

# SPIRITUALITY AND BURNOUT: AN INCREMENTAL VALIDITY STUDY

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Burnout is often seen as a combination of personality and work environment factors. Like other professions in burnout research, clergy have been treated with little consideration for what might be unique about or vital to the vocation or its adherents. The present study examined the incremental validity of spirituality in predicting burnout in United Methodist clergy over and above both personality and work environment variables. Burnout was measured using a composite index consisting of the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996), the Situational Shift Scale (Rodgers & Piedmont, 1998), and the Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). Hierarchical multiple regression analysis indicated that spirituality showed incremental significance in predicting burnout even when controlling for personality and work environment, although the contribution was small.

As a result of the increasing recognition of the demands of the pastorate, there has been a growing interest in work-related stressors for clergy (Malony, 1988; Morris & Blanton, 1994). The burnout syndrome found among human service professionals has been associated with the pastorate as well (Daniel & Rogers, 1982; Sanford, 1982; Hall, 1997). Identified problem areas for clergy include lack of time, stress, frustration, loneliness, social isolation, and diminished marital adjustment (Ellison & Mattila, 1983; Warner & Carter, 1984). In his review of the literature, Hall (1997) explored the research on emotional well-being, marital/divorce adjustment, stress and coping, family adjustment, and burnout among the

clergy. He noted, however, that what is lacking in the current research is an assessment of pastors' spirituality as it related to personal and interpersonal functioning.

With a few exceptions (Prout, 1996; Rodgers & Piedmont, 1998), little attempt has been made to study spirituality and its relationship to burnout. Burnout among the clergy may well touch upon the heart of one's spiritual life and identity (Oswald, 1991). Maslach and Leiter (1997) wrote that "Burnout is the index of the dislocation between what people are and what they have to do. It represents an erosion in values, dignity, spirit, and will, an erosion of the human soul" (p. 17). Burnout among the clergy may represent a threat not only to one's vocation, but to one's sense of life calling and identity as a pastor. Pastors struggling with burnout often face a growing sense of cynicism and disillusionment (Oswald, 1991; Sanford, 1982) that threaten to undermine the very convictions which define their calling. Oswald (1991) called burnout "a deeply religious issue" (p. 71) in that it calls the pastor to confront the issue of personal commitment.

Bulka (1984) argued that the answer to burnout may be found in self-transcendence. It is here that one of the fundamental attributes of clergy, their spirituality, might serve as an important variable in buffering the negative effects of burnout. According to Emmons (1999), "The core component of spirituality is reflected in the notion of 'transcendence'" (p. 101). Self-transcendence involves the ability to step beyond oneself, to take a larger view of present circumstances. Piedmont (1999) defined spiritual transcendence as the capacity of individuals to stand outside of their immediate sense of time and place to view life from a larger, more objective perspective. Spiritual transcendence involves the ability to move beyond oneself and make connections with an Ultimate that is per-



ceived as greater than oneself. How does this capacity for self transcendence relate to burnout? Does spirituality tell us anything about burnout among clergy over and above an examination of personality and work environment? Little empirical work has been done to answer these questions, which were the focus for the present research.

### THE BURNOUT CONSTRUCT

Burisch (1993) pointed out that burnout is a psychological construct, and as such the only meaningful question we can ask is "How do we want to define it?" For the purposes of the present study, the definition offered by Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) will be used. They see burnout as a persistent, negative, work-related state of mind that is characterized by exhaustion, a sense of reduced effectiveness, decreased motivation, and the development of dysfunctional work attitudes and behaviors. This condition is believed to develop gradually, and can remain unnoticed for a long time. Often burnout is self-perpetuating because of inadequate coping strategies that are associated with the syndrome. Several elements of this definition should be noted. First, burnout occurs in "normal" individuals who may not suffer from any diagnosable psychopathology. Second, burnout involves affective (emotional), cognitive (attitudinal), and behavioral symptoms. Third, both situational and personological factors are involved.

Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) identified three predisposing factors to burnout: (a) an initial strong motivation, (b) an unfavorable work environment, and (c) the use of inadequate coping skills to respond to an unfavorable work environment. These factors are particularly applicable to the situation of most clergy. First, the sense of call to the ministry implies an initial strong motivation. Freudenberger and Richelson (1980, p. 22) called burnout "the disease of overcommitment." Such intense dedication is often evident among new clergy who view their ministry as not simply a vocational choice but as a divine mandate informing their identity. Second, given the nature of the parish, clergy often find themselves in unfavorable work environments. Emotional demands on clergy are often high, and parishioners can easily take clergy for granted, resulting in a perceived lack of reciprocity (e.g., Oswald, 1991). Third, individual differences in the way one appraises and responds to environmental stress can point to inadequate coping strategies.

Clergy are no different than the general population in this regard. The heuristic model provided by Schaufeli and Enzmann fits well with experience of clergy, and it also recognizes that both situational and personological factors are at work in the syndrome's development.

### SITUATIONAL, PERSONOLOGICAL, AND RELIGIOUS CORRELATES OF BURNOUT

Much of the early burnout research focused on situational or environmental factors at work (Jackson, Schwab, & Schuler, 1986; Jackson, Turner, & Brief, 1987; Martone, 1987; Maslach & Jackson, 1984; Maslach & Florian, 1988). Evidence exists for a relationship between role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload and burnout. Schwab, Jackson, and Schuler (1986), for instance, found that after controlling for age and gender, role conflict explained the largest percentage of variance in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Pretorius (1994) found that role conflict and number of students were significant predictors of emotional exhaustion among teachers, while number of students and role ambiguity were significant predictors of depersonalization. Manlove (1994) explored the contributions of role conflict and role ambiguity to predictions of burnout among child care workers and found that both predicted significant amounts of the variance in burnout over both demographic variables (age, marital status, number of children living at home) and professional variables (wages, education level, hours worked, years in the field).

Later research shifted to an examination of the role of personal dispositions in the development of burnout. Hills and Norvell (1991), for example, working out of a diathesis-stress model, examined the relationship between the personality dimensions of hardiness and neuroticism and the emotional exhaustion dimension of burnout. Their hypothesis was that hardiness and neuroticism would act as moderators of perceived stress. Results indicated only significant main effects for hardiness and neuroticism; the expected interactions were not found. Deary et. al. (1996) explored the contributions of personality (measured by the five-factor model), coping styles, and organizational change to burnout among Scottish medical personnel using structural equation modeling. They found initial strong correlations between neuroticism and emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Their latent modeling



suggested that certain personality types will predispose individuals to respond to stress with more negative appraisals, and higher levels of such response styles will lead to higher reported burnout.

Research has also indicated that both personality and situation independently explain the variance in burnout. Piedmont (1993) used a longitudinal analysis to explore personality (as measured by the five-factor model) as a predictor of burnout while controlling for situational factors. Using a relatively small sample of occupational therapists, he demonstrated that Neuroticism was a significant predictor of both Emotional Exhaustion (EE) and Depersonalization (DP), both concurrently and predictively. Even when controlling for the effects of the work environment, personality continued to significantly predict burnout over a seven month period. These results point to the importance of personality factors in predicting burnout, even when controlling for situational factors. Further, no significant interaction between personality and work environment in predicting burnout was found.

Among the clergy, burnout has been linked with a number of individual-difference constructs, including role conflict and role ambiguity (Schwanz, 1996), leisure attitudes and behavior (Stanton-Rich & Iso-Ahola, 1998), loneliness and marital adjustment (Warner & Carter, 1984), loneliness, years of service, and spiritual well-being (Prout, 1996), and styles of religious problem-solving (Rodgers & Piedmont, 1998). All of these constructs evidenced significant relations to burnout and underscore the importance of person variables for understanding stress, coping, and burnout.

## ISSUES OF ASSESSMENT AND MEASUREMENT

### *Burnout*

The possible influence of personality (especially neuroticism) on the assessment of burnout has raised questions about how best to measure this construct. Maslach's three-fold definition of burnout and its operationalization in the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) has become the most frequently used for research purposes (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). Yet this scale is not without problems (Garden, 1987; Schaufeli, Enzmann, & Girault, 1993; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998).

The bulk of the criticism of the MBI has revolved around factorial structure (Garden, 1987) and discrimi-

nant validity (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). However, the consistently strong correlation between neuroticism and burnout as measured by the MBI suggests possible item contamination (Schroeder & Costa, 1984). It may be possible that the MBI is a measure of traits rather than of the situational components contributing to burnout. Schroeder and Costa (1984) explored item contamination among stress measures and their outcomes measure and found many incidences of content overlap. A similar problem may exist with the measurement of burnout. For example, an examination of the Cynicism subscale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS) and the Neuroticism subscale of the Bipolar Adjective Rating Scale (BARS) found several possible overlapping items.

**Behavioral component.** In addition to standard self-report measures such as the MBI, Schaufeli et al. (1993) have called for behaviorally anchored rating scales to augment assessment of burnout. To date few attempts have been made to assess the behavioral component of burnout. The Situational Shift Scale (SSS; Rodgers, 1994; Rodgers & Piedmont, 1998) offers one possibility for behavioral assessment, especially among clergy. This scale measures changes in behavior and attitude in response to shifting work situations. The use of this scale is important in assessing situational factors in burnout rather than simply trait influenced responses. The scale was shown to be correlated in expected ways with burnout as measured by the MBI (Rodgers, 1994). A modified version of this scale will be included in this study.

**Cognitive component.** In addition to the affective and behavioral components of burnout, a cognitive or attitudinal component of burnout has also been identified (Schaufeli & Van Dierendonck, 1993; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). The MBI-GS has attempted to capture the cognitive component of burnout through the Cynicism (Cy) and Professional Efficacy (PE) subscales. Item overlap between the Cy subscale and the Neuroticism subscale of the BARS presents problems, however, creating spurious associations between the two measures. As an additional cognitive assessment of burnout, the present study also employed the Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985) as an assessment of global life satisfaction.

For the purpose of the present study, therefore, burnout was measured by a summated assessment from three sources: (a) the MBI-GS; (b) the Satisfaction With Life Scale; and (c) the Situational Shift Scale. Use of these three sources was intended to capture the affective, cognitive, and behavioral com-



ponents of burnout. Converting individual scores to z-scores provided a common metric, and summing z-scores from the three measurements provided an overall burnout score, termed "zBurnout."

### *Spirituality*

The last decade has seen a growth in assessment tools for measuring spirituality, but the variety of available instruments and constructs measured has raised several problems. Piedmont (2001) has identified two important issues in the assessment of spiritual constructs. The first concern involves the conceptual redundancy among these new scales. To what extent do these scales measure unique constructs in the individual and to what extent are they "simply the reiteration of a common construct" (Piedmont, 2001, p. 4)? The second issue concerns whether the spiritual constructs being measured are simply the "religification" (Van Wicklin, 1990) of existing personality variables. Do these scales tell us anything above and beyond that already assessed by personality?

Piedmont (1999) developed the Spiritual Transcendence Scale (STS) in an attempt to address these concerns. The Spiritual Transcendence Scale is a 24-item scale that measures three dimensions of spirituality: (a) *connectedness*, or the "belief that one is part of a larger human orchestra whose contribution is indispensable in creating life's continuing harmony" (Piedmont, 1999, p. 989), (b) *universality*, or a sense of unity in and with all of life, and (c) *prayer fulfillment*, a feeling of joy and well-being as a result of one's prayer life. Based on the results of both developmental and validation studies, Piedmont has shown that Spiritual Transcendence is factorially distinct from the dimensions of the five factor model of personality. In addition, the subscales of the STS have provided incremental validity over and above personality in predicting a number of psychosocial outcomes (e.g., Attitudes Toward Abortion, Perceived Social Support, Vulnerability to Stress, and Prosocial Behavior).

The present study was an attempt to extend the research on spirituality through an examination of its incremental validity in predicting burnout over and above any contribution of personality and work environment. Employing a series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses, the overall and unique predictiveness of Spiritual Transcendence will be established

## METHOD

### *Participants*

Subjects in the study were ordained United Methodist clergy in full connection with an annual conference and currently under appointment. The Office of Research of the General Board of Global Ministry of the United Methodist Church agreed to provide a random list of 700 subjects, drawn from the population of active United Methodist clergy in the United States. From the 340 surveys returned, 321 were useable (response rate of 48.4%).

The median age of the sample was 50.6 years. Clergy had been in the parish an average of 20.8 years and reported working an average of 54.1 hours a week. The sample was 81% male and 19% female, fairly representative of United Methodist clergy. Regarding marital status, 88.5% were married, 4.4% single, 5.6% divorced, and 1.5% widowed.

### *Measures*

***Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey.*** The Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS) (Maslach et al., 1996) was developed to assess burnout in occupational groups other than human services. The MBI-GS is a 16-item scale in which subjects respond to items on a 7-point Likert scale. Responses range from *Never* to *Every day*. The MBI-GS contains three subscales. These include 5 items measuring Exhaustion (Ex), 5 items measuring Cynicism (Cy), and 6 items measuring Professional Efficacy (PE). Leiter and Schaufeli (1996) reported Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging from .89 to .91 for Ex, .77 to .84 for Cy, and .73 to .78 for PE.

***Situational Shift Scale.*** The Situational Shift Scale (SSS) (Rodgers, 1994; Rodgers & Piedmont, 1998) is a 7-item scale measuring recent behavioral and attitudinal changes in a pastor's life over the previous six months. Items are answered on a 9-point Likert scale from *greatly decreased* (1) to *greatly increased* (9). Participants respond to statements such as "In the past six months my prayer and devotional life has:" and "In the past six months the number of hours that I have worked has:" Rodgers (1994) reported an alpha reliability of .54 for the entire scale. Using only those four items that pertain to a pastor's religious life, however, produced an alpha reliability of .84, but at the cost of decreased validity and lower correlational value. For the purposes of the present study, the original 7-item scale was



Table 1  
*Situational Shift Scale*

The following questions are answered on a 7-point Likert scale from *Greatly Decreased* to *Greatly Increased*.

Original items:

- 1. In the past six months, my prayer and devotional life has . . .
- 2. In the past six months, my feelings of closeness to God have . . .
- 3. In the past six months, my enthusiasm for worship has . . .
- 4. In the past six months, the number of hours that I have worked has . . .
- 5. In the past six months, my job responsibilities have . . .
- 6. In the past six months, my thoughts of a job change have . . .
- 7. In the past six months, my commitment to the ministry has . . .

Additional items:

- 8. In the past six months, my study of the scripture has . . .
- 9. In the past six months, my weekly days off have . . .
- 10. In the past six months, my time with family and friends has . . .
- 11. In the past six months, my enthusiasm for church work has . . .
- 12. In the past six months, my time spent each week in sermon preparation has . . .

augmented by five additional scale items in order to assess behavioral and attitudinal shifts among clergy. Alpha reliability for the expanded SSS was .78. Table 1 presents the original items of Rodgerson's scale along with the five additional items.

**Satisfaction With Life Scale.** The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) is a 5-item scale developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985) to measure the global life satisfaction component of subjective well-being. Items in the SWLS are measured on a 7-point Likert scale from *Strongly disagree* to *Strongly agree*. Included are such items as "In most ways my life is close to ideal," and "So far I have gotten the important things I want in life."

Scores from the MBI-GS, the SSS, and the SWLS were transformed into z-scores and combined to form a single burnout score, the zBurnout score. A formula of  $zEx + zCy + zSSS \div zPE \div zSWLS$  was used to calculate the resulting zBurnout scores. Higher scores on the zBurnout scale reflected a greater degree of overall burnout.

**Spiritual Transcendence Scale.** The Spiritual Transcendence Scale (STS) (Piedmont, 1999) is a 24-item scale measuring three dimensions of Spiritual Transcendence. These include Prayer Fulfillment (9 items), Universality (9 items), and Connectedness (6

items). Responses are measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*. Alpha reliabilities of the three subscales were .65, .85, and .85 for Connectedness, Universality, and Prayer Fulfillment respectively. Correlations between the STS and the dimensions of the five-factor personality model were all below .20, suggesting that the STS measured a construct independent of the five-factor model (Piedmont, 1999). In a second construct validity study, Piedmont (2001) scores on the STS correlated with a wide range of salient psychosocial constructs, including Prosocial Behavior, Self-Actualization, and Purpose in Life.

**Bipolar Adjective Rating Scale.** The Bipolar Adjective Rating Scale (BARS) is an 80-item set of adjective pairs devised by McCrae and Costa (1985) and based on the 40-item adjective pairs of Goldberg (1983). The scale measures the five-factor model of personality (neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness). The BARS assesses adjective pairs based on a 7-point Likert scale of similarity from *Very Much Like Me* to *Neutral*. Scale validity was assessed both by self- and observer-ratings as well as by comparison of the 80-item pairs with the NEO (assessing neuroticism, extraversion, and openness to experience). Conver-



gent correlations for neuroticism, extraversion, and openness ranged from .57 to .65 in the self-report sample, and were .52 in the observer-rating sample, all  $p < .001$ .

**Occupational Role Questionnaire.** The Occupational Role Questionnaire (ORQ) is a subscale of the Occupational Stress Inventory, Revised (OSI-R), devised by Osipow (1998). For the purpose of this study, five of the six subscales of the occupational stress dimension were used. Each subscale is comprised of 10 items answered on a 5-point Likert scale from *Rarely or never true* to *True most of the time*. Subscales used include (a) Role Overload (RO), (b) Role Insufficiency (RI), (c) Role Ambiguity (RA), (d) Role Boundary (RB), and (e) Responsibility (R). Reliability was assessed and presented in two ways. First, test-retest data on a sample of 62 Air Force cadets over a two-week period produced a correlation for the ORQ as a whole of .61,  $p < .01$ . Correlations for the subscales ranged from .41 for RB to .68 for RO, all  $p$ 's  $< .01$ . Second, as a measure of internal consistency, alpha reliabilities were calculated both for the individual subscales and for the ORQ as a whole. Alpha levels were within acceptable limits, ranging from .72 for RB to .85 for RI (Osipow, 1998).

**Demographic Data.** Various demographic data were also assessed. These included such items as gender, age, and years in the parish.

### Procedure

Research packets were sent to all 700 potential participants. The research packets consisted of a letter of introduction and the various surveys for participants, as well as a self-addressed stamped return envelope. After two weeks follow-up cards were sent to non-respondents encouraging participation. Participation was anonymous.

## RESULTS

### Sample Descriptives

The Bipolar Adjective Rating Scale (BARS) scores, assessing the five-factor model of personality, were transformed into T-scores. Scores for Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, and Conscientiousness were within the normal range (45 to 55), while scores for Agreeableness were above the normal range. A higher score on Agreeableness may reflect the interpersonal or pro-person nature of parish ministry. Scores from the Occupational Role Question-

naire (ORQ) subscales were close to the reported norm for Role Boundary, higher than the reported norms for Role Overload, Role Ambiguity, and Responsibility, and below the reported mean for Role Insufficiency (Osipow, 1998).

Maslach et al. (1996) reported that levels of burnout as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Scale (MBI-GS) differed among national samples. For the purposes of this research, only the North American sample was used. Scores for Exhaustion and Cynicism were close to the norms reported by Maslach et al., while scores for Professional Efficacy were above the reported norm. Scores on the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) were close to the norm reported by Diener et al. (1985). While Rodgeron (1994) reported means and standard deviations for the Situation Shift Scale (SSS), the scale used in the present study contained additional items not found in the original scale. The three subscales of the MBI-GS, the Situational Shift Scale, and the Satisfaction With Life Scale were transformed into z-scores and aggregated to create an overall burnout score,  $z_{\text{Burnout}}$ .

### $z_{\text{Burnout}}$ correlates

Table 2 provides a correlation matrix for key variables.  $z_{\text{Burnout}}$  scores correlated positively with Neuroticism ( $r = .48$ ,  $p < .001$ ), as expected. Correlations with the other personality dimensions were consistent with previous findings on the relationship between burnout and personality.  $z_{\text{Burnout}}$  scores also correlated positively with all five subscales of the ORQ, as expected and were consistent with previous research on the relationship between burnout and work environment. Significant negative correlations were also found between  $z_{\text{Burnout}}$  and the spirituality scale used, as shown in Table 2. A greater sense of burnout was experienced by those who scored lower on the three subscales of the Spiritual Transcendence Scale.

### Incremental validity of the Spiritual Transcendence Scale

In order to determine the unique contribution of spirituality as a predictor of  $z_{\text{Burnout}}$ , a series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses were performed. The results of these analyses can be found in Table 3.

Demographic variables of age and gender were entered in the first step of the regression analysis.



Table 2  
Correlation matrix and alpha reliabilities for key variables

Variables	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
BARS															
1. Neuro.	.82		-.08	.07	-.47**	-.46**	.30**	.28**	.35**	.34**	.19**	-.05	-.17**	-.05	.48**
2. Extra.	.74		C	.29**	.41**	.18*	-.06	-.28**	-.24**	-.09	-.05	.20**	.20**	.24**	-.29**
3. Open.	.79			C	-.11	-.07	.11*	.04	.03	.15*	.07	.09	.10	.11*	-.03
4. Agree.	.82				C	.40**	-.14*	-.34**	-.29**	-.17**	-.09	.17**	.11	.23**	-.31**
5. Consc.	.86					C	-.07	-.29**	-.41**	-.24**	.04	.14*	.17**	.19**	-.32**
ORQ															
6. RO	.81						C	.19**	.37**	.58**	.59**	.01	.09	-.01	.46**
7. RI	.84							C	.44**	.43**	.08	-.17**	-.20**	-.13*	.63**
8. RA	.76								C	.58**	.20**	-.15*	-.11	-.20**	.55**
9. RB	.77									C	.44**	-.03	.04	-.11	.60**
10. R	.75										C	.01	.04	.01	.35**
STS															
11. Univ.	.79											C	.42**	.50**	-.16**
12. Prayer	.61												C	.24**	-.26**
13. Conn.	.57													C	-.17**
Burnout															
14. zBurn	.68														C
Descriptives															
Mean		46	51	52	56	51	28	21	22	23	31	37	32	23	0
SD		8.4	8.5	9.2	8.2	8.6	6.9	6.8	5.8	6.6	5.7	4.5	4.1	3.1	3.8

Note: N = 321; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .005$ . All two-tailed tests.  
Note: Neuro. = Neuroticism; Extra. = Extraversion; Open. = Openness to Experience; Agree. = Agreeableness; Consc. = Conscientiousness; RO = Role Overload; RI = Role Insufficiency;  
RA = Role Ambiguity; RB = Role Boundary; R = Responsibility; Univ. = Universality; Prayer = Prayer Fulfillment; Conn. = Connectedness; zBurn. = zBurnout



**Table 3**  
*Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Demographic, Personality, Situational, and Spiritual Variables Predicting zBurnout*

Steps	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	F Change	df	Sig. ΔF
Demo	.164	.027	.021	.027	4.404	2, 318	.013
Pers.	.556	.309	.294	.282	25.589	5, 313	.001
ORQ	.804	.647	.633	.338	58.889	5, 308	.001
STS	.818	.670	.653	.023	7.011	3, 305	.001

*Note:* Demo = Demographic data; Pers. = Personality as measured by the FFM; ORQ = Occupational Role Questionnaire; STS = Spiritual Transcendence Scale.

**Table 4**  
*Overall and Unique Variance in the Regression Equation using the Spiritual Transcendence Scale*

Variable	Overall Variance Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Unique Variance R <sup>2</sup>
Demographics	.021	.010
Personality	.303	.038
ORQ	.589	.339
STS	.078	.023

*Note.* ORQ = Occupational Role Questionnaire; STS = Spiritual Transcendence Scale.

Only age was a significant predictor of zBurnout. In the second step, personality variables were entered in a block. Neuroticism ( $\beta = .428, t = 7.500, p < .001$ ) and Extraversion ( $\beta = -.258, t = -4.582, p < .001$ ) were both significant predictors of zBurnout, even when controlling for demographic variables. Personality contributed an additional 28% of the variance of zBurnout. Work environment variables were entered in a block in step three, contributing an additional 34% of the variance over and above demographics and personality. All five subscales of the ORQ remained significant predictors of zBurnout even when controlling for both demographic and personality variables.

The three subscales of the Spiritual Transcendence Scale were entered in a block in the final step. As can be seen in Table 3, the Spiritual Transcendence Scale did account for additional variance in zBurnout. Further analysis showed that of the three subscales entered, only Prayer Fulfillment

was a significant predictor of zBurnout when controlling for demographics, personality, and work environment ( $\beta = -.167, t = -4.277, p < .001$ ). The addition of the Spiritual Transcendence Scale explained an additional 2% of the variance of zBurnout, and the overall model was significant (Partial  $R^2 = .023$ , Partial  $F(3, 305) = 7.011, p < .001$ ).

Table 4 represents overall (entered first) and unique (entered last) variance contributed by key variables in the regression equation. As can be seen, when entered first in the equation, spirituality as measured by the STS accounts for almost 8% of the variance in zBurnout; when entered last, it still accounts for just over 2%.

**DISCUSSION**

*Spirituality variables*

As can be seen from the results, the Spiritual Transcendence Scale showed small but significant incremental validity (2%) when controlling for personality



and work environment, the two factors most commonly linked to burnout. The significant component of spirituality involved the individual's perceived relationship with God (Prayer Fulfillment); those dimensions of spirituality that related the individual to others in service and community (Connectedness and Universality) were not significant. It would seem that spirituality, and especially that quality which connects one with the Transcendent, does indeed tell us something about burnout among clergy that personality and work environment do not tell us. The less one feels oneself in intimate relationship with the Divine, the greater the likelihood of burnout. The implication of this is that when it comes to dealing with the work-related distress of burnout, the ability to lose oneself in prayer or meditation is different than the ability to lose oneself in other areas of life such as in a hobby or in service.

These findings are consistent with those of Rodgeron and Piedmont (1998) in terms of effect size. They found that the contributions of the Religious Problem Solving scale did significantly predict two dimensions of burnout (Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment), although the magnitude of the correlation was small (2-5% incremental validity). The current research found a similar effect size for spirituality even when using a composite burnout scale. Similar effect sizes have been found when spirituality has been linked to subjective well-being (Ellison, 1991; Ellison, Gay, & Glass, 1989; Poloma & Pendleton, 1990).

It must be kept in mind that the modest findings in the present study represent the incremental validity of spirituality. A mere 2% of the variance of *z*Burnout, while statistically significant, may not appear clinically significant. Four points of comparison need to be made. First, these results were found even after partialing personality and work environment, thus this reflects the truly unique predictive-ness of spirituality. Second, it is interesting to note that the five personality dimensions themselves only uniquely added about 4%. Thus, the single dimension of spirituality adds 50% as much as the five dimensions of personality. Third, it must be kept in mind that the overall significance of spirituality was closer to 8%. Finally, the goal in multiple regression analysis is to find the contributions of all relevant variables, not simply the strongest variables, in order to provide the most comprehensive explanatory model possible.

### *Implications for research*

Present research in burnout must take into account both situational factors and personality factors. The argument offered by Maslach and Leiter (1997) that burnout is a problem of the work environment rather than the people themselves cannot be supported by the research. Both situational factors and personality factors contribute to burnout. The magnitude of the contributions will depend on how work environment, personality, and burnout are assessed. The present research suggested that work environment and personality are additive. Future research is needed to explore the possible interaction between work environment and personality.

The use of the composite *z*Burnout scale in the present research introduced a new way of understanding burnout. Burnout was defined here as a composite of cognitive, affective, and behavioral work related distress. The behavioral dimension of burnout, captured in the Situational Shift Scale, has been previously unexplored in burnout research. Use of a single composite burnout measure, the *z*Burnout score, provided for better validity and reliability in assessing overall burnout. It must be noted, however, that burnout has been referred to as a multidimensional construct (Maslach, 1993; Schaufeli, Maslach, & Marek, 1993). While a single composite score increases the ability to predict overall burnout by capitalizing on information across the domains measured, it does so at the cost of interpretive specificity. In other words, while a *z*Burnout score will more clearly and reliably predict the presence of burnout in an individual, the composite nature of the score means that it is impossible to know in what dimensions (cognitive, affective, or behavioral) the individual is most distressed. Future research will need to explore ways to provide both a powerful aggregate burnout score as well as to identify specific dimensions of distress.

The present research also confirms the incremental validity of spirituality, as defined by the STS, as a predictor of distress even when controlling for personality and work environment. Spirituality was a robust variable, explaining an additional 2% of the variance in burnout even after both situation and personality, the main contributors to burnout, were partialled out. The use of all three variables (work environment, personality, and spirituality) makes for a strong overall model in assessing clergy burnout.



Using a burnout measure with an alpha reliability of .68, a combination of demographics, personality, work environment, and spirituality was able to explain 65% of the variance in zBurnout. In other words, these constructs accounted for almost all of the reliable variance in zBurnout.

The incremental validity model used in the present research provides a valuable means of assessing the unique contributions of spirituality as a factor in clergy distress. Although personality and situational factors were found to play important roles, spirituality, and especially that quality of spirituality which relates the individual to God through prayer or meditation, was also shown to be an important additional component in burnout. All three components make unique and important contributions to understanding burnout among clergy.

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