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Burnout Among Pastors in Local Church Ministry in Relation to Pastor, Congregation Member, and Church Organizational Outcomes

Crystal Mary Burnette
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BURNOUT AMONG PASTORS IN LOCAL CHURCH MINISTRY IN RELATION TO PASTOR, CONGREGATION MEMBER, AND CHURCH ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy
Industrial-Organizational Psychology

by
Crystal Mary Burnette
August 2016

Accepted by:
Dr. Robert R. Sinclair, Committee Chair
Dr. Thomas W. Britt
Dr. Mary Anne Taylor
Dr. DeWayne Moore
ABSTRACT

Based on the empirical literature, popular press, and personal testimonies, burnout is a reality for many pastors (Doolittle, 2010; Randall, 2013). Burnout and exhaustion among pastors pose a threat to local church health and ministry vitality (Miner, Dowson, & Sterland, 2010). Existing research has focused almost exclusively on individual and job-related variables in an effort to predict pastor job burnout. The current dissertation addressed the lack of understanding regarding pastor job burnout as it relates to pastor health, congregation member, and church organizational outcomes. Specifically, the current dissertation examined the relationships between pastor job burnout and a) pastor physical and mental health, b) intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness of worship service attenders, and c) church organizational health: financial stability, attendance rates, and pastor turnover intentions. Multilevel modeling was used to account for the fact that individual-level data are naturally clustered within organizations, the local church. Most of the hypotheses were supported. For several variables, results demonstrated that the problem of pastor burnout is bigger than the individual pastor. Pastor job burnout (Level 1) was negatively related to pastor physical health, mental health, and turnover intentions. Pastor job burnout (Level 2) was negatively related to both measures of attenders’ extrinsic religiousness: sense of belonging and participation, but not attenders’ intrinsic religiousness. Churches with higher average pastor job burnout (Level 2) had lower ratings of financial stability, but burnout was unrelated to church attendance rates. Social support from the congregation weakened the positive relationship between pastor job burnout (Level 1) and pastor turnover intentions, but did not affect the relationships
between pastor job burnout and physical or mental health. Efforts to reduce pastor burnout would benefit the entire congregation. Implications for research and the wider church community are discussed.
DEDICATION

May all glory, honor, and praise be given to the Lord Jesus Christ for my life and work. I pray that this project would bring glory to Him and contribute to the furtherance of His church.

To my parents, Terry and Susan, who have always believed in me. Thank you for your prayers, encouragement, and steadfastness to help me complete this project and many other occasions in life, large and small.

To my sister, Jackie, who is a constant source of encouragement. Thank you for your endless support and prayers.

To my grandmother, Mary, from whom I learned the importance of being loyal and believing the best about others.

To pastors, leaders, and friends at Crosspoint Church. I treasure your friendship and investment in my life. Thank you for showing me what it means to offer one’s life, gifts, and talents to the glory of God.

To pastors of local churches around the world who sacrifice for the advancement of the gospel. May God encourage you and be with you as you shepherd His flock.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ABSTRACT........................................................................................................................................... ii
DEDICATION........................................................................................................................................ iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS...................................................................................................................... v
LIST OF TABLES............................................................................................................................... ix
LIST OF FIGURES............................................................................................................................. x

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................................ 1

  Burnout among Church Leaders ................................................................................................. 1
  Problem Statement ....................................................................................................................... 5
  The Current Study ....................................................................................................................... 5
  Definitions .................................................................................................................................. 8
  Summary .................................................................................................................................... 9

II. JOB BURNOUT ............................................................................................................................ 11

  An Overview of Burnout Research ............................................................................................ 11

III. JOB BURNOUT AMONG PASTORS .......................................................................................... 18

  The Pastorate as an Occupation ............................................................................................... 19
  The Prevalence of Burnout ........................................................................................................ 22
  Theories of Burnout .................................................................................................................. 24
  Correlates of Burnout ................................................................................................................ 27

IV. BURNOUT, HEALTH, AND MENTAL HEALTH................................................................... 41

  Social Support as a Moderator of Burnout, Health, and Mental Health ...................................... 45

V. PASTOR BURNOUT AND CONGREGATION MEMBERS .................................................. 48

  Religious Participation and Religiousness .................................................................................. 49

vi
Table of Contents (Continued)

Burnout and Religiousness ................................................................. 53

VI. ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES OF PASTOR BURNOUT ........... 56
   Church Attendance Rates ............................................................... 56
   Church Financial Stability ............................................................ 62
   Turnover Intentions ..................................................................... 65
   Social Support as a Moderator of Burnout and Turnover Intentions .... 71

VII. METHOD .................................................................................. 73
    Summary of the Hypotheses ......................................................... 73
    Overall Design ........................................................................... 74
    Procedures .................................................................................. 74
    Participants ................................................................................ 77
    Measures .................................................................................... 80
    Analysis Strategy ....................................................................... 89

VIII. RESULTS ................................................................................ 98
     Statistical Assumptions ............................................................... 98
     Descriptive Statistics and Correlations ....................................... 98
     Hypothesis Testing .................................................................... 102
     Summary .................................................................................. 110

IX. DISCUSSION ............................................................................. 114
   Discussion of the Findings ............................................................ 114
   Limitations and Future Directions .............................................. 130
   Contributions ............................................................................. 136
   Practical Recommendations ....................................................... 137
   Conclusion .................................................................................. 139

APPENDICES ................................................................................ 141

A: Job Burnout (Leader Survey) ...................................................... 142
B: Physical and Mental Health Status (Leader Survey) ................. 143
C: Turnover Intentions (Leader Survey) ........................................ 145
D: Social Support from the Congregation (Leader Survey) .......... 146
E: Intrinsic Religiousness (Attender Survey) ................................. 147
Table of Contents (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Extrinsic Religiousness (Attender Survey)</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Church Attendance Rate and Financial Stability (Organizational Profile)</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Tables and Figures</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: ICC1 calculated for predictor, moderator, and outcome variables</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations among pastor variables</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations among attender variables</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations among organizational variables</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5: Parameter estimates of pastor job burnout (Level 1) predicting pastor physical health</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6: Parameter estimates of pastor job burnout (Level 1) predicting pastor mental health</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7: Multilevel ordinal logistic regression results of pastor job burnout (Level 2) predicting attenders’ sense of belonging (extrinsic religiousness)</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8: Parameter estimates of pastor job burnout (Level 2) predicting attenders’ participation (extrinsic religiousness)</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9: Parameter estimates of pastor job burnout (Level 2) predicting church financial stability</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10: Parameter estimates of pastor job burnout (Level 1) predicting turnover intentions</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11: Parameter estimates of the interaction between pastor job burnout (Level 1) and pastor social support from the congregation predicting pastor turnover intentions</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The hypothesized model</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The hypothesized model with the level of analyses indicated for each relationship</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Model indicating the hypotheses supported in the current study</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Conceptual model of multilevel ordinal logistic regression results of pastor job burnout (Level 2) predicting attenders’ sense of belonging. Thresholds represent ascending ordered steps on the DV</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Simple slopes of the moderating effect of social support from the congregation on the relationship between job burnout (Level 1) and turnover intentions among pastors</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Burnout among Church Leaders

Religious beliefs play a central role in the lives of many people. A Gallup survey in 2009 involving 114 countries worldwide found that the global median of adults who reported that religion plays an important part in their daily was 84% (Gallup, 2009). The United States had one of the highest proportions among wealthier countries: 65% of American respondents reported that religion is an important part of their daily lives. Across all countries surveyed with average per-capita incomes higher than $25,000, an average of 47% participants reported that religion played an important part in their daily lives (Gallup, 2009). Religion plays an important role in the lives of many people worldwide.

Faith communities in which people with shared beliefs worship together have been called the single most important repository of social capital in the United States (Putnam, 2000). As such, churches represent connections between individuals, social networks, trust, reciprocity, and opportunities for community, leadership, and service (Carroll, 2006). Beyond their social capital, congregations and the networks of organizations they support are increasingly needed to deliver social services in their communities (Carroll, 2006). Whether by maintaining ethical systems, promoting education, and fostering purpose, health, and well-being, religion has been associated with a variety of individual, local, and global improvements (Engelberg, Fisman, Hartzell, & Parsons, 2013).
In addition to social contributions, the primary significance of the Christian church is theological, specifically, related to the study of God as revealed in the Bible. A brief introduction will be provided here. The local congregation is the primary mode through which the Christian gospel is organizationally embodied, made visible, and shared with others. *Gospel* is the English word usually used to translate the Greek word *euangelion* in the Bible (Elwell, 2001). *Euangelion* signifies heartfelt “good news.” It is rarely found outside of the Bible and Christian writing. Thus, it specifically pertains to the joyous proclamation of God’s redemptive activity in Jesus Christ on behalf of humans enslaved by sin (Elwell, 2001; Mark 1:14-15; Romans 1:1-6). From a Biblical perspective, sin is not only an act of wrongdoing but a continuous state of separation from God (Elwell, 2001; Isaiah 59:1-2; Romans 6:23). Christianity teaches that sin cannot be overcome through human effort, but the solution lies in what God has done for us through Jesus Christ. The penalty of sin is separation from God, death, and judgment, but the gospel is that God has chosen to pay this penalty himself for all who believe in the sacrificial life, death, and resurrection of his son, Jesus Christ (Elwell, 2001; John 3:16-17; Romans 3:21-26).

An understanding of the Christian gospel is necessary to understand the foundation by which the Christian church is built and gives purpose to the pastors and others who serve there. In local churches, individuals encounter the gospel message through Bible reading, preaching, teaching, community, and prayer. Individuals grow in their understanding and commitment to the gospel. Further, the gospel is inherently social as well as personal, in that it influences every aspect of life and understanding of human
relationships on every dimension (Elwell, 2001). For example, the Bible teaches that Christians are called to care for the poor, homeless, orphaned, and widowed (Deuteronomy 10:18-19; James 1:27). The impact of the belief in the gospel moves Christians to establish and organize means of social contribution, as mentioned above.

The social and theological significance of churches highlight the importance of those who lead them. Those who serve in the role of pastor at a local congregation occupy a significant number of jobs in the United States. The number of pastors in the U.S. is approximately 239,600, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012). To put this number in perspective, in 2012 there were an estimated 955,800 high school teachers, 607,300 social workers, 166,300 mental health counselors, and 160,200 psychologists in the U.S. (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). Thus, the number of pastors is substantial. Moreover, these pastors serve an estimated 339,000 churches with more than 152 million confirmed members (Lindner, 2008)—an estimated 49% of the U.S. population in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Pastors represent a unique vocation with a unique set of required emotional demands and job skills. The responsibilities of teaching, preaching, counseling, administrating, and leading characterize their work. Numerous Christian ministry books in the popular press indicate that burnout in ministry is a reality for many, such as “Leading on Empty: Refilling Your Tank and Renewing Your Passion” by Wayne Cordeiro (2009), “Pastors at Greater Risk” by H. B. London, Jr. and Neil Wiseman (2003), and “On the Brink: Grace for the Burned-Out Pastor” by Clay Werner (2014). In these and other books, pastors who have struggled with burnout and exhaustion have
written as an encouragement to pastors, others serving in ministry, and their families. Pastors are beginning to write on their experiences; however, the empirical research has not caught up with examining or addressing this issue.

Burnout is a common condition among pastors and those in other helping professions. Christian ministers are subject to work-related stress that is typical of other human service occupations. Stress in the life of a pastor can result from rigid work schedules, bureaucracy, denominational structures, conflicts between personal and congregational needs, high congregational expectations, and impoverished or conflicted personal relationships (Miner et al., 2010).

As in the burnout literature among other occupations, little consideration has been given as to what might be unique about the pastoral vocation (Golden, Piedmont, Ciarrocchi, & Rodgerson, 2004). The existing research has focused almost exclusively on individual and job-related variables in an effort to predict pastor job burnout: personality, numerous interpersonal interactions, numerous and varied responsibilities, work overload, role ambiguity, and conflict resulting from expectations and self-role differentiation. Much less research attention has been applied to how pastor job burnout can be related to congregation member and church organizational variables. This dissertation contributes to an understanding of the burnout phenomenon among pastors, an often-neglected occupational group, by examining several potential implications of burnout on the local church as a whole. In particular, subjective ratings of health and mental health of the pastor, intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness of congregation
members, and church organizational health: financial stability, service attendance, and pastor turnover intentions were examined.

**Problem Statement**

Based on the empirical literature, popular press, and personal testimonies, burnout is a reality for many pastors. Estimates of the prevalence of burnout vary widely, ranging from 10% to 47% of pastors according to either subjective ratings of burnout or Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) criteria (Doolittle, 2010; Randall, 2013). Burnout and exhaustion among pastors pose a threat to local church health and ministry vitality (Miner et al., 2010). Existing research has focused almost exclusively on individual and job-related variables in an effort to predict pastor job burnout. The problem addressed in this study is the lack of understanding regarding the potential implications of pastor burnout on the pastor’s own health, congregation member intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness, and the organizational health of the church body. Is pastor job burnout related to aspects of the wider church organization, its members and organizational health? If so, the problem of burnout is bigger than the individual; it is detrimental to accomplishing the church’s mission and thriving as a congregation.

**The Current Study**

This dissertation contributes to an understanding of the burnout phenomenon among pastors by examining potential implications of burnout on the local church. In particular, I examined a) subjective ratings of the pastor’s physical and mental health, b) congregation members’ intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness, and c) church organizational health: financial stability, service attendance, and pastor turnover intentions. Pastors’
social support from the congregation was examined as a moderator of pastor physical health, mental health, and turnover intentions.

It is important to note that the design of the current study was cross-sectional; thus, significant relationships identified in this study were correlational. The variables studied as “outcomes” were theorized to be causal outcomes of burnout, but causal relationships cannot be tested here. I used data on pastor burnout, physical health, mental health, congregation members’ intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness, and measures of organizational health to determine how burnout is related to the pastor’s health, his congregation members, and church organization. I explored these relationships using data from the U.S. Congregational Life Survey (USCLS) that was collected during Fall 2008 and Spring 2009. An earlier wave of data was collected in 2001, but the variables of interest for the current dissertation were only present in the 2008-2009 wave of survey administration.

The current study focused the Christian church; however, a small proportion of participating pastors and attenders represented other religions (approximately 3% of the sample). The purpose of the USCLS was to examine American religious life from a broad perspective in order to develop resources for pastors and denominational leaders and measure changes over time. The USCLS (Wave 1 and Wave 2) included over 500,000 worshipers in more than 5,000 congregations across the U.S., making it the largest survey of worshipers in America ever conducted (What is the U.S. Congregational Life Survey?, n.d.). The current study was based on data from Wave 2, representing over 700 congregations. This major study of religious life in America was funded by The Lilly

This dissertation focused specifically on pastor burnout and individual, congregation member, and organizational outcomes, as well as examined social support from the congregation as a moderator. This dissertation used a multilevel perspective to account for the fact that individual pastor data are naturally clustered within organizations, the local church. Thus, the current study appropriately modeled the non-independence of data and account for between-church differences.

**Contributions.** There are several contributions and strengths of the current study. The current study contributes to an understanding of the burnout phenomenon among pastors, a vital and often-neglected occupational group. As mentioned, existing research has focused almost exclusively on individual and job-related variables in an effort to predict pastor job burnout. The current study is among the first to examine pastor job burnout in relation to the wider church organization, theorized as potential outcomes of pastor burnout. In addition, this dissertation is among the first to examine a protective factor of pastor job burnout, enacted social support from the congregation, which may buffer the negative effects of burnout.

The strengths of this study include that the data were gathered from a nationwide sample of pastors and church attenders in the U.S. representing more than 700 congregations. Participants were sampled across Christian denominations, including Catholic and Protestant, and a small proportion of participants were non-Christian
religious leaders and attenders. Data were linked from three independent sources: pastors’ self-report, worship service attenders’ self-report, and objective measures of organizational health completed by a church staff member, such as attendance numbers. Thus, this dissertation included subjective and objective measures.

Practical contributions of the current study include that it helps inform local church leaders, members, and denominational boards regarding the prevalence and effects of burnout among pastors. It helps identify protective factors that may buffer the effects of burnout, namely, social support from the congregation. It will provide evidence that the problem of burnout is associated with congregation member and church organizational outcomes. Although specific strategies were not studied in the current dissertation, local church leaders will be able to apply the results of this dissertation to prevent or reduce a pastor’s burnout by changing their job structure, delegating certain tasks to staff and other leaders, facilitating sabbatical, and other strategies.

Definitions

There are several terms need to be defined regarding their use in this study. The definitions are listed below in alphabetical order.

Associate pastor. A pastor who serves with multiple other pastors at a church (two or more). This individual is often responsible for leading a specific ministry area, such as college or youth ministry. As one of the pastors, an associate pastor often has the responsibility of preaching, though less frequently than the senior pastor. The Bible describes the qualifications to hold the office of elder (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).
Clergy. A member of the clergy is an ordained religious leader in the Christian church, as distinguished from the laity (those who are not ordained). Although this term is used in some of the existing literature, pastor is preferred in this dissertation.

Senior pastor. A pastor who is the lead pastor among multiple other pastors at a church (two or more). Pastors are gifted to teach the word of God and shepherd the people of God (protect, care for, and lead; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 5:1-4). In most churches, this individual oversees the ministry of the church in terms of preaching, teaching, worship, discipleship, and other areas. The Bible describes the qualifications to hold the office of elder (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).

Solo pastor. A pastor who is the only pastor at a local church. A solo pastor’s role and responsibilities are similar to that of a senior pastor. Both senior and solo pastors will be described as senior pastors in this dissertation unless otherwise noted.

Summary

The purpose of this dissertation was to examine how pastor job burnout relates to a) the health and mental health of the pastor, b) intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness of worship service attenders, and c) church organizational health: financial stability, service attendance, and pastor turnover intentions. The following chapters are organized in the following manner. Chapter 2-6 provides a literature review. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the traditional burnout literature, primarily from the field of occupational health psychology. Chapter 3 examines existing literature regarding job burnout among pastors. Chapter 4 reviews the relationships between burnout and a) health and b) mental health in traditional burnout research and research among pastors. Chapter 5 presents
theory and research describing how burnout among pastors may affect the religious participation of the congregation members. Chapter 6 examines potential relationships between pastor burnout and several organizational outcomes: a) financial stability, b) attendance growth, and c) pastor turnover intentions. Social support from the congregation is considered as a moderator of the relationships between pastor burnout and his own health and turnover intentions. Multiple hypotheses specify the relationships between these variables. Chapter 7 specifies the method of the current study including design, participants, measures, and analyses. Chapter 8 presents the results of each hypothesis test. Lastly, Chapter 9 presents a discussion of the results along with possible explanation of the findings, limitations of the current study, and implications for research and practice.

Figure 1 presents the hypothesized model of pastor burnout predicting self-reported physical and mental health, congregation member intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness, worship service attendance rates, church financial stability, and pastor turnover intentions. Figure 2 presents the hypothesized model with the level of analysis indicated for each relationship.
CHAPTER TWO

JOB BURNOUT

Job burnout is a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job (Maslach, 2003). Burnout is a syndrome of disengagement from one’s work that involves exhaustion, hopelessness, lack of enthusiasm, irritability, and reduced self-esteem (Maslach, 2003). The term syndrome refers to the pattern of symptoms that commonly characterize a disorder or disease.

Burnout can be understood in the context of the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989). According to COR theory, individuals attempt to acquire and protect their desired resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Threatened or actual resource loss is a source of stress. Also, individuals compensate for one resource loss by acquiring or utilizing other resources. Thus, as many resources are depleted over time, the individual becomes less resilient and vulnerable to other stressors. The burnout syndrome can be an outcome of work-related resource depletion. Shirom (2009) described burnout as the result of cognitive, emotional, and physical resource depletion.

In the following chapter, I will provide a brief overview of the job burnout syndrome, which generally comes from the I/O psychology and occupational health psychology (OHP) literatures. In the chapter that follows, I will overview the existing literature that examines job burnout specifically in the context and role of pastors.

An Overview of Burnout Research

Historical background. Research on burnout originated in the psychological stress literature (Randall, 2013). Early writing and exploration began in the 1970s with
the aim to describe the phenomenon and show that it is not an uncommon response to stress (Maslach et al., 2001). Early writings were based on the experiences of health and human service employees. Interpersonal and emotional stressors emerged as key stressors in caregiving and service occupations (Maslach et al., 2001). Nurses, social workers, counselors, and pastors characterize this type of work in which care is provided and emotional labor is involved. Freudenberger (1974, 1975, as cited in Randall, 2013), a psychiatrist working in an alternative health care agency, was one of the first to popularize the term and describe the process of “burnout.” Burnout was termed to refer to emotional depletion, loss of motivation, and low commitment to one’s job (Freudenberger, 1975).

**Maslach Burnout Inventory.** In the 1980s, burnout research shifted from the exploratory work to scale development and empirical research. Several different conceptualizations and measures were developed. Maslach and Jackson (1981) identified a multidimensional model of burnout with three components: emotional exhaustion, cynicism (formerly known as depersonalization), and reduced personal accomplishment. This model contrasted typical unidimensional models of stress responses because it went beyond the psychological stress experience (exhaustion) to encompass interpersonal responses (cynicism) and job performance (feelings of inefficacy; Maslach, 2003).

Maslach and Jackson’s (1981) Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) measures burnout based on these three dimensions. The MBI has the strongest psychometric properties and is the most widely used instrument of burnout, particularly among the helping professions (Maslach et al., 2001). Negatively worded items are used to measure
emotional exhaustion and cynicism (seen as the presence of negative components), and positively worded items are used to measure reduced personal accomplishment (seen as the absence of a positive component).

Emotional exhaustion is the core burnout dimension and most obvious manifestation of this syndrome (Maslach et al., 2001). Emotional exhaustion refers to a depletion of emotional resources, often from consistent or draining interactions with others (Fusilier & Manning, 2005). Emotional exhaustion may be a precursor to the other symptoms, such that exhausted individuals begin to distance themselves emotionally, socially, or cognitively from their work, presumably in an attempt to cope with demands (Maslach, 2003).

Cynicism, or depersonalization, is the social interaction aspect of burnout. Cynicism is characterized by a callous attitude, detachment, and frustration toward others (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). In human services and other types of jobs, individuals use cognitive distancing as a coping mechanism, which means that they develop an indifference to people when they are exhausted or discouraged. Disengagement is such an immediate response to exhaustion that a strong relationship is consistently found between emotional exhaustion and cynicism across a wide range of occupational settings (Maslach et al., 2001).

Reduced personal accomplishment or efficacy is the self-evaluation and performance-related component of burnout. It refers to feelings of a lack of achievement, purpose, and productivity at work (Maslach et al., 2001). The relationship of reduced personal accomplishment, or inefficacy, and the other two components is more complex.
In some instances, inefficacy appears to be a result of exhaustion, cynicism, or both (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). In other instances, feelings of personal inefficacy seem to develop in parallel with the other two components, rather than sequentially (Maslach, 2003).

The multidimensional conceptualization of burnout raises the question about a potential causal order that may exist between the dimensions. Do the dimensions develop simultaneously or in sequence? Limited research exists to test theories that have been suggested regarding a developmental order (Maslach et al., 2001). One issue is that longitudinal studies are needed, and the majority of studies are cross-sectional. A commonly accepted theory is that of Leiter and Maslach (1988) that emotional exhaustion influences cynicism, and cynicism influences personal accomplishment. In contrast, Van Dierendonck, Schaufeli, and Buunk (2001) conducted multi-group analyses with the results from five studies with longitudinal designs, and found that a process model of reduced personal accomplishment → cynicism → emotional exhaustion provided the best fit to the data. More recent studies have found that the sequence was different between men and women (Houkes, Winants, Twellaar, & Verdonk, 2011). While some evidence exists, the literature is inconclusive regarding an accepted developmental process.

**Shirom-Melamed Burnout Measure.** Building on Maslach’s foundation, Shirom and Melamed developed a somewhat different conceptualization of burnout (Shirom, 2003). Their conceptual approach viewed burnout as individual feelings of physical, emotional, and cognitive exhaustion. Thus, the model focused on the depletion of physical, emotional, and cognitive energetic resources resulting from chronic exposure to
job-related stress (Shirom, 2003). This conceptual approach led to the development of the Shirom-Melamed Burnout Measure (Shirom & Melamed, 2006).

One improvement of the SMBM over previous models was that it was developed with a stronger theoretical foundation, whereas the MBI dimensions were identified through factor analysis (Shirom, 2011). The SMBM was based on Hobfoll’s (1989) conservation of resources (COR) theory. The SMBM conceptualized burnout as the depletion of energetic resources and covered physical, emotional, and cognitive energies (Hobfoll & Shirom, 2000). These were labeled physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and cognitive weariness. Another improvement was that the SMBM clearly differentiated burnout from stress appraisals preceding the experience of burnout, from coping behaviors that burned out individuals might engage in (e.g., distancing oneself from service recipients) and from the probable consequences of burnout (e.g., such as performance ineffectiveness; Shirom, 2011).

**Related outcomes.** The significance of burnout research lies in its links to important outcomes. Burnout is commonly related to job performance outcomes: withdrawal (e.g., absenteeism, turnover intentions, and turnover behavior), reduced productivity, job satisfaction, and job commitment. Some research has examined the effects of burned out employees on their colleagues. Burned out individuals can cause or perpetuate interpersonal conflict and disrupt the effectiveness of other employees. In addition, there is some evidence that the emotional experience of burnout is “contagious” to other people, such that a negative environment is perpetuated through words, social
interactions, and emotional expressions. This has been termed “burnout contagion,” a form of emotional contagion (Bakker, Le Blanc, & Schaufeli, 2005).

In addition, some research has related burnout to physical health outcomes, such as insomnia, musculoskeletal pain, and physical fatigue (Shirom, 2009), as well as cholesterol and triglyceride levels (Shirom, Westman, Shamai, & Carel, 1997). Previous research suggests that the emotional exhaustion component of burnout is more predictive of health outcomes than the other two components (Maslach et al., 2001). These physiological correlates are similar to those found with other indices of prolonged stress.

Burnout has also been related to mental health outcomes; however, the relationship is more complex. A commonly held assumption is that burnout is not a type of mental illness, but rather causes mental dysfunction. Burnout precipitates negative effects such as anxiety, depression, social withdrawal, and reduced self-esteem (Maslach et al., 2001).

It is important to differentiate burnout from other closely related constructs, one of which is depression. Although some studies have found that burnout is highly correlated with depression ($r = .85, p < .01$; Maslach & Leiter, 1996), an important distinction is that burnout is a problem that is specific to the work context, whereas depression tends to pervade every aspect of life (Maslach et al., 2001). Leaving one’s job usually results in resolution of burnout symptoms, suggesting that the syndrome is specific to a role or context (Doolittle, 2010). Notably, individuals who are more prone to depression are also more vulnerable to burnout (Maslach et al., 2001).
Looking ahead, burnout is likely to present a pressing social and organizational problem in years to come (Shirom, 2011). Employees in many different job economies worldwide experience heightened levels of job insecurity, demands for excessive work hours, the need for continuous retraining due to constant changes in technology, and the blurring of lines between work and home life (Shirom, 2011). In the next chapter, I will consider how local church pastors may specifically experience the burnout syndrome.
CHAPTER THREE

JOB BURNOUT AMONG PASTORS

Burnout is a common condition among those in the caring professions. Burnout may be especially prevalent in those that are considered intense caring vocations. The pastorate is one of these professions. As with some other occupations, the lines between pastors’ personal and professional lives are inherently blurred (Beebe, 2007). The job of a pastor is more of a lifestyle. It involves the whole family. Pastors spend much of their work time investing in others, sometimes at the deficit of caring for themselves or investing well at home. Although an extensive literature has developed examining burnout across a variety of occupational groups over the past few decades, relatively little work has been conducted regarding pastor/ministry burnout. Nevertheless, Christian ministers are subject to work-related stress and potential burnout that is typical of other human service professions (Miner et al., 2010).

In this chapter, first, I will describe the pastorate as an occupation. Second, I will discuss the prevalence, development, and experience of burnout among pastors. Then, I will examine existing literature on pastor burnout, which primarily focuses on bivariate relationships between individual and/or job-related variables in an effort to predict pastor burnout. Most existing research has not tested complex models to predict pastor burnout, such as tests of mediators or moderators of burnout antecedents. Regarding potential outcomes of pastor burnout, the existing literature is very limited.
The Pastorate as an Occupation

Pastors represent a unique vocation with a unique set of job tasks, required skills, and emotional demands. As noted, pastors make up a significant portion of the workforce in the United States; however, they have received minimal research attention compared to other occupations, especially other helping professions. In this section, I will explore what the job of a pastor look like in terms of responsibilities, tasks, and skills. Then, I will explore who make up the pastorate in terms of demographics and characteristics typical of those serving as a pastor. Lastly, I will examine the context in which pastors work.

First, what does the job of a pastor look like in terms of roles and responsibilities? The responsibilities and tasks of a pastor can be broad. Major responsibilities include preaching, teaching, administering the sacraments (baptism, marriage, the Lord’s Supper, etc.), administrating, overseeing congregational life and the staff, and giving pastoral care to individuals and families (Carroll, 2006). Carroll (2006) reported that among pastors who worked full-time, on average, preaching and leading worship (and preparation for each) constituted the greatest number of work hours per week, 22% of their work hours. Next, 15% of their time was spent in pastoral care (visitation, counseling, etc.). They spend 13% of their time teaching and preparing others for ministry. Administration and various meetings comprised 14% of the week. Evangelism, including visiting prospective members, involved 7% of their week. Further, pastors reported spending several hours per week in prayer and personal Bible reading, which benefits their own spiritual health and that of the congregation (Carroll, 2006).
Beyond tasks and responsibilities, it is important to consider that the pastorate is different from most other occupations, namely because pastors see their vocation as part of a specific calling from God (Proeschold-Bell & LeGrand, 2012). The task is weighty and carries a high responsibility: Pastors are leaders and “shepherds” of individual souls and the collective body of the local church. The Bible describes the responsibility of elders (overseers) as a noble task: “The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task” (1 Timothy 3:1). Further, the Bible describes the characteristics of an elder, which can be summarized as one who demonstrates high moral character, the ability to lead others in the Christian faith, spiritual maturity, and the ability to teach (see 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-16).

Pastors are accountable to God for the care of those whom they have been entrusted, the congregation. This task can weigh on a pastor’s mind, body, and soul as he is incredibly burdened for the eternal destiny of those around him. Many pastors report that work overload and a lack of self-role differentiation mark their jobs and lives (Beebe, 2007), but there is only some data to specifically indicate how many hours pastors typically work in a week or other quantifications of workload. A major study by Carroll (2006) reported that pastors worked an average of between 47 and 56 hours per week, varying according to denominational tradition and other factors. Another report among Catholic priests in the U.S. stated that priests worked an average of 63 hours per week (Perl & Froehle, 2002). One problem in measuring workload is that the pastorate is certainly a lifestyle, and it is sometimes difficult to see where one’s job role ends and personal life begins.
Second, what are the demographics and characteristics typical of those serving as a pastor? Three demographics to highlight are gender, age, and second-career pastors. Male pastors are the overwhelming majority of all Christian pastors, Protestant and Catholic (Carroll, 2006). However, one change of to the demographic makeup of the pastorate as an occupation is that some denominations today also ordain women as pastors. The ordination of women began in the 1950s in two denominations, and in 2009, approximately 10% of all senior or solo pastors in Protestant churches were women (Barna, 2009). The proportion of women in the pastorate varies according to denomination because some ordain women and others do not. Denominational differences are primarily due to differing interpretations of the Bible, specifically passages that relate to the qualifications of an elder (e.g., 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).

The current study will reference pastors as “he or she” to reflect the sample of current study participants.

Male and female pastors report different stressors and have somewhat different experiences in the pastorate. They also report different reasons for leaving the pastorate as an occupation. For female pastors, caring for children and aging parents is a major reason why some leave the ministry (Hoge & Wenger, 2005).

As pastors in the U.S. are not exclusively male, they are also not only young people who have proceeded directly from college to seminary to the pastorate. Across several denominations, the median age of a solo or senior pastor (i.e., not an associate pastor) is 50-55, and 70-85% of all pastors are over age 45 (Carroll, 2006). In contrast, in 1968, the majority of pastors were younger than age 45. The aging workforce among
pastors in primarily attributed to the trend for individuals to attend seminary and enter the ministry as a second career (Carroll, 2006).

Third, what is the context in which pastors work? Congregation size is important to understanding a pastor’s workload, financial base, and support system. A solo pastor in a rural town likely carries much of the weight and responsibility with less financial stability and support. More than 50% of pastors in Protestant denominations serve in churches that are considered “small” in size, less than 100 members, according to Carroll (2006). Conversely, most Catholic priests serve in larger congregations, at least 100 members (Carroll, 2006). Catholics traditionally have larger church bodies. Interestingly, the majority of churchgoers participate in larger congregations, about half in medium-sized churches and another 25% in large churches (101-350; 350-1000 members, respectively; Carroll, 2006).

Another important contextual consideration is location, whether urban or rural. Some denominations experience difficulty in finding pastors to serve small congregations in rural settings that often have limited resources (Carroll, 2006). Carroll (2006) found that across several denominations, the majority of churches in the U.S. were located in rural or suburban areas.

The Prevalence of Burnout

A general benchmark for burnout among pastors could be established by comparing their prevalence of burnout to that of other helping professions. Similar to other helping professions, pastors have extensive interpersonal connections and extend significant emotional energy. In a study among nurses who care for high-risk patients,
29% of nurses who cared for AIDS patients and 15% who cared for cancer patients met MBI criteria for high levels of burnout (Catalan, Pergami, Hulme, Gazzard, & Phillips, 1996). Additionally, across many medical specialties, the Physician Worklife Study revealed an overall burnout prevalence of 22% for physicians (Williams et al., 1999).

Burnout appears to be a widespread problem for pastors, but as would be expected, burnout estimates vary widely. In a study of 1,242 Catholic priests in the United States, Rossetti (2011; as cited in Rossetti & Rhoades, 2013) reported that 42% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I feel overwhelmed with the amount of work I have to do.” This item most closely reflects the MBI emotional exhaustion item: “I feel like I am working too hard on the job.”

Randall (2013) found that emotional exhaustion was a significant experience for a large majority of male and female Anglican clergy in the Church of England and Church of Wales, regardless of age: 44% of these clergy reported feeling drained by their ministry roles. In the same study, 38% of clergy reported that fatigue and irritation are part of their daily experiences, and 47% indicated that they are frustrated in their attempts to accomplish important tasks at work (Randall, 2013). An Australian study found that 25% of pastors experienced burnout as an extreme or significant issue, and 50% were considered at risk of developing burnout (Kaldor & Bullpitt, 2001, as cited in Miner et al., 2010).

In addition, some research suggests that pastors have good insight into identifying themselves as burned out. Asked to judge subjectively, 13% of United Methodist ministers considered themselves burned out and 23% considered themselves depressed.
Based on the MBI criteria, 19% of these pastors met the cut off for high emotional exhaustion, 10% met the cutoff for high depersonalization (cynicism), and 11% met the cut off for low personal accomplishment (Doolittle, 2010). Although these data were not analyzed at the individual level to determine what each pastor reported, a similar percentage of pastors judged themselves as burned out as those that met MBI criteria for burnout.

In sum, estimates of burnout are varied. Based on one study that analyzed MBI criteria, it might be concluded that as few as 10% of pastors experience burnout (Doolittle, 2010). Based self-evaluations of burnout, it might be concluded that 13% to 47% of pastors sampled experienced burnout (Doolittle, 2010; Randall, 2013). Previous research has suggested that rates of burnout for pastors are similar to that of other helping professions (e.g., educators, nurses, physicians, social workers, counselors).

**Theories of Burnout**

Several theories, processes, and psychological mechanisms have been used in an attempt to describe burnout among pastors. Studies with pastors have indicated that burnout is a complicated construct resulting from some combination of numerous responsibilities, role conflict, work overload, and emotional energy expenditure, among others (Beebe, 2007; Grosch & Olsen, 2000;)

Although the literature examining burnout among pastors is not as extensive as that of several other occupational groups, it is recognized that pastors are subject to work-related stressors typical of other helping occupations (Hall, 1997). Ministry stress can result from a lack of consistent work hours, bureaucracy within the organization or at the
denominational level, high congregational expectations on the pastor, and impoverished or conflicted personal relationships (Miner et al., 2000). Lack of social support and isolation are also related to ministry stress and burnout (Virginia, 1998). Moreover, pastors are leaders and “shepherds” (1 Peter 5:1-4) of individual souls and the collective body of the local church. They are accountable to God for the care of those whom they have been entrusted in their congregation. This is a mighty task that weighs heavily on a pastor’s heart, mind, and body.

Beebe (2007) described that the pattern of burnout among pastors seemed to suggest the following basic process: Clergy become emotionally and functionally overwhelmed by the demands and expectations of the role. Role ambiguity, role overload, and a lack of self-role differentiation lead to exhaustion and an inability to fulfill one’s job functions. Interpersonal conflict encourages emotional separation that promotes *cynicism*. Self-role fusion and emotional distancing leads to heightened *emotional exhaustion* (Bowen, 1978). Increasingly conflictive situations and decreased performance leads to a reduced sense of *personal accomplishment*.

**Self-role differentiation.** As such, one psychological mechanism that may be at work in the emotional dysfunction of pastors is the difficulty of maintaining an appropriate level of differentiation between self and role. In a focus group study by Jinkins (2002), pastors described psychological drain as the result of being unable to distinguish between goal-setting with reference to their congregational ministries and goal-setting in their own personal and professional lives. Thus, some pastors over-identify with the successes, failures, and conflict present in their role and church. Pastors
who are able to develop self-role differentiation are able to address the multifaceted demands of congregation members in a healthy way (Beebe, 2007). They understand the difference between practical limitations, congregational expectations, and fulfillment of their personal call and responsibilities (Beebe, 2007).

Another factor contributing to a lack of self-role differentiation and the persistence of burnout among pastors is that some pastors view interpersonal and congregational conflict as an indication of one’s job performance in the pastorate. If pastors can view conflict as separate from evaluations of one’s performance in the pastorate and evaluations of one’s self, it would positively affect perceptions of work overload and ambiguity and reduce burnout. Further, this distinction could facilitate addressing conflict more directly and healthier interpersonal relationships within the pastor’s family, church staff, and congregation members (Beebe, 2007).

A **high calling**. Burnout may represent a threat not only to one’s vocation, but to the sense of calling on one’s life and identity as a pastor. Most pastors see their vocation as part of a specific calling from God (Proeschold-Bell & LeGrand, 2012; Proeschold-Bell, LeGrand, Wallace, James, Moore, Swift, & Toole, 2012). A person’s calling indicates his personal mission or purpose (Smith, 2011). Pastors experiencing burnout often face a growing sense of cynicism that threatens to undermine the convictions which define their call to the pastorate (Golden et al., 2004). Oswald (1991, as cited in Golden, 2004) called burnout a “deeply religious issue” (p. 71) that confronts a pastor’s personal commitment and trust in his calling.
**Person-job fit theory.** Lastly, person-job fit theory (French, Rodgers, & Cobb, 1974, as cited in Maslach et al., 2001) suggests that individuals who perceive that they do not “fit” their job well (i.e., they do not have the necessary skills or abilities, or are not interested in their job) will experience their work as stressful and be more likely to exhibit signs of burnout (Miner et al., 2010). According to theories of fit, stress results from the mismatch between a person and the environment (P-E Fit) or a person and his job (P-J Fit). As the mismatch between the person and the job increases, the likelihood of burnout increases (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Maslach and Leiter (1997) specified this theory by formulating a model that focused on the degree of match between a person and six domains of his job or environment: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values. Burnout arises from chronic mismatch between people and some or all of these six areas. To note a few, some pastors report being overwhelmed by the amount of work they have to do (Rossetti, 2011; as cited in Rossetti & Rhoades, 2013). Many pastors also report feeling unprepared to handle the business and organizational aspects of their church, such as facilities and financial oversight (Carroll, 2006). These church leadership skills are often acquired through experience and learning from others rather than formal seminary education.

**Correlates of Burnout**

The majority of the literature that has examined burnout in ministry to date has focused on individual and job-related variables in an effort to predict pastor burnout. In this section, I present a summary of the state of this literature among pastors.
Gender. There is mixed evidence regarding gender differences in burnout among pastors. In a study of 735 Presbyterian Church (USA) pastors (72% males), Francis, Robbins, and Wulff (2013) found that female pastors had significantly higher levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization than male pastors. This study used the Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM; Francis, Kaldor, Shevlin, & Lewis, 2004), a subscale of the Francis Burnout Inventory, to measure emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. The SEEM is a measure of burnout that was specifically developed for the pastoral occupation. Although labeled as primarily measuring emotional exhaustion, the SEEM also includes items to measure depersonalization.

In contrast, Miner and colleagues (2010) found that male pastors reported significantly higher levels of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) than females, also using the SEEM to measure burnout. Miner and colleagues (2010) studied 2,132 Australian church leaders (88% male) who were surveyed as part of the 2001 National Church Life Survey.

In addition, a few studies have reported no significant differences in burnout according to gender. Francis, Kaldor, Shevlin, and Lewis (2004) did not find significant gender differences in emotional exhaustion among 4,370 Australian pastors (92% male) who participated the 1996 National Church Life Survey. In a study of 370 pastors (77% male) in their seventh year of ministry, Randall (2004) also found that gender was not significantly correlated with emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment among Anglican clergy as measured with a modified version of the
MBI. Thus, after seven years in ordained ministry, pastors of either gender experience similar levels of proneness to burnout (Randall, 2004).

These studies reflect the fact that women comprise a small proportion of the pastorate. In sum, the existing literature is inconclusive regarding gender differences in burnout that may exist among pastors. Continued research is needed regarding gender differences among pastors that may exist regarding the prevalence of burnout and associated predictors and outcomes of burnout.

**Contextual variables.** Even in the United States, church congregations exist in a wide variety of communities and contexts. For example, church communities vary on socioeconomic status, education level, rural or urban setting, ethnic groups, region of the U.S., the acceptance and prevalence of Christianity in the surrounding community, etc. The role and expectations on a pastor can vary widely between churches because of these and other factors.

Regarding the influence of setting, limited research has examined how occupational conditions and clergy experiences may vary systematically by geographical context. Nearly one-third of all congregations in the United States are located in predominantly rural areas (Miles & Proeschold-Bell, 2012). Miles and Proeschold-Bell (2012) examined the influence of setting in a study of United Methodist ministers serving in a variety of contexts across North Carolina. Contrary to expectations, they found that although pastors in rural settings faced several unique challenges (e.g., pastoring multiple congregations, lower salaries, less frequently taking a day off each week), they reported
lower levels of several stressors (e.g., conflict within the congregation; organizational challenges) and higher levels of support than pastors in non-rural settings.

Francis and Rutledge (2000, as cited in Francis et al., 2012) examined the relationship between context and burnout for pastors. In a study of clergy in the Church of England, Francis and Rutledge (2000) found that although rural clergy reported slightly lower feelings of personal accomplishment, they were no different than non-rural clergy on emotional exhaustion or cynicism. Francis and Rutledge (2000) and Miles and Proeschold-Bell (2012) appear to be the only studies to date that examined rural/non-rural differences in stressors and burnout for pastors. Taken together, these studies suggest that rural ministry was not generally related to higher levels of burnout and stressors. However, additional research is needed to support these findings.

In addition, some research has specifically studied the impact of pastoring more than one congregation on burnout. Francis and colleagues (2013) hypothesized that pastors serving more than one congregation would more susceptible to burnout in terms of emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. Their study of 735 Presbyterian Church (USA) pastors found that after controlling for age, gender, and personality, pastoring more than one congregation did not significantly impact a pastor’s experience of emotional exhaustion or job satisfaction. However, additional work is needed regarding contextual variables, as this is the only known empirical study of this relationship.

**Personality.** In accordance with burnout and personality research that has been conducted in other occupational groups, previous studies among pastors have demonstrated a relationship of the personality traits of neuroticism and introversion with
burnout (Francis, Kaldor, Shevlin, & Lewis, 2004; Miner, Dowson, & Sterland, 2010). In a study of 1,468 Roman Catholic parish-based priests in England and Wales, Francis, Kaldor, and colleagues (2004) found support for the correlation between burnout and aspects of personality: Higher scores of neuroticism and lower scores of extraversion were correlated with greater emotional exhaustion and cynicism.

Randall (2013) found strong, positive correlations between levels of neuroticism and emotional exhaustion using two different measures of burnout in a sample of Anglican clergy in England and Wales. Using a version of the MBI adapted specifically for clergy, Randall (2013) found strong correlations between neuroticism and the three subscales of burnout: emotional exhaustion ($r = .55$), depersonalization ($r = .43$), and personal accomplishment ($r = -.36$). Randall (2013) also found a strong, positive correlation ($r = .50$) between levels of neuroticism and emotional exhaustion using the Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM) subscale of the Francis Burnout Inventory (Francis, Kaldor, et al., 2004). Using two measures of burnout with the same sample of pastors (MBI and SEEM) adds support to the correlation between neuroticism and burnout for pastors.

Golden and colleagues (2004) surveyed 321 United Methodist pastors in the United States to examine the relationship between personality and burnout. Golden and colleagues (2004) created a composite score of burnout from three sources: the MBI-General Survey, the Situational Shift Scale (Rodgerson & Piedmont, 1998), and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) to examine the relationship between burnout and personality. These scales were used together in an
effort to capture the affective, behavioral, and cognitive, respectively, components of burnout.

The composite measure of burnout was positively correlated with neuroticism and negatively correlated with extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Golden et al., 2004). In addition, after controlling for demographics variables, neuroticism and extraversion were significantly correlated with burnout. Personality accounted for 3.8% of unique variance in predicting burnout among pastors (Golden et al., 2004). As personality traits are relatively stable and could be measured at any time, they could be used as a way to identify pastors who may be more susceptible to burnout and provide them with resources to prevent burnout. This could be particularly helpful for pastors who are high on neuroticism, given its consistent association with burnout across multiple studies (Francis, Kaldor, et al., 2004; Miner et al., 2010).

Role stressors. Some research among pastors has suggested that role stressors such as role conflict and role ambiguity are associated with higher levels of burnout. Exploratory, descriptive studies of the origins of stress in the ministry frequently mention the high percentage of pastors noting role overload as a major factor in the depletion of emotional resources (Beebe, 2007).

In a study of pastors currently serving or recently retired from congregations in New York, Beebe (2007) found that role perceptions were related to the experience of burnout. Role overload exhibited a significant multivariate relationship with overall burnout, such that those with higher levels of role overload were more likely to experience burnout. Role ambiguity displayed a similar multivariate relationship: As role...
ambiguity increased, levels of burnout also increased. Role overload and role ambiguity played a significant role in the experience of burnout.

In addition to studying the relationship between burnout and personality, Golden and colleagues (2004) attempted to predict burnout among pastors based on role perceptions and the work environment. Role perceptions and the work environment were measured using the Occupational Role Questionnaire (ORQ), a subscale of the Occupational Stress Inventory, Revised (OSI-R; Osipow, 1998). In this study of United Methodist ministers in the U.S., burnout was positively correlated with all five components of the work environment: role overload, role ambiguity, role insufficiency, role boundary, and responsibility. The correlations remained significant even after controlling for demographics and personality. In this study, the work environment was the biggest unique contributor to burnout, explaining 33.9% of unique variance in burnout (Golden et al., 2004). Taken together, initial research appears to suggest that role overload, role ambiguity, and other aspects of the work environment play a significant role in the experience of burnout among pastors.

**Job satisfaction.** Consistent with burnout literature among other occupational groups, some research has suggested that pastors with lower levels of job satisfaction have been found to experience higher levels of burnout. In a study of 2,482 Catholic priests from congregations across the United States, Rossetti and Rhoades (2013) found that higher job satisfaction was related to lower levels of emotional exhaustion and cynicism, as measured with the MBI-Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS). In a study among Anglican clergy in the Church of England and the Church of Wales, Randall
(2013) found that job satisfaction (termed “satisfaction in ministry”) had a strong negative correlation with emotional exhaustion ($r = -.68$). In this study, satisfaction in ministry and burnout were measured using two subscales of the Francis Burnout Inventory, Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS) and the Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM; Francis, Kaldor, Shevlin, & Lewis, 2004; Francis, Kaldor, Robbins, & Castle, 2005). These studies provide some evidence that job satisfaction is negatively correlated with burnout among pastors, and this relationship was identified among pastors from different denominations, settings, and using different scales to measure burnout.

Importantly, dissatisfaction with one’s job or position in ministry does not necessarily equate with burnout. It is possible to be dissatisfied with one’s job and not experience the burnout syndrome. However, these and other studies have found initial evidence that they are related among some pastors (Rossetti & Rhoades, 2013). The current dissertation draws upon this line of research and hypothesizes a negative relationship between burnout and mental health among pastors. Burned out individuals may indicate lower life satisfaction, and for some, this manifests itself in mental health concerns. The current dissertation explores this relationship, discussed in the next section.

**Spiritual beliefs.** Another important area to be addressed is the influence of spirituality on pastors’ understanding of their role, ability to cope, and response to factors that lead to the experience of burnout. A fundamental part of work and life for pastors that distinguishes them from other occupational groups, spirituality may serve as an important protective factor against burnout and as a buffer of the negative effects of burnout (Golden et al., 2004).
One difficulty in research is that the term “spirituality” carries different meanings for different groups, and measures of spirituality sometimes vary widely. Historically, attendance at religious services and belief in God have been the most commonly used markers of one’s spiritual life (Doolittle, 2007). In much of the existing literature, one of these constructs was typically used as a single-item measure of spirituality, often in the form of a “yes”/”no” response. However, more recent studies have used measures that reflect internal beliefs (e.g., dependence on God, faith) and measures of external practices (e.g., attendance at services, small group fellowships) rather than a single-item measure of one or the other (Doolittle, 2007; Golden et al., 2004).

A small but growing literature has studied spirituality and its relationship to burnout among pastors, including peer-reviewed literature (e.g., Chandler, 2009; Doolittle, 2007; Golden et al., 2004; Rodgerson & Piedmont, 1998; Rossetti & Rhoades, 2013) and several doctoral dissertations (e.g., Chng, 2012; Kayler, 2001; Kirsch, 2011; Prout, 1996; Shirey, 2001). An important personal resource, spirituality may be negatively related to burnout because spiritual beliefs allow an individual to look beyond oneself, take a larger view of the present circumstances, and hope in God.

In a study with United Methodist ministers in the United States, Golden and colleagues (2004) examined if spirituality predicted burnout in pastors over and above the influence of demographics, personality, and characteristics of the work environment. The dimensions of spirituality in this study were (a) connectedness, belief that one is an integral part of a larger human orchestra across generations, (b) universality, belief in a common, deeper purpose to this life that binds all people, and (c) prayer fulfillment, a
feeling of joy and peace as a result of one’s prayer life (Piedmont, 1999). Golden and colleagues (2004) found that higher levels of each of these components were related to lower levels of burnout. Further, a composite measure of spirituality explained 2.3% of additional variance in burnout beyond that explained by demographics, personality, and the work environment, which are the variables most commonly studied in association with burnout (Golden et al., 2004). Additional analyses showed that prayer fulfillment carried the effect: it was the only subscale contributing to incremental variance. Prayer fulfillment represents a sense of personal strength gained through one’s relationship with God. Pastors reported a sense of communion with God through prayer reported significantly lower levels of burnout (Golden et al., 2004).

Doolittle (2007) used a different conceptualization and measure of spirituality: the Hatch Spiritual Involvement and Beliefs Scale (SIBS; Hatch, Burg, Naberhaus, & Hellmich, 1998). The SIBS conceptualizes spirituality as (a) internal beliefs, (b) external practices, (c) personal humility/forgiveness and (d) existential beliefs, or the influence of spiritual forces on one’s life. Interestingly, Doolittle (2007) found that higher levels of spirituality were correlated with higher levels of emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and personal accomplishment. The strong positive correlation between spirituality and emotional exhaustion suggested that a pastor may need to employ all coping resources, especially one’s faith, to cope with emotional exhaustion. Pastors strengthen their trust in God during times of exhaustion. In addition, there was a strong, positive correlation between spirituality and personal accomplishment (Doolittle, 2007). This revealed that a pastor can have a strong faith, a high sense of accomplishment, and at the same time feel
emotional exhausted and detached from others (cynicism). Thus, some pastors who were experiencing the burnout syndrome also felt like they were succeeding in their job role.

Spirituality is an essential part of work and life for a pastor. Although additional research is needed to better understand the relationship between spirituality and burnout, the current dissertation will consider a step further: is a pastor’s experience of burnout related to the religious participation of his or her congregation members? The next chapter further examines how a burned out leader may influence intrinsic and extrinsic religious practices of congregation members.

**Sabbath rest and exercise.** Many pastors strongly value rest and sabbatical, such as taking a day of rest once a week. However, anecdotal and research evidence has suggested that many pastors do not take the times and days of rest every week, as they would like and believe they should (Cordiero, 2009; Doolittle, 2010). London and Wiseman (2003) reported that 56% of pastors surveyed reported they regularly take one day of rest per week, and as many as 21% reported that they do not take any days off in a regular week. The practice of taking a Sabbath is a spiritual discipline, and one must be very intentional to keep it as a day of rest. Some pastors have described that it is essential to their ministry to have a Sabbath day once a week and longer periods of rest, such as a couple weeks of vacation per year. However, many fail to take this time off from their work and, over time, experience the consequences of exhaustion (Cordiero, 2009).

Doolittle (2010) found that pastors who took regular time out for themselves were 22% less likely to meet the MBI cutoff for feelings of low personal accomplishment. It appears that this time away from work protected against the experience of burnout.
Regarding longer periods of rest, Doolittle (2010) found that pastors who took a retreat at least twice per year were 20% less likely to meet the MBI cutoff for high emotional exhaustion and 9% less likely to meet the cutoff for high cynicism. Extended periods of respite in which pastors can reflect, be alone, and plan for the future protected against the experience of burnout.

In addition, there is some evidence that regular exercise and physical activity are protective against some of the dimensions of burnout. Doolittle (2010) found that pastors who exercised at least three times per week were 25% less likely to have high emotional exhaustion. However, regular exercise was not significantly related to cynicism or personal accomplishment (Doolittle, 2010). Some professional workshops and literature simply attribute burnout to excessive work and not enough exercise. The recommendation to take time off work and exercise are certainly helpful, but research described here suggests that the experience and solution to burnout is more complex (Rossetti & Rhoades, 2013).

In sum, initial evidence has suggested that pastors who take regular time away from work, extended times of retreat, and exercise may be less likely to experience burnout. Although these are important considerations to understand the current state of the literature regarding burnout among pastors, the current dissertation will not examine these factors.

**Summary.** The current state of the literature regarding burnout among pastors is that predictors and correlates of burnout have been examined, including individual, contextual, and job-related factors. Previous studies have found some evidence for
relationships between burnout and higher levels of neuroticism, introversion, role stressors, the absence of intentional time for rest and non-work activities, a lack of exercise, and lower levels of job satisfaction. Some studies have found that other factors are unrelated to pastor burnout: urban versus rural setting and pastoring more than one congregation.

For other factors, the existing evidence is mixed. For example, the existing evidence is mixed regarding if male or female pastors report higher levels of burnout. This relationship in particular is more challenging to measure and understand because a) only some denominations ordain women as pastors, and b) even in denominations that ordain women, women make up a small percentage of the pastorate. In addition, mixed evidence has been found for the relationship between the strength of one’s spiritual beliefs and burnout. This is also a difficult construct to summarize because its conceptualization and measurement often differs between studies.

Given that a body of literature has been established regarding predictors of burnout, the current dissertation seeks to advance the literature by examining potential outcomes of burnout among pastors. The existing literature regarding outcomes of burnout is very limited. Only job satisfaction, mentioned above, has been studied as a potential outcome. In Chapters 4-6 that follow, I will explore some of the areas that may be affected by burnout among pastors. In these chapters, I focus on how burnout affects three areas which represent three constituent groups: a) the pastor’s own health and mental health, b) congregation members’ participation and engagement, and c) the organizational health of the church. The current dissertation also examines social support
from the congregation as a moderator of the relationships between burnout and the pastor-level outcomes. The next chapter explores the relationships between burnout on a pastor’s own physical and mental health.
CHAPTER FOUR

BURNOUT, HEALTH, AND MENTAL HEALTH

Pastors are leaders and “shepherds” of individual souls and the collective body of a local church (1 Peter 5:1-4). They are accountable to God for the care of those whom they have been entrusted in their congregation. Empirical and anecdotal evidence has suggested that those in ministry often put the needs of other above their own (Proeschold-Bell, LeGrand, James, Wallace, Adams, & Toole, 2011). This self-sacrificing mindset may play an important role in the deterioration of a pastor’s health. In working diligently to serve and worship God as their primary goal, pastors may prioritize the daily needs, as well as crises, of their congregation members, and fail to engage in caring for oneself through appropriate work-family balance, time management, exercise, and healthy eating habits.

In 2014, Dr. Dan Doriani, a seminary professor at Covenant Theological Seminary and former pastor shared his experience in front of the crowd at a conference. His story exemplified the extent to which the task of a pastor weighed on his body, mind, and spirit, and how he tried to care for himself during that time. Doriani explained that during his time in the pastorate, he never had sufficient time to eat, much less eat healthily. He was often so concerned and burdened for the eternal destiny of his parishioners that he began losing a significant amount of weight. His plan to combat this issue was to ensure that he ate several milkshakes a week to get enough calories and avoid losing so much weight (Doriani, 2014). He acknowledged that this was not the wisest or healthiest way to cope with the emotional and spiritual demands of his job, but
he saw it as an acceptable short-term solution. Of course, in order to serve and care for others well, ministers must also care for their own health and well-being. Although Doriani’s personal experience highlighted more of the spiritual burden of a pastor for his parishioners and the community around him than it does burnout, it is an example of unhealthy coping that does not contribute to the longevity of ministry.

A small but growing literature has examined rates of physical health issues among pastors. Proeschold-Bell and LeGrand (2010) concluded that pastors are experiencing chronic diseases at alarming rates, even compared to disease rates of comparison individuals in the United States. This study compared self-reported chronic disease prevalence rates between United Methodist ministers in North Carolina and their North Carolinian comparison counterparts (people aged 35–64, White, insured, and employed in the past year; Proeschold-Bell & LeGrand, 2010). Over 41% of United Methodist ministers in NC reported height and weight data that would qualify them for obesity, 36% reported having high blood pressure, 34% reported having arthritis, 14% reported having asthma, and 13% reported having diabetes. These rates were significantly higher for NC ministers than for their comparison counterparts. The prevalence rates for ministers were higher by 10.3% for obesity, 4.3% for high blood pressure, 4.1% for asthma, 3.3% for diabetes, and 2.5% for arthritis than their counterparts.

Another study among pastors in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reported a 34% obesity rate for their pastors compared to a U.S. national average of 22% (Halaas, 2002; as cited in Proeschold-Bell & LeGrand, 2012). Unlike Proeschold-Bell and LeGrand (2010), Halaas (2002) did not adjust for gender (74% male) and age
(mean = 50 years), which may have inflated rates. Nevertheless, there is evidence that clergy experience high rates of chronic disease.

In another study, Proeschold-Bell and LeGrand (2012) found that pastors have an optimistic view of their health functioning. This study used the same data collected from United Methodist ministers in 2010 and compared self-reported physical health functioning (measured by the SF-12) to the U.S. normed data in the SF-12 manuals from 1998 and 2002 (Ware, Kosinski, & Keller, 1998; Ware, Kosinski, Turner-Bowker, & Gandek, 2002). The sample of United Methodist ministers from North Carolina was predominantly white, male, and highly educated (78% either held a master’s or doctoral degree). Compared to their normed counterparts in the U.S., the pastors reported significantly higher health functioning scores at almost every combination of gender- and age-matched pairs (Proeschold-Bell & LeGrand, 2012).

The authors presented a few reasons why this may have been the case. First, the difference could be because the sample of pastors (and the pastoral occupation as a whole) has a higher educational level and income than the general U.S. population. Both income and education are related to better health (Pappas, Queen, Hadden, & Fisher, 1993), so this would create a true difference in health ratings. Second, pastors may feel such a strong calling to their vocation that they do not perceive chronic health issues as an impediment to their life or work. Higher ratings of subjective health functioning may reflect an extreme dedication to the call to ministry and a desire to persevere even if health concerns are present (Proeschold-Bell & LeGrand, 2012). Either or both of these explanations may be the reason for higher subjective health ratings for pastors.
Traditional occupational health psychology literature has suggested that increased burnout is directly related to physical health issues (job demands-resources [JD-R] model; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). In light of neglected healthy behaviors, existing chronic disease issues, and an overall optimistic view of their current health status, it is clear that pastors need to understand how physical health concerns may impair their ability to carry out their calling in the long run. The Bible also communicates the importance of caring for one’s body and soul in order to carry out one’s calling most effectively (1 Corinthians 6:19; 1 Timothy 4:8).

Over the past 15 years, the relationship between religiousness and mental health has been studied extensively (Kutcher, Bragger, Rodriguez-Srednicki, & Masco, 2010). Studies have found that religious individuals report greater happiness and satisfaction with life (Myers & Diener, 1995) and fewer depressive symptoms (Smith, McCullough, & Poll, 2003; Yi et al., 2006) than individuals who are not religious. More specifically, one study found that among adolescents, intrinsic religiousness was negatively correlated with depressive symptoms, but extrinsic expressions of religiousness were not correlated with depressive symptoms (Pössel, Martin, Garber, Banister, Pickering, & Hautzinger, 2011). Thus, adolescents who had a strong personal commitment to their faith were also those who experienced fewer depressive symptoms, whereas external expressions and participating for social benefits did not improve or affect depressive symptoms (Pössel et al., 2011).

Based on the Conservation of Resources Theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989), low physical, emotional, and cognitive resources may contribute to pastors neglecting to take
preventative means to care for themselves such as regular exercise, healthy eating, and doctor’s visits (Proeschold-Bell & LeGrand, 2012). Thus, burnout may contribute to lower levels of physical and mental health functioning. In the current study, I will examine the relationship between burnout and subjective physical and mental health functioning using the SF-12 (Ware et al., 1998; Ware et al., 2002).

Hypothesis 1. Pastor burnout will be negatively associated with self-reported physical health.

Hypothesis 2. Pastor burnout will be negatively associated with self-reported mental health.

Social Support as a Moderator of Burnout, Health, and Mental Health

Just as there has been very little research to date examining potential effects of pastor burnout on the individual, congregation members, and organization, no known literature has examined moderators of the relationships between pastor burnout and these outcomes. The current dissertation explores the proposition that enacted social support from the congregation moderates the individual-level effects of burnout.

Social support is an important construct in organizational research and a well-known job resource (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The current study focused on the role of job resources to reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Further, the current study examined enacted social support, as opposed to perceived social support. Enacted or received support represents whether, or how often, specific supportive behaviors have been provided. In contrast, perceived social support represents subjective judgments of the quality or availability of
one’s network if aid is needed (Cohen, Lakey, Tiell, & Neely, 2005).

Social support is probably the most well-known situational variable that has been proposed as a potential buffer against job stressors (see van der Doef & Maes, 1999, for a review). In a longitudinal study, Frese (1999) tested different sources of social support as moderators of the relationship between job demands and psychological dysfunction (i.e., depression, anxiety, psychosomatic complaints). Controlling for initial levels of psychological dysfunction, this study found evidence for social support as a moderator of the relationship between job demands and the change in psychological dysfunction over the 16-month measurement interval. The relationship between job demands and psychological dysfunction was less positive for individuals with higher levels of social support. This study provides longitudinal evidence that social support plays an important role in reducing the negative effects of job demands on psychological well-being.

The current study specifically examined the role of emotional support that is provided to a pastor by the congregation members. Emotional support is form of social support. Emotional support can be particularly valuable for a pastor who may feel isolated at the top because of his leadership position. Some pastors describe that their closest friends are not within their own congregation because while they often provide support to others, it may not be reciprocated in full (Hoge & Wenger, 2005).

It is proposed that social support from congregation members will weaken the negative relationship between pastor burnout and self-reported a) physical health and b) mental health. Support for these relationships will suggest that social support from one’s
community, particularly those from the same faith community, protect job burnout from influencing more distal physical and mental health measures.

*Hypothesis 3*. Social support from congregation members will weaken the negative relationship between pastor burnout and physical health.

*Hypothesis 4*. Social support from congregation members will weaken the negative relationship between pastor burnout and mental health.
CHAPTER FIVE

PASTOR BURNOUT AND CONGREGATION MEMBERS

In addition to the relationships between pastor burnout and his or her own health, the experience of pastor burnout may be related to outcomes for the congregation members. These research questions are based on the leadership literature regarding how a leader’s emotions and stress can “trickle down” to his or her followers (see Skakon, Nielsen, Borg, & Guzman, 2010, for a review). Theories of emotional contagion suggest that positive and negative emotions can automatically and unconsciously spread throughout groups (Bakker, Le Blanc, & Schaufeli, 2005; Johnson, 2008). In regard to the workplace, negative culture and climate can spread quickly and create a toxic work environment that is dominated by negative emotions (Johnson, 2008).

In this chapter, I will demonstrate that a pastor’s burnout may be related to his or her congregation members’ religious participation. Although the relationship between a pastor and his congregation members is not identical to that of a leader and his followers or direct subordinates in a work setting, evidence from the leadership literature can be applied to the relationship between a pastor and individuals who follow and depend on him as part of a spiritual congregation. The reasoning is as such: pastors who are burned out may express little enthusiasm to participate in important church ministries and activities, either from the pulpit or as they interact with individuals (Niedringhaus, 2008). Pastors lead by example. If a burned out pastor is also disengaged and unenthusiastic, the religious participation of his congregation members is likely compromised.
In this section, I will define and review the existing literature regarding religiousness, including intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness, one way to conceptualize religious involvement. Then, I will provide an overview of the limited amount of literature that connects burnout and religiousness, in particular, that pertaining to pastor burnout and the religiousness of his congregation members.

**Religious Participation & Religiousness**

Definitions of religiousness differ widely across studies (Pössel et al., 2011). The term “religiosity” has commonly been used to describe a wide variety of constructs: attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, experiences, perceptions, and values. This varied operationalization has resulted in a lack of clarity in the literature regarding the description and measurement of various components of religious life (Levin, Taylor, & Chatters, 1995; Neff, 2006).

Various terms have been used to describe the importance and impact of religious beliefs on an individual’s life. The most commonly used terms to describe this phenomenon are religiousness, religiosity, and religious orientation. In this paper, “religiousness” is the preferred term. “Religiosity” is avoided on the basis of etymology: “Religiosity” connotes an artificial or exaggerated religious interest; whereas, “religiousness” does not carry that conceptual connotation and is thus more appropriate in the present context (see Donahue, 1985).

The measurement of religiousness is also varied in the existing literature. Frequency of religious service attendance is one of the traditional ways to measure religiousness (e.g., Horowitz & Garber, 2003; Weeden & Kurzban, 2013). Other
commonly used methods include a single-item rating of the importance of one’s religious faith and frequency and private expressions of faith (e.g., prayer, personal Bible reading; Levin et al., 1995; Neff, 2006).

Intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness. Two major frameworks currently exist to describe different forms of religious involvement: a) intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness, and b) organizational, non-organizational, and subjective religiousness. The former has received substantially more attention in the existing literature; however, both will be highlighted here to provide a more complete conceptualization.

The study of religiousness began in the early research of Gordon W. Allport (1958, as cited in Levin et al., 1995). Allport (1958) described two types of religious practice, which he called institutionalized and interiorized. Allport’s distinction between institutionalized and interiorized religious orientations led to the conceptualization of extrinsic and intrinsic religiousness, respectively (see Donahue, 1985 for review and meta-analysis). This distinction describes substantively different ways in which religious faith can be expressed.

These two “types” of religiousness were originally conceptualized as bipolar ends of the same continuum, such that an individual would be considered either intrinsically or extrinsically religious. But, from the beginning of the empirical research, there was doubt regarding if this characterization of intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness was appropriate (Donahue, 1985). Allport and Ross (1967) found that the two scales, rather than being strongly negatively correlated, and thus bipolar ends of one continuum, were largely uncorrelated, representing two distinct constructs. Since this time, researchers have
generally concluded that intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness should be measured as a separate constructs (Donahue, 1985).

**Intrinsic religiousness** describes the private, personal significance of one’s religious faith and practices. This aspect of religious life focuses on the impact of one’s religious beliefs on daily life and decision making (Donahue, 1985). Intrinsic religiousness reflects one’s spiritual growth and development, personal faith, and private devotional activities. High intrinsic religiousness means that one’s beliefs are internalized and strongly influence one’s pattern of behavior and decision-making.

In contrast, **extrinsic religiousness** focuses on religious institutions and conventions that help provide an individual with a sense of security and social support. This aspect of religious life focuses on religious attendance, rituals, and practices. It is a more public expression of religious faith (Donahue, 1985). Extrinsic religiousness represents not so much the extent of one’s faith per se, but an attitude or motivation for religiousness or religious practice (Donahue, 1985).

Notably, this conceptualization of religiousness is distinct from church membership, belief in God, liberal—conservative theological orientation, and so forth. Although originally developed from the Christian perspective, the lack of doctrinal content in the intrinsic and extrinsic conceptualization makes it useable for virtually any Christian denomination, and perhaps non-Christian religious expression (Donahue, 1985).

**Organizational, non-organizational, and subjective religiousness.** The second major framework that has been used to describe and measure religiousness is the
distinction between three expressions of religious faith: organizational, non-organizational, and subjective religiousness. Compared to the conceptualization of intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness, this framework has received significantly less attention in the existing literature. However, this structure uniquely contributes to the literature by describing a third expression of faith.

Factor analyses by Levin and colleagues (1995) identified a three-factor structure of religiousness based on research among African Americans. Building on the framework of Allport (1958), two of these factors were labeled organizational and non-organizational religiousness, distinguishing between public and private expressions of religious faith, respectively. Private expressions of religious faith were further separated into a third dimension labeled subjective religiousness, an attitudinal, rather than behavioral, dimension. This expression of faith captures one’s perception of his spiritual maturity and the impact of faith on his life. Levin and colleagues (1995) found that this three-factor structure of religious participation exhibited better fit to the data than unidimensional and the two-dimensional models of only organizational and non-organizational items. This structure offered theoretical and empirical improvement over simpler, alternative models (Levin et al., 1995).

Behavioral expressions of faith (e.g., service attendance; private devotional activities) have received substantially more research attention than attitudinal or intrinsic expressions of religious life. However, attitudinal indicators may be more valuable and precise in measuring the significance of faith in one’s life. At the very least, attitudinal
items likely have different antecedents and outcomes than behavioral items, and each should be measured as a separate dimension of religious life and participation.

In sum, the two-dimensional conceptualization of religious involvement in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness has been used most often in the existing literature. This conceptualization of religiousness was also used in the current dissertation.

**Burnout and Religiousness**

As discussed, the definition, operationalization, and measurement of religiousness are varied in the existing literature. This lack of consistency makes it difficult to accurately determine specific antecedents and outcomes of religious faith. In the following section, the existing literature connecting burnout and religiousness is discussed. The current dissertation attempted to specifically connect a pastor’s experience of burnout with congregation members’ religiousness and religious involvement. No existing studies to date have related a pastor’s experience of burnout to his congregation members’ attitudes or public or private behavioral expressions of faith.

Some literature has examined the correlation between one’s own experience of burnout and his or her religiousness. Kutcher and colleagues (2010) found that religious practices were negatively correlated with one’s own experience of burnout. This correlation was found for overall burnout score (as measured by the MBI; Maslach & Jackson, 1986), and each of the three dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Further, results of a t-test indicated that those who self-identified as one who practices religion had significantly lower levels of burnout than those who identified as one who did not practice religion (Kutcher et al.,
Kutcher and colleagues (2010) found initial evidence for a relationship between burnout and religiousness, but this finding is only somewhat related to how a pastor’s burnout experience of may influence his congregation members.

As stated, no known literature has examined the relationship between a pastor’s experience of burnout and the religious participation of his congregation members, or any other attitudes or behavior of members, for that matter. The relationship between leader burnout and a decrement in follower attitudes and behaviors has been found in the traditional I/O and occupational health psychology literature (Skakon, Nielsen, Borg, & Guzman, 2010; Johnson, 2008). Although the supervisor-subordinate relationship is not exactly parallel to a pastor and his congregation members, this study aims to determine if a similar relationship is supported between pastors and congregation members.

In the current dissertation, intrinsic religiousness was measured with a composite score of four self-reported items: spiritual growth over the past year, frequency of private devotional activities, the extent to which participation in the congregation impacts one’s everyday life, and the extent to which spiritual needs are met in the congregation (Hypothesis 5). Extrinsic religiousness will be assessed with two separate items: sense of belonging in the congregation and changes in one’s level of participation in church activities compared to two years ago (Hypothesis 6a-b).
Hypothesis 5. Churches with higher average burnout among pastors will have lower average ratings of attenders’ intrinsic religiousness.

Hypothesis 6a. Churches with higher average burnout among pastors will have lower average ratings of attenders’ sense of belonging (extrinsic religiousness).

Hypothesis 6b. Churches with higher average burnout among pastors will have declining ratings of attender participation (extrinsic religiousness).
CHAPTER SIX

ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES OF PASTOR BURNOUT

In addition to the relationships between pastor burnout and his or her own health and congregation member religiousness, pastor burnout is also expected to be related to measures of church organizational health. In this chapter, I will examine three common measures of church organizational health, and the relationships between pastor burnout and these measures. Specifically, I will examine the impact of pastor burnout on a) church attendance, b) financial stability, and c) pastor turnover intentions.

Church Attendance Rates

Within Christian churches, many argue that the church in North America is in crisis (Burton, 2010; Olson, 2008). To the casual observer, however, the North American church may seem to be booming, as new churches are regularly established in many parts of the country (Olson, 2008). However, approximately 80% of church congregations in North America are stagnant or in decline, and approximately 3,500 churches in the U.S. close their doors every year (Stetzer, 2003).

Trends continue to show that a decreasing proportion of Americans regularly attend church. Based on a study by The American Church Research Project, 17.5% of the American population in 2005 attended a Christian church on any given weekend (Olson, 2008). If trends continue, one prediction states that the percentage of Americans who attend church in 2050 will be half that which it was in 1990 (Olson, 2008). This prediction is based on multiple factors, such as, for the most part, church attendance is not keeping up with the U.S. population growth (Olson, 2008)
Examining attendance data from U.S. churches from 2000 to 2005, Olson (2008) reported that attendance trends differed by denominational traditions. The proportion of Americans who attended a Catholic Church on any given weekend declined 14% from 2000 to 2005 (Olson, 2008). For Mainline Protestant churches (e.g., United Methodist Church, Episcopalian Church, Presbyterian Church USA), weekly attendance declined 7% in the same time frame. However, for Evangelical Protestant churches (e.g., Presbyterian Church in America; Southern Baptist Church) the proportion of Americans attending was relatively constant from 2000 to 2005 (9.2% and 9.1% attending, respectively; Olson, 2008). There are many factors affecting these differences, including the average age of congregants, age of the church, and the denominational tradition’s emphasis on church planting in areas where like-minded churches are sparse (Olson, 2008).

Church attendance rates. Growth is a measure of success in most organizations, and church organizations are no different (Dougherty, 2004, as cited in Burton, 2010). The long-term survival and success of local congregations, denominations, and the faith itself requires some evidence of growth. Stagnation quickly leads to evident decline. Importantly, a prescribed faith can die out completely in just a few generations, if the older generation does not teach it to the younger (Psalm 78:4).

Attendance rates are one of the most frequently used measures of church organizational health and performance. For over 100 years, church membership numbers were the primary metric of churches (Rainer, 2013a). During that time, in most churches,
there was a higher expectation of attendance and participation for members. There was little difference between membership and weekly attendance numbers (Rainer, 2013a).

In the more recent past, average *weekly service attendance* has become the most common metric of organizational health and performance (Rainer, 2013a). In many churches, there is little expectation or accountability for members to be active in a meaningful way, even in weekly attendance (Rainer, 2013a). Engelberg and colleagues (2013) explained that they focused their study on weekly attendance rather than membership numbers because it was apparent from discussions with church leaders that membership numbers were less representative of the current health of a church than attendance data. For example, it may go unnoticed for months when church members move out of the area, which means they remain on membership rosters but are not actively participating. In many churches, it is uncommon to systematically or periodically remove members because of non-participation in church services and activities. Thus, examining changes in membership as part of a study may be an inflated and less precise measure of the activity and health of the church. In addition, Engelberg and colleagues (2013) noted that they focused on changes in attendance (percent increase or decrease) rather than raw attendance numbers to normalize churches of different sizes.

It is important to note that although used frequently, most church leaders do not consider attendance numbers to be a complete measure of church health (Bonem, 2012). The number of people in the pews, or even on the membership rosters in some churches, do not necessarily equate to committed, maturing disciples and a healthy congregation. Broad congregational metrics do not adequately show how individual people are growing
in their faith (Bonem, 2012). However, churches must use these types of metrics, namely, attendance, membership, giving, and spending, because they are accessible and quantifiable. Most church leaders monitor trends in attendance, membership, giving, and spending, but are well aware that these do not fully measure the success of their local church according to its mission and vision. Personal testimonies of how God is at work in individuals and their communities are invaluable to see the full picture of the health and impact of a church.

The impact of leadership from the senior pastor. One of the aims of the current dissertation was to examine if burnout among pastors may be related to a decline in church attendance. There is no known literature to date that has examined this relationship. From a more broad sense, there is mixed evidence regarding the senior pastor’s impact on church attendance rates in terms of their leadership behaviors, style, or personal characteristics.

As mentioned, approximately 80% of churches in North America are stagnant or in decline (Stetzer, 2003). Some within the church community believe certain pastoral leadership behaviors or characteristics are necessary for church growth (Burton, 2010). For example, some believe that if a pastor is a gifted teacher and preacher, growth will follow. Others are not certain about the impact that the leadership of a senior pastor has on church growth (Barna, 1999).

Studies of the relationship between a pastor’s leadership and attendance rates have shown mixed results (Bridges, 1995; Langner, 2004). Burton (2010) examined the relationship between leadership behaviors and church attendance rates with 76 pastors.
from two denominations, the Church of the United Brethren in Christ and the Missionary Church. Burton (2010) used the Leadership Practices Inventory-Observer (LPI; Kouzes & Posner, 2002) to measure leadership behaviors. The LPI focuses on five practices or behaviors: a) model the way, b) inspire a shared vision, c) challenge the process, d) enable others to act, and e) encourage the heart. Burton (2010) found that none of the five leadership behaviors significantly predicted church attendance rates.

Notably, Burton (2010) described a major limitation of his study: There were only 76 pastors from two denominations, Church of the United Brethren in Christ and the Missionary Church, that participated. These two denominations were considered “similar” by the researcher; however, the analyses may have been more accurate if participants were separated according to denomination or if denomination was considered a control variable. It is possible that the relationship between senior pastor leadership behavior and attendance rates may have been present with a larger sample size, with a wider variety of denominations, and/or examined within a single denomination.

Other researchers have found that senior pastor leadership style has influenced church population growth. Bae (2001) found that there was a correlation between transformational leadership and church population rates for churches of 150 members or more. In another study, Engelberg and colleagues (2013) used internal records from every United Methodist Church (UMC) in Oklahoma from 1961-2003 to estimate the role of specific, individual pastors on church service attendance. After accounting for the variance explained by county population growth, the year of data collection, and individual differences between churches, the individual pastor explained a significant
amount of unique variance in church attendance rates. Specific behaviors, style, or characteristics were not examined in this study; however, pastors were the most important determinant of church growth (or decline) examined in this study (Engelberg et al., 2013). Moreover, pastors were important in both small and large churches, and further (Engelberg et al., 2013).

In sum, some initial evidence has suggested that pastoral leadership behaviors, style, and/or personal characteristics are related to church attendance trends. However, to my knowledge, previous research has not examined the relationship between the emotional health of a pastor and the attendance rates of the congregation. The current study aimed to examine burnout as a specific characteristic or experience of the pastor that may be related to church attendance rates. Pastors are influential leaders, and must lead by example (Niedringhaus, 2008). Congregation members may perceive a pastor’s emotional, physical, and spiritual exhaustion, either implicitly or explicitly, and this may affect attendance. Congregation members may or may not know their pastor well enough to know what is going on in his or her life, but they may notice from the pulpit or in conversation that they are disengaged or worn down. This may not be the reason members start to attend less frequently or move to other churches, but it may contribute implicitly to their decision to become less involved.

Hypothesis 7. Churches with higher average burnout among pastors will have declining attendance rates.
Church Financial Stability

Similar to the ways in which a pastor can implicitly or explicitly influence a congregation member’s regular participation in church services and activities, a pastor can influence their financial giving to the church and its ministries. For Christians, faithful, regular giving to the local church is a response of loving obedience that constitutes an essential part of worship of God (1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:7). Giving is essential for the continuation of ministries through the local church and missions efforts around the world (1 Corinthians 9:13-14). Pastors are needed to communicate a Biblical understanding of the stewardship of one’s resources. Pastors are needed to lead by example around important ministries and activities of the congregation (Niedringhaus, 2008). A pastor who is burned out may have limited personal resources to lead by example as a cheerful giver and/or encourage congregation members to give faithfully and cheerfully.

Very limited research efforts have examined the relationship between the pastor and church giving. To my knowledge, no empirical studies have examined how a pastor can affect the financial giving or the financial health of his church. Niedringhaus (2008) provided some descriptive evidence pertaining to differing attitudes on stewardship for pastors and suggested how these attitudes may affect congregation members’ giving. Niedringhaus (2008) reported on behalf of the United Methodist Communications and General Commission on Finance and Administration who examined pastor characteristics as one factor that may help explain church members’ giving habits. Using cluster analysis, four groups of pastors were identified with differences that could obviously
affect much more than giving: *Outwardly Focused Disciples, Inwardly Focused Disciples, Social Justice Advocates,* and *The Less Engaged.* Forty-eight percent of responding pastors were *Outwardly Focused Disciples.* These pastors indicated that private devotional activities are extremely important to them (e.g., prayer, mediation, personal Bible study). They considered regular corporate worship, generous and regular giving, lifelong study of Scripture, and social justice efforts very important. Similarly, they strongly support sharing one’s faith with others and establishing new churches to reach more individuals and communities. *Inwardly Focused Disciples* were 15% of respondents. These pastors expressed opinions very close to those of *Outwardly Focused Disciples,* but were less interested in maintaining connections with other Christians and participating in social issues as a church. *Inwardly Focused* pastors were more focused on the internally efforts and issues of their church, such as allocation and use of resources and the influence of powerful social circles in the church.

*Social Justice Advocates* described 16% of respondents. This pastor profile put the least amount of emphasis on private devotional activities. In contrast to other groups, these pastors had more interest in church activism in addressing social issues, such as racism, health issues, and war. Lastly, *The Less Engaged* constituted 19% of participating pastors. These pastors were similar to *Inwardly Focused Disciples* in that they considered worship, prayer, and investing in spiritual growth of others the very important. In contrast, these pastors see financial giving and Bible study as less important. They have little interest in church activism to address social issues (Niedringhaus, 2008).
These pastoral profiles highlighted the diversity of opinions, ministry emphases, and church direction among pastors. Niedringhaus (2008) reported that many pastors expressed limited enthusiasm for focusing on financial stewardship, among other factors. It is clear that this is not necessarily due to burnout. However, burnout could be one reason that a pastor is disinterested or disengaged with certain ministries. It is also possible that certain pastors naturally prefer to focus on other ministries than stewardship. However, stewardship and giving are essential for a church’s health and growth.

Further, because generous giving is a form of worshipping God, pastors should want to see generous giving for their members, not as something to be received from their members (Alcorn, 2003; 2 Corinthians 9:11-15). As such, a financially stable church, with members who give generously, could be an indication that members are spiritually healthy and growing in their love and worship of God. Thus, financial stability in relation to pastor burnout could be seen as a) something that a burned out pastor is not motivated to preach and teach on, and/or b) an indication that members are not growing in their love and worship of God (personal religiousness).

The current dissertation operationalized giving and stewardship as the subjective “financial stability” of the church, as reported by a church staff member. The financial stability of a church will be evaluated with a 4-point scale with response options ranging from: “Our financial situation is a serious threat to our ability to continue as a viable congregation (1)” to “We have an increasing financial base (4).” (See Appendix G).

Hypothesis 8. Churches with higher average burnout among pastors will have lower average financial stability.
Turnover Intentions

There are several important organizational outcomes of burnout, as evidenced by the traditional I/O psychology literature. Turnover intentions are often examined as an outcome of burnout (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model of burnout and engagement posits that job burnout is positively related to turnover intentions (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014).

In considering the relationship between job burnout and turnover intentions for pastors, it is important to note that high levels of burnout do not necessarily mean strong intentions to turnover. This is often confused in modern vernacular, such that describing someone as “burned out” means that they desire, are making efforts toward, or have already left their job or occupation. Burnout is a psychological, emotional, and physical phenomenon, and it is possible that an individual who is experiencing high levels of burnout may also be satisfied with his or her job and have no intention to leave (Francis, Louden, & Rutledge, 2004).

Nonetheless, the reasons why a pastor may leave his position in a local church are very diverse. As in the traditional workforce, some pastors leave voluntarily, and others leave involuntarily. In some instances, a pastor aims to pursue ministry in a particular setting (e.g., hospital chaplaincy; parachurch organization on a college campus). In other instances, a pastor may leave to pursue a job in the traditional workforce. In addition, he may be pushed out of his position involuntarily: as a result of a conflict, disagreement, or
misconduct that disqualifies him from the position (e.g., embezzlement, fraud, sexual misconduct).

Some research has begun to explore job turnover and transitions among pastors. Studies have examined how many ordained pastors remain in local church ministry years after ordination, those who left local church ministry but continue to serve in another setting of Christian ministry, and those who left the ministry to pursue a different occupation. The majority of these studies have been conducted within a single denomination; however, at least one study of turnover among pastors was across multiple denominations. Zikmund, Lummis, and Chang (1998) surveyed 5,000 ordained clergy across 15 denominations. Zikmund and colleagues found that by age 45 or 50, 67% remained in local church ministry, and fewer women remained than men (59% and 75% remained, respectively). More women than men were serving in non-local church settings in the later years of their career (Zikmund et al., 1998). Women were more likely to leave often because of family responsibilities, particularly to care for their children or other family members. Some women also cited continued discouragement because of resistance to female clergy from denominational leaders as a reason for leaving (Hoge & Wenger, 2005).

In a study of United Methodist ministers, Memming (1998, as cited in Hoge & Wenger, 2005) found that 59% of ministers were still in local church ministry ten years after ordination, but only 42% remained at twenty years after ordination. Despite the fact that some moved out of local church ministry, 93% were still in some form of Christian ministry, in other settings and specialties (Memming, 1998). Additionally, one study by
the Presbyterian Church USA (1999, as cited in Hoge & Wenger, 2005) estimated that 11-13% of ministers ordained in 1990-1992 who served in the local church had left the Presbyterian ministry entirely.

The Pulpit and Pew study of more than 900 former ministers has brought some clarity to this complex topic (Hoge & Wenger, 2005). In addition to examining other topics, former ministers across denominations were surveyed or interviewed to gain a better understanding of why they left their position in the local church. The Pulpit and Pew studies drew three major conclusions pertaining to why pastors leave local church ministry.

First, the main factors pushing pastors away from serving in the local church are organizational and interpersonal (Hoge & Wenger, 2005). All of the major factors identified in this study that were pushing or pulling pastors out of churches could be grouped into these two overarching categories. More specifically, the Pulpit and Pew studies determined seven major reasons why pastors leave local church ministry: the preference for another kind of ministry or setting, the need to care for children or family members, conflict in the congregation, conflict with denominational leaders, burnout or discouragement, sexual misconduct, and divorce or marital problems.

Second, a lack of social support, especially when a pastor is coping with conflict, is a major contributor to turnover (Hoge & Wenger, 2005). The problem with the lack of support is complex. Most pastors understand the need for personal support systems, with friends, family, and other pastors. However, in regard to giving and receiving support from fellow pastors, Hoge and Wenger (2005) reported that some pastors felt
unavoidable competition with one another, which impedes the formation of healthy supportive relationships with one’s peers.

Third, as in the traditional workforce, it is often not just one, but a combination of stressors, difficulties, and circumstances that influence a pastor to leave. It is often difficult to distinguish if it is concern for family, interpersonal conflict, job dissatisfaction, or work overload issue that is the root of the concern and reason for leaving. Regardless if a pastor leaves because of a major conflict or because he needs to care for his family, pastors who leave local church ministry may receive negative attention, misunderstanding, and even hostility from congregation and community members (Hoge & Wenger, 2005).

As noted, burnout and discouragement was one of the seven major reasons that pastors left local church ministry (Hoge & Wenger, 2005). Twelve percent of former pastors identified burnout and discouragement as one of the reasons why they left the pastorate (Hoge & Wenger, 2005). The pastors who cited burnout were not unique to other pastors who left in terms of gender, age, denomination, or position level. However, they were distinguishable from other pastors in several respects: they felt more lonely and isolated, stressed due to challenges from the congregation, bored and constrained to their positions, and doubted their abilities as ministers in a local church. These pastors felt frustrated and could not see any solution other than to leave local church ministry. Compared to those who left for different reasons, pastors who named burnout as a major contributor of leaving did not identify an outward entity on which to place the blame for their discontent. Their complaints and issues were not directed at denominational
officials; rather, they believed that the problem existed within their local church, or within themselves (Hoge & Wenger, 2005). Therefore, pastors may believe that they have brought the experience and consequences of burnout on themselves or could have prevented it.

There is additional empirical evidence for a relationship between burnout and turnover intentions among pastors. In a study of Anglican clergy in the Church of England and the Church of Wales, higher levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment were correlated with more frequent considerations of leaving the ministry (Randall, 2004). Although not specified by the authors, this item appeared to specifically measure occupational turnover intentions, in which a pastor no longer desires to serve in a ministerial capacity. The alternative would be that he desires to leave his current church and instead pastor another church or begin a ministerial position in another setting (i.e., a college Chaplin). However, Randall (2004) described a positive relationship between burnout and occupational turnover intentions for pastors.

Randall (2004) also reported that for each of the three dimensions of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment), pastors who had considered leaving the ministry on three or more occasions reported significantly higher levels of burnout than those who had considered leaving the ministry on fewer than three occasions. One major difference between Randall (2004) and Hoge and Wenger (2005) is that the former was a study of clergy who were still working in their current positions (i.e., turnover intentions) whereas the later was a study of former
pastors who were reporting reasons why the left (i.e., influences on actual turnover). Therefore, it is important to note that burnout can affect actual turnover behavior, and its precursor, the consideration of leaving one’s job.

In contrast, one study has suggested that burnout was not a significant predictor of turnover. In a study of current or recently retired pastors from multiple denominations, Beebe (2007) found that burnout was not significantly related to turnover. As one of the few studies connecting burnout to turnover among pastors, it is worth mentioning; however, the measurement of burnout and turnover was not comparable to the others described here. Burnout was measured conventionally with the MBI; however, “turnover” was measured as self-reported longest tenure at one organization. The assumption was that an individual who had a shorter reported tenure with one organization had turned over more frequently in his career. This operationalization looked at the number of turnovers over the course of one’s career whereas burnout was measured in terms of one’s current experience. It would be more precise to measure current turnover intentions or recent turnover behavior. In sum, although worth mentioning, it is not surprising that Beebe (2007) did not find a significant relationship between one’s current experience of burnout and longest tenure at one organization.

In sum, turnover intentions are a well-known outcome of burnout (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). There is some empirical evidence for the relationship between burnout and turnover intentions among pastors (Randall, 2004; Hoge & Wenger, 2005). Some evidence has also suggested that some pastors experiencing burnout consider
organizational or occupational turnover (Hoge & Wenger, 2005). In the current study, turnover intentions was measured with a composite score of three items (see Method).

_Hypothesis 9._ Pastor burnout will be positively related to turnover intentions.

**Social Support as a Moderator of Burnout and Turnover Intentions**

As mentioned, no known literature to date has examined moderators of the relationships between pastor burnout and the outcomes described herein. The current dissertation explored the proposition that enacted social support from the congregation moderates the relationships between burnout and the pastor-level outcomes.

Social support has been consistently linked to turnover intentions (e.g., Alexander, Lichtenstein, Oh, & Ullman, 1998). The job demands-resources model (JD-R; Bakker & Demerouti, 2004) underlines the importance of social support in relation to one’s to intentions to stay on the job. According to this model, lack of resources predict work disengagement outcomes. Lack of resources is suggested to weaken motivation, decrease social connections, and lead to various forms of disengagement (Pomaki, DeLongis, Frey, Short, & Woehrle, 2009).

Some research has also suggested that social support can protect against the negative relationship between job demands and disengagement outcomes. One study among new teachers in Canada found that coworker social support moderated the relationship between workload and turnover intentions, such that social support reduced the negative relationship between workload and turnover intentions (Pomaki et al., 2009). One limitation to this study, however, was that organizational and occupational turnover

71
intentions were measured as one construct. Thus, it cannot be determined if social support protected against organizational turnover, occupational turnover, or both.

For a pastor, supportive congregation members also include other church staff with whom a pastor works on a daily basis: associate pastors, ministers, interns, administrative staff, etc. Supportive coworkers can make individuals feel respected, help them engage in adaptive coping mechanisms, assist them in mobilizing other resources (Cohen & Wills, 1985), and provide opportunities for new perspectives to work-related issues (Kahn, Schneider, Jenkins-Henkelman, & Moyle, 2006).

As mentioned, supportive congregation members can bolster a pastor’s resources by providing much-needed support, and emotional support was the focus of the current study. Again, genuine care expressed by fellow church members may be a particularly important form of support that reduces a pastor’s desire to leave. The current study proposed that social support from congregation members weakens the positive relationship between pastor burnout and turnover intentions. Support for these relationships will suggest that social support from those in one’s faith community reduces the relationship between burnout and the desire to leave.

_Hypothesis 10_. Social support from congregation members will weaken the positive relationship between pastor burnout and turnover intentions.
CHAPTER SEVEN

METHOD

Summary of the Hypotheses

The aim of the current dissertation was to determine if local church pastors’ experience of burnout was related to various levels of the church organization: pastor, congregation, and organizational outcomes. In addition, social support from congregation members was examined as a moderator of the individual-level relationships (see Figures 1 and 2). This dissertation used a multilevel perspective to account for the fact that individual pastor data are naturally clustered within organizations, the local church. Thus, the current study accounted for the influence of between-organization (between-church) differences. Therefore, the following hypotheses were proposed:

Hypothesis 1. Pastor burnout will be negatively associated with self-reported physical health.

Hypothesis 2. Pastor burnout will be negatively associated with self-reported mental health.

Hypothesis 3. Social support from congregation members will weaken the negative relationship between pastor burnout and physical health.

Hypothesis 4. Social support from congregation members will weaken the negative relationship between pastor burnout and mental health.

Hypothesis 5. Churches with higher average burnout among pastors will have lower average ratings of attenders’ intrinsic religiousness.

Hypothesis 6a. Churches with higher average burnout among pastors will have lower average ratings of attenders’ sense of belonging (extrinsic religiousness).

Hypothesis 6b. Churches with higher average burnout among pastors will have declining ratings of attender participation (extrinsic religiousness).
Hypothesis 7. Churches with higher average burnout among pastors will have declining attendance rates.

Hypothesis 8. Churches with higher average burnout among pastors will have lower average financial stability.

Hypothesis 9. Pastor burnout will be positively related to turnover intentions.

Hypothesis 10. Social support from congregation members will weaken the positive relationship between pastor burnout and turnover intentions.

Overall Design

The current study used data collected as part of a large national study, the U.S. Congregational Life Survey (USCLS). The USCLS was conducted to examine American religious life from a broad perspective. Data from Wave 2 of the USCLS was used in the current study, collected during Fall 2008 and Spring 2009. USCLS Wave 1, collected in 2001, did not contain the primary variables of interest for the current study. The USCLS data is publically available (U.S. Congregational Life Survey, Wave 2, 2008/2009).

Procedures

Participants were identified and recruited to participate in the USCLS at the congregation level. As mentioned, congregations were selected either through (a) random sampling across the United States, or (b) some denominations agreed to sample their own congregations for participation. Each of these methods is described in more detail below.

Random sampling. The first method by which congregations were identified to participate in Wave 2 of the USCLS was through random sampling. Congregations were identified and recruited for Wave 2 of the USCLS by Harris Interactive, a market research firm. Harris Interactive identified a random sample of congregations through a poll of adults in the United States conducted in 2007. Individuals were asked if they
regularly attend worship services. Those who said “yes” were asked to name the congregation where they usually attend worship. Since the poll involved a national random sample of individuals, congregations identified by these participants comprised close to a national random sample of congregations. About 1,800 congregations were identified with this strategy and invited to participate in the U.S. Congregational Life Survey in 2008 and 2009 (Wave 2; Resources for Researchers, n.d.).

Of 1,330 congregations nominated and verified for the Wave 2 sample, 201 agreed to participate (15% of congregations) and 148 returned completed attender surveys (73% of those that agreed). These congregations returned 38,468 attender surveys. In addition, congregations in the national random sample that participated in 2001 (USCLS Wave 1) were also invited by Harris Interactive to take part in Wave 2. In 2008, Harris Interactive verified and located 411 of the 434 congregations that participated in Wave 1. Of these, 145 agreed to participate in Wave 2 (35% of congregations), and 108 returned completed surveys from their worshipers (74% of those that agreed). These congregations returned 26,206 completed attender surveys. The total number of returned attender surveys in Wave 2 was 64,674 (U.S. Congregational Life Survey, Wave 2, 2008/2009).

**Denominational sampling.** The second method by which congregations were identified to participate in Wave 2 of the USCLS was through sampling that was conducted within a few denominations. In Wave 1 and Wave 2, some denominations were invited and encouraged to draw a random sample of their congregations. Denominations participating in this oversampling procedure were Church of the
Nazarene, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (USA), Seventh-day Adventist Church, United Methodist Church, and United Church of Christ. In Wave 2, the Church of God (Cleveland, TN) also participated by surveying a national random sample of their denomination’s congregations (U.S. Congregational Life Survey, Wave 2, 2008/2009). These denominational samples were large enough that the results were representative of congregations within each denomination and can be used as denominational benchmarks (e.g., United Methodist Church, n = 3,996; Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, n = 6,490). This allowed congregations within the denomination to compare their results to results for the “typical” congregation in their denomination.

Survey administration. Each participating congregation completed three types of surveys: (a) an “attender survey” completed by all worshipers aged 15 and older who attended worship services during the weekend the survey was administered, (b) a “congregational profile” describing the congregation’s facilities, staff, programs, and worship services completed by one person in the congregation, usually a staff member, and (c) a “leader survey” completed by the pastor, priest, minister, rabbi, or other senior leader (Resources for Researchers, n.d.). Associate pastors, if applicable, completed a very similar leader survey in which some of the items were reworded to pertain to the associate leader position. Thus, participants in the current study represent three groups within a local church: pastors, church attenders (not necessarily members of the church), and church staff who completed organizational information about the church. This design provides a unique look at religious life in America from multiple angles.
A business-reply envelope was used for leaders to mail back the survey and maintain their confidentiality. Leaders could also complete the survey online. In addition, Harris Interactive made several attempts by mail and by telephone to contact the senior leader in each congregation that was nominated for the project but declined to participate in the attender portion of the study. After several reminders, incentives were offered to remaining non-respondents to encourage participation (U.S. Congregational Life Survey, Wave 2, 2008/2009).

**Participants**

Participants in the current study represented three groups within a local church: pastors, church attenders (not necessarily members of the church), and church staff members who completed organizational information about their church. The effects examined in the current dissertation are not expected to vary according to a pastor’s job role (i.e., senior or associate pastor). Thus, data from senior and associate pastors were combined to examine burnout of all pastors, and job type was included as a control variable.

**Pastors.** Pastors who participated in the USCLS were 862 total pastors, representing 707 different congregations. Of these, 692 pastors (80.3%) were the senior leader in their church. These included *senior pastors*, those who serve with two or more pastors at their church, and *solo pastors*, those who are the only pastor at their church. In addition, 170 pastors (19.7%) identified themselves as *associate pastors*, those who serve with one or more other pastors at their church. Individuals who did not identify themselves as holding the role of a pastor (e.g., youth minister, minister of music) were
not included in the current study. Thus, of the total sample of 862 pastors, 35% \( (n = 306) \) were senior pastors, 40% \( (n = 345) \) were solo pastors, and 20% \( (n = 170) \) were associate pastors. Senior and associate pastors serving at the same congregation were analyzed together as such in multilevel modeling analyses.

As the current study used multilevel modeling techniques with *church* as the Level 2 grouping variable, it was desirable for only a small proportion churches to have a single observation to represent them (i.e., one pastor at the church). If only one pastor represented a church, only his or her characteristics represented the organization and nested data was not present. Importantly, if too many Level 2 units were represented by a single data point, random effects cannot be estimated and convergence errors may arise (Singer, & Willett, 2003). To prevent these errors, some of the churches represented by only one pastor were randomly selected and excluded, so that only 30% of the Level 2 units had a single observation (Singer, & Willett, 2003). Thus, 204 churches (30% of the total sample) with a solo pastor were randomly selected and included in the current study. This proportion means that 680 total pastors representing 336 churches were included in the analyses: 45% \( (n = 306) \) were senior pastors, 30% \( (n = 204) \) were solo pastors, and 25% \( (n = 170) \) were associate pastors.

Senior and solo pastors were described as *senior pastors* in this dissertation unless otherwise noted. Senior pastors in this study were primarily white (93.6%) and primarily males (82.3%). The average age of senior pastors was 53.75 years old \( (SD = 10.05) \). Senior pastors had an average occupational tenure of 22.34 years \( (SD = 12.2) \). The church’s denomination as reported by the senior pastor was categorized into
denominational families by the U.S. Congregational Life Survey. Classification into denominational families was based on several sources, such as the Association of Religion Data Archives (Evangelical Protestant Denominations, n.d.; Mainline Protestant Denominations, n.d.). The denominational families represented by senior pastors were: 7.2% Catholic, 59.4% Mainline Protestant, 30.6% Conservative/Evangelical Protestant, and 2.7% other.

Associate pastors in the current study were also primarily white (84.7%) and primarily males (72.6%). Associate pastors were, on average, younger than senior pastors, averaging 46.53 years old ($SD = 13.31$). Associate pastors had an average occupational tenure of 12.13 years ($SD = 11.27$). The denominational families represented by associate pastors were: 30% Catholic, 37.6% Mainline Protestant, and 32.4% Conservative/Evangelical Protestant.

**Service attenders.** Worship service attenders who participated in the current study were 64,674 attenders, representing 256 different congregations. All worshipers aged 15 and older that attended worship services at participating churches during a designated weekend were invited to participate. Service attenders were primarily white (77.4%) and primarily females (61.1%). The average age of participating attenders was 53.08 years old ($SD = 19.0$). Attenders reported the denominational family of their congregation: 52.2% Catholic, 30.8% Mainline Protestant, 16.5% Conservative/Evangelical Protestant, and 0.2% other.

**Organizational profile.** Finally, organizational information about each participating church was completed by a staff member or lay leader. A total of 251
congregations returned a completed profile. The participating churches were primarily well-established, older congregations: the average number of years since establishment was 96 years ($SD = 59.76$). The denominational families of the congregations were 12.8% Catholic, 55.2% Mainline Protestant, 30.4% Conservative Protestant, and 1.6% other. Therefore, attenders represented more Catholic churches, and churches with organizational profiles were majority Protestant.

The average weekly attendance in 2008 for all services of a congregation was 209.3 ($SD = 384.1$), which serves as a proxy measure of congregational size. (The measurement of church attendance growth in the current study is covered in the next section.) In terms of personnel, the majority (68.1%) of churches had one full-time ordained pastor. The majority of congregations did not have part-time ordained professionals, full-time non-ordained pastors/leaders, or part-time non-ordained pastors/leaders (72.3%, 78.7%, and 71.0% of churches did not have these, respectively). Part-time paid support and administrative staff were more common among participating churches: 47.8% of churches had 1-3 part-time paid support staff.

**Measures**

Measures in the current study are described below according to which participants were assessed on the construct: congregational leaders (i.e., senior pastors and associate pastors), service attenders, or organizational information reported on from each participating church.
Leader survey.

Burnout. Pastors responded to six items designed to measure job burnout. The items were adapted for pastors from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). The MBI measures burnout based on three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced personal accomplishment. The MBI has strong psychometric properties and is one of the most widely used measures of burnout, particularly among the helping professions (Maslach et al., 2001). In the current study, two items measured emotional exhaustion, two measured cynicism, and two measured reduced personal accomplishment. Ratings were made on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree). Higher scores indicated higher levels of job burnout. As the current study focused on the overall burnout syndrome, a composite score of the six items measuring burnout was used to test the hypothesized relationships. (See Appendix A).

A series of multilevel confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) were conducted to test the factor structure of the six items used to measure job burnout. Significant nesting was present (burnout ICC1 = .06); therefore, multilevel CFA techniques were appropriate to accurately model the non-independence of errors due to group membership. The hypothesized three-factor structure representing the dimensions of burnout mentioned above provided good fit to the data (CFI = .98; RMSEA = .08; SRMR = .02). Items representing the three dimensions were considered together as a composite scale because the theoretical interest was in the overall burnout syndrome. The three factors were highly correlated suggesting they could be combined. Correlations of $r = .58$, .70, and .74 represented the relationships between emotional exhaustion and cynicism, emotional
exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment, and cynicism and reduced personal accomplishment, respectively.

Based on the level of analysis for each hypothesized relationship, pastor burnout was analyzed at the individual level or aggregated to the church level. Thus, the factor structure for burnout must be examined at both the within- and between-church levels. At the within-church level (Level 1), Cronbach’s alpha was .73 and rho (composite reliability) = .78. When pastor burnout scores were aggregated to the between-church level (Level 2), Cronbach’s alpha was .76 and rho = .83. The reliability coefficient rho is helpful because it allows factor loadings to vary across items, whereas Cronbach’s alpha assumes equal loadings for each item (Peterson & Kim, 2013).

Intra-class correlation statistics (ICC1) were calculated to indicate the proportion of total variance that can be explained by group membership. Table 1 displays ICC1 values for all study variables. The recommended cutoff is an ICC1 value of .02 or greater, meaning that at least 2% of the total variance was at Level 2 (the church level). The primary predictor of interest, pastor job burnout, displayed moderate variance at the group level (ICC1 = .060). That is, 6% of the variability in individual level pastor burnout was associated with differences between churches. Thus, multilevel modeling techniques were appropriate.

**Physical health status.** Three items from the SF-36 (Ware & Sherbourne, 1992) were used to measure physical health status. These items were ratings of general health status, physical pain, and social functioning. These three items are part of the SF-12, the short form of the SF-36 that contains the items that best reproduce the SF-36. Responses
options were different for each of the three items for this construct. Ratings for each were made on a 5-point Likert scale: general health status (poor – excellent), the extent to which physical pain interferes with normal activities (not at all – extremely), and the extent to which one’s physical health interferes with social functioning (none of the time – all of the time). Higher scores indicated more favorable levels of physical health functioning. A composite scale calculated from raw scores of each item was very highly correlated with a scale calculated from z-scores of each item ($r = .99, p < .01$). The composite scale calculated from the raw scores was used. (See Appendix B).

**ICC1 values for pastor physical health (one of the outcome variables) was below the recommended cutoff to demonstrate a significant amount of variance at Level 2 (ICC1 = .013). This means that pastor physical health was not greatly affected by one’s church membership and varied primarily at the individual level; nearly all of the variability was at the individual level.**

**Mental health status.** Four items from the SF-36 (Ware & Sherbourne, 1992) were used to measure mental health status. These items measured calm/peaceful, downhearted/depressed, energy, and happiness. All of these except the item measuring happiness are also part of the SF-12, which contains the items that best reproduce the SF-36. Ratings were made on a 5-point Likert scale (none of the time – all of the time). Higher scores indicated more favorable levels of mental health functioning. (See Appendix B).

Pastor mental health (one of the outcome variables) displayed moderate variance at the group level (ICC1 = .078). That is, 7.8% of the variability in individual level pastor
burnout was associated with differences between churches.

A series of multilevel CFAs were conducted to test the factor structure of the seven items designed to measure physical and mental health status. A two-factor structure representing physical and mental health provided good fit to the data (CFI = .99; RMSEA = .01). As hypothesized, three items will be used to measure physical health, and four items will be used to measure mental health. Based on the two-factor CFA with both physical and mental health items included, Cronbach’s alpha was .76 and rho (composite reliability) = .80. The reliability coefficient rho is helpful to review because it allows factor loadings to vary across items, whereas Cronbach’s alpha assumes equal loadings (Peterson & Kim, 2013).

**Turnover intentions.** Three items were used to measure pastors’ turnover intentions. These items measured the frequency of thoughts regarding leaving one’s current position to a) become a pastor at another church, and b) enter a ministry position that is outside the local church (e.g., chaplain of an organization), and c) enter a secular occupation. Ratings were made on a 4-point Likert scale (*never – very often*). Higher scores indicated more frequent thoughts of leaving. (See Appendix C).

A series of multilevel CFAs were conducted to test the factor structure of three items intended to measure pastor turnover intentions. Multilevel CFA techniques were appropriate due to significant nesting for this variable (ICC1 = .052). A single-factor model of turnover intentions with the three items is a just-identified (or saturated) model, meaning that the number of free parameters equals the number of known values (df = 0). A model with zero degrees of freedom produces trivially perfect fit; thus, fit statistics are
meaningless. The three items were moderately correlated with one another (bivariate $r = .31$, .44, and .48); therefore, a single-factor structure was preferred to separating the items into single-item measures of turnover. Cronbach’s alpha was .68 and rho (composite reliability) = .69 based on this multilevel CFA.

**Social support from the congregation.** Three items were used assess enacted support from one’s congregation members. Specifically, this study focused on enacted emotional support. Pastors were asked the frequency that, over the past year, people in the congregation: 1) made you feel loved and cared for, 2) listed to you talk about your private problems and concern, and 3) expressed interest and concern in your well-being. Ratings were made on a 4-point Likert scale (*never – very often*). Higher scores indicated more frequent enacted support from the congregation. (See Appendix D).

A multilevel CFA was conducted to test the factor structure of the three items designed to measure enacted social support from the congregation. The degree of nesting did not meet the general criteria to indicate significant nesting (ICC1 = .013). This means that membership at a particular church did not contribute as much to a pastor’s level of social support from the congregation; nearly all of the variability was at the individual level. However, multilevel CFA techniques were used because social support was included in hypotheses tests with other multilevel items. Again, the hypothesized one-factor model of enacted support from the congregation with the three items is a just-identified model ($df = 0$). Fit statistics produce trivially perfect fit. The three items were moderately correlated with one another (bivariate $r = .35$, .35, and .54); therefore, a single-factor structure was preferred to separating the items into single-item measures of
social support. Cronbach’s alpha was .67 and rho (composite reliability) = .68 based on this multilevel CFA.

**Service attender survey.**

**Intrinsic religiousness.** Worship service attenders responded to four items to assess intrinsic religiousness. These items were self-evaluations of one’s a) spiritual growth over the last year, b) frequency of private devotional activities, c) the extent to which worship services help in one’s everyday living, and d) the extent to which one’s spiritual needs are being met in this congregation. Each of these items reflected personal religious involvement and growth as opposed to participation in public worship services and activities (intrinsic versus extrinsic religiousness). Higher scores indicated greater personal religious involvement and growth. Response options differed for each of these four items; thus, a composite measure was computed as the mean of z-scores for each item. (See Appendix E).

A series of multilevel CFAs were conducted to test the factor structure of the five continuous items designed to measure intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness. Significant nesting was present (intrinsic religiousness ICC1 = .066; sense of belonging ICC1 = .032; participation ICC1 = .019); thus, multilevel techniques were used. As hypothesized, the item measuring one’s level of participation in activities at the church (extrinsic religiousness, described below) did not load onto the factor established by the four intrinsic religiousness items. The hypothesized one-factor structure representing intrinsic religiousness (based on four items) provided good fit to the data (CFI = .99; RMSEA = .07; SRMR = .04) and was retained. Based on the results of the Lagrange Multiplier
(LM) test, one error covariance was included in the model at the within-group level between the items measuring *spiritual needs are being met in this congregation* and the *frequency of private devotional activities*. This suggests that congregation members had a similar pattern of responding for these two items. Cronbach’s alpha was .55 and rho (composite reliability) = .64 based on this multilevel CFA. Although internal consistency was lower than desired, face validity indicates that these items measure facets of personal religious involvement.

**Extrinsic religiousness.** Worship service attenders responded to two items that measured extrinsic religiousness. These items were self-evaluations of a) changes in one’s level of participation in church activities compared to two years ago, and b) one’s sense of belonging in the congregation. Ratings for participation were made on a 3-point Likert scale (1 = *participate less*, 2 = *about the same*, 3 = *participate more*). Ratings for sense of belonging were made on a 4-point ordinal scale (1 = *no, but I am happy as I am/and I wish I did*/but I am new here; 2 = *yes, but perhaps not as strong as in the past*; 3 = *yes, a strong sense – about the same as last year*; 4 = *yes, a strong sense of belonging that is growing*). To create a more even distribution of responses and allow the data to be analyzed as ordinal, three response options for “no” were collapsed (see Analysis Strategy below). Higher scores indicated greater participation in public worship services and activities and a stronger sense of belonging in one’s church community. (See Appendix F).

These items were analyzed as two single-item measures of extrinsic religiousness. It is important to note that the item measuring *sense of belonging* was not included in the
multilevel CFAs because the response options for this item were an ordinal scale of measurement rather than interval. In addition, based on face validity, this item represented extrinsic religiousness more so than intrinsic religiousness, thus it would not have been included in the composite measure of intrinsic religiousness. As mentioned, the item measuring one’s level of participation in church activities did not load onto the factor that measured intrinsic religiousness in CFA analyses, supporting its categorization as a measure of extrinsic religiousness. (See Appendix F and Analysis Strategy).

**Organizational profile survey.**

**Church attendance rate.** A church attendance rate (percent growth or decline) was calculated from the average weekly attendance for worship services each congregation from 2001 to 2008. A church staff member or lay leader from each congregation reported average weekly attendance. For congregations with more than one worship service, attendance was reported for all services combined.

In the current study, church attendance growth was measured as the percentage change in average weekly attendance from year 2001 to year 2008, such that, attendance growth = [(attendance \textsubscript{2008} – attendance \textsubscript{2001}) / attendance \textsubscript{2001}]. If the 2008 attendance was greater than the 2001 attendance, it will be a percentage increase. Otherwise, it is a percentage decrease. Using percentage change rather than the raw change in the number of attenders standardizes the measure for small and large churches. For a few churches (< 10), the attendance for 2001 and/or 2008 was not reported but the adjacent year was reported (2002 or 2007). In these cases, the adjacent year was used to calculate the attendance rate. Descriptive statistics revealed that among the 251 churches sampled,
attendance rates slightly declined during this period overall ($M = -.03, SD = .31$). (See Appendix G).

**Financial stability.** A staff member or lay leader responded to a single item on the organizational profile survey to describe the financial stability of the congregation. Ratings were given on a 4-point scale ($1 = \text{Our financial situation is a serious threat to our ability to continue as a viable congregation}$ to $4 = \text{We have an increasing financial base}$.) Higher scores indicated stronger financial stability for the congregation. (See Appendix G).

**Control variables.** Pastor’s gender, occupational tenure, and job type (i.e., senior or associate pastor) were included as control variables in Level 1 analyses with pastor burnout. Previous research has identified significant relationships between burnout among pastors and the demographic variables of gender (Francis, Robbins & Wulff, 2013; Miner et al., 2010) and occupational tenure (Prout, 1996 as cited in Golden et al., 2004). Service attenders’ gender was included as a control variable in analyses of service attenders’ responses. Lastly, denominational group (Catholic/Protestant) for all participants was a control variable. Denominational group was included to control for the differences between Catholic and Protestant traditions in theological beliefs and religious practice.

**Analysis Strategy**

**Statistical assumptions.** All analyses were conducted using SPSS 22.0. First, statistical assumptions were tested. With multilevel data, traditional examinations of skewness and kurtosis (quantile-versus-quantile [Q-Q] plots and the Kolmogorov-
Smirnov test) to test the assumption of normality are not reliable tests. Thus, univariate skewness was examined with descriptive statistics. Study variables that produced a skewness value within the range of +/- 3.0 indicated that the data were not significantly skewed.

The data were also screened for potential outliers. Again, with multilevel data, traditional examinations of outliers using leverage statistics (e.g., Mahalanobis distance) are not appropriate because the data is nested. In the current study, outliers were identified through an examination of saved residuals from the multilevel test of each hypothesis. This method of examining the data for outliers takes into account that the data is nested. Residuals saved from these tests were converted into z-scores and examined for outlying values (+/- 3.25, with a large sample size). Scores that exceeded this value and were extreme were excluded. Scores that exceeded this value and were grouped together, assumed to represent a clustered group of valid cases, were retained.

Lastly, the data in the current study were structured such that pastors and worship service attenders were nested within churches. Most of the churches in the current study had more than one pastor, and clearly, many service attenders. The OLS regression assumption of independent errors is violated when the data are nested within preexisting groups. Multilevel modeling was employed for this reason, discussed below.

Descriptive statistics were calculated for all variables. Bivariate correlations between variables were presented.

**The logic and the process of multilevel modeling.** All study variables were examined for the amount of variance that existed at Level 2 (the church level) to provide
support for the use of multilevel modeling. For most outcome variables, a moderate amount of variance existed at Level 2. This means that a moderate amount of variability was due to between-church differences, and MLM techniques were appropriate.

Due to the fact that the data from pastors and congregation members were naturally nested within churches, multilevel modeling (MLM, also known as hierarchical linear modeling or random coefficient modeling) techniques were necessary. With nested data, the errors are more likely to be correlated which increases the Type I error rate if left uncorrected (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Multilevel modeling techniques partition individual-level and group-level variance in the DVs. Additional error terms are measured and used as the primary means by which MLM captures the correlations due to nested data. Thus, although conceptually similar to OLS regression, MLM is the more accurate way to analyze nested data because within-group and between-group variability is accounted for simultaneously (Nezlek, 2008). MLM properly controls for the non-independence of errors by allowing both intercepts and slopes to vary across groups.

In two-level MLM, three variance terms are estimated: intercept variance, slope variance, and random variance (Bliese & Jex, 2002). Intercept variance refers to mean differences between groups (in the present study, churches) on the dependent variables. Slope variance refers to the variance that occurs in the relationship between the IV and DV between groups. Recall that OLS regression assumes a fixed slope for all individuals because nesting is not accounted for. Lastly, random variance is the variance within groups. Thus, in sum, MLM estimates and tests the differences that occur within and
between groups (i.e., within and between churches).

MLM is a simultaneous, two-stage process (Hofmann, Griffin, & Gavin, 2000). In the first stage, or Level 1 analysis, relationships among Level 1 variables are estimated separately for each higher-level unit. The outcome of this stage is intercept and slope terms are estimated separately for each group. In the current dissertation, for each church, there will be a Level 1 intercept term as well as a slope term summarizing the relationship between pastor burnout and each DV. Slope and intercept parameter estimates from this stage are called random coefficients because they are allowed to vary across groups (Hofmann et al., 2000).

In the second stage, these Level 1 intercepts and slopes are used as outcome variables for analysis at the group level (Level 2). In the current study, this stage will investigate the degree to which pastor burnout predicts the variance across groups in the Level 1 intercepts and slopes (Hofmann et al., 2000). As this analysis is at the group level, slope and intercept parameter estimates from this stage are called fixed effects because only one parameter summarizes the relationship across all groups.

Evidence for multi-level modeling. Multi-level modeling (MLM) was used to test all of the study hypotheses except one because evidence of significant nesting was present. ICC1 values ranged from .013 to .078 for study variables (see Table 1). This means that a moderate amount of variability in the measures was due to between-church differences. However, Hypothesis 1 was tested using OLS regression because of negligible nesting for the DV, pastor physical health (ICC1 = .013). In this case, OLS regression is most appropriate so that the estimates are more stable.
ICC1 values represent the degree to which the data is dependent on the grouping variable, or the proportion of total variance that can be explained by group membership, in this case, the church that one attends (Bliese, 2000). Greater ICC1 values indicate a greater level of non-independence among group members, meaning that group membership affects or is related to lower-level observations. If ICC1 values approach or exceed .02 (i.e., 2% of the variance is at Level 2), significant nesting is present and multi-level modeling is appropriate (Bliese, 2000). MLM was used in the current study to model and adjust for between-church differences. Additional statistics representing the reliability of the group means (ICC2) and group agreement (rwg) were not necessary to examine in the current study because Level 1 variables were not aggregated to create Level 2 variables as part of the hypotheses.

**Centering.** Lastly, before testing the hypotheses, decisions about centering the predictors were made. Centering refers to the reference value used to estimate an intercept (Nezlek, 2008). In MLM, Level 1 predictors can either be uncentered (raw scores), group mean centered (individual scores are centered around the group mean), or grand mean centered (individual scores are centered around the overall mean for a variable).

In the current dissertation, the predictor (pastor job burnout) and moderator (social support from the congregation) variables were measured at the individual level (Level 1). The data were not aggregated to create Level 2 variables as a part of the hypotheses (i.e., to simultaneously examine an individual-level and group-level variables or the incremental effects of group membership). However, multi-level modeling was
used because significant nesting was present to appropriately model the group-level variance. As aggregated Level 2 variables were not introduced as part of the hypotheses, the decision to group or grand mean center the predictors does not affect Level 1 estimates. As such, the predictor and moderator variables were grand mean centered in the current study.

**Hypothesis testing.**

*The null model.* A series of mixed models in SPSS were used to test all of the hypotheses except H1 for which traditional OLS regression was used and H6a which has categorical response options (see below). First, examined the null model (intercept only; no predictor variables) to create a reference point for subsequent analyses. In addition to creating a baseline model, the null model indicates the amount of variance occurring within and between groups (i.e., intercept and residual variance; Mathieu, Ahearne, & Taylor, 2007). The values are used to calculate ICC1 and determine if significant nesting was present.

**Hypotheses of direct effects: MLM.** Next, the variables of interest and demographic variables were added as individual level predictors (gender, occupational tenure, and pastor job type [i.e., senior or associate pastor]). The addition of the demographic variables served to statistically control for these factors. The predictor and moderator variables were measured at Level 1; thus, random coefficient regression (RCR) models will be used. These models are named as such because they are similar to OLS regression, but in these models, regression coefficients are allowed to vary across groups (Hofmann et al., 2000). The hypotheses of direct effects (Hypotheses 2, 5a-c, 6b,
7-8, and 9a-b) were supported if a significant value for the mean of the slopes across groups ($\gamma_{10}$) is found. These tests examined whether, on average, the Level 1 slope between pastor burnout and the DV differed significantly from zero (Hofmann et al., 2000).

These analyses also provided significance tests for the two residual variances ($\tau_{00}$ and $\tau_{01}$). These tests indicated whether there was significant variance in the intercepts ($\tau_{00}$) and slopes ($\tau_{01}$) across groups for each predictor-criterion relationship (Hofmann et al., 2000).

Effect sizes for these relationships were calculated using an estimate of the Level 1 residual variance ($\sigma^2$) from the null model, full model, and reduced model removing the predictor of interest. Comparing these three variance estimates, a “pseudo” MLM version of $sr^2$ was calculated for the relationship between each predictor and DV. Specifically:

$$sr^2 \text{ for Level 1 model} = \frac{\sigma^2_{\text{reduced model}} - \sigma^2_{\text{full model}}}{\sigma^2_{\text{null model}}}$$

This ratio compares the amount of variance accounted for by the predictor of interest to the total within-group variance in the DV. Therefore, the ratio represents the percentage of the Level 1 variance in the DV that is accounted for by the predictor (Hofmann et al., 2000). For Level 2 predictors that are significantly related to the DV, the above formula will be used but a reduction in intercept variance will be calculated.

**Hypotheses of direct effects: OLS.** As mentioned, Hypothesis 1 testing the relationship between pastor job burnout and pastor physical health was analyzed using OLS regression because of the small degree of nesting in terms of pastor physical health
(ICC1 = .013). For consistency with how the other hypotheses were analyzes using MLM, the variables of interest and demographic variables (gender, occupational tenure, and pastor job type) were added together in one step. Effect sizes for significant relationships \((sr^2)\) were calculated by squaring the semipartial correlation coefficient \((sr)\) given on the regression output.

**Moderation hypotheses.** Hypotheses 3, 4, and 9 which proposed social support from the congregation as a moderator of pastor burnout and physical health, mental health, and turnover intentions, respectively, were tested with RCR models, similar to the steps described above. Note that social support was also a Level 1 variable and only hypothesized as a moderator of relationships between pastor burnout and pastor-level DVs. In addition to the process described above, the interaction term of pastor burnout × social support from the congregation will be added to the RCR model along with the control variables, predictor, and moderator, just as in OLS regression. A significant interaction will be determined, along with significant slope and intercept variance. Effect sizes will also be calculated.

**Ordinal logistic regression.** Lastly, I tested Hypothesis 6a. The predictor variable was continuous (pastor burnout), and the outcome variable (sense of belonging) had six response options that reflected either “yes” or “no” regarding a sense of belonging with various sentiments attached (see Appendix F). The responses associated with “no” were categorical, but the responses associated with “yes” were ordinal. In addition, a relatively small proportion of respondents answered one of the three response options associated with “no” (6.5%, 3.6%, and 5.4%, respectively; 15.4% of the total). To create a more
even distribution of responses and allow the data to be analyzed as ordinal, the response options for “no” were collapsed. Thus, this item was analyzed as having four ordinal response options. Therefore, ordinal logistic regression was appropriate. Significant nesting was present for sense of belonging (ICC1 = .032); therefore, multilevel ordinal logistic regression was conducted.

Ordinal logistic regression is appropriate to examine an outcome variable with three or more ordinal response options (Cohen et al., 2003). Ordinal logistic regression allows for the slope of the relationship between the predictor and outcome variable to vary for each ordered response on the DV. Logistic regression models will be conducted to compare each ordered response on the DV. As such, the threshold between those who answered “1” to those who answered “2” will be identified. Those who answered “2” will be compared to those who answered “3”, and so forth. This process calculates a slope of the relationship between the IV and the DV for each step in response options.
CHAPTER EIGHT
RESULTS

Statistical Assumptions

Before examining the hypotheses, the assumption of normality was assessed using SPSS 22.0. Univariate skewness was examined with descriptive statistics. Each study variable produced a skewness value within the range of +/- 3.0, indicating that the data was not significantly skewed. Thus, the assumption of normality was met.

The data were screened for potential outliers through an examination of saved residuals from the multilevel test of each hypothesis. Residuals saved from these tests were converted into z-scores and examined for outlying values ( +/- 3.25, with a large sample size). Scores that exceeded this value and were extreme were excluded. Scores that exceeded this value and were grouped together, assumed to represent a clustered group of valid cases, were retained. An examination of z-scores identified seven unique participants as outliers. These cases were exceeded the critical value of $z = +/- 3.25$ and were not clustered together with other cases. Outliers identified for each hypothesis test were excluded for that analysis and retained for other analyses.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Pastor variables. Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations between the raw variables (i.e., not adjusted for group membership) are displayed in Table 2. Bivariate correlations were calculated between variables that were collected among the same group of participants (i.e., correlations were calculated among all variables reported
by pastors, attenders, and staff reporting organizational data). Therefore, correlations were not given between all variables, only those reported by the same participants.

The means for pastor job burnout were on the lower end of the scale, indicating burnout was not a major issue for most pastors sampled \((M = 2.02, SD = .67)\). The mean of social support from the congregation was above the midpoint of the scale, indicating that most pastors received a fair amount of emotional support from their congregation members \((M = 2.78, SD = .60)\). The means for pastor physical and mental health were above the midpoint, indicating the pastors sampled were fairly healthy on average \((M = 4.27, SD = .63; M = 3.73, SD = .57, \text{ respectively})\). The mean of turnover intentions was low, indicating that most pastors never or rarely think about leaving their position or occupation \((M = 1.47, SD = .55)\).

The majority \(79.6\%\) of pastors sampled were male. Gender was significantly correlated with pastor job type, such that a greater proportion of males served as senior or solo pastors and a greater proportion of females served as associate pastors \((r = .38, p < .01)\). This indicates that 14.4\% of the variance in pastor job type was explained by the correlation with gender \(r^2 = .14\). Gender was also related to occupational tenure, such that males reported longer occupational tenure \((r = -.27, p < .01)\). Thus, 7.2\% of the variation in occupational tenure was explained by the correlation with pastor gender \(r^2 = .07\).

There was a small negative correlation between pastor occupational tenure and job burnout \((r = -.10, p < .01)\), and a small positive correlation between occupational tenure and social support from the congregation \((r = .09, p < .01)\). Interestingly, tenure
was not related to pastor physical health, but there was a small positive correlation between pastor tenure and mental health ($r = .13, p < .01$). Lastly, a small negative correlation was found between pastor tenure and turnover intentions ($r = -.12, p < .01$).

Pastor gender was significantly related to physical and mental health, such that males had higher average physical and mental health ($r = -.07, p < .05$; $r = -.07, p < .05$, respectively). However, these were small effects, such that gender explained less than 1% of the variance in pastor physical and mental health ($r^2 = .005$). As expected, moderate to strong negative correlations were found between pastor burnout and social support, physical health, mental health ($r = -.36, p < .01$; $r = -.25, p < .01$; $r = -.60, p < .01$, respectively). There was a moderate positive relationship between pastor burnout and turnover intentions ($r = .48, p < .01$). Notably, there was a moderate positive correlation between social support and mental health ($r = .31, p < .01$), but social support was unrelated to physical health. As expected, there was a moderate negative relationship between social support and turnover intentions ($r = -.27, p < .01$). There was a moderate negative correlation between mental health and turnover intentions ($r = -.38, p < .01$) and a small negative correlation between physical health and turnover intentions ($r = -.10, p < .01$).

**Attender variables.** Intrinsic religiousness for attenders was computed as the mean of z-scores because the items that in this scale had various response options. Average scores for the items that comprise this scale were as follows: spiritual growth ($M = 2.41$ on a 3-point scale, $SD = .64$), private devotional activities ($M = 4.72$ on a 6-point scale, $SD = 1.51$), impact on everyday living ($M = 3.42$ on a 4-point scale, $SD = .78$), and
spiritual needs are met ($M = 4.14$ on a 5-point scale, $SD = .78$). Thus, on average, attenders were above the midpoint for each item that represented intrinsic religiousness. On average, attenders reported that their levels of extrinsic religiousness were steady compared to the past few years. On average, attenders reported their participation in church activities was “about the same compared to two years ago” (56.5% of participants gave this response). On average, attenders reported that they had “a strong sense of belonging, about the same as last year” (30.2% of participants gave this response).

There were small but significant relationships between denominational group membership and attender intrinsic religiousness, participation, and sense of belonging, such that Protestants reported slightly higher levels of each than Catholics ($r = .07; p < .01$; $r = .08, p < .01$; $r = .05, p < .01$, respectively). These are small distinctions, such that denominational group membership explained less than 1% of the variance in these intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness measures. Female attenders reported slightly higher levels of intrinsic religiousness and sense of belonging than males ($r = .14, p < .01$; $r = .04, p < .01$, respectively). However, male attenders reported slightly higher increases in participation over the past two years than females ($r = -.01, p < .05$). Again, small distinctions between male and female attenders were found, as gender explained less than 1% of the variance in participation in church activities. As expected, moderate positive correlations were found between intrinsic religiousness and a) participation in church activities and b) sense of belonging in the congregation ($r = .24, p < .01$; $r = .46, p < .01$, respectively).
Organizational variables. Lastly, the churches sampled showed a slight decline in attendance rates over the past eight years (2001 to 2008; $M = -.03, SD = .31$). In terms of financial stability, most churches sampled reported that they had a stable financial base (59.59% of church staff members described their church as “having an essentially stable financial base”). There was a moderate positive correlation between attendance rates and financial stability, such that churches with increasing attendance rates reported greater financial stability ($r = .41, p < .01$).

Hypothesis Testing

Figure 3 presents a summary of the hypothesized relationships that were supported in the current study.

Pastor outcomes (Hypotheses 1-4). The pastor-level outcome described in Hypothesis 1 was analyzed using OLS regression due to the small degree of nesting. The pastor-level outcomes described in Hypotheses 2-4 were analyzed with the mixed-model analysis function of SPSS in order to model between-church differences. All predictors and moderator variables were grand mean-centered. These individual-level (Level 1) analyses were run with a random intercept only, as the random slopes were not significant in the model, indicating that the slopes were similar across churches and did not significantly vary.

Hypothesis 1, predicting a negative relationship between pastor job burnout and pastor physical health, was supported, $B = -.25, S.E. = .04, t = -5.57, p < .01$. This relationship was found above and beyond the main effects of social support from the congregation and the control variables of pastor gender, occupational tenure, pastor job
type (senior or associate pastor), and denominational group (Catholic or Protestant). In addition, denominational group was significantly related to pastor physical health, such that pastors from Protestant churches had higher average physical health, $B = .26, S.E. = .06, t = 4.18, p < .01$. The other control variables were not significantly related to pastor physical health. (See Table 5).

For Hypothesis 1, effect sizes ($sr^2$) were calculated by squaring the semipartial correlation coefficient ($sr$) given on the regression output. Pastor job burnout had a moderate effect on pastor physical health, explaining 6.37% of the variance in the DV. Denominational group had a modest effect on pastor physical health, explaining 3.59% of the variance in the DV.

Hypothesis 2, predicting a negative relationship between pastor job burnout (Level 1) and pastor mental health, was supported, $B = -.46, S.E. = .04, t = -13.12, p < .01$. This relationship was found above and beyond the main effects of social support from the congregation and the control variables of pastor gender, occupational tenure, pastor job type, and denominational group. In addition, pastor social support from the congregation was positively related to pastor mental health, such that those with greater social support have more favorable mental health, $B = .13, S.E. = .04, t = 3.20, p < .01$. Lastly, denominational group was significantly related to pastor mental health. In contrast to the effect found with pastor physical health, pastors from Catholic churches had more favorable average mental health scores, $B = -.11, S.E. = .05, t = -2.05, p < .05$. The other control variables were not significantly related to pastor mental health. (See Table 6).
For Hypotheses 2-4 tested with MLM, effect sizes were calculated by examining the reduction in residual variance in a model with all variables listed above (pastor job burnout, pastor social support from the congregation, pastor gender, occupational tenure, job type, and denominational group), compared to models with the variable of interest removed (reduced model), representing a pseudo \( r^2 \). The denominator was the residual variance from the null model. Pastor job burnout had a substantial effect on pastor mental health, explaining 27.20% of the variance in mental health. Social support from the congregation had a modest effect on pastor mental health, explaining 1.86% of the variance in pastor mental health. Denominational group had a modest effect on pastor mental health, explaining 4.87% of the variance in pastor mental health.

Hypothesis 3, examining social support from the congregation as a moderator of the relationship between job burnout and pastor physical health, was not supported, \( B = -0.07, S.E. = 0.06, t = -1.16, ns \). This relationship was tested above and beyond the main effects of job burnout, social support from the congregation, and the control variables of pastor gender, occupational tenure, pastor job type, and denominational group. Thus, enacted socio-emotional support from the congregation did not protect against the negative relationship between job burnout and physical health for pastors.

Similarly, Hypothesis 4, examining social support from the congregation as a moderator of the relationship between job burnout and pastor mental health, was not supported, \( B = 0.01, S.E. = 0.05, t = 0.15, ns \). This relationship was tested above and beyond the main effects of job burnout, social support from the congregation, and the control variables of pastor gender, occupational tenure, pastor job type, and denominational
group. Thus, enacted socio-emotional support from the congregation did not protect against the negative relationship between job burnout and mental health for pastors.

**Service attender outcomes (Hypotheses 5 & 6).** Attenders’ outcomes described in Hypotheses 5 and 6b were analyzed with the mixed-model analysis function of SPSS in order to model between-church differences. All predictor variables were grand mean-centered. Control variables in these church-level analyses included attenders’ gender and denominational group. Pastor job burnout was analyzed at Level 2 (church level) in these analyses, as congregation members are nested within churches. Thus, these models included a random intercept only. Hypothesis 6a was tested using multilevel ordinal logistic regression due to ordinal response options. Control variables were not included in this analysis.

Hypothesis 5, predicting a negative relationship between pastor job burnout (Level 2) and attenders’ intrinsic religiousness, was not supported, $B = -0.02$, $S.E. = .02$, $t = -1.93$, $ns$. This relationship was tested above and beyond the effects of two control variables: attender gender and denominational group. The relationship between pastor job burnout (Level 2) and attenders’ intrinsic religiousness was in the negative direction, as expected, meaning that higher levels of pastor job burnout were associated with lower attender intrinsic religiousness. Attender gender was significantly related to attender intrinsic religiousness, such that females had higher levels of intrinsic religiousness, $B = .20$, $S.E. = .01$, $t = 34.72$, $p < .01$.

Full support was found for Hypothesis 6 predicting a negative relationship between average pastor burnout (Level 2) and the two measures of attenders’ extrinsic
religiousness. Results supported Hypothesis 6a. Multilevel ordinal logistic regression results demonstrated a negative relationship between average pastor job burnout (Level 2) and attenders’ sense of belonging, \( B = -0.14, S.E. = 0.05, t = -3.07, p < .01 \). (\( B \) values from this analysis represent logit coefficients.)

Ordinal logistic regression examines the amount of change, specifically, the steepness of the slope, at each step of ordered values on the DV. It does not assume that the relationships at each interval are equal. In the current study, threshold coefficients indicated that as pastor burnout increased, attenders were significantly less likely to respond 2 compared to 1 in terms of sense of belonging (\( B = -2.16, S.E. = 0.10, t = -21.96, p < .01 \)). Also, as pastor burnout increased, attenders were significantly less likely to respond 3 compared to 2 in terms of sense of belonging (\( B = -1.51, S.E. = 0.10, t = -15.41, p < .01 \)). Finally, as pastor burnout increased, attenders were marginally less likely (\( B = -0.18, S.E. = 0.10, t = -1.83, p = .068 \)) to respond 4 compared to 3 in terms of sense of belonging. Thus, pastor burnout had the greatest effect on low levels of attenders’ sense of belonging, that is, the distinction between response options 1 and 2 in terms of sense of belonging. (See Table 7 and Figure 4).

Hypothesis 6b, predicting a negative relationship between past job burnout (Level 2) and self-reported participation over the past two years by attenders, was supported. Churches with higher average pastor job burnout (Level 2) had declining attender participation over the past two years, \( B = -0.03, S.E. = 0.01, t = -2.41, p < .05 \). This relationship was found above and beyond the effects of attender gender and denominational group. In addition, attender gender was significantly related to attender
participation, such that male attenders reported more participation growth over the past two years, \( B = -.02, S.E. = .01, t = -2.45, p < .05 \). Lastly, denominational group was significantly related to participation, such that Protestants had more participation growth over the past two years compared to Catholics, \( B = .06, S.E. = .02, t = 3.69, p < .01 \).

Effect sizes (pseudo \( \eta^2 \)) were calculated. Pastor job burnout (L2) had a modest effect on attenders’ participation, explaining 3.93% of the variance in participation. Attender gender had a modest effect on attenders’ participation, explaining .01% of the variance in participation. Lastly, denominational group had a moderate effect on attenders’ participation, explaining 10.26% of the variance in participation. (See Table 8).

**Church-level organizational outcomes (Hypotheses 7 & 8).** Church-level organizational outcomes described in Hypotheses 7 and 8 were analyzed with the mixed-model analysis function of SPSS in order to model between-church differences. All predictor variables were grand mean-centered. Control variables in these church-level analyses included denominational group. Pastor job burnout was analyzed at Level 2 (church level) in these analyses, as the outcome variables are also at Level 2 (one score given per church). As the outcome variables are measured at Level 2, no random effects were included in these models.

Hypothesis 7, predicting a negative relationship between pastor job burnout (Level 2) and church attendance rates, was not supported, \( B = -.06, S.E. = .04, t = -1.52, ns \). This relationship was tested above and beyond the effects of denominational group. As such, churches with higher levels of pastor job burnout (Level 2; measured in 2008) were not associated with attendance rates in terms of the change from 2001 and 2008.
Hypothesis 8, predicting a negative relationship between pastor job burnout (Level 2) and church financial stability, was supported. Churches with higher average pastor job burnout (Level 2) had lower ratings of financial stability, $B = -.22$, $S.E. = .07$, $t = -3.07$, $p < .01$. This relationship was found above and beyond the effects of denominational group. Effect sizes (pseudo $r^2$) examining a reduction in intercept variance for this Level 2 variable were modest. Pastor job burnout (L2) explained $3.42\%$ of the variance in church financial stability. (See Table 9).

**Pastor-level organizational outcomes (Hypotheses 9 & 10).** Pastor-level organizational outcomes described in Hypotheses 9 and 10 were analyzed with the mixed-model analysis function of SPSS in order to model between-church differences. All predictors and moderator variables were grand mean-centered. These individual-level (Level 1) analyses were run with a random intercept and a random slope for pastor job burnout. Thus, the relationship between pastor job burnout (Level 1) and turnover intentions significantly varied across churches.

Results supported Hypothesis 9. Pastor job burnout (Level 1) was positively related to pastor turnover intentions, $B = .31$, $S.E. = .04$, $t = 7.96$, $p < .01$. This relationship was found above and beyond the main effects of social support from the congregation and the control variables of pastor gender, occupational tenure, pastor job type (senior or associate pastor), and denominational group (Catholic or Protestant). Social support from the congregation was negatively related to pastor turnover intentions, $B = -.10$, $S.E. = .04$, $t = -2.80$, $p < .01$. In addition, denominational group was significantly related to turnover intentions, such that pastors from Protestant churches had
higher average turnover intentions, \( B = .14, S.E. = .05, t = 3.09, p < .01 \). The other control variables were not significantly related to pastor turnover intentions. (See Table 10).

Effect sizes were calculated by examining the reduction in residual variance in a model with all variables listed above (pastor job burnout, pastor social support from the congregation, pastor gender, occupational tenure, job type, and denominational group), compared to models with the variable of interest removed, representing a pseudo \( \text{sr}^2 \). The effect size was substantial for pastor job burnout. Pastor job burnout (Level 1) explained 53.25\% of the variance in turnover intentions. Social support from the congregation and denominational group explained 3.15\% and 12.13\% of the variance in turnover intentions, respectively. Social support from the congregation had a modest unique effect, and denominational group had a moderate unique effect.

Results supported Hypothesis 10. Social support from the congregation significantly moderated the relationship between pastor job burnout (Level 1) and pastor turnover intentions, \( B = -.13, S.E. = .05, t = -2.39, p < .05 \). Thus, enacted socio-emotional support significantly weakened the relationship between pastor job burnout and turnover intentions (See Table 9). Figure 5 presents the simple slopes for pastor job burnout (Level 1) in relation to pastor turnover intentions at high, average, and low levels of social support from the congregation. As presented, at low levels of pastor job burnout, social support did not affect the relationship between burnout and turnover intentions. At low levels of burnout, turnover intentions were the lowest overall. However, at high levels of burnout, social support from the congregation impacted the relationship between burnout and turnover intentions. Pastors with high burnout and high social support from the
congregation had significantly lower turnover intentions compared to pastors with low and average levels of social support. At low levels of social support, the simple slope between burnout and turnover intentions was significant, $B = .38, S.E. = .05, t = 8.13, p < .01$. At average levels of social support, the simple slope was significant, $B = .30, S.E. = .04, t = 7.69, p < .01$. Lastly, at high levels of social support, the simple slope was significant, $B = .22, S.E. = .05, t = 4.15, p < .01$.

This moderating effect was found above and beyond the main effects of job burnout, social support from the congregation, and the control variables of pastor gender, occupational tenure, pastor job type, and denominational group. In this model, the main effects of pastor job burnout (Level 1; $B = .30, S.E. = .04, t = 7.65, p < .01$), social support from the congregation ($B = -.13, S.E. = .04, t = -3.45, p < .01$), and denominational group ($B = .15, S.E. = .05, t = 3.12, p < .01$) remained significantly associated with pastor turnover intentions. (See Table 11).

Pastor job burnout × social support from the congregation accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in turnover intentions, pseudo $sr^2 = 2.35\%$, a moderate unique effect for an interaction. The main effect of pastor job burnout (Level 1) still explained the majority of the variance in turnover intentions, 46.35%. The main effects of social support from the congregation and denominational group explained 4.95% and 11.59% of the variance in turnover intentions, respectively.

**Summary**

Overall, results provided support for seven of the eleven hypotheses (see Figure 3 for a summary). Pastor job burnout (Level 1) was negatively related to pastor a) physical
and b) mental health. These relationships were found above and beyond the main effects of social support from the congregation and the control variables of pastor gender, occupational tenure, pastor job type, and denominational group. Social support from the congregation was positively related to pastor mental health. However, social support from the congregation was not a significant moderator of the negative effects of job burnout on pastor a) physical or b) mental health.

In terms of the relationships between pastor job burnout and attender outcomes, results did not find support for a negative relationship between pastor job burnout (Level 2) and attenders’ intrinsic religiousness. This relationship was in the predicted direction, however, such that higher levels of pastor job burnout were associated with lower attender intrinsic religiousness. Results demonstrated a negative relationship between pastor job burnout (Level 2) and both measures of attenders’ extrinsic religiousness: sense of belonging and participation.

Lastly, in terms of the relationships between pastor job burnout and organizational outcomes, pastor job burnout (Level 2) was not significantly related to church attendance rates. Pastor job burnout (Level 1) was positively related to pastor turnover intentions. Social support from the congregation significantly moderated of the relationship between pastor job burnout (Level 1) and pastor turnover intentions, such that social support significantly weakened the positive relationship between job burnout and turnover intentions. These relationship were found above and beyond the main effects of pastor job burnout, social support from the congregation, and the control variables of pastor gender, occupational tenure, pastor job type, and denominational group.
**Influence of control variables.** Denominational group, in particular, was significantly related to several of the variables in the current study. Denominational group represented a simple distinction between Protestant and Catholic churches or church membership. Protestant pastors had higher levels of physical health; Catholic pastors had higher levels of mental health. Protestant pastors reported higher levels of turnover intentions compared to Catholic pastors. Denominational group was not associated with attender intrinsic religiousness, but it was associated with attender participation over the past two years (Protestant attenders reported increased levels of participation). Lastly, denominational group was not associated with church attendance rates or financial stability.

Pastor gender, job type (senior or associate pastor), and occupational tenure were not significantly related to any of the models tested. Attender gender was significantly related to intrinsic religiousness, such that females reported higher levels of intrinsic religiousness. Attender gender was also related to the extrinsic religiousness measure of participation, such that males reported a stronger increase in participation over the past two years.

**Supplemental analyses.** Based on face validity, it appeared that the three items used to measure pastor turnover intentions may have conceptual differences. Thus, follow up analyses were conducted to test the main effect of pastor burnout on the three aspects of turnover intentions separately (Hypothesis 9). Results suggested that pastor burnout was positively related to thoughts of leaving one’s current position to become a pastor elsewhere, \( B = .27, S.E. = .05, t = 5.44, p < .01 \). Results also suggested that pastor
burnout was positively related to thoughts of leaving local church ministry to enter another type of ministry, \( B = .27, S.E. = .05, t = 5.25, p < .01 \). Lastly, pastor burnout was positively related to thoughts of leaving local church ministry to enter a secular occupation, \( B = .27, S.E. = .05, t = 5.44, p < .01 \). Thus, pastor burnout was positively related to the composite measure of turnover intentions and each of the items individually, providing further support for Hypothesis 9.

The moderating effect of social support from the congregation on the relationships between pastor burnout and the three items measuring turnover intentions were also tested. These results were different from the test of the interaction on the composite measure of turnover intentions. Social support from the congregation did not moderate the relationship between pastor job burnout and thoughts of leaving one’s current position to become a pastor elsewhere, \( B = -.07, S.E. = .07, t = -1.01, p = .32 \). The moderating effect of social support on the relationship between pastor job burnout and thoughts of leaving local church ministry to enter another type of ministry approached significance, \( B = -.13, S.E. = .07, t = -1.84, p = .07 \). Lastly, social support significantly moderated the relationship between pastor job burnout and thoughts of leaving local church ministry to enter a secular occupation, such that social support weakened the positive relationship between burnout and turnover intentions, \( B = -.17, S.E. = .07, t = -2.50, p < .05 \). (See the discussion of Hypothesis 9 and 10 in the following section.)
CHAPTER NINE  

DISCUSSION  

The current dissertation tested the relationships between pastor job burnout and a) the physical and mental health of the pastor, b) religious participation of worship service attenders, and c) church organizational health: financial stability, service attendance, and pastor turnover intentions. This dissertation also examined social support from the congregation as a moderator of the relationships between pastor job burnout and pastor physical health, mental health, and turnover intentions. This dissertation used multilevel modeling to account for the fact that individual pastor data are naturally clustered within organizations, the local church. Each hypothesis is discussed below with possible explanations for the findings. Lastly, limitations of the present study, directions for future research, recommendations for practice, and contributions are presented. 

Discussion of the Findings  

Hypotheses 1-2. The first objective of the current study was to investigate whether there is a negative relationship between pastor job burnout and pastor a) physical and b) mental health. Results supported these relationships. These findings suggest that pastor job burnout is directly related to a pastor’s own physical and mental health. Comparing the two outcomes, pastor job burnout had a stronger correlation with mental health than with physical health. In addition, pastor burnout accounted for more of the variance in mental health than physical health. These relationships support the existing literature that burnout is more conceptually related to mental health than physical health.
In particular, the core burnout dimension of emotional exhaustion has conceptual overlap with general mental health (Maslach et al., 2001).

As described in the introduction, some evidence has been found in the general burnout literature for the relationships between burnout and physical and mental health. A small but growing body of literature has found evidence supporting the relationships between job burnout and a) physical and b) mental health among pastors. The findings in the current study contribute to the body of evidence and suggest that burnout is negatively related to physical and mental health among pastors. Empirical and anecdotal evidence has suggested that those in ministry often put the needs of others above their own (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2011). This self-sacrificing mindset may play an important role in the deterioration of a pastor’s health. A burned out pastor with diminished personal resources may neglect healthy eating habits, exercise, doctor’s visits, work-family balance, and good time management. The neglect of healthy behaviors may be related to lower levels of physical and mental health for pastors. Thus, mediators of these relationships may exist, such that burnout reduces protective health strategies, which, in turn, affects overall measures of physical and mental health.

It is important to consider how physical and mental health were defined when making comparisons with the existing literature. In the current study, physical health was operationalized as a composite of self-reported overall physical functioning, the extent that pain interferes with daily activities, and the extent that physical health issues interfere with social activities. Previous studies of burnout and physical health have studied physical health in variety of ways including insomnia, musculoskeletal pain,
physical fatigue, cholesterol, triglyceride levels, obesity, and other chronic diseases (e.g., Shirom et al., 2007; Shirom, 2009; Proeschold-Bell & LeGrand, 2010). Measurement in the current study aligns with existing studies in terms of the relationships between burnout and self-reported physical health (e.g., pain and the extent that physical health interferes with daily activities). However, the results of the current study are less comparable with previous research that has suggested negative relationships between pastor burnout and objective measures of physical health, such as obesity or cholesterol levels. The results from numerous studies contribute to a more complete picture of the negative impact of burnout on health.

In addition to the findings concerning a negative relationship between pastor job burnout (Level 1) and a) physical and b) mental health, these analyses indicated support for a direct relationship between social support from the congregation and pastor mental health. Results did not indicate a significant relationship between social support from the congregation and pastor physical health. As socio-emotional support from congregation members increased, pastors were more likely report higher ratings of their own mental health. In contrast, enacted socio-emotional support from congregation members was not correlated with higher or lower pastor physical health scores. These effects are reasonable considering that socio-emotional support from congregation members was operationalized as making the pastor feel loved and cared for, talking with him about personal problems or concerns, and expressing interest in his well-being. This type of emotional care likely has a positive impact on one’s mental health but is not related to physical health measures.
These findings support the general rationale of matching principles (e.g., de Jonge & Dormann, 2006) that suggest that variables that come from the same context or domain are often more strongly related than variables that do not. The measure of social support used here represented an emotional support domain that was related to better mental health. Further, although social support did not significantly moderate the relationships between burnout and a) physical and b) mental health (see below), social support from the congregation was directly associated with better mental health.

Lastly, denominational group was significantly related to pastor physical and mental health. Protestant pastors had significantly higher levels of physical health ($M = 4.34$, $SD = .58$) than Catholic pastors ($M = 4.13$, $SD = .67$; $F = 15.98$, $p < .01$). However, Catholic pastors reported significantly higher levels of mental health ($M = 3.80$, $SD = .59$) than Protestant pastors ($M = 3.67$, $SD = .58$; $F = 7.20$, $p < .01$). There are no known studies of denominational differences between physical and mental health. A very small proportion of pastors in the U.S. completed this survey (230 Catholic and 400 Protestant pastors) and represent thousands of pastors nationwide. Thus, denominational differences on these measures seem to be due to random chance according to the pastors who were sampled. There are no known systematic differences in theology or religious practice that provide rationale for these differences.

**Hypotheses 3-4.** The second objective was to test social support from the congregation as a moderator of the relationships between pastor job burnout and a) physical and b) mental health. Results did not provide evidence for social support as a moderator of these relationships. Social support from the congregation did not buffer the
negative relationships between job burnout and physical and mental health. No known literature has examined moderators of the relationships between pastor burnout and individual, congregational, and organizational outcomes. Therefore, existing studies can be used to make comparisons or draw conclusions.

One explanation for the lack of moderating effect could be that social support from the congregation may not be the source of support that is most relevant for the relationship between pastor burnout and physical/mental health. Previous research has described matching principles that suggest that the type or source of social support should be relevant to the context of the stressor (e.g., de Jonge & Dormann, 2006). The degree of matching between job burnout and social support from congregation members was relatively low. Job burnout is relatively narrow and job-related. Emotional support from congregation members is relatively broad and context-free. Also, a pastor may not interact with congregation members as often as he would fellow church staff members or his family. Social support from fellow church staff members may be expected to have the strongest relationship with these variables because it relates most closely the work domain.

In addition, the type of social support measured in the current study may not the type of support most closely associated with the relationship between pastor burnout and physical/mental health. Social support from the congregation was operationalized as a pastor’s report of enacted emotional support from congregation members. On average, pastors reported that they experience this type of support fairly often. Perhaps instrumental support would be a more likely moderator of the burnout—health
relationship, such as preparing meals if one is sick or unable, offering to help care for one’s children or family members, etc. If these variables were better matched in terms of content and/or scope, the hypothesized relationships may have been identified (de Jonge & Dormann, 2006).

**Hypotheses 5-6.** The third objective was to test negative relationships between pastor job burnout (Level 2) and worship service attenders’ intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness. Results indicated that pastor job burnout (Level 2) was negatively related to attenders’ a) sense of belonging and b) changes in participation (measures of extrinsic religiousness). However, pastor job burnout (Level 2) was unrelated to attenders’ intrinsic religiousness. Some literature has examined the relationship between one’s own experience of burnout and his or her religiousness (e.g., Kutcher et al., 2010). However, no known literature has examined relationships between a pastor’s experience of burnout and the religious participation of his congregation members, or any other attitude or behavior, for that matter. Thus, this is a novel area of study and no existing evidence is available for comparison.

These hypotheses were based on theories of emotional contagion that suggest that positive and negative emotions can automatically and unconsciously spread throughout groups (Bakker et al., 2005; Johnson, 2008). Also, evidence from the leadership literature that a leader’s emotions and stress can “trickle down” to his or her followers (Skakon et al., 2010). Of course, causal inferences cannot be made from the current study. The causal direction is uncertain; it is possible that less engaged congregation members could contribute to a pastor’s experience of burnout.
Results supported negative relationships between pastor job burnout (Level 2) and attenders’ a) sense of belonging and b) participation in church activities (extrinsic religiousness). As pastor job burnout increased, attenders at these congregations had a reduced sense of belonging and declining ratings of participation. Pastors who are burned out may express little enthusiasm to participate in important church ministries and activities, either from the pulpit or as they interact with individuals (Niedringhaus, 2008). If a pastor is disengaged and unenthusiastic, the religious participation of his congregation members is likely compromised, especially the public expressions of religious faith. As such, the overall church may have decreased measures of extrinsic religiousness in relation to pastor burnout. Future research could examine the influence of pastor job burnout (Level 2) on attenders’ sense of belonging and participation aggregated to Level 2. This would examine if the average level of burnout among pastors impacts the average felt sense of belonging and participation in the congregation.

Further, there were significant differences between denominational groups in terms of self-reported participation in church activities over the past two years. Attenders at Protestant churches reported significantly greater increases in participation over the past two years ($M = 2.16$, $SD = .67$) than attenders at Catholic churches ($M = 2.10$, $SD = .62$; $F = 93.67, p < .01$). No known studies have examined denominational differences in self-reported participation of attenders. However, researchers have examined denominational differences in terms of attendance rates. Although attendance rates are not identical to self-reported participation, attendance rates provide some insight. Examining attendance data from U.S. churches from 2000-2005, Olson (2008) reported
that attendance at Catholic churches declined at 14% during that time frame, while attendance at Mainline Protestant churches declined at 7% and attendance at Evangelical/Conservative Protestant churches remained relatively constant. (Protestant denominations were analyzed together in the current study.) It appears that if attendance trends are a representation self-reported participation, attenders at Catholic churches reported declining levels of participation and attendance compared to Protestant attenders during the same time period. Results of the current study supported this denominational difference. However, in the current study, church attendance rates did not vary according to denominational group; thus, self-reported changes in participation are not identical to church attendance rates. Continued research is needed to understand reasons why individuals at both denominations, and more specific denominations/churches, report increased or decreased participation in church activities.

It is surprising that the results did not support a relationship between pastor burnout and reduced intrinsic religiousness for congregation members. Members with strong devotional practices (e.g., prayer, reading the Bible alone) will likely maintain these practices regardless of their pastor’s experience of burnout. Thus, pastor burnout and intrinsic religiousness may be unrelated among this subgroup. Private devotional practices reflect one’s personal relationship with God, and for those whom this is a regular personal practice, it probably would not be affected by a pastor’s experience of burnout. In the current study, 47.6% of attenders reported that they spend time in private devotional activities “every day or on most days”. Thus, a large portion of the sample reported that they have a strong private devotional life. However, for congregation
members who “sometimes” or “rarely” engage in private devotional activities, they may not initiate or increase these practices if their pastor is burned out and disengaged. Again, pastors are needed to lead by example. If a pastor is disengaged, the religious participation of his congregation members is likely compromised.

Although this seems reasonable, the relationship between pastor burnout and congregation member intrinsic religiousness was not supported in the current study. Additional research should consider if pastor burnout is related to attender intrinsic religiousness only among those who report certain levels of attender intrinsic religiousness. Pastor burnout is expected to be related to intrinsic religiousness only among those with medium or low intrinsic religiousness. Those with high intrinsic religiousness will likely maintain private devotional activities, application of their faith to their life, and other indicators regardless of a pastor’s level of burnout. In addition, future research with full panel longitudinal designs are needed to ascertain the causal ambiguity between pastors’ experience of burnout and attender religiousness.

From a measurement perspective, it is important to note that the scale that measured intrinsic religiousness was comprised of four items that all had different response options. The composite scale was computed using z-scores. Reliability statistics from a multilevel CFA were lowered than desired; Cronbach’s alpha was .55 and rho (composite reliability) = .64. It is likely that this scale could have benefitted from more consistent response options. It is possible that improvement in measurement may have found support for the hypothesized negative relationship between pastor burnout and attender intrinsic religiousness.
Hypotheses 7-8. The fourth objective was to test a direct negative relationship between pastor job burnout (Level 2) and organizational outcomes. The first two examined were attendance rates and financial stability. Results of the current study did not support a relationship between pastor job burnout (Level 2) and church attendance rates. Thus, burnout among pastors was not found to be related to a decline in church attendance. However, support was found for a negative relationship between pastor job burnout (Level 2) and ratings of the church’s financial stability. Churches with higher levels of burnout were more likely to have a declining financial base.

There is no known literature to date that has examined the relationship between pastor burnout and church attendance rates. Thus, no existing studies can be used for comparison. Attendance rate is an interesting measure because it is the only true objective measure in the current study. Descriptive statistics revealed that among the churches sampled, attendance rates slightly declined during this period overall.

One reason for the lack of relationship found between pastor job burnout and attendance rates is that attendance rates are influenced by numerous factors. These include people moving into the area, out of the area, new churches being established nearby, the average age of the congregation, interpersonal relationships, and numerous other factors. The current study provided initial evidence that pastor job burnout was unrelated to attendance rates. Additional research is needed in this area. Notably, only 245 churches completed this portion of the study, which represents a very small proportion of churches in the U.S.
It is important to note that the causal direction cannot be determined through the design of the present study. It is possible that the causal direction is opposite that of the current hypotheses: declining attendance rates may lead to pastor burnout. It seems that it would take a drastic negative change in attendance rates for this to cause pastor burnout, either in a short time or over a period of many years. It seems more likely that a pastor who is burned out for reasons other than declining attendance rates might negatively impact congregation members’ attendance because of diminished personal resources, investment in the lives of congregation members, and engagement in the important ministries of the church. Thus, continued research is needed, particularly studies with full-panel designs in which pastor burnout is measured for several years.

As mentioned in the introduction, although used frequently, most church leaders do not consider attendance numbers to be a complete measure of church health (Bonem, 2012). The number of people in the pews, or even on the membership roster in some churches, do not necessarily equate to committed, maturing disciples and a healthy congregation. Personal testimonies of how God is at work in individuals and their communities are necessary to see the full picture of the health and impact of a church.

Secondly, results of the current study identified a negative relationship between pastor job burnout (Level 2) and ratings of the church’s financial stability. The rating of financial stability was made by one of the church staff members, likely a church administrator. This finding demonstrates that along with a pastor’s impact on congregation members’ participation in church activities and sense of belonging, a pastor can impact members’ regular participation in the ministry of the church through giving.
Giving one’s finances to the church and its ministries could be seen as an intrinsic and extrinsic religious practice. It is extrinsic because a member participates in corporate worship when they give to the church. However, giving is primarily an intrinsic practice because it is done out of faith in God and the belief that God has entrusted money and other resources to his church, and out of loving obedience, Christians are called to faithfully steward those gifts and contribute to the ministry of the church through finances, their time, and other gifts (Luke 12:44-48; Romans 14:8; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7). Pastors are needed to communicate a Biblical understanding of the stewardship of one’s resources and lead by example around important ministries of the congregation (Niedringhaus, 2008). A pastor who is burned out may have limited personal resources to lead by example as a cheerful giver and/or encourage congregation members to give faithfully and cheerfully.

To my knowledge, the current study is the first to examine how a pastor can affect the financial giving or the financial health of his church. It is important to note that causal inferences cannot be determined with the design of the current study; thus, the causal direction is uncertain. It is possible that church financial instability could lead to burnout for a pastor, perhaps indirectly through moderating variables such as work overload because of the inability to afford additional staff members. Additional research is needed to bolster the findings of this study, particularly longitudinal studies to examine the causal direction.

**Hypotheses 9-10.** The final objective was to test a negative relationship between pastor job burnout (Level 1) and a pastor-level organizational outcome, namely turnover
intentions (Hypothesis 9). In addition, Hypothesis 10 tested social support from the congregation as a moderator of the relationship between pastor job burnout (Level 1) and pastor turnover intentions. Results supported both of these relationships. As expected, pastors with higher levels of burnout were more likely to consider leaving their position or occupation. (Multilevel CFAs supported measuring turnover intentions as a composite score of organizational and occupational turnover). Supplemental analyses provided further support for Hypothesis 9, as pastor burnout was positively related to each of the three items used to measure turnover intentions when examined individually. Further, social support from the congregation weakened the positive relationship between pastor job burnout and turnover intentions. However, supplemental analyses suggested that social support significantly weakened the relationship between burnout and turnover intentions in terms of leaving local church ministry to enter a secular occupation. The moderating effect approached significance in relation to thoughts of leaving local church ministry to enter another type of ministry position. Both of these items reflect occupational turnover rather than organizational turnover.

In interpreting these results, it is important to note that the relationship found is correlational. It is unknown from the current study if job burnout has a causal relationship with turnover intentions. According to these findings, pastors with higher levels of burnout are more likely to have higher turnover intentions. As studied here, higher experienced burnout is correlated with numerous variables such as lower physical and mental health and higher turnover intentions.
The current study supports a small body of literature that pastor job burnout is at least correlated with turnover intentions. Job burnout explained over half of the variance in turnover intentions (53%) suggesting a strong relationship between these variables. The reasons why a pastor may desire to leave his job or occupation are diverse and complex (Hoge & Wenger, 2005). Based on a series of studies, Hoge and Wenger (2005) reported that burnout/discouragement was one of seven major reasons pastors cited after leaving local church ministry. Thus, beyond turnover intentions, burnout was related to actual turnover behavior based on qualitative evidence. A complex issue among all occupations, it is often a combination of several stressors, difficulties, and circumstances that influence the desire to leave.

Results of the current study also supported social support from the congregation as a moderator of the positive relationship between pastor job burnout (Level 1) and turnover intentions. Social support weakened the impact of job burnout on turnover intentions. This was the only significant moderation effect in the current study. As mentioned, this is the first known study to date that has examined moderators of the relationships between pastor job burnout and various outcomes. Thus, existing literature cannot be used directly for comparison.

Supportive congregation members can bolster a pastor’s resources by providing much-needed support, and emotional support was the focus of the current study. Genuine care expressed by fellow church members may be a particularly important to mitigate burnout and reduce a desire to leave. For pastors, supportive congregation members also include other church staff with whom a pastor works on a daily basis: associate pastors,
ministers, interns, and administrative staff. Supportive coworkers listen and offer encouragement, help individuals engage in adaptive coping mechanisms, and assist in mobilizing other resources (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Lastly, social support from congregation members may increase pastors’ affective commitment to the organization, thereby increasing the desire to stay (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). In sum, these findings suggest that social support from those in one’s faith community can mitigate relationship between job burnout and the desire to leave.

Supplemental analyses suggested that when the items measuring turnover intentions were analyzed separately, social support moderated the relationship between pastor job burnout and occupational turnover intentions. Especially if a pastor is considering leaving local church ministry to enter a secular occupation, he is considering a major decision away from the role where he once believed God called him to serve. One explanation for the moderating effect of social support in relation to occupational turnover intentions is that perhaps a pastor’s network of social support from the congregation only becomes “active” when the pastor is having a difficult time and expresses needs and concerns. Pastors and their families can become isolated leading the congregation, and it may be that only a few others in the congregation aware of their personal needs and concerns. Regarding potential occupational turnover, social support networks may become active and are effective to protect against the negative effects of burnout.

Specific denominational differences may contribute to the lack of moderating effect of social support from the congregation protecting against the relationship between
burnout and organizational turnover. In some denominations, namely United Methodist, pastors serve on an itinerant basis. In the United Methodist church, pastors are annually appointed by the regional bishop regarding the congregation they will serve (The United Methodist Church, n.d.). United Methodist pastors are typically appointed to begin serving at a new congregation every few years. Therefore, United Methodist pastors may contemplate leaving the church where they currently serve to serve at another congregation, as this is typical practice in the denomination.

In addition, results suggested small but significant differences between denominational groups in terms of turnover intentions, such that pastors at Protestant churches reported significantly higher levels of turnover intentions ($M = 1.55$, $SD = .59$) than pastors at Catholic churches ($M = 1.35$, $SD = .45$; $F = 19.20$, $p < .01$). It is important to note that these means are on the lower end of the scale representing “never” or “once in awhile” thinking about leaving one’s organization or occupation. Hoge and Wenger (2005) reported that, across denominations, actual turnover behavior among pastors has not changed much in recent years. Hoge and Wenger (2005) is the best known comprehensive study of turnover intentions and behavior among pastors, and they focused on differences between Protestant denominations, not between Catholic and Protestant groups. However, Hoge and Wenger (2005) stated that the Roman Catholic Church has an overall shortage of clergy, and in general, Protestant denominations do not have such a shortage. Thus, Roman Catholic pastors may feel more of a need to stay in their position or occupation due to an overall shortage of clergy.
In a follow-up analysis, pastors at Catholic churches in the current study reported significantly longer occupational tenure \((M = 24.91 \text{ years}, SD = 14.31)\) than pastors at Protestant churches \((M = 19.63 \text{ years}, SD = 11.68; F = 17.23, p < .01)\). As in other occupations, pastors with less occupational tenure are generally more likely to consider leaving their organization or occupation compared to those who have been invested longer in their career (Hoge & Wenger, 2005). Thus, Protestant pastors in the current study may have higher turnover intentions because they are younger in their careers, have more career mobility, and less continuance commitment. Additional research is needed to test these theories beyond conjecture.

Further, it is important to remember that pastors leave or consider leaving their position or occupation for a variety of reasons that are not always unfavorable. Some leave to take care of a family member or because their family is considering relocating to another area. Some may feel called to specialized ministry outside the local church (e.g., chaplaincy or missionary work). Continued research is needed to examine reasons why pastors consider leaving their role, as well as denominational and other differences that may exist.

**Limitations and Future Directions**

Some limitations of the current study should be considered. The limitations presented also suggest opportunities for future research.

First, the current study had a cross-sectional design, and causal inferences cannot be drawn with a cross-sectional, correlational design. It is possible that the relationships identified in this study have reverse or bidirectional causation compared to what was
presented here. Thus, it is possible that poor health, disengaged congregation members, declining attendance rates, and/or a lack of church financial stability precipitate pastor job burnout. In particular, the temporal order of the data collected in the current study would suggest that declining attendance rates may precipitate pastor job burnout: attendance was calculated as the percentage growth (or decline) in average weekly attendance from 2001 to 2008. Pastor job burnout was only measured in 2008/2009. Thus, the temporal order suggests that changes in attendance may have affected pastor burnout. Similarly, financial instability in the congregation may precipitate pastor burnout in causal order. To examine these and other causal effects of pastor burnout, future research should utilize a longitudinal, full panel design. Support for causal inferences and the causal order could be established with this design.

Second, all variables were collected by means of self-report, with the exception of church attendance numbers. Six of the eleven hypotheses involved data from a common source, pastors’ self-report. Self-reported data is often discussed as a limitation because self-reporting can produce common method variance that has the potential to inflate correlations (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). However, Spector (2006) argued that these concerns might be overstated depending on the constructs of interest. In short, the correlations between some constructs may be more or less influenced by the use of a common method. For example, if two constructs are similarly affected by socially desirable responding, their correlations may be inflated if a common method is used.
In the current study, socially desirable responding may have influenced self-reports of pastor job burnout, physical health, mental health, and turnover intentions. These represent the desire to minimize one’s emotional exhaustion, physical or mental health concerns, and the consideration of leaving a job or occupation. Some previous studies have theorized that pastors may underreport their level of burnout (Rosetti & Rhoades, 2013). Most pastors see their vocation as part of a specific calling from God, which may feel at odds with the experience of burnout (Proeschold-Bell & LeGrand, 2012). If social desirability affected these variables similarly, correlations between the pastor variables may have been inflated. The influence of socially desirable responding was reduced in the present study because the items that measured similar topics were separated on the survey instrument. This is one practical way to reduce common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Further, a major strength of this study was that the other five hypotheses linked data that was collected from independent sources: pastors, worship service attenders, and objective organizational data completed by a church staff member (i.e., attendance numbers). Utilizing independent raters is the primary way of reducing common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Future research in this area should continue to apply these strategies to reduce common method variance.

Third, the current study was limited by three single-item measures: attenders’ sense of belonging in the congregation (extrinsic religiousness), attenders’ changes in participation over the past two years (extrinsic religiousness), and church financial stability. Organizational research has generally concluded that multiple item measures have better psychometric properties compared to single-item measures (Fisher,
Matthews, & Gibbons, 2016). However, single-item measures can provide useful information and are considered acceptable to measures some psychosocial variables, particularly those that sufficiently narrow and straightforward (Fisher et al., 2016). It seems that these three constructs could be sufficiently measured with a single item, given that they are relatively straightforward. However, the effects may have been larger and more stable with multiple items to measure these constructs. Future research should examine these constructs with multiple items, if possible, in an attempt to replicate the findings of the current study.

Fourth, in addition, it may be more appropriate to analyze intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness as formative, rather than reflective, models. This was a limitation of the current study because the measurement model should be properly specified before analyzing the structural model (Coltman, Devinney, Midgley, & Venaik, 2008). The four items intended to measure intrinsic religiousness had low internal consistency, as measured by multilevel Cronbach’s alpha, \( \alpha = .55 \). Low item intercorrelation is one evidence for a potential formative factor (Coltman et al., 2008). Additionally, the items do not appear to be interchangeable. As with a list of physical health symptoms, adding or removing one of the indicators changes the conceptual domain of the construct. Lastly, the direction of causality appears to flow from the indicators to the construct: A change in the indicators would cause a change in the construct. This was the case in the current study: the indicators measuring religiousness were relatively independent and would independently influence the construct. In future research, it may be more accurate to consider a model of four single items to measure intrinsic religiousness as a formative
factor, and maintain the two single items measuring extrinsic religiousness. To consider overall religiousness, a formative factor with six indicators could be used.

Fifth, additional research is needed regarding the relationship between pastor burnout and turnover intentions and moderating effect of social support from the congregation on this relationship. Multilevel CFAs suggested that three items measuring turnover intentions could be combined into a composite scale, and this was used in the primary tests of the hypotheses. However, supplemental analyses analyzing the items measuring turnover intentions separately suggested that the moderating effect of social support from the congregation was only present for the relationship between burnout and occupational turnover intentions. The measurement of turnover intentions may have limited the study’s primary analyses, and additional research is needed to further explore these relationships.

Sixth, there is range restriction associated with the fact that congregations that self-selected in to participate in the U.S. Congregational Life Survey (USCLS). Of 1,330 congregations nominated and verified for the USCLS Wave 2 collected in 2008/2009, 201 agreed to participate (15% of congregations) and 148 returned completed attender surveys (73% of those that agreed). In addition, 411 of the 434 congregations that participated in Wave 1 of the USCLS were identified and invited to participate in Wave 2. Of these, 145 agreed to participate (35% of congregations), and 108 returned completed surveys from their worshipers (74% of those that agreed). It is unknown if there were certain characteristics that distinguished churches that agreed to participate from churches that did not choose to participate. Participating churches might have been
healthier than average congregations or less healthy than average congregations. Range restriction makes the effects found in the current study more conservative, in that the hypotheses were supported with restricted variance available. The effects supported in the current study are assumed to be stronger among U.S congregations in general than the results presented here.

Seventh, participants in this study were pastors currently working in local church ministry. Former pastors who left local church ministry for variety of reasons were not included. Thus, those with the highest levels of burnout may not have been included in the sample because they self-selected out of the organization or occupation. The relationships identified here can be generalized to pastors currently serving in local church ministry. Future research could examine how burnout (and other factors) influence actual turnover behavior by studying former local church pastors, perhaps qualitatively through open-ended survey questions, interviews, or focus groups. The Pulpit and Pew study of more than 900 former ministers has paved the way for a continued exploration of pastors who are no longer in local church ministry (Hoge & Wenger, 2005). Future studies could use these methods to examine how burnout influences actual turnover.

Lastly, additional research is needed to bolster all of the relationships studied here. In particular, studies should continue to examine pastor job burnout as it relates to congregation member and church organizational variables, as well as moderators of these relationships. Moderators other than social support from the congregation should be considered. This dissertation is the first known study that connects data from pastors,
congregation members, and the church organization. In general, future studies should continue to identify potential outcomes of pastor burnout so that the vast implications of pastor job burnout can be identified and steps can be taken to prevent and reduce burnout and strengthen associated protective factors.

**Contributions**

This dissertation contributes to an understanding of the burnout phenomenon among pastors, a vital and often-neglected occupational group. Pastors represent a unique vocation with a unique set of required emotional demands and job skills. Numerous Christian books in the popular press suggest that burnout in ministry is a reality for many pastors. The current dissertation is part of a growing body of empirical research that aims to understand, prevent, and reduce the experience of burnout among pastors.

As mentioned, existing research has focused almost exclusively on predictors and correlates of burnout among pastors, including individual, contextual, and job-related factors. This study pioneers a new line of research by studying pastor job burnout as it relates to the pastor’s health, congregation member variables, and church organizational variables. This study is also the first to examine a protective factor of pastor job burnout, social support from the congregation, which may buffer the negative effects of burnout. Results demonstrated that reducing pastor job burnout would benefit the entire congregation including the pastors, congregation members, and the overall organization. Social support from the congregation reduced the negative relationship between pastor burnout and turnover intentions. These findings provide important insight to promote career longevity for pastors and the vitality of a church overall.
As a result of the design and sampling procedures, this study has a high degree of
generalizability for Christian pastors and churches in the United States. Data were
gathered from a nationwide sample of 680 pastors and 64,674 church attenders in the
U.S. representing 336 congregations. Participants were sampled from numerous Christian
denominations, including Catholic and Protestant, and a small proportion of participants
were non-Christian religious leaders and attenders.

Practical contributions of the current study include that informs local church
leaders, members, and denominational boards regarding the prevalence and church-wide
correlates of burnout among pastors. It provides evidence that the problem of burnout is
related to multiple aspects of the church, not just the pastor. As a better understanding of
the impact of burnout is gained, church leaders will be further motivated to prevent
burnout and associated undesirable outcomes.

**Practical Recommendations**

This study provides evidence that the problem of burnout is bigger than the
individual pastor; it may be detrimental to thriving as a congregation. Understanding and
shedding light on these issues should bring greater awareness and resources to supporting
pastors. Local churches should prioritize these issues. Preventative actions should be
taken instead of inaction until a deep-seeded problem is visible. Previous literature has
found individual, contextual, and job-related factors that are theorized to be predictors of
burnout. Among these factors are role stressors (Beebe, 2007; Golden et al., 2004), the
absence of intentional time for rest and non-work activities (Doolittle, 2010), a lack of
exercise (Doolittle, 2010), and lower levels of job satisfaction (Rosetti & Rhoades, 2013).
To implement what is learned through this research, denominational boards and local church leaders should proactively provide support to pastors through various strategies, such as evaluating one’s work assignments and responsibilities, delegating certain tasks to staff and other leaders, providing pastoral assistants, encouraging a day of Sabbath rest each week, facilitating sabbatical leave and/or counseling, and various forms of social support.

Supportive congregation members can reduce the influence of burnout by providing much-needed support. The only significant moderating relationship identified in the current study was social support from the congregation as it weakened the positive relationship between pastor burnout and turnover intentions. Genuine care expressed by fellow church members may be a particularly important to mitigate a desire to leave. Although not specifically studied, pastors benefit from social, emotional, spiritual, and instrumental support from multiple angles: fellow staff members, congregation members, mentors, friends outside the congregation, and family. Pastors and their families can feel isolated in the congregation. Churches should encourage members to care for pastors and other staff members, model this care whenever possible, and organize specific efforts to care for pastors and their families. Pastor appreciation month is a simple, practical example of how some churches intentionally show appreciation for and encourage their pastors.

In addition, fellow staff members and church leaders play an integral role in supporting pastors. In particular, a church structure of multiple pastors who share in leadership, teaching, and shepherding is ideal and considered the Biblical example of
church organization (e.g., Acts 14:23; Titus 1:3-5). The plurality of elders in a church allows them to provide instrumental, social, and spiritual support, accountability, and encouragement to one another. Fellow pastors, staff, and other leaders can help moderate the expectations that congregation members may have on their pastor, and also the personal expectations that a pastor has on himself (Beebe, 2007). A pastor’s calling from God is carried out most effectively when he also cares for his own body and soul, as it is with any Christian (1 Corinthians 6:19; 1 Timothy 4:8).

**Conclusion**

This dissertation suggests that the problem of pastor burnout is larger than an individual experience. It is related to pastor, worship service attender, and church organizational variables. Specifically, pastor job burnout was negatively associated with pastor physical health, mental health, turnover intentions, attenders’ sense of belonging and participation, and church financial stability. Connections between pastor burnout and attenders’ intrinsic religiousness and attendance rates were not found. Social support from the congregation was a protective factor in terms of the relationship between burnout and turnover intentions.

Efforts to reduce pastor burnout would benefit the entire congregation. These findings provide important insight to promote longevity in ministry for pastors and the overall vitality of churches. Additional research is needed to support these novel findings. I hope that this dissertation stimulates continued research regarding the potential widespread outcomes of burnout, as well as practical changes in local churches that aim to prevent and reduce pastor burnout. Job burnout among pastors is complex, but
nevertheless, continued efforts to understand, prevent, and reduce pastor burnout are essential.
APPENDICES
Appendix A

Job Burnout (Leader Survey)

The items below were adapted for pastors from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). As the separate dimensions of burnout are not of interest in the current study, a composite score of the six items measuring burnout will be used.

Instructions: Do you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Moderately Disagree
3 = Neutral or Unsure
4 = Moderately Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

Emotional Exhaustion
1. I feel drained in fulfilling my functions in this congregation.
2. I find myself frustrated in my attempts to accomplish tasks that are important to me.

Cynicism
3. I am less patient with people in this congregation than I used to be.
4. I feel negative or cynical about the people with whom I work.

Reduced Personal Accomplishment
5. I have enthusiasm for my work. (R)
6. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in my ministry here. (R)
Appendix B

Physical and Mental Health Status (Leader Survey)

The seven items below are from the Physical and Mental Health subscales of the SF-36 (Ware & Sherbourne, 1992). All of the items except #4 of the Mental Health subscale are also part of the SF-12 short form that contain the items that best reproduce the SF-36. Items are divided into Physical or Mental Health subscales based on the measurement model of the SF-12 (Ware, Kosinski, & Keller, 1996). Physical and mental health will be analyzed separately in the current study. Higher scores represent higher levels of physical and mental health functioning.

1. Physical Health

1. In general, would you say your health is…
   1 = Poor
   2 = Fair
   3 = Good
   4 = Very Good
   5 = Excellent

2. During the past four weeks, how much did pain interfere with your normal activities (including both work outside the home and housework)? (R)
   1 = Not at all
   2 = A little bit
   3 = Moderately
   4 = Quite a bit
   5 = Extremely

3. During the past four weeks, how much of the time has your physical health or emotional problems interfered with your social activities (like visiting friends or relatives)? (R)
   1 = None of the time
   2 = A little of the time
   3 = Some of the time
   4 = Most of the time
   5 = All of the time
Appendix B (continued)

2. Mental Health

*Instructions*: How much of the time during the past four weeks…

1 = None of the time
2 = A little of the time
3 = Some of the time
4 = Most of the time
5 = All of the time

1. Have you felt calm and peaceful?
2. Did you have a lot of energy?
3. Have you felt downhearted and depressed? (R)
4. Have you been happy?
Appendix C

Turnover Intentions (Leader Survey)

Instructions: During the past year, how often have you seriously thought of...

1. Leaving your current position to become a pastor elsewhere?
2. Leaving pastoral ministry in a congregation to enter another type of ministry position?
3. Leaving pastoral ministry to enter a secular occupation?

1 = Never
2 = Once in a while
3 = Fairly often
4 = Very often
Appendix D

Social Support from the Congregation (Leader Survey)

Instructions: During the past year, how often have people in your congregation…

1. Made you feel loved and cared for?
2. Listened to you talk about your private problems and concerns?
3. Expressed interest and concern about your well-being?

   1 = Never
   2 = Once in a while
   3 = Fairly often
   4 = Very often
Appendix E

Intrinsic Religiousness (Attender Survey)

Based on the results of a series of multilevel CFAs, these four items will be combined to form a scale intended to measure intrinsic religiousness.

1. Over the last year, how much have you grown in your faith?*
   1 = No real growth
   2 = Some growth
   3 = Much growth, mainly through this congregation
   3 = Much growth, mainly through other groups or congregations
   3 = Much growth, mainly through my own private activities

2. How often do you spend time in private devotional activities (such as prayer, meditation, reading the Bible alone)?
   1 = Never
   2 = Hardly ever
   3 = Occasionally
   4 = Once a week
   5 = A few times a week
   6 = Every day or most days

3. To what extent do the worship services or activities of this congregation help you with everyday living?
   1 = Not at all
   2 = A small extent
   3 = Some extent
   4 = A great extent

4. My spiritual needs are being met in this congregation.
   1 = Strongly disagree
   2 = Disagree
   3 = Neutral or unsure
   4 = Agree
   5 = Strongly agree

*Three of the response options for this item represented “much growth” but attributed the growth to various sources (originally coded 3, 4, and 5). As the specific source of growth is not relevant to the current study, these options were recoded such that all participants who indicated that they had “much growth” received the same score (coded as 3). Thus, this item will be measured on a 3-point scale (no real growth, some growth, much growth).
Appendix F
Extrinsic Religiousness (Attender Survey)

The two aspects of extrinsic religiousness listed below will be assessed separately. Each will be assessed with a single-item.

1. **Participation**

   1. Compared to two years ago, do you think that you participate in activities of the congregation more, less, or about the same amount as you did then?

      1 = Participate less
      2 = About the same
      3 = Participate more
      n/a = Not applicable (been coming less than two years)*

2. **Sense of Belonging**

   1. Do you have a sense of belonging in this congregation?**

      1 = No, but I am happy as I am
      1 = No, and I wish I did by now
      1 = No, but I am new here
      2 = Yes, but perhaps not as strong as in the past
      3 = Yes, a strong sense—about the same as last year
      4 = Yes, a strong sense of belonging that is growing
      n/a = Not applicable*

*Participants who indicated “n/a” were excluded from the analyses in the current study.

**The responses associated with “no” are categorical, but the responses associated with “yes” are ordinal. In addition, a relatively small proportion of respondents answered one of the response options associated with “no” (6.5%, 3.6%, and 5.4%, respectively; 15.4% of the total). To create a more even distribution of responses and allow the data to be ordinal, the response options for “no” were collapsed and all coded as “1”. Thus, this item was analyzed as having four response options. Hypotheses with this item will be analyzed using multilevel ordinal logistic regression.
Appendix G

Church Attendance Rate and Financial Stability (Organizational Profile Survey)

The organizational outcomes listed below will be assessed separately, not combined to determine a composite organizational impact of burnout.

1. Church Attendance Rate

This item will be measured as the percent change in average weekly attendance from 2001 to 2008.

1. For each of the last seven years, what is your best estimate of average weekly attendance at worship services for this congregation? If you have more than one worship service, record the average attendance for all services combined.

2. Financial Stability

1. Which one of the following describes this congregation’s financial situation?

   1 = Our financial situation is a serious threat to our ability to continue as a viable congregation.
   2 = We have a declining financial base.
   3 = We have an essentially stable financial base.
   4 = We have an increasing financial base.
### Table 1. ICC1 calculated for predictor, moderator, and outcome variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>ICC1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastor job burnout (Level 1)</td>
<td>.060</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pastor social support from the congregation</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor physical health</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor mental health</td>
<td>.078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor turnover intentions</td>
<td>.052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attender intrinsic religiousness</td>
<td>.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attender sense of belonging (ER)</td>
<td>.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attender participation (ER)</td>
<td>.019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** ER = extrinsic religiousness.
Table 2. Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations among pastor variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Denominational group (pastors)</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>2. Pastor occupational tenure (years)</td>
<td>22.65</td>
<td>12.54</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Pastor job type</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.40**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Pastor gender</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.27**</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Pastor job burnout (Level 1)</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.10**</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>6. Pastor job burnout (Level 2)</td>
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<td>.57</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.09*</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.85**</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>7. Pastor social support from the congregation</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.09**</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.36**</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>8. Pastor physical health</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.07*</td>
<td>-.25**</td>
<td>-.21**</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Pastor mental health</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>-.11**</td>
<td>.13**</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.07*</td>
<td>-.60**</td>
<td>-.49**</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Pastor turnover intentions</td>
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<td>.55</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>-.12**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>-.27**</td>
<td>-.10**</td>
<td>-.38**</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Correlations are presented between the variables measured among 680 pastors. Denominational group represented a distinction between Catholic (coded 1) and Protestant (coded 2) churches. Gender was coded 1 = male, 2 = female. Pastor job type was coded 0 = senior or solo pastor, 1 = associate pastor. Cronbach’s alpha values calculated from multilevel CFAs are given on the diagonal for multiple item measures.

* p < .05; ** p < .01.
Table 3. Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations among attender variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Denominational group (attenders)</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Attender gender</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Attender intrinsic religiousness†</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.07**</td>
<td>.14**</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Attender sense of belonging (ER)</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>.08**</td>
<td>.04**</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Attender participation (ER)</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.05**</td>
<td>-.01*</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. Correlations are presented between the variables measured among 64,674 worship service attenders. Denominational group represented a distinction between Catholic (coded 1) and Protestant (coded 2) churches. Gender was coded 1 = male, 2 = female. Pastor job type was coded 0 = senior or solo pastor, 1 = associate pastor. ER = Extrinsic religiousness. Cronbach’s alpha values calculated from multilevel CFAs are given on the diagonal for multiple item measures.

* p < .05; ** p < .01; † Variable given as a z-score.
Table 4. Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations among organizational variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Denominational group (organizations)</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Church attendance rates</td>
<td>- .03</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Church financial stability</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. Correlations are presented between the variables measured among 251 church staff members that reported organizational data. Denominational group represented a distinction between Catholic (coded 1) and Protestant (coded 2) churches. Church attendance rates represented the change in attendance from 2001 to 2008.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. 
Table 5. Parameter estimates of pastor job burnout (Level 1) predicting pastor physical health.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Parameter Estimate ($B$)</th>
<th>$SE$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$sr^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>125.07**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor gender</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.165</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor occupational tenure</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.82</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor job type</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-1.41</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denominational group</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>4.18**</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor social support from the congregation</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.80</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor job burnout (L1)</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-5.57**</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. DV = Pastor physical health. L1 = Level 1 (individual level). Results represent OLS regression. Gender was coded 1 = male, 2 = female. Pastor job type was coded 0 = senior or solo pastor, 1 = associate pastor. Denominational group represented a distinction between Catholic (coded 1) and Protestant churches (coded 2). *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$. 
Table 6. Parameter estimates of pastor job burnout (Level 1) predicting pastor mental health.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Parameter Estimate (B)</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>sr²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>34.04**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor gender</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.66</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor occupational tenure</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.82</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor job type</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denominational group</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-2.05*</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor social support from the congregation</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>3.20**</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor job burnout (L1)</td>
<td>-.46</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-13.12**</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. DV = Pastor mental health. L1 = Level 1 (individual level). sr² is the MLM version of reduction in variance. Gender was coded 1 = male, 2 = female. Pastor job type was coded 0 = senior or solo pastor, 1 = associate pastor. Denominational group represented a distinction between Catholic (coded 1) and Protestant churches (coded 2). *p < .05; **p < .01.
Table 7. Multilevel ordinal logistic regression results of pastor job burnout (Level 2) predicting attenders’ sense of belonging (extrinsic religiousness).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model term</th>
<th>Parameter Estimate (B)</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Odds ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threshold for attenders’ sense of belonging</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-2.16</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-21.96**</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1.51</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-15.41**</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-1.83</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor job burnout (L2)</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-3.07**</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. DV = Attenders’ sense of belonging. B represents cumulative logit coefficients ascending from response options “1” to “4”. L2 = Level 2 (church level). *p < .05; **p < .01.
Table 8. Parameter estimates of pastor job burnout (Level 2) predicting attenders’ participation (extrinsic religiousness).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Parameter Estimate (B)</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>sr²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>277.68**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attender gender</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-2.45*</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denominational group</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>3.69**</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor job burnout (L2)</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-2.41*</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. DV = Congregation members’ participation (extrinsic religiousness). L2 = Level 2 (church level). sr² is the MLM version of reduction in variance. Gender was coded 1 = male, 2 = female. Denominational group represented a distinction between Catholic (coded 1) and Protestant (coded 2) churches. *p < .05; **p < .01.
Table 9. Parameter estimates of pastor job burnout (Level 2) predicting church financial stability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Parameter Estimate ($B$)</th>
<th>$SE$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$sr^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>70.31**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denominational group</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor job burnout (L2)</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-3.07**</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. DV = Church attendance rates. L2 = Level 2 (church level). Gender was coded 1 = male, 2 = female. Denominational group represented a distinction between Catholic (coded 1) and Protestant (coded 2) churches. $sr^2$ is the MLM version of reduction in variance.

*p < .05; **p < .01.
Table 10. Parameter estimates of pastor job burnout (Level 1) predicting pastor turnover intentions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Parameter Estimate (B)</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>sr²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>13.69**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor gender</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor occupational tenure</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-1.18</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor job type</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.38</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denominational group</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>3.09**</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor social support from the congregation</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-2.80**</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor job burnout (L1)</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>7.96**</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. DV = Pastor turnover intentions. L1 = Level 1 (individual level). sr² is the MLM version of reduction in variance. Gender was coded 1 = male, 2 = female. Pastor job type was coded 0 = senior or solo pastor, 1 = associate pastor. Denominational group represented a distinction between Catholic (coded 1) and Protestant churches (coded 2). *p < .05; **p < .01.
Table 11. Parameter estimates of the interaction between pastor job burnout (Level 1) and pastor social support from the congregation predicting pastor turnover intentions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Parameter Estimate $(B)$</th>
<th>$SE$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$sr^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>13.32**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor gender</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor occupational tenure</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-1.00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor job type</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.37</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denominational group</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>3.12**</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor social support from the congregation</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-3.45**</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor job burnout (L1)</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>7.65**</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor job burnout × Pastor social support</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-2.39*</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. DV = Pastor turnover intentions. L1 = Level 1 (individual level). $sr^2$ is the MLM version of reduction in variance. Gender was coded 1 = male, 2 = female. Pastor job type was coded 0 = senior or solo pastor, 1 = associate pastor. Denominational group represented a distinction between Catholic (coded 1) and Protestant churches (coded 2). *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$. 
Figure 1. The hypothesized model.

Notes. (+) and (-) signs represent the predicted direction for each hypothesized relationship. The overall model is presented for conceptual purposes; bivariate and moderation hypotheses were tested in the current study.
Figure 2. The hypothesized model with the level of analysis indicated for each relationship.

Notes. L1 = Level 1 (individual); L2 = Level 2 (church). (+) and (-) signs represent the predicted direction for each hypothesized relationship. ER = extrinsic religiousness. The overall model is presented for conceptual purposes; main effect and moderation hypotheses were tested in the current study.
Figure 3. Model indicating the hypotheses supported in the current study.

*Notes: The dark lines represent the hypothesized relationships that were supported in the current study. The dashed lines indicate hypothesized relationships that were not supported. ER = extrinsic religiousness. (+) and (-) signs represent the predicted direction for each hypothesized relationship. The overall model is presented for conceptual purposes. Hypotheses of direct and moderation effects were tested in the current study.
Figure 4. Conceptual model of multilevel ordinal logistic regression results of pastor job burnout (Level 2) predicting attenders’ sense of belonging. Thresholds represent ascending ordered steps on the DV.
Figure 5. Simple slopes of the moderating effect of social support from the congregation on the relationship between job burnout (Level 1) and turnover intentions among pastors.
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