Impact of positive psychology in PK-12 settings

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IMPACT OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY IN PK-12 SETTINGS

An Abstract of a Dissertation

Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Approved:

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Dr. Kim Huckstadt, Chair

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Dr. Jennifer Waldron
Dean of the Graduate College

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December 2020
ABSTRACT

Educator burnout is threatening the well-being of society, having a financial impact on the United States, as well as influencing the optimal growth of students and the quality of our educational system. Overexposure to stress while trying to meet countless demands can lead to burnout and jeopardize workforce retention. Stress, burnout, and teacher attrition have reached alarming levels, threatening quality instruction and subsequent student achievement (Steinhardt et al., 2011). The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the effect of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework and whether schools that employ these techniques experience a significant difference in their levels of burnout, as measured by The Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI-ES). Data was collected from two comparable school districts in the midwestern United States, one that employs strategies from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework ($N = 327$) and one that does not ($N = 248$). The two similar school districts were selected from a department of education database specifically reviewing the following characteristics: enrollment, free/reduced lunch, and minority percentage. This study will answer the following research questions:

1. To what level do PK-12 educators in a midwestern school district experience burnout, as defined by the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI-ES)?

2. What is the difference in the levels of burnout, as measured by the MBI-ES, between a school district who employs the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework and one that does not?
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Daniel Paul Butler

University of Northern Iowa

December 2020
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife and best friend, Johna. You have been an incredible support through this entire process. Whether it was taking care of the boys over multiple weekends so I could travel to UNI for class, continue writing, or giving me the freedom to do what was needed to push through, you have been and continue to be the best. Your unwavering encouragement allowed me to prevent burnout, while completing a dissertation about it. I could not have done this without you; I love you so much.
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Finally, I would like to acknowledge my parents, Dean, and the late Patti Butler. Dad, you modeled the value of education at an early age and have never stopped coaching me. Mom, I love and miss you every day. You taught me not to take myself too seriously, accept people for who they are, and to go out and get something if you want it. I started this doctoral work when you got really sick and promised myself, I would finish it for you. Love you forever.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Overview

Educators are under constant pressure to meet the needs of a variety of learners, engage families, and collaborate with colleagues, while doing everything necessary to make a difference in the lives of students. These, among a myriad of other responsibilities, are part of the typical routine in the life of an instructor. Add curricula, federal and state initiatives, and community responsibilities to educators’ plates, alongside conflict resolution, at-risk/dropout prevention, financial literacy, trauma-informed care, STEAM, and early literacy initiatives. With so much demanded of educators and not one extra minute added to the day, teachers and support staff are at a high risk to burnout.

Burnout is a severe problem affecting professionals working in educational settings and has many consequences. Physical illness, increased feelings of hopelessness, irritability, impatience, and poor interpersonal relationships with family, coworkers, and students are common experiences for the educator experiencing burnout. Longitudinal studies suggest its prevalence may be on the rise, due in part to declining trust in relationships with colleagues, parents, students, administrators, and community members, as accountability standards as well as other external factors have impacted the teaching profession (Dworkin & Tobe, 2014).

Burnout is a workplace phenomenon that has been studied and reviewed by several researchers yielding a comprehensive collection of results. It emerged as a major
social issue in the United States in the mid 1970’s and its significance has grown over the past forty years (Schaufeli et al., 2009). The term was originally coined in 1974 by a clinical psychologist named Herbert Freudenberger, as he observed many of the volunteers with whom he was working experienced a gradual emotional depletion and a loss of motivation and commitment (Jackson et al., 1986). Freudenberger (1974) applied the term from the illicit drug scene where it referred to the devastating effect of chronic abuse. Freudenberger defined burnout as a state of mental and physical exhaustion caused by one’s professional life and theorized twelve phases of the process which are not necessarily followed sequentially (Freudenberger, 1974). The phases are as follows:

1. The compulsion to prove oneself. Excessive ambition, often found at the beginning, fuels the desire to prove oneself in the workplace, which turns into compulsion.

2. Working harder. People establish high personal expectations, as they try to prove themselves to others in an organization. To meet these expectations, they tend to focus solely on work while taking on more responsibilities.

3. Neglecting their needs. Since they must devote everything to work, little time or energy is given to anything else. Friends, family, eating, and sleeping start to be neglected, because they reduce the time and energy that can be spent on work.

4. Displacement of conflicts. They become aware that what they are doing is not right, but they are unable to see the source of the problem.
5. Revision of values. While falling into a state of denial of basic physical needs, perceptions and value systems change. Work consumes all energy, leaving little for friends and hobbies.

6. Denial of emerging problems. People may become intolerant and dislike being social, which could lead to aggressive or sarcastic behavior. Problems may be blamed on time, pressure, and all the work that must be done.

7. Withdrawal. Minimal social contact turns into isolation. Alcohol or drugs may be used as a release from obsessive working. Feelings of being without hope or direction may emerge.

8. Obvious behavior changes. Coworkers, family, friends, and others in the immediate social circles cannot overlook the behavioral changes.

9. Depersonalization. It is possible that they no longer see themselves or others as valuable. Their view of life narrows to only seeing the moment and life turns to a series of mechanical functions.

10. Inner emptiness. They feel empty inside and may exaggerate activities such as overeating or sex to overcome these feelings.

11. Depression. Burnout may include depression. In that case, the person is exhausted, hopeless, indifferent and believes that life has no meaning.

12. Burnout syndrome. They collapse physically and emotionally and need immediate medical attention. In extreme cases, suicide may occur, with it being viewed as an escape from their situation.
Individually and concurrently, Christina Maslach and her colleagues came across the term in California when interviewing a variety of human service workers. As a result of these interviews, Maslach learned workers often felt emotionally exhausted, developed negative perceptions and feelings about their clients or patients, and experienced crises in professional competence because of the emotional turmoil. Like Freudenberger (1974), Maslach found these practitioners continually referred to the syndrome as “burnout” (Schaufeli et al., 2009).

Dedicating more than four decades of research to the topic, Maslach et al. (1986) expanded on the work of Freudenberger (1974) by including three specific dimensions of the phenomenon to define burnout as a psychological syndrome consisting of a state of emotional exhaustion in which one is cynical about the value of one’s occupation and doubtful about one’s capacity to perform (Schaufeli et al., 2009). Emotional exhaustion occurs when resources are drained because of demanding interpersonal contact with others (Maslach et al., 2001). The second dimension, depersonalization, is characterized as a negative, insensitive, or cynical attitude toward the recipients of one’s care or service (Maslach et al., 2001). In the educational setting, this applies to students, colleagues, families, or members of the school community. Lack of personal accomplishment is the tendency to evaluate one’s work with school personnel negatively and is the third dimension of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). The significance of this three-dimensional model clearly places the individual stress experience within a social context and involves the person's conception of both self and others (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).
Maslach and Leiter (1997) assert burnout is an issue specific to the work context and suggest the phenomenon must include all three dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and ineffectiveness. This contrasts with Malach-Pines (2005), who argued burnout is one-dimensional and the equivalent of exhaustion. Similarly, Kristensen et al. (2005) developed the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory that measures physical or psychological exhaustion in all contexts, which tend to permeate every domain of a person’s life. Schaufeli et al. (2009) responded to the claims of Malach-Pines (2005) and Kristensen et al. (2005) by stating, “There is no scientific reason to use the term burnout, when referring to exhaustion only. Hence, our view is that reducing burnout to mere exhaustion boils down to putting new wine (burnout) into very old bottles (workplace fatigue)” (pp. 211-212). Focusing solely on the person while ignoring the social context and one’s relationship with work neglects the more powerful impact of the job situation. Research findings from Leiter and Maslach (2005) suggest burnout is much more about the work environment than the person, specifically how the employee connects or fits with the work situation. A deeper explanation of mismatch between employee and work context will be explored in a future section of this essay. The burnout experience has serious effects on health and job performance which will be discussed in the following pages.

**Statement of the Problem**

Educator burnout is threatening the well-being of society, having a financial impact in the United States, as well as influencing the optimal growth of students and the quality of our educational system. Overexposure to stress while trying to meet so many
needs can lead to burnout and impact teacher attrition. Teacher attrition due to work stress is increasing, 40-50% of new teachers leave the profession after only three years of service. In addition, between 8 and 15% of teachers are leaving the vocation every year (Ingersoll et al., 2018). In their study of Norwegian elementary and middle school teachers \((N = 563)\), Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2009) list administrative support, increased demands, relations to parents, and limited autonomy as main sources of work stress contributing to the three dimensions of burnout. Workplace burnout continues to be one of the most common reasons teachers leave each year, particularly when additional responsibilities are demanded of educators with limited leadership support (Brown & Roloff, 2011). Continuous turnover of teachers predominately hurts low income schools, which suffer from turnover rates as much as 50% higher than affluent schools (Ingersoll, 2012). Stressors that educators regularly encounter include role overload, disruptive students, non-supportive or over involved parents, lack of support from administration, poor relationships with colleagues, evaluation, high-stakes testing, negotiation battles, and accountability in which job security is threatened (Steinhardt et al., 2011).

When top-quality educators are burned out, absentee rates rise, meaning more substitutes, less consistency and predictability, and decreased levels of student learning. Educators suffering from emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and ineffectiveness do just enough to survive, which impacts overall job performance. According to Maslach and Leiter (1997), burnout is reaching epidemic proportions among North American workers, as workplaces have been described as cold, hostile, and demanding environments, both economically and psychologically. Additionally, the social dynamics of work have
changed in the last twenty years, as organizations have directed extreme focus to results in lieu of the well-being of employees (IT Revolution, 2018). Supporting this claim, Pfeffer (2018), contends, “The workplace profoundly affects human health and mortality, and too many workplaces are harmful to people’s health; people are literally dying for a paycheck” (p. 8). Job stress costs the United States economy an estimated $300 billion annually in sick leave, long-term disability, and excessive job turnover (Medina, 2014). Conclusively, a pilot study conducted by Barnes et al. (2007) determined teacher turnover costs taxpayers $7.3 billion each year.

In addition to the financial burden the burnout phenomenon presents, there are several negative physical consequences including sleep disturbances, physical tension in the body, anxiety, gastro-intestinal disorders, depression, and the development of poor nutritional habits. Honkonen et al. (2006) observed burnout to be related to musculoskeletal diseases among women and cardiovascular disorders among men in a study of Finnish health employees ($N = 3,368$). This study demonstrated higher rankings of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and lower rankings of personal accomplishment heightened the risk of negative physical consequences (Honkonen et al., 2006). Chronic stress and living in this state can also lead to heart disease and unhealthy life decisions, such as alcohol and drug use (Leiter & Maslach, 2005). Additionally, Leiter and Maslach (2005) assert long-term disability claims based on stress, burnout, and depression are the fastest growing claims in North America and Europe. Disengaged, unhealthy, and unhappy educators are not as productive, innovative, energetic, or effective, which ultimately leads to lower levels of student achievement (Arens & Morin,
2016). More importantly, educators who experience burnout lose the joy and fulfillment of making a difference in the lives of students (Leiter & Maslach, 2005).

Social consequences also arise in the workplace because of burnout. When employees are burned out, they may withdrawal, which can put a strain on relationships and lead to incivility in the organization. Goleman (2006) explains behavior is contagious, “Like secondhand smoke, the leakage of emotions can make an innocent bystander a casualty of someone else’s toxic state” (p. 14). Christakis and Fowler (2011) expand on this notion and describe the phenomenon as emotional contagion. They assert moods are affected by emotional states of the people with whom they interact. People are hardwired to mimic others outwardly and come to adopt their inward states (Christakis & Fowler, 2011). Cavanaugh (2016) provides further support and refers to this as vibrational energy, “Vibrational energy is about the energy you bring to the table and how people experience you” (p. 136). This can become problematic in the work context, as one person having a sense of low morale and disengagement can impact an organization negatively, but when these feelings ripple out to others within the work group, it is a recipe for dysfunction. Fortunately, positive emotions are also contagious and can affect the work situation in a productive manner; a deeper explanation on the impact of positive emotions will be described in the literature review. Now that background on the burnout phenomenon and the associated negative consequences has been provided, a potential intervention will be introduced.

An exploration of positive psychology and the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog framework may reveal stress can be mitigated before it becomes burnout. The
Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog framework aims to provide educators with well-being tactics aligned to the seven principles of positive psychology from Shawn Achor (2010) to reduce burnout while fostering workplace engagement. This study’s findings may contribute to a gap in the research associated with burnout intervention. There are few known studies related to the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework as a burnout reduction intervention. The researcher conducted a thorough search using Google Scholar, which did not yield any results related to the topic. The International Thought Leader Network (ITLN) was contacted via email and a case study from a school district in Illinois was shared (Greatrex, 2019), as well as a phenomenological dissertation (Stidham, 2019), using the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework. While these studies are connected to the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog, the framework is not used as a burnout prevention strategy.

The ITLN partnered with Shawn Achor to develop the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework, which will be explained in greater detail in chapter two of this dissertation. A discussion will now be led related to the purpose of the study, research questions, and a theoretical framework of how six mismatches between employee and work environment contribute to burnout.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of the effect of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework and whether schools that employ these techniques experience a significant difference in their levels of burnout, as measured by the MBI-ES.
Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study.

1. To what level do PK-12 educators in a midwestern school district experience burnout, as defined by the MBI-ES?

2. What is the difference in the levels of burnout, as measured by the MBI-ES, between a school district who employs the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework and one that does not?

Theoretical Framework

Job burnout is a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job. It is a term used loosely in workplace conversations and educational writing, which could mean different things to different people. The three key dimensions of this response are overwhelming exhaustion or a severe lack of energy; feelings of cynicism or detachment from the job; and a sense of ineffectiveness and/or failure. Unlike unidimensional models of stress, Maslach’s multidimensional theory conceptualizes burnout in terms of its three core components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. This multi-dimensional theoretical framework continues to be the predominant one in the burnout field (Schaufeli et al., 2009).

The most widely reported and thoroughly analyzed dimension of burnout is emotional exhaustion. When people are exhausted, they are overextended mentally, physically, emotionally, and depleted of energy. There is too much to do, not enough time to do it, increasingly difficult standards to meet, and inadequate time to recover. An
example of an emotionally exhausted educator is one who stays at school until 7:00 each evening after meeting with an overbearing parent, serving on a literacy committee, coaching baseball, grading papers, designing appropriate accommodations, and planning engaging lessons for his students. When this is done repeatedly without ample time to recover, educators become incredibly fatigued. Unfortunately, this example is all too common in the current landscape of education in the United States.

Educators feeling cynical create emotional distance between themselves and their students, which is referred to as depersonalization. This can be explained by seeing students as numbers in a book or products on an assembly line, rather than unique individuals with beating hearts, exhilaration, and unlimited potential. Cynical educators feel negativity toward others, are irritable, and indifferent, as if they are going through a mundane routine while believing their work does not matter. Educators are more likely to develop an indifferent or negative attitude and detached response on the job when feeling emotionally exhausted and discouraged (Schaufeli et al., 2009).

Those who experience ineffectiveness feel a growing sense of inadequacy while losing belief in their ability to make a difference. When educators lose confidence in themselves, others begin to lose confidence in them (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). A work situation with chronic, overwhelming demands that contributes to exhaustion or cynicism is likely to wear down one’s sense of efficacy and success. Research findings have shown that people working in human service or helping professions such as health care, social work, law enforcement, education, and occupations in which the core of the job is the relationship between provider and recipient are at greater risk to experience burnout
Schaufeli et al., 2009). These populations are particularly vulnerable to burnout by giving so much of themselves to others.

A different variation of imbalance of burnout is the Areas of Worklife (AW) model (Leiter & Maslach, 2005) that frames job stressors in terms of person-job imbalances or mismatches. The six key areas in which these imbalances take place are: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values. Disparities in these regions affect an individual's level of experienced burnout, which in turn influences various outcomes, such as job performance, social behaviors, and personal well-being. The greater the mismatch between the person and the job, the greater the likelihood of burnout; conversely, the greater the match or fit, the greater the likelihood of engagement. A further discussion of the six areas of work will be discussed in detail in chapter 2 of this dissertation.

**Significance of the Study**

While a growing number of studies on burnout, workplace engagement, and positive psychology have been written during the past fifty years, not many have focused on effective interventions, and even fewer, if any, on the effect of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework. Schools and districts that have invested time, effort, and money into this initiative are lacking quantitative evidence of its effectiveness. Meanwhile, school and district administrators are tasked with convincing school boards, parent, and community groups of the benefits of this initiative, as it is a substantial financial commitment. This research will fill an important gap by examining the relationship between schools that employ the Happiness Advantage |
Orange Frog framework and those that do not. Leiter and Maslach (2010) believe interventions designed to alleviate distress will automatically have an impact on engagement, which makes this study even more valuable. This study is meaningful because it will determine the extent, if any, to which positive psychology principles affect the three dimensions burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment), as measured by the MBI-ES.

**Preview of Method and Procedures**

A purposeful sample will be gathered from educators in two Midwestern school districts, one employing strategies from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog framework to avoid job burnout and one that does not. The two similar school districts were selected from a department of education database specifically reviewing the following characteristics: enrollment, free/reduced lunch, and minority percentage. Each educator from the school districts will be asked to provide gender, age, classification of work (administrator, teacher, support staff member), years of experience in their current position, and ethnicity. The researcher will use Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Microsoft Windows 10 to conduct independent samples t-tests, analyses of variance (ANOVAs), and relevant post hoc analyses to answer the research questions.

**Delimitations of the Study**

The findings of this study may be generalizable to the population of the school districts from which the sample was drawn, two districts from a Midwestern state, but may not be generalizable to other populations.
Limitations

Limitations of the study include variation among implementation efforts of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog framework, as well as individual cultures within the schools. The specific culture-building strategies vary from school to school and across districts.

Organization of the Study

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 presents the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, theoretical framework, significance of the study, preview of methods and procedures, delimitations, limitations, and definitions. Chapter 2 produces a summary of the literature related to the burnout phenomenon; the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey; positive psychology; and the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog framework. Chapter 3 contains the methods and procedures used to conduct the study. An analysis of reported data and findings is presented in Chapter 4. Finally, a summary of the findings, conclusions, discussion, and further recommendations of research are presented in Chapter 5.

Definitions

**Burnout:** A psychological syndrome consisting of a state of emotional exhaustion in which one is cynical about the value of one’s occupation and doubtful about one’s capacity to perform. The erosion of engagement.

**Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI-ES):** The Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey is a twenty-two-item instrument used to measure an
educator’s levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and perceived personal accomplishment.

**Engagement:** The positive antithesis of burnout. When people feel energy, involvement, and efficacy within their positions. One is considered engaged by scoring positive on all three subscales of the MBI-ES (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment).

**Positive Psychology:** The study of personal characteristics or behaviors that promote one’s well-being.

**Well-Being:** A construct consisting of the five measurable elements of positive emotion, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and accomplishment.
CHAPTER 2
THE LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a review of the literature related to the burnout phenomenon and positive psychology. Specifically, this review will focus on four distinct parts including burnout, the MBI-ES, positive psychology, and the Orange Frog | Happiness Advantage framework. The first section of the literature review will provide a historical perspective of burnout, as well as an exploration of six specific work areas that, when out of balance between the person and the job, increase the risk of burnout. Following this historical perspective and exploration of six work areas, the MBI-ES will be described in detail. In addition, the principles of positive psychology and its relationship to burnout will be presented. At this point, the literature turns toward examining the use of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog framework to reduce burnout among PK-12 educators.

**Burnout**

To gain a broad understanding of burnout, literature related to the phenomenon was reviewed. Educator burnout is a topic that has gained interest from researchers in the past fifty years, particularly the last twenty, as Leiter and Maslach (2005) have described it as the biggest occupational hazard of the 21st century. Schaufeli et al. (2009) estimates over 6,000 books, chapters, dissertations, and journal articles related to burnout have been published as of 2009. The researcher has cited the work of Christina Maslach and Michael Leiter a great deal within this literature review and dissertation. These two researchers are the recognized authorities in the areas of burnout and workplace
engagement and contribute a perspective that fits strongly with this study. Conflicting views of Maslach and Leiter are present; however, the reader will observe strong endorsement of these two researchers within the literature. The literature is a combination of books and essays about burnout in various settings, mismatches between employee and work environment, and empirical studies examining burnout in educational contexts. The section will include a discussion of areas of worklife and a clear theme will rise to the surface, the greater incongruity between employee and work environment, the greater the likelihood of experienced burnout.

**History and Definition**

Job burnout emerged as an important concept in the 1970s and captured something very critical about people’s experience with work (Schaufeli et al., 2009). When burnout began to be described and discussed in the 1970s, it was primarily about work in the human services, such as health care, social work, psychotherapy, legal services, and police work. This discussion continues today, some 50 years since its introduction to psychological literature and cultural discourse; however, the research has expanded to include all areas of work. Both then and now, burnout has been a concept that seems to ring true to a common experience people have with their work. It has inspired researchers to study and better understand what it is and why it happens. At the beginning of the 21st century, the context expanded, as burnout has increasingly been considered an erosion of engagement. Maslach and Leiter (1997) define work engagement as a three-dimensional construct of energy, involvement, and efficacy. When an erosion of engagement occurs, energy turns into exhaustion, involvement becomes
cynicism, and efficacy molds into ineffectiveness (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Furthermore, Leiter and Maslach (2010) describe engagement as the positive antithesis of burnout and believe reducing burnout and increasing engagement are essentially two sides of the same coin.

Emotional exhaustion, cynicism or depersonalization, and low efficacy or personal accomplishment are the three dimensions of burnout in the workplace context. The primary causes are six recurring mismatches of people and the work environment. Preventing burnout means finding better alignments of people and work (Leiter & Maslach, 2003). The disparities of workload, control and autonomy, rewards to shape behavior, community, fairness, and an argument related to values will be discussed in detail in the next several sections.

**Workload**

Having too much to do and insufficient time or resources to do it is a legitimate issue. In addition to the many demands and responsibilities placed upon educators, 24/7 accessibility, and the hyper-connected environment in which educators work today presents another set of issues related to work overload. With access to email, grade books, lesson plans, text messages, social media, and instructional resources at the click of a mouse or touchscreen, it is more difficult than ever to disconnect from work responsibilities. The boundary lines between work and life have blurred with the advancement of technology, and if educators are not intentional about separating the two, the work never seems to end (Butler, 2018).
Workload refers to the amount of work to be done in a given time with a certain amount of resources. Work overload contributes to burnout by depleting the capacity of people to meet the demands of the job. Increased educator demands, such as larger class sizes, mandatory initiatives, and accountability procedures with decreased resources, such as fewer staff, instructional time, and limited leadership contribute to experienced burnout. When this kind of overload is a chronic job condition and there is little opportunity to rest, recover, and restore balance, job burnout is inevitable. In their review of literature related to the integration of research on job burnout, Cordes and Dougherty (1993) argue increasing workload has a consistent relationship with burnout, especially within the emotional exhaustion dimension. In contrast, a sustainable and manageable workload provides opportunities to use and refine existing skills as well as to become effective in new areas of activity (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008).

When there is an imbalance between the job demands and the available resources to meet those demands, work overload occurs (Bakker et al., 2014). Bakker and Demerouti (2007) created the Job Demands-Resources Theory, which maintains all characteristics of work can be identified as demands or resources. Demands are often predictors of negative outcomes, such as exhaustion, stress, or anxiety, while resources are predictive of engagement, motivation, and enjoyment. Of the six areas that will be discussed in the next several pages, the researcher argues work overload is the easiest for people to notice. Educators feel the exhaustion that comes with workload, as more curricular areas, programs, and initiatives are added to their proverbial plates with each passing decade.
Since 1990, more than thirty-two curricular areas, programs, and federal or local initiatives have been added to the plans of instructors in the United States (Vollmer, 2012). Some examples of these programs have included conflict/peer resolution, at risk/dropout prevention, personal financial literacy, trauma-informed care, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS), and the Early Literacy Initiative, to name a few. In addition to this initiative and curricular overload, not one minute has been added to the instructional day in six decades (Vollmer, 2010). Jamie Vollmer is a former business leader who converted to public-school advocate and has spent the past several years researching what continues to be expected from educators. Within this practice, he has developed what is known as the “Increasing Burden on America’s Schools” or what others simply refer to as “Vollmer’s List,” which lists, by decade, the increased responsibilities placed on public educators (Vollmer, 2012).

Twenty-first century educators are faced with more demands than teachers in any previous era, as they are often expected to act as social workers, health care providers, and parents, while continuing to educate children about core content areas, technology, and the global community (Kozol, 2012). As a result of these pressures, many educators are leaving the profession, suffering the consequences of job-related stress and depleted engagement. Now that literature has been reviewed for the first mismatch, the second discrepancy will now be explored.

Control

Control refers to the opportunity to make decisions, solve problems, and contribute to the fulfillment of responsibilities. Control allows educators to participate in
important decisions about work, as well as the range of professional autonomy. A clear link has been found between a lack of control in the work context and job burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). When educators feel micromanaged, believe they do not have a voice in what they do, and lack autonomy, they are more likely to experience burnout. Accountability measures, teacher evaluations tied to student performance, standardization of instruction, reduced funding, disconnected professional learning, and curricular pacing guides are some of the recent trends that threaten educator autonomy. Pink (2009) has written extensively about autonomy and has said it is basic human nature to be curious and self-directed. “Autonomy is the sun around which Self-Determination Theory’s planets orbit” (p. 88). Educators are autonomously motivated when they perform their job for the intrinsic value of achieving meaningful and interesting goals or because they personally grasp the value of their work activities.

Fernet et al. (2012) found teachers perception of classroom overload and disruptive behavior of students related negatively to changes in autonomous motivation, which in turn, increased levels of emotional exhaustion in a study conducted with 806 French-Canadian elementary and secondary teachers.

In addition to a lack of autonomy, when educators experience role conflict where their position does not meet personal values or ethical obligations, they are much more likely to burnout. Confusion about one’s role or ill-defined work objectives also contribute to burnout. It is distressing for people to feel responsible for producing results to which they are deeply committed, while lacking the capacity to deliver on that mandate (Leiter & Maslach, 2005). Conversely, Maslach and Leiter (2016) maintain
employees who have the perceived capacity to influence decisions that affect their work, exercise professional autonomy, and gain access to necessary resources are more likely to experience job engagement, which is the positive antithesis of job burnout. Similarly, Warr (2007), argued when workers are given some control within their jobs, they are significantly more involved and engaged.

Locus of control is the contemporary term for the concept of internal versus external control (Lefcourt, 1972). Individuals with a strong internal locus of control believe events in their life come primarily from their own actions and behaviors. Having an internal locus of control is linked to self-efficacy or personal accomplishment, the belief one has about being able to do something successfully. A deeper explanation of locus of control will come in a later section of this literature review. The literature now turns toward reward, the third disparity between educators and the work context.

**Reward**

Reward is the financial and social recognition one receives for contributions on the job consistent with expectations. Examples of reward include praise, awards, encouragement, perks, appreciation, and salary. These examples are designed to recognize and reinforce positive behavior. While financial compensation is necessary and awards are nice to collect, research from Christina Maslach has shown the everyday appreciation workers receive is even more valuable (IT Revolution, 2018). According to Chapman and White (2019), the number one factor in job satisfaction is not the amount of pay received, but whether people feel appreciated and valued for the work they do. The results of several studies have shown that insufficient reward (whether financial,
institutional, or social) increases people’s vulnerability to burnout because it devalues both the work, workers, and is closely associated with feelings of inefficacy (Chappell & Novak, 1992; Glicken, 1983; Maslanka, 1996; Siefert et al., 1991). Chappell and Novak (1992) found social support at work, specifically training to work with residents with cognitive impairment, and support from family and friends, can assist nursing assistants in dealing with burnout and perceived job pressure. Similarly, Glicken (1983) uncovered in her study of counselors that a lack of or inappropriate reward systems increased degrees of burnout. In a study of volunteers working with individuals with HIV and AIDS, Maslanka (1996) observed consistent rewards and support from supervisors and colleagues decreased burnout among these people. Finally, Siefert et al. (1991) revealed in the study of health care social workers that dissatisfaction with financial rewards emerged as significant predictors of the depersonalization dimension of burnout.

Like counselors, volunteers, and medical workers described in the previous studies, educators may feel they are compensated inadequately for the work they do or that their efforts go unrecognized. When the work of educators is not acknowledged, the message sent is that it is not important. Lencioni (2007) refers to this as anonymity and irrelevance. People want to be seen and know that what they think, say, and do matters. Consistency in the reward dimension between the person and the job means there are both material rewards and opportunities for intrinsic satisfaction (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Intrinsic rewards, such as pride of doing something important and doing it well can be just as critical, if not more than extrinsic rewards. (Leiter & Maslach, 2003). It is now time to move to the fourth mismatch, community.
Community

The fourth mismatch between employee and the work environment occurs when people lose a sense of positive connection with others in the workplace (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). The area of community has to do with the ongoing relationships employees have with other people on the job. When these relationships are characterized by a lack of support and trust, and by unresolved conflict, there is a greater risk of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Educators are susceptible to burnout when they lose a sense of positive connection with others in the school or district. Insensitive coworkers and colleagues may be stressors due to discourtesy or even bullying. In their research of workplace bullying, Rayner and Cooper (2006) found that opinions of others are belittled, shame occurs in a public manner, access to social opportunities is denied or withheld, or information is kept in certain groups allowing cliques to thrive. Unfortunately, this occurs often in schools and such behaviors are a recipe for disengagement, toxicity, and ineffectiveness. Conversely, coworkers, colleagues, and supervisors can also be critical resources in providing help, trust, and friendship. Amid the challenges and stress in the school setting, nothing is more crucial to success than investing in each other socially, while improving a collaborative and supportive culture (Achor, 2010). A further argument related to the power of social investment will be in a later section of chapter two.

People thrive in community and function best when they share praise, comfort, happiness, and humor with those they like and respect (Leiter & Maslach, 2003). The experiences that contribute to well-being are often amplified through positive relationships and connections and can give life purpose and meaning (Seligman, 2011).
In their development of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Deci and Ryan (2012) list relatedness, in addition to autonomy and competency, as essential human needs for well-being.

When job-related relationships are working well, there is a great deal of social support, employees have effective means of working out disagreements, and they are more likely to experience job engagement (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Similarly, Truchot and Deregard (2001) discovered a sense of community has been found to buffer feelings of inequity at work in their review of helping models. In addition, they realized social support and a sense of community are associated with greater engagement, decreased burnout, and increased confidence. At this point in the review, the discussion moves toward the fifth mismatch between employees and the work environment, fairness.

**Fairness**

Fairness is the extent to which decisions at work are perceived as being reasonable and equitable. Cynicism, anger, and hostility are likely to arise when people feel they are not being treated with an appropriate level of respect (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Fairness is about how people are treated in comparison to others, communicates reverence, and confirms self-worth. When decisions are made that do not seem fair and just, the engagement of workers deteriorates. In the educational context, when interpersonal trust between administrators and teachers is diminished, burnout is heightened and inescapable (Dworkin & Tobe, 2014). The sixth and final mismatch is related to the values between workers and the organization.
Values

Values are the ideals and motivations that originally attracted people to their job. According to Brown (2018), “A value is a way of being or believing that we feel most important” (p. 186). Similarly, Cavanaugh (2016) claims, “Values are the things that drive you. They’re what’s important to you, what you stand for, what you hold dear” (p. 94). As Brown (2018) and Cavanaugh (2016) have declared, values are the fundamental beliefs and actions of a person or an organization and thus the motivating connection between worker and the workplace. When there is a conflict on the job and a gap between individual and organizational values, employees will find themselves making a trade-off between work they want to do and work they have to do which can contribute to greater burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

In some cases, people might feel constrained by the job to conduct unethical acts and not aligned with their personal values. For example, in the business world, an employee might have to tell a lie, become deceptive, or not forthcoming with the truth to make a sale. In other instances, there may be a mismatch between personal career aspirations and the values of the organization (Leiter & Maslach, 2005). Educators are certainly not immune to value conflicts. Most educators entered the profession to make a difference and meet the unique needs of a variety of children. In the age of extreme accountability, school rankings, and high-stakes assessment, this can become challenging and demoralizing for many educators. Santoro (2018a) contends, “Teachers who experience demoralization believe that the school practices or policy mandates that they are expected to follow are harmful to students or degrading to the profession and that
their attempts to alter them have been fruitless” (p.10). Demoralization is a form of professional dissatisfaction when educators encounter constant and persistent challenges to enacting the values that motivate their work. Some educational examples include failing to meet the unique learning needs of a particular student, due to mandated pedagogy and curricular materials or following school policies and practices that continually focus on academic achievement, while neglecting the profound social and emotional needs of students (Santoro, 2018b). The greater the mismatch of values between employee and organization, the greater the likelihood of burnout. Now that the six mismatches between employee and work context have been discussed, the literature explores a burnout measurement tool, the MBI-ES.

**The Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI-ES)**

After understanding the history of burnout and the conceptual definition, as used by Maslach and Leiter (1997), it is helpful to know how this phenomenon has been formally measured and operationalized. The MBI-ES was constructed by Christina Maslach, Susan Jackson, and Richard Schwab in 1986 to measure the three constructs of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment.

**History and Development**

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was initially published in 1981. At that time, there was an enormous amount of interest in the phenomenon of burnout, but very little in the way of guiding theory or empirical research. Along with some of the other initial researchers in the field, Maslach et al. (1986) recognized the need for a standardized measure of an individual's experience of burnout and developed this
instrument. Since publication of the original MBI, it has been administered to thousands of people working in a wide variety of settings in many countries and in many languages (Maslach et al., 1986). The MBI is recognized as the leading measure of burnout, as it clearly dominates the research literature; by the end of the 1990’s it was used in 93% of published journal articles and dissertations related to burnout (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). Additional measures of burnout have been developed and appeared in the research arena, such as the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (Kristensen et al., 2005) and the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (Demerouti et al., 2003). Researchers (Kristensen, et al., 2005; Demerouti et al., 2003) were critical of the MBI and felt it was limited to those working in the human service positions. Additionally, they believed the items on the inventory were negatively stated, such as ‘I really don’t care what happens to some students,’ which potentially turned participants away from use. Regardless of these concerns, the MBI remains as the “gold standard” in assessing burnout (Schaufeli et al., 2009).

There have been four additional versions of the MBI following the publication of the original to fit different groups and settings (Maslach et al., 1986). In addition to the original MBI Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS), the MBI General Survey (MBI-GS), MBI for Medical Personnel (MBI-HSS (MP)), MBI Educators Survey (MBI-ES), and MBI General Survey for Students (MBI-GS (S)) have been developed for use in a variety of research settings to assess levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment (Maslach, et al., 1986). The original MBI-HSS is the most widely used version and this survey is appropriate for professionals working in human
service professions, such as nurses, physicians, health aides, social workers, health counselors, therapists, police, correctional officers, clergy, and other fields focused on helping people live better lives by offering guidance, preventing hard, and enriching physical, emotional or cognitive problems (Maslach, et al., 1986). The MBI-HSS, MBI-HSS (MP), and MBI-ES have twenty-two questions and measure the three dimensions of burnout, while the MBI-GS and MBI-GS (S) have sixteen questions and measure emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, respectively. Across all versions of the MBI, burnout is conceptualized as a continuous variable, ranging from low to high degrees of experienced feeling. Burnout is not viewed as a dichotomous variable, which is either absent or present (Maslach, et al., 1986).

The MBI-ES is a twenty-two-item version of the original MBI designed for teachers, administrators, and anyone working in an educational setting. As with the original MBI, the MBI-ES measures all three subscales of burnout: emotional exhaustion (nine items), depersonalization (five items), and personal accomplishment (eight items) on a Likert scale ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (every day).

Three Subscales

Emotional exhaustion is defined as the feeling of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by work, as energies are drained. When these feelings become chronic, educators find they can no longer dedicate themselves to students as they once could (Maslach, et al., 1986). A sample subscale item from emotional exhaustion is ‘I feel emotionally drained from my work’ (Steinhardt et al., 2011).
Depersonalization is the unfeeling and impersonal responses toward one’s students or colleagues. Educators who no longer have positive feelings about their students are experiencing the second component of educator burnout, depersonalization (Maslach, et al., 1986). Among the many ways educators can display indifferent, negative attitudes toward their students are by using derogatory labels (for example, "they are all animals"), exhibiting cold or distant attitudes, physically distancing themselves from students (for example, barricading themselves behind their desk), and tuning out students through psychological withdrawal. A sample subscale item from depersonalization is ‘I don’t really care what happens to some students’ (Steinhardt et al., 2011).

Personal accomplishment refers to feelings of competence and successful achievement in one’s work, which is critical for all educators. Most educators enter the field to make a difference in the life of a child. When educators feel as though they are no longer contributing to the learning and growth of students, they are vulnerable to experiencing profound disappointment (Maslach et al., 1986). A sample subscale item from personal accomplishment is ‘I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job (Steinhardt et al., 2011). Higher scores on the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization scales correspond to greater experienced burnout, while lower scores on the personal accomplishment scale correspond to greater experienced burnout.

**Internal Reliability**

Cronbach alpha estimates have been reported of: .90 for Emotional Exhaustion, .76 for Depersonalization, and .76 for Personal Accomplishment (Iwanicki & Schwab, 1981); .88, .74, and .72 respectively (Gold, 1984); and .87, .76, and .84, respectively, in a
recent study of 492 teachers (Chang, 2013). The MBI-ES defines burnout as a matter of
degree on its three subscales. This quality is compatible with regression-based statistical
methods, and current statistical developments, such as structural equation modeling
(Schaufeli et al., 2009).

Validity of the MBI-ES

Evidence supporting the validity of the MBI-ES comes primarily from studies that
have assessed the relationships between burnout scales and various aspects of the work
experience. For example, in a study of full-time elementary ($N = 1,203$), intermediate ($N$
$= 410$), and secondary teachers ($N = 1,431$), working conditions characterized by role
conflict, work overload, classroom climate, and social support from peers were correlated
with emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment as predicted
across the three groups (Byrne, 1994). Consistent with research using other MBI scales, a
study of 175 physical education teachers in Greece found a strong negative relationship
between the three burnout scales (treated as a set) and several job conditions including
the work setting, the job itself, supervision, and the organization as a whole (Koustelios
& Tsigilis, 2005).

Means and Standard Deviations for the MBI-ES Scales

In a study of primary and secondary educators ($N = 4,163$), a mean score of 21.25
and standard deviation of 11.01 was found in the emotional exhaustion dimension on the
MBI-ES. A mean score of 11.00 and standard deviation of 6.19 for the depersonalization
scale and a mean of 33.54 and standard deviation of 6.89 on the personal accomplishment
scale, respectively. The researcher expects mean scores to be similar of participants
within the study, though not identical to the 4,163 primary and secondary educators listed above.

In a study of postsecondary teachers \( (N = 635) \), a mean score of 18.57 and standard deviation of 11.95 was found in the emotional exhaustion dimension on the MBI-ES. A mean score of 5.57 and standard deviation of 6.63 for the depersonalization scale and a mean of 39.17 and standard deviation of 7.92 on the personal accomplishment scale, respectively.

Scores can be interpreted for individual respondents, or MBI-ES scores for a group of respondents can be treated as aggregate data. With either approach, scores can be understood as absolute values or by comparing scores to those of a larger population to determine the individual’s relative degree of burnout (Maslach, et al., 1986). As can be understood reading this section, burnout can be assessed for severity and cause. Burnout can also be remedied by individual intervention and sophisticated organizational change programs, such as the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework. By addressing burnout, well-being can be increased, as well as student and educator satisfaction, and the quality of education, which will be discussed in the following sections, beginning with a review of literature related to positive psychology.

**Positive Psychology**

The aim of positive psychology is to amplify individual strengths and virtues that contribute to subjective well-being (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Direct attention is given to optimistic emotions, the constructive side of life, and positive psychology essentially focuses on what works, as opposed to what does not work.
(Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The literature lists Seligman, along with Csikszentmihalyi, as the founders of positive psychology and have stated the science should be as concerned with strength as with weakness, as interested in building the best things in life as in repairing the worst, as concerned with making the lives of normal people better as with healing pathology, and develop interventions to increase well-being, not just to decrease misery. Seligman (2003) provides an explanation of the brief history of psychology, “Before World War II, psychology had three distinct missions. The first was to cure mental illness. The second was to make lives happier, productive, and fulfilling. The third was to identify and nurture talent and genius” (p. xiv). Many years of psychology concentrated on pathology in conjunction with the passage of the 1946 Veterans Admission Act and the 1947 founding of the National Institute of Mental Health (Seligman, 2002).

After these significant events, two of the three missions of psychology were all but forgotten, as thousands of psychologists discovered they could earn a living treating individuals with neuroses in Omaha, while academics found that they could obtain grants if they described their research in terms of curing mental illness (Seligman, 2003). While the previous waves of psychology focused on human flaws, overcoming deficiencies, avoiding pain, and escape from unhappiness, positive psychology focuses on well-being, contentment, excitement, cheerfulness, and the pursuit of meaning in life. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) further describe positive psychology as an evidenced based exploration consisting of three pillars.

- Positive subjective states and experiences in the past, present, and future
• Positive individual traits: identifying and using strengths
• Positive institutions and organizational positive traits

The uninformed might view positive psychology as a framework that only focuses on optimism, while turning a blind eye to negativity or challenges. Keyes and Haidt (2003) offer clarity, “Positive psychology is realistic. It does not claim that human nature is all sweetness and light, but it does offer a more balanced view. Positive psychology aims to balance out the overly negative picture painted by psychology to date” (p. 4). Similarly, Gable and Haidt (2005) provide further support and transparency, “Positive psychology's aim is not the denial of the distressing or negative aspects of life. The aim of positive psychology is to study the other side of the coin—the ways people feel joy, altruism, and create healthy families and institutions” (p. 105).

**Well-Being Theory**

Positive psychology research has continued to be a topic of interest for many scholars over the past twenty years and several theories have been developed in the process. Seligman (2011) has developed two of these theories and describes well-being as a construct consisting of five elements: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (PERMA), which serve as the building blocks of resilience and growth. PERMA is an expansion of Seligman’s Authentic Happiness Theory (2002), where the focus was directed toward positive emotions, engagement, and meaning.

Continuing to investigate this theory with a critical eye, Seligman (2011) clearly understood its inadequacy, as he stated, “I used to think the topic of positive psychology
was happiness, that the gold standard for measuring happiness was life satisfaction. I now know positive psychology is about well-being and that the goal of positive psychology is to increase flourishing” (p. 13). Authentic Happiness Theory (2002) became problematic because when you ask people about their life satisfaction, 70% of their answer relates to the mood they are in and about 30% is what judgment they make about the conditions of their life (Seligman, 2011). It was at this time that Seligman (2011) changed the target of positive psychology from life satisfaction to PERMA or well-being. The next portion of this review of literature will explain each element of PERMA, beginning with positive emotion.

**Positive emotion.** Positive emotion can be described as the extent to which individuals experience joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, and love (Fredrickson, 2009). Positive emotion is the central marker of subjective well-being and the happiness element of PERMA (Seligman, 2011). Barbara Fredrickson is a pioneer researcher around positive emotions and has developed a theory she refers to as the Broaden and Build model. This suggests positive emotions broaden people's attention and thinking, undo lingering negative emotional arousal, fuel psychological resilience, build consequential personal resources, trigger upward spirals towards greater well-being in the future, and seed human flourishing (Fredrickson, 2004). People should cultivate positive emotions in their own life and in the lives of those around them, not just because doing so makes them feel good in the moment, but also because doing so transforms people for the better and sets them on paths toward flourishing and healthy longevity. When positive emotions are in short supply, people get
stuck. They lose their degrees of behavioral freedom and become painfully predictable (Fredrickson, 2004). Gratitude is an antidote to negative emotions, a neutralizer of envy, greed, hostility, worry, and irritation (Lyubomirsky, 2008) and will be discussed in a future section of this dissertation.

Regarding positive emotions, are people born happy? There are many in the public who believe happiness is a fixed trait and cannot be altered; however, Haidt (2006) provides an explanation:

One of the most important ideas in positive psychology is what Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, Schkade, and Seligman call the ‘happiness formula: $H = S + C + V$. The level of happiness that you experience ($H$) is determined by your biological set point ($S$) plus the conditions of your life ($C$) plus the voluntary activities ($V$) you do (p. 91.)

Research from Lyubomirsky (2008) claims positive emotions (happiness) are determined by roughly 50% genetics (set point), 10% life circumstances (conditions), and 40% intentional activities (voluntary activities). Some people are born with higher levels of positive emotions and happiness than others; however, it is important to note that this set point accounts for roughly half of your overall happiness. Conditions include facts about your life that you cannot change, such as race, gender, age, disability, as well as things that you can, such as wealth, marital status, where you live, the relationships you have, and so forth. Conditions are constant over time, at least for a period of your life, which make them the sort of things to which we adapt (Haidt, 2006). Voluntary activities are the things you choose to do, such as meditation, exercise, expressing gratitude, taking a vacation, exploring a passion, or applying signature strengths. Voluntary activities offer great promise for increasing happiness while avoiding adaptation effects (Haidt, 2006).
There is room for happiness to improve and it is under our control to change (Lyubomirksy et al., 2005). When we experience the positive emotions outlined by Fredrickson (2009) our brains are filled with dopamine and serotonin, which not only make us feel good, but also allow our brains to operate at higher levels (Achor, 2010).

Engagement. Engagement is described as the extent to which individuals become absorbed in an activity and is the second element of Martin Seligman’s well-being theory. Seligman (2011) describes engagement as being in state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), where time seems to stop, and highest strengths can be used to tackle the highest challenges during an absorbing activity. Leiter and Bakker (2010) contribute to this description by defining work engagement as, “A positive, fulfilling, affective-motivational state of work-related well-being that can be seen as the antipode of job burnout” (p. 2). In this sense, engagement is separate from positive emotion in that the individual does not appraise an event while it is happening, because they are so absorbed during the activity (Seligman, 2011). Thinking or cognitive appraisals are absent in the experience of flow and engagement and can only be assessed upon reflection (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Further, although the retrospective appraisal of engagement may produce the subjective experience of positive emotions, engagement is pursued for its own sake rather than for the anticipated experience of positive emotions (Seligman, 2011).

To build engagement, Seligman (2011) recommends learning about your signature strengths, which can be done, free of charge, on his website www.authentichappiness.com. Once your signature strengths have been determined, look
for opportunities to apply these strengths within daily routines. Wrzesniewski et al. (1997) writes about a phenomenon referred to as job crafting, which is designed to promote meaning and purpose in work. In the study, it was realized employees have one of three orientations about their work: jobs, careers, or callings (Achor, 2010). People with a job see work as a chore and the paycheck as the reward. Those with a career not only work out of necessity, but also to advance and succeed. Finally, those with a calling view work as an end within itself; they feel their work contributes to something bigger than themselves, draws on personal strengths, which provides meaning and purpose (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997).

When signature strengths have been identified, they can be applied to create engagement even in positions that may be viewed as having low autonomy (Pink, 2009). For example, suppose my signature strength is curiosity and interest in the world. I am an elementary principal who is required to attend meetings off campus that do not particularly pique my interest. Before leaving these meetings, I could set a goal to ask three questions to learn more about the content of the presentation to feed my curiosity strength. While this would not change the fact that I am required to attend this meeting, it would provide increased meaning, while contributing to my top signature strength.

Relationships. Positive relationships are described as interactions with others that provide a sense of both autonomy and relatedness, which serve as the foundation for well-being. The experiences that contribute to well-being are often amplified through our relationships and connections to others can give life purpose and meaning (Seligman, 2011). In their development of Self-Determination Theory, Deci and Ryan (2012) list
relatedness in addition to autonomy and competency as essential human needs for well-being. Of the various positive psychology interventions that have been tested, practicing acts of kindness produced the single most reliable momentary increase in well-being (Seligman, 2011). A deeper explanation of conscious acts of kindness as a well-being intervention will come in the next section in this review of literature.

From an evolutionary perspective, we are social beings because the drive to connect with and serve others promotes our survival. Developing strong relationships is central to adaptation and is enabled by our capacity for love, compassion, kindness, empathy, teamwork, cooperation, and self-sacrifice (Haidt, 2006). Research shows that people often turn to others to share their good news, a process called capitalization (Gable & Reis, 2010). These studies indicate that both the act of telling others about good events and the response of the person with whom the event was shared have personal and interpersonal consequences. This research has demonstrated that when the close other responds in an active and constructive manner (and not in a passive or destructive manner), both the discloser and the relationship between the discloser and the responder profit. Personal benefits linked to capitalization processes include increased positive emotions, subjective well-being, self-esteem, and decreased loneliness, while relationship benefits associated with capitalization processes include satisfaction, intimacy, commitment, trust, closeness, and stability (Gable & Reis, 2010).

**Meaning.** According to Seligman (2011), the fourth element of well-being, meaning, refers to a sense of belonging to and serving something perceived to be bigger than the self. Meaning has a subjective component in that only individuals themselves
can derive what life events or activities serve a higher purpose. In short, meaning has more to do with altruism than pleasure.

**Accomplishment.** Conclusively, accomplishment denotes perceptions of achievement and is closely linked to intrinsic motivation (Seligman, 2011). Intrinsically motivated people freely engage in activities of personal interest on their own volition (Cox & Williams, 2008). Deci and Ryan (2012) discuss competency as an intrinsically motivated desire to achieve mastery over a life domain, in which satisfying the need for competency bolsters well-being.

Daniel Pink (2009) identifies mastery as the desire to continually improve at something that matters, and only engagement can produce mastery. He includes an appropriate placed quotation from Sebastian Coe, a middle-distance runner who won gold medals in the 1980 and 1984 Olympic Games:

> Throughout my athletics career, the overall goal was always to be a better athlete than I was at that moment – whether next week, next month, or next year. The improvement was the goal. The medal was simply the ultimate reward for achieving that goal (p. 112.)

In sum, well-being is comprised of the presence of positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and accomplishment, where well-being is enhanced when any one component is experienced by the individual. After gaining a broad perspective of a sample of the literature related to positive psychology and well-being, the next step in this review is to provide an explanation of a framework designed to build positive energy, optimism, resilience, and efficacy, while reducing stress and burnout in the workplace.
“An environment that supports energetic, dedicated participation is one that provides employees with the materials, information, facilities, equipment, expertise, and support necessary to do their most effective work” (Leiter & Maslach, 2010, p. 177). The Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework was created by the ITLN and Shawn Achor (2013) and aims to accomplish exactly what Leiter and Maslach (2010) describe in the quotation above. Two of Achor’s books, The Happiness Advantage: The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology That Fuel Success and Performance at Work (2010) and The Orange Frog: A Parable based on Positive Psychology (2013), serve as foundational content of this framework. This section will introduce the seven principles of positive psychology from Achor’s (2010) work including: The Happiness Advantage, Mindset Matters, Tetris Effect, Falling Up, Zorro Circle, 20-Second Rule, and Social Investment. Each of these principles will be examined and explained; specifically, how happiness gives your brain a competitive advantage, improving performance by changing mindset, training your brain to capitalize on possibility, capitalizing on the downs to build upward momentum, limiting focus to small, manageable goals to expand the sphere of power, how to turn bad habits into good ones by minimizing barriers to change, and why social support is the single greatest asset toward improvement (Achor, 2010).

Happiness Advantage

The first principle of this framework teaches participants how to retrain their brains to capitalize on positivity, while improving productivity and performance. There is
no question that intelligence and technical skills are crucial in today’s competitive workplace; however, the greatest competitive advantage in the modern economy is a positive and engaged brain (Achor, 2010). The Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework and workshop operates under the evidence-based assumption that happiness leads to success, not the other way around (Achor, 2010). Happy individuals and those who work with a positive mindset are more likely than their less than happy peers to have fulfilling relationships, social support, high incomes, superior work performance, community involvement, robust health, a long life, stronger immune systems, while showing more resilience in the face of stress and trauma (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). Positive emotions, such as joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, and love (Fredrickson, 2009) are often associated with resources and characteristics that are affiliated with success and thriving, such as sociability, optimism, energy, originality, and altruism. The positive emotions mentioned from Fredrickson (2009) fill our brains with dopamine and serotonin, which not only make us feel good, but also allow our brains to operate at higher levels (Achor, 2010). Dopamine is a hormone associated with happiness and serotonin regulates our mood (Baixauli, 2017). Isen et al. (2003) supports this claim and has proposed dopamine circulation as a physiological basis for the broadening that accompanies positive emotions (as cited in Fredrickson et al., 2003).

Happiness is at the center and success revolves around it, yet, according to Achor (2010), happiness is perhaps the most misunderstood driver of performance. Most people believe, and were taught at a young age, that first you become successful and then you
will be happy. Conventional wisdom holds that if we work hard, we will be more successful, and if we are more successful, then we will be happy (Achor, 2010). The belief has existed that if we can win the big match, obtain the next degree, or get recognized with a prestigious award, happiness will follow. Discoveries in the field of positive psychology in the past twenty years have revealed this formula is backward: happiness fuels success, not the other way around (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005). This is the foundation upon which the Happiness Advantage principle is built.

**Mindset Matters**

How people experience the world, and the ability to succeed within it, constantly changes based on their mindset. The second principle is about improving performance by changing mindset. Individuals with a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006) understand intelligence and skills are something that can be grown, meaning that with practice, seeking feedback, facing challenges, and making it through frustrations, they are growing their aptitudes. By contrast, those with a fixed mindset consider intelligence to be a fixed commodity and avoid challenges and frustrations.

The mental construction of daily activities, more than the activity itself, defines reality and the research of Achor (2010) has uncovered it is not necessarily reality that shapes human emotion and experience, but rather the lens through which brains process information from the world. How you think about yourself, your world, and other people—is more important to your well-being than the objective circumstances of your life (Lyubomirsky, 2008). If the lens can be altered, not only can well-being be improved, but every single educational and business outcome can be increased simultaneously. In a
meta-analysis of 225 academic studies, Lyubomirsky, King, and Diener (2005) found happy employees have, on average, 31% higher productivity, with creativity being three times greater than those who are unhappy or neutral, as well as 23% fewer fatigue symptoms. In relation to positive mindset, Langer (2009) discovered that mental construction, or the way people conceive of themselves, has a direct impact on the physical aging process. In her 1979 counterclockwise study, she proved physical traits, such as flexibility, posture, hand strength, eyesight, tests of memory, and intelligence could be improved by the way a group of seventy-five-year-old men viewed themselves.

Similarly, in 1965, Rosenthal conducted an experiment in a Kindergarten-5th grade elementary school in California, telling teachers that approximately 20% of their students had shown the potential for intellectual blooming based on the results of the Harvard Test of Inflected Acquisition (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). The children that carried the label of potential to bloom showed significant growth in comparison to peers, as bloomers gained an average of twelve IQ points over the course of the year compared to eight points of control group peers. The students labeled as bloomers did not perform any higher than anyone else on the initial assessment; they were selected at random by Rosenthal and the teachers were lied to about their abilities. Rosenthal proved the belief teachers had of their students (mindset) shaped reality. This phenomenon is called the Pygmalion Effect (Rosenthal, 2010): when the belief in another person’s potential brings that potential to life (Achor, 2010; Grant, 2013).

External reality is far more malleable than many people think and far more dependent on how it is viewed. According to the research of Buettner (2017):
People with positive attitudes tend to smoke less and exercise more, eat better foods, wear their seat belts more often, take their medicines more regularly, have stronger immune systems, and enjoy better cardiovascular health. There’s also evidence that happier people recover from illness faster, that emotional vitality reduces the risk of strokes, and even that an optimistic spouse can improve a patient’s outcome. Being happy actually helps you to become healthier (p. 29.)

Well-being is not about deception or turning a blind eye to the negative. Rather, it is about realizing the world is not fixed and mindset can significantly impact outcomes (Achor, 2010).

The Tetris Effect

When brains get stuck in patterns that focus on stress and negativity, failure is inevitable. By contrast, when brains scan for possibility, hope, and positivity, the chances of success are improved dramatically. The third principle in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework is called the Tetris Effect. This principle teaches participants to retrain their brains to spot patterns of possibility to not only see, but seize opportunity wherever they look (Achor, 2010). If one sees the world through the same cognitive patterns for long enough, brains can retain the imprint of those patterns and fall into what is known as a positive or negative Tetris Effect (Stickgold et al., 2000). A positive or negative cognitive afterimage (Tetris Effect) occurs when people devote focused time and attention to an activity that it begins to pattern their thoughts, mental images, and dreams. Stickgold et al. (2000) studied the results from a group of participants who played the computer game, Tetris, repeatedly over the course of several days to coin what became known as the Tetris Effect. Participants were constantly seeing patterns from the game in various settings outside of the laboratory throughout the day. It is crucial to create a positive lens through which to see the world so one can see more
aspects of improved reality. A positive Tetris Effect requires the brain to be actively scanning, scouring, and searching to find a positive pattern. When consciously looking for the positive, it gets easier to find and enables our brains to work more efficiently and effectively creating a virtuous cycle (Achor, 2010).

**Falling Up**

Amid defeat, stress and crisis, our brains map different paths to help us cope. This principle is about finding the mental path that not only leads out of failure or suffering but allows us to be happier and more successful because of it; adversity is used to find the path forward. Research has shown when people are able reappraise stress and adversity as opportunities, they are more likely to experience growth. Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995) identified the positive psychological changes that can occur following a potentially traumatic event as post-traumatic growth (Peterson et al., 2008). The components of posttraumatic growth identified by Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995) are improved relationships with others, openness to new possibilities, greater appreciation of life, enhanced personal strength, and spiritual development (Peterson, et al., 2008). Linley and Joseph’s (2004) research is consistent with these claims, as they suggested posttraumatic growth may be a positive function of extent of exposure to potentially traumatic events.

Mindset is a powerful predictor of future success and simply believing that we can get back up again teaches us to consider setbacks as springboards for growth. We can train our brains to associate challenge with the opportunity for legendary success (Achor, 2010).
The Zorro Circle

The fifth principle in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework is called the Zorro Circle with its name coming from the masked legend, Alejandro Zorro. Achor (2010) describes how the Zorro Circle received its name:

According to legend, a masked hero named Zorro roamed what is now the southwestern United States, fighting for those who could not fight for themselves. Zorro was resolute, disciplined, and fearless, a combination that immortalized him as the popular hero of so many books, TV shows, and movies.

But there is a lesser known chapter to Zorro’s story. According to legend, Zorro was not always that swashbuckler able to swing from chandeliers and overpower ten men with the slash of his sword. At the beginning of the film The Mask of Zorro, we see him as the young and impetuous Alejandro, whose passion far exceeds his patience and discipline. His quest is to assail villains and right the injustices of the world, but he desires to do so immediately and spectacularly. The higher he flies, the farther he falls, until he soon feels out of control and utterly powerless. By the time the aging sword master Don Diego meets him, Alejandro is a broken man, a slave to drinking and despair. But Don Diego sees the young man’s potential and takes him under his wing, promising Alejandro that mastery and triumph will come with “dedication and time.” In the hidden cave that serves as Don Diego’s lair, the elder sword master begins Alejandro’s training by drawing a circle in the dirt. Hour after hour, Alejandro is forced to fight only within a small circle. As Don Diego wisely tells his protégé, ‘This circle will be your world. Your whole life. Until I tell you otherwise, there is nothing outside of it.

Once Alejandro masters control of this small circle, Don Diego allows him to slowly attempt greater and greater feats, which one by one, he achieves. Soon he is swinging from ropes and besting his trainer in a sword fight. But none of these achievements would ever have been possible had he not first learned to master that small circle. Before that moment, Alejandro had no command over his emotions, no sense of his own skill, no real faith in his ability to accomplish a goal, and – worst of all – no feeling of control over his own fate. Only after he masters that first circle does he start to become Zorro, the legend (pp. 128-129.)

The Zorro Circle is about breaking larger tasks into small, manageable steps to create success; our brains need to experience quick wins to create and sustain lasting change (Achor, 2010). When faced with daunting challenges and overwhelming feelings, research suggests breaking large projects into small, manageable tasks to create higher
levels of happiness (Achor, 2013). When larger tasks are broken down, a message is sent to our brains that our behavior matters, and our locus of control is improved. Locus of control is the contemporary term for the concept of internal versus external control of reinforcement (Lefcourt, 1972). Individuals with a strong internal locus of control believe events in their life come primarily from their own actions and behaviors. For example, people with a strong internal locus of control credit successes and challenges to their skills and behavioral patterns. Conversely, those with a strong external locus of control tend to praise or blame external factors, such as other people or the circumstances they are currently experiencing (Findley & Cooper, 1983). Having an internal locus of control is linked to self-efficacy or personal accomplishment, the belief you have about being able to do something successfully. When challenges loom and we get overwhelmed, our rational brains can get hijacked by emotions. The Zorro Circle teaches participants how to regain control by focusing first on small, manageable goals and then gradually expanding the circle to achieve bigger and bigger ones (Achor, 2010).

**The 20-Second Rule**

While many of the tactics and principles of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog framework may seem like common sense, it is well known that common sense is not common action. Having the knowledge is only the first part of the battle; without action, knowledge is often meaningless (Achor, 2010). The positive principles and tactics that have been described in the previous pages and ones to follow may seem simple and obvious; however, they are challenging, if not impossible, to execute by relying on willpower alone. Temptation might be able to be resisted once or twice, but it is unlikely
you can muster the willpower to override your desires every time (Clear, 2018). The Twenty Second Rule is about developing better habits by designing an environment for growth, while removing barriers to change.

“Success is the product of daily habits-not once in a lifetime transformation” (Clear, 2018, p. 18). Habits are established and developed to meet a variety of needs and become so automatic that rarely are they thought about and the role they play in shaping behavior (Achor, 2010). Well-being, success, and productive change are much more likely if a collection of positive habits have been established. On the contrary, negative habits undoubtedly contribute to struggle, making well-being much more challenging. In order to create any type of positive change, such as an exercise regimen, healthy eating, expressing gratitude, or implementing a meditation routine, there is an initial investment of energy that is required to get started; this is called activation energy (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997).

Research has suggested that three to twenty seconds can transform the likelihood of adopting a positive habit or stopping a negative one (Achor, 2010). Often, it is the initial activation energy that ignites or prevents a positive habit. For example, if a person were interested in establishing a morning exercise routine, he or she could do several things to impact the environment, to reduce the required activation energy. This could include preparing a specific workout routine the night before and laying exercise clothes right next to the bed. The more convenient an action is, the more likely we are to execute the behavior. Heath and Heath (2010) refer to this as tweaking the environment, “Tweaking the environment is about making the right behavior a little bit easier and the
wrong behavior a little bit harder” (p. 183). Participants in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog workshop are encouraged to create a path of least resistance toward positive habits. The less convenient the behavior, the less likely it is that you will complete it. The essence of the Twenty Second Rule is to figure out the habits and work routines you want to establish and make them three to twenty seconds easier to complete, while figuring out the behaviors you want to avoid and make them harder to accomplish.

The Twenty Second Rule can help participants develop more positive habits, which ultimately improves levels of well-being. To make positive habits more consistent, participants are encouraged to manage activation energy. Lower the activation energy for the things you want to accomplish and increase it for the things want to avoid.

Social Investment

Amid challenges and stress, a strong social support network is the greatest predictor of both performance and happiness (Achor, 2010). Instead of hunkering down and retreating within themselves, the most successful people invest in their friends, team members, peers, and family to propel themselves forward. Previous studies have consistently shown that job resources, such as social support from colleagues and supervisors, performance feedback, skill variety, autonomy, and learning opportunities are positively associated with work engagement (Halbesleben, 2010). Seligman (2011) has shared other people are the best antidote to the downs of life and the single most reliable up; social connectedness is one of the best long-term predictors of well-being. The more social support you have, the happier you are. And as we know, the happier you are, the more advantages you accrue in nearly every domain of life (Achor, 2010).
Conversely, research from Buettner (2017) has revealed loneliness has as harmful effect on well-being as smoking fifteen cigarettes per day and as you age, your risk for high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, and dementia increases.

Happiness research has uncovered the leading indicator for well-being is the strength of our connections with others (Lyubomirsky, 2008). Strong relationships and having social support provide more happiness than income, possessions, IQ, age, gender, ethnicity, or any other factor. Time spent building and maintaining relationships is always a good investment for increasing happiness. This principle teaches participants in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog framework to invest more in social support networks—especially during challenges and setbacks. The current research on the power of social investment is shared with participants and they are challenged with incorporating more social investment opportunities into their current work routines.

5 Happiness Building Tactics

After realizing that positive brains have a competitive advantage over brains that are negative or neutral, how do we build the Happiness Advantage into our work routines? Achor (2010) and the ITLN recommend five tactics or happiness habits within the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework: 3 Gratitudes, The Doubler, Exercise, Meditation, and Conscious Acts of Kindness. Each participant within the framework and workshop is taught how to utilize these tactics, which will be described in greater detail throughout this portion of the literature review.

3 gratitudes. Participants that employ the 3 Gratitudes tactic (Emmons et al., 2003) capture three unique things for which they are grateful each day. The literature has
identified Emmons as the most prominent researcher and writer about gratitude. He defines it as “A felt sense of wonder, thankfulness, and appreciation for life” (Lyubomirsky, 2008; Emmons & Shelton, 2002). The content of the gratitude could be anything that the participant chooses: from family, to a warm home, or their physical fitness. To reap the benefits of this intervention, participants are instructed to think of three unique things each day to record and complete this process for twenty-one consecutive days, as this is the average length of time it takes a human to develop a sustainable habit, according to the ITLN. The research literature presents many arguments about the time it takes to establish a habit. Clear (2018) provides an argument that resonates most with this researcher, as he states those attempting to form a new habit should not be concerned about whether it has been twenty-one days, thirty days, or three hundred days. When developing a habit, what matters is the rate at which you perform the behavior; it is the frequency of the habit that makes the difference.

People who write down three things for which they are grateful trigger their brains to cognitively rewire looking for and seeing patterns for which they are grateful. This practice has proven to train your brain to work more optimistically and successfully by scanning the world for the positive, which fills it with dopamine and serotonin (Emmons et al., 2003). When we feel gratitude, we benefit from a positive memory in our lives and those who are consistently grateful have been found to be relatively happier, more energetic, more hopeful, and report experiencing more positive emotions (Lyubomirsky, 2008). In addition to the individual benefits of gratitude, when we express it to others, we strengthen our relationship with them (Seligman, 2011). Like the 3
Gratitudes tactic, The Doubler is a daily journaling technique, which will be described in detail in the following section.

**The doubler.** A second tactic in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework provides participants with the opportunity to scan their environment for possibility through a daily writing routine called The Doubler. Participants capture and reflect upon a positive memory from the past twenty-four hours by writing about it in a journal. Spending two minutes describing a meaningful experience from the past twenty-four hours allows brains to experience the event two times, hence the term, The Doubler. Scanning the environment and writing about positive, emotional experiences is associated with a host of productive outcomes, such as optimism, hope, resilience, and efficacy (Slatcher & Pennebaker, 2006). As participants successfully scan for the positive within their environments, finding a path forward in the face of adversity is much easier, as was described in the Falling Up section of this literature review. Now that two tactics have been described, it is time to explore meditation, which is the third well-being habit.

**Meditation.** A host of positive psychologists have written about the benefits of meditation, as it has shown to focus attention in a nonanalytic way (Shapiro et al., 2016). Haidt (2006) wrote about the practice of mindful meditation and its benefits:

Suppose you read about a pill that you could take once a day to reduce anxiety and increase your contentment. Would you take it? Suppose further that the pill has a great variety of side effects, all of them good: increased self-esteem, empathy, and trust; it even improves memory. Suppose finally that the pill is all natural and costs nothing. Now would you take it? The pill exists. It is meditation (p. 35.)
A third tactic in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework teaches participants to meditate. Spending a few minutes meditating daily has shown a host of benefits, including attentional performance and cognitive flexibility (Moore & Malinowski, 2009), as well as increases in one’s sense of control and decreases in psychological symptomatology (Astin, 1997). Walsh (1983), a pioneer in the field of meditation research, identified the ultimate aims of meditation practice, “The development of deep insight into the nature of mental processes, consciousness, identity, and reality, and the development of optimal states of psychological well-being and consciousness” (p. 19). Meditation is the core practice of mindfulness and regular practice can permanently rewire the brain to raise levels of happiness, lower stress and even improve immune function. A daily practice of 20-60 minutes is the most effective way to boost well-being using this tool. The Zorro Circle principle can be applied when establishing a meditation routine. Of the five tactics in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework, meditation has been one that participants struggle to implement with fidelity. A Zorro Circle approach could involve setting a small goal of meditating for one minute each day in the first week, while progressively adding time, as success is reached. The first three happiness building tactics have focused on the mental aspect of well-being. The fourth and fifth tactics direct their focus to physical benefits.

**Exercise.** A fourth tactic in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog framework is exercise. Daily physical activity is a catalyst for happiness. It improves mood, releases endorphins, increases energy, enhances sleep, lowers chances of obesity and chronic disease, tends to be a pro-social activity, and is likely to make you more attractive
Present findings suggest that a modest exercise program, (e.g. three times per week with 30 minutes at 70% of maximum heart rate reserve each time), is an effective, robust treatment for patients with major depression (Babyak et al., 2000). One of the positive psychological benefits of systematic exercise is the development of a sense of personal mastery and positive self-regard, which is likely to play some role in the depression-reducing effects of exercise (Ratey & Hagerman, 2013).

Depression researcher, Stephen Ilardi (2009), insists exercise is medicine and advocates for it as a powerful antidepressant, claiming it is more effective than any pill. Exercise is not just a powerful mood lifter but also a long lasting one. Run, walk, ride, dance, stretch, skip, it does not matter so long as you get moving. If it gets the heart pumping, it increases energy, gets more oxygen to the brain, and increases endorphins, which will boost your mood. Ratey and Hagerman (2013) argue regular physical exercise provides your brain with just as many benefits as the rest of your body. The first four happiness tactics have focused on the self. Conscious acts of kindness not only build well-being within the self, but also ripple out positive emotions to others.

Conscious acts of kindness. Research has found that committing conscious acts of kindness decreases stress and contributes to enhanced mental health (Otake et al., 2006). In a study conducted in a Vancouver elementary school, students who performed kind acts experienced significantly larger increases in peer acceptance (or sociometric popularity) than a control group of students who wrote about places they visited (Layous et al., 2012). Increasing peer acceptance is a critical goal, as it is related to a variety of important academic and social outcomes, including reduced likelihood of being bullied.
By doing a kind act we become happier, the happier we feel, the more kind acts we do, and then become even happier (Layous et al., 2012). A bonus is that we increase our social connections in this way, and other people are more inclined to be kind to us in return. Participants that adopt this tactic in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework are taught the research of this practice and instructed to commit one intentional, daily act of kindness for at least twenty-one consecutive days. The scientific research of this social investment strategy has shown that committing acts of kindness is not only good for the receiver, but also the giver (Lyubomirsky, 2008).

**Summary**

This chapter presented a review of the literature on burnout, the MBI-ES, positive psychology, and the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework. The first section described the burnout phenomenon and the six mismatches that occur between employees and work environments. Next, a summary of the components of the MBI-ES was presented. Then, the principles of positive psychology were described. Finally, the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework was reviewed. While a growing number of studies on burnout have been written during the past several years, there have been very few focused on the impact of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog framework, based on positive psychology. As such, further quantitative and qualitative studies exploring the impact of this framework are needed. Meanwhile, school and district administrators are tasked with convincing school boards and parent groups of the benefits of positive psychology practices in contributing to engaging environments for educators, students, and the greater community. This research
will fill an important gap by examining the relationship between a district employing the principles and tactics of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog framework and one that does not. This study is significant because it will determine the extent, if any, to which positive psychology principles affect levels of burnout, as measured by the MBI-ES.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

Chapter three includes the methods and procedures that guided this research study with the following sections: research questions, research design, research methods, data collection procedures, and data analysis. The purpose of this quasi-experimental study was to assess and compare the levels of burnout, based on the MBI-ES, in two school districts in the state of Iowa. The researcher set out to understand the effect of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework, as it relates to levels of experienced educator burnout.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. To what level do PK-12 educators in a midwestern school district experience burnout, as defined by the MBI-ES?

2. What is the difference in the levels of burnout, as measured by the MBI-ES, between a school district who employs the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework and one that does not?

Research Design

This quasi-experimental study research design used pre-existing groups consisting of educators (administrators, teachers, and support staff members) employed at two school districts in the state of Iowa. Data was provided by the MBI-ES to examine the
relationship between a school district that employs the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework and one that does not. This study will fill a gap in the literature by comparing two school districts taking different approaches to reduce burnout in their settings. For this study, the MBI-ES was used as the data collection tool, as this is a reliable and valid instrument for measuring the three dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment.

Research Methods

Sample

A purposeful sample was gathered from preschool-twelfth grade educators (administrators, teachers, and support staff members) at two school districts in the state of Iowa. One district employs the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework and one does not. Each of these groups of people were given the MBI-ES. School districts were selected using data provided by the Iowa Department of Education to determine districts of similar size, socioeconomic status (as defined by the percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch), and ethnicity. Each employee of both districts was asked to provide gender, years of experience, age, ethnicity, and classification of work (administrator, custodian or maintenance worker, food service, instructional coach, nurse, paraprofessional, school counselor secretary, or transportation employee). Research participants were not asked to reveal their identity during this study.

Site

The Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district from Northeast Iowa is in a town of approximately 1,700 people. It is within proximity to a city with over 58,000
people, based on the reported results of the 2017 United States Census population estimates. Just over 30% of the students receive free/reduced lunch and less than 9% of the students identify themselves as persons of color. A little more than 13% of students qualify for Special Education support and 2.1% are identified as English Language Learners.

The Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district was formed by the consolidation of many rural school districts. Organized in 1960, the district continues to be comprised of a student body from rural, small-town settings where strong work ethic and family values are important. There are five elementary schools, one middle school, a junior/senior high school, and a high school for a total of eight buildings and 3,285 students. Enrollment within this district continues to increase on a yearly basis, due to housing developments in the surrounding communities. One of the elementary schools within this district closed in 2017, due to low enrollment. At the time of the closing of the school, there were 31 students enrolled in preschool-fourth grades.

According to the latest School Performance Profile results from the Department of Education released in January 2020, two of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog schools rank as Exceptional, four are in the High Performing category, and two fall within the Commendable level. School Performance Profile rankings have six categories including: Exceptional, High Performing, Commendable, Acceptable, Needs Improvement, and Priority/Comprehensive. These rankings are based on standardized academic assessment measures as well as a Conditions for Learning climate survey. The Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district provided positive psychology
workshops to all 550 employees beginning in the 2016-17 school year, and at of the time of this writing, is considered one of three school systems in the state and one of twenty-nine in the country to implement this framework.

Levels of implementation of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework are varied across the eight buildings, based on the researcher’s conversations and observations of the different buildings. All eight buildings have implemented and utilized the principles of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog framework with a high degree of fidelity; however, some of the schools have taken their efforts to a higher level than others.

The Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog workshop explores the science of sustainable peak performance and applies the latest research-based techniques from the field of positive psychology. This framework is based on the works of Shawn Achor (2010), author of *The Happiness Advantage: The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology That Fuel Success and Performance at Work* and *The Orange Frog: A Parable Based on Positive Psychology*. Achor taught in Harvard’s famed happiness course and has brought this framework to businesses and school districts worldwide. The Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog workshop provides a sustainable approach to enhancing productivity at the individual, team, and organizational level. Several companies across the globe have participated in this work and many schools as well.

The school district that does not employ the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog framework is in a town with approximately 5,600 people and within proximity to a city with more than 102,000 residents. Just over 21% of the students receive free/reduced
lunch and nearly 12% of the students identify themselves as persons of color. A little more than 10% of students qualify for Special Education support and less than 1% are identified as English Language Learners. After a phone interview with the superintendent of schools and middle school principal, it was found that professional learning efforts have focused on building positive school culture. However, there have been no district-wide initiatives like the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework to reduce burnout and increase work engagement.

The school district that does not employ the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog framework became a legal entity on July 1, 1956 and resulted from a special election in December 1955. There are five elementary schools, one middle school, and a high school for a total of seven buildings and 3,139 students. Enrollment within this district remains very steady and increases only slightly on a yearly basis.

According to the latest School Performance Profile results from the Department of Education released in January 2020, five of the non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog schools rank as High Performing, one is in the Commendable category, and one in the Acceptable level.

Instrumentation

There have been debates about how to best define and assess burnout, as definitions have been included in earlier parts of this essay. Two assessment tools will be mentioned in this section. The Burnout Measure (Malach-Pines, 2005) and Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) are the two most widely used scales to capture burnout (Chang, 2009). Several burnout measures were developed in the 1980’s; however, the only one
that assesses all three dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment is the MBI, constructed by Christina Maslach and Susan E. Jackson (1981). The MBI is the primary measure and continues to be the most widely used, as it is considered the “gold standard” for work on burnout (Schaufeli et al., 2009). The MBI has dominated the field as a research tool; by the end of the 1990’s it was used in 93% of journal articles related to burnout (Enzmann et al., 1998). It is a twenty-two-item inventory, divided into three subscales of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The nine items in the emotional exhaustion subscale assess feelings of being emotionally extended and exhausted by one’s work. The five items related to depersonalization measure an unfeeling or impersonal response toward students or colleagues; for example, “I don’t really care what happens to some students.” (Schaufeli et al., 2009). Each of these statements included in the MBI are rated on frequency (‘a few times a year or less’ to ‘every day’) and intensity (‘very mild, barely noticeable’ to ‘major, very strong’). The eight items in the personal accomplishment subscale assess competence and successful achievement in one’s work with people. An example item from this subscale is, “I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.”

Reliability and Validity of the MBI-ES

Reliability refers to an instrument’s consistency to yield similar results over time including consistency in scoring and consistency in test administration (Creswell, 2014). Cronbach alpha estimates have been reported of: .90 for emotional exhaustion, .76 for depersonalization, and .76 for personal accomplishment (Iwanicki & Schwab, 1981); .88,
.74, and .72 respectively (Gold, 1984); and .87, .76, and .84, respectively, in a recent study of 492 teachers (Chang, 2013). The MBI-ES defines burnout as a matter of degree on its three subscales. This quality is compatible with regression-based statistical methods, and current statistical developments, such as structural equation modeling (Schaufeli et al., 2009).

Validity refers to an instrument’s ability to make meaningful inferences (Creswell, 2014). Evidence supporting the validity of the MBI-ES comes primarily from studies that have assessed the relationships between burnout scales and various aspects of the work experience. For example, in a study of full-time elementary (N = 1203), intermediate (N = 410), and secondary teachers (N = 1431), working conditions characterized by role conflict, work overload, classroom climate and social support from peers were correlated with emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment as predicted across the three groups (Byrne, 1994). Consistent with research using other MBI scales, a study of 175 physical education teachers in Greece found a strong negative relationship between the three burnout scales (treated as a set) and several job conditions including the work setting, the job itself, supervision, and the organization as a whole (Koustelios & Tsigilis, 2005).

**Ethical Considerations**

The researcher obtained data from both school districts through an electronic version of the MBI-ES, which was sent via email to all employees in each district. The researcher did not have access to data from either school district until after Institutional Research Board approval was obtained from the University of Northern Iowa. Names of
the educators were not collected on the survey to protect the privacy of participants. Electronic data will be kept in a password-protected environment for three years after publication of the research and will then be destroyed.

**Data Collection**

The researcher contacted the previously mentioned school districts within the state of Iowa; one district that employs the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework and one that does not. The two school districts that agreed to participate were emailed a hyperlink to the MBI-ES. Each educator taking the survey was asked to provide gender, age, years of experience, ethnicity, and classification of work (administrator, teacher, or support staff member). No identifying information about participants (i.e. name, birthdate, mailing address, etc.) was requested.

**Data Analysis**

The researcher used SPSS software for Windows 10 to conduct unpaired \( t \)-tests and ANOVAs with relevant post-hoc analyses to determine differences from MBI-ES benchmarking data. Descriptive statistics were calculated by SPSS and used to describe the sample’s demographics including gender, age, years of experience, ethnicity, and classification of work (administrator, teacher, or support staff member). SPSS was used to generate means, standard deviations, graphs, charts, and other descriptive statistics.

The research questions were as follows:

1. To what level do PK-12 educators in a midwestern school district experience burnout, as defined by the MBI-ES?
2. What is the difference in the levels of burnout, as measured by the MBI-ES, between a school district who employs the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework and one that does not?

To answer the first question, the researcher analyzed results collected from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district, comparing to the established norm-referenced data in the MBI-ES handbook. These analyses included t-tests, a one-way ANOVA, and relevant post-hoc analyses to determine differences from MBI-ES benchmarking data. From the descriptive statistics, comparisons were made to norm-referenced data, supplied by the MBI-ES handbook.

To answer the second question, the researcher conducted t-tests, a two-way ANOVA, and other accompanying statistical analyses to measure differences with emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment.

Summary

This quasi-experimental study was designed to gain an understanding on the effect of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework and whether schools that employ these techniques experience a significant difference in their levels of burnout, as measured by the MBI-ES. This chapter described the research questions, research design, research methods, data collection procedures, and data analysis used to accomplish this purpose.

Chapter four will include a summary of the data analysis collected in the study. Chapter five will discuss an overview of the study; interpret the findings, study limitations and suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this quasi-experimental study was to gain an understanding of the effect of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework in a PK-12th grade school district.

Data were analyzed using independent samples $t$-tests and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with relevant post hoc analyses to answer research question one. A 2x5 between-subjects ANOVA for non-repeated measures, independent samples $t$-tests, and a Tukey post hoc multiple comparison of means were used to answer question two.

The research questions are as follows.

1. To what level do PK-12 educators in a midwestern school district experience burnout, as defined by the MBI-ES?
2. What is the difference in the levels of burnout, as measured by the MBI-ES, between a school district who employs the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework and one that does not?

This chapter reports the findings for each research question. When needed, descriptive statistics were rounded to the nearest hundredth. Following the descriptive analysis of the demographic data of study participants, the results are presented in order of the two research questions.
Descriptive Analysis

The data were collected from two similar school districts selected from a department of education database specifically reviewing the following characteristics: student enrollment, socioeconomic status, and diversity. The purposeful sample was drawn from staff members in a school district that uses the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog framework ($N = 327$) and one that does not employ these positive psychology strategies ($N = 248$). A summary of research participants by job description can be found below in Table 1. For this study, the sample size was a combined 575 staff members from the two school districts.

Table 1

Research Participants by Job Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Description</th>
<th>HA</th>
<th>OF District</th>
<th>NON-HA</th>
<th>OF District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custodians/Maintenance</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Service</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Coaches</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurses</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraprofessionals</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretaries</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>149</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>248</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Job Descriptions in Other category included Technology Staff, Juvenile Court Liaisons, and Before/After School Care Workers
Demographic Data

Of the 575 participants in the study, 115 were male and 460 were female. Thirteen job description categories were gathered from the survey and can be seen in Table 1 on page 68. Teachers from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district comprised the largest subgroup with 175 participants and 149 teachers from the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district, respectively. Collectively, teachers represented 56% of all research participants within this study. Years of experience in participants’ current school districts varied, ranging from 0-2 years to more than 30 years of experience. 203 (35%) of all research participants indicated 3-9 years of experience in their current districts, making this the largest subgroup of the category. Additional details of years of experience can be found below in Table 2. Of the 575 participants in the study, 564 (98%) identified themselves as White or Caucasian.

Table 2

Research Participants by Years of Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>HA</th>
<th>OF District</th>
<th>NON-HA</th>
<th>OF District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2 years</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-9 years</td>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-16 years</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-23 years</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-30 years</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 30 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>327</td>
<td></td>
<td>248</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Analysis

Data were collected from a survey distributed to all employees in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog and Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school districts. In addition to answering the twenty-two items on the MBI-ES, staff members from each school district were asked to provide gender, job description, years of service to their current school district, age, and ethnicity. For each staff member, scores in the dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment were derived from the MBI-ES. Scores were calculated by totaling the nine items from emotional exhaustion, five items from depersonalization, and eight items from personal accomplishment to provide three separate scores for each participant.

Procedures

SPSS for Microsoft Windows 10 was used to conduct unpaired t-tests, ANOVAs, and Tukey post hoc multiple comparisons of means to answer the research questions. In the following paragraphs, the procedures used to investigate each research question will be described.

Research Question 1

To what level do PK-12 educators in a midwestern school district experience burnout, as defined by the MBI-ES? To answer the first question, independent t-tests for emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment were performed and each found to be statistically significant with p values less than .001. The emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment mean scores of the school district that employs the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive
psychology framework (N = 327) were compared to normative data in the MBI-ES scoring guide, which is a collection of elementary and secondary educators (N = 4,163).

Scores from the MBI-ES consist of three subscales: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Participants scoring higher in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization demonstrate higher levels of experienced burnout, while the same is true for those scoring lower in personal accomplishment. Prior to 2016, cut-off scores were set up to identify which people were “high” in burnout. In the 2016 publication of the MBI Manual 4th edition, the cut-off scores were removed due to having no diagnostic validity. “High,” “moderate,” and “low” classifications of burnout were calculated by splitting the normative population into thirds – where a person was considered “high” in emotional exhaustion simply because they scored in the upper third percentile of the population. The MBI authors realized that the cut-offs were problematic. For this reason, the cut-offs were not published in the MBI Manual 4th edition and removed from all associated MBI materials.

Research published by Leiter and Maslach (2016) explored the use of burnout profiles to identify patterns of the burnout experience. The profile types are Engaged, Ineffective, Overextended, Disengaged, and Burnout. The goal with these profiles is to inform the design of burnout interventions. For example, someone who matches the Ineffective profile is experiencing loss of confidence in their abilities and may need a solution involving more recognition for their quality work. Leiter and Maslach (2016) used standardized (z) values to calculate an individual's profile. Specifically, they set the following critical boundaries:
• Emotional Exhaustion: $z = M_{EE} + (SD \times 0.5)$

• Depersonalization: $z = M_{DP} + (SD \times 1.25)$

• Personal Accomplishment: $z = M_{PA} + (SD \times 0.10)$

These critical boundaries are dependent on the population norms for the group. Therefore, profile categorization for an individual may differ slightly based on the population used in the critical boundary calculation. Profile descriptions and categorization are used as a reference point to define burnout experience and plan appropriate interventions.

**Emotional Exhaustion**

The Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog group ($N = 327$) scored numerically lower on emotional exhaustion ($M = 14.45, SD = 9.13$) in comparison to a group of educators ($N = 4136$) from the MBI-ES scoring guide ($M = 21.25, SD = 11.01$). To test the hypothesis that the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog and MBI-ES normative data groups were associated with statistically significantly different means for emotional exhaustion, an independent samples $t$-test was performed. Results of this test indicated a statistically significant difference $t(4,461) = 10.88, p < .001$ with a medium effect size ($g = .63$). Results of this $t$-test are displayed in Table 3.

The researcher chose to use Hedges’ $g$ for effect size calculations in these independent $t$-tests, due to the difference between the number of participants in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog ($N = 327$) compared to the MBI-ES normative data ($N = 4136$) groups. Hedges' $g$, which provides a measure of effect size weighted according to the relative size of each sample, is an alternative to the more familiar
Cohen’s $d$, Hedges’ $g$ and Cohen’s $d$ are interpreted in a similar manner, as such, the following rule of thumb is used for interpreting Hedges’ $g$ and Cohen’s $d$ in this study:

- Small Effect = .2
- Medium Effect = .5
- Large Effect = .8

Regarding burnout profiles in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district, emotional exhaustion scores of 19.02 or higher placed participants in the Overextended profile. Of the 327 participants from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district, 87 (27%) fit into this profile. Scores in the emotional exhaustion dimension ranged from 0 to 43 with 240 (73%) participants scoring lower than the 19.02 critical boundary.

Table 3

*Happiness Advantage Compared to MBI-ES Normative Data: Emotional Exhaustion*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Set</th>
<th>$N$</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>Hedges’ $g$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HA</td>
<td>OF School District</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>14.45</td>
<td>11.01</td>
<td>$&lt; .001$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emotional exhaustion data from the MBI-ES were further analyzed using a one-way between-subjects ANOVA to estimate the degree of difference across grouped job categories from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district. Administrators \((N = 10)\), instructional coaches \((N = 7)\), non-certified staff members \((N = 55)\), paraprofessionals \((N = 80)\), and teachers \((N = 175)\) from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district represent the five grouped job categories. The administrator group was comprised of principals, assistant principals, and central office leaders. Employees in the non-certified educator group consisted of before/after school care providers, custodians or maintenance workers, food service employees, juvenile court liaisons, nurses, school counselors, secretaries, technology staff, and transportation workers. While school counselors and nurses are typically included in certified staff groups in schools, the researcher placed them in the non-certified group for the purpose of this study. This decision was made due to the prior training and encounters school counselors and nurses typically experience throughout the course of the day, as it relates to the classroom. Descriptive statistics for the grouped job categories can be found in Table 7. Grouped job categories was the independent variable with five levels (a) administrators, (b) instructional coaches, (c) non-certified staff members, (d) paraprofessionals, and (e) teachers. Emotional exhaustion mean scores from MBI-ES was the dependent variable. The ANOVA summary table is provided in Table 4. As the table suggests, the emotional exhaustion scores of the grouped job categories differed significantly \(F(4, 322 = 9.63, p < .001)\).
Table 4

ANOVA Results for Emotional Exhaustion by Grouped Job Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>2,909.69</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>727.42</td>
<td>9.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>24,300.26</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>75.47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27,209.95</td>
<td>326</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following the one-way ANOVA, the researcher conducted ten independent samples t-tests as a post hoc analysis. To control for the Family Wise Error Rate, the Bonferroni correction was applied, which makes equal adjustments to each p value. The Bonferroni correction is calculated by dividing the alpha level (.05) by the number of tests conducted (10) to reveal an adjusted alpha level. To be considered statistically significant in this analysis, each t-test needed to be .005 or lower. In the case of this analysis, three of the ten post hoc t-tests were statistically significant.

The first post hoc independent samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference $t(180) = 20.47, p = .004$ and a large effect size ($g = 1.11$) between instructional coaches ($N = 7$) and teachers ($N = 175$). Hedges $g$ was used for the effect size calculation of the first statistically significant t-test, due to the difference in the size of these groups. Hedges' $g$ provides a measure of effect size weighted according to the relative size of each sample. Cohen’s $d$ was used in the following statistically significant t-tests because of the similar size of the respective groups. A significant ($p < .001$) mean difference between non-certified staff members ($N = 55$) and paraprofessionals ($N = 80$) was found $t(133) = 3.87$ with a medium effect size ($d = .68$). The final independent samples t-test
revealed a statistically significant difference $t(253) = 5.98, p < .001$ and a large effect size ($d = .82$) between teachers ($N = 175$) and paraprofessionals ($N = 80$). At this point in the analysis of research question one, the focus turns toward depersonalization, the second dimension of burnout.

Depersonalization

The Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog group ($N = 327$) scored numerically lower on depersonalization ($M = 2.89, SD = 3.14$) in comparison to a group of educators ($N = 4136$) from the MBI-ES data set ($M = 11, SD = 6.19$). An independent samples $t$-test was performed to test the hypothesis that the mean difference from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog and MBI-ES normative data groups were statistically significant for depersonalization. Results of this test indicated a statistically significant difference $t(4,461) = 23.45, p = < .001$, very large effect size ($g = 1.35$) and are displayed in Table 5. Concerning critical boundary data from the Orange Frog | Happiness Advantage school district, depersonalization scores of 6.82 or higher placed participants in the Disengaged profile. Of the 327 participants from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district, 37 (11%) fit this profile. Scores in the depersonalization dimension ranged from 0 to 14 with 290 (89%) participants scoring lower than the 6.82 critical boundary.
Table 5

_Happiness Advantage Compared to MBI-ES: Depersonalization_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Set</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Hedges’ g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HA</td>
<td>OF School District</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBI-ES Normative Data</td>
<td>4,136</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>7.53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Personal Accomplishment**

The Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog group (N =327) scored numerically higher on personal accomplishment ($M = 41.70$, $SD = 7.53$) in comparison to a group of educators ($N = 4,136$) from the MBI-ES data set ($M = 33.54$, $SD = 6.89$). To test the hypothesis that the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog and MBI-ES normative data groups were associated with statistically significantly different means for personal accomplishment, an independent samples $t$-test was performed. Results of this test indicated a statistically significant difference $t(4,461) = 20.47$, $p < .001$, very large effect size ($g = 1.18$), and are displayed in Table 6 on page 77. With reference to critical boundary data from the Orange Frog | Happiness Advantage school district, personal accomplishment scores of 42.45 or lower placed participants in the Ineffective profile. Of the 327 participants from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district, 132 (40%) fit this profile. Scores in the personal accomplishment dimension ranged from 8 to 48 with 195 (60%) participants scoring higher than the 42.45 critical boundary.
Table 6

*Happiness Advantage Compared to MBI-ES: Personal Accomplishment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Set</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Hedges’ g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HA</td>
<td>OF School District</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>41.70</td>
<td>7.53</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBI-ES Normative Data</td>
<td>4,136</td>
<td>33.54</td>
<td>6.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Question 2**

What is the difference in the levels of burnout, as measured by the MBI-ES, between a school district who employs the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework and one that does not?

Statistical analyses were performed using a 2 X 5 between-subjects ANOVA with school districts and grouped job categories as the main effects. The school district factor had two levels: The Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district \((N = 327)\) and the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district \((N = 248)\). The grouped job category factor had five levels: administrators \((N = 20)\), instructional coaches \((N = 17)\), paraprofessionals \((N = 117)\), teachers \((N = 324)\), and non-certified educators \((N = 97)\). As was communicated in an earlier section, employees in the non-certified educator group consisted of before/after school providers, custodians or maintenance workers, food service employees, juvenile court liaisons, nurses, school counselors, secretaries, technology staff, and transportation workers. The outcome variable is the scores collected from the MBI-ES, which produced separate totals for emotional exhaustion,
depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. To begin the analysis, descriptive statistics were calculated and recorded.

**Emotional Exhaustion**

*Descriptive statistics.* In the dimension of emotional exhaustion, teachers from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district \((N = 175)\) scored numerically lower \((M = 16.38, SD = 8.41)\) than teachers \((N = 148)\) from the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district \((M = 22.91, SD = 10.09)\). Additional descriptive statistics for the emotional exhaustion subscale can be found in Table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Job Description</th>
<th>(N)</th>
<th>(M)</th>
<th>(SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happiness Advantage</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.40</td>
<td>8.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange Frog</td>
<td>Instructional Coach</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Certified</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>16.04</td>
<td>11.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paraprofessional</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>9.79</td>
<td>7.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>16.38</td>
<td>8.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>14.45</td>
<td>9.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Non-Happiness Advantage | Administrator     | 10    | 17.80 | 9.56  |
| Orange Frog             | Instructional Coach | 10    | 16.80 | 11.06 |
|                         | Non-Certified    | 42    | 14.67 | 9.51  |
|                         | Paraprofessional | 37    | 12.24 | 9.67  |
|                         | Teacher          | 149   | 22.91 | 10.09 |
|                         | Total            | 248   | 19.47 | 10.71 |
Inferential statistics. A 2 X 5 between-subjects ANOVA was conducted that examined the effect of school districts and grouped job categories. The emotional exhaustion subscale score from the MBI-ES served as the dependent variable. There was a statistically significant interaction between the effects of school districts and grouped job categories, $F(4, 571) = 4.06, p = .003$. This significant interaction is visible in the line graph of Figure 1.

Figure 1. Interaction Effects of School Districts and Grouped Job Categories
Depersonalization

Descriptive statistics. In the dimension of depersonalization, administrators from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district ($N = 10$) scored numerically lower ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 2.80$) than administrators ($N = 10$) from the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district ($M = 5.50$, $SD = 3.66$). Non-Certified staff members from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district ($N = 55$) scored numerically higher ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 3.39$) than non-certified participants ($N = 42$) from the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district ($M = 2.31$, $SD = 2.20$) Additional descriptive statistics for the depersonalization subscale can be found in Table 8.

Table 8

*Descriptive Statistics for the Depersonalization Dimension*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Job Description</th>
<th>$N$</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happiness Advantage</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange Frog</td>
<td>Instructional Coach</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Certified</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paraprofessional</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>3.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Happiness Advantage</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange Frog</td>
<td>Instructional Coach</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Certified</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>2.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paraprofessional</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>4.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inferential statistics. Results from the 2 X 5 between-subjects ANOVA that examined the independent variables of school districts and grouped job categories with the depersonalization subscale score from the MBI-ES serving as the dependent variable revealed a significant main effect of school district $F(1, 570) = 9.15, p = .003, \eta^2_p = .016$. Those who participated in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog framework reported significantly less depersonalization scores ($M = 2.89, SD = 3.14$) than those who did not participate in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog framework ($M = 3.91, SD = 3.77$). The analysis also revealed a significant main effect of grouped job categories $F(1, 570) = 5.67, p > .001, \eta^2_p = .039$. There was not a significant interaction between school district and grouped job categories ($p = .15$).

Following the ANOVA results, which produced a significant main effect of grouped job categories, a Tukey post hoc multiple comparison of means revealed significant ($p = .004$) mean differences between teachers and non-certified staff members (1.37) and significant ($p = .001$) mean differences between teachers and paraprofessionals (1.47); results of the Tukey post hoc analysis can be found in Table 9.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Description (I)</th>
<th>Job Description (J)</th>
<th>Mean Diff. (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Non-Certified</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>.390</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.30 - 2.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paraprofessional</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>.363</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.47 - 2.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Personal Accomplishment

Descriptive statistics. In the dimension of personal accomplishment, teachers from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district (N = 175) scored numerically higher (M = 42.87, SD = 4.681) than teachers (N = 148) from the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district (M = 41.15, SD = 5.37). Non-certified staff members from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district (N = 55) scored numerically lower (M = 33.60, SD = 12.54) than non-certified participants (N = 42) from the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district (M = 36.29, SD = 10.81) Additional descriptive statistics for the emotional exhaustion subscale can be found in Table 10.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics for the Personal Accomplishment Dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Job Description</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happiness Advantage</td>
<td>Orange Frog</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>43.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instructional Coach</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>45.71</td>
<td>4.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Certified</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>33.60</td>
<td>12.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paraprofessional</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>44.16</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>42.87</td>
<td>4.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>41.70</td>
<td>7.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Happiness Advantage</td>
<td>Orange Frog</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instructional Coach</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>42.50</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Certified</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>36.29</td>
<td>10.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paraprofessional</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>41.65</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>41.15</td>
<td>5.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>40.42</td>
<td>6.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inferential statistics. A 2 X 5 between-subjects ANOVA examined the
independent variables of school districts and grouped job categories with the personal
accomplishment subscale score from the MBI-ES serving as the dependent variable. Data revealed a significant main effect of grouped job categories $F(1, 570) = 24.63, p > .001$, $\eta^2 = .15$. The analysis did not reveal a significant main effect of school districts $F(1, 570) = 2.47, p = .117$, $\eta^2 = .004$. There was not a significant interaction between school
district and grouped job categories ($p = .04$).

Following the ANOVA results, which produced a significant main effect of
grouped job categories, a Tukey post hoc multiple comparison of means revealed
significant ($p < .001$) mean differences between non-certified staff members and
administrators (-7.09), instructional coaches (-9.06), paraprofessionals (-8.06), and
teachers (-7.31); results of this analysis can be found in Table 11.

Table 11

Tukey Post Hoc Multiple Comparison for Personal Accomplishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Description (I)</th>
<th>Job Description (J)</th>
<th>Mean Diff. (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Certified</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>-7.09</td>
<td>1.634</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-11.56 -2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ins. Coach</td>
<td>-9.06</td>
<td>1.750</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-13.85 -4.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paraprofessional</td>
<td>-8.06</td>
<td>.914</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-11.11 -6.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>-7.31</td>
<td>.770</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-9.42 -5.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter five will discuss an overview of the study; interpret the findings, study
limitations, and suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSIONS

The intent of this study was to fill a gap in the literature by comparing a school district that employs the strategies of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework to one that does not. More specifically, this study sought to determine the extent, if any, to which positive psychology strategies impact levels of experienced burnout as measured by the MBI-ES. The study was drawn from educators in two Midwestern school districts during the 2019-2020 school year. One school district employs the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework and one does not. The data were analyzed using independent samples t-tests, ANOVAs, and relevant post hoc analyses to answer the research questions, respectively:

1. To what level do PK-12 educators in a midwestern school district experience burnout, as defined by the MBI-ES?

2. What is the difference in the levels of burnout, as measured by the MBI-ES, between a school district who employs the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework and one that does not?

Summary of Findings

In response to the first question, an independent samples t-test revealed emotional exhaustion scores to be statistically significant \( t(4,461) = 10.88, p < .001 \) between the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district \( (M = 14.45, SD = 9.13) \) and normative data from the MBI-ES manual \( (M = 21.25, SD = 11.01) \). This finding implies
educators from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district ($N = 327$) experience fewer feelings of overextension and exhaustion than a large sample of primary and secondary educators ($N = 4,136$). There are nine questions related to emotional exhaustion on the MBI-ES. Based on the survey results, educators from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district experienced feelings of emotional exhaustion a few times a year or less compared to once a month from primary and secondary educators in the MBI-ES guidebook.

Concerning burnout profiles in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district, emotional exhaustion means of 19.02 or higher placed participants in the Overextended profile. Of the 327 participants from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district, 87 (27%) fit into this profile. Scores in the emotional exhaustion dimension ranged from 0 to 43 with 240 (73%) participants scoring lower than the 19.02 critical boundary.

A one-way between-subjects ANOVA in the emotional exhaustion dimension revealed a significant difference across grouped job categories (administrators, instructional coaches, non-certified members, paraprofessionals, and teachers) in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district: $F(4, 322) = 9.63, p < .001$), suggesting different job titles and responsibilities within this school district contribute to varied levels of emotional exhaustion.

Following the one-way ANOVA, ten independent samples $t$-tests as a post hoc analysis were conducted. To control for the Family Wise Error Rate, the Bonferroni correction was applied, which makes equal adjustments to each $p$ value. The Bonferroni
correction is calculated by dividing the alpha level (.05) by the number of tests conducted (10) to reveal an adjusted alpha level. To be considered statistically significant in this analysis, each t-test needed to be .005 or lower. In the case of this analysis, three of the ten post hoc t-tests were statistically significant.

The first post hoc independent samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference \( t(180) = 20.47, p = .004 \) and a large effect size \( (g = 1.11) \) between instructional coaches \((N = 7)\) and teachers \((N = 175)\). Hedges \( g \) was used for the effect size calculation of the first statistically significant t-test, due to the difference in the size of these groups; Cohen’s \( d \) was used for the others. A significant \((p < .001)\) mean difference between non-certified staff members \((N = 55)\) and paraprofessionals \((N = 80)\) was found \( t(133) = 3.87 \) with a medium effect size \((d = .68)\). The final independent samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference \( t(253) = 5.98, p < .001 \) and a large effect size \((d = .82)\) between teachers \((N = 175)\) and paraprofessionals \((N = 80)\). At this point in the summary of findings for research question one, the focus turns toward depersonalization, the second dimension of burnout.

An independent samples t-test revealed depersonalization scores were statistically significant \( t(4,461) = 23.45, p < .001 \) between educators from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district \((M = 2.89, SD = 3.14)\) and the MBI-ES normative data \((M = 11.00, SD = 6.19)\). This finding suggests educators from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district experience significantly less cynicism, disengagement, and irritability than the primary and secondary educators from the MBI-ES normative data set. There are five questions associated with depersonalization on the MBI-ES. Based on
the survey results, educators from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district experienced feelings of depersonalization a few times a year or less compared to once a month from primary and secondary educators from the MBI-ES normative data.

Regarding burnout profiles in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district, depersonalization means of 6.82 or higher placed participants in the Disengaged profile. Of the 327 participants from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district, 37 (11%) fit into this profile. Scores in the depersonalization dimension ranged from 0 to 14 with 290 (89%) participants scoring lower than the 6.82 critical boundary. The summary of findings for research question one now moves to personal accomplishment, the third and final dimension of burnout.

An independent samples t-test revealed personal accomplishment scores were statistically significant $t(4,461) = 20.47$, $p < .001$ between the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district ($M = 41.7$, $SD = 7.53$) and the MBI-ES normative data ($M = 33.54$, $SD = 6.89$). This finding indicates members of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district experience feelings of confidence, efficacy, and successful achievement in their work much more often than the educators from the MBI-ES normative data. Eight questions from the MBI-ES are related to personal accomplishment. Based on the survey results, educators from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district experienced feelings of efficacy or personal accomplishment a few times a week or more compared to once a week from primary and secondary educators in the MBI-ES guidebook.
With respect to burnout profiles in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district, personal accomplishment means of 42.45 or lower placed participants in the Ineffective profile. Of the 327 participants from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district, 132 (40%) fit into this profile. Scores in the personal accomplishment dimension ranged from 8 to 48 with 195 (60%) participants scoring higher than the 42.45 critical boundary. The summary of findings will now be directed toward the second research question.

In response to the second question, a 2 X 5 between-subjects ANOVA revealed a statistically significant interaction in the emotional exhaustion dimension between the main effects of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog and Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school districts and grouped job categories of administrators, instructional coaches, non-certified members, paraprofessionals, and teachers: $F(4, 571) = 4.06, p = .003$. This finding suggests educators from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district, apart from non-certified members, experience lower levels of emotional exhaustion than educators from the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district. Now that the emotional exhaustion findings have been summarized for research question two, the focus turns toward depersonalization, the second dimension of burnout.

A statistically significant main effect of school districts in the depersonalization dimension of the MBI-ES: $F(1, 570) = 9.15, p = .003$ resulted from the 2 X 5 between-subjects ANOVA. This finding suggests working in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district contributes to lower levels of cynicism or indifferent attitudes compared to employees in the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district. The 2 X 5 ANOVA
also revealed a statistically significant main effect of grouped job categories in the
depersonalization dimension of the MBI-ES: $F(4, 570) = 5.67, p > .001$, implying the job
responsibilities in both school districts contribute to varying degrees of depersonalization.
Resembling the emotional exhaustion dimension, administrators, instructional coaches,
paraprofessionals, and teachers from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school
district scored numerically lower in the depersonalization dimension than the Non-
Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district. The non-certified group from the
Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district scored numerically higher ($M = 2.67,
SD = 3.39$) than the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district ($M = 2.31,
SD = 2.16$). The summary of findings for research question two now moves to personal
accomplishment, the third and final dimension of burnout.

Conclusively, the 2 X 5 between-subjects ANOVA uncovered a statistically
significant main effect of grouped job categories in the personal accomplishment
dimension of the MBI-ES: $F(4, 570) = 24.63, p > .001$. This finding implies the job
responsibilities in both school districts contribute to varying levels of competence and
successful achievement at work. There was not a statistically significant main effect of
school districts in the personal accomplishment dimension of the MBI-ES: $F(1, 570) =
2.47, p = .117$, suggesting working in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district
does not contribute to higher levels of efficacy and confidence compared to employees in
the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district. Corresponding to the emotional
exhaustion and depersonalization dimensions, administrators, instructional coaches,
paraprofessionals, and teachers from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school
district scored numerically higher in the personal accomplishment dimension than the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district. The non-certified group from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district scored numerically lower ($M = 33.60, SD = 12.54$) than the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district ($M = 36.29, SD = 10.81$). Additional commentary related to the emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment findings will be argued in the discussion portion of this chapter.

**Discussion**

This study expanded upon previous research by attempting to gain an understanding on the effect of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework, as measured by the MBI-ES. Subscale scores of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment from the MBI-ES were compared based on the type of intervention experienced in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog and Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school districts. Prior to this research, various studies have used the MBI-ES to determine levels of experienced burnout, see Van Dierendonck et al. (1998), Halbesleben et al. (2006), and Duijts et al. (2008); however, few, if any, explored the impact of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework to improve these measures. In the following paragraphs, the findings will be discussed in the context of expanding upon the understanding of how school leaders may better understand the strengths and weaknesses of implementing a positive psychology approach to reduce burnout, while increasing workplace engagement in their settings.
Emotional Exhaustion

Of the three MBI-ES subscales, emotional exhaustion means differed most when the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district was compared to the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district. For the discussion portion of this essay, the commentary will focus primarily on the comparison between the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog and Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school districts. The demographic similarities between the school districts make the discussion much richer than differences between the MBI-ES normative data set. All employees from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district recorded a mean score of 14.45, while the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district mean was 19.47. This finding suggests, as a large group (\(N = 327\)), members of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district have developed strategies and resources to address the increasing demands of the profession. Workload and emotional exhaustion issues occur when there is an imbalance between the job demands and the available resources to meet those demands (Bakker et al., 2014). Bakker and Demerouti (2007) created the Job Demands-Resources Theory, which asserts all characteristics of work can be identified as either demands or resources. Demands are often predictors of negative outcomes, such as exhaustion, stress, or anxiety, while resources are predictive of engagement, motivation, and enjoyment. Significant differences in emotional exhaustion means indicate the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework has a powerful impact in tackling workload and emotional exhaustion issues. Now that a broad overview
of emotional exhaustion differences between the two school districts has been shared, specific commentary will be provided for various grouped job categories. Teachers represented 56% of research participants and were the largest subgroup of the job categories in this study ($N = 324$). The 175 teachers in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district logged an emotional exhaustion mean score of 16.38, while 148 teachers from the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district recorded 22.91, respectively. It is not surprising that teachers in both districts recorded the highest emotional exhaustion scores of all grouped job categories. The discussion related to the “Increasing Burden on America’s Schools” from Jamie Vollmer (2012) in chapter 2 is particularly relevant in this context, as curricular initiatives and school goals often fall directly upon the shoulders of teachers. Regardless of Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology interventions, workload and emotional exhaustion will continue to be issues for teachers in the current landscape of education. The difference between these means (6.53) was the second largest of all subgroups within the study. It is plausible to believe the positive psychology principles from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog framework resonated deeply with teachers in this district and have allowed them to negotiate emotional exhaustion in a more effective manner. When emotional exhaustion is navigated successfully, the well-being of teachers improves, as do outcomes for students (Klusmann et al. 2008; Arens & Morin, 2016). If these results could be replicated for other instructors, the entire educational system would benefit. The focus of the discussion will now turn toward instructional coaches, whose results were similar teachers in the emotional exhaustion dimension.
The instructional coaches in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district recorded the lowest emotional exhaustion mean within the study (7.14), while the instructional coaches from the Non-Happiness Advantage school district more than doubled this number, with a recorded emotional exhaustion mean of 16.80. Participants in these subgroups are small with 7 and 10 members, respectfully; however, the mean difference between them is large (9.66). Further qualitative research is needed to understand the roles and responsibilities of instructional coaches in each district and how their assignments contribute to emotional exhaustion. Instructional coaches have different roles and responsibilities depending upon the districts they serve and the models of coaching that are followed, see Knight (2007), Hall and Simeral (2008), Killian (2009), Toll (2009), Ellison and Hayes (2009), and Sweeney (2011). It can be concluded that instructional coaches in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district have discovered approaches to consistently create vitality within daily work routines, as they experience feelings of emotional exhaustion only a few times a year or less. It is encouraging for instructional coaches from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district to record such positive numbers in the emotional exhaustion dimension. As Goleman (2006), Cavanaugh (2016), and Christakis and Fowler (2011) have said, positive emotions are contagious and instructional coaches in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog have a prominent reach. Within this district, instructional coaches follow the model of Jim Knight (2007) and work closely with teachers to provide professional learning, while modeling excellent instructional practices. When an instructional coach with an infectious personality can profoundly impact others through simple actions, value
is added to the whole system (Knight, 2007). The discussion will now focus on the Overextended profile and participants scoring higher than the critical boundary in the emotional exhaustion dimension.

The burnout profiles discussed in earlier portions of this essay exist to identify effective interventions for various individuals and groups. Emotional exhaustion scores of 19.02 or higher placed Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog participants in the Overextended profile. Of the 327 participants in this district, 87 or 27% scored higher than this threshold. The data suggest emotional exhaustion is an issue in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district. It is recommended that emotional exhaustion interventions be explored for this group. The Zorro Circle or Twenty Second Rule (Achor, 2010) from chapter 2 are potential options to investigate in this dimension. These are only two intervention options to combat emotional exhaustion; there are a myriad of other available options. From a leadership and management perspective, the goal of the intervention is to manipulate the conditions in the work environment that are more conducive to engagement and less conducive to burnout (Leiter & Maslach, 2010). To close the discussion on emotional exhaustion, an unexpected finding will be examined in the next paragraph.

There were five grouped job categories within this study: administrators, instructional coaches, non-certified staff, paraprofessionals, and teachers. The administrator group was comprised of principals, assistant principals, and central office leaders. Employees in the non-certified educator group consisted of before/after school
care providers, custodians or maintenance workers, food service employees, juvenile court liaisons, nurses, school counselors, secretaries, technology staff, and transportation workers. All grouped job categories, except for non-certified staff, from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district recorded lower emotional exhaustion means than the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district. This finding was consistent across the dimensions of depersonalization and personal accomplishment and indicates non-certified members responded to the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework differently than the other four grouped job categories. Further qualitative research is needed to fully understand and explain this surprising difference. It is puzzling to the researcher why this group responded differently than the other grouped job categories across all three dimensions of the MBI-ES. The discussion now turns toward the second dimension of burnout, depersonalization.

**Depersonalization**

Depersonalization means also varied when the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district was compared to the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district. The Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district recorded a mean score of 2.89 from all employees, while the depersonalization mean from the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district was 3.91. The difference between these means is small (1.02); however, when compared to the depersonalization mean from the MBI-ES normative data (11.00), the difference is large (8.11). This finding suggests members of both school districts have developed strategies to create positivity and meaning within their work, while remaining engaged. It is conceivable to imply the Happiness Advantage
Orange Frog positive psychology framework did not contribute considerably to lowering levels of depersonalization for all staff members compared to the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district.

According to Seligman’s Well-Being Theory (2011), meaning refers to a sense of belonging and serving something perceived to be bigger than the self. Likewise, Fredrickson’s Broaden and Build model proposes positive emotions broaden people’s attention and thinking, undo lingering negative emotional arousal, fuel psychological resilience, build consequential personal resources, trigger upward spirals towards greater well-being in the future, and seed human flourishing (Fredrickson, 2004). Results from the MBI-ES indicated educators from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district experienced feelings of depersonalization only a few times a year or less, indicating strong feelings of involvement, positivity, contribution, and meaning within their work. These results are not only important to the individual, but also to the entire system, as disengaged and unhappy educators are not as productive, innovative, energetic, or effective, which ultimately leads to lower levels of student achievement (Klusmann et al. 2008; Arens & Morin, 2016). More importantly, educators who experience depersonalization lose the joy and fulfillment of making a difference in the lives of students (Leiter & Maslach, 2005).

The burnout profiles discussed in earlier portions of this essay exist to identify effective interventions for various individuals. Depersonalization scores of 6.82 or higher placed Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog participants in the Disengaged profile. Of the 327 participants in this district, only 37 or 11% scored higher than this threshold. The
data suggests depersonalization or disengagement is not a top priority issue in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district. At the time of this dissertation, normative data for the latent burnout profiles does not exist. It is recommended that these profiles continue to be employed to establish norms and effective interventions to target burnout. The depersonalization discussion will be completed in the next paragraph with a review of significant differences between grouped job categories.

In chapter 4, results from a 2 X 5 between-subjects ANOVA indicated a significant main effect of grouped job categories $F(1, 570) = 5.67, p > .001$, $\eta^2 = .039$. Additionally, a Tukey post hoc comparison of means revealed significant ($p = .004$) mean differences between teachers and non-certified staff members (1.37) and significant ($p = .001$) mean differences between teachers and paraprofessionals (1.47). Results of the Tukey post hoc analysis can be found in Table 9. In response to this finding, teachers are surrounded by students all day and when students are not in their care, teachers are communicating with families, lesson planning, grading, and responding to many other demands related to the job. It is reasonable that teachers’ depersonalization scores are significantly higher than non-certified staff members. Paraprofessionals and non-certified staff members, such as transportation workers, food service employees, school nurses, secretaries and other members of this group typically can end their workday with ample opportunity to recharge for the next, as responsibilities after hours are limited. Teachers do not have this luxury, as was mentioned above. When additional responsibilities are required of teachers outside of the instructional day with limited time to recover, it is not a surprise that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization scores climb to higher levels.
Educators are more likely to develop an indifferent or negative attitude and detached response on the job when feeling emotionally exhausted and discouraged (Schaufeli et al., 2009). A discussion of personal accomplishment findings will be interpreted in the next section of this chapter.

**Personal Accomplishment**

Personal accomplishment refers to feelings of competence and successful achievement in one’s work, which is critical for all educators. Most educators enter the field to make a difference in the life of a child and need to know their job matters to someone. Personal accomplishment means contrasted when the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district was compared to the MBI-ES normative data and the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district. The Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district recorded a mean score of 41.70 from all employees, while personal accomplishment means from the MBI-ES normative data were 33.54 and 40.42 from the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district, respectively. This finding suggests members of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district have developed approaches to increase feelings of competence and successful achievement when compared to the MBI-ES normative data. It is reasonable to suggest members of both districts experience consistent feelings of professional efficacy or personal accomplishment at least once per week, if not daily in their jobs. It can be further concluded the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework did not drastically affect personal accomplishment scores when compared to the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district. This finding supports Maslach and
Leiter (2016), as they argue that when employees have the perceived capacity to influence decisions affecting their work, exercise professional autonomy, and gain access to the resources necessary to do an effective job, they are more likely to experience job engagement. Resembling the arguments of Maslach and Leiter (2016), Truchot & Deregard (2001) discovered a sense of community has been found to buffer the impact of feelings of inequity at work in their review of helping models. In addition, they uncovered social support and a sense of community are associated with greater engagement, decreased burnout, and increased confidence.

In chapter 4, results from a 2 X 5 between-subjects ANOVA indicated a significant main effect of grouped job categories $F(1, 570) = 24.63, p > .001, \eta^2_p = .015$. Furthermore, a Tukey post hoc comparison of means revealed significant ($p < .001$) mean differences between non-certified staff members and administrators (-7.09), instructional coaches (-9.06), paraprofessionals (-8.06), and teachers (-7.31). In response to this finding, school counselors, transportation workers, nurses, food service employees, technology staff, and others within this non-certified group do not have as strong of a sense of professional efficacy as the other groups. Many of these job responsibilities require work in somewhat of an isolated environment with limited exposure to colleagues and supervisors. As Sanfelippo and Sinanis (2016) have stated, in the absence of knowledge, people tend to make up their own. A conceivable assertion is that a lack of constructive or encouraging feedback contributes to lower personal accomplishment scores. Related to this claim, Lencioni (2007) argues without seeing a connection
between the work and the satisfaction of another person or group of people, an employee will simply not find lasting fulfillment.

Regarding burnout profiles and interventions in the personal accomplishment dimension, scores of 42.45 or lower placed Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog participants in the ineffective category. Of the 327 participants in this district, 132 or 40% scored lower than this threshold. This statistic should be viewed with caution. While 40% of Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog participants did score lower than the 42.45 critical boundary, it must be noted that employees in this district feel they have experienced many worthwhile opportunities several times per week, according to MBI-ES personal accomplishment results. A perfect score in the personal accomplishment dimension is 48, which is important to note when examining the critical boundary number of 42.45. This data suggests professional efficacy is not a top priority issue in the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district. At the time of this dissertation, normative data for the latent burnout profiles does not exist. It is recommended these profiles continue to be employed to establish norms and effective burnout interventions.

Results revealed educators from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district experienced sentiments of personal accomplishment more than a few times a week, suggesting highly consistent feelings of efficacy, competence, and accomplishment within their work. Those who experience effectiveness feel a growing sense of adequacy while contributing to their ability to make a difference (Donohoo, 2018). Furthermore, when educators gain confidence in themselves, others begin to gain confidence in them (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).
Conclusions

Based on the results of this study, it is reasonable to conclude the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework significantly improves levels of burnout in PK-12th grade educators, particularly in the emotional exhaustion dimension. Educators employing the positive psychology strategies outlined in this framework experience lower levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and higher levels of personal accomplishment in comparison to instructors that do not utilize these tactics. Finally, it may be concluded positive psychology practices outlined in this study are one of several variables, including gender, job description, years of service, age, and ethnicity that aid in predicting emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment scores on the MBI-ES.

Recommendations for Future Research

The significance of these findings as well as the scarcity of previous research regarding the use of effective burnout interventions in educational settings suggest the need for many research studies aimed at expanding the understanding of this topic. In this section the researcher concisely describes five studies intended to contribute to these two goals. This list is not intended to exhaust all the potential avenues for research, but it should demonstrate how productive this new line of research could be. Based on the findings of this study, five follow-up studies are recommended.

1. Of the 575 research participants used in this study, 98% are Caucasian educators from a Midwestern state in school districts that achieve at reasonably high levels. This study should be replicated with staff members at additional school districts,
particularly with students in urban settings and with more diversity as measured by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

2. Non-certified staff members from the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district scored lower in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and higher on personal accomplishment than non-certified members from the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog school district. This finding was unexpected and different than all other job categories. A qualitative study should be conducted to learn more about why this job category from the Non-Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog district scored more favorable than all the others.

3. The MBI-ES was used to determine levels of burnout in this study. A similar study should be undertaken in school districts using the Areas of Worklife Survey (AWS). The AWS was created to assess employees' perceptions of work setting qualities that play a role in whether they experience work engagement or burnout. This assessment will allow researchers to understand specifically where the mismatch occurs between employee and the work environment in six areas: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, or values.

4. Additional research is needed to explore the latent burnout profiles (Leiter & Maslach, 2016) discussed in chapters 4 and 5. At the time of this research, norms do not exist for comparisons to be made, nor do profiles exist for participants showing negative scores in two dimensions, such as emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment, or
5. The Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog framework aims to increase workplace engagement through positive psychology principles. While Maslach and Leiter (1997) have argued positive scores on the MBI-ES are equivalent to engagement, when an employee is not burned-out, this doesn’t necessarily mean that he or she is engaged in his or her work. Reversibly, when an employee is low on engagement, this does not mean that he or she is burned-out. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). This study should be replicated using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), which produces three subscales of engagement: vigor, dedication, and absorption, in addition to the data collected from the MBI-ES. This study will include assessments of the full scope of both engagement with the UWES and burnout with the MBI-ES to fully understand the effect of the Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog positive psychology framework.
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APPENDIX A

IRB 20-0167 STUDY APPROVAL

IRB 20-0167 - Study Approval, Expedited 7

Mark Hecimovich <mark.hecimovich@uni.edu>

Wed 3/4/2020 4:33 PM

To: Dan Butler <redones@uni.edu>; Timothy Gilson <tim.gilson@uni.edu>; Anita Gordon <anita.gordon@uni.edu>; Sean Parrish <sean.parrish@uni.edu>; Todd Evans <todd.evans@uni.edu>

IRB 20-0167 - Study Approval, Expedited 7

Dear Mr. Butler and Dr. Gilson

Your study, Impact of Positive Psychology in PK-12 Settings as Measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory, has been approved by the UNI IRB, under 45 CFR 46 Expedited Category 7. You may begin recruitment, data collection, and/or analysis for your project. You are required to adhere to the procedures and study materials approved during this review, as well as to follow IRB policies and procedures for human subjects research posted on the IRB website.

If you need to make changes to your study design, samples, procedures, or study materials, please email the IRB Administrator at anita.gordon@uni.edu to request approval of the changes before they are implemented. Include any revised study materials with edits highlighted. You may expect a response in 2-3 days.

Your study will not require annual review and approval by the IRB. However, you will receive an annual study update request, which will ask if the study is still active and if any problems have arisen. Advisors: If your student has graduated, please reply to the annual update request on the student’s behalf.

If at any time you observe any problems or incidents that are serious and unexpected (e.g., you did not include them in your IRB materials as a potential risk), you must report this to the IRB within 10 days. Examples include unexpected injury or emotional stress for study participants, missteps in the consent process, or breaches of confidentiality. The IRB will advise on any next steps that might be necessary.

If you need a signed approval letter, contact the IRB Administrator and one will be provided for your records.

Best wishes for your project success.

Mark Hecimovich, PhD

IRB Committee

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APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

The following survey is being conducted as part of a study regarding the job-related attitudes of various workers in school districts in the state of Iowa. The purpose of the study is to gather feedback from educators and school personnel regarding perceptions of their job. You will be presented with information relevant to job-related attitudes and asked to answer some questions about it. Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential.

The survey should take you around 5 minutes to complete. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice.

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary, you are 18 years of age, and aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time for any reason. If you would like to contact the Principal Investigator of the study to discuss this research, please e-mail redones@uni.edu.

I consent, begin the survey

I do not consent and do not wish to participate
APPENDIX C

MBI-ES LICENSE AGREEMENT

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www.mindgarden.com

To Whom It May Concern,

The above-named person has made a license purchase from Mind Garden, Inc. and has permission to administer the following copyrighted instrument up to that quantity purchased:


The three sample items only from this instrument as specified below may be included in your thesis or dissertation. Any other use must receive prior written permission from Mind Garden. The entire instrument form may not be included or reproduced at any time in any other published material. Please understand that disclosing more than we have authorized will compromise the integrity and value of the test.

Citation of the instrument must include the applicable copyright statement listed below.

Sample Items:

MBI - Human Services Survey - MBI-HSS:
  I feel emotionally drained from my work.
  I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.
  I don't really care what happens to some recipients.

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MBI - Human Services Survey for Medical Personnel - MBI-HSS (MP):
  I feel emotionally drained from my work.
  I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.
  I don't really care what happens to some patients.

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MBI - Educators Survey - MBI-ES:
  I feel emotionally drained from my work.
  I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.
  I don't really care what happens to some students.

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Cont'd on next page
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**MBI - General Survey - MBI-GS:**

I feel emotionally drained from my work.
In my opinion, I am good at my job.
I doubt the significance of my work.

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**MBI - General Survey for Students - MBI-GS (S):**

I feel emotionally drained by my studies.
In my opinion, I am a good student.
I doubt the significance of my studies.

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Sincerely,

Robert Most
Mind Garden, Inc.
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