

**WORK WELLNESS OF PENTECOSTAL PASTORS IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE**

**Y. Jansen van Vuuren, Hons B. Com (Industrial Psychology)**

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**Supervisor : Dr J. Pienaar**

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## COMMENTS

The reader is reminded of the following:

- The references as well as the editorial style as prescribed by the *Publication Manual (5<sup>th</sup> edition)* of the American Psychological Association (APA) were followed in this dissertation. This practice is in line with the policy of the Programme in Industrial Psychology of the NorthWest University to use APA style in all scientific documents as from January 1999.
- The mini dissertation is submitted in the form of a research article. The editorial style as specified by the *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology* (which agrees largely with the APA style), is used, although the APA guidelines were followed in constructing tables.

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## ABSTRACT

**Title** : Work Wellness of Pentecostal Pastors in the North West Province.

**Key terms** : Burnout, engagement, job stress, validity, reliability, standardisation of measuring instruments, pastors, ministers, ministry, wellness

Literature generally acknowledges that ministers have a demanding job with unique requirements and unclear boundaries between their personal and professional lives. Since 1980, studies have been describing an alarming spread of burnout in the ministry, with three out of four ministers reporting severe stress, causing anguish, worry, bewilderment, anger, depression, fear and alienation. South African literature indicates ministry as a high-risk occupation with regard to burnout. As providers of help, ministers are exposed to demanding work situations, with unique job and client-related stressors that show high correlation with burnout.

Burnout, according to Levert (*et al*, 2000) is a syndrome consisting of three dimensions: these are Exhaustion, Cynicism and lack of Professional Efficacy. Exhaustion refers to the depletion and draining of emotional resources and feelings of being overextended. Cynicism reflects a negative, cynical and callous attitude towards recipients of service, and/or extreme detached responses to aspects pertaining to the job. A lack of professional efficacy refers to the tendency to evaluate aspects negatively with regard to personal accomplishments and competence at work. Burnout in the human service industry is a growing phenomenon.

The objectives of this study were to determine the reliability and validity of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) in the context of ministry, The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), and the Coping Orientations to Problems Experienced questionnaire (COPE), and to develop a measuring instrument to describe occupational stress of Pentecostal pastors in the North West Region of South Africa. A cross-sectional survey design was used. Availability samples ( $n = 100$ ) were taken of qualified and ordained Pentecostal Pastors in the ministry. The Ministry Demands Survey was developed as measuring instrument, indicating internal demands/emotional input and relationship demands/demands with regard to calling, as reliable factors. Coping was described as being either Problem or Emotion-focused.

Health of Pentecostal pastors was predicted by Internal Demands/Emotional Input, Exhaustion and Problem and Emotion-focused Coping. Recommendations for future research were made.

## OPSOMMING

**Titel:** Werksverwante gesondheid van Pinksterpastore in die Noordwes Provinsie

**Sleutelterme :** Uitbranding; begeestering; werkspanning; geldigheid; betroubaarheid ;  
standardisering van meetinstrumente; pastore; predikante; bediening.

Literatuur erken in die algemeen dat predikante 'n uitputtende beroep beoefen, met unieke uitdagings en onduidelike grense tussen hul persoonlike en professionele lewe. Sedert 1980, beskryf verskeie studies die kommerwekkende verhoging van uitbranding in die bediening, met drie uit vier predikante wat ernstige spanning aanmeld, wat pyn, bekommernis, paniek, woede, depressie, vrees and isolasie veroorsaak. Suid Afrikaanse literatuur dui die bediening aan as 'n hoë risiko beroep met betrekking tot uitbranding. As hulpverleners word predikers blootgestel aan bemoeiende beroepsituasies, met unieke werk- en kliëntgesentreerde stressore wat hoë korrelasie met uitbranding toon.

Uitbranding is 'n sindroom wat uit drie dimensies bestaan: Emosionele Uitputting, Sinisme en gebrek aan Professionele Doeltreffendheid. Uitbranding verwys na die afname en dreinering van emosionele hulpbronne, en gevoelens van ooreising. Sinisme reflekteer 'n negatiewe, siniese, en verharde houding teenoor die ontvanger van dienste, en/of ekstreem afsydige reaksies op aspekte wat betrekking het op eie werk. 'n Gebrek aan professionele doeltreffendheid verwys na die neiging om aspekte van persoonlike bekwaamheid negatief te beoordeel. Uitbranding in die diensindustrieë is 'n groeiende verskynsel.

Die doelstellings van hierdie navorsing was om die betroubaarheid en geldigheid van die Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), die Utrecht Work Engagement Skaal (UWES), en die Coping Orientations to Problems Experienced vraelys (COPE) te bepaal, en om 'n meetinstrument te ontwikkel wat die werkverwante stressore van Pinksterpastore in die Noord-Wes Provinsie van Suid Afrika beskryf. 'n Dwarsdeursnee-opname ontwerp is gebruik. Beskikbaarheids steekproewe (n = 100) van gekwalifiseerde pastore binne die bediening, is afgeneem. Die Ministry Demands-opname is ontwikkel as meetinstrument, en het Interne Eise/Emosionele Insette en Verhoudingseise/Eise met betrekking tot Roeping aangedui as betroubare faktore. Coping is beskryf as of Probleem- of Emosie-gefokus.

Gesondheid van Pinksterpastore is voorspel deur Interne Eise/Emosionele Insette, Uitputting en Probleem- en Emosie-gefokusde coping tegnieke. Aanbevelings vir toekomstige navorsing is aan die hand gedoen.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This mini dissertation deals with burnout, engagement, coping and health as it manifests itself in Pentecostal pastors in the North West Province

Chapter 1 focuses on the problem statement, objectives and basic hypothesis as well as the research method.

### **1. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Stress and burnout in ministry have been worldwide realities in the lives of ministers for decades. For centuries, it has been assumed by Western civilisation that Christianity was the faith dominating the various world religions. This is slowly changing and there is a growing tendency towards other belief systems such as Hinduism, Islam, and the New Age movement. The world is progressing towards a global village situation, causing the integration of religions that, in the past, would never have been able to influence one another.

The situation described above adds to the increasing incidence of burnout among pastors and ministers of religion (Janik & Kravitz, 1994). A productive, motivated and healthy minister is an important contributor to the stability and development of any assembly. In South Africa, members of the clergy are challenged by various potential stressors, such as personal criticism, high expectations of ministers and their families on the part of the community, financial stressors, boundary ambiguity and a lack of resources (Swart, 2002).

The stressor that makes the South African context most unique compared to other countries, is the fact that the country is still dealing with a legacy of apartheid, which has influenced the views and beliefs of a vast number of people of different cultures. This situation forces ministers to accommodate people from “outside” their belief systems, whereas in the past, the church and ministers were allowed to function inside their own belief systems, without any influences or challenges from other belief systems.

The expectations placed on the pastor or congregational leader by today’s Assembly member differ from those of previous generations. These individuals have to cope with demands that



arise from having to fulfil various roles. They encounter stresses from a wide range of sources and people. Maintaining spiritual vitality in the midst of the issues of ministry is a definite concern for pastors (Shirey, 2001).

The pastor is often the first person called upon when people feel in need of counselling, or when individuals and families are in a crisis or serious conflict, even when those concerned have in the past not been particularly active church members or congregants (Stümpfer & Bands, 1996). The congregation often has unrealistic expectations such as being ministered to during the early hours of the morning, and the minister sometimes has to deal with highly volatile emotional situations. At the same time he/she also carries a heavy administrative burden (Kellerman, 1991; Roux, 1992).

Apart from social and emotional support, he/she may have to help people to integrate unexplainable aspects of a crisis, a disaster, or sorrow, into the context of their religious beliefs. Furthermore, he/she has to provide moral guidance to followers and even non-followers. In performing such tasks, the pastor may be relentlessly confronted with the value bases of an increasingly secularized society, in which reliance on religious legitimisation has been substantially eroded (Stümpfer & Bands, 1996).

A pastor is often expected to be a highly visible model of faultless behaviour, even in spheres unrelated to their professional lives. He/she (and his/her family) is sometimes seen as the symbol of perfection, a symbol which has to compensate for the shortcomings of churchgoers (Roux, 1992). In a religious context, the expectation is often that the minister should be a Christian *par excellence*, or a super believer, who cannot do anything wrong (Kellerman, 1991). In a psychological context, the minister is often expected to act as an exemplar of happiness, well-being and satisfaction in life. Pastors also experience their occupation as a higher calling and have to confront the stressful interaction of simultaneously living a calling of God, and living up to expectations of the Assembly (Swart, 2002)

Ministers also frequently entertain unrealistic self-expectations and conditional self esteem, and consequently may over-engage themselves (Hatcher & Underwood, 1990). Hatcher and Underwood (1990, p. 192) state that ministers seem to have been “taught, erroneously, to equate self esteem with selfishness”. It seems therefore that these individuals might be prone to neglecting their own personal well-being, while working towards the maintenance of the well-being of others.

In addition to the human service activities, pastors have an administrative role in the church as an organisation, related to committees, budgets, and properties. Kellerman (1991) calls this the “managerial role” pastors have to fulfil. The pastor is often the only full time worker in the congregation and, compared to managers in the ordinary sense, ministers have only volunteer workers (Roux, 1992). Quantitatively the workload is sometimes excessive, perhaps with a seven-day work week, and being on call for the congregation 24 hours a day, with numerous and diverse, even irreconcilable, tasks. The work is also characterised by the emotional demands of some tasks, for example having to work when others can relax (on Sundays and in evenings). Often, the work brings no closure, is repetitive and cyclical, seldom delivers an end product, and offers no feedback channels (Roux, 1992).

Lastly, pastors often don't have social support mechanisms, or someone to confide in (Hatcher & Underwood, 1990). Roux (1992) finds that ministers suffer from loneliness; in relation to colleagues, true fellowship and communion are often absent, and intimate friendships with members of the congregation create problems. Shirey (2001) regards the role of support systems of pastors as an important means of maintaining spiritual well-being and coping with burnout.

Literature generally acknowledges that ministers have a demanding job with unique requirements and unclear boundaries between their personal and professional lives (Swart, 2002). A few studies exist with regard to burnout of ministers in the South African context (Delpont, 1990; Malan, 2000; Malan & De Bruin, 2001; Odendaal, 1984; Smuts, 1988; Swart, 2002; 1999).

Research done regarding ministers in the Dutch Reformed Church indicates that ministers are at serious risk in terms of burnout, and that a wide variety of factors contribute to burnout levels in pastors (Malan, 2000). Research indicates that there are different stressors that have different effects on ministers, and that improper handling of stressful situations leads to increased probability of burnout (Malan, 2000; Swart, 2002). These stressors include work circumstances, opportunities for training, personal wellness and a loss of meaning.

The objective of this research is to investigate the psychometric properties of the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (MBI-GS) (Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach, & Jackson, 1996; Maslach & Jackson, 1986), The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Schaufeli,

Salanova, & Bakker, 2002), and The Coping Orientations to Problems Experienced questionnaire (COPE) (Carver, Scheier & Weintraub, 1989), and to develop an indicator of occupational stress for Pentecostal pastors in the North West Region of South Africa. The final objective is to test a predictive model of Pentecostal pastors' health, using burnout, engagement, job stress, and coping as variables.

### **Burnout, Engagement, Occupational Stress, Coping and Health**

Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998, p. 36) define burnout as “a persistent, negative, work related state of mind in normal individuals that is primarily characterised by exhaustion, which is accompanied by distress, a sense of reduced effectiveness, decreased motivation, and the development of dysfunctional attitudes and behaviours at work”. Burnout has been recognised as a serious threat, particularly for employees who work with people (Van Dierendonck, Schaufeli & Buunk, 1993). It is the end result of consistently unmoderated or unsuccessful attempts at mediating stressors in the environment on the part of the individual (Levert, Lucas & Ortlepp, 2000).

Burnout is viewed as a syndrome consisting of three dimensions, namely exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal efficacy. Research over the past two decades has shown that burnout is not only related to negative outcomes for the individual, including depression, sense of failure, fatigue, and loss of motivation, but also to negative outcomes for the organisation (or in this case, assembly), including increased sickness and absenteeism (Levert et al., 2000).

Two trends recently emerged in burnout research, both of which boil down to a broadening of the traditional concept and scope (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). First, the concept of burnout that was initially closely linked to the human service industries such as ministry, health care, education and social work where people do ‘people’ work of some kind, has been expanded to include all other professions and occupational groups. Second, burnout research seems to shift towards its opposite namely job engagement. Researchers recently extended their interest to the positive pole of employees’ well-being, instead of looking exclusively to the negative pole. Seen from this perspective, burnout is rephrased as erosion of engagement with the job (Schaufeli, Salanova et al., 2002). This development indicates an emerging trend towards a ‘positive psychology’ that focuses on human strengths and optimal

functioning, rather than on weakness and malfunctioning (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Maslach and Leiter (1997) state that engagement is characterised by energy, involvement and efficacy, which are considered the direct opposites of the three burnout dimensions. Employees who are engaged in their jobs have a sense of energetic and effective connection with their job activities, and see themselves as able to deal totally with their job demands. These authors consider burnout and engagement to be opposite poles of a continuum, that is covered by a single instrument.

Schaufeli, Salanova et al. (2002; 12) describe burnout and engagement as opposite concepts that should be measured independently with different instruments. They define engagement as a “positive, fulfilling, work related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption”. Engagement refers to a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular job, event, individual or behaviour. Engagement conceptually consists of the components of vigour, dedication and absorption. *Vigour* refers to high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, as well as a willingness to exert effort in, and persistence even through, difficult situations. *Dedication* is described as a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge. *Absorption* refers to a tendency to be fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulty detaching oneself from work. *Absorption* includes focused attention, a clear mind, mind and body unison, effortless concentration and complete control (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

According to Levert et al. (2000), burned out workers show a lack of commitment, and are less capable of providing adequate services, especially along dimensions of decision-making and initiating involvement with clients. Burned out workers are too depleted to give of themselves in a creative, co-operative fashion (Sammur, 1997). Researchers elsewhere in the world have found that the possible causes of burnout can be classified into organisational, biographical and personality factors. Biographical characteristics that could explain burnout include age, work experience and gender. Burnout is also negatively related to work experience.

Organisational factors adding to burnout are work overload (Landsbergis, 1988), poor support from colleagues (Golembiewski & Munzenrider, 1988) and lack of feedback.

Burnout has been found to be related to job stressors including low levels of perceived control and work overload (Bacharach, Bamberger & Conley, 1991). Personality traits that affect burnout include emotional stability, extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness (Barrick & Mount, 1991).

One of the basic issues in the burnout domain concerns coping, or ways in which an individual can attempt to deal with job stressors to ward off aversive strains (Beehr, Johnson & Nieva, 1995). Lazarus and Folkman (1984, p. 141) define coping as "...constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person". When a successful coping strategy is followed, goals are achieved, professional efficacy is enhanced and a sense of existential significance is fostered (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). By contrast, when a poor coping strategy is adopted, burnout is likely to develop. Burnout is also a self-perpetuating process not only because it impedes the attainment of professional goals, but also because it depletes coping resources.

According to Carver et al. (1989), individuals have consistent coping preferences or dispositions that are employed across a wide range of situations. A study done by Carver *et al* (1989) measured coping dispositions by instructing the participants to think about the ways in which they usually deal with stress. The dispositional version of the Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced (COPE) scale (Carver et al., 1989) is one such inventory.

Empirical studies designed to investigate the relation of coping efforts and burnout (Etzion & Pines, 1986; Pines, Aronson & Karfy, 1981; Shinn, Rosario, Morch & Chestnut, 1984) have yielded inconsistent findings. Shinn et al. (1984) found no relation between coping strategies and burnout, whereas Pines and her colleagues (Etzion & Pines, 1986; Pines et al., 1981) found that active coping efforts such as confronting the problem, were associated with lower levels of burnout. Inactive efforts such as avoidance were associated with higher levels of burnout.

According to Rowe (2000), individuals using proactive strategies are more able to effectively cope with stressors, feel a greater sense of personal accomplishment and are less emotionally exhausted. Shaddock, Hill and Van Limbeek (1998) have found evidence for a link between the practice of religion, having an ideology, and lower burnout scores, while Alsoofi, Al

Heeti and Alwashli (2000) also found significant correlations between ways of coping and burnout. Finally, Etzion (1984) and Leiter and Meechan (1986) report that availability of social support is associated with less burnout.

According to the Person Environment Fit Theory (Frenzy, Chaplan & Harrison, 1982), stress in work settings is attributed to the interaction of an individual with his or her working environment. According to Spielberger and Vagg (1999), a comprehensive assessment of work stress requires an evaluation of the specific aspects of one's job that produce job strain. According to Spielberger and Vagg (1999), stressors can include organisational factors, inherent factors, shortage of resources and stressful working conditions.

Organisational factors which have been shown to contribute to burnout are work overload, role conflict, role ambiguity (Miller, Ellis, Zook & Lyles, 1990), low levels of perceived control and lack of feedback (Bacharach et al, 1991). These factors represent "demands" on employees that are included in most models of burnout. Job resources also have an influence on burnout. Job resources include equipment to perform work, the number of people available to assist in the work, as well as the physical equipment and supporting structures available to perform the work (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998).

The above discussion shows that pastors' adaptation at work could be studied in a positive way by focusing on the concept of engagement. A few studies were found which focused on engagement and its relationship with burnout (Malan, Rothmann & Rothmann, 2002; Redelinghuys & Rothmann, 2004). The UWES is not yet standardised for Pentecostal pastors in South Africa and no information is available on the construct validity, which makes it difficult to place the research results into context.

A review of the available literature indicated that no quantitative research with regard to burnout and engagement of Pentecostal pastors exists. Furthermore, no research has been done in the North West Region of South Africa on the burnout and engagement levels of pastors. Therefore, research regarding the burnout and engagement of Pentecostal pastors in the North West Region of South Africa is relevant. Predicting the health outcomes of Pentecostal pastors by variables such as burnout, engagement, work stressors and coping, can present important points of intervention in managing work wellness of ministers or congregational leaders.





















































































































