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Marketing boundary spanners—especially customer service representatives—are notably susceptible to burnout. The authors define the burnout construct and develop hypotheses to examine if burnout acts as a partial mediator between role stressors and key behavioral and psychological job outcomes. Responses from 377 customer service representatives reveal that burnout levels are high relative to other burnout-prone occupations (e.g., police, nursing) and that burnout has consistent, significant, and dysfunctional effects on their behavioral and psychological outcomes. Moreover, burnout mediates the negative effects of role stressors on job outcomes, whereas the positive effects of role stressors are unmediated.

## Behavioral and Psychological Consequences of Boundary Spanning Burnout for Customer Service Representatives

Evidence linking marketing-oriented boundary spanning positions (e.g., customer service representatives, salespeople) to burnout, the malady of 1990s, has been accumulating with alarming regularity. In a recent review, Cordes and Dougherty (1993, p. 644) note that customer service representatives are susceptible to “moderate to high” levels of burnout because they “are caught in a difficult position when they perceive that client demands cannot or will not be met by the organization.” In a 1992 survey of 1299 full time employees drawn randomly from U.S. firms, the Northwestern Life Insurance company noted that “sales and service workers are more likely to be candidates of burnout.” The American Institute of Stress went as far as to categorically identify a customer service worker as one of the ten most stressful jobs in America (Miller et al. 1988).

Burnout tendencies<sup>1</sup> are defined as a psychological dispo-

sition characterized by emotional exhaustion, lack of personal accomplishment, and a tendency to depersonalize others. These tendencies are evident in occupations that entail (1) a strong interpersonal component and (2) elevated levels of role or job stress (Cordes and Dougherty 1993). Marketing boundary spanners certainly reflect these occupational characteristics. Often marketing programs require that boundary spanners deliver high levels of service quality through personal interaction, care, and concern for customers. Moreover, due to its innovative nature and large role set, boundary spanners are prone to elevated levels of role stress.

In addition, burnout plays an important role in understanding the impact of role stressors on boundary spanner performance, satisfaction, commitment, and turnover. Researchers agree that extreme role stress invariably results in an erosion of performance and job-related attitudes (i.e., “distress”); however, moderate levels of role stress may *increase* performance as stress stimulates individuals to excel (“eustress”; cf. Seyle 1976). The delineation between moderate and excessive role stress is problematic because the notion of moderate stress is subject to individual variability. As such, the measurement of role stress is not sufficient to determine whether it has a positive or negative influence. In contrast, burnout occurs only when stressors overwhelm a person’s coping resources. Consequently, burnout is potentially a more accurate predictor of critical job outcomes than the presence or extent of key role stressors (cf. Bacharach, Bamberger, and Conley 1991). Moreover, burnout provides a theoretically sound approach to differentiate, at the individual level, between positive and negative levels of stress.

We aim to evaluate burnout’s substantive contribution to the study of boundary role stress processes in marketing. Specifically, our aim is threefold: First, we introduce

<sup>1</sup>Although *burnout* often refers to an unpleasant *state* of being (as in “I am burned out”), the scientific literature utilizes the term to represent a *continuum* ranging from “none” to “high” evidence of psychological symptoms associated with the burnout construct. This construct continuum can be likened to *burnout tendencies*. The everyday notion of burnout represents only an extreme position at the high end of the construct continuum. Throughout the article, we utilize the scientific notion of burnout construct and use the terms *burnout* and *burnout tendencies* interchangeably.

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burnout and its related literature to marketing, focusing on the conceptualization and operationalization of the burnout construct. In so doing, we draw clear distinction between role stressors and burnout in terms of their influence on boundary spanner attitudes and behaviors. Second, we posit a set of hypotheses based on the notion that burnout partially mediates the effect of role stressors (e.g., role conflict, ambiguity, overload) on critical behavioral (i.e., performance) and psychological (i.e., satisfaction, turnover intentions, and commitment) job outcomes. In so doing, we develop the theoretical rationale that inclusion of burnout helps clarify the relationship between role stressors and job outcomes. Third, we test the partial mediating thesis by utilizing data from a sample of 377 customer service representatives in telemarketing positions and examine how burnout mediates in role stress processes. We close with implications for theory and managerial practice.

### BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

#### *Burnout and Role Stressors: Definitional and Discriminant Validity Issues*

**Burnout.** Although several approaches for defining burnout exist, the particular approach developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981) has received the most attention. Conceptually, Maslach and Jackson define burnout as a psychological condition or syndrome that is characterized by three distinct but interrelated symptoms or dimensions: (1) emotional exhaustion (EE), (2) reduced personal accomplishment (RPA), and (3) depersonalization (DP). Notably, EE reflects feelings of being depleted of energy and drained of sensation ("exhausted") due to excessive psychological ("emotional") demands. Primarily, EE occurs in "intensive" and "people-oriented" occupations in which job tasks involve charged interpersonal interactions. RPA taps the notion of "learned helplessness" (i.e., when efforts repeatedly fail to produce results) and is characterized by attributions of inefficacy, reduced motivation, and low self-esteem. In extreme burnout, people no longer believe their actions make a difference, and consequently they quit trying. Finally, DP represents the tendency to deindividuate and dehumanize others. In the extreme, DP manifests in a cynical, callous, uncaring, and negative attitude toward others and detached references to clients as objects.

**Role stressors.** In marketing, role stress research has been dominated by three constructs: (1) Role conflict (RC) is the degree of incompatibility of expectations associated with the role; (2) role ambiguity (RA) is the degree to which clear information is lacking about the expectations associated with a role, methods for fulfilling role expectations, and/or consequences of role performance; (3) role overload (RO) exists when role expectations are far greater than the individual's abilities and motivation to perform a task.

**Burnout versus role stressors.** Although embedded in the same nomological network, researchers draw clear distinction between burnout and role stressors, citing two key factors. First, these concepts differ in their influence on various job outcomes. Whereas role stressors are hypothesized to have either a positive (e.g., when stress acts as a stimulus) or negative (e.g., when stress is dysfunctional) influence,

burnout is thought to be consistently dysfunctional. Thus, the relationship between role stressors and job outcomes is described by an inverted U curve in accord with the Yerkes-Dodson (1908) law; in contrast, this relationship for burnout is linear and negative in slope. In this sense, burnout and role stressors have disparate influence on job outcomes.

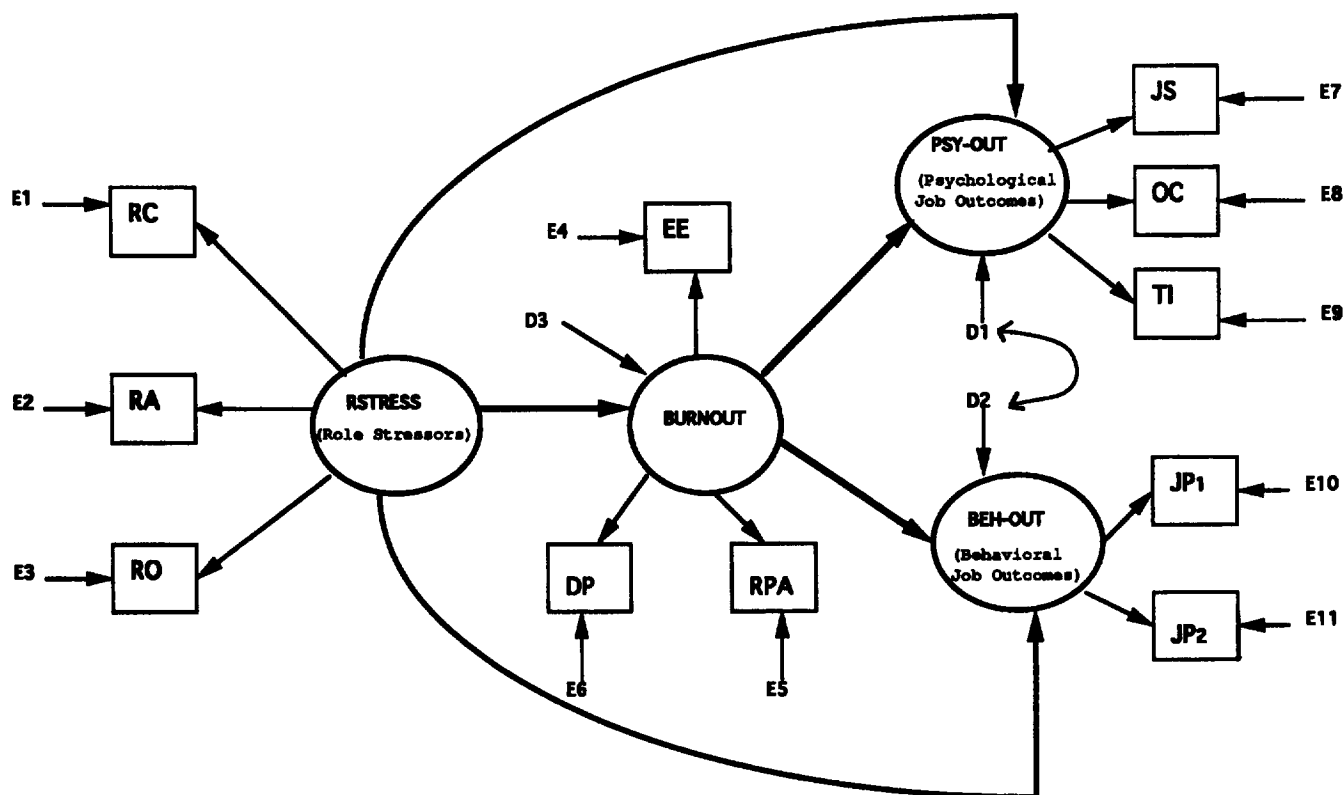
Second, burnout is not a stressor per se; rather it arises from the cumulative impact of multiple role stressors (Hunsaker 1986). That is, we recognize that in a particular role, (1) several sources of stress are often present (e.g., conflict, ambiguity, overload), (2) and though individually these role stressors may not be dysfunctional, (3) the cumulative effect of these stressors can overwhelm the individual's coping resources, thereby resulting in burnout. This conceptualization of burnout is consistent with the notion that even in an environment of moderate to low role stressors, chronic stress may significantly erode a person's ability to cope and deplete his or her reservoir of support. In this sense, burnout and role stressors differ in their etiology. The preceding should not be taken to imply that role stressors and burnout are unrelated concepts. Rather, we posit that these concepts are distinct constructs and related through a nomological net best represented by a partial mediation thesis.

#### *Burnout in Role Stress Models: The Partial Mediation Thesis*

Much previous role stress research in marketing is based on the proposition of DIRECT EFFECTS, whereby role stressors are hypothesized as direct antecedents of job outcomes, including job satisfaction (JS), job performance (JP), organizational commitment (OC), and turnover intentions (TI). This proposition is rooted in literatures of role theory, expectancy theory, and job stress. However, results from this extensive research have failed to uncover consistent and strong direct effects (Brown and Peterson 1993; Churchill et al. 1985). In Churchill and colleague's (1985) meta-analysis, the shared variance between all role stressors combined and JP was only 14%. Moreover, Brown and Peterson (1993) revealed wide variability in the DIRECT EFFECTS of role stressors. For example, the 95% confidence intervals for the DIRECT relationships between RC and JS was  $\{-.04, -.80\}$  and for RA and JS it was  $\{-.15, -.74\}$ . This wide variability is indicative of a misspecified DIRECT EFFECT. Thus, although there is little doubt that role stressors significantly affect the psychological attitudes and behavioral outcomes of boundary spanners, the evidence lacks consistency and stability.

Consistent with the emerging view of burnout in occupational psychology (Bacharach, Bamberger, and Conley 1991), we propose that burnout is (1) an important partial mediator of the effects of role stressors on job outcomes and (2) a more potent predictor of various job outcomes than one or more role stressors. This is not to imply that the direct effect of role stressors on job outcomes is always insignificant; rather, the proposition is that the direct effect of role stressors on job outcomes after controlling for burnout is mostly marginal compared with its "before" effects (i.e., before partialling the mediated effect of burnout). In this sense, burnout partially mediates the role stressors to job outcomes relationship. We refer to this as the PARTIAL MEDIATION thesis (see Figure 1).

Figure 1  
THE ESTIMATED PARTIAL MEDIATING THESIS FOR THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ROLE STRESSORS,  
BURNOUT, AND JOB OUTCOMES



*Theoretical rationale and empirical support.* The thesis of PARTIAL MEDIATION is based on two key arguments. First, as noted previously, burnout is thought to represent the cumulative effect of several role stressors in the job environment (Hunsaker 1986). Thus, when many role stressors simultaneously impinge on the boundary spanner, it is plausible that though individual stressors operate at a moderate to low level, the cumulative effect is significantly dysfunctional. In such situations, role stressors are expected to be only moderately or weakly related to job outcomes, but the pathway mediated by burnout is likely to be strong.

Second, researchers have begun to recognize that in and of itself the magnitude of role stressors is not as critical as its magnitude vis-à-vis the individual's coping resources (Jackson, Schwab, and Schuler 1986). This distinction is important because some role stress may help marketers creatively manage role demands and possibly enhance productivity (Seyle 1976; Singh 1993). As such, eliminating role stress potentially inhibits creativity and productivity. However, when the coping resources of the individual are exceeded, role stress becomes unequivocally dysfunctional, resulting in burnout. Thus burnout clarifies the theoretical relationship between role stressors and job outcomes by offering an unambiguous approach for assessing the dysfunctional effects of a stressful role environment.

Although the PARTIAL MEDIATION thesis has not been subjected to a direct empirical investigation, recent studies in occupational psychology offer indirect support. For example, Leiter and Maslach (1988) show that EE partially mediates the influence of RC and unpleasant supervisor contacts on OC. Likewise, Bacharach, Bamberger, and Conley (1991) found that burnout partially mediates the impact of RC and RO on JS. We build on this evolving work by (1) developing the theoretical rationale for the partial mediation thesis, (2) proposing specific hypotheses, and (3) subjecting these hypotheses to empirical investigation.

Our framework does not examine the complex relationships among each of the role stressors, burnout dimensions, and individual job outcomes. Rather, we propose hypotheses at the level of higher (second)-order constructs—that is, we examine the nomological net of relationships that involves second-order constructs of role stressors (RSTRESS), burnout (BURNOUT) and job outcomes (OUT) (discussed subsequently). We believe that this higher-order analysis is more parsimonious and perhaps more appropriate given the current state of the literature.

#### *Relationship Between Role Stressors and Burnout*

The second-order construct of RSTRESS is composed of three stressors—RC, RA, and RO, each of which increases burnout. RC arises when boundary spanners are expected to

satisfy incompatible demands from multiple role partners. Organizational (e.g., inconsistent policies) and interpersonal (e.g., incongruous expectations of boss and customers) sources can contribute to role conflict. When boundary spanners are unable to reconcile incongruent expectations, role theory suggests that high levels of distress, frustration, and anxiety are generated. This in turn results in emotionally charged role environments wherein high levels of effort are required to perform tasks. If such an environment persists over multiple role episodes, boundary spanners may experience burnout (cf. Maslach and Jackson 1984).

When boundary spanners face tasks that are unique and require innovative solutions, RA arises. In such complex task environments, it is difficult to provide clear policies and guidelines for all possible situations and contingencies. Thus, some RA is inherent in boundary spanning roles. In addition, boundary spanners oftentimes either do not have sufficient resources or are not empowered to implement satisfactory solutions. This is likely to render boundary spanning tasks ambiguous. Finally, because their performance may not be clearly defined or judged (e.g., "quality" service), boundary spanners may lack clarity about performance expectations. Roles without clear goals and direction contribute to burnout because performing under chronic RA conditions requires excessive levels of energy and mental resources (Maslach 1982). This drain on energy, combined with a prolonged state of emotional excitement, are conducive to feelings of burnout (Jackson, Schwab, and Schuler 1986).

Boundary spanning positions in marketing are susceptible to RO because the flow of tasks in boundary spanning positions is often uncontrollable (e.g., high traffic periods) and they must interact with large numbers of customers, as well as many internal employees and supervisors. Consequently, in many instances, demands exceed the abilities and resources of the individual. Because chronic overload can be emotionally draining, RO can result in burnout.

On the basis of the preceding, we propose the following hypothesis for empirical examination:

H<sub>1</sub>: The higher the level of role stressors, because of RC, RA, and/or RO, the greater the burnout.

#### *Relationship Between Burnout and Job Outcomes*

We conceptualize job outcomes as composed of two distinct second-order constructs: (1) psychological and (2) behavioral outcomes. Psychological outcomes (PSY-OUT) represent job attitudes that capture the notion of psychological approach or avoidance toward the job and include such attitudes as satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intentions. In contrast, behavioral outcomes (BEH-OUT) reflect performance outcomes of boundary spanners. These outcomes are not strongly related and differ in their relationships with role stressors (Brown and Peterson 1993).

*Burnout and psychological outcomes.* We examine three components of psychological outcomes related to burnout—two representing attitudes of the "approach" variety, namely JS and OC, and the third reflecting an "avoidance" orientation, namely TI.

The notion that JS is an important consequence of burnout is firmly established in the literature (Maslach 1982;

Wolpin, Burke, and Greenglass 1991). This view is based on two theoretical arguments. First, because psychological burnout is the outcome of an appraisal process by which an individual evaluates the demands vis-à-vis his or her resources, it is posited that the outcome of this appraisal should affect an individual's psychological well-being on the job, including JS. Second, because both are affective responses, it is hypothesized that burnout feelings should be related to JS.

Burnout is related negatively to OC because boundary spanners caught in a burnout syndrome generally view the organization in adversarial terms and tend to withdraw psychologically from it (Maslach 1982). Thus, emotionally exhausted boundary spanners who view others in a detached and callous manner and do not believe their job provides them with a sense of accomplishment are likely to be less committed to their organization.

In addition to its impact on psychological withdrawal from work, chronic burnout can also result in withdrawal from the organization (Maslach 1982). Initially, this withdrawal may take the form of absenteeism, physical isolation, and extended breaks, as the worker avoids contact with organizational members and customers. Eventually, if burnout persists, the worker will likely seek permanent avoidance by leaving the position, the firm, or even the career.

On the basis of the preceding, we propose the following hypothesis:

H<sub>2</sub>: The greater the burnout, the lower the boundary spanner's perceived psychological outcomes, reflecting lower JS, OC, and/or higher TI.

*Burnout and behavioral outcomes.* Burnout affects behavioral outcomes, such as JP, because it reduces the energy at the disposal of the boundary spanner and leads to reduced efforts at work. Burnout feelings also entrap boundary spanners in a vicious spiral in which they are less prone to seek and obtain support and, as a result, continue to perform ineffectively. Finally, burnout affects JP directly because the individual perceives little or no control over the job situation, and his or her confidence in tackling work-related problems declines. Thus, we propose:

H<sub>3</sub>: The higher the burnout, the less effective a boundary spanner is likely to be in her or his JP, resulting in lower behavioral outcomes.

#### *Relationship Between Role Stressors and Job Outcomes*

In contrast to the prevailing position of DIRECT EFFECTS, we hypothesize a PARTIAL MEDIATION thesis. Specifically, the hypothesis for PARTIAL MEDIATION asserts that the direct, nonmediated "after" effect (i.e., after accounting for burnout) of role stressors on job outcomes will be small in magnitude compared with the "before" effect (i.e., before controlling for burnout). This assertion is based on two theoretical arguments. First, as noted previously, role stressors can have both positive and negative effects on job outcomes. The burnout literature suggests that only the negative ("distress") aspect of role stressors contributes to burnout. In contrast, the positive effects of role stressors ("eustress") should not be mediated by burnout, supporting a direct link between role stressors and job outcomes. Sec-

ond, some of the negative impact of role stressors on job outcomes may persist as direct effects when role stressors are not of sufficient magnitude to foster burnout. That is, as described previously, burnout occurs only when role stressors are of sufficient magnitude to collectively overwhelm the resources of the individual. Role stressors below the threshold of burnout will not follow a mediated pathway, yet may influence job outcomes directly.

On the basis of the preceding, we propose the following hypotheses for empirical examination:

- H<sub>4</sub>: After controlling for burnout, the direct, unmediated effect of role stressors on psychological outcomes will be relatively small or insignificant.
- H<sub>5</sub>: After controlling for burnout, the direct, unmediated effect of role stressors on behavioral outcomes will be relatively small or insignificant.

### RESEARCH DESIGN

#### *Research Setting and Constraints*

We chose a sample of customer service representatives in telemarketing positions from a large, multinational *Fortune* 500 firm. Customer service representatives are considered to have one of the most stressful professions in the United States (Miller et al. 1988). We reasoned that if the burnout construct is not relevant in such an environment, it is less likely to prove useful in studying other burnout prone environments. Furthermore, using a single firm offers the advantage of controlling for contextual effects and minimizes possible contingencies common in cross-industrial research. The disadvantage, of course, is that the results are less generalizable.

Nevertheless, the study sample represents a job environment that is not atypical of many boundary spanning positions. Specifically, the customer service representatives were responsible for handling and rectifying billing problems and selling programs. Each representative performed a customer-contact role by screening and addressing complaints and inquiries. In addition, customer service representatives were expected to meet daily quotas and were randomly monitored for service quality standards. Common to much service work, this work setting parallels many characteristics of an environment in which burnout could occur. Typically, customer service representatives indicated that they work long hours, lack autonomy, bear responsibility without authority, have insufficient resources and guidelines to handle problems, face demanding quotas, and often endure manager apathy. Also, they typically complained of being in a "dead-end job."

Interestingly, it became clear that the study of burnout poses additional constraints in designing a field study. Our focus groups revealed that focal boundary spanners were likely to perceive detailed questionnaires as "burdensome" and "unwanted" paperwork. In a sense, a survey that was not adapted to the boundary spanners' stressful environment may run the risk of being ignored at best and appear as an additional role stressor at worst. Thus, to obtain high-quality data, we balanced the need for brevity with that of multi-item scales by using either a short form of a scale or parsimonious versions of extant measures.

#### *Sample*

We sought participation from service managers of randomly selected medium (10–25 representatives) to large (26–50 representatives) service centers throughout the United States. In all, 18 service managers agreed to participate. A total of 770 customer service representatives were sent a packet containing their chief executive officer's letter endorsing the study, a survey instrument, and a return envelope to be sent directly to the researchers. After three weeks, managers were sent a second wave of survey-packets. All participants were promised anonymity.

Overall, 377 surveys were returned, for a response rate of about 50%. However, 26 received responses were not usable, yielding a usable rate of 45.5%. Fully 69% of the responding sample was female. Most had completed high school or some college (median = 1–3 years of college), are relatively young (median = 31–35 years), and earn less than \$20,000 per year. Over 47% of service representatives have been with the firm for two years or less (median = 3–5 years). Service managers indicated that our sample was representative of their employees.

#### *Measures*

*Role stressors.* Role stressors were assessed by three separate first-order measures. RC and RA were measured by three items drawn from House, Rizzo, and Lirtzman's (1970) work. RO involved five items from Beehr, Walsh, and Taber's (1976) scale. In addition, an overall item was used to obtain a "global" assessment for each role stressor. All responses were obtained on a five-point "strongly disagree"–"strongly agree" scale. The alpha reliabilities for the multi-item RC, RA, and RO scales were .68, .73, and .77, respectively.

*Boundary spanning burnout.* The burnout dimensions were measured by 24 items (i.e., 8 items per dimension) drawn from the scale developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981) (see Appendix A).<sup>2</sup> Consistent with Lee and Ashforth (1993), the items were modified to include statements about customers, boss, coworkers, and top management rather than nonspecific "recipients" (e.g., "I feel indifferent toward some of my recipients" became "I feel indifferent toward some of my customers"). Separate items were included for the four role members because in focus groups boundary spanners indicated that (1) these were salient role members with whom they interacted frequently, (2) they present distinct demands and pressures, and (3) burnout tendencies vary with role members.

The factor structure for burnout items corresponding to each role member was identical. In each case, a three-di-

<sup>2</sup>The specific scale developed by Maslach and Jackson is referred to as the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). The MBI is a copyrighted scale and may be used only with the permission of its authors or by contacting Consulting Psychologists Press, 577 College Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94306, USA. Originally, the MBI scale assessed both the frequency and intensity of burnout feelings. However, this convention has been generally discontinued. Researchers typically assess the three burnout dimensions using the MBI items and a response scale provided by Golembiewski, Munzenrider, and Stevenson (1988), which utilizes a Likert-type scale anchored by "very much unlike me" and "very much like me." The responses from the preceding scale are highly correlated with MBI's frequency ( $\rho = .89$ ) and intensity ( $\rho = .88$ ) scales.

Table 1  
MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS AND CORRELATIONS FOR THE CONSTRUCTS UTILIZED IN THE STUDY

| Construct <sup>a</sup>                          | Mean | Standard Deviation | Correlations      |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                  |                  |      |                  |
|---|------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------|------------------|
|   |      |                    | EE                | RPA               | DP                | RC                | RA                | RO                | JS               | OC               | TF   | JP <sub>1</sub>  |
| <i>Burnout Dimensions (BURNOUT)<sup>b</sup></i> |      |                    |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                  |                  |      |                  |
| Emotional exhaustion (EE)                       | 2.71 | .87                |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                  |                  |      |                  |
| Reduced personal accomplishment (RPA)           | 2.34 | .82                | .30 <sup>d</sup>  |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                  |                  |      |                  |
| Depersonalization (DP)                          | 2.64 | .92                | .52 <sup>d</sup>  | .30 <sup>d</sup>  |                   |                   |                   |                   |                  |                  |      |                  |
| <i>Role Stressors (RSTRESS)</i>                 |      |                    |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                  |                  |      |                  |
| Role conflict (RC)                              | 3.24 | .95                | .36 <sup>d</sup>  | .11               | .28 <sup>d</sup>  |                   |                   |                   |                  |                  |      |                  |
| Role ambiguity (RA)                             | 2.61 | .82                | .29 <sup>d</sup>  | .23 <sup>d</sup>  | .20 <sup>d</sup>  | .40 <sup>d</sup>  |                   |                   |                  |                  |      |                  |
| Role overload (RO)                              | 2.95 | 1.05               | .37 <sup>d</sup>  | .06               | .25 <sup>d</sup>  | .40 <sup>d</sup>  | .20 <sup>d</sup>  |                   |                  |                  |      |                  |
| <i>Psychological Outcomes (PSY-OUT)</i>         |      |                    |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                  |                  |      |                  |
| Job satisfaction (JS)                           | 3.45 | .90                | -.36 <sup>d</sup> | -.22 <sup>d</sup> | -.43 <sup>d</sup> | -.18 <sup>d</sup> | -.26 <sup>d</sup> | -.14 <sup>e</sup> |                  |                  |      |                  |
| Organizational commitment (OC)                  | 3.12 | .76                | -.53 <sup>d</sup> | -.24 <sup>d</sup> | -.55 <sup>d</sup> | -.38 <sup>d</sup> | -.30 <sup>d</sup> | -.39 <sup>d</sup> | .55 <sup>d</sup> |                  |      |                  |
| Turnover intentions (TI) <sup>c</sup>           | 2.86 | 1.20               | -.38 <sup>d</sup> | -.10              | -.40 <sup>d</sup> | -.30 <sup>d</sup> | -.14 <sup>e</sup> | -.25 <sup>d</sup> | .49 <sup>d</sup> | .54 <sup>d</sup> |      |                  |
| <i>Behavioral Outcomes (BEH-OUT)</i>            |      |                    |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                  |                  |      |                  |
| Job performance <sub>1</sub>                    | 4.39 | .64                | -.13              | -.35 <sup>d</sup> | -.04              | .05               | -.10              | .01               | .10              | .08              | -.12 |                  |
| Job performance <sub>2</sub>                    | 4.36 | .59                | -.18 <sup>d</sup> | -.42 <sup>d</sup> | -.04              | .05               | -.09              | .09               | .11              | .07              | .08  | .77 <sup>d</sup> |

<sup>a</sup>The items corresponding to each construct/dimension were summed and averaged in order to obtain a summated index. The summary statistics are reported for this index.

<sup>b</sup>The BURNOUT dimensions were measured by utilizing a 6-point scale. All other constructs were measured by a 5-point scale. The composite reliabilities for the EE, RPA, and DP dimensions of BURNOUT are .80, .81, and .82, respectively.

<sup>c</sup>The measure of Turnover Intentions was reverse scored (i.e., lower numbers mean higher turnover) so that its correlations with other dimensions of PSY-OUT would be in the same direction.

<sup>d</sup> $p < .01$ .

<sup>e</sup> $p < .05$ .

mensional structure corresponding to first-order dimensions of EE, RPA, and DP provided an acceptable fit to the data with fit statistics ranging from  $\chi^2 = 7.4$ ,  $df = 6$ ,  $p > .28$  (for boss-related items) to  $\chi^2 = 2.6$ ,  $df = 6$ ,  $p > .86$  (for coworker-related items). Furthermore, the three dimensions accounted for more than 67% of the variance in each role member items. Thus, items corresponding to each dimension were summed across all role members to obtain a composite score for EE, RPA, and DP. The intercorrelations between composites range from .30 (RPA-DP) to .52 (EE-DP).

**Job outcomes.** Psychological outcomes were measured by three separate first-order constructs. JS was operationalized as a 26-item scale adapted from Churchill, Ford, and Walker's (1985) study that has been frequently used in marketing. The alpha reliability of this scale was estimated as .92. OC was operationalized by use of a 6-item version of a scale from Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979). The scale achieved acceptable reliability ( $\alpha = .79$ ). Finally, TI was assessed by a three-item measure based on Donnelly and Ivancevich (1975). In addition, this measure has been shown in several studies to be a consistent predictor of actual turnover. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for this measure was .85. Behavioral outcomes were measured by a self-rating, 6-item measure of JP drawn from Dubinsky and Mattson (1979). Boundary spanners rated themselves in comparison with their coworkers on a 5-point scale (ranging from "bottom 10%" to "top 10%") on six different dimensions (quantity, ability, potential, customer relations, time management and planning, and knowledge;  $\alpha = .84$ ).

To examine psychological and behavioral second-order dimensions, all outcomes measures were pooled together and analyzed by iterative principal axis factor analysis using SPSS<sup>®</sup>. For this analysis, two composites were utilized for each measure of job outcomes (JS, OC, TI, and JP) by ran-

domly splitting the corresponding items into two groups. Thus, eight composites were developed (two composites for each of the four measures of job outcomes). Factor analysis of these eight composites revealed two eigenvalues larger than 1 (3.62 and 1.86) that explained 68% of the variance. In line with our expectations, the oblique rotated factor pattern indicated that measures of JS, OC, and TI loaded together, whereas JP measures loaded on a separate factor (factor intercorrelation = .07). Descriptive statistics and correlations for the study constructs are in Table 1.

#### Method of Analysis

All analyses involved the method of Latent Variable Structural Equations modeling using the statistical software EQS (Bentler 1990). Specifically, we test the hypotheses by using a competing model analysis such that two substantive models are estimated and compared. The first model, referred to as the DIRECT EFFECTS model, involves estimating the effects of role stressors on psychological and behavioral outcomes. The second model, the PARTIAL MEDIATION model, represents the posited hypotheses and involves estimating the effects of (1) role stressors on burnout, (2) role stressors on psychological and behavioral outcomes, and (3) burnout on psychological and behavioral outcomes. The hypothesized mediating effect of burnout is supported if, compared with the DIRECT EFFECTS model, the PARTIAL MEDIATION model yields (1) higher explained variances (i.e.,  $R^2$ ), (2) a significant relationship between role stressors on burnout, (3) substantially diminished or insignificant effects of role stressors on psychological and behavioral outcomes, and (4) highly significant effects for burnout on psychological and behavioral outcomes. If the PARTIAL MEDIATION is supported, then the model coefficients can be tested.

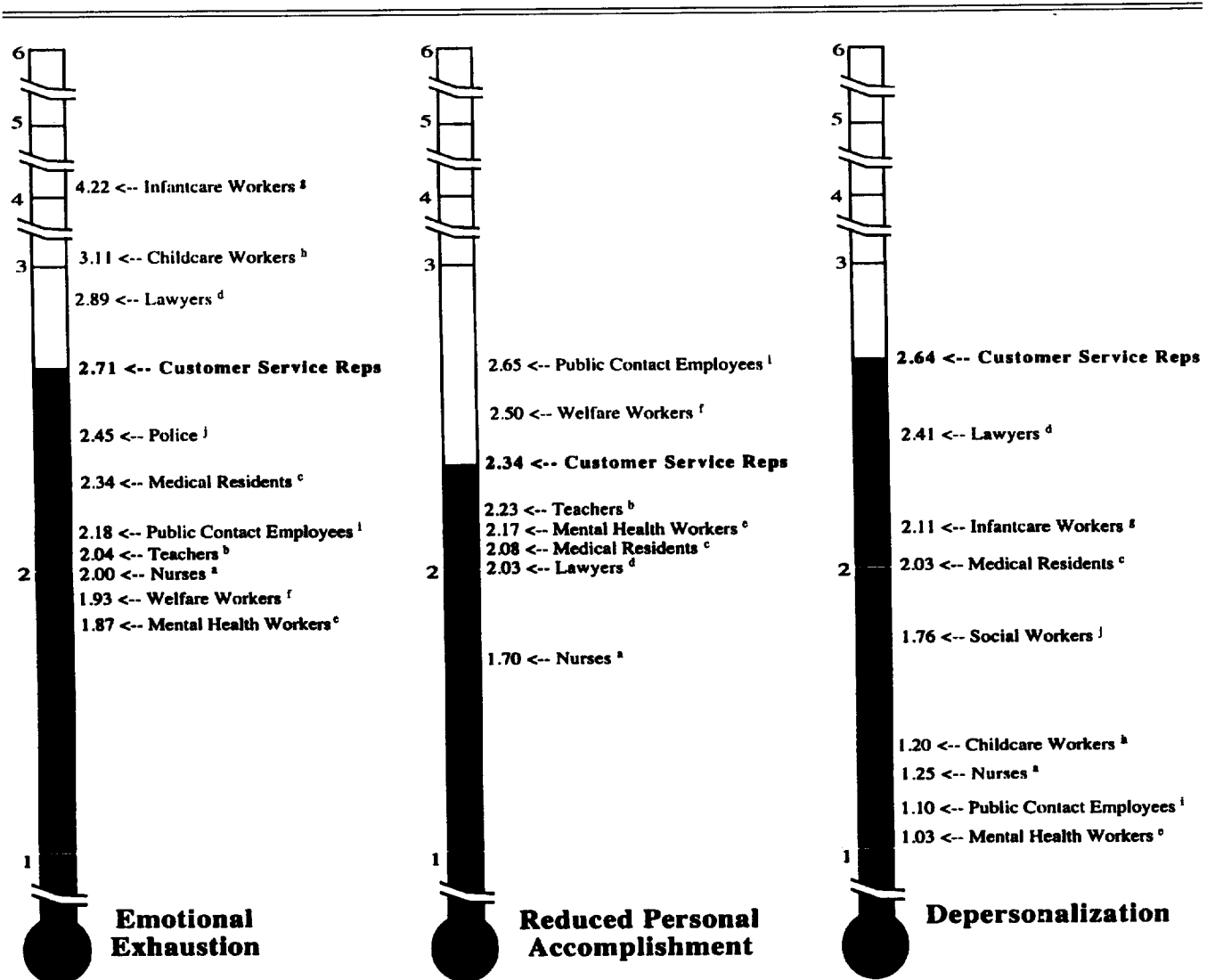
FINDINGS

*Burnout: Magnitude and Discriminant Validity*

The estimated means and standard deviations of burnout tendencies among our sample of customer service representatives are in the top panel of Table 1 (under BURNOUT). Figure 2 provides a comparison of means obtained in our study with those reported in the literature for other professions. Only studies that utilized the MBI were included in

Figure 2. In terms of EE, Figure 2 reveals that customer service representatives reported higher level of burnout tendencies than police, medical residents, and welfare, social, and mental health workers. However, customer service representatives' EE levels were lower than that of lawyers and child- and infant-care workers. Likewise, for RPA, customer service representatives indicate that their burnout tendencies parallel those reported for the social and federal public contact workers and are among the highest across various pro-

Figure 2  
MEAN VALUES FOR BURNOUT DIMENSIONS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES  
IN COMPARISON TO OTHER PROFESSIONS



<sup>a</sup>Leiter and Maslach (1988)  
<sup>b</sup>Jackson, Schwab, and Schuler (1986).  
<sup>c</sup>Rafferty and colleagues (1986).  
<sup>d</sup>Jackson, Turner, and Brief (1987).  
<sup>e</sup>Leiter (1990).  
<sup>f</sup>Leiter (1991).  
<sup>g</sup>Lee and Ashforth (1993).  
<sup>h</sup>Fuqua and Couture (1986).  
<sup>i</sup>Maslach and Jackson (1985).  
<sup>j</sup>Gaines and Jermier (1983).

fessions. Finally, in terms of DP, the mean values obtained for our customer service representatives sample are the highest relative to those for other professions. Only lawyers approach the magnitude of DP tendencies reported by customer service representatives.

Table 1 also depicts the correlations between the three burnout dimensions and various role stressors and job outcomes. Without exception, the burnout dimensions correlate positively with role stressors and negatively with job outcomes, as expected. Moreover, the correlations between the first-order dimensions of burnout and role stressors range from .06 to .37 (average = .24); thus, the shared variance between these concepts (i.e., redundancy) is no more than 13% (average <6%). This supports the view that burnout and role stressors are empirically distinct constructs. The correlations between the first-order dimensions of burnout and psychological outcomes range from -.10 to -.55 (average = -.35) such that the redundancy does not exceed 31% (average <13%). Also, the average correlation between burnout and psychological outcomes is less than the average correlation among the three psychological outcomes (-.35 versus .53). A similar pattern holds for the relationship between the first-order dimensions of burnout and behavioral outcomes. This suggests that burnout is a distinct construct, different from other psychological and behavioral job outcomes.

#### Test of Partial Mediating Thesis

**Analysis of competing models.** Table 2 summarizes the results from fitting the DIRECT EFFECTS and PARTIAL MEDIATION models to customer service representatives' data. Several inferences can be drawn from Table 2. First, in terms of fit statistics, both models appear to be reasonable fits to the data. These models yields fit indices (i.e., NFI, NNFI, and CFI) that approach or exceed .90 and residuals (i.e., AOSR) that tend to approach .05, the value recommended for acceptable fits. Although the  $\chi^2$  statistic is significant for both models (at  $p = .05$ ), problems with this test statistic for large sample sizes ( $N > 300$ ) are well documented. Second, in contrast to the first inference, the two competing models differ significantly in terms of the variance they account for in job outcomes. Compared with the DIRECT EFFECTS model, the PARTIAL MEDIATION model represents a twofold increase in  $R^2$  for psychological outcomes (.72 versus .35) and an over tenfold increase in  $R^2$  for behavioral outcomes (.14 versus .01). Admittedly, both models are less effective in explaining behavioral outcomes of customer service representatives. Third, the PARTIAL MEDIATION model shows evidence of a discernible mediating effect. Specifically, the effect of role stressors on burnout is highly significant ( $t = 7.8, p < .01$ ), and so are the effects of burnout on psychological ( $t = 6.2, p < .01$ ) and behavioral outcomes ( $t = 3.9, p < .01$ ). Finally, compared with the DIRECT EFFECTS model, the PARTIAL MEDIATION model significantly attenuates the effects of role stressors on psychological outcomes (-.59,  $p < .01$  to -.12,  $p > .10$ ). Surprisingly, the effect of role stressors on behavioral outcomes shifts from insignificance in the DIRECT EFFECTS model (.05,  $p > .10$ ) to significance in the positive direction under the PARTIAL MEDIATION model (.35,  $p < .01$ ) (discussed subsequently). Taken together, the preceding evidence suggests that the PARTIAL MEDIATION model is a significant

Table 2  
RESULTS FROM TESTING THE PARTIAL MEDIATING THESIS: A  
SECOND-ORDER MODEL OF BURNOUT AS A MEDIATOR  
BETWEEN ROLE STRESSORS AND JOB OUTCOMES

| Parameter <sup>c</sup>                        | DIRECT EFFECTS<br>Model <sup>a</sup> | PARTIAL MEDIATION<br>Model <sup>b</sup> |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Structural Coefficients</i>                |                                      |   |
| RSTRESS → PSY-OUT                             | -.59 (7.1)                           | -.12 (-1.2)                             |
| RSTRESS → BEH-OUT                             | .05 (.8)                             | .35 (3.0)                               |
| RSTRESS → BURNOUT                             | —                                    | .64 (7.8)                               |
| BURNOUT → PSY-OUT                             | —                                    | -.77 (-6.2)                             |
| BURNOUT → BEH-OUT                             | —                                    | -.46 (-3.9)                             |
| <i>Measurement Coefficients</i>               |                                      |   |
| RSTRESS → RC                                  | .78 (11.8)                           | .75 (11.7)                              |
| RSTRESS → RA                                  | .50 (7.9)                            | .50 (7.7)                               |
| RSTRESS → RO                                  | .56 (8.9)                            | .58 (9.1)                               |
| BURNOUT → EE                                  | —                                    | .75 <sup>e</sup>                        |
| BURNOUT → RPA                                 | —                                    | .42 (6.6)                               |
| BURNOUT → DP                                  | —                                    | .69 (10.5)                              |
| PSY-OUT → JS                                  | .66 <sup>e</sup>                     | .65 <sup>e</sup>                        |
| PSY-OUT → OC                                  | .85 (10.1)                           | .86 (11.0)                              |
| PSY-OUT → TI                                  | .65 <sup>f</sup> (9.5)               | .65 <sup>f</sup> (9.4)                  |
| BEH-OUT → JP <sub>1</sub>                     | .78 <sup>e</sup>                     | .77 <sup>e</sup>                        |
| BEH-OUT → JP <sub>2</sub>                     | .99 (21.6)                           | .99 (21.1)                              |
| <i>Goodness of Fit Statistics<sup>d</sup></i> |                                      |   |
| $\chi^2$                                      | 71.0                                 | 146.0                                   |
| df  | 17                                   | 38                                      |
| NFI   | .91                                  | .91                                     |
| NNFI  | .89                                  | .90                                     |
| CFI   | .93                                  | .93                                     |
| AOSR  | .06                                  | .05                                     |
| $R^2$ for PSY-OUT                             | .35                                  | .72                                     |
| $R^2$ for BEH-OUT                             | .01                                  | .14                                     |

<sup>a</sup>The DIRECT EFFECTS model includes only the direct effects role stressors → psychological outcomes and role stressors → behavioral outcomes.

<sup>b</sup>The PARTIAL MEDIATION model includes two direct effects, role stressors → psychological outcomes and role stressors → behavioral outcomes, and two mediated effects, role stressors → burnout → psychological outcomes and role stressors → burnout → behavioral outcomes.

<sup>c</sup>The parameter estimates are standardized coefficients obtained from iteratively reweighted generalized least squares solution using the software EQS. The t-statistic for each estimate is in parenthesis.

<sup>d</sup>NFI = Normed-Fit-Index, NNFI = Non-Normed-Fit-Index, CFI is Comparative-Fit-Index, and AOSR = the Average-Off-Diagonal-Standardized-Residual (cf. Bentler 1990).

<sup>e</sup>The unstandardized coefficient corresponding to this parameter was set to equal 1.00 to fix the scale of the latent variable.

<sup>f</sup>The turnover intentions measure (TI) was reverse scored so that its loading on PSY-OUT is in the same direction as JS and OC.

improvement over a DIRECT EFFECTS model and substantiates the partial mediating role of burnout.

**Test of hypotheses.** Before testing model coefficients, it is useful to inspect the measurement coefficients of the PARTIAL MEDIATION model in Table 2. Note that the factor loadings of RC, RA, and RO are significant and range from .50 ( $t = 9.1, p < .01$ ) to .75 ( $t = 11.7, p < .01$ ). Consistent with this, the composite reliability of the second-order role stressors construct is .65. Likewise, the factor loadings of burnout dimensions are significant (ranging from .42 for RPA to .75 for EE,  $p < .01$ ) and composite reliability of the second-order burnout construct is .66. The outcome constructs, psychological and behavioral outcomes, also depict



factor loadings that exceed .65 ( $p < .01$ ) and composite reliabilities that are .77 and .87 respectively.

Consistent with  $H_1$ , Table 2 reveals that role stressors have a significant, positive effect on BURNOUT with a standardized coefficient of .64 ( $t = 7.8, p < .001$ ). Thus, as boundary spanners perceive greater role stressors, they appear to reflect more burnout tendencies. In turn, BURNOUT results in a substantively significant but negative effect on psychological outcomes as the path coefficient is estimated at  $-.77$  ( $t = -6.2, p < .01$ ). This offers strong support for  $H_2$ . Moreover, in accord with  $H_3$ , burnout has a significant, negative influence on behavioral outcomes with a standardized coefficient of  $-.46$  ( $t = -3.9, p < .01$ ). This suggests that, with increasing burnout tendencies, boundary spanners depict greater dysfunctional effects in both their psychological attitudes toward and behavioral responses on the job. However, the impact of burnout on psychological outcomes is about one and a half times as large as its effect on behavioral outcomes.

The partial, unmediated effects of RSTRESS on job outcomes, after controlling BURNOUT, are also provided in Table 2. Note that the unmediated effect of role stressors on psychological outcomes is insignificant because the standardized coefficient is only estimated at  $-.12$  ( $t = 1.2, p > .10$ ). This offers support for  $H_4$ . However, the unmediated effects of role stressors on behavioral outcomes is significant and positive because the path coefficient is estimated as .35 ( $t = 3.0, p < .001$ ). Because of its significance and the direction of effect, this result is contrary to  $H_5$ . Note that it is only the partial, unmediated effect of role stressors on behavioral outcomes that is positive; the total effect of role stressors on behavioral outcomes is indeed insignificant.<sup>3</sup> Evidently, the overall effect of role stressors on behavioral outcomes appears to be cancelled by two countervailing effects—a positive, eustress-type effect (i.e., RSTRESS  $\rightarrow$  BEH-OUT), and a negative, distress-type effect (i.e., RSTRESS  $\rightarrow$  BURNOUT  $\rightarrow$  BEH-OUT). More importantly, utilizing burnout as a mediator helps uncover the positive, eustress-type effects of role stressors.

### DISCUSSION

We aimed to explore burnout's relevance for marketing-oriented boundary spanners and examine its substantive contribution to the study of role stress processes. As an initial study of boundary spanner burnout, however, certain limitations should be noted. The findings are based on a specific sample of boundary spanners (i.e., customer service representatives) working in a single firm. Further studies with different samples and across firms and industries are needed for generalizable evidence. Moreover, the relevance of the burnout construct for various marketing-oriented boundary spanners warrants further examination. This may require psychometric assessment and, perhaps, further de-

<sup>3</sup>The total effect of RSTRESS on BEH-OUT is a sum of two components: (1) an unmediated, direct effect that is estimated at .35 and (2) a mediated, indirect effect as RSTRESS effects BURNOUT (coeff. = .64) and BURNOUT effects BEH-OUT (coeff. =  $-.46$ ). The indirect effect is the product of the two involved coefficients and equals  $-.29$ . Consequently, the total effect of RSTRESS on BEH-OUT is .06. Note that this total effect equals the corresponding effect in the DIRECT EFFECTS model, within rounding error.

velopment of the burnout construct. Nevertheless, our research offers insights heretofore unavailable in marketing's role stress research by yielding demonstrable evidence of burnout's (1) relevance for customer service representatives, (2) consistently dysfunctional consequences for customer service representatives' behavioral and psychological outcomes, and (3) partial mediating effect in role stress models.

### Burnout's Relevance

Our comparison of burnout means across various professions underscores burnout's relevance for marketing. In some cases, burnout mean scores are comparable or higher for customer service representatives than samples from occupations considered prototypical of burnout and where its consequences are well documented and researched (e.g., police, medical residents, social/mental health workers). Customer service representatives apparently experience substantial amount of EE and a sense of RPA on their job. Notably, customer service representatives' tendencies to depersonalize interpersonal relationships are among the highest across professions, suggesting that these boundary spanners likely detach themselves emotionally from the people (i.e., customers) that they are expected to serve. This sense of detachment may underlie customer service representatives' feelings of RPA and may contribute to service quality problems. In addition, this lends credence to the popular press claims that some marketing boundary spanners are prime candidates for burnout (Miller et al. 1988). Taken together, it appears that the magnitude of burnout tendencies among customer service representatives are high enough to warrant the serious attention of marketing researchers and concerned managers.

### Burnout's Consequences

Our results offer clear and compelling evidence of burnout's consequences for customer service representatives. Specifically, burnout has a (1) significant, negative impact on behavioral outcomes or performance of customer service representatives ( $\beta = -.46$ ), (2) large, negative impact on the psychological outcomes of customer service representatives ( $\beta = -.77$ ), and (3) significantly stronger effect on behavioral and psychological outcomes relative to the direct effects of role stressors ( $-.46$  versus  $.05$ ;  $-.77$  versus  $-.59$ ). Thus, the inclusion of burnout in a role stress model yields nontrivial increases in explained variance for behavioral ( $\Delta R^2 = .13$ ) and psychological outcomes ( $\Delta R^2 = .37$ ). These results parallel findings from occupational psychology literature with samples of "helping" professionals (Lee and Ashforth 1990; Leiter and Maslach 1988).

### Burnout's Mediating Role

Our study offers evidence that substantiates the hypothesized theoretical arguments regarding burnout's mediation in role stress processes. In accord with  $H_1$ , role stressors have a significant, positive relationship with burnout ( $\beta = .64$ ). In addition, burnout has significant dysfunctional impact on psychological and behavioral job outcomes, supporting  $H_2$  and  $H_3$ , respectively. Taken together, it is apparent that role stressors affect burnout tendencies of customer service representatives and, in turn, burnout affects job out-

comes. Moreover, in accord with  $H_4$ , the direct effect of role stressors on psychological outcomes reduces from substantial ( $\beta = -.59$ ) to insignificant ( $\beta = -.12$ ) when the mediating effects of burnout are included. We appear to have sufficient evidence to conclude that burnout is a critical mediator in role stress processes, and as such it clarifies the link between role stressors and job outcomes. Thus, its omission from further role stress research is not justifiable.

The effects involving behavioral outcomes yield the most interesting results. Controlling for burnout, the effect of role stressors on behavioral outcomes shifts from insignificant ( $\beta = .05$ ) to a significant, positive effect ( $\beta = .35$ ). We interpret this shift in light of the Yerkes-Dodson law that posits that role stressors and performance are related by an inverted-U relationship. We reason that, in a given random sample, customer service representatives are probably located randomly at different points of this U-shaped curve. As such, at the aggregate level, the empirical estimation of the linear relationship between role stressors and performance yields a flat line with an insignificant slope coefficient. However, after controlling for burnout, customer service representatives are likely located only along the upward sloping part of the U-shaped curve, because customer service representatives who are located along the downward sloping curve likely evidence burnout tendencies and, hence, are partialled out. For this reason, the empirical estimation of the linear relationship between role stressors and behavioral outcomes, after controlling for burnout, yields a positive coefficient. In other words, the effect of role stressors on behavioral outcomes for one part of the range (positive slope) is inconsistent with second part (negative slope). This inconsistency is likely a major contributing factor in wide variability of previous role stress findings. Because burnout has a consistent, negative effect on behavioral outcomes, controlling for burnout helps uncover the eustress inherent in role stressors.

Overall, the preceding clear and consistent evidence substantiates the theoretical arguments hypothesized to account for burnout's impact in role stress processes. Specifically, these arguments involve three propositions. First, burnout is thought to be a stronger predictor of job outcomes than role stressors because of its "accumulative" capacity; that is, burnout presents the combined influence of several role stressors. As such, the combined effect is likely to be more significant than its individual components. Second, burnout's effect is thought to be more consistent than that of role stressors because it considers the coping resources of the individual boundary spanner. Because burnout tendencies appear when role stressors exceed the individual's coping resources, burnout is thought to be consistently dysfunctional; in contrast, role stressors can be either dysfunctional (distress) or functional (eustress) (cf. Singh 1993). Third, burnout is more closely associated with job outcomes because it is a psychological condition attained as an outcome of a stress appraisal process (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). Because job outcomes, especially psychological outcomes, are also consequences of other appraisal processes, it is expected that these outcome states be related.

### MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

In describing the burnout's consequences, Pines, Aronson, and Kafry (1981, p. 3-4) observe:

Tragically, burnout impacts precisely those individuals who had once been among the most idealistic and enthusiastic. We have found, over and over again, that in order to burnout a person needs to have been on fire at one time. It follows, then, that one of the great costs of burnout is the diminution of the effective service of the best people in a given profession. Accordingly, everyone is the poorer for the existence of this phenomenon.

Indeed, the costs of burnout are high for the individual and organization alike. The results of this study imply that managers' focus on identifying and possibly eliminating all role stressors in boundary spanning positions is probably misguided. Instead, they should view burnout as the critical variable of interest that unequivocally captures the dysfunctional aspects of a stressful role environment. This strategy is likely to preserve the motivational elements in a role that come from "solving" challenging problems (and may be perceived as stressful) while ensuring that boundary spanners do not burn out as chronic problems overwhelm the resources of the individual. Moreover, because it captures the individual's net affective reaction to the job arising from all chronic and negative aspects of the job (Maslach and Jackson 1981), burnout serves as a unique quality-of-life-on-the-job indicator. Managers can initially utilize benchmark studies to determine tolerable limits of burnout tendencies that are specific to their personnel, industry, and job environment.

### CONCLUSION

For over two decades, researchers have studied various role stressors and their direct impact on psychological and behavioral outcomes of boundary spanners. This direct, aggregate analysis using global measures has invariably revealed that role stressors have dysfunctional effects resulting in a conventional wisdom that boundary spanning roles ideally must be free of role stressors to maintain optimal performance and psychological well-being. Although at the aggregate, global level, this conventional wisdom is probably undisputed, a contrary view is emerging at the margins as researchers begin to recognize the energizing and functional aspects of certain role stressors (cf. Singh 1993). By developing and testing the partial mediation thesis, our study contributes to this growing literature. Our findings offer the following new directions into understanding role stress processes:

- It clarifies the conceptual and etiological distinction between burnout and role stressors. Thus, to the extent that researchers use *burnout* and *role stressors* interchangeably, such practice is theoretically and empirically not justified.
- It indicates that burnout can account for variability inherent in individual vulnerability to role stressors by controlling for excessive role stress and, consequently, uncovering the eustress inherent in role stressors. As such, it appears useful to include burnout in further research of role stress processes.

- It opens new areas of research that provide answers to why and how role stressors affect job outcomes. Explicit in the partial mediating framework is the view that role stressors result in burnout, and in turn negative job outcomes, only when employee's coping mechanisms are overwhelmed. Thus a research program can be initiated that examines the role of social support, organizational factors (e.g., autonomy), and coping behaviors in burnout processes.
- It offers insights for burnout management. Evidently, eliminating role stress not only is a formidable task, but it may also be counterproductive because it purges jobs of motivational elements that come from accomplishing

challenging tasks. The burnout literature shifts focus away from role stressors and emphasizes the significance of coping resources.

The more we know about the etiology of burnout, and the processes by which role stressors positively and negatively affect job outcomes, the greater the likelihood of creating boundary roles that balance the need for retaining the e-stress inherent in role stressors and reducing burnout among employees. As Maslach (1982, p. 40) explains, "the promise inherent in understanding burnout is the possibility of doing something about it."

#### Appendix A THE OPERATIONAL MEASURE UTILIZED TO MEASURE BURNOUT IN CSRS

| Dimension                       | Role Member    | Item Description <sup>a</sup>   |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---|
| Depersonalization               | Customer       | I feel I treat some customers as if they were impersonal "objects."<br>I feel indifferent toward some of my customers.                                      |
|                                 | Boss           | I feel a lack of personal concern for my supervisor.<br>I feel I'm becoming more hardened toward my supervisor.   |
|                                 | Coworkers      | I feel I have become callous toward my coworkers.<br>I feel insensitive toward my coworkers.  |
|                                 | Top Management | I feel I am becoming less sympathetic toward top management.<br>I feel alienated from top management.   |
| Reduced Personal Accomplishment | Customer       | I feel I perform effectively to meet the needs of my customers. <sup>b</sup><br>I feel effective in solving the problems of my customers. <sup>b</sup>      |
|                                 | Boss           | I feel I am an important asset to my supervisor. <sup>b</sup><br>I feel my supervisor values my contribution to the firm. <sup>b</sup>                      |
|                                 | Coworkers      | I feel my coworkers truly value my assistance. <sup>b</sup><br>I feel I am a positive influence on my coworkers. <sup>b</sup>                               |
|                                 | Top Management | I feel I satisfy many of the demands set by top management. <sup>b</sup><br>I feel I make a positive contribution toward top management goals. <sup>b</sup> |
| Emotional Exhaustion            | Customer       | Working with customers is really a strain for me.<br>I feel I am working too hard for my customers.   |
|                                 | Boss           | Working with my boss directly puts too much stress on me.<br>I feel emotionally drained by the pressure my boss puts on me.                                 |
|                                 | Coworkers      | I feel frustrated because of working directly with coworkers.<br>I feel I work too hard trying to satisfy coworkers.  |
|                                 | Top Management | I feel dismayed by the actions of top management.<br>I feel burned out from trying to meet top management's expectations.                                   |

<sup>a</sup>For all items, the respondents were asked to evaluate the extent to which each statement accurately describes how they feel about their job. The responses were obtained by utilizing a 6-point Likert-type scale with response categories as follows: (1) Is very much UNLIKE me, (2) Is UNLIKE me, (3) Is somewhat UNLIKE me, (4) Is somewhat LIKE me, (5) Is LIKE me, (6) Is very much LIKE me.

<sup>b</sup>These items were reverse scored.

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