exhaustion burnout were found among sub-groups of teachers classified by age, and number of years as an educator.

On Depersonalization burnout, statistically significant differences were found among sub-groups of teachers classified by sex, age, and consistency between teaching assignment and training.

On Personal Accomplishment burnout, statistically significant differences were recorded among sub-groups of teachers classified by consistency between teaching assignment and training.
Chapter VI

SOCIAL SUPPORT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SELECTED BACKGROUND VARIABLES

In this chapter findings on the nature of social support among Victorian Government high school teachers are presented, and differences among sub-groups of teachers classified by selected background variables are examined.

The Nature of Social Support Among Teachers

2.1. What is the rank order distribution of the sources of social support, the types of social support and the types of social support offered to others by teachers themselves?

As illustrated in Table 6.1, seven sources of social support were identified as helping teachers best cope with work stress and burnout: principal, deputy principal, level co-ordinator, faculty head, peer group teachers, friends in/out of school, and family/spouse/relatives. Teachers identified support from peer group teachers was most important in helping them cope with burnout (M=2.61), followed by family (M=2.54) and friends (M=2.32). Each source of support provided close to considerable support in helping teachers cope with burnout, and each was above the theoretical mean (M=2.0). This finding is consistent with research by Otto (1980:174) who found that "... many teachers seek relief through talking about their problems to others 'who can understand' be they colleagues, family members or friends." Maslach (1982b:112-113) maintained that peer support was a most valuable social resource by "... providing a shoulder to cry on," giving a new
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Support</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean (^a)</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Group Teachers</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/spouse/relatives</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends in/out of school</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Coordinator</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Head</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening/concern/trust</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice/information</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types Offered by Teachers Themselves</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening/concern/trust</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice/information</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Original response categories for social support were the following: 0=Not At All; 1=A Little; 2=Somewhat; 3=Considerable; 4=Very Much.
perspective on a problem and sharing experiences for comparison, so that the individual does not feel alone. Compared with collegial support, teachers reported that school administrators offered only a little support, with the principal offering the least ($M=1.27$).

Table 6.1 also illustrates the rank order distributions of responses by teachers on four types of social support, categorized as listening/concern/trust, time, feedback, and advice/information. Teachers indicated that listening was the most important type of support ($M=3.18$) in helping them deal with work stress and burnout. This finding is consistent with research by Pines et al. (1981:125) who found that having "... a good active listener" was important in coping with burnout. In this study, time was the next most important type of support ($M=3.01$), followed by feedback and advice/information which teachers rated as close to considerably helpful in coping with burnout. Similar to sources of support, each type of support rated higher than the theoretical mean ($M=2.0$).

The types of social support offered to others by teachers themselves and as illustrated in Table 6.1 were the same as those above. Teachers indicated that they most offered listening/concern/trust as a type of support ($M=2.84$) in helping their coworkers cope with burnout. This was followed by advice/information, feedback, and time. Apart from the first type of support, all others were in reverse order to the type of support teachers believed they received. Further, as indicated by the mean responses in Table 6.1, teachers reported the type of support was more helpful than the source of that support. Considering that teachers reported time to be the second most desired type of support, it is not surprising that teachers felt they could least afford to offer time to others. This finding is consistent with research by
Blase (1986:28) who asserted that "... time may be one of the most important and neglected variables in understanding stress."

Summary

Teachers reported that peer group teachers helped them most cope with work stress and burnout, while the principal was seen as offering the least support. The types of support providing considerable help to teachers were listening/concern/trust and time. Teachers perceived that they most offered listening/concern/trust to other teachers, and time as a type of support was offered the least.

A. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOURCES OF SOCIAL SUPPORT AND SELECTED BACKGROUND VARIABLES

Between Group Differences

2.2. What is the relationship between sources of social support and the selected background variables of teachers?

The twelve selected background variables considered for analysis were sex, age, marital status, total number of years as an educator, total number of years in current position, percentage of teaching time consistent with training, grade level taught, desire to leave school, frequency of interesting work; overall work stress, size of school, and location of school.

One-way analyses of variance with the Bonferroni procedure (e.g., Wilkinson, 1987:MSLH27) were used to test for differences in the sources of social support among groups of teachers classified by the selected background variables. The analyses of variance results
indicated no statistically significant differences in the sources of social support utilized by teachers classified by grade level taught, size of school, and location of school. The results for the analyses of variance related to other background variables are reported on the following pages.

A t-test was used to test for significant differences in sources of support used by male and female teachers. The results of this analysis are reported with the other findings.

**Sex.** The results of t-tests conducted on the mean scores of male and female teachers for each source of social support are presented in Table 6.2. There were no statistically significant differences between male and female teachers regarding the level of support provided by the principal, deputy principal, and family/spouse/relatives. For level co-ordinator, peer group teachers and friends in/out of school, the mean scores of female teachers were consistently higher than those for male teachers, and were statistically significant beyond the 0.01 level. Female teachers perceived these sources of support provided more help in coping with work stress and burnout compared with male teachers. These findings are consistent with research by Etzion (1984:620) who maintained that men and women differ in their use of social support in the work place. For both male and female teachers, non-administrative staff and friends were reported as providing the most support.

**Age.** As shown in Table 6.3, statistically significant differences in sources of social support were found among sub-groups of teachers classified by age. Teachers in the 20 to 49 years age category identified less support from the principal compared with teachers 50
Table 6.2

T-tests for Mean Scores of Teachers Classified by Sex on Sources of Social Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Support</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>D.F.</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=192)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(N=297)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=191)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(N=295)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Coordinator</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=183)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(N=287)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Head</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=173)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(N=268)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Group Teachers</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>6.88</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=191)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(N=297)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends in/out of school</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>6.49</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=192)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(N=296)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/spouse/relatives</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=152)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(N=296)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Original response categories for sources of social support were the following: 0=Not At All; 1=A Little; 2=Somewhat; 3=Considerable; 4=Very Much.
Table 6.3
One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers Classified by Age on Sources of Social Support (N=486)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Support (N=)</th>
<th>A 20-29 years (136)</th>
<th>B 30-39 years (250)</th>
<th>C 40-49 years (77)</th>
<th>D 50+ years (23)</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1.02b</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>2.17a</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>A-D, B-D, C-D, A-B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal</td>
<td>1.30b</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>2.17a</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>A-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Coordinator</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>1.61b</td>
<td>2.23a</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Head</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>1.51b</td>
<td>2.29a</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Group Teachers</td>
<td>2.81a</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>2.33b</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>A-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends in/out of school</td>
<td>2.55a</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>2.22b</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family, spouse/relatives</td>
<td>2.63a</td>
<td>2.49b</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aHighest mean for this source of social support.
bLowest mean for this source of social support.

Principal: F(3,480)=6.51, p < .001
Deputy Principal: F(3,477)=2.69, p < .05
Level Coordinator: F(3,461)=1.58, p > .05
Faculty Head: F(3,461)=2.01, p > .05
Peer Group Teachers: F(3,479)=3.54, p < .05
Friends in/out of school: F(3,479)=1.78, p > .05
Family, spouse/relatives: F(3,479)=0.28, p > .05
years of age and older. The youngest teachers perceived the least support from the principal. These teachers also registered a lower level of principal support compared with teachers in the 30 to 39 years age category. Teachers aged 20 to 29 years old also perceived less support from the deputy principal compared with teachers 50 or more years old.

In comparison, the youngest teachers perceived significantly more support from peer group teachers than those in the 40 to 49 years age category. No statistically significant differences were found among sub-groups of teachers for the remaining sources of support. These findings are similar to those of Ivancevich and Matteson (1980:127) who indicated that not all individuals prefer or value group support, while other individuals do not experience an easing of stress and burnout through the provision of collegial social support.

Marital status. As indicated in Table 6.4, statistically significant differences in the sources of support were obtained among sub-groups of teachers according to marital status. Single teachers reported significantly more support from peer group teachers than those who were divorced, and more support from friends compared with married teachers. Married teachers indicated significantly more family support compared with teachers in all other sub-groups. There were no statistically significant differences reported for support from the principal, deputy principal, level co-ordinator, and faculty head.

Years as an educator. Table 6.5 indicates that teachers who had been teaching for fewer than five years reported significantly more support from the faculty head.
### Table 6.4

**One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers**

Classified by Marital Status on Sources of Social Support (N=487)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Support (N=)</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(148)</td>
<td>(297)</td>
<td>(22)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(17)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1.27&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>0.67&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>1.46&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.77&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Coordinator</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.69&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.41&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Head</td>
<td>1.76&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.00&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Group Teachers</td>
<td>2.79&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>2.14&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>A-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>2.71&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>2.00&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>A-B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends in/out of school</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>2.85&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>1.33&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>A-B, E-C, B-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family, spouse/relatives</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>2.85&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>1.33&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>A-B, E-C, B-D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A=Single; B=Married; C=Divorced; D=Widowed; E=Other.

<sup>a</sup>Highest mean for this source of social support.

<sup>b</sup>Lowest mean for this source of social support.

- Principal: $F(4, 480) = 0.85, p > .05$
- Deputy Principal: $F(4, 477) = 0.44, p > .05$
- Level Coordinator: $F(4, 466) = 1.48, p > .05$
- Faculty Head: $F(4, 432) = 0.30, p > .05$
- Peer Group Teachers: $F(4, 479) = 2.70, p < .05$
- Friends in/out of school: $F(4, 479) = 4.72, p < .01$
- Family, spouse/relatives: $F(4, 479) = 11.97, p < .001$
### Table 6.5

One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers Classified by Total Number of Years as an Educator on Sources of Social Support (N=491)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Support (N=)</th>
<th>A 1-5 years (114)</th>
<th>B 6-10 years (155)</th>
<th>C 11-15 years (133)</th>
<th>D 16-20 years (58)</th>
<th>E 21+ years (31)</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1.10^b</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>1.81^a</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.39^b</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>1.77^a</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Coordinator</td>
<td>1.97^a</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>1.68^b</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.68^b</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Head</td>
<td>2.12^a</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1.24^b</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>A-C, A-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Group Teachers</td>
<td>2.79^a</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>2.10^b</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>A-E, B-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends in/out of school</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>2.79^a</td>
<td>2.19^b</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family, spouse/relatives</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.50^a</td>
<td>2.19^b</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^aHighest mean for this source of social support.
^bLowest mean for this source of social support.

Principal: $F(4,484)=2.27, p > .05$
Deputy Principal: $F(4,483)=0.83, p > .05$
Level Coordinator: $F(4,485)=0.97, p > .05$
Faculty Head: $F(4,436)=4.46, p < .005$
Peer Group Teachers: $F(4,483)=3.68, p < .01$
Friends in/out of school: $F(4,483)=1.12, p > .01$
Family, spouse/relatives: $F(4,483)=0.62, p > .05$
compared with teachers with 11 to 20 years experience. Teachers with 10 or fewer years experience indicated significantly more support from peer group teachers than those teaching for 21 or more years. There were no statistically significant differences among sub-groups on the other sources of social support.

**Years in current position.** Table 6.6 illustrates the statistically significant differences among sub-groups of teachers classified by number of years in current position. Teachers who had been in their current position for 21 or more years reported significantly higher levels of principal support than teachers in all other categories. Educators who had remained in the same school for 16 to 20 years recorded the lowest mean score ($M=0.88$) for principal support. Support from peer group teachers was significantly higher for teachers who had been in their current position for 10 or fewer years compared to those who had been in the same job for between 11 and 15 years. There were no statistically significant differences among sub-groups of teachers on the other sources of social support.

**Teaching assignment consistent with training.** Table 6.7 shows that teachers who reported no consistency between teaching assignment and training reported statistically significant less support from the principal compared with teachers who reported a 51 to 75 percent consistency between assignment and training. On all the other sources of social support, there were no statistically significant differences among sub-groups of teachers classified by consistency between teaching assignment and training.
Table 6.6
One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers Classified by Total Number of Years in Current Position on Sources of Social Support (N=491)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Support</th>
<th>A 1-5 years (290)</th>
<th>B 6-10 years (123)</th>
<th>C 11-15 years (56)</th>
<th>D 16-20 years (17)</th>
<th>E 21+ years (5)</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>0.88&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.00&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>A-E, B-E, C-E, D-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>1.00&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.40&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Coordinator</td>
<td>1.85&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>1.60&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Head</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>1.39&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>2.60&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Group</td>
<td>2.69&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>2.21&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>A-C, B-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends in/out of school</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>2.11&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>2.80&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family, spouse/relatives</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>2.43&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>3.20&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Highest mean for this source of social support.
<sup>b</sup>Lowest mean for this source of social support.

F(4,484)=3.43, p< .01
F(4,481)=1.53, p< .05
F(4,463)=.82, p< .05
F(4,436)=1.61, p< .05
F(4,483)=2.75, p< .05
F(4,483)=0.65, p< .05
F(4,483)=0.59, p< .05
Table 6.7
One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers Classified by Teaching Assignment Consistent with Training on Sources of Social Support (N=462)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Support (N=)</th>
<th>A None (18)</th>
<th>B 1-25% (80)</th>
<th>C 26-50% (61)</th>
<th>D 51-75% (100)</th>
<th>E 76-100% (201)</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>0.61\text{b}</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.48\text{a}</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>A-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal</td>
<td>0.89\text{b}</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>1.67\text{a}</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Coordinator</td>
<td>1.28\text{b}</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>1.83a</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Head</td>
<td>1.00\text{b}</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>1.87a</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Group Teachers</td>
<td>2.17\text{b}</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>2.71a</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends in/out of school</td>
<td>1.83\text{b}</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>2.38a</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family, spouse/relatives</td>
<td>2.17\text{b}</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.70\text{a}</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\text{a}Highest mean for this source of social support.
\text{b}Lowest mean for this source of social support.

Principal: F(4,455)=2.82, p<.05
Deputy Principal: F(4,452)=1.69, p>.05
Level Coordinator: F(4,437)=1.08, p>.05
Faculty Head: F(4,407)=2.69, p>.05
Peer Group Teachers: F(4,454)=2.03, p>.05
Friends in/out of school: F(4,454)=0.82, p>.05
Family, spouse/relatives: F(4,454)=0.97, p>.05
Desire to leave school. The results of one-way analyses of variance on the mean scores of teachers classified by desire to leave school are reported in Table 6.8. Faculty heads and peer group teachers were seen as providing statistically significant more support for teachers who preferred to remain in their present school compared to those who would leave education completely. There were no significant differences among sub-groups of teachers on the remaining sources of support.

Frequency of interesting work. As shown in Table 6.9, statistically significant differences on sources of social support were obtained among sub-groups of teachers classified by frequency of interesting work. Teachers who rated their work was not at all to seldom interesting reported significantly less support from the principal and deputy principal compared with those who found their work interesting most of the time. Teachers who reported their work was not at all or seldom interesting registered a lower level of support from the level co-ordinator and peer group teachers compared with teachers whose work was occasionally interesting to interesting most of the time. Teachers whose work was occasionally interesting reported less support from the faculty head than those whose work was frequently interesting to interesting most of the time.

There were no statistically significant differences among sub-groups on the remaining sources of support.

Overall work stress. Maslach (1982b:111) commented that "... social and emotional support ... can be critical for survival on the job." However, the findings from Table 6.10 indicate statistically significant differences among sub-groups of teachers on
Table 6.8
One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers Classified by Desire to Leave School on Sources of Social Support (N=482)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Support (N=)</th>
<th>A (202)</th>
<th>B (54)</th>
<th>C (60)</th>
<th>D (166)</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Coordinator</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Head</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>1.89a</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>A-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Group Teachers</td>
<td>2.77a</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>2.43b</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>A-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends in/out of school</td>
<td>2.28b</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.37a</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family, spouse/relatives</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>2.62a</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A=Stay in Same School; B=Change Schools; C=Another Job in Education; D=Leave Education.

*Highest mean for this source of social support.*

*Lowest mean for this source of social support.*

Principal: $F(3,476)=2.32, p > .05$
Deputy Principal: $F(3,473)=1.35, p > .05$
Level Coordinator: $F(3,458)=2.23, p > .05$
Faculty Head: $F(3,430)=3.98, p < .01$
Peer Group Teachers: $F(3,475)=3.41, p < .05$
Friends in/out of school: $F(3,475)=0.09, p > .05$
Family, spouse/relatives: $F(3,475)=0.48, p > .05$
### Table 6.9
One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers Classified by Frequency of Interesting Work on Sources of Social Support (N=490)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Support (N=)</th>
<th>A (13)</th>
<th>B (128)</th>
<th>C (172)</th>
<th>D (177)</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>0.40^b</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>1.48^a</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>A-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal</td>
<td>0.63^b</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>1.77^a</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>A-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Coordinator</td>
<td>0.50^b</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.87^a</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>A-B, A-C, A-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Head</td>
<td>1.19^b</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>1.93^a</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>B-C, B-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Group Teachers</td>
<td>0.60^b</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>2.83^a</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>A-B, A-C, A-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends in/out of school</td>
<td>1.07^b</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>2.46^a</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family, spouse/relatives</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.38^b</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>2.77^a</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^A=Not At All-Seldom; B=Occasionally; C=Frequently; D=Most of the Time.

^Highest mean for this source of support.

^Lowest mean for this source of support.

F(5, 483)=2.70, p < .05
F(5, 483)=2.84, p < .05
F(5, 483)=3.07, p < .05
F(5, 483)=3.17, p < .05
F(5, 483)=5.44, p < .001
F(5, 483)=1.31, p > .05
F(5, 483)=2.04, p > .05
### Table 6.10
One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers Classified by Overall Work Stress on Sources of Social Support (N=490)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Support (N=)</th>
<th>A (120)</th>
<th>B (176)</th>
<th>C (122)</th>
<th>D (72)</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1.47(_a)</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.16(_b)</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal</td>
<td>1.70(_a)</td>
<td>1.37(_b)</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Coordinator</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.89(_a)</td>
<td>1.59(_b)</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Head</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>1.76(_a)</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.39(_b)</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Group Teachers</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>2.68(_a)</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.51(_b)</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends in/out of school</td>
<td>1.88(_b)</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>2.36(_a)</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>A-D, A-B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family, spouse/relatives</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>2.66(_a)</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>1.35(_b)</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A=Not Stressful—Mildly Stressful; B=Moderately Stressful; C=Considerably Stressful; D=Very—Extremely Stressful.

\(\_a\)Highest mean for this source of social support.

\(\_b\)Lowest mean for this source of social support.

- Principal: F(5,482)=0.48, p > .05
- Deputy Principal: F(5,479)=0.96, p > .05
- Level Coordinator: F(5,464)=0.80, p > .05
- Faculty Head: F(5,434)=0.97, p > .05
- Peer Group Teachers: F(5,481)=0.38, p > .05
- Friends in/out of school: F(5,481)=2.30, p < .05
- Family, spouse/relatives: F(5,481)=0.84, p > .05
one source of social support only. Teachers who perceived their work was moderately and extremely stressful reported their friends provided significantly more support compared with teachers whose work was not stressful or mildly stressful. This finding is atypical to the others that reveal a close relationship between social support and work stress, where the greater the level of support provided, the lower the level of work stress experienced.

Summary

This section presented the findings on the relationship between the sources of social support and the selected background variables of teachers. Female teachers reported higher levels of support from the level co-ordinator, peer group teachers, and friends in/out of school. Teachers in the 20 to 29 years age group perceived the principal and deputy principal as least supportive, and peer group teachers as providing the most support in coping with burnout. Married teachers derived the most support from family/spouse/relatives, and single teachers reported the most support from peer group teachers and friends in/out of school. Teachers with five or fewer years experience registered higher levels of support from the faculty head and peer group teachers, and teachers who had been in their current position for twenty-one or more years reported higher levels of principal support.

On the level of consistency between teaching assignment and training, teachers who reported no consistency rated the principal as offering the least support. Those teachers who chose to remain in their present school reported significantly more support from the faculty head, and peer group teachers, while those who rated their work was interesting most of the time
perceived higher levels of principal support compared with teachers whose work was not at all interesting. For overall work stress, teachers who indicated their work was very to extremely stressful perceived more support from friends than those whose work was not stressful.

B. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TYPES OF SOCIAL SUPPORT AND SELECTED BACKGROUND VARIABLES

Between Group Differences

2.3. What is the relationship between types of social support and the selected background variables of teachers?

The twelve selected background variables considered for analysis in section A were also used in this section. The analyses of variance indicated no statistically significant differences in the types of social support utilized by teachers, classified by marital status, teacher training consistent with teaching assignment, grade level taught, desire to leave to school, frequency of interesting work, and school size.

A t-test was used to test for significant differences in types of support used by male and female teachers, and the results of this analysis are reported with the other findings.

Sex. The results of t-tests conducted on the mean scores of male and female teachers for each type of social support are presented in Table 6.11. On all four types of support, listening/concern/trust, feedback, advice/information, and time, t-values and their associated alpha levels indicated that female teachers reported considerably higher support than did male
Table 6.11

**T-tests for Mean Scores of Teachers Classified by Sex on Types of Social Support**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Support</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>D.F.</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening/concern/trust</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>8.47</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=)</td>
<td>(192)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(296)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=)</td>
<td>(192)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(294)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice/information</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=)</td>
<td>(192)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(296)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=)</td>
<td>(190)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(294)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Original response categories for types of social support were the following: 0=Not At All; 1=A Little; 2=Somewhat; 3=Considerable; 4=Very Much.
teachers. The findings suggest that female teachers place more importance on all types of social support in helping them cope with work stress and burnout.

**Age.** As shown in Table 6.12, statistically significant differences in types of social support provided were found among sub-groups of teachers classified by age. Teachers in the 20 to 29 years age category reported significantly more advice/information than did teachers in the 30 to 49 years age group. Teachers 50 years and older reported advice/information was the most important type of support compared with all other sub-groups, and significantly more important than teachers 40 to 49 years old. There were no statistically significant differences among sub-groups classified by age on the other types of social support.

**Total number of years as an educator.** Table 6.13 illustrates that teachers with fewer than five years experience reported significantly more advice/information as a type of support compared with teachers with 16 or more years experience. No statistically significant differences were recorded for the remaining types of social support.

**Years in current position.** As revealed in Table 6.14, one-way analyses of variance on the mean scores of teachers classified by years in current position revealed no statistically significant differences among sub-groups for listening/concern/trust and time as types of social support. Teachers who had been in their job fewer than five years reported significantly more feedback compared with teachers who had remained in their current position for 16 or more years. Teachers with 21 or more years in their current
Table 6.12
One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers Classified by Age on Types of Social Support (N=486)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Support (N=)</th>
<th>A 20-29 years (136)</th>
<th>B 30-39 years (250)</th>
<th>C 40-49 years (77)</th>
<th>D 50+ years (23) Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening, concern, trust</td>
<td>3.29&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.13&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>2.99&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>2.64&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice, information</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>2.40&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.13&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>3.15&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>2.87&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Highest mean for this type of social support.
<sup>b</sup>Lowest mean for this type of social support.

Listening, concern, trust  \( F(3,479)=0.80, p > .05 \)
Feedback  \( F(3,477)=2.61, p > .05 \)
Advice, information  \( F(3,479)=8.71, p < .001 \)
Time  \( F(3,475)=0.66, p > .05 \)
Table 6.13
One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers
Classified by Total Number of Years as an Educator
on Types of Social Support (N=491)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening, concern, trust</td>
<td>3.33&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt; 3.16 3.19</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>2.87&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt; 3.14</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>2.96&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt; 2.77</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>2.48&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt; 2.74</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice, information</td>
<td>3.06 2.72</td>
<td>3.54&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt; 2.59</td>
<td>2.32&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt; 2.85</td>
<td>A-D, A-E</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>3.15&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt; 3.07</td>
<td>2.77&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt; 3.03</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Highest mean for this type of social support.
<sup>b</sup>Lowest mean for this type of social support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Social Support</th>
<th>F(df,df error)</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening, concern, trust</td>
<td>F(4,483)=1.46, p &gt; .05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>F(4,481)=1.48, p &gt; .05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice, information</td>
<td>F(4,483)=7.34, p &lt; .001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>F(4,479)=1.01, p &gt; .05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.14
One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers Classified by Total Number of Years in Current Position on Types of Social Support (N=491)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Support (N=)</th>
<th>A 1-5 years (290)</th>
<th>B 6-10 years (123)</th>
<th>C 11-15 years (56)</th>
<th>D 16-20 years (17)</th>
<th>E 21+ years (5)</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening, concern, trust</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.11&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.40&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>2.91&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>2.29&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>A-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice, information</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.41&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.40&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>B-E, G-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>2.38&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.20&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Highest mean for this type of social support.
<sup>b</sup>Lowest mean for this type of social support.

- Listening, concern, trust: F(4,483)=0.26, p > .05
- Feedback: F(4,481)=2.75, p < .05
- Advice, information: F(4,483)=3.72, p < .01
- Time: F(4,479)=1.97, p > .05
position reported significantly more advice/information than those with six to 10 and 16 to 20 years in current position.

**Overall work stress.** Table 6.15 indicates that teachers whose work was very to extremely stressful reported significantly more listening/concern/trust, feedback and time as types of social support compared with teachers whose work was not stressful and mildly stressful. A higher level of feedback was also recorded by teachers who described their work was moderately stressful. There were no significant differences among sub-groups on advice/information as a type of support.

**School location.** Table 6.16 reveals no significant differences among sub-groups of teachers on listening/concern/trust, feedback and time as types of social support. Urban school teachers reported significantly more advice/information than did teachers from rural areas.

**Summary**

This section presented the findings on the relationship between the types of social support and the selected background variables of teachers. Female teachers reported significantly higher levels of support on all four types of social support compared with male teachers. Teachers 20 to 29 years old and those with one to five years teaching experience reported significantly more advice/information as the most important type of support in coping with burnout.

Feedback was a significantly more important type of social support for teachers with five or fewer years in their current position. Teachers whose work was very to
Table 6.15
One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers Classified by Overall Work Stress on Types of Social Support (N=490)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Support (N=)</th>
<th>A (120)</th>
<th>B (176)</th>
<th>C (122)</th>
<th>D (72)</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening, concern, trust</td>
<td>2.93&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.50&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>A-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>2.45&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>3.13&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>A-B, A-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice, information</td>
<td>2.52&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.98&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>2.80&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>3.31&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>A-D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A=Not Stressful-Mildly Stressful; B=Moderately Stressful; C=Considerably Stressful; D=Very-Extremely Stressful.
<sup>a</sup>Highest mean for this type of social support.
<sup>b</sup>Lowest mean for this type of social support.

Listening, concern, trust $F(5,481)=2.27, p<.05$
Feedback $F(5,479)=3.26, p<.01$
Advice, information $F(5,481)=1.78, p>.05$
Time $F(5,477)=2.31, p<.05$
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Support (N=)</th>
<th>A Urban (341)</th>
<th>B Rural (121)</th>
<th>C Other (29)</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening, concern, trust</td>
<td>3.24&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>2.86&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.67&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.86&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice, information</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>2.50&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.97&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>A-B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>3.10&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.96&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Highest mean for this type of social support.

<sup>b</sup>Lowest mean for this type of social support.

| | F(2,485)=2.58, p > .05 |
| Feedback | F(2,483)=1.12, p > .05 |
| Advice, information | F(2,485)=3.51, p < .05 |
| Time | F(2,481)=0.65, p > .05 |
extremely stressful recorded significantly higher levels of support on listening/concern/trust, feedback and time. Urban school teachers reported significantly more advice/information compared with rural school teachers.

C. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TYPES OF SOCIAL SUPPORT OFFERED TO OTHERS BY TEACHERS THEMSELVES AND SELECTED BACKGROUND VARIABLES

Between Group Differences

2.4. What is the relationship between types of social support offered to others by teachers themselves and the selected background variables of teachers?

The twelve selected background variables considered for analysis in sections A and B were also used in this section. The analyses of variance results indicated no statistically significant differences in the types of social support offered by teachers classified by marital status, teacher training consistent with teaching assignment, grade level taught, desire to leave school, overall work stress, and school size. The results of the analyses of variance related to other background variables are reported.

A t-test was used to test for significant differences between male and female responses on the types of support teachers themselves offered to others. The results of this analysis are reported with the other findings.

Sex. As indicated in Table 6.17, the results of t-tests revealed that female teachers offered significantly more listening/concern/trust, feedback and
Table 6.17

T-tests for Mean Scores of Teachers Classified by Sex on Types of Social Support Offered by Teachers Themselves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Support</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>D.F.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening/concern/trust (N=)</td>
<td>2.54 0.84</td>
<td>3.03 0.83</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>6.28</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback (N=)</td>
<td>2.22 0.92</td>
<td>2.47 0.86</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice/information (N=)</td>
<td>2.50 0.90</td>
<td>2.62 0.96</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time (N=)</td>
<td>2.02 1.07</td>
<td>2.35 1.03</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Original response categories for types of social support were the following: 0=Not At All; 1=A Little; 2=Somewhat; 3=Considerable; 4=Very Much.
time as types of support than did male teachers. The
greatest difference was on listening/concern/trust
($t=6.28$, $p<.000$). No significant difference was recorded
for advice/information.

**Age.** Table 6.18 indicates the differences in types
of support offered by teachers themselves classified by
age. Teachers 20 to 29 years and 30 to 39 years of age
offered significantly less advice/information and time
compared with teachers 50 or more years old. No
statistically significant differences were recorded among
sub-groups of teachers on listening/concern/trust and
feedback as types of support offered.

**Years as an educator.** As shown in Table 6.19,
teachers with 11 to 15 years experience offered
significantly less advice/information as a type of
support than did teachers with 21 or more years
experience. There were no statistically significant
differences among sub-groups on the remaining types of
support that teachers offered to others.

**Years in current position.** As indicated in
Table 6.20, the analysis of variance revealed
statistically significant differences in types of support
offered by teachers themselves classified by number of
years in current position. Teachers who had remained in
the same school for one to 15 years provided
significantly less advice/information than did teachers
with 16 to 20 years in current position. There were no
significant differences on the remaining types of social
support teachers offered to others.

**Frequency of interesting work.** Table 6.21
indicates that teachers whose work was not at all or
Table 6.18
One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers
Classified by Age on Types of Social Support Offered by Teachers Themselves (N=486)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Support</th>
<th>A 20-29 years (136)</th>
<th>B 30-39 years (250)</th>
<th>C 40-49 years (77)</th>
<th>D 50+ Overall Average (23)</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening, concern, trust</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>2.78[^b]</td>
<td>3.09[^a] 2.88</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>2.34[^b]</td>
<td>2.57[^a] 2.42</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice, information</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>2.49[^b]</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>3.13[^a] 2.71</td>
<td>A-D, B-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>2.16[^b]</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.83[^a] 2.35</td>
<td>A-D, B-D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^a] Highest mean for this type of social support.
[^b] Lowest mean for this type of social support.

F(3,480)=0.81, p > .05
F(3,478)=0.49, p > .05
F(3,480)=3.86, p < .05
F(3,475)=2.87, p < .05
Table 6.19
One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers
Classified by Total Number of Years as an Educator
on Types of Social Support Offered by Teachers Themselves (N=491)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Support (N=)</th>
<th>A 1-5 years (114)</th>
<th>B 6-10 years (135)</th>
<th>C 11-15 years (133)</th>
<th>D 16-20 years (58)</th>
<th>E 21+ years (31)</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening, concern, trust</td>
<td>2.88 2.82 2.81&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt; 2.86&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>2.42&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt; 2.38 2.32&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt; 2.39</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice, information</td>
<td>2.59 2.50 2.46&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt; 2.79</td>
<td>2.90&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>C-E</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>2.15&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt; 2.18 2.18 2.23</td>
<td>2.74&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Highest mean for this type of social support.
<sup>b</sup>Lowest mean for this type of social support.

F(4,484)=0.16, p > .05
F(4,482)=0.24, p > .05
F(4,484)=2.54, p < .05
F(4,479)=2.14, p > .05
Table 6.20
One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers Classified by Total Number of Years in Current Position on Types of Social Support Offered by Teachers Themselves (N=491)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Support (N=)</th>
<th>A 1-5 years (290)</th>
<th>B 6-10 years (123)</th>
<th>C 11-15 years (56)</th>
<th>D 16-20 years (17)</th>
<th>E 21+ years (5)</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening, concern, trust</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>2.71&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>3.20&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>2.15&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.80&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice, information</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>2.46&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.29&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>A-D, B-D, C-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>2.09&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>3.00&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Highest mean for this type of social support.
<sup>b</sup> Lowest mean for this type of social support.

F(4,484)=1.45, p > .05
F(4,482)=1.72, p > .05
F(4,484)=3.41, p < .01
F(4,479)=2.29, p > .05
Table 6.21
One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers
Classified by Frequency of Interesting Work
on Types of Social Support Offered by Teachers Themselves (N=490)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Support (N=)</th>
<th>A (13)</th>
<th>B (128)</th>
<th>C (172)</th>
<th>D (177)</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening, concern, trust</td>
<td>2.32\textsuperscript{b}</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>3.00\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>A-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>1.71\textsuperscript{b}</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>2.59\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>A-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice, information</td>
<td>1.97\textsuperscript{b}</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>2.78\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>A-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>0.93\textsuperscript{b}</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>2.43\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>A-B, A-C, A-D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a}Highest mean for this type of social support.
\textsuperscript{b}Lowest mean for this type of social support.

F(5,482)=4.31, p<.01
F(5,480)=6.72, p<.001
F(5,482)=4.24, p<.01
F(5,477)=5.78, p<.001
seldom interesting offered significantly less listening/concern/trust, feedback, advice/information and time than did teachers whose work was interesting most of the time, as well as less time compared with teachers whose work was occasionally to frequently interesting.

School location. Table 6.22 illustrates that teachers in urban schools offered significantly more listening/concern/trust than did those in rural schools. There were no statistically significant differences among sub-groups on feedback, advice/information and time as types of support offered.

Summary
This section presented the findings on the relationship between the types of social support teachers themselves offered to others and the selected background variables of teachers. Female teachers provided significantly more support than male teachers on listening/concern/trust, feedback and time. Teachers 50 or more years of age offered more advice/information and time than teachers in the 20 to 39 years age groups. Further, significantly more advice/information was provided by teachers with 21 or more years experience and those who had been in their current position for 16 to 20 years. Teachers whose work was not at all or seldom interesting offered significantly less of all four types of support than did teachers who rated their work was interesting most of the time. Finally, urban school teachers provided more listening/concern/trust than did rural school teachers.
Table 6.22
One-Way Analysis of Variance for Mean Scores of Teachers Classified by School Location on Types of Social Support Offered by Teachers Themselves (N=491)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Support (N=)</th>
<th>A Urban (341)</th>
<th>B Rural (121)</th>
<th>C Other (29)</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Significantly Different Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening, concern, trust</td>
<td>2.90(^a)</td>
<td>2.67(^b)</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>A-B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>2.27(^b)</td>
<td>2.52(^a)</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice, information</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.49(^b)</td>
<td>2.66(^a)</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>2.19(^b)</td>
<td>2.27(^a)</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Highest mean for this type of social support.
\(^b\)Lowest mean for this type of social support.

Listening, concern, trust: F(2,486)=3.09, p < .05
Feedback: F(2,484)=1.32, p > .05
Advice, information: F(2,486)=0.66, p > .05
Time: F(2,481)=0.23, p > .05

highest mean for this type of social support.
lowest mean for this type of social support.
D. SUMMARY

This chapter presented the findings on the nature of social support among teachers and its relationship to selected background variables.

Teachers perceived peer group teachers provided the most support in coping with stress and burnout, and the principal provided the least. Listening/concern/trust and time were considered to be the most helpful types of support. Teachers offered more listening/concern/trust to others, and time the least as types of support.

Female teachers reported statistically significant higher levels of support from the level co-ordinator, peer group teachers, and friends in/out of school, and higher levels of all types of social support compared with male teachers. Further, female teachers provided more listening/concern/trust, feedback and time for other teachers compared with male teachers.

Analyses of variance results revealed statistically significant differences in sources of support among sub-groups of teachers classified by age, marital status, years as an educator, years in current position, teaching assignment consistent with training, desire to leave school, frequency of interesting work, and overall work stress.

On types of support, statistically significant differences were found among sub-groups of teachers classified by age, total number of years as an educator, years in current position, overall work stress, and school location.

On types of support teachers themselves offered to others, statistically significant differences were found among sub-groups classified by age, years as an educator, years in current position, frequency of interesting work, and school location.
Chapter VII

SOCIAL SUPPORT AS A PREDICTOR OF BURNOUT IN TEACHERS

Multiple stepwise linear regression analyses were used to examine the extent to which sources and types of social support were statistically significant predictors of teacher burnout. The results of these analyses are presented in this chapter.

The chapter is divided into three sections. Section one presents the results of the regression analyses for the sources of social support on each sub-scale of burnout. Section two presents the results of the regression analyses for the types of social support on each burnout sub-scale, and section three presents the results of the regression analyses for the types of social support teachers themselves offer to others on each sub-scale of burnout.

Two points need to be kept in mind when reading this chapter. First, in order to control for the effect of teacher demographic characteristics on burnout, the background variables of sex, age, marital status, years as an educator, and years in current position were first entered into each regression equation. Second, because the Personal Accomplishment burnout sub-scale is reverse scored, any positive correlation between a predictor and Personal Accomplishment burnout indicates a reduced level of Personal Accomplishment burnout, and a heightened sense of personal accomplishment in teachers.
A. SOURCES OF SOCIAL SUPPORT AND TEACHER BURNOUT

Predictors of Emotional Exhaustion Burnout

3.1. To what extent are sources of social support statistically significant predictors of Emotional Exhaustion burnout in teachers?

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients among sources of social support and each sub-scale of burnout are presented in Table 7.1, and the regression analysis for Emotional Exhaustion burnout in Table 7.2. As indicated in Table 7.2, the background variables accounted for 2.0 percent of the variance in Emotional Exhaustion burnout. Next, sources of social support were entered as a block of predictor variables into the equation.

Sources of social support which were statistically significant predictors were principal, faculty head, and friends in/out of school, together contributing a further 4.2 percent to the variance in this sub-scale. As indicated by the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients and the beta weights, the less the support provided by the principal and faculty head, the more likely were teachers to experience Emotional Exhaustion burnout. Peer group teachers and level co-ordinator accounted for one percent more in the variance, although they had no significant beta.

Overall, the beta weights and their levels of significance indicate that after first entering background variables into the regression equation, social support by the principal, faculty head and friends in/out of school was most important as a predictor of Emotional Exhaustion burnout. Russel et al. (1987:271) reported "... social support received from supervisors was found to be the only significant predictor of burnout."
Table 7.1

Pearson Correlation Coefficients among Selected Background Variables, Sources of Social Support and Burnout Sub-scales (N=414)

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<td>.12</td>
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<td>-.24</td>
<td>-.38</td>
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</table>

*1=Sex; 2=Age; 3=Marital Status; 4=Years as an Educator; 5=Years In Current Position; 6=Principal; 7=Deputy Principal; 8=Level Coordinator; 9=Faculty Head; 10=Peer Group Teachers; 11=Friends; 12=Family; 13=Emotional Exhaustion; 14=Depersonalization; 15=Personal Accomplishment.
Table 7.2
Stepwise Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for Prediction of Emotional Exhaustion Burnout from Sources of Social Support (N=425)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Multiple R</th>
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<th>Beta</th>
<th>r</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Sex</td>
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<td>.067</td>
<td>-.101</td>
<td>-.072</td>
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<td>Level Coordinator</td>
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<td>.072</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td>-.068</td>
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</table>

F(10,414)=3.21, p<.001
*p<.05. **p<.01.
Similarly, Jackson et al. (1986:635) found that social support from the principal was the most important. Ganster et al. (1986:108) stated:

... of the different sources of support, those sources from the workplace, especially the supervisor are the most important in affecting strains [burnout]. Furthermore, support from family and friends is significantly associated with lower levels of somatic health symptoms.

The results of this study are consistent with the findings of current research.

Predictors of Depersonalization Burnout

3.2. To what extent are sources of social support statistically significant predictors of Depersonalization burnout in teachers?

As shown in Table 7.3, teacher background variables contributed 4.5 percent to the total variance in Depersonalization burnout, with sex being the only significant predictor ($\beta=-.170$, $p<.001$). The principal was the only source of support to enter the regression equation, contributing a further 1.5 percent to the total variance. As indicated by the negative Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient and beta weight, the less the support given by the principal, the greater the feelings of Depersonalization burnout in teachers.

Depersonalization burnout refers to the development of negative attitudes and cynical, impersonal responses toward clients and work colleagues. Lack of support from the principal indicates a lack of recognition and feedback which research has shown contributes to burnout (e.g., Cherniss, 1980b:96; Pines et al., 1981:117). Further, Maslach (1982b:19) maintained that because human service helpers deal with the needs and demands of
Table 7.3

Stepwise Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for Prediction of Depersonalization Burnout from Sources of Social Support (N=488)

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>Marital Status</td>
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<td>-.063</td>
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<td>Years as an Educator</td>
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<td>.045</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>.010</td>
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<td>Years in Current Position</td>
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<td>.045</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>.244</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>-.127**</td>
<td>-.146</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

F(6,481)=5.04, p<.001

**p<.01. ***p<.001.
clients and receive little recognition for their efforts, "... it is not surprising that [they] begin to develop a negative and cynical view of human nature." The finding that sex was the only background variable to significantly predict Depersonalization burnout is consistent with the research findings of Russell et al. (1987:272-273).

Predictors of Personal Accomplishment Burnout

3.3. To what extent are sources of social support statistically significant predictors of Personal Accomplishment burnout in teachers?

Table 7.4 indicates that the background variables contributed 0.2 percent to the total variance in Personal Accomplishment burnout. The principal as a source of social support was the most significant predictor ($R^2=.174$, $p<.001$), contributing 3.1 percent to the total variance, followed by peer group teachers, which added a further 0.8 percent.

The positive Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients and beta weights indicate that the more teachers perceived they received support from the principal and peer group teachers, the greater were their feelings of Personal Accomplishment.

Maslach and Jackson (1981a:1) described Personal Accomplishment burnout as "... the tendency to evaluate oneself negatively, particularly with regard to one's work with clients." Lack of support and recognition from the principal for the value of teachers' work, according to Farber (1983:6), "... promotes a feeling of inconsequentiality, a feeling that no matter how hard they work, the payoffs in terms of accomplishment ... are not there", and this contributes to burnout. The
Table 7.4

Stepwise Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for Prediction of Personal Accomplishment Burnout from Sources of Social Support (N=477)

<table>
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<th>Beta</th>
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<td>-.031</td>
<td>.029</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>Peer Group Teachers</td>
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<td>.127</td>
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</table>

F(7,469)=3.22, p<.002

*p<.05.  **p<.001.
study of New Hampshire teachers by Jackson et al. (1986:636-637) found that Personal Accomplishment burnout decreased "... for teachers in supportive environments, with support from one's principal appearing to be particularly important." Maslach (1982b:111) has asserted the importance of peer group support, and Farber (1983:5) also cited the loss of collegiality among staff members as contributing to burnout. Otto (1986:174) maintained the importance of peer group support for teachers, describing the need teachers have to seek relief through talking with colleagues about problems. Nonetheless, in this study, the small amount of variance accounted for in Personal Accomplishment (4.1 percent) suggests that other work factors heighten feelings of personal accomplishment in teachers.

B. TYPES OF SOCIAL SUPPORT AND TEACHER BURNOUT

Predictors of Emotional Exhausion Burnout

3.4. To what extent are types of social support statistically significant predictors of Emotional Exhausion burnout in teachers?

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients among types of social support and each burnout sub-scale are presented in Table 7.5, and the regression analysis for Emotional Exhausion burnout in Table 7.6. As illustrated in Table 7.6, teacher background variables were first entered into the regression equation, accounting for 1.7 percent of the variance in Emotional Exhausion burnout. The types of social support were then entered as a block of predictor variables into the equation.

As shown in Table 7.6, the beta weights for the
Table 7.5  
Pearson Correlation Coefficients among Selected Background Variables,  
Types of Social Support and Burnout Sub-scales (N=466)

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<td>-.02</td>
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<td>.06</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td>-.37</td>
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</table>

*1=Sex; 2=Age; 3=Marital Status; 4=Years as an Educator; 5=Years in Current Position; 6=Listening, concern, trust; 7=Feedback; 8=Advice, information; 9=Time; 10=Emotional Exhaustion; 11=Depersonalization; 12=Personal Accomplishment.
Table 7.6

Stepwise Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for Prediction of Emotional Exhaustion Burnout from Types of Social Support (N=479)

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<th>$r$</th>
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<td>-.035</td>
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<td>-.131*</td>
<td>-.111</td>
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<td>-.039</td>
<td>-.047</td>
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<td>.031</td>
<td>-.056</td>
</tr>
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<td>.046</td>
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<td>.113***</td>
<td>.189</td>
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<td>Listening, concern, trust</td>
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<td>.174*</td>
<td>.130</td>
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</table>

$F(7,471)=4.66$, $p<.001$

*p<.05.  ***p<.001.
demographic variables of sex and age were statistically significant. This indicates that with the type of support, sex and age were predictive of Emotional Exhaustion burnout. Russel et al. (1987:273) also found that the sex and age of teachers were predictors of burnout.

Both time and listening/concern/trust entered the regression equation with significant beta weights ($\beta=.113$, $p<.001$ and $\beta=.174$, $p<.05$ respectively). The positive beta weights indicate that the more time and emotional support (listening/concern/trust) is given, the greater the feelings of Emotional Exhaustion burnout in teachers. This finding suggests a complex relationship between the types of support teachers perceive are available to them and how this support affects their ability to cope with feelings of overextension and exhaustion. Rathbone and Benedict (1980:13) discovered that some teachers preferred to avoid their colleagues and felt that sharing negative experiences exacerbated rather than reduced their feelings of burnout. Pines et al. (1981:125-126) also asserted that finding a "... good active listener" who will not judge, give advice, or try to out do with their own story, but simply listen, is difficult. They cautioned that a poor listener may blunder in many ways which usually increases burnout. Their assertions appear to be borne out by the findings of this study.

**Predictors of Depersonalization Burnout**

**3.5. To what extent are types of social support statistically significant predictors of Depersonalization burnout in teachers?**

Table 7.7 indicates that the teacher background variables accounted for 4.4 percent of the variance in
Table 7.7
Stepwise Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for Prediction of Depersonalization Burnout from Types of Social Support (N=487)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Multiple R</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>$r$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>.173</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>-.209***</td>
<td>-.176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.191</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>-.142*</td>
<td>-.074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>.200</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>-.059</td>
<td>-.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years as an Educator</td>
<td>.209</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.098</td>
<td>-.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Current Position</td>
<td>.209</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening, concern, trust</td>
<td>.226</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>.094*</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$F(6,480)=4.41$, $p<.001$

*p<.05. ***p<.001.
Depersonalization burnout. As in previous cases, the background variables of sex and age were statistically significant predictors of burnout. These results are consistent with previous research by Schwab et al. (1986) and Schwab and Iwanicki (1982a) who found that sex and age predicted teacher burnout, and with Maslach's (1982b:58) finding that males experience more Depersonalization burnout compared to females.

As shown in Table 7.7, listening/concern/trust was the only type of social support to enter as a significant predictor of Depersonalization burnout, accounting for a further 0.7 percent of the variance. The positive direction of the beta weight and correlation coefficient indicates that the more teachers perceived they were offered this type of support, the greater were their feelings of Depersonalization burnout. As mentioned previously, the literature indicates that social support may exacerbate feelings of burnout in some instances. For instance, Wellman (1981) argued that not all social ties among individuals are necessarily supportive and much depends on the type of aid given, and the conditions under which it is offered. Brenner et al. (1985:10) reported that "... relationships with staff and principals were a stress source" which contributed to burnout, as did Tellenback et al. (1983). Thoits (1982:147) also found that not all "... types of social support are equally effective" in dealing with stress and burnout. The finding of this study that listening/concern/trust as a type of support which contributed to feelings of burnout is consistent with these previous research findings.
Predictors of Personal Accomplishment Burnout

3.6. To what extent are types of social support statistically significant predictors of Personal Accomplishment burnout in teachers?

Table 7.8 indicates that teacher background variables contributed a marginal 0.2 percent to the variance in Personal Accomplishment burnout. No types of support as included in the instrument were statistically significant predictors of Personal Accomplishment burnout in teachers.

C. TYPES OF SOCIAL SUPPORT OFFERED BY TEACHERS THEMSELVES AND TEACHER BURNOUT

Predictors of Emotional Exhaustion Burnout

3.7. To what extent are types of social support offered by teachers themselves statistically significant predictors of Emotional Exhaustion burnout in teachers?

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients among types of social support offered by teachers themselves and each burnout sub-scale are presented in Table 7.9, and the regression analysis for Emotional Exhaustion burnout in Table 7.10. The five demographic teacher variables of age, sex, marital status, years as an educator and years in current position accounted for 1.5 percent of the variance in Emotional Exhaustion burnout. Teacher age was a significant predictor of Emotional Exhaustion burnout as indicated by the beta weight (β=-.133, p<.05).

Instrumental aid in the form of time that teachers offered to others entered the equation next with a
Table 7.8

Stepwise Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for Prediction of Personal Accomplishment Burnout from Types of Social Support (N=480)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Multiple R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>-.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years as an Educator</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>-.026</td>
<td>-.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Current Position</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>-.018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F(5,474)=0.15, N.S.
Table 7.9
Pearson Correlation Coefficients among Selected Background Variables, Types of Social Support Offered by Teachers Themselves and Burnout Sub-scales (N=466)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables*</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. SEX</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. AGE</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. MS</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. YED</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. YCP</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. LCT</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. FD</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. AI</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. TIME</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. EE</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. DEP</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. PA</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td>-.37</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1=Sex; 2=Age; 3=Marital Status; 4=Years as an Educator; 5=Years in Current Position; 6=Listening, concern, trust; 7=Feedback; 8=Advice, Information; 9=Time; 10=Emotional Exhaustion; 11=Depersonalization; 12=Personal Accomplishment.
Table 7.10

Stepwise Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for Prediction of Emotional Exhaustion Burnout from Types of Social Support Offered by Teachers Themselves (N=479)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Multiple R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>-.038</td>
<td>-.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.112</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>-.133*</td>
<td>-.108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>.115</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>-.024</td>
<td>-.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years as an Educator</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>-.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Current Position</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>-.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>.164</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>-.160**</td>
<td>-.116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening, concern, trust</td>
<td>.193</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.122*</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F(7,471)=2.58, p<.01  
*p<.05. **p<.01.
statistically significant beta weight ($\beta = -.160, p<.01$). The negative direction of the beta weight indicates that the more teachers felt they offered time to others, the less they themselves experienced Emotional Exhaustion burnout. However, on listening/concern/trust, and as indicated by the positive beta weight and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, the more teachers offered this type of support, the greater were their feelings of Emotional Exhaustion burnout.

Maslach (1982b:111) asserted "the power of your peers to help you handle burnout should not be underestimated", where the sharing of problems and the willingness to listen to others may help alleviate feelings of isolation. However, while the sharing of a problem may offer temporary release, the support offered by peers has limited effect, and the nature of social support as a mutual transaction, in this case, indicates that offering emotional support actually increases teachers' feelings of Emotional Exhaustion. Research by Cohen and Wills (1985:351) supports this finding. They stated that:

... it may be that there are some costs associated with receiving support in particular instances, especially when it is asked for or when the receiver feels obligated to the giver as a result of the transaction.

Research by Greenberg and Westcott (1983), Rosen (1983), and Wills (1983) had similar findings.

Predictors of Depersonalization Burnout

3.8. To what extent are types of social support offered by teachers themselves statistically significant predictors of Depersonalization burnout in teachers?
As indicated in Table 7.11, teacher background variables accounted for 4.3 percent of the variance in Depersonalization burnout. The finding that sex and age were statistically significant predictors ($B=-.149$, $p<.001$ and $B=-.131$, $p<.05$ respectively) is consistent with previous research (e.g., Anderson and Iwanicki, 1984; Russell et. al., 1987).

As shown in Table 7.11, time was the only type of support offered by teachers themselves to enter as a statistically significant predictor of Depersonalization burnout. The negative beta and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients indicate that the more time teachers offered to others, the less Depersonalization burnout they experienced. Depersonalization burnout incorporates feelings of negative and cynical attitudes toward others (e.g., Maslach and Jackson, 1981a:1). However, as illustrated in this study, if teachers are able to offer their time to help others, these negative feelings are reduced. Blase (1986:28) commented that time is a central, yet neglected variable in stress-burnout research, and the findings of this study suggest that time considerations also have important implications for the degree of burnout experienced by classroom teachers.

Predictors of Personal Accomplishment Burnout

3.9. To what extent are the types of social support offered by teachers themselves statistically significant predictors of Personal Accomplishment burnout in teachers?

As indicated in Table 7.12, advice/information was the first statistically significant predictor of Personal Accomplishment burnout to enter the regression equation, contributing 12.7 percent to the total variance in
Table 7.11
Stepwise Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for Prediction of Depersonalization Burnout from Types of Social Support Offered by Teachers Themselves (N=483)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Multiple R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>.170</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>-.149***</td>
<td>-.175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.186</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>-.131*</td>
<td>-.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>.198</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>-.066</td>
<td>-.074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years as an Educator</td>
<td>.207</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.100</td>
<td>-.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Current Position</td>
<td>.207</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>.246</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>-.134**</td>
<td>-.157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F(6, 476) = 5.12, p < .001
*p < .05.  **p < .01.  ***p < .001.
Table 7.12
Stepwise Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for
Prediction of Personal Accomplishment Burnout from
Types of Social Support Offered by Teachers
Themselves (N=476)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Multiple R</th>
<th>R^2</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.079</td>
<td>-.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.026</td>
<td>-.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years as an Educator</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>-.023</td>
<td>-.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Current Position</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>-.001</td>
<td>-.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice, information</td>
<td>.360</td>
<td>.130</td>
<td>.201***</td>
<td>.356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening, concern, trust</td>
<td>.387</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>.151**</td>
<td>.299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>.396</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>.119*</td>
<td>.325</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F(8,467)=10.48, p<.001
*p<.05.  **p<.01.  ***p<.001.
Personal Accomplishment burnout for teachers. Other statistically significant predictors in order of entry into the regression equation were listening/concern/trust, contributing an additional 2.0 percent, and feedback contributing a further 0.7 percent. These predictors combined with background variables were associated with 15.7 percent of the total variance in Personal Accomplishment burnout for teachers.

The positive direction of the beta weights for each significant predictor indicates that the more teachers felt they offered each type of social support to others, the greater were their feelings of personal esteem, and the lower their level of Personal Accomplishment burnout. Maslach (1982b:147) asserted the importance of personal accomplishment to workers who need to feel that "... 'I work at this job because it is what I want to do, and not because I have to.'" Maslach (1982b:147) claimed that within the organization there must exist the scope for the individual to develop "... a sense of identity and self worth." In this study, teachers' feelings of being able to provide advice, emotional aid in the form of listening/concern/trust, and feedback to others enhanced their own feelings of esteem and self-worth. In consequence, Personal Accomplishment burnout was reduced.

D. SUMMARY

The results of regression analyses used to examine the extent to which social support was a statistically significant predictor of burnout in teachers were presented in this chapter.

The sources of social support which predicted Emotional Exhaustion burnout in teachers were principal,
faculty head, and friends in/out of school. For Depersonalization burnout, the principal was the only statistically significant predictor, and for Personal Accomplishment burnout in teachers the principal and peer group teachers were statistically significant predictors.

The types of social support which predicted Emotional Exhaustion burnout were time and listening/concern/trust. Further, the demographic variables of sex and age were statistically significant predictors of both Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization burnout. Listening/concern/trust was a statistically significant predictor of Depersonalization burnout. There were no types of support which were statistically significant predictors of Personal Accomplishment burnout.

Time as a type of support teachers themselves offered to others was a statistically significant predictor of Emotional Exhaustion burnout, as was listening/concern/trust. The background variable of age also was a statistically significant predictor of Emotional Exhaustion burnout. Sex and age were statistically significant predictors of Depersonalization burnout, as was time offered to others by teachers themselves. The types of social support offered to others by teachers themselves which were statistically significant predictors of Personal Accomplishment burnout were advice/information, listening/concern/trust and feedback. The more teachers offered these types of support to others, the greater was their sense of self esteem, and the lower their level of Personal Accomplishment burnout.
Chapter VIII

SOCIAL SUPPORT TEACHERS USE TO COPE WITH BURNOUT

This chapter presents the analysis of the qualitative data. The chapter is divided into three sections. Section one describes the sources and types of social support teachers identified as most helpful in coping with feelings of overextension and exhaustion on the job. Section two reports the sources and types of social support teachers identified as most helpful in coping with the development of negative attitudes and impersonal responses towards the people with whom they work, and section three presents sources and types of social support which teachers identified as helping them most cope with feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment. These feelings and attitudes were representative of Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment burnout, respectively.

A. SOCIAL SUPPORT TEACHERS USE TO COPE WITH FEELINGS OF OVEREXTENSION AND EXHAUSTION

4.1. What are the sources and types of social support teachers identified as helping them most cope with feelings of overextension and exhaustion, and how are they related to the significant predictor(s) of Emotional Exhaustion burnout?

Table 8.1 presents the frequency and percentage frequency distributions of comments by teachers who found that feelings of overextension and exhaustion were alleviated or exacerbated by certain sources in the work
Table 8.1
Sources and Types of Social Support Teachers Use to Cope With Feelings of Overextension and Exhaustion (N=450)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Support</th>
<th>LCT</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>AI</th>
<th>FD</th>
<th>Sub-Totals</th>
<th>Negative Comments</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Group Teachers</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/Spouse/Relatives</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends in/out of school</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Coordinator</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Head</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Totals</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Conditions</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*LCT = Listening/concern/trust; TIME = Time; AI = Advice/Information; FD = Feedback

This means that 133 of the 450 respondents identified LCT as a type of support provided by peer group teachers

This means that 30% of respondents identified LCT as a type of support provided by peer group teachers

*Sub-totals and totals exceed total responses (N=450) due to teacher identification of more than one source and type of social support in most cases
environment. Four hundred and fifty teachers replied to this section of the survey, representing a 92 percent response rate. Teachers were asked to reply to the question "Explain how specific TYPES of support (e.g., Feedback, Time) offered by one or more SOURCES of support (e.g., Principal, Family) help you cope with feelings of overextension and exhaustion on the job."

Wells (1984:118) commented on the importance of defining who provided the most social support and what type of support was provided. In this study, Victorian Government high school teachers perceived peer group teachers within their own schools provided the most support (57%). Family/spouse/relatives were ranked second (38%), followed by the principal (17%), friends in/out of school, (17%), and the deputy principal (11%). The level co-ordinator (8%) and faculty head (6%) were ranked as providing the least support. Teachers perceived listening/concern/trust (77%) was the most available type of support from all sources and saw feedback (21%) as being offered the least.

The remainder of this section examines teachers' written comments as they relate to each of the ranked sources and types of social support. The types of support offered by each source of support are presented in their order of frequency as identified by teachers. In some cases, sources and types of social support have been combined to make the interpretation of results more meaningful. This procedure is consistent with Orlich's (1978:47) observation that qualitative data should be analysed in a manner that provides "meaningful, systematic, and objective information."

Peer Group Teachers

Listening/concern/trust. The majority of teachers (57%) perceived their peers within school provided most of the available social support. Some 30 percent of
teachers in this category considered that listening/concern/trust was the most readily available type of support which helped them cope with feelings of overextension and exhaustion.

The predominant comment among teachers was the knowledge that they were not alone. For example, a married female teacher (levels 7-9, 5 years experience) wrote that "... in discussion with peers you understand you are not alone in the problems you face in the classroom ... and realising this, [it] helps overcome exhaustion." A single female teacher (levels 8-10, 4 years experience) explained: "... when other teachers sit down next to me in the staffroom and commiserate, it helps."

The need to feel affiliation is a fundamental aspect of social support (e.g., Schacter, 1959) and for teachers in this study, the sense of belonging to a group and sharing experiences was helpful in coping with feelings of overextension. A married female teacher (levels 7-9, 5 years) commented: "... one realizes that you are not alone with these feelings [of overextension and exhaustion] and that often your own problem may not be very bad in comparison with others." A single male teacher (levels 10-12, 14 years) summed up this sense of isolation when he stated: "... you have to be a teacher to understand." Some of the comments from teachers in this study reflected the observation by Cherniss (1980b:120) that "... group discussions [among staff] helped frustrated workers see that their problems and reactions are not unique." A married female teacher (levels 7-9, 8 years) mentioned that "... basically knowing that other staff members may be feeling the same anxiety is comforting." Similarly, a married female teacher (levels 10-12, 9 years) commented:
Just having someone willing to give up time to listen to any problems I might have does release the tension - you know you are not alone when others can sympathize and relate similar situations.

A single male teacher (levels 9-10, 4 years) highlighted the importance of immediate support from peer group teachers. He commented that peer group teachers are most helpful because "... they're there when you need them, are familiar with people and events involved and you know they face similar situations at times."

By talking and listening, teachers also expressed that common experiences shared with others helped put their work into perspective. A single male teacher (levels 7-9, 4 years) stated:

When I come in from the class or a frustrating meeting trying to get something done, if I talk with someone I trust I feel that things are more in perspective, that I'm not alone and the responsibility for a successful class is not all my own.

Frustration and anxiety in coping with workload, time pressures and student problems is lessened for some teachers if they feel others have the same experience. For example, a married female teacher (levels 10-12, 7 years) wrote:

Talking with other teachers about problems at school (discipline, administration) has helped me to realize that I am not the only one experiencing such problems - it overcomes feelings of inadequacy and frustration ... but it is often difficult to find the time to get together.

Similarly, a married male teacher (levels 10-12, 9 years) explained the need to feel "... you're not 'out there' on your own, that people care. [I] need to keep convincing myself that I'm doing a reasonable job as a human being." Maslach (1982b:113) asserted that this
type of "... comparative knowledge can help correct the bias towards self-blame." Through talking and listening to others, teachers seem to have a yardstick by which to measure their own performance and problems, and this provides assurance that they are doing a decent job.

Cherniss (1980b:12) noted the importance of informal social interaction among staff members which "... provides a welcome and needed escape for emotionally strained workers." Some teachers in this study highlighted this aspect as most helpful to them in coping with feelings of overextension and exhaustion. A married male teacher (levels 7-9, 12 years) mentioned that "... I find relaxing in the pub with my peers on Friday night is a great unwinder." Similarly, a single female teacher (levels 7-9, 9 years) commented: "... Friday pub night I see as valuable as I get school out of my system and I don't think about it for the weekend."

Maslach (1982b:114) observed that humour was a good release valve. In this study, peer group support for some teachers provided a ready source of humour to relieve tension. A single female teacher (levels 7-9, 7 years) commented that "... constant social rapport with colleagues is very important to me [and] I find laughter extremely beneficial." Along the same line, a single female teacher (levels 10-12, 18 years) commented that "... letting off steam [and] laughter with friends and colleagues" made a situation seem less serious, and thus it seemed less overwhelming.

Feedback. Maslach (1982b:113) maintained that peers provide job rewards through "... praise, compliments and recognition for a job well done." As shown in Table 8.1, teachers rated more instances of feedback from peer group teachers (N=46) than from any other source of social support. For example, a single female teacher (levels 10-12, 6 years) commented, "... fellow
workmates make me feel that I am achieving a great deal in their eyes already and thus I may rest more on my laurels." A married female teacher (levels 7-9, 3 years) observed that "... feedback from my peer group teachers gives me satisfaction and strength to continue."

Peers also are in a position to recognize what the job entails. As one married male teacher (levels 8-10, 10 years) expressed, "... peers have an understanding and recognition of the work load one is coping with."

A married female teacher (levels 10-12, 10 years) wrote: "... feedback from workmates is important so that you don't feel that it is your fault that you're feeling stressed or not coping." Positive peer group evaluation of what an individual is doing on the job provides that person with a sense of the job being worthwhile. The measurement of outcome is often difficult to judge objectively in the day to day routine of teaching. As one married male teacher (levels 8-10, 15 years) noted, "... positive feedback from peers is very useful as evidence that the work is serving some purpose."

Similarly, a married female teacher (levels 10-12, 10 years) felt that "... colleagues giving feedback makes you feel that you are not inadequate."

**Time.** Table 8.1 indicates that peer group teachers were perceived as offering the most time (nine percent) as a type of social support within the school environment. The provision of time by peers is practical help in confronting the sources of Emotional Exhaustion burnout. This form of burnout is induced by overextension, often the cumulative result of workload and time pressures. In their study of 2829 educators in Alberta, Ratsoy and Friesen (1985:17) found that "... the dominant stressors perceived by teachers ... [were] insufficient time for planning and for getting work done." In this study, a single female teacher
Peer group teachers offer help in running off materials, supplying materials and advice [which] saves time on preparation and leaves time to at least relax a bit more.

Pears respect and understand the pressures associated with limited time. A single female teacher (levels 7-9, 15 years) commented that "... fellow staff provide time to allow you to 'cope' by covering classes as a favour to you in what would have been their spare period." Another single female teacher (levels 7-9, 11 years) wrote: "... peer teachers are sympathetic at work and don't approach me with extra tasks on days where I'm teaching all periods."

Advice/information. Table 8.1 illustrates that eight percent of teachers perceived peer group teachers offered them the most advice/information compared with the remaining sources of support. Peer group teachers were seen to provide solutions for dealing with immediate problems. For example, a single female teacher (levels 10-12, 4 years) observed that "... overextension and exhaustion occur when I have difficult classes and hence particular peer group teachers help with advice and strategies to deal with these classes." Another female teacher (levels 7-9, 14 years) explained that "... advice and information bring the realization that other people have difficulties and they are also prepared to advise on strategies to deal with problems."

Pines et al. (1981:128) maintained the importance of social reality, the belief that people share common views and values and can evaluate what is happening around them. Peer group teachers may provide this touchstone for each other as they share the same work environment with the same people. According to Pines et al.
in times of stress or confusion when one needs sound advice, a person with similar priorities, values and views can be very helpful. A person with a shared social reality is most likely to give useful advice.

Similarly, a married female teacher (levels 7-9, 16 years) explained:

Often other staff assist with advice which helps avoid some situations and confrontations with students. They assist where possible to reduce problems and help you work them out.

Negative comments. While 57 percent of teachers found that peer group teachers provided the most social support, as indicated in Table 8.1, 20 percent of teachers who responded to this section of the questionnaire considered their peers aggravated feelings of overextension and exhaustion. Pines et al. (1981:125) and Cherniss (1980b:121) warned of the potential negative consequences of staff listening, talking and sharing personal 'horror' stories of their work. Consistent with these findings, Rathbone and Benedict (1980:19) quoted from a case study:

... being with other teachers can't help. Undirected teachers' coffee room talk can cause you to get more burned out. Because you just talk about your nagging problems and they just talk about their nagging problems and it's just going to get worse and get both of you convinced that everything's terrible.

Maslach (1982b:117) advised "... catharsis alone is not a very constructive way to cope. Releasing pent-up feelings may be good at first, but if it is not followed by good insights into how to do things better, it is not particularly helpful."
The mixed responses of teachers to the benefits of co-worker support clearly indicate the complex and often confusing picture of social support in the work environment. For example, a married male teacher (levels 10-12, 17 years) noted that some peer group teachers "... tended to indulge in grizzle sessions which many avoid." Similarly, another male teacher (levels 7-9, 11 years) wrote that "... negative attitudes of less committed staff overpower any support and encouragement from colleagues." A married male teacher (levels 10-12, 12 years) suggested that "... staffroom talking and listening exacerbated the often mass nature of the school environment." A married female teacher (levels 10-12, 12 years) observed:

Other teachers at school 'think' they help me and others to cope with stress, but I often find they throw their problems in when listening and then they too make me feel stressed.

Similarly, a married male teacher (levels 8-11, 12 years) noted that "... other teachers tend to load you up with their problems" and a married male teacher (levels 8-11, 3 years) explained, "... it can be a negative experience when you find that other teachers are always exhausted and always feel overextended."

The varied benefits of social support and the seeming contradictions are illuminated by these comments. Individuals have a need to unload and share feelings with others, to identify similar experiences and be comforted that they are not alone. However, this sharing can be very stressful for co-workers as the cumulative effect of everybody's problems does not alleviate feelings of exhaustion; if anything, it confirms the individual's appraisal of his or her own situation as one of overextension and exhaustion. A married female teacher
(levels 7-9, 11 years) recognized this when she stated: "... people generally don't help because they have problems of their own." A married male teacher (levels 8-10, 12 years) commented, "... I don't burden other teachers because so many have their own problems," and a divorced female teacher (levels 10-12, 14 years) observed, "... some other assistant teachers like myself add to the exhaustion/stress [of others] by needing help with discipline etc."

Hence, while for some teachers, "... sharing and commiserating helps" (female teacher, levels 8-10, 4 years), for others "... hackneyed commiseration and the emphasis on the inability to do anything about the situation" (male teacher, levels 7-9, 12 years) only increased feelings of overextension and exhaustion.

Family/Spouse/Relatives

Listening/concern/trust. As shown in Table 8.1, 38 percent of teachers considered their families helped them cope with feelings of overextension and exhaustion. More than half cited listening/concern/trust as the most helpful type of support. A single female teacher (levels 10-12, 4 years) commented:

There is the opportunity to speak to family candidly about feelings of stress and inadequacies in the face of an overwhelming workload. It is helpful to voice self doubts about the ability to cope to someone concerned for my well being and not just my performance as a teacher.

This comment highlights an important aspect of perceiving the availability of social support outside the school setting when intra-school support is unavailable. Kyriacou (1987:149) asserted the reticence of some teachers to ask for help from other staff members, as in some school settings the culture of the school denied
acceptance of individuals being unable to cope. It was important not to be seen as failing and no sympathy was given to teachers who could not cope. In these terms, support from the family would be relied upon more heavily. A single female teacher (levels 10-12, 14 years) wrote: "... family members are the greatest sources of support. It's good just to be able to talk, as they are 'on my side', so to speak."

The trust that individuals place in their families to some extent may protect them from some of the harsher realities of the workplace. Maslach (1982b:118) argued that

... employees with good stable family lives are more likely to perform well and are better able to cope with emotional stress. Thus [family support] ... can be a strong line of defense against the deleterious effects of burnout.

Teachers also felt that because their families were removed from the work situation, they could listen and evaluate objectively. A married male teacher (levels 7-9, 16 years) wrote that "... merely talking about my concerns with my family helps me clarify them." A married female teacher (levels 10-12, 3 years) observed: "... my spouse has helped by giving me support by listening and helping me see the job in perspective - that it is only one aspect of my life." Further, a single female teacher (levels 8-11, 4 years) explained:

I find family members the greatest source of support in coping with these feelings [of overextension and exhaustion] because they are removed from the immediate scene and they tend to recall for you the positive achievements in the job ... so that the immediate catastrophe is toned down.
The indications are that family support is non-judgemental. For example, a married female teacher (levels 7-9, 9 years) noted: "... my spouse helps by listening and showing some understanding (without trying to give advice)."

**Time.** As illustrated in Table 8.1, family/spouse/relatives provided the most time for teachers, compared with the other available sources of support. Teachers' comments reflected the problem of workload which can be alleviated by family sharing household tasks and not making extra demands. A married female teacher (levels 10-12, 16 years) said, "... my husband and family give me time and support by taking responsibility for their share of housework." A divorced male teacher (levels 7-9, 11 years) explained, "... family help by picking up work at home when I'm overcommitted - freeing me up to get pressing work completed." A single male teacher (levels 10-12, 9 years) commented that "... family support is necessary to cope with the extra work that must be completed outside school hours." A married male teacher (levels 10-12, 10 years) said:

To me time is the key. To prepare work and give feedback to students I constantly run out of it and use excessive amounts of my own spare time and my wife's to help prepare.

When teachers felt that their families supported them and willingly allowed time for work out of school hours, feelings of overextension and exhaustion were relieved. As a married female teacher (levels 8-10, 2 years) explained, "... I rely on my family a great deal in as much that during the week they don't ask too much of me." Similarly, a married male teacher (levels 10-12, 11 years) wrote, "... my wife and family are
supportive in that they recognize fatigue [and make a] reduction in demands on my time."

Family also provided time for relaxation. Many teachers observed that 'time-out' with family was the most helpful type of support. A married male teacher (levels 10-12, 5 years) observed that "... my family is the greatest support in the time they give me to relax," and a married female teacher (levels 10-12, 4 years) commented that "... family encourage me to take it easy, particularly after a difficult day." A married male teacher (levels 10-12, 6 years) summed up: "... family is the focus of leisure activities and in communication of anxieties and tiredness, I am able to relieve tension and relax."

Pines et al. (1981:176) quoted from the results of a National Survey in America by Cantril and Roll (1971) which showed that:

. . . only a small percentage of people ranked work as the central factor in their lives. Family life was consistently mentioned as more important than work on most people's lists of important life factors.

Advice/information. Teachers generally did not seek advice/information from family/spouse/relatives for work-related problems. A small percentage (five percent) mentioned that family offered advice that was objective of the school situation. For example, a single female teacher (levels 10-12, 9 years) noted that "... my family is concerned and offer[s] possible strategies to be followed."

Feedback. Similarly, only two percent of teachers mentioned feedback as a type of support offered by families. Teachers who looked to family/spouse/relatives for appraisal of their work seemed to be those who also
had other teachers in their family circle. A married female teacher (levels 10-12, 10 years) explained: "... family who are also in the teaching profession are my greatest support simply by offering ideas, alternatives and exchanging views." Another married female teacher (levels 7-9, 16 years) found feedback from family members who were students, not teachers, the most helpful. She wrote:

Feedback from family, all of whom are students help me cope with feelings of overextension and exhaustion by offering me alternatives to complicated methods of assessment, allocation of punishment and assessment in the classroom.

Family support is important to teachers, and over a third of all teachers found this source of support positive and beneficial. In addition, the most important type of support provided by the family/spouse/relatives was listening/concern/trust, or emotional support.

**Negative comments.** The symptoms of Emotional Exhaustion burnout, such as feeling overextended and exhausted, can have an adverse effect upon family life. Seven percent of teachers in this study considered family attitudes and demands contributed to feelings of exhaustion. For example, a married female teacher (levels 7-9, 3 years) said, "... my family tends to resent time spent on work at home, [and] are not very interested in listening or giving physical help." Pines et al. (1981:176) pointed out that when work pressures build, people frequently bring home anxieties and worries. When work stress and burnout overlap into life outside work, this can place severe pressures on the family. For example, Maslach and Jackson (1981b:106) found that burned out police officers had more severe family problems.
When under pressure at work, it is possible for some people to develop unrealistic expectations of the support provided by family/spouse/relatives and rely exclusively on this source rather than colleagues or administrators at work. Pines et al. (1981:177) warned that if the demands are exceedingly high and the pressures unbearable then the "... family is simply not equipped to provide the support often demanded by the worker."

**Principal**

**Listening/concern/trust.** As shown in Table 8.1, 17 percent of teachers perceived the principal was supportive in helping them overcome Emotional Exhaustion burnout, of which six percent mentioned listening/concern/trust was the most available type of support. Research on work stress/burnout and social support has consistently shown that support from the supervisor is highly correlated with an individual's ability to cope with work stress and burnout (e.g., Cherniss, 1980b; Maslach, 1982b; Russell et al., 1987; Schwab et al., 1986). Teachers who perceived principal support was positive, also felt better about their work. For example, a single male teacher (levels 7-9, 3 years) said:

> support from the principal is most effective when listening, showing concern and trusting [are provided] ... because in effect this is understanding and encouraging. It creates a feeling of being valued for doing a worthwhile job.

Another single male teacher (levels 10-12, 14 years) wrote that the "... principal treats me as a friend and I feel I can approach him openly." A married female teacher (levels 10-12, 15 years) said: "... the principal is available to talk to if one requires," and a
divorced male teacher (levels 10-12, 22 years) explained that the principal was most helpful by "...lending an ear."

**Advice/information.** Table 8.1 indicates that a small percentage of teachers (three percent) perceived the principal offered helpful advice/information. The administrative experience of principals and their overall view of the school places them in a unique position to advise teachers in particular areas. A married male teacher (levels 10-12, 2 years) wrote: "...the principal is approachable and offers advice on where to find information, and what type of administrative details are important or how to deal with such details." A married female teacher (levels 7-9, 15 years) summed up:

I don't have any strong feelings of overextension or exhaustion on the job, but I would have if the principal didn't do his job. Where the principal does a proper job, the teachers can get on with teaching and there is little unnecessary stress, because there are proper back-up services at the time and place where they matter.

**Feedback.** Table 8.1 illustrates that a small percentage of teachers indicated that feedback from the principal helped them cope with feelings of overextension and exhaustion. Cherniss (1980b:114) asserted:

...in many settings there is ...a strong expectation that supervisors will help the worker to understand and constructively manage his or her own emotional response to the work. Thus, it should not be surprising that the quality of the supervisory relationship has a major impact on stress ... and burnout in the job.

A divorced female teacher (levels 10-12, 21 years) wrote: "...the principal is the first to give praise where it
is due." A married male teacher (levels 10-12, 16 years) said: ". . . the personal thank you from the principal, visits to staff work areas just to chat about classes and work is important to my general morale." A married female teacher (levels 7-9, 9 years) asserted: ". . . compliments and positive feedback from the principal have made me feel more confident and happy about my teaching. A positive attitude helps overcome exhaustion." Similarly, a married female teacher (levels 10-12, 17 years) wrote that " . . . my principal is very pleased with my work and makes me feel it is worthwhile."

Teachers who contribute beyond their scheduled workload need to be recognized for their efforts. In this regard, a married male teacher (levels 10-12, 8 years) commented that " . . . the principal makes it clear that he is grateful for teachers who help in an extra way above their normal teaching duties."

Time. As indicated in Table 8.1, a very small percentage of teachers (three percent) perceived the principal was helpful in providing time as a support. Generally, teachers' comments reflected the principal's willingness to be aware of time pressures on them and alleviate these where possible. A single female teacher (levels 10-12, 11 years) observed that " . . . the time given by the principal for assistance at work (i.e. people recruited to help with paperwork) is a real aid." A divorced male teacher (levels 10-12, 4 years) recognized the power of the principal to provide extra time: " . . . the time for the organization of swimming sports last year by the principal was great." Similarly, a single female teacher (levels 7-9, 5 years) said that " . . . the principal actively encourages and makes possible individual resourcing of 'slow' students in a separate place by a specialist at specific times. This relieves strain and stress." A married female teacher
(levels 7–9, 3 years) claimed that "... the principal sometimes helps by not giving extra jobs to those who already seem to have too much to do," and a single female teacher (levels 9–10, 8 years) noted that "... flexibility of time allowances from the principal is especially helpful when a deadline is due."

Further, the principal can provide time for teachers' professional development. For example, a married male teacher (levels 10–12, 10 years) explained: "... time from the principal to attend in-service and information days [is] extremely important in terms of knowledge and the break from face to face consultation."

As these comments reveal, teachers believe that the principal as head of the school has the power to aid them in coping with the stresses of teaching. An awareness by the principal of staff workload and time pressures is a potentially valuable way of helping teachers cope with feelings of overextension and exhaustion on the job.

**Negative comments.** While 17 percent of teachers commented on principal support, a further nine percent mentioned that the principal contributed to feelings of overextension and exhaustion. Cherniss (1980b:117) maintained that if "... supervisors are available, interested and involved with their staff, then staff perceive a connection between what they do and an important source of reinforcement in their environment." For example, a married female teacher (levels 7–9, 16 years) said, "... the principal will listen, but he does not act on problem areas." A married male teacher (levels 10–12, 8 years) observed: "... I don't feel that the principal is any help to me," and a married female teacher (levels 10–12, 9 years) claimed that "... the principal is somewhat unapproachable and doesn't really offer any solutions." A single male teacher (levels 7–9, 3 years) agreed: "... I feel that the
principal could not care less about his staff."

These findings indicate that just as relations with one's peers can be a source of stress and subsequent burnout, so can relations with the supervisor. Maslach (1982b:45) highlighted the constant interactions with the supervisor where "if the dealings are unsatisfactory the resulting tension and friction add their toil to the emotional overload of the job." A married female teacher (levels 8-10, 17 years) explained: "at times I'm fighting the principal to convince him that as librarian I do work hard, I just don't sit and read, and this conflict adds to my feelings of exhaustion." A married male teacher (levels 10-12, 12 years) claimed that "the school principal only exacerbates stress by his attitudes," similar to a single female teacher (levels 7-9, 17 years): "the principal is no support but is highly critical and adds to stress."

The demands imposed on staff by the principal added to levels of teacher stress. For example, a married female teacher (levels 7-9, 19 years) wrote: "I find that the principal does more to increase feelings of overextension and exhaustion on the job by the extra demands and long meetings after school." A single male teacher (levels 10-12, 5 years) responded: "the principal expects far too much and justifies this by the old chestnut 'professionalism'. Additionally, the principal makes it clear that he does not trust the staff and this is very stressful."

Although some teachers felt that the principal gave no support and did not trust them, they recognized that the principal was under constant stress. Cherniss (1980b:119) maintained:

"... supervisors often are themselves the targets of enormous pressures, demands and conflicts. ... in fact, the first-line
supervisors in a human service organization usually are the ones who experience conflict most intensely.

This pressure causes them to withdraw from their workers and to become less responsive to their needs; in effect, to 'burn out'.

Some teachers were aware of this pressure. One single female teacher (levels 7-9, 1 year) remarked: "... the principal is too busy coping with his own work to notice your problems." A married male teacher (levels 10-12, 8 years) wrote: "... the principal either avoids such assistance or is himself seeking it." A married female teacher (levels 10-12, 6 years) stated: "... I doubt that the principal would notice if I was under stress, and how sympathetic he'd be would be related to his own feelings of overextension."

These comments emphasize some of the many facets of social support. When interactions with other staff and the principal are positive, social support is a potentially important source for adapting to and coping with work stress and burnout. If, however, there are barriers which prevent the development of supportive interaction, then mistrust and conflict result, which exacerbate feelings of overextension and exhaustion, and encourage the development of burnout among school teachers.

Friends in/out of School

Listening/concern/trust/, advice/information, feedback. Table 8.1 indicates that 17 percent of teachers mentioned friends in/out of school helped them cope with feelings of overextension and exhaustion. For example, a single female teacher (levels 10-12, 6 years) observed:
Concern shown by friends and advice (i.e. get more rest!) help you to know that someone cares about you and encourages me to relax and look after myself. Time spent with them, especially when they offer support, gives back to me after I give most of the day giving out to others. It is vital that we receive as well as give.

Many teachers mentioned the value of friendship, of having someone they could trust and talk to in confidence. For example, a single male teacher (levels 10-12, 15 years) noted: "... I have some good friends whom I trust and with whom I can relax." Teachers valued the time spent listening and talking to friends in a relaxed atmosphere, generally away from the workplace.

Friends from school or in other professions seemed to offer the same outlet. A married female teacher (levels 7-9, 20 years) wrote that "... discussing problems with friends in a relaxed atmosphere over dinner can resolve matters." A married male teacher (levels 10-12, 5 years) concurred: "... friends help me unwind enough during holidays/weekends so that I can look forward to the next lot of teaching." Another married male teacher (levels 8-11, 11 years) said: "... what is helpful is spending time with friends, not talking shop, forgetting school and doing other things."

A married female teacher (levels 7-9, 22 years) asserted that friends within the teaching profession "... who have solved the sort of problems I face, has helped. We whinge, let off steam and laugh together a lot." These findings illustrate the therapeutic nature of friends as sources of social support for school teachers.

Deputy Principal

Listening/concern/trust, advice/information, time, feedback. As shown in Table 8.1, 11 percent of teachers commented on the positive support provided by
the deputy principal. The deputy principal has a senior administrative position in the school, and because of this office, s/he has the potential to help teachers in practical ways (e.g., Maslach, 1982b:48). For example, a married female teacher (levels 7-10, 4 years) said: "... the deputy principal is very supportive and will take action if called upon." Another married female teacher (levels 7-9, 10 years) commented: "... the deputy principal helps by listening and showing concern and trust. He gives reassurance about my teaching standards and that I'm not the first to feel the strain of teaching." A single female teacher (levels 10-12, 10 years) observed: "... the deputy principal offers support by giving advice about organization and planning," and a married female teacher (levels 7-9, 10 years) commented: "... the deputy principal has the time to listen and give feedback." These comments indicate the ability of deputy principals to guide and counsel teachers about the practical aspects of their work. Deputy principals may hold the key for making creative use of staff as indicated by Shapiro (1982:224):

... to the extent that staff members can enhance their sense of contribution to the work place and the sense of career development or professional identity, a varied work load may reduce burnout at the same time it contributes to productivity.

Level Co-ordinator and Faculty Head

Listening/concern/trust, advice/information, time, feedback. As shown in Table 8.1, the level co-ordinator and faculty head were perceived as offering the least support (eight percent and six percent respectively) in helping teachers cope with feelings of overextension and exhaustion. In addition, teachers' comments tended not to differentiate between the roles of
Faculty heads and level co-ordinators were perceived as being supportive in two main ways. First, in offering advice/information on lesson preparation and teaching materials, and second in helping teachers deal with problem students. For example, a married male teacher (levels 7-9, 6 years) commented: "... advice and information from faculty head and level co-ordinator generates ideas on how to deal with problem students and how to add variety to lessons." A married female teacher (levels 8-11, 7 years) wrote: "... level co-ordinators and faculty heads have given me support by listening to any problems I have and freely giving of their time, concern and advice."

This study surveyed classroom teachers only, and some of those surveyed were either level co-ordinators or faculty heads themselves. Consequently, this could account for teachers' overall responses registering little support from these sources.

Other

As shown in Table 8.1, 79 teachers indicated that sources other than those itemized in the survey either helped them cope with feelings of overextension and exhaustion, or further exacerbated these feelings. These additional sources of support were students, self-support, and work conditions.

Students. Table 8.1 indicates that two percent of teachers perceived positive student feedback helped them cope with feelings of overextension. One married male teacher (levels 7-9, 15 years) said, "... students are my greatest supporters and critics. It is from them that
I gain enthusiasm and inspiration." Similarly, a single female teacher (levels 8-11, 2 years) remarked, ". . . students recognize the work I've done and this seems to compensate. Their encouragement and praise make it all worthwhile."

**Self.** As illustrated in Table 8.1, eight percent of teachers found strength from within themselves. This helped make them self-reliant. One married female teacher (levels 8-11, 5 years) said, ". . . Ultimately I rely on myself to cope . . . Because of the nature of the job, I'm the one who has to cope with what I'm doing." Teachers' comments reflected the importance of being organized, by not letting work invade personal life, and having activities away from school. For example, a married male teacher (levels 10-12, 10 years) explained, ". . . one has to rely on one's own ability to be organized and to devise methods of relaxation. This means 'turning off' at home."

**Work conditions.** As shown in Table 8.1, eight percent of teachers felt that the conditions associated with teaching were such, that no source of support from either within or outside the school helped them to cope with feelings of overextension and exhaustion. Time and workload were noted as the major contributors to feeling overextended, and this finding is consistent with current research on teacher burnout (e.g. Blase, 1986). A single female teacher (levels 3-11, 10 years) summed up, ". . . Time is the most crucial factor given the ever-increasing load on teachers - classroom management, curriculum development, endless meetings, lack of preparation time. . . it really boils down to a case of 'survival of the fittest'."
Relationship between Teacher Identified Social Support and Predictors of Emotional Exhaustion Burnout

Analysis of the qualitative data revealed that 36 percent of teachers indicated that peer group teachers, family/spouse/relatives and the principal aggravated feelings of overextension and exhaustion, rather than helping them to cope with these feelings. Results of the stepwise multiple linear regression analysis as illustrated in Table 7.2 indicated that the less support given by the principal and faculty head, the greater were teachers' feelings of Emotional Exhaustion burnout. The analysis of the qualitative data focussed not on absence of support, but on the presence of perceived support. Principal support was mentioned by 17 percent of teachers, however nine percent found the principal was unsupportive, and asserted that the principal's demands, expectations and attitudes increased feelings of overextension and exhaustion. Support from the faculty head was mentioned by six percent of teachers, and was considered helpful when it was available.

As illustrated in Table 7.2, support from peer group teachers accounted for less than one percent of the variance in Emotional Exhaustion burnout, compared with the written comments of teachers which indicated this was the most available source of support. However, while 57 percent mentioned positive aspects of peer group support, a further 20 percent indicated that listening/concern/trust, the most available type of support provided by peers, only added to feelings of exhaustion. Consistent with these findings, results of the regression analysis for prediction of Emotional Exhaustion burnout from types of support (Table 7.6) indicated that the more emotional support (listening/concern/trust) was given, the greater were
feelings of Emotional Exhaustion burnout in teachers. These data suggest that the cumulative effect of listening to everybody's problems and negative staffroom complaints did not offer solutions for many teachers. Otto (1985:37) asserted that teachers' abilities to cope with work stress and burnout are eroded by such stress-producing conditions, and combined with this negativism, teachers may not be able to recuperate quickly or adequately enough in order to cope. Further, research by Fergusson (1984), Hiebert (1984), and Swent and Gmelch (1977) found that interpersonal relationships among staff contributed to feelings of overextension and exhaustion, and were possible indicators of burnout.

Similarly, the regression analysis for types of support teachers themselves offered to others (Table 7.10), indicated that the more teachers offered listening/concern/trust to others, the greater were their feelings of Emotional Exhaustion burnout. The burden of listening to others' problems increased feelings of overextension and exhaustion, so that despite the comfort of knowing others felt the same, and the individual was not alone, it was in essence a cold comfort and appeared to reinforce feelings of powerlessness, of not being able to change conditions in the workplace. Otto (1985:10) has asserted that "... both powerlessness and lack of support implied intensified feelings of stress," and this was borne out by the findings in this study.

Summary

Teachers indicated that peer group teachers offered the most support, and level co-ordinators and faculty heads offered the least. However, while listening/concern/trust was the most available type of social support, a large number of teachers (20 percent) indicated this was of limited help in that no solutions were offered and nothing changed. This only added to
feelings of overextension and exhaustion, and contributed to burnout.

Positive support from the family in helping them cope with feelings of overextension and exhaustion was mentioned by 38 percent of teachers. However, seven percent reported conflict and added stress in the family because of work demands.

Seventeen percent of teachers mentioned positive support from the principal, and nine percent indicated that there was no help from this source, and that in fact principal behaviour increased feelings of overextension.

Support from the remaining sources of support, namely deputy principal, friends in/out of school, level co-ordinator and faculty head generally was considered to be of minimal help.

For some teachers (10 percent), positive student feedback and the need to organize oneself and relax away from school were the best ways to cope with feelings of overextension and exhaustion. Others (eight percent) indicated that no amount of social support could offset time and work conditions, which they perceived contributed most to Emotional Exhaustion burnout.

The qualitative data compared with the findings of the regression analyses highlight that lack of principal support and the provision of emotional support (listening/concern/trust) may increase feelings of Emotional Exhaustion burnout in some teachers.
B. SOCIAL SUPPORT TEACHERS USE TO COPE WITH NEGATIVE ATTITUDES AND IMPERSONAL RESPONSES

4.2. What are the sources and types of social support teachers identified as helping them most cope with the development of negative attitudes and impersonal responses, and how are they related to the significant predictor(s) of Depersonalization burnout?

Table 8.2 illustrates the rank order distributions of sources and types of social support as identified by Victorian Government high school teachers. In addition, Table 8.2 presents the frequency and percentage frequency distributions of negative comments by teachers who found that the development of negative attitudes and impersonal responses was related to certain sources in the work environment. Three hundred and seventy-five teachers replied to this section of the survey, representing a 76 percent response rate. Teachers were asked to reply to the question, "Explain how specific TYPES of support (e.g., Feedback, Time) offered by one or more SOURCES of support (e.g., Principal, Family) help you cope with the development of negative attitudes and impersonal responses toward the people with whom you work."

In this study, Victorian Government high school teachers identified peer group teachers within their own schools as providing the most support (47%). Family/spouse/relatives were ranked second (21%), followed by friends in/out of school (11%). The principal (8%) and level co-ordinator (8%) were ranked next and the faculty head (3%) and deputy principal (3%) were perceived as providing the least support. The majority of teachers (56%) indicated that listening/concern/trust was the most available type of support from all sources, and time (4%) was perceived as being offered the least.

The remainder of this section examines teachers'
Table 8.2
Sources and Types of Social Support Teachers Use to Cope With the Development of Negative Attitudes and Impersonal Responses (N=375)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Support</th>
<th>LCT</th>
<th>AI</th>
<th>FI</th>
<th>TME</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Negative Comments</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer Group Teachers</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23 1.6</td>
<td>3 1</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/Spouse/Relatives</td>
<td>52</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3 1</td>
<td>4 4</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>Friends in/out of school</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>3 2</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6 2</td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Coordinator</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6 2</td>
<td>3 1</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Head</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>1 1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Totals</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38 11</td>
<td>15 4</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: No Negative Comments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>59</td>
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<td>Self</td>
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<td>Work Conditions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38 11</td>
<td>15 4</td>
<td>554</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LCT = Listening/concern/trust; AI = Advice/information; TME = Time; FD = Feedback

This means that 107 of the 375 respondents identified LCT as a type of support provided by peer group teachers.

This means that 28 of the 375 respondents identified LCT as a type of support provided by peer group teachers.

Sub-totals and totals exceed total responses (N=375) due to teacher identification of more than one source and type of social support in most cases.
written comments as they relate to each of the ranked sources and types of social support. The types of support offered by each source of support are presented in their order of frequency as identified by teachers. In some cases, sources and types of social support have been combined to make the interpretation of results more meaningful.

**Peer Group Teachers**

**Listening/concern/trust.** As indicated in Table 8.2, a large percentage of teachers (47 percent) perceived their peers within the school provided the most help in coping with the development of negative attitudes and impersonal responses toward others, and 28 percent of these indicated listening/concern/trust was the most available type of support.

Maslach (1982b:4) described Depersonalization burnout as the development of a "... detached, callous and ... dehumanized response" to those with whom one works. In the case of teachers, this attitude may be directed toward colleagues and/or students. Teaching is a job that requires constant interactions with people all day, every day, and these working conditions according to Maslach (1982b:11) increase the risk of burnout. In many instances, peer group support is a critical buffer to burnout. A married female teacher (levels 7-9, 5 years) recognized that:

> Teaching is an extremely people oriented job and I don't think you can be in the job if you become impersonal and negative. ... I find interaction with and talking to fellow teachers is an important type of support to avoid becoming negative.

Teachers felt that sharing their concerns and negative attitudes toward others with peer group teachers helped to place their feelings in perspective, and opened
the possibilities to change. A married male teacher (levels 8-10, 6 years) said, "... listening and talking to other colleagues often helps to rationalize specific situations where negative attitudes have developed towards others." Another married male teacher (levels 10-12, 10 years) stated:

Listening, concern and trust from peer group teachers helps you to overcome and discuss ways of changing your attitudes or how to make allowances for those attitudes and to try to consider the positive aspects of the people you deal with.

Teachers noted the importance of having other teachers as "... sounding boards ... to weigh up the alternatives" (married male teacher, levels 10-12, 14 years), and were encouraged by not having to face feeling negative and disheartened alone. A married male teacher (levels 7-9, 12 years) commented that "... isolation, thinking you are the only one having trouble seems the biggest danger ... and peers are most helpful in avoiding this." Some teachers felt that their negative feelings about other staff members were somewhat justified if other colleagues shared their feelings. A married female teacher (levels 10-12, 5 years) explained that peer group teachers "... help me to see that I am not the only one who has negative attitudes about this person," and similarly another married female teacher (levels 7-9, 5 years) wrote, "In so far as fellow teachers also have similar negative attitudes towards the people you do - eases the tension."

Teachers also felt that their peers helped to prevent feelings of depersonalization from becoming a major problem. A single female teacher (levels 8-11, 10 years) explained, "... it is very important to talk about issues/problems etc. to avoid becoming negative or impersonal. A shared 'letting steam off' or making a joke
of things that go wrong is vital." Many teachers indicated the ability to laugh at one's attitudes with fellow teachers was helpful.

Peer group support among teachers seems to be particularly important and helpful when dealing with student problems. As one single female teacher (levels 8-11, 2 years) noted:

"Rarely do I have negative attitudes to my work but I do feel impersonal towards some students, especially when they show lack of respect and motivation. Other staff members help me to forget about it and try again."

Pines et al. (1981:19) asserted that ".. . as a result of the process of dehumanization, people are less likely to perceive and respond to the personal identity of other people and are more likely to treat them as if they were not human beings." Consistent with these observations, a married female teacher (levels 10-12, 18 years) in this study said, "... students who create this response [the development of negative attitudes and impersonal responses] deserve it. Griping to colleagues and discussion with them relieves tension." The negative attitudes expressed by some teachers is indicative of the psychological withdrawal mechanisms Maslach (1982b:39) identified among human service helpers who become "... overwhelmed by the press of people who need something, want something, and are always taking something from them." Cherniss (1980b:21) reiterated that psychological detachment was associated with apathy, cynicism, and rigidity.

Advice/information. As shown in Table 8.2, most teachers felt their peers provided more advice/information in coping with negative feelings and impersonal attitudes in their work, compared with all other sources of support. This finding is consistent
with research by Litt and Turk (1985:144) who found that "... seeking more information about a problem through talking to other teachers ... was of positive benefit." For example, a married female teacher (levels 8-11, 4 years) explained that "... fellow teachers are able to advise on ways in which they cope [and] if I am having a similar problem I am able to then try out their strategies." A single female teacher (levels 7-9, 10 years) saw peer group teachers as a resource model. She wrote:

... some teachers who appear to cope in a way I believe desirable, help mainly by example. When I see them being positive in their interaction with students, I am reminded that that is what I am aiming at.

It is the combined and often varied experience among teachers in a school that teachers may tap into when the need arises. As a single female teacher (levels 10-12, 4 years) asserted, "... other teachers point out their experiences and how they deal with problems," and a married female teacher (levels 7-9, 8 years) said:

... other teachers can be objective and act as sounding boards to provide a clearer picture of a situation before it leads to any hostile feelings. The fact that you are not necessarily seen and condemned as totally wrong ... provides a good basis for you to be more prepared to accept your own wrongs and forgive others.

Feedback. Cherniss (1980b:96) maintained "... feedback ... is [a] critical 'resource' without which a worker cannot adequately perform his/her role." Table 8.2 indicates that six percent of teachers reported their peers provided the most of this type of support. A single female teacher (levels 10-12, 5 years) said, "Feedback from peers helps tremendously in making the working environment more positive, hence reducing
negative responses." A female teacher (levels 7-9, 9 years) explained, "... feedback from staff teaching students I teach can make me re-think my attitude to a student and try another approach." By providing feedback and encouragement for each other, teachers may "... avoid negative feelings and attitudes before they escalate" (single female teacher, levels 7-9, 15 years). A married female teacher (levels 7-9, 6 years) added "... feedback confirms that I am getting through to people ... and this is heartening."

**Time.** As shown in Table 8.2, very few teachers (N=3) felt that time provided by peers helped them cope with negative feelings and impersonal responses. However, Pines et al. (1981:111) advised that time must be recognized as one of the most valuable resources and when time is pressured or time out is not available, "... professionals are more likely to feel trapped by their responsibility to their clients," and negative feelings may develop as a consequence. A married female teacher (levels 10-12, 3 years) confirmed this. She said:

... peer group teachers have given time supervising students out of class which has helped me to feel I can cope, and so not develop those negative attitudes in the first place.

**Negative comments.** As indicated in Table 8.2, 47 percent of teachers felt their peers helped them cope with negative attitudes, while nine percent considered peer group teachers were the source of their negativism. Predominantly, teachers felt angry and cynical towards others on the staff who were "... disinterested, ineffective and incompetent" (married male teacher, levels 7-9, 8 years). A married female teacher (levels 8-11, 8 years) said, "... I feel negative attitudes towards peoples' lack of professionalism and dedication,"
and another married female teacher (levels 10-12, 7 years) added, "... colleagues who do not contribute anything to school (beyond attending class) increase my impersonal responses." A typical comment by teachers indicated negative feelings were increased towards "... lazy or apathetic teachers who never prepared lessons or attended meetings" (married female teacher, levels 10-12, 4 years). A married male teacher (levels 7-9, 20 years) commented "... I often feel many of my colleagues lack motivation or direction or both." In support of these findings, Blase (1983:1) reported that teachers felt resentment toward other teachers who did not perform, as this increased the workload of others.

Some teachers in this study also felt that the pervasive "... negative grumblings in the staffroom" (married male teacher, levels 9-12, 5 years) increased impersonal responses, and as a married male teacher (levels 7-9, 7 years) explained:

... talking to some staff increases and strengthens negative attitudes towards some staff and students. It is accepted amongst most staff that there are students the school cannot, and indeed should not cater for, and overall negative feelings develop through staff discussions.

A married female teacher (levels 7-9, 7 years) concluded, "... many teachers present a fairly callous front, possibly as their method of coping." These findings are consistent with those by Rathbone and Benedict (1980:56-57) who found that negative staffroom talk and gossip were indicators of burnout.

Family/Spouse/Relatives

Listening/concern/trust. Table 8.2 indicates that 14 percent of teachers considered emotional support in the form of listening/concern/trust from the family
was helpful in coping with the development of negative attitudes and impersonal responses. Teachers mainly commented that discussing negative feelings towards colleagues and students with their family helped make them more rational and objective. For instance, a married female teacher (levels 10-12, 11 years) said,

The ability to talk over difficulties at home helps me to keep them in perspective and generally I am able to work with people, disagree with them when necessary, but not take that personally.

The family is a strong reference point for an individual where one feels cared for and esteemed, and this knowledge is reflected in such comments as "... knowing my family has confidence in my judgement to always try and do the correct thing is sufficient to help me cope with any negative attitudes" (married female teacher, levels 7-10, 7 years). Another reference point in the family is one's own children, and many teachers felt that "... observing, understanding and relating to your own children" (married male teacher, levels 10-12, 17 years) helps when dealing with students. Similarly, a married male teacher (levels 7-9, 22 years) wrote, "... my own children give me a better insight into the needs of others, and responses."

Advice/information, time, feedback. As shown in Table 8.2, seven percent of teachers considered the family was helpful in coping with negative feelings and impersonal responses by offering advice/information, time and feedback. A married male teacher (levels 10-12, 6 years) said, "... my family offer advice and present alternative strategies for handling problems," and a divorced female teacher (levels 10-12, 8 years) suggested that it is helpful to get advice "... from a parent's point of view."
The family can ease workload, as one married female teacher (levels 8-11, 7 years) observed: "... my husband is supportive and takes the burden of chores off me too."

A married male teacher (levels 10-12, 7 years) found that family support increased his confidence: "... other teachers generally don't care, but my wife is always a support. She gives me positive reinforcement."

**Negative comments.** Pines et al. (1981:177) maintained that "... the family expects attention rather than continual and intensive involvement in work problems ... [and] the implication is that one needs to compartmentalize work and home." As shown in Table 8.2, only one percent of teachers felt they did not receive positive support from the family in order to cope with negative feelings toward others. A married male teacher (levels 8-10, 14 years) remarked, "... the family don't want to be burdened by whingeing," and a married female teacher added "... the family are not interested in school ... and tend to expect that school problems should be unimportant in my life."

**Friends in/out of School**

*Listening/concern/trust, advice/information, time.* Table 8.2 indicates that 11 percent of teachers turned to friends for support in coping with the development of negative attitudes and impersonal responses toward those with whom they worked. Friendship and trust provided teachers the opportunity to vent negative feelings in confidence. For example, a single female teacher (levels 10-12, 4 years) observed that, "... you know what you say won't be repeated or developed out of proportion. Friends offer understanding, not judgement." Further, encouragement from friends helped to build confidence, "... and not take criticism or negative
responses so personally" (single male teacher, levels 7-9, 4 years). Teachers also reported that friends made them feel less guilty about harbouring these negative attitudes. A single female teacher (levels 7-9, 6 years) said, "... having friends who will listen to me complain and whinge enables me to get negative feelings out in the open, acknowledge they are there, and then begin to work them through." Also, spending time away from school with friends was therapeutic for some teachers. A single male teacher (levels 10-12, 5 years) noted that, "... spending time with friends who are not part of the system and who are therefore not 'negative' helps a lot."

In contrast, a single female teacher (levels 8-11, 17 years) found "... friends who have a teaching background are a valuable source of advice and information," similar to a married female teacher (levels 10-12, 10 years) who observed "... school friends suggest means of ignoring awkward and unpleasant situations that arise by focusing on the positive aspects of the job."

Principal

Listening/concern/trust. Supervisor support has been acknowledged as valuable in coping with teacher burnout (e.g., Russell et al., 1987:271). As indicated in Table 8.2, three percent of teachers found that the principal as a source of emotional support helped them cope with negative attitudes and impersonal responses towards those with whom they worked. A married female teacher (levels 7-11, 22 years) said, "... the principal has always been supportive ... and helps me to get my feelings into proper perspective." Another married female teacher (levels 7-9, 22 years) wrote, "... the principal is always willing to listen to any complaints and problems before negative attitudes
develop."

**Advice/information, feedback.** Table 8.2 shows that five percent of teachers perceived the principal provided advice/information and feedback. A single female teacher (levels 10-12, 11 years) explained that "... the principal has helped with advice and information on how to handle negative attitudes." A married male teacher (levels 10-12, 9 years) found advice from the principal taught him not to expect too much from other teachers in that "... you can't rely on teachers to always carry out tasks and by accepting this, negative attitudes won't develop." In addition to advice, positive feedback from the principal is invaluable, as a married female teacher (levels 8-11, 18 years) wrote: "... appreciation from the principal that I am doing an excellent job in difficult conditions ... helps to avoid developing negative feelings."

**Negative comments.** As shown in Table 8.2, five percent of teachers felt that the principal contributed to the development of negative feelings toward others. For example, a single female teacher (levels 10-12, 7 years) remarked, "... The principal exacerbates the problem by taking little interest in the school welfare and therefore offering no positive support for teachers." The predominant comment of teachers reflected the principal's "... concern with his own survival" (married female teacher, levels 9-11, 12 years), and avoiding his/her involvement in many areas of the school. A married female teacher (levels 10-12, 15 years) observed:

> Our principal propagates negative attitudes towards many areas in our school by not giving feedback of a positive nature and is impersonal towards too many people and situations in the school.
In addition, some teachers indicated that principal behaviour promoted conflict among staff. A single female teacher (levels 7-9, 11 years) said, "... the principal has often used staff as a means of negative feedback about other staff and this contributes to my negative feelings about other teachers." Another single female teacher (levels 10-12, 3 years) added, "... The principal is a great source of stress and undermines any sense of worth or achievement."

Principals can weaken the morale of their staff by failing to encourage teachers. Consequently, teachers lose confidence in the principal as a source of support. A single male teacher (levels 7-10, 8 years) explained: "... failure of principals to accept responsibility to fully support staff in issues of importance to them as a whole leads to feelings of cynicism." Lack of recognition, particularly from the principal, contributed to Depersonalization burnout among teachers in this study, and research has shown that negative or no feedback contributes to burnout (e.g., Cherniss, 1980b:96; Pines et al., 1981:117; Rathbone and Benedict, 1980:56-57).

**Level Co-ordinator and Faculty Head**

*Listening/concern/trust, advice/information, time, feedback.* As shown in Table 8.2, 11 percent of teachers considered the level co-ordinator and faculty head were some help in coping with negative feelings and impersonal responses. In both cases, the most useful type of support was advice/information. Teachers mainly sought advice in dealing with problem students. For instance, a married male teacher (years 8-11, 7 years) said: "... advice from the year level co-ordinator who helps with discipline is really the only support in this school." A married female teacher (levels 7-9, 9 years)
wrote: "... support from the year level co-ordinator and the faculty head enables me to feel that I can make real progress with 'difficult' students." Some teachers valued feedback from these sources, as one married female teacher (levels 10-12, 5 years) observed: "... Feedback from level co-ordinators and faculty heads helps me to cope with negative attitudes towards the administration in this school." Another married female teacher (levels 8-11, 14 years) described feedback from these sources as "... a great morale booster [which] restores one's faith in the job and students." It was also important that teachers were provided with listening, concern and trust from supportive co-ordinators. Discussion helped prevent the development of negative attitudes and reduced impersonal responses, particularly towards students.

Deputy Principal

Listening/concern/trust, advice/information. As indicated by Table 8.2, only three percent of teachers perceived the deputy principal as helpful in coping with negative attitudes towards the people with whom they worked. Generally, the deputy principal was a source of advice and as one single male teacher (levels 10-12, 5 years) explained, "... the deputy principal is willing to disseminate helpful information and his familiarity with individuals is a positive factor in eliminating the impersonal response."

Other

As shown in Table 8.2, 59 teachers reported no negative attitudes and impersonal responses toward others. A further 58 indicated that sources other than those sources itemized in the survey either helped them cope with or exacerbated negative feelings and impersonal responses. These additional sources were self-support
and work conditions.

Self. Table 8.2 indicates that five percent of teachers considered it a matter of self-discipline and professionalism that negative attitudes and impersonal responses were not allowed to develop. As one single female teacher (levels 8-11, 11 years) explained:

I mainly do my job and don't interfere with people I might have negative attitudes towards. I work with them if we have to work together. Professionalism is more important.

Work conditions. As illustrated in Table 8.2, 11 percent of teachers felt that none of the sources of support from either within or outside the school helped them cope with their negative attitudes. Responses showed disillusionment with teaching in the face of ever-increasing work demands, community criticism, and perceived lack of support from the Ministry of Education in general. A married male teacher (levels 10-12, 9 years) commented that, "... Teachers constantly face a barrage of criticism. I have seen very little support from within their own organization for one another and it is very rare that the authorities will 'go to bat' for their employees." Another married male teacher (levels 9-11, 28 years) added: "... lack of support means that if you're strong you survive, if not you 'go under' and leave the job."

Relationship between Teacher identified Social Support and Predictors of Depersonalization Burnout

Analysis of the qualitative data (Table 8.2) indicated that 15 percent of teachers perceived peer
group teachers, family, spouse/relatives and the principal aggravated the development of negative attitudes and impersonal responses toward those with whom they worked. Results of the stepwise multiple linear regression analysis as illustrated in Table 7.3 indicated that the less support given by the principal, the greater were teachers' feelings of Depersonalization burnout. The qualitative data support these statistical findings as many teachers felt that the principal's attitudes and behaviour both increased negative feelings and resentment among staff, and promoted the development of cynical, impersonal responses which characterize Depersonalization burnout.

Consistent with the results of the regression analysis for prediction of Depersonalization burnout from types of support (Table 7.7), the written comments of teachers revealed that the more they provided emotional support for each other by listening and talking, the greater was their detachment and the more negative and cynical they felt. Pines et al. (1981:54-55) asserted that there is a danger in "... complete detachment . . . with the loss of concern and the [increase of] dehumanizing attitudes," which is characteristic of burnout.

The regression analysis for types of support teachers themselves offered to other teachers (Table 7.11) indicated that the more time teachers offered to others, the less Depersonalization burnout they experienced. While time was only mentioned by five percent of teachers in their written responses, the findings are consistent as teachers reported that if they had more time to give to others, their negative feelings would be reduced. For example, a married male teacher (levels 7-9, 18 years) wrote:
If I had more time I could help teachers deal with problems and this would help negate any negative attitudes I feel towards them, particularly inexperienced teachers who are teaching at my year levels.

Summary

Teachers indicated that peer group teachers offered the most support and the faculty head and deputy principal offered the least in helping them cope with burnout. However, while listening/concern/trust was the most available type of support provided by peers, nine percent of teachers felt that discussions among staff aggravated impersonal responses toward others and promoted negative attitudes.

Eight percent of teachers found support from the principal was beneficial in coping with negative feelings toward others. None the less, five percent considered principal behaviour contributed to feelings of resentment and negativism among staff.

Twenty-one percent of teachers mentioned that family/spouse/relatives was helpful in dealing with negative attitudes and responses by keeping work in its proper perspective. Only a very small number found the family did not help them deal with difficulties with other staff and students.

Support from the remaining sources, namely friends in/out of school, level co-ordinator, faculty head and the deputy principal was considered to be of minimal help.

Some teachers (16 percent) indicated no feelings of negativism or cynicism, while others suggested that being a professional meant it was possible to prevent the development of negative attitudes toward others. Just over ten percent of teachers felt that present conditions in teaching which contributed to negativism and impersonal responses could not be alleviated by social
support.

The qualitative data compared with the findings of the regression analyses indicate that lack of principal support, and the need to listen and talk to other teachers contributed to feelings and attitudes representative of Depersonalization burnout. Further, the more teachers offered time as a support to others, the less intense were their feelings of Depersonalization burnout.
C. SOCIAL SUPPORT TEACHERS USE TO COPE WITH FEELINGS OF A LACK OF PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT

4.3. What are the sources and types of social support teachers identified as helping them most cope with feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment on the job, and how are they related to the significant predictor(s) of Personal Accomplishment burnout?

Table 8.3 illustrates the rank order distributions of sources and types of social support as identified by Victorian Government high school teachers. In addition, Table 8.3 presents the frequency and percentage frequency distributions of negative comments by teachers who found that feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment were exacerbated by certain sources within the work environment. Four hundred and three teachers replied to this section of the survey, representing an 82 percent response rate. Teachers were asked to reply to the question, "Explain how specific TYPES of support (e.g., Feedback, Time) offered by one or more SOURCES of support (e.g., Principal, Family) help you cope with feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment on the job."

In this study, Victorian Government high school teachers identified peer group teachers within their own schools as providing the most support (37%), followed by family/spouse/relatives (13%). The principal was ranked next (12%), followed by the faculty head (3%) and level co-ordinator (3%). Friends, in/out of school (2%) and the deputy principal (1%) were perceived as providing the least support. Feedback (44%) was identified as the most helpful type of support, followed by listening/concern/trust (24%). Advice/information was mentioned by three percent of teachers as being helpful, and no respondents identified Time as helpful in dealing with feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment.
Table 8.3
Sources and Types of Social Support Teachers Use to Cope With Feelings of a Lack of Personal Accomplishment (N=403)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Support</th>
<th>FD</th>
<th>LTC</th>
<th>AI</th>
<th>TDE</th>
<th>Sub. Totals</th>
<th>Negative Comments</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer Group Teachers</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10 2</td>
<td>151 37 19 5</td>
<td>170 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/Spouse/Relatives</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4 1</td>
<td>54 13</td>
<td>54 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>43 11 29 7</td>
<td>77 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Head</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>13 3</td>
<td>13 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Coordinator</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11 3</td>
<td>11 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends In/out of school</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9 2</td>
<td>9 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 1</td>
<td>6 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Totals(^d)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14 3</td>
<td>415 109 524</td>
<td>524</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^d\) FD = Feedback; LTC = Listening/concern/trust; AI = Advice/information; TDE = Time

\(^d\) This means that 92 of the 403 respondents identified FD as a type of support provided by peer group teachers.

\(^d\) This means that 23% of respondents identified FD as a type of support provided by peer group teachers.

\(^d\) Sub-totals and totals exceed total responses (N=403) due to teacher identification of more than one source and type of social support in most cases.
The remainder of this section examines teachers' written comments as they relate to each of the ranked sources and types of social support. The types of support offered by each source of support are presented in their order of frequency as identified by teachers. In some cases, sources and types of support have been combined to make the interpretation of results more meaningful.

Peer Group Teachers

Feedback. As shown in Table 8.3, 37 percent of teachers perceived their peers within the school provided the most help in coping with feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment on the job, and 23 percent of these considered feedback was the most useful type of support available. Feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment, according to Maslach (1982b:5) derive from a "... gnawing sense of inadequacy about ability... and may result in a self-imposed verdict of 'failure.'" Cherniss (1980b:120) and Maslach (1982b:113) maintained that praise, feedback and recognition from fellow workers can provide a valuable frame of reference as colleagues are in a unique position to evaluate a peer's work, and this can bolster confidence in the individual.

Teachers in this study valued both recognition of achievements and positive criticism from colleagues, whom they "respect" (married female teacher, levels 10-12, 17 years). A single female teacher (levels 7-9, 15 years) added:

I find the support of peer group teachers is important because they are aware of the entailments of your job and can point out things that they view as your personal accomplishments. Recognition of effort and achievement is vital.
Similarly, a married male teacher (levels 10-12, 14 years) wrote, "... congratulatory remarks and positive feedback help to reduce and dismiss feelings of failure or lack of success."

Teachers also recognized the importance of offering praise and encouragement to others, as one married female teacher (levels 10-12, 10 years) remarked: "... most people need to be told they've done a good job or be thanked for putting in extra time and effort," and another married female teacher (levels 8-11, 15 years) observed that "... too few people tell others what a good job they are doing." Maslach (1982b:114) offered similar advice: "... the best tactic for getting feedback is first to give positive feedback to others ... take the first step of rewarding others for their accomplishments - notice all the things they do well and tell them so."

**Listening/concern/trust.** As shown in Table 8.3, a considerable number of teachers (N=49) perceived listening/concern/trust helped them cope with feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment and achievement. By talking and listening to others, "... confidence is re-established and doubts about what one has achieved are dispelled" (married female teacher, levels 10-12, 6 years). Veninga (1979:45) maintained that "... the failure to realize one's expectations [and] positive perceptions about oneself and about what one can accomplish" are closely tied to feelings of personal accomplishment. When teachers are able to talk with each other and share experiences, these expectations become more realistic. A single female teacher (levels 7-9, 10 years) summed up:

Peer group discussions often end up in 'pep talks' where we remind each other why we are teachers and the fact that, although it isn't
immediately obvious, and although one can't identify what contribution each individual teacher has made to a student's personal and intellectual development, we are all actually contributing to that development. The problem is that we are often 'bashed about' by negative incidents, but can't claim any of the positive feedback because very often it cannot be claimed by individuals.

However, teachers did feel that being able to encourage each other contributed to their feelings of self-esteem and personal accomplishment in their work.

Advice/information. As indicated in Table 8.3, only two percent of teachers considered this type of support from peer group teachers was beneficial in dealing with feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment. A married female teacher (levels 8-11, 4 years) commented, "... I often find that a bit of information and advice goes a long way towards self confidence, personal accomplishment and job satisfaction." A married male teacher (levels 7-9, 19 years) added:

It's easy to be discouraged, especially when work piles up more than usual, but the experience of others in specific situations suggests ways to deal with problems on the basis of 'good advice' and this helps you feel you are accomplishing something.

Negative comments. Table 8.3 indicates that a small percentage of teachers (five percent) felt that their colleagues' attitudes contributed to feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment. Predominantly, teachers felt disillusioned and defeated by the lack of support among staff. A single female teacher (levels 10-12, 9 years) wrote, "... personal accomplishment I feel tends to be very limited with teachers at this time therefore peers tend not to be a source of support, but reinforce
any negative attitudes." A single male teacher (levels 8-11, 3 years) said, ". . . there is little help in this area - most staff tend to see lack of personal accomplishment as a lack of ability/confidence on your part, or are negative towards ideas to improve your own sense of accomplishment." A lack of cohesiveness among staff can lower morale and as one female teacher (levels 7-9, 21 years) remarked, ". . . when fellow teachers work against me or undermine and condemn my subject matter . . . my stress levels increase and I feel I'm achieving very little."

Family/Spouse/Relatives

Listening/concern/trust. As indicated by Table 8.3, thirteen percent of teachers perceived family/spouse/relatives were helpful in coping with a lack of personal accomplishment. Eight percent of these teachers reported listening/concern/trust was the most available type of support.

The confidence and esteem derived from within the family circle is important to the individual's sense of self-worth. A single female teacher (levels 10-12, 7 years) said: ". . . my family expresses faith in my ability," and a married female teacher (levels 10-12, 9 years) wrote, ". . . talking with my husband helps me realize that this is not my personal failure but in part a reflection of the backgrounds and frustrations of the students." Family support and the affirmation of the individual's achievements keeps work expectations realistic. As one married male teacher (levels 10-12, 10 years) explained,

Family (wife and child) gives one a perspective on one's job that is healthier (many teachers live for work) and helps one manage energy so as to maintain home-life. Family is always supportive offering love and understanding. It is the emotional bedrock,
as it were, allowing one to work in an often stressful occupation and feel a sense of accomplishment.

Another married male teacher (levels 7-9, 24 years) added, "... I see my family as being the main, constant reinforcement of self-worth, regardless of the frustrations of the job."

**Feedback, advice/information.** As shown in Table 8.3, four percent of teachers reported feedback from family/spouse/relatives was helpful and one percent mentioned advice/information. Teachers' comments reflected an acceptance of no recognition from the work-place, hence only family knew of their personal achievements. A married male teacher (levels 8-11, 20 years) said, "... there are no rewards for being a good teacher. Little or no recognition is given except from family who know that I work hard and long." Another married male teacher (levels 10-12, 8 years) wrote, "... my family helps by relating back to me what parents have said about my teaching," while another married male teacher (levels 8-11, 18 years) added, "... family reminding me that I have accomplished reasonably good results with my students at all levels heightens my sense of personal accomplishment." Welch et al. (1982:23) stated that a lack of feedback led teachers "... to come to believe that nobody cares." In the perceived absence of recognition and feedback from within the workplace, teachers relied on family support to "... make you feel a bit better about yourself" (married female teacher, levels 10-12, 12 years).

**Principal Feedback, listening/concern/trust.** As illustrated in Table 8.3, 12 percent of teachers indicated that feedback and listening/concern/trust when
provided by the principal heightened a sense of personal accomplishment. Ten percent reported feedback from the principal was most important. This finding is consistent with current North American research (e.g., Jackson et al., 1986:636-637; Russell et al., 1987:271) which found that lack of recognition by the principal was a significant predictor of teacher burnout. Generally, teachers commented on their principal's "... acknowledgement of small successes in a variety of ways" (married male teacher, levels 7-9, 5 years), and "... the time the principal takes to come and pat you on the back for a job well done, particularly when you feel you could have done better" (married female teacher, levels 10-12, 3 years). A single female teacher (levels 10-12, 3 years) wrote, "... It is 'good for the soul' to be recognized through your work. Our principal is thankful for any extra work we do, and says so." Teachers repeated the need for "... feedback from a person in authority" (married male teacher, levels 10-12, 15 years), as feedback from such a source ratifies and confirms success in the job.

Negative comments. As shown in Table 8.3, seven percent of teachers indicated the principal exacerbated feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment, but as one married female teacher remarked, "... unfortunately the school system to some extent forces the principal to become too far removed from the 'chalk face'." Others felt, however that principal "... prejudices, lack of co-operation and encouragement against implementing anything new" (single female teacher, levels 10-12, 5 years), or a principal feeling "... threatened by staff who strive for change" (single female teacher, levels 10-12, 3 years) reduced the teacher's feelings of personal accomplishment. Another single female teacher (levels 7-9, 17 years) added, "... the principal gives
little positive approbation but is always ready to criticize," and a single male teacher (levels 10-12, 9 years) similarly remarked, "... the principal never acknowledges my responsibility for efforts at school and is quick to criticize for real or imagined 'sins'."

Faculty Head, Level Co-ordinator
Feedback, listening/concern/trust. Table 8.3 illustrates that the faculty head and level co-ordinator were perceived by six percent of teachers as helping them cope with feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment on the job, by offering feedback as a main type of support (five percent). Feedback from these sources provides teachers with affirmation that their work is successful, because the supervisory nature of the faculty head and level co-ordinator invests these positions with authority. Teachers need to feel they are making full use of their abilities and as one married female teacher (levels 7-9, 13 years) observed, "... the faculty head is wonderful for morale as he draws us into decision making and has full confidence in each teacher's ability to fulfill syllabus requirements." Another married female teacher (levels 8-11, 7 years) said of the level co-ordinator, "... he always has positive remarks about my teaching and his negative remarks are always constructive and are aimed at improving me professionally."

Teachers' comments reiterated the need for feedback and recognition of their work without which they felt inadequate, frustrated and lacking in accomplishment.

Friends in/out of School
Feedback, listening/concern/trust. As shown in Table 8.3, only two percent of teachers felt support from friends helped them cope with feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment. By talking with friends,
teachers realized that "... a lack of personal accomplishment is not only experienced by teachers but people in all occupations at times" (married female teacher, levels 10-12, 9 years). In addition, a single female teacher (levels 7-9, 6 years) explained, "... Feedback from friends can provide a broader perspective and ... affirms the positive role teachers are playing, reminding me that I have gifts that can be used positively in working with adolescents."

**Deputy Principal**

As indicated in Table 8.3, a very small number of teachers (N=6) perceived the deputy principal was helpful in providing feedback to alleviate a lack of personal accomplishment in their job. For example, a married female teacher (levels 7-9, 10 years) explained: "... The deputy principal gives me the encouragement to believe that I am capable of achieving more out of teaching than just in the classroom," and a married male teacher (levels 7-9, 13 years) added: "... the deputy principal praises my efforts and raises my self esteem."

**Other**

As shown in Table 8.3, 54 teachers reported no feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment in their work, while a further 130 indicated variables other than the sources itemized in the survey either helped them cope with, or exacerbated a lack of personal accomplishment in their job. These additional sources were students/parents, self support, and work conditions.

**Students/parents.** As shown in Table 8.3, nine percent of teachers indicated that feedback from both parents and students heightened feelings of accomplishment. Parental acknowledgement of the effort and work expended by teachers and appreciation by the
students affirmed the teacher's "... usefulness and achievements" (married male teacher, levels 7-9, 5 years). Similarly, a married female teacher (levels 8-11, 22 years) wrote: "... I often meet ex-students who come up to me and say 'thanks for what you did for me those years ago when I was a student of yours.' That's the best medicine." Teachers also highlighted feedback from parents on Parent-Teacher nights. One married female teacher (levels 7-9, 15 years) remarked, "... at parent-teacher interviews, to be told that a student enjoys your subject and teaching, to have their work appreciated in the community which the school serves is ample reward." A single female teacher (levels 10-12, 21 years) explained, "... the community feedback gives one a sense of accomplishment and the return of ex-students as 'old friends' from time to time helps one measure achievements."

**Self.** As shown in Table 8.3, seven percent of teachers believed a sense of personal accomplishment was achieved through setting personal goals and striving to attain these, regardless of outside recognition. Most comments reflected the belief that ". . . It is basically up to the individual teacher and what you put into it [that helps one] gain a sense of success" (married female teacher, levels 7-9, 14 years). A married male teacher (levels 10-12, 15 years) elaborated:

A sense of personal accomplishment tends to be a very individual experience and it is very difficult to gain comfort or reassurance from other sources. Positive 'vibes' from teachers, students, and parents can help, but it is an inner feeling which involves self-worth as well as a sense of personal accomplishment within the school community. An honest self appraisal of what you have achieved within the classroom can be a focal point in the amount of stress and mental exhaustion that one experiences.
Those teachers who did not rely on recognition from others by which to measure success in their work tended to emphasize the individual's ability to set realistic goals, and to be objective and rational about work. These self-sufficient teachers appeared to develop a sense of working for the collective good of students, rather than for their own successes. Feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment were not a problem in such cases.

Work conditions. Table 8.3 indicates that 15 percent of teachers felt that none of the sources of support from either within or outside the school alleviated their sense of a lack of personal accomplishment. Many comments emphasized the lack of recognition for the work performed, particularly from within the Ministry of Education. Further, increased workloads, more meetings and committees, combined with 'teacher bashing' in the media contributed to feelings of low self esteem and disillusionment. For many teachers, the lack of promotional opportunities and alternative career structures, together with poor salary prospects combined to make teaching an unattractive proposition. A married male teacher (levels 10-12, 9 years) wrote:

Teaching is a dead end job, career and money wise. I have reached sub-division 14 and can't go any further. I'm stuck. This frustrates me and causes me stress more than anything else.

Similarly, a single female teacher (levels 8-11, 10 years) noted that "... teaching is becoming more and more 'dead-end' in terms of career advancement, particularly for teachers under thirty-five [years of age] who have been functioning in senior teacher positions for years without any 'official' recognition."
The majority of teachers who answered this section and pointed to systemic factors as contributing to a lack of personal accomplishment indicated that if the opportunity arose, they would leave teaching and seek an alternative career.

**Relationship between Teacher Identified Social Support and Predictors of Personal Accomplishment Burnout**

Analysis of the qualitative data (Table 8.3) indicated that 33 percent of teachers reported feedback from peer group teachers and the principal heightened feelings of personal accomplishment in their work. This finding is consistent with the results of the stepwise multiple linear regression analysis for prediction of Personal Accomplishment burnout from sources of social support (Table 7.4), which found that the more teachers perceived support from these sources, the greater were their feelings of personal accomplishment, and the lower their Personal Accomplishment burnout.

Further, the regression analysis for prediction of Personal Accomplishment burnout from types of social support offered by teachers themselves (Table 7.12) indicated that the more teachers were able to offer feedback, advice and emotional support (listening/concern/trust) to others, the greater were their feelings of personal accomplishment. The written comments showed an awareness by teachers of the need to offer support and feedback to each other, and lamented the fact that this happens all too seldom. Farber (1983:5) asserted that a loss of collegiality among staff members contributed to burnout, and the negative comments by teachers in relation to peer group teachers and the principal (12 percent) highlighted that lack of feedback and recognition were particularly responsible for
lowering morale and contributed to feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment in their work.

Summary

Teachers indicated that peer group teachers offered the most support, followed by family/spouse/relatives and the principal. The remaining sources offered minimal support. Feedback was perceived as the most useful type of support available in coping with feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment, followed by listening/concern/trust.

Some twelve percent of teachers reported that attitudes of peer group teachers and the principal exacerbated feelings of Personal Accomplishment burnout.

No Personal Accomplishment burnout was reported by thirteen percent of teachers. Nine percent considered feedback from students and parents heightened feelings of personal accomplishment, and seven percent considered that it was the inner resources and strengths of the individual which helped give one a sense of accomplishment and self worth. Fifteen percent of teachers indicated that present job conditions in teaching such as lack of recognition, poor career opportunities and insufficient salary created a feeling of getting nowhere, and contributed to a lack of personal accomplishment in their work.

The qualitative data compared with the findings of the regression analyses indicate that feedback and recognition from the principal and peer group teachers increased feelings of personal accomplishment, and morale and personal accomplishment was heightened by teachers offering feedback, advice and emotional support (listening/concern/trust) to others.
D. SUMMARY

This chapter presented findings from the written comments of teachers. On Emotional Exhaustion burnout, teachers indicated that peer group teachers offered the most support, and level co-ordinators and faculty heads offered the least. While listening/concern/trust was the most available type of social support, a large number of teachers reported that the negativism associated with staff-room discussions offered no solutions and this only increased feelings of overextension and exhaustion. Principal support both alleviated and increased feelings of overextension and exhaustion among teachers.

Similarly on Depersonalization burnout, teachers indicated that while peer group teachers offered the most support in the form of listening/concern/trust, a number of them felt that discussions among staff aggravated impersonal responses toward others and promoted negative attitudes. Again principal support, when positive, was of considerable benefit, but many teachers reported negative principal behaviour contributed to feelings of resentment among staff.

On Personal Accomplishment burnout, teachers indicated that feedback from both peer group teachers and the principal heightened their sense of accomplishment on the job. Conversely, negative criticism and lack of feedback from these sources exacerbated feelings of low self-esteem and failure in teachers.

The qualitative data compared with the findings of the regression analyses highlighted that the lack of principal support and the provision of listening/concern/trust by peer group teachers exacerbated feelings of burnout. Further, the comparison of the quantitative and qualitative data indicated that teachers offering feedback, and advice/information to others, experienced fewer feelings of burnout themselves.
Chapter IX
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The final chapter is divided into the following sections: (1) a summary of the study, (2) a summary of the findings as they relate to the research and the literature, (3) conclusions, and (4) a discussion of the implications of the study including recommendations for future research and practice.

A. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Purposes and Objectives of the Study

The major purposes of the study were to examine the nature of burnout and social support among Victorian Government high school teachers, and to describe the extent to which sources and types of social support were statistically significant predictors of teacher burnout.

The following objectives were established to fulfill these purposes:

1. To describe the nature of burnout among high school teachers,

2. To describe the nature of social support (i.e., sources and types) among high school teachers,

3. To explore the extent to which sources and types of social support were statistically significant predictors of burnout in high school teachers, and

4. To describe the aspects of social support personally identified by teachers as helping them most cope with each type of burnout as defined by Maslach and Jackson (1981a,b).
Overview of the Study

The relationship between prolonged work stress and burnout is well represented in the theory and research (e.g., Maslach, 1982a,b; Cherniss, 1980a,b; Pines et al., 1981), but specific research on burnout among educators has been minimal. Research findings on educator burnout generally have been inconsistent, inconclusive and in need of further clarification. Because burnout has serious implications for the individual, the organization and the client, research directed towards understanding more about this syndrome is necessary both for employee health and morale, and organizational productivity and growth.

The literature and research on social support indicate that it is a potential resource for reducing life and work stress, and that it may alleviate burnout. The limited research which has focussed on teacher burnout and social support has highlighted the importance of supervisor or principal support (e.g., Jackson et al., 1986; Russell et al., 1987). Further, teachers who perceived they worked in supportive environments with co-workers reported less experience of burnout. For example, MacPherson (1985:238) in his study of principal burnout noted that "... principals who identified relations with staff ... as stressful aspects of the job also recorded higher levels of burnout." In this respect, MacPherson recommended further examination of interpersonal relationships in the job situation as these relate to the experience of burnout.

The personal and situational characteristics of teachers associated with burnout and social support need attention also, as studies have indicated differences, for example, across such variables as age, sex, marital status, and years experience on levels of burnout experienced, and in the utilization of social support.
Conceptual Framework

In this study, teacher burnout is conceptualized as the result of prolonged work stress. This conceptualization is consistent with current research findings in the reporting of burnout in an organizational setting (e.g., Cherniss, 1980b; Maslach, 1982a,b; Schwab et al., 1986). Social support is conceptualized as a coping resource, and consists of the sources and types of support offered by others and by oneself. This interpretation parallels the definition of social support by House (1981), Weis (1984) and d'Abbs (1982). The conceptual framework of the study described and explored the relationships among teacher burnout and social support, and the extent to which social support was a predictor of burnout in teachers.

Respondents

The respondents in the study were 491 Victorian Government high school teachers from 229 schools across the state, and were selected randomly in cooperation with the Statistics Section, Policy and Planning Unit (Schools Division), Ministry of Education.

Research Methodology

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected through use of a 52-item questionnaire which was posted to the randomly selected teachers through the principal of their respective schools. The questionnaire used in this study consisted of four sections: (a) background information, (b) social support, (c) human services survey (burnout), and (d) personal comments.

Quantitative data included (a) selected background variables of the respondents and included both personal and situational variables; (b) the social support instrument developed by the researcher and which consisted of three sections related to sources of support, types of support, and support teachers themselves offered to others. The instrument was
intended to fill some of the gaps in the research base on social support as identified by Caplan (1974), d’Abbs (1982), House (1981), and was developed in response to Wells’ (1984:113) observation that "... few studies answer the question of which source provides the most support"; and (c) the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) which consists of the three sub-scales of Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment burnout. The MBI measures both the frequency and intensity of the respondent's feelings to 22 specific work-related items. However, in a cross-validation of the MBI for use with educators, Iwanicki and Schwab (1981:1172) found high correlations between the two ratings of frequency and intensity. Recent studies by Jackson et al. (1986) and Russell et al. (1987) used one dimension only. This study used the strength or intensity rating in accordance with these research findings and suggestions.

Qualitative data were collected by means of an open-response section in the questionnaire where teachers were asked to explain how specific types of support (e.g., Feedback, Time) offered by one or more sources of support (e.g., Principal, Family) helped them to cope with (1) feelings of over-extension and exhaustion on the job, (2) the development of negative attitudes and impersonal responses toward people with whom they work, and (3) their feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment on the job.

The study was descriptive, thus statistical techniques such as means, standard deviations and frequencies were used for analysis of the data. The study was also exploratory, hence multiple step-wise linear regression analyses, analyses of variance, t-tests and factor analyses were used to explore relationships.
B. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The major findings as they relate to each of the four research problems examined in the study are presented in this section.

The Nature of Burnout Among Teachers

1.1. What is the nature of burnout among teachers, and how does it compare with the established norms for each sub-scale of burnout?

Maslach and Jackson (1981a:1) described the three dimensions of burnout as Emotional Exhaustion burnout, or the feeling of being emotionally overextended and exhausted; Depersonalization burnout, or the development of unfeeling and impersonal responses towards recipients; and Personal Accomplishment burnout, as the sense of low achievement in one's work and loss of self-esteem. In this study, teachers recorded lower than average levels of Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization burnout, and a higher than normal level of Personal Accomplishment burnout. Comparing the teacher distribution to the normative distribution for each sub-scale, the majority of teachers were in the lower to middle thirds on Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization burnout, and were over-represented in the upper-third on Personal Accomplishment burnout.

1.2. What is the relationship between each of the sub-scales of burnout and the selected background variables of teachers?

The selected background variables of marital status, grade level taught, school size and school location registered no statistically significant differences among sub-groups of teachers on each burnout sub-scale. The results of analyses of variance on the remaining
background variables are reported below.

**Sex.** Male teachers experienced a statistically significant higher level of Depersonalization burnout than female teachers.

**Age.** The youngest teachers recorded the highest levels of Emotional Exhaustion burnout, and those 30-39 years old recorded the highest level of Depersonalization burnout. There were no statistically significant differences among sub-groups of teachers on Personal Accomplishment burnout.

**Total number of years as an educator.** Teachers with 21 or more years as an educator recorded a significantly lower level of Emotional Exhaustion burnout compared with all other sub-groups.

**Years in current position.** Teachers who had been in their current position for six to 15 years reported significantly more Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization burnout than those with 21 or more years in their current position. Teachers with one to five years in their current position reported a statistically significant lower level of Personal Accomplishment burnout compared with those with six to 10 years in their current position.

**Teaching assignment consistent with training.** Teachers who reported a one to 25 percent and 51 to 75 percent consistency between teaching assignment and training recorded higher levels of Depersonalization burnout than other teachers. Those who reported between one and 50 percent consistency registered higher levels of Personal Accomplishment burnout compared with those whose training was 76 to 100 percent consistent with their teaching task.
Desire to leave school. Teachers who stated a preference to leave education completely recorded a higher level of Emotional Exhaustion burnout than all other groups. Teachers who chose to stay in their same job registered lower Depersonalization burnout than those who advocated a change of school or preference to leave education completely. On Personal Accomplishment, teachers who desired another job away from education registered a higher level of burnout compared with teachers who chose to stay in their same job.

Frequency of interesting work. For each burnout sub-scale, teachers who indicated their work was interesting most of the time reported significantly less burnout compared with those who indicated their work was not at all or seldom interesting.

Overall work stress. Teachers who reported their work was not stressful or mildly stressful recorded significantly less burnout for each sub-scale compared with teachers who reported their work was considerably to extremely stressful.

The Nature of Social Support Among Teachers

2.1. What is the rank order distribution of the sources of social support, the types of social support and the type of social support offered to others by teachers themselves?

The rank order distribution of the seven sources of support revealed that teachers identified peer group teachers as providing the most help in coping with burnout, followed by family/spouse/relatives and friends, in/out of school. The principal offered the least support.

The type of support teachers identified as most helpful in coping with burnout was
listening/concern/trust, and teachers themselves offered this type of support most to others. Teachers reported time was the second most important type of support in coping with burnout, but offered this the least to others. Overall, teachers considered types of support were more helpful in coping with burnout than were the sources of support.

2.2. What is the relationship between sources of social support and the selected background variables of teachers?

The analyses of variance indicated no statistically significant differences in the sources of social support used by teachers classified by grade level taught, size of school, and location of school. The results of the analyses of variance for the remaining background variables are reported below.

**Sex.** Female teachers reported significantly more support than male teachers from the level co-ordinator, peer group teachers and friends, in/out of school.

**Age.** Teachers 20-29 years old indicated most support from peer group teachers and least support from the principal compared with teachers in all other age groups.

**Marital status.** Single teachers reported statistically significant more support from peer group teachers, and married teachers indicated significantly more support from their families.

**Years as an educator.** Teachers with 10 or fewer years experience reported statistically significant more support from peer group teachers, compared with all other sub-groups.
Years in current position. Teachers with 21 or more years in their current position reported significantly more support from the principal than teachers in all other categories. Support from peer group teachers was significantly higher for teachers who had been in their current position for 10 or fewer years compared to those who had been in the same position for 11 to 15 years.

Teaching assignment consistent with training. Teachers who reported no consistency between training and teaching task registered significantly less support from the principal, compared with those who reported a 51 to 75 percent consistency between training and teaching assignment.

Desire to leave school. Faculty heads and peer group teachers were seen as providing significantly more support for teachers who preferred to remain in their present school, compared with those who would leave education completely.

Frequency of interesting work. Teachers who rated their work was not at all to seldom interesting reported less support from the principal, deputy principal, level co-ordinator and peer group teachers compared with teachers who found their work interesting most of the time.

Overall work stress. Teachers who perceived their work was moderately to extremely stressful reported statistically significant more support from friends, in/out of school than those who reported mild to no stress in their work.
2.3. **What is the relationship between types of social support and the selected background variables of teachers?**

No statistically significant differences on types of support were recorded for teachers classified by marital status, consistency of teacher training with teaching assignment, grade level taught, desire to leave school, frequency of interesting work, and school type. The results of the analyses of variance for the remaining background variables are reported below.

**Sex.** Female teachers reported all four types of support as significantly more important in helping them cope with burnout, compared with male teachers.

**Age.** Teachers 50 or more years old reported advice/information was the most helpful type of support compared with all other sub-groups, whereas the youngest teachers (20-29 years old) perceived listening/concern/trust and feedback were the most helpful types of support.

**Total number of years as an educator.** Teachers with one to five years experience reported significantly more advice/information as a type of support compared with teachers with 16 or more years experience. Teachers with 11-15 years experience registered the highest mean on advice/information as a type of social support.

**Years in current position.** Teachers who had been in their current position for five or fewer years reported significantly more feedback as a type of support, compared with teachers who had remained in their current position for 16 or more years. Teachers with 21 or more years in their current position reported significantly more advice/information than those with six to 10 and 16 to 20 years in current position.
Overall work stress. Teachers who reported their work was very to extremely stressful registered significantly higher levels of listening/concern/trust, feedback and time as types of social support compared with teachers who found their work was not stressful to mildly stressful.

School location. Urban school teachers reported advice/information was more important a type of support compared with rural school teachers.

2.4. What is the relationship between types of social support offered to others by teachers themselves and the selected background variables of teachers?

No statistically significant differences in the types of social support offered by teachers themselves were recorded for teachers classified by marital status, teacher training consistent with teaching assignment, grade level taught, desire to leave school, overall work stress and school size. The results of the analyses of variance for the remaining background variables are reported below.

Sex. Female teachers offered significantly more listening/concern/trust, feedback and time as types of support than did male teachers.

Age. Teachers 20-29 years and 30-39 years of age offered significantly less advice/information and time as types of support compared with teachers in the fifty years or more category.

Years as an educator. Teachers with 11 to 15 years experience offered significantly less advice/information compared with teachers with 21 or more years experience.
Years in current position. Teachers who had been in their current position for 16 to 20 years offered significantly more advice/information than did teachers with 15 or fewer years in their current position.

Frequency of interesting work. Teachers who rated their work not at all or seldom interesting offered significantly less listening/concern/trust, feedback, advice/information and time than did teachers whose work was interesting most of the time.

School location. Teachers in urban schools offered significantly more listening/concern/trust than did those in rural schools.

Social Support as a Predictor of Teacher Burnout

The results of stepwise multiple linear regression analyses for the prediction of each burnout sub-scale in teachers are reported in this section.

3.1. To what extent are sources of social support statistically significant predictors of Emotional Exhaustion burnout in teachers?

The principal, faculty head and friends, in/out of school as sources of social support were statistically significant predictors of Emotional Exhaustion burnout, and together with background variables accounted for 6.2 percent of the variance in Emotional Exhaustion. The less support perceived from these sources, the more likely were teachers to experience Emotional Exhaustion burnout.
3.2. To what extent are sources of social support statistically significant predictors of Depersonalization burnout in teachers?

Support from the principal was the only statistically significant predictor of Depersonalization burnout in teachers, contributing a further 1.5 percent to the total variance in this sub-scale.

3.3. To what extent are sources of social support statistically significant predictors of Personal Accomplishment burnout in teachers?

The principal and peer group teachers as significant predictors of Personal Accomplishment burnout contributed 3.9 percent to the total variance in this sub-scale.

3.4. To what extent are types of social support statistically significant predictors of Emotional Exhaustion burnout in teachers?

Time and listening/concern/trust as types of support were significant predictors of Emotional Exhaustion burnout, contributing 4.8 percent to the total variance after statistically controlling for background variables. The positive beta weights indicated that teachers' experiences of Emotional Exhaustion burnout were heightened by these types of support.

3.5. To what extent are types of social support statistically significant predictors of Depersonalization burnout in teachers?

Listening/concern/trust was the only significant predictor of Depersonalization burnout, and with the background variables contributed 5.1 percent to the total
variance. The positive beta weights indicated that listening/concern/trust tended to increase teachers' experiences of Depersonalization burnout.

3.6. To what extent are types of social support statistically significant predictors of Personal Accomplishment burnout in teachers?

No types of social support were statistically significant predictors of Personal Accomplishment burnout in teachers.

3.7. To what extent are types of social support offered by teachers themselves statistically significant predictors of Emotional Exhaustion burnout in teachers?

Time and listening/concern/trust offered by teachers themselves were significant predictors of Emotional Exhaustion burnout, contributing a further 2.2 percent to the total variance in this sub-scale after statistically controlling for background variables. The more teachers offered time as a type of support to others, the less they experienced Emotional Exhaustion burnout. Conversely, the more teachers provided listening/concern/trust as a type of support, the greater were their feelings of Emotional Exhaustion burnout.

3.8. To what extent are types of social support offered by teachers themselves statistically significant predictors of Depersonalization burnout in teachers?

Time offered by teachers themselves was the only significant predictor of Depersonalization burnout, accounting for a further 1.7 percent of the total variance after statistically controlling for background variables. The more teachers offered time to others, the less Depersonalization burnout they experienced.
3.9. To what extent are the types of social support offered by teachers themselves statistically significant predictors of Personal Accomplishment burnout in teachers?

Advice/information, listening/concern/trust and feedback were significant predictors of Personal Accomplishment burnout, contributing 15.4 percent to the total variance in this sub-scale after statistically controlling for background variables. The more teachers offered these types of support to others, the lower were their levels of Personal Accomplishment burnout, and the greater their feelings of self-esteem.

Social Support Teachers Use to Cope with Burnout

The results of the analysis of the qualitative data are reported in this section.

4.1. What are the sources and types of social support teachers identified as helping them most cope with feelings of overextension and exhaustion, and how are they related to the significant predictor(s) of Emotional Exhaustion burnout?

Teachers indicated that peer group teachers offered the most support, and that listening/concern/trust was the most available type of social support. However, 20 percent of teachers felt that peer support offered no real solutions to problems, that nothing changed, and that feelings of over-extension and exhaustion were exacerbated. Principal support was desired but generally not available.

Comparisons with the results of the regression analyses highlight the lack of principal support as a source of Emotional Exhaustion burnout. Further, listening/concern/trust as a type of emotional support provided some comfort, but in some cases tended to
4.2. What are the sources and types of social support teachers identified as helping them most cope with the development of negative attitudes and impersonal responses towards the people with whom they work, and how are they related to the significant predictor(s) of Depersonalization burnout?

According to teachers' comments, peer group teachers were the most helpful sources of support, and listening/concern/trust was the most available type of support. However, many teachers found negative staff-room talk and the constant problems of others contributed to feelings of detachment and cynicism, the characteristics of Depersonalization burnout. Teachers considered positive principal support was most beneficial, but five percent commented that the negative and critical attitudes displayed by the principal increased their feelings of cynicism and negativism towards others in the school.

Compared with the results of the regression analyses, the qualitative data indicated that the lack of principal support increased feelings of Depersonalization burnout in teachers. Further, the more some teachers responded to other teachers' problems through listening/concern/trust as a type of social support, the more negative and cynical they became.

4.3. What are the sources and types of social support teachers identified as helping them most cope with feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment on the job, and how are they related to the significant predictor(s) of Personal Accomplishment burnout?

Peer group teachers were perceived as offering the most help, and feedback was considered to be the most
useful type of social support according to teachers' comments. However, some 12 percent of teachers reported that attitudes of peer group teachers and the principal exacerbated feelings of Personal Accomplishment burnout.

Consistent with the findings of the regression analyses, the qualitative data indicated that feedback and recognition from the principal and peers increased feelings of self-esteem, and decreased feelings of Personal Accomplishment burnout. Positive feelings of accomplishment were also heightened for teachers who offered feedback advice and listening/concern/trust.

C. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS IN RELATION TO THE LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

Teacher Burnout

Farber (1984b:324) claimed that teacher burnout "... can be regarded as the final step in a progression of unsuccessful attempts to cope with negative stress conditions." Over recent times, teacher burnout has become the focus of research which consistently has found that classroom teachers experience burnout to a greater degree and to a larger extent than principals (e.g., Anderson and Iwanicki, 1984; Cedoline, 1982; Farber, 1984a,b; MacPherson, 1985; Ratsoy and Friesen, 1985). A study by McGowan (1984:89) for instance, estimated that between 10 to 25 percent of Queensland teachers were experiencing acute stress and burnout.

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) has been the instrument most often used in studies that measure the degree of experienced burnout among classroom teachers. Maslach and Jackson (1981b) who developed the instrument, reported normative mean scores on each sub-scale of burnout based on their study of 2118 helping service professionals, including teachers, administrators, and social workers. The identification of norms and normative distributions for each sub-scale
has enabled researchers since to compare their findings with these established norms and distributions.

**Emotional exhaustion burnout.** The results of this present study indicated teachers were experiencing less Emotional Exhaustion burnout compared with studies of teachers in North America. Schwab and Iwanicki (1982) studied 469 teachers in Massachusetts, Anderson and Iwanicki (1984) surveyed 375 teachers in Connecticut, and Ratsoy and Friesen (1985) examined work stress and burnout among 2478 teachers in Alberta, Canada. All studies, including the present one, reported a lower level of Emotional Exhaustion burnout compared with the established norm.

**Depersonalization burnout.** On this sub-scale, Maslach and Jackson (1981b) reported a higher norm for their respondents compared with the American-based research. However, the findings reported in this study indicate that Victorian Government high school teachers were experiencing more Depersonalization burnout than teachers in the Schwab and Iwanicki (1982), Anderson and Iwanicki (1984), and Ratsoy and Friesen (1985) studies.

**Personal accomplishment burnout.** The findings of this study revealed that Victorian Government high school teachers experienced more Personal Accomplishment burnout compared with the norm, and with the other studies cited above.

These findings indicate that Victorian Government high school teachers were experiencing high levels of burnout on each of the sub-scales. Further, analyses of variance results revealed that those teachers who expressed the preference to leave education completely recorded the highest levels of burnout over the three sub-scales. This finding is a particular cause for concern, as various studies have shown.
For example, Jackson et al. (1986:639) indicated that "... a large percentage of teachers are in their current jobs involuntarily ... causing negative consequences for both individuals and educational institutions." It would seem that the Victorian Government system also has its share of involuntary staff members, whose experiences of stress and burnout may have long-term implications for career development and student learning. Farber (1984b:333) asserted that teacher burnout "... will not 'go away' [and] has become an issue of increasingly greater public and professional concern." He argued that with current economic constraints, teachers will find they cannot leave the field, with the result that "... they feel stuck in teaching - a position that intensifies feelings of irritability, anger and loss of commitment." Some of the written comments of teachers in this present study expressed these sentiments. For instance, a single female teacher (levels 8-11, 10 years experience) summed up by saying that "... teaching is becoming more and more 'dead-end' in terms of career advancement, particularly for teachers under thirty-five [years of age] who have been functioning in senior positions for years without any 'official' recognition."

Pitt and Jennings (1984:235) reported that the average age of teachers in Victorian Government high schools was thirty-four, and that the workforce was an ageing one. They found that from 1972-1984 teachers 30-45 years old had increased by 55 percent. In comparison, this study found that 67 percent of teachers were in the 30-49 years age group, which suggests that the trend towards an older and more experienced workforce is continuing in the teaching profession. To some extent this could explain the higher than average level of Personal Accomplishment burnout, where teachers' career paths seem to come to a standstill due to a lack of career opportunities in the system. Pitt and Jennings (1984:236) recognized this also, and suggested that part
of the mid-career crisis is exacerbated by "... disillusionment [and] the decreasing chance of promotion as the over-thirty teacher cohort swells." These findings suggest a need for further examination of the causes of Personal Accomplishment burnout in Victorian Government high school teachers.

Personal Accomplishment burnout was highest for those teachers who had been teaching for six to ten years in this study. These findings are similar to those by Rathbone and Benedict (1980:28), who discovered that the sense of personal failure and the refusal to accept what can be realistically achieved in teaching lead to the loss of idealism. This loss of idealism, according to Pines et al. (1981:4), is an important element in Personal Accomplishment burnout. Harrison (1983:38) also commented on the relationship between burnout and the loss of idealism, maintaining "... when one highly values one's work but is unable to achieve the desired goals ... burnout [may result]."

Some selected findings from the analyses of variance results in this study indicate that male teachers experienced a higher level of Depersonalization burnout compared with female teachers. This finding is consistent with Maslach's (1982b:58) claim that "... men are more likely [than women] to have depersonalized and callous feelings about the people they work with," and is similar to research by Russell et al. (1987:271) and Schwab (1981:123) who found that the level of Depersonalization burnout was higher for male teachers. Further research into the experience of Depersonalization burnout for male teachers is suggested in order to examine the causes of their more negative and cynical work attitudes, compared with female teachers.

Consistent with current research, this study also found younger teachers experienced the highest levels on the sub-scales of Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization burnout. Russell et al. (1987:271) cited the youngest teachers reported the most Emotional
Exhaustion burnout.

According to research (e.g., Cherniss, 1980a,b; Farber, 1984a; MacPherson, 1985; Ratsoy and Friesen, 1985; Welch et al., 1982), work stress and burnout are highly correlated. The results of this present study indicated similar findings where teachers who reported their work was considerably to extremely stressful also recorded higher levels of burnout for each of the three sub-scales. What these findings suggest is that if teachers are to receive systemic assistance in coping with burnout, then a fundamental understanding of what causes them stress and how they handle it is the first step in the support process.

Social Support and Teacher Burnout

In his analysis of social support, Beehr (1985:381) commented that:

> many of us believe that social support is beneficial in the context of occupational stress because (1) such past research seems to imply that support is generally beneficial, and (2) it seems to be a common sense notion that people can help others in almost any situation.

However, the notion of social support as a resource for coping with work stress and burnout needs to be approached with some caution. We need to consider the costs involved in a mutual transaction of support. For instance, Cohen and Wills (1985:348) asserted "... it may be that there are some costs associated with receiving support in particular instances, especially when it is asked for or when the receiver feels obligated to the giver as a result of the transaction." Consequently, the nature of social support is complex and the research and literature to date reflect some of the difficulties in examining the area.

Generally however, the literature and research on work stress and social support in particular suggests
that those who perceive they work in a supportive environment experience lower levels of work stress overall (e.g., Caplan, 1974; Caplan et al., 1975; Ganster et al., 1986; House, 1981; La Rocco et al., 1980). Laughlin (1984:307) asserted:

"... One can say with some confidence that teachers confronted with stressful situations are most likely to avoid dysfunctional outcomes if they work in a supportive and cohesive environment and have empathetic and understanding out-of-school relationships."

Ganster et al. (1986:108) reported supervisor support was the "... most important in affecting strains" in the work place, and found support from family and friends "... was significantly associated with lower levels of somatic health symptoms." Similar symptoms have been identified with burnout in various studies (e.g., Frese, 1985; Kyriacou and Pratt, 1985). In comparison, studies of the effect of social support on particular stressors have been less successful and inconsistent in their findings (e.g., Abdel-Halim, 1982; Gore, 1978; House and Wells, 1978; La Rocco et al., 1980; Seers et al., 1983).

Research on the relationship between social support and teacher burnout is even more limited, although the findings so far published have shown some consistency. For instance, Russell et al. (1987:271) in their study of 316 public school teachers in Iowa found that "... social support received from supervisors was found to be the only significant predictor of burnout." Similarly, Jackson et al's (1986:636-637) study of 327 teachers in New Hampshire revealed that "... feelings of Personal Accomplishment are highest for teachers in supportive environments, with support from one's principal appearing to be particularly important." Blase (1983:1) reported two principal behaviours, lack of support and lack of consistency, led to conflict between principal and teacher, and contributed to feelings of burnout in teachers.
The findings of this present study support these conclusions. Lack of principal support was found to be the most significant predictor of Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment burnout. When the principal did provide support, then teachers experienced less emotional exhaustion, felt less negative and cynical towards others in the workplace, and felt better about themselves and the job they were doing. The qualitative data of this study are also consistent with Maslach's (1982b:45) assertion that "... burnout among providers can be hastened or alleviated by supervisory actions." The written comments of teachers revealed that feelings of burnout were exacerbated by negative principal attitudes and behaviour.

Although both Maslach (1982b:111) and Pines et al. (1981:124) maintained the benefits of strong support among staff members and the value of providing each other with recognition and feedback, Pines et al. (1981:125) advised that the wrong type of interaction can worsen the experience of burnout. Teacher colleagues who are insensitive enough to offer unsolicited advice, judgements, and opinions only increase the burden on the one seeking help. This assertion was borne out in this study of Victorian Government high school teachers. Many teachers found that emotional support in the form of listening/concern/trust from their peers was the most available type of support, but in real terms it was the least effective in coping with burnout. Nothing constructive could be achieved, no changes could be made, and the constant negativism only increased feelings of exhaustion and hopelessness. Similar to these findings, the study by Kaufman and Beehr (1986:552) of 102 hospital nurses in the United States found that social support increased perceived job stress. The authors suggested that supervisors may be the major source of stress, so that any approach by a supervisor would increase anxiety in the workers. Further, communication between co-workers did not alleviate stress, but rather reinforced and
confirmed the worst in the situation. Another study of work relationships by Argyle and Furnham (1983) found colleagues to be a source of emotional conflict, as were work supervisors. The study of 63 teachers near Stockholm by Brenner et al. (1985) also concluded that social support exacerbated work stress rather than alleviated it. The findings of these studies have been confirmed by the present study.

Ratsoy and Friesen (1985:138) reported a low 13 percent of teachers in their study turned to superordinates for help when experiencing occupational stress. The majority (69%) relied on their immediate family followed by work colleagues (61%). The study of Victorian Government primary school teachers by Chiu et al. (1986:17) reported that of those teachers suffering occupational stress, 82 percent relied on family and 65 percent turned to colleagues as sources of support. However, the study did not mention the role of supervisory support.

These findings are fairly consistent with those of the present study. The low incidence of supervisory support noted in the Ratsoy and Friesen (1985) study is similar to the lack of principal support perceived by teachers in Victorian Government high schools. Further, teachers' written evaluations that the most support was provided by their peer group teachers and family and friends, are consistent with the findings of both the Ratsoy and Friesen (1985:138) and Chiu et al. (1986:17) studies.

Findings from this study also revealed that female teachers reported both sources and types of social support were significantly more important to them than for male teachers. Female teachers also offered more support to others than did their male counterparts. These findings support other research which reported women received more support, used more support, shared more with others in their work, and evaluated social support as a more effective coping strategy than did men.
(e.g., Pines and Kafry, Kafry and Pines, cited in Pines et al., 1981:138). Laughlin's (1984a:284-286) study of teachers in New South Wales also reported female teachers found support from colleagues and family and friends was more beneficial in helping them cope with work stress, compared with male teachers. In comparison, Etzion (1984:621) found women relied far more on support from outside the work-place, whereas men relied more on sources within the work environment.

The literature and research on teacher burnout and social support, though limited, offers significant confirmation of the results of this present study. The lack of principal or supervisory support as a predictor of teacher burnout has been highlighted, as has the availability of peer group or collegiate support in helping teachers cope with burnout. In addition, research by Anderson and Iwanicki (1984:123) on teacher burnout has identified the youngest teachers as the highest risk group for Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization burnout, and has emphasized the importance of providing "... a support system for younger and less experienced teachers to help them cope."

The findings of this study support those by Anderson and Iwanicki (1984), for the youngest teachers were experiencing the highest levels of burnout, consistently saw the principal as providing the least support, and perceived their peers provided the most support in coping with burnout. Nonetheless, many teachers commented that support from coworkers was ineffective in dealing with a wide range of problems, and what they most desired but received least was support from the school principal.

D. CONCLUSIONS

1. Victorian Government high school teachers recorded low to moderate mean scores for Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization burnout, but a higher
than average level of Personal Accomplishment burnout.

2. Higher levels of burnout across all sub-scales were reported by teachers who stated a preference to leave education, who indicated their work was not at all or seldom interesting, and who perceived their work was considerably to extremely stressful.

3. Male teachers recorded significantly more Depersonalization burnout compared with female teachers.

4. The youngest teachers recorded the highest levels of Emotional Exhaustion burnout, and teachers in the 30-39 years age category recorded the highest level of Depersonalization burnout.

5. The most experienced teachers (21 or more years) and those in their current position for twenty-one or more years recorded the lowest levels of Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization burnout.

6. Higher levels of Personal Accomplishment burnout were recorded by teachers who had been in their current position for more than six years, who reported only a fifty percent consistency between teacher training and job assignment, and who desired a job not in the field of education.

7. Teachers identified peer group teachers as the most helpful, and the principal as the least helpful in coping with job-related burnout.

8. Listening/concern/trust was identified by teachers as the most helpful type of support, and teachers offered this the most to others. Overall, teachers considered types of support were more helpful in coping with burnout than were sources of support.

9. Compared with male teachers, female teachers reported more support from the level co-ordinator, peer group teachers and friends in/out of school, considered all four types of social support (listening/concern/trust, feedback, advice/information, time) as more important, and offered significantly more of each type of support to others except for advice/information.
10. The youngest teachers relied most on peer group teachers and the least on the principal for support, considered advice/information as the most helpful type of social support, and offered significantly less advice/information and time as support compared with teachers in the older age groups.

11. Married teachers recorded more support from family, spouse/relatives in helping them cope with burnout, compared with single teachers who relied most on their peer group.

12. Teachers who had been teaching the longest and had remained in their current position for twenty-one or more years recorded more principal support and offered the most advice/information compared with younger, less experienced teachers.

13. Teachers who reported little consistency between training and teaching assignment, a preference to leave education, and who found their work was not at all to seldom interesting, recorded less support from all sources, and offered the least support to others.

14. Teachers who reported their work was considerably to extremely stressful perceived that friends, in/out of school provided the most support, and considered listening/concern/trust, feedback and time as the most helpful types of support.

15. The principal, faculty head, and friends, in/out of school were statistically significant predictors of Emotional Exhaustion burnout, and the principal was a significant predictor of Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment burnout.

16. The demographic variables of sex and age together with listening/concern/trust and time as types of social support, and time as a type of support offered by teachers themselves, were significant predictors of Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization burnout.

17. Personal Accomplishment burnout was best predicted by advice/information, listening/concern/trust, and feedback as types of social support offered by
teachers themselves.

18. Sources and types of social support teachers identified as helping them most cope with feelings of over-extension and exhaustion, and the development of negative attitudes and impersonal responses toward others were peer group teachers and listening/concern/trust. Peer group teachers and feedback were most helpful in coping with feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment on the job.

E. IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Theory and Research

Teacher burnout. The concept of burnout as the consequence of prolonged and severe work stress (e.g., Cherniss, 1980b; Maslach, 1982a,b; Veninga and Spradley, 1981) has been confirmed by this study. That is, the relationship between the degree of experienced work stress and Emotional Exhaustion burnout in teachers was found to be highly related. This finding is consistent with Maslach's (1982b:3) claim that "[the] heart of the burnout syndrome [is] a pattern of emotional overload."

One of the most important findings of this study is the high level of Personal Accomplishment burnout among Victorian Government high school teachers. This level of Personal Accomplishment burnout is even more apparent when we compare it with the research findings of Anderson and Iwanicki (1984), Ratsoy and Friesen (1985), and Schwab and Iwanicki (1982). Victorian Government high school teachers reported a higher level of Personal Accomplishment burnout compared with teachers in these studies.

1. Further research on Personal Accomplishment burnout in teachers and in an Australian context is warranted, given the implications of this finding. For instance, a study across alternative school systems, such as the Catholic
and Independent school systems, would enable a more detailed examination of the nature of burnout experienced by teachers. The results of ongoing research may promote further study on the personal and motivational needs of teachers in relation to what the job offers, what teachers expect of teaching, and how systemic and policy initiatives account for different experiences of burnout in teachers.

The demographic variables of age and sex were found to be significant predictors of Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization burnout, similar to current research findings (e.g., Russell et al., 1987).

2. Further examination of these variables may uncover more than the obvious reasons of why teachers burn out at a certain stage in their career, that is from 30-40 years of age. A longitudinal study is recommended as an alternative method of data collection and analysis. Such a study may reveal that teachers who experience and survive burnout, recover to continue and develop their careers. Future research may identify and examine the conditions and factors which facilitate this recovery in teachers.

Studies have found higher levels of burnout for teachers in comparison to principals and system administrators (e.g., Patsoy and Friesen, 1985). School principals, it appears, seem to have developed coping strategies that enable them to survive the stresses and strains of school administration. Nonetheless, the results of this study suggest that Victorian Government high school teachers also are coping with an increasing workload and other work-related pressures. Compared with the norms, teachers reported lower levels of both Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization burnout.
However, the high incidence of Personal Accomplishment burnout is cause for concern.

3. A study of principal burnout in Victorian Government high schools would assist in a comparison of experienced burnout in teachers and principals, and possibly help identify school-based and system-wide causes of educator burnout.

This study considered school size and school location as situational variables, among others, and found no statistically significant differences in the levels of burnout among teachers. However, the written comments of teachers from schools across the state suggest that there may be characteristics in some schools which contribute to burnout.

4. Some school-based characteristics which could be explored as predictors of teacher burnout in future research include: (1) particular city locations, such as western suburban schools compared with those in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, (2) physical school environment and availability of human, financial, and physical resources, (3) overall experience of teachers and administrators, (4) the incidence of teacher turnover and absenteeism, (5) community participation in school affairs, and (6) role of the school council in the recruitment and selection of staff.

Social support. The complex nature of social support may, to some extent, be explained through the various conceptualizations of coping described in the review of the literature (e.g., Folkman and Lazarus, 1980; Monat and Lazarus, 1977;Pearlin and Schooler, 1978). The literature proposes that social support is used either in a direct-action or palliative mode; that is, confronting or avoiding the stressor. The findings
of this study suggest that the direct-action form of social support was utilized by teachers who were able to ask for help, and who felt confident of receiving it. For example, those teachers who reported positive help from their peer group teachers, considered this help to be most important to them in coping with burnout. These teachers, it seemed, were confronting their situation head-on, and in a positive manner. In comparison, those teachers who perceived that their peers burdened them with more problems, and who were affected by negative and damaging staff-room gossip, may very well view social support as a palliative form of coping. That is, some temporary relief is afforded through catharsis and letting off steam, but like other palliative coping modes (e.g., alcohol, cigarette smoking) the long-term side effects may be harmful or negative. In teaching, the side effect may be increased and ongoing feelings of burnout.

5. The nature of social support and its effectiveness in combatting teacher burnout is an area in need of further research.

Kyriacou (1981:58) highlighted the dual and often inconsistent nature of social support when viewed from the coping perspective. He noted:

Some authors seem to regard seeking social support mainly as a palliative technique, but are often inconsistent. For example, Dewe et al. (1979) categorise 'tend to complain or gripe to colleagues' as a palliative coping action but categorised 'get support from colleagues' as a direct-action coping action.

Research in identifying and evaluating collegiate support may be guided by Kyriacou's misgivings.

6. Research could attempt to define more clearly the forms of social support teachers receive from their colleagues. For instance, what constitutes palliative and direct-action modes of
social support from teacher coworkers?

The findings of this study suggest that support from school administrators is quite different to collegiate support. The suggestions are that teachers perceive school administrators may have the power to change organizational routines, and thereby directly influence a teacher's workload and potential stress level.

7. Research on the nature and scope of administrator support, and administrators' attitudes in the provision of this support, would broaden our knowledge on the potential of principal social support in helping teachers cope with work stress and burnout.

Implications for Practice

The finding that teachers in this study reported a high level of Personal Accomplishment burnout, and that this level was related to the lack of career opportunities in the system, suggests that the promotional and career structures for teachers in Victorian Government high schools may be inappropriate for, and unrepresentative of teachers' career needs and motivational drives.

8. It is recommended that both school-based and system-wide incentives could be implemented in order to provide increased positive feedback and recognition to teachers. Such initiatives may stimulate greater work commitment and job satisfaction, and help teachers feel more important in the system.

The higher levels of Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization burnout experienced by the youngest teachers suggest that these teachers be targeted for increased support, relief, and counselling. Studies have shown that Emotional Exhaustion burnout is a predictor of
teacher turnover and absenteeism (e.g., Jackson et al., 1986). The cost to the system of the youngest teachers either leaving the system or increasing their rates of absence from duty needs to be addressed.

In comparison, the oldest and most experienced teachers were experiencing the least burnout on all three sub-scales. Their teaching experience may be viewed as a resource that younger teachers could utilize, and from which they could learn the skills of their vocation.

9. Schools would be advised to encourage the most experienced and able of their teachers to share their coping strategies, and to help others without judgement or criticism. Schools could promote a mentoring scheme for first year teachers. These mentors could be responsible for helping the neophyte teacher adjust more comfortably to the gap between the rhetoric and the reality of teaching.

Carruthers (1986:230) asserted that:

Beginning teachers need help and would appreciate offers of help from more experienced colleagues. Beginning teachers need someone to talk to without threat. Principals and teachers are too often insensitive to the apprehensions of beginning teachers. If more senior colleagues could make their new colleagues aware of the existence of goodwill and of the availability of support, much apprehension would be removed.

People can be taught to be supportive, and the benefit of this study is to alert teachers and administrators alike to the potential of social support as a means of coping with burnout. The creative use of supervision, the possibilities of varying workload and stimulating challenge, the alternatives available with scheduling time during the school day, and the administrator's awareness of demands on teachers both
inside and outside the classroom indicate the potential of social support as a resource for relieving work pressure. It is important to remember however that not all schools have a naturally supportive environment, and that interpersonal relationships may be a serious source of stress for many teachers.

The fear of sharing problems with work colleagues is another area of concern. Brownell and Shumaker (1985:113) noted that "... many people fear dependency or simply do not believe their problems should be shared with others." Social support is a maze of complexities because it is fundamentally people relating to people, but it is because of this dynamic nature that it is an area that can be improved upon both at an individual and organizational level.

In this study, the school principal was seen consistently as being the least supportive source of support, particularly by the youngest teachers. These teachers experienced the highest levels of burnout, and it would seem they are the ones who could benefit most from principal support. However, other research also has shown that in times of crisis, "... the last person to turn to [is] the principal because that would be a sign of weakness or incompetence" (e.g., Stone, 1987:33).

10. **Principals need to be made more aware of the importance of being accessible and available to all staff, and not to be seen merely as authority figures in charge of policy and administration. Through scheduled in-service activities, principals could be trained to be more supportive of their staff, and be guided in how to develop a caring, communicative work environment.**

Listening/concern/trust as the type of support which was provided most by peer group teachers appeared to contribute to feelings of Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization burnout in many teachers. This finding
suggests that the concern of colleagues and friends, while welcomed, may not necessarily alleviate the workload and time constraints associated with Emotional Exhaustion burnout, nor counterbalance a pervasive negative and cynical attitude identified in many staff-rooms. In support of this finding, the Victorian Ministry of Education report (WorkCare, 1987:144) stated that those teacher support groups which tended to focus "... on forming close personal relationships are less likely to be effective than those that adopt a problem solving focus where participants ... explore alternatives together for modifying the environment to reduce stress." Further, collegial support as a sharing of problems through listening and concern implies a fundamental understanding of social support as the reciprocal give-and-take in a mutual realtionship. Peer group teachers can support each other with a problem, but without professional training and guidance the chances of teachers overidentifying with, and becoming involved in a situation, may escalate rather than relieve the feelings of burnout.

The findings of the present study indicate that these negative interactions are a distinct possibility. Any programme which utilizes social support in the school organization now and in the future should treat with caution any global recommendations of the positive benefits of social support. Brenner et al. (1985:11) were similarly cautious, and asserted that "... concepts of coping and social support contain diverse and conflicting processes and phenomena ...," and that personal relationships among staff may in fact be a source of stress and burnout.

Brownell and Shumaker (1985) highlighted the further dimension of social support as an intervention measure. They (1985:114) stated that "... interventions that prevent or alter the sources of stress will be more expedient than support interventions that attempt to enhance health by facilitating adjustment to the
stressors." That is, interventions that confront the stressor directly are more likely to meet with success than those types of interventions (such as social support) which at best help adjustment to the consequences of stress. In this study the relatively small amount of the variance accounted for in teacher burnout when social support was used as the predictor, suggests that social support has little influence on the experience of teacher burnout. Laughlin (1984) had a similar finding in his study on the relationship between social support and teacher stress. Laughlin (1984:285-286) stated that "... leader support appeared to have little influence on perception of general stress ... [and the] perceptions of stress in the work-place were not influenced by support from family and friends."

Consequently, it would seem that an intervention programme based on assumptions about the relationship of social support to work stress and burnout would meet with little success. Further, Vaux (1985) claimed that behaviour may be interpreted at the group level as supportive, but may actually be non-supportive at the individual level. In this study the overall view by teachers was that peers offered the most support, but many teachers commented that they found their peers on an individual basis were a source of stress.

II. On the basis of the findings of this study it seems that negative interactions and poor staff relationships are major contributors to feelings of teacher burnout. The implications of this finding for teacher training are fairly clear. For instance, trainee teachers could be guided in how to be supportive, how to recognize when to give this support, and how to receive support when it is given.

Brownell and Shumaker (1985:117) support this recommendation, and advised that "... promoting co-operative work and school environments ..." will
12. This study has found that social support is a desirable resource in the school environment, but that its relationship with teacher burnout is relatively weak, and in need of further exploration.

It would seem that work stressors which most contribute to burnout, such as workload, time pressures, student misbehaviour, and lack of career options are not alleviated to any significant extent by social support. Hatchard and Thomas (1987:46) drew attention to this notion of social support as a temporary measure when they stated:

Social support is essentially a 'first order' change strategy, that is, it does not alter the nature of the malfunctioning system, institution or organization. Effective remediation ... at least requires 'second order' strategies of change. This implies both that reality of the stress/burnout phenomena be acknowledged and that changes at the systems level may have to be made.

13. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that any future intervention strategies take note of the weak relationship between teacher burnout and social support. More consideration should be given to appropriate recruitment and selection of teachers at the beginning of their careers, and then implementing a realistic training and development program in conjunction with support from the Ministry and its schools.
Teacher burnout has increased in the last 10 years, without any apparent relief in sight in the short-term. Specifically, the results of this study suggest that the high level of Personal Accomplishment burnout in Victorian Government high school teachers is a consequence of insufficient recognition and rewards, and inadequate support from administrators. Teachers it seems are not feeling good about themselves or their work. This declining sense of work achievement and significance is a serious concern in any organization. However, a demoralized teaching force is particularly serious, when we consider that schooling is responsible for the education, guidance, and development of our youth. The long-term implications of burned out teachers are as yet unclear; but we can assume they will not be associated with continued progress and educational enlightenment.

Teachers are trying to cope, and appear to be succeeding with the ever increasing workload, time pressures, and systemic demands. Nonetheless, the rewards for their efforts seem inappropriate, while their sense of professionalism is subject to ongoing media review and criticism. The exceptionally high return rate of 89 percent from respondents in this study, and the hundreds of pages representing over fifteen hundred written comments by teachers who are concerned about teaching, indicate that Victorian Government high school teachers are not apathetic, nor are they as yet irrevocably burned out. These responses reflect teachers' interest and concern for their jobs and their futures, and an acute awareness of the problems they face.

To suggest that social support is capable of making a big difference to the experience of severe work stress and burnout is a comfortable solution, and the 'common sense' view favours healthier, happier people in a supportive work environment. However, the findings of
this research indicate that social support is not the panacea for work-related stress and burnout among teachers. Further, this study has demonstrated the complex and conflictual nature of social support, and has recommended more extensive and detailed research of the relationship between social support and teacher burnout.

This study has shown that teacher burnout and social support share a dynamic and complex relationship, and that social interactions can be a source of stress at times, and a comfort at others. Nonetheless, teachers and administrators are encouraged to develop caring and supportive environments in their schools in order to promote a sense of kinship, and to help teachers face up to the demands of their vocation in a realistic fashion. These support structures will not change the fundamental work situation, but they may help minimize the experiences of stressful interpersonal relationships and staff conflicts, and thereby assist in alleviating teacher burnout.
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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

THE QUESTIONNAIRE:

JOB SURVEY FOR VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS
JOB SURVEY
FOR
VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT HIGH
SCHOOL TEACHERS

JUNE 1987

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SECTION A

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please CIRCLE the appropriate number or fill in the blank.

1. Sex:
   1. Male
   2. Female

2. Your Age:
   ________ years

3. Marital Status:
   1. Single
   2. Married
   3. Divorced
   4. Widowed
   5. Other (please specify)

4. Total number of years as an educator. Include the current year as a full year.
   ________ years

5. Total number of years in your current position. Include the current year as a full year.
   ________ years

6. Identify what percentage of your teaching time is consistent with your training:
   1. None
   2. 1 - 25%
   3. 26 - 50%
   4. 51 - 75%
   5. 76 - 100%

7. Grade level at which you do most of your work:
   1. Level '7 - 9
   2. Level 10 - 12
   3. Other (please specify)

8. If you were free to choose would you:
   1. Stay in the same job
   2. Change schools
   3. Change to another job in education
   4. Change fields completely

9. How often do you find your work interesting?
   1. Not At All
   2. Rarely
   3. Seldom
   4. Occasionally
   5. Frequently
   6. Most of the Time

Office Use Only

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<tr>
<th>CC</th>
<th>1-3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5-6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8-9</th>
<th>10-11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

SECTION A

10. In general, how stressful do you find your work?
   1. Not Stressful
   2. Mildly Stressful
   3. Moderately Stressful
   4. Considerably Stressful
   5. Very Stressful
   6. Extremely Stressful

11. Size of school (student numbers):
   1. Less than 200
   2. 201 - 300
   3. 301 - 400
   4. 401 - 500
   5. 501 - 600
   6. 601 - 800
   7. 801 - 1000
   8. 1000+

12. Location of school:
   1. Urban
   2. Rural
   3. Other (please specify)
SECTION B
SOCIAL SUPPORT

Please rate each item according to the following scale:
Not At All  A Little  Somewhat  Considerable  Very Much
0  1  2  3  4

**CIRCLE** the selected number.

1. Indicate the extent to which each person is a **SOURCE** of support in helping you deal with work stress and/or burnout:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Deputy Principal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Level Co-ordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Faculty Head</td>
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<tr>
<td>E. Peer Group Teachers</td>
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<td>F. Friends in/out of school</td>
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<tr>
<td>G. Family, spouse/relatives</td>
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</table>

2. Indicate how important are each of the following **TYPES** of support for you in dealing with work stress and/or burnout:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Listening, concern, trust</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Advice, information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Time</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3. Indicate the extent to which you consider **YOURSELF** to be a source of the following types of support for other teachers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Listening, concern, trust</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Feedback</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Advice, information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Time</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The purpose of this section is to discover how you view your job and the people with whom you work closely. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you feel this way about your job. If you have never had this feeling write "0" (zero) in the "HOW STRONG" space before the statement. If you have had this feeling indicate how strong the feeling is when you experience it by writing the number from 1 to 7 that best describes how strong you feel about it.

**HOW STRONG:** 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- Never
- Very Mild,
- barely noticeable
- Moderate
- Very Strong

**HOW STRONG STATEMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CC</th>
<th>1.</th>
<th>I feel emotionally drained from my work</th>
<th>34</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I feel used up at the end of the workday</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I can easily understand how my students feel about things</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal objects</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Working with people all day is really a strain for me</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.</td>
<td>I deal very effectively with the problems of my students</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.</td>
<td>I feel burned out from my work</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.</td>
<td>I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.</td>
<td>I've become more callous toward people since I took this job</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11.</td>
<td>I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.</td>
<td>I feel very energetic</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.</td>
<td>I feel frustrated by my job</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.</td>
<td>I feel I'm working too hard on my job</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.</td>
<td>I don't really care what happens to some students</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Working with people directly puts too much stress on me</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17.</td>
<td>I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my students</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18.</td>
<td>I feel exhilarated after working closely with my students</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19.</td>
<td>I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20.</td>
<td>I feel like I'm at the end of my rope</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21.</td>
<td>In my work, I deal with emotional problems very calmly</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22.</td>
<td>I feel students blame me for some of their problems</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION D
PERSONAL COMMENTS

You are encouraged to be frank and forthright in your responses to the following statements, and are assured that all returns will be treated confidentially. In your answers please refer to the SOURCES and TYPES of social support contained in Section B of this survey.

1. Explain how specific TYPES of support (e.g. Feedback, Time) offered by one or more SOURCES of support (e.g. Principal, Family) help you cope with feelings of overextension and exhaustion on the job.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. Explain how specific TYPES of support (e.g. Feedback, Time) offered by one or more SOURCES of support (e.g. Principal, Family) help you cope with the development of negative attitudes and impersonal responses toward the people with whom you work.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

3. Explain how specific TYPES of support (e.g. Feedback, Time) offered by one or more SOURCES of support (e.g. Principal, Family) help you cope with feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment on the job.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION
APPENDIX B

LETTER OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY

COVERING LETTERS TO PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

REMINDER LETTER TO TEACHERS
February 10, 1987

Ms Anne M. Sarros
2 Chifley Avenue
ALTONA VIC. 3018

Dear Anne,

I refer to your letter requesting approval to approach schools to conduct your Ph.D. research on "The Role of Social Support in Teacher Burnout".

On behalf of the General Manager, Schools Division approval is given on the basis of the dissertation proposal submitted, with the modification that you will require a sample from across the State.

I request that you do not approach schools before the beginning of March.

Some assistance in identifying your sample could be made available to you through the Statistics Section. You may wish to follow up this matter.

Good Luck with your research.

Yours sincerely,

P.J. CREED
Director, Policy and Planning
TO: SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AS ADDRESSED
DATE: 23 MAY 1987

TEACHER SURVEY 1987

The Policy and Planning Unit, Schools Division, in collaboration with the Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne, has approved this survey of a random sample of teachers in Victorian Government High Schools. The Schools Division is conscious of the demands made on schools, and attempts to limit research requests accordingly. Nonetheless, the present research is important in understanding the support networks teachers both use and provide in coping with their work demands.

The teachers who have been randomly selected to participate from your school are listed on the attached sheet. Please give each teacher (1) a copy of the survey, (2) the covering letter attached to the survey, and (3) a self-addressed envelope for return of the completed survey to the Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne no later than Wednesday, 17 June 1987. If any selected teacher has since left your school or is unavailable, please advise and a replacement teacher will be selected through the same random selection procedure.

Participating schools will receive a summary of results. All participating schools and teachers are assured of anonymity and confidentiality in reporting of results.

All enquiries may be directed to Anne Sarros, University of Melbourne, (03) 344 6326, or (03) 398 5493.

Thank you for your cooperation, it is gratefully appreciated.

Dr. Ross H. Millikan
Senior Lecturer, Education,
University of Melbourne.

Dr. Philip J. Creed
Director, Policy & Planning Unit,
Ministry of Education.

Anne M. Sarros,
Graduate Research, University of Melbourne.
28 MAY 1987

Dear

TEACHER SURVEY 1987

You have been randomly selected to participate in a survey of support networks teachers use and provide in coping with their work demands. This research has been approved by the Policy and Planning Unit, Schools Division, and the Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne.

We are aware of the demands made on you, but the research is important in adding to the data base on Victorian Government School teachers and their work conditions.

Please complete the attached survey and return it to the Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne in the post-paid return address envelope which has been provided no later than Wednesday 17 June 1987. You are assured of complete anonymity and confidentiality in the reporting of results. You will receive a summary of the results when all surveys have been completed and programmed.

All enquiries may be directed to Anne Sarros, University of Melbourne, (03) 344 6326, or (03) 398 5493.

Thank you for your cooperation, it is gratefully appreciated.

Dr. Ross H. Millikan
Senior Lecturer, Education,
University of Melbourne.

Anne M. Sarros,
Graduate Research, University of Melbourne.

Dr. Philip J. Creed
Director, Policy & Planning Unit,
Ministry of Education.
Dear,

This letter is a reminder to you to please complete the Job Survey for Victorian Government High School Teachers which was sent to you in May through your school principal.

As explained initially, you are one of 550 teachers selected randomly from all Government High School teachers in the state to participate in this study on the nature of teaching and social support in Victorian Government High Schools. The study has been approved by the Ministry of Education (Schools Division), and the Faculty of Education and Department of Graduate Studies, University of Melbourne.

It is most important that you complete and return the questionnaire promptly so that all data can be analyzed. You are assured of complete anonymity and confidentiality in the reporting of results. A report of the findings will be provided when the study is completed.

In the event that you have misplaced the original survey, a replacement copy and postage-paid envelope have been included.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours Sincerely,

Anne M. Sarros,
Graduate Research,
University of Melbourne.

For: Dr. P.J. Creed,
Director, Policy and Planning Unit

Dr. R.H. Millikan,
Faculty of Education,
University of Melbourne.

2 Treasury Place, Melbourne. Nauru House, 80 Collins Street, Melbourne. Rialto Towers, 525 Collins St, Melbourne.
APPENDIX C

LETTERS OF PERMISSION FOR USE OF MASLACH BURNOUT INVENTORY (INTENSITY)
February 12, 1987

Ms. Anne Sarros
2 Chifley Avenue
Altona, Victoria
AUSTRALIA 3018

Dear Ms. Sarros,

I am writing in response to your letter to us dated February 6, 1987, in which you request permission to reproduce 550 copies of the "strength" dimension only of the Maslach Burnout Inventory, by Christina Maslach and Susan E. Jackson. I'm not quite sure what you mean by the "strength" dimension, but I am assuming that you mean the "Emotional Exhaustion" subscale of this test.

Enclosed is the permission form which grants you permission to make 550 copies of the "Emotional Exhaustion" subscale of the MBI. If this is not what you meant, please so inform me. Please note the fees involved, and that you must send us a copy of the test as you reproduce it for your study.

If you have any further questions, please let me know. Otherwise, good luck with your study.

Sincerely,

Pamela J. Horner
Supervisor of Contracts,
Permissions and Licenses

PJT:me \encl
February 23, 1987

Ms. Anne Sarros
2 Chifley Avenue
Altona, Victoria
AUSTRALIA 3018

Dear Ms. Sarros,

Thank you for your letter of February 19, 1987, which cleared things up for me considerably. I am enclosing another permission form which should replace the one I sent previously. Please note that you may use the title "Human Services Survey" instead of "Maslach Burnout Inventory" if using the word burnout might have an adverse effect on your subjects' view of your study.

If you have any questions concerning this, or if you need further assistance, please contact me. Again, good luck with your study.

Sincerely,

Pamela J. Homer
Supervisor of Contracts,
Permissions and Licenses

PJH:me
encl
In response to your request of Feb. 6 and Feb. 19, 1987, permission is hereby granted to reproduce 550 copies of the Maslach Burnout Inventory, to be administered using the "intensity" scale only, as per your letters to me, subject to the following restrictions:

(a) Any and all material used will contain proper acknowledgments; e.g., "Reproduced by special permission from The Maslach Burnout Inventory (The Human Services Survey) published by Christina Maslach and Susan E. Jackson (author) Copyright 1981, by C.P.P. Published by Consulting Psychologists Press Inc., Palo Alto, CA 94306. Further reproduction without the Publisher's consent is prohibited."

(b) None of the materials may be sold or used for purposes other than those mentioned above.

(c) One copy of any material reproduced will be sent to the Publisher.

(d) Payment of a royalty/license fee of $.09 x 550 = $49.50 is due.

(e) 

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By [Signature]
Date 2/23/87