

TEACHER BURNOUT: A REVIEW OF FACTORS AND
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT STRATEGIES
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Abstract

This review of literature analyzes the factors that lead to teacher burnout including increased demands, unrealistic expectations, and lack of administrative or collaborative peer support. The roles of the mediating factors such as principal support, physical activity, classroom management, social support, psychological support, and teacher preparation programs are discussed. The focus of the analysis is on efforts that principals can make to decrease the impact of burnout within a school community. Recommendations include areas of future research and further training provided to principals due to their proximity to the problem and potential to affect change.

Chapter One: Introduction

Background

According to de Heus & Diekstra (1999), although occupational burnout was first diagnosed among nurses and other healthcare professionals, some researchers now believe burnout strikes teachers (especially at the secondary level) even more than nurses, mental-health professionals, physical-health professionals, and domestic and personal healthcare professionals. For example, Jesus & Lens (2005) argued teachers lack motivation due to burnout more so than any other professional group (Jesus & Lens, 2005).

The global effects of burnout have been shown to produce one of two results. First, burnout is perceived as the number one reason for the increased rate of premature retirement of teachers due to psychosomatic disorders and symptoms (Bauer et al., 2005). More still abandon the career early; as many as one quarter of beginning educators in the United States leave the field within three years due to high levels of dissatisfaction (Martin & al., 2011) and approximately half leave within the first five years (Pas et al., 2012). The financial costs associated have been conservatively estimated at thousands of dollars per teacher and millions of dollars per year that could be otherwise spent within the classroom (Sass et al., 2011). Yet many burned-out teachers do not retire because of their inability to use their skills in other marketable fields and the sense of defeat evoked by a loss of status (Buunk et al., 2007). With teachers demonstrating burnout behaviors remaining in the classroom, much is unknown as to their effectiveness as leaders of students and colleagues. Burned-out teachers who remain in the classroom influence the learning environment and have harmful effects on students, especially those with mental health issues (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). They become less effective and

impact the morale of their colleagues and students. Affected teachers are also less likely to refer students for special education services (Egyed & Short, 2006).

Although there are common characteristics among burnout sufferers, burnout has been known to occur within both large and small schools and to develop among experienced and inexperienced staffs. It can be the result of administrative or political demands, social conditions within the school's outlying community, and even the personal characteristics of a teacher. Its effects are demoralizing and physically harmful for the teachers impacted, as well as expensive for the schools affected and devastating for the students whose quality of education may be decreased.

Statement of the Problem

As educational leaders, administrators need to possess a strong understanding of this phenomenon and its impact. Principals need to recognize the development of burnout and be prepared to aid staff members with the condition to overcome burnout and succeed within the classroom. They also need to implement strategies and programs to discourage its development altogether. A satisfied, healthier staff is more motivated and productive, and the improvement it fosters benefits the overall climate. Therefore, it is essential for any future to be fully informed about burnout.

Research exists on environmental factors affecting the development of burnout such as training, principal support, and workload. Research is also being done of personal variables such as age, experience, and emotion-regulation ability. Worldwide, programs that stress student empowerment, teacher preparation, and relationship development are being implemented to decrease the impact of burnout. Still, few American schools have yet to develop comprehensive strategies to combat the issue. What are the best methods for schools to decrease the

development of burnout and rehabilitate teachers who suffer? More specifically, how prevalent is burnout in our rural school setting, and how should administrators work to combat its development and effects?

Research Question

The focus of this research was to review research on the causes of teacher burnout and determine the best methods principals and other administrators can employ to prevent and cope with its effects. The research question guiding the review was “What are the most effective methods for reducing teacher burnout?”

Chapter II: Review of Literature

Much of the research concerning burnout centers around the interaction of the three psychological attributes that define burnout and their impact on the likelihood of teachers to leave the profession due to the depression associated with it. As the study of the phenomenon has evolved, however, more research is being done on coping with teacher burnout and developing methods to prevent its development altogether. This paper will briefly discuss the definition of burnout, the causes and effects, the interactions of the psychological attributes associated and then focus more extensively on coping and prevention strategies. The guiding research question concerning the most effective ways of preventing teacher burnout will be further examined in respect to the role administrative support ~~support~~ plays in fostering relationships, providing training and support for classroom management, and advocating for the mental health of staff members.

Classifications Associated with Burnout

The term “burnout” was first used in 1974 by German psychologist Herbert J. Freudenberger in his book *Burnout: the High Cost of High Achievement*. The condition occurs within normally healthy individuals working in fields that stress a high sense of ideals along with intense interactions with others. Burnout is characterized by three psychological attributes: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment. These characteristics of burnout are most often measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey, a 22-item scale developed specifically for the condition. Today, the measure of coping capacity questionnaire, MECCA, may also be employed in some research. Emotional exhaustion refers to the draining of emotional resources caused by interactions. Depersonalization refers to cynicism and callousness towards students, parents, and other staff

members. Reduced personal accomplishment is characterized by the feeling that one's work no longer makes a difference. Although all three must be present for burnout to be perceived as diagnosable, new findings have strengthened the premise that emotional exhaustion is the most important piece in determining whether burnout becomes depression (Steinhardt et al., 2011).

Causes of Teacher Burnout

There are commonalities among sufferers of teacher burnout. Burnout occurs most often in middle school or high school teachers under forty who are idealistic and prone to follow external events instead of internal cues (Farber, 2000). The condition is also more common in underfunded large urban schools without administrative or social support structures. Burnout has been shown to be more common among women, especially individuals who are divorced or employed part-time (Bauer et al., 2006). Another factor influencing its development is the structure of the school; 54% of teachers in a traditional school reportedly would not choose to work in education again, while only 24% of teachers in a progressive reform school responded the same way (Cheek et al., 2003). There also have been higher levels of job dissatisfaction linked to larger schools and those with a greater proportion of students eligible for free and reduced lunch programs (Shen et al., 2012). Further, teachers with higher intrinsic motivation and more ability to regulate their duties show lower levels of burnout, while amotivated teachers facing introjected and external regulation show higher levels of burnout (Fernet et al., 2008). Lower levels of efficacy in student engagement within teachers are also an important predictors of burn out development and an increased likelihood to leave the profession (Martin et al., 2011).

Often teacher dissatisfaction leading to burnout can be the result of administrative demands and performance pressures. A common complaint is that teachers can only be successful if their students achieve on specific indexes of performance (Farber, 2000). Teachers

are often burdened with new state-driven curriculum and standardized testing. In fact, teachers have even reported they are unwilling to take time off to handle stress due to fears they might hurt their students' chances on the next standardized tests (Richards, 2012). This load can be exacerbated by more controlling administrators. Put simply, when administrators take a controlling stance on teachers to improve test score outcomes, teachers are more likely to take a less effective and more controlling instructional approach with students thus drawing more demands from a controlling administrator (Pelletier & Sharp, 2009). The results help neither teacher nor students. Perceived administrative support, however, has been shown to be the most important predictor of teachers' job satisfaction (Tickle et al., 2011). Overwhelmingly, teachers feel stressed by factors beyond their control (Richards, 2012).

There are a number of personal characteristics that affect the development of burnout. Teachers are especially vulnerable as they perceive a great deal of self-worth from their profession, and these demands challenge their sense of identity (Parker et al., 2011). Loss of status and sense of defeat correlate positively with teacher burnout, especially on the secondary level, due to societal demands. In particular, men seem to be more sensitive to low status and develop burnout (Buunk et al., 2007). However, both genders are affected when a sense of defeat generated by attempting to motivate students who lack interest in the subject matter leaves teachers feeling ineffective (Schrier, 2008). In addition, student discipline is considered the critical aspect for teachers' exhaustion (Klusman et al., 2008) and the primary stress factor for teachers (Bauer, 2006). Finally, teachers are more burned out when faced with greater numbers of students with behavior problems and learning disabilities (Fejgin et al., 2005).

Effects of Teacher Burnout

Teachers with lower job satisfaction have more somatic symptoms, more anxiety and worry, and more severe depression (Ho & Au, 2006). One study conducted in Spain sought to measure the physiological responses to burnout during a typical teachers' workday. The study found burnout sufferers experienced high systolic blood pressure and low levels of salivary cortisol at the beginning of the day, and the heart rate among burnout sufferers presented higher at the end of the day. These results suggest burnout can lead to dysregulation of cardiovascular activity and alterations in mood (Moya-Albiol et al., 2010).

Teachers with burnout are also less likely to trust their own decision-making abilities. One surprising effect of teacher burnout can be a drop in the referrals of students for special education services because teachers with a high level of burnout are more likely to be uncertain about whether to refer a student for services. These teachers may be experiencing high levels of "internal conflict" and may believe that neither a mainstream classroom nor a special education setting will be an effective placement for a problem child (Egyed & Short, 2006).

Interaction of Psychological Attributes

Martin, Sass, and Schmidt (2011) conducted a descriptive study to examine the mediating effects of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment on chronic work stress and depressive symptoms. In this study 267 teachers were surveyed on demographic characteristics and asked to self-report on measures of perceived work stress, burnout, and depressive symptoms. The participants were primarily female (75%) with an average of 18 years of experience, and 75% were high teachers compared to 13% middle school and 12% elementary school. 86% were White, 8% were Hispanic, and 3% were African – American, The subjects were recruited through a mass mailing to award-winning teachers

available through an alumni association database at a large Texas institution, and respondents were entered into a raffle to receive prizes valued at less than \$100. A modified version of the Teacher Stress Inventory, the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey, and the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale were used.

The results of this survey were examined through indirect and direct path analysis which revealed several correlations. First, each of the burnout subscales (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment) was significantly correlated with each other, and the strongest area of correlation occurred between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. The control variable related to demographics were not strongly related to chronic work stress, burnout, or depressive symptoms; but small correlations were found with more experiences and award-winning teachers reporting less burnout, and high school teachers reporting greater depressive symptoms and reduced personal accomplishment.

Based upon their work, Martin, Sass, and Schmidt (2011) suggested that high levels of work stress can lead to depression and strengthens the idea that emotional exhaustion in the main component of burnout. More importantly, the trio argued that enhanced support could mediate the impact of chronic stress on emotional exhaustion, thus mediating the development of burnout. The study results and conclusions need to be put into context. First, the pool of respondents for this research is heavily weighted in favor of experienced and successful teachers due to the fact that the initial invitations were sent to award-winners collected from alumni association records. Second, the self-reporting nature of this information and the raffle incentive to participate may have skewed the responses. Still, as mentioned, this study is very important because the suggestion of the importance of support.

The decrease in the perception of personal accomplishment and emotional exhaustion associated with burnout has also been researched in the context of teacher efficacy and the manner in which it changes over time, especially in light of increased governmental and cultural demands for improved instruction. John Hopkins Center for the Prevention of Youth Violence explored four groups of factors: teacher demographics, teacher experience, teacher perceptions of the school environment, and school-level contextual factors. Using a multilevel, longitudinal model the research team analyzed the intercept and growth of teacher efficacy and burnout. The study was conducted on 600 Maryland public elementary teachers from 31 different schools over a three year period, and the data was collected using a five-item measure of Teacher Efficacy related to handling behavior problems, the Emotional Exhaustion component of the Maslach Burnout Inventory, Teacher Preparedness items taken from the National Center for Education Statistics School and Staffing Survey, and the Organizational Health Inventory. Staff participation was completely voluntary and the response rate was 76% on the initial survey, 75% the next survey, and 85% on the final survey. Respondents were given an ink pen as a reward for participation. The initial pool of participants was 849, but complete data was only available for analysis on 600 teachers due to the passage of time (Pas et al., 2012).

The John Hopkins study confirmed several commonly-held ideas, while suggesting interesting conclusions. First, teachers who reported higher rates of teacher efficacy initially also reported lower levels of burnout implying that those who are more prepared feel more confident about their effectiveness. Surprisingly, years of experience, graduate degrees, and perceptions of parent and student involvement, were not significantly related to growth of teacher efficacy, yet parent and student involvement was significantly related to burnout. High ratings of collegial leadership were associated with higher efficacy and lower burnout initially, teacher affiliation

was not related to teacher efficacy but rather to the growth of burnout, and high ratings on the Academic Emphasis scale corresponded to greater efficacy but not burnout (Pas et al., 2012).

The study concluded that although both teacher efficacy and burnout grow over time, burnout grows at a faster rate, and even those teachers who reported low levels initially, are susceptible to burnout (Pas et al., 2012).. The results do have to be examined closely, however, because of the high level of drop off from the initial number of participants to the group that was analyzed at the close of the research. Could those drop-offs have left the profession due to high levels of dissatisfaction? Nonetheless, the research points to the need for interventions, even among those initially report low levels of burnout.

The Impact of Administrators

Past research has cited four main predictors of teacher job satisfaction and teacher intent to stay in teaching: teacher salary satisfaction, student behavior, teaching experience, and administrative support. Tickle, Chang, and Kim (2011) conducted a path analysis based on the 2003-04 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics where the investigated the relationship between these four factors and their impact on job satisfaction and intent to stay in teaching. The SASS is a stratified probability proportionate sample which uses a Likert-scale paired with statements for response. Only the data from regular, full-time public school teachers was reviewed and the weighted sample size was 32,271,936.

Most of the results of this study supported previous research: teaching experience, student behavior, perceived administrative support and teachers' satisfaction with their salary are all significant predictors of teachers' job satisfaction and intent to stay in teaching. Perceived administrative support was also shown to be a mediate the effects of teaching experience,

perceived student behavior, and teacher satisfaction with salary as predicted. In other words, Tickle et al.'s (2011) findings suggest that administrative support is the strongest predictor of job satisfaction and intent to stay which challenges previous works that suggested salary and student behavior were more important. The size of this study and the reflective manner in which it was conducted warrant serious consideration of this conclusion and reflection on the powerful impact of administrators on staff.

Coping Strategies

One important survey that highlighted the need for the implementation of better coping strategies was conducted online nationwide via SurveyMonkey during September and October of 2009. Participation was voluntary, and the pool of teachers initially began with those taking part in online masters programs at two California universities and those who accessed it through Edjoin.org, a California job-search site. Teachers who took part were encouraged to invite colleagues to participate, and ultimately 1201 K-12 teachers nationwide responded. Approximately one-half of the participants were K-5 teachers, and approximately one-half taught in grades 6-12. Ninety percent taught in a public school setting, and their ages were fairly evenly distributed for under 30 to over 50. Seven hundred forty-two of the participants were from California, so the data produced was segregated into California Teachers and Non-California Teachers. Thirty-seven percent of the California described the socioeconomic status of their school as "low", while 19 percent of teachers from other schools did so (Richards, 2012).

The top six manifestations of stress for both groups were identified as follows: physical exhaustion, loss of idealism and enthusiasm, sense of being overwhelmed and diminished teacher efficacy, negative impact on personal relationships, worry about job security, and psychosomatic symptoms like headaches, stomach aches, and high blood pressure. Interestingly, the top five

coping strategies cited by both groups were identical and can be fostered without much additional funding by administrators and school districts. They include having good friends and family, a good sense of humor, times of solitude, the belief that stress is a problem to be solved, and a positive attitude. Although physical activity was found to be a powerful stress buster, exercise was not indicated as a top coping mechanism, but few argue the potential in brings (Richards, 2012). Ideally, its encouragement could bring another strategy to an administrator trying to promote positive health within a school.

Chapter III: Results and Analysis

Examination of this current literature on teacher burnout yields very clear results which center around the need for more support of the teachers in our classrooms. Pivotal in this support is the role of the principal, the lead administrator, as the facilitator of effective classroom management practices, keeper of the school climate, and advocate for the mental health needs of his/her staff. Administrative support has been clearly identified as the most important predictor on teachers' job satisfaction (Tickle et al., 2011). Further, university administrative leadership programs need to do more to prepare future leaders with approaches that are more supportive of teachers (Sass et al., 2011).

The Principal and the Impact of Direct Support

As chief administrators, principals play a major role in the prevention of burnout through their attention and interactions with staff. In fact, higher perceived principal support in pedagogical matters is associated with higher teacher engagement, often viewed as the opposite of burnout (Klusmann et al., 2008). Positive correlations have been found among positive affect, personal accomplishment, and principal support, thus decreasing the likelihood of the development of burnout (Brackett et al., 2010; Tickle, 2011). Indirectly, principals have a significant impact on the level of peer influence in a building through the development of mission and goals and the fostering of a trusting environment (Supovitz et al., 2010). Principals' practices have also been found to be significantly related to a beginning teacher's intention to remain in the profession (Devos et al. 2012). Both principal and peer influences are positively associated with instructional improvement and change.

On the other hand, principals' actions can also increase stress levels and the likelihood of burnout. For example, principals who preach a collaborative structure but manipulate leadership

decisions push teacher leaders on governing bodies to burn out. This situation provides too much risk and exposure to real criticism while feelings of powerlessness persist (Cameron, 2005).

Principals play a major role in creating the social working environment; and teacher outcomes are strongly associated with those that are based on motivation and effort instead of comparison and competition (Devos et al., 2012) Additionally, controlling administrators who place unreasonable demands on their staff members foster burnout-ready conditions (Pelletier & Sharp, 2009).

The Principal and Classroom Management

Student misbehavior is one of the most important predictors of burnout because disruptive behavior leads to emotional exhaustion (Klusmann et al., 2008.) Consequently, the manner in which a teacher manages a classroom becomes crucial in its study. Teachers with more training in behavior management and higher levels of classroom confidence report lower levels of burnout (Martin et al. 2012). Specifically, behavior management training may increase self-efficacy by equipping teachers with a wider range of tools and boosting self-esteem (Egyed & Short, 2006). Overall, teachers with higher job satisfaction were better at classroom management and experienced less misbehavior (Ho & Au, 2006, Martin et al., 2012). Further, teachers who experienced more administrative support in their management decisions regarding student behavior were more likely to report higher job satisfaction (Tickle et al., 2011).

The role of the principal in the school setting revolves around the idea of maintaining a safe and productive learning atmosphere where expectations are clear and consequences are fair and appropriate. As principal, one needs to demand good classroom management from one's staff and provide assistance and reinforcement when teachers' hold deficiencies in this area.

Results of Martin's 2012 study of 631 certified teachers in the southwestern United States clearly

demonstrated that "...the relationships between teacher efficacy in student engagement and student behavior stressors and personal accomplishment are fully mediated by instructional management," (pg. 555). Those teachers who excel in instructional management are more likely to have higher job satisfaction. Further, administrative support has been shown to mediate the effects of student behavior, among other variables (Tickle et al., 2011; Steinhardt et al., 2011).

To improve student behavior, one approach is a children's rights perspective stressing rights, respect, and responsibility through whole school reform. When students were able to play a meaningful role in school rules and policies, more prosocial behaviors occurred and fewer discipline problems resulted. Not surprisingly, teachers reported less emotional exhaustion, higher senses of personal achievement, and less depersonalization. Obviously, this reform correlated with less burnout (Covell et al., 2009).

Another administrative approach to addressing classroom management issues is to facilitate programs that help teachers develop better social and coping skills. Teachers with higher levels of social and emotional competence implement social and emotional curriculum more effectively, improving the classroom climate by creating a "positive feedback loop" that may help prevent burnout by diffusing behavior issues (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Secondary school teachers with maladaptive thinking processes struggle to process rationally during work. Thus, their reactions can intensify classroom situations. Therefore, intervention programs that promote Epstein's theory of constructive thinking may be successful in treating burnt-out teachers because teachers with a positive self-oriented or positive other-oriented method of thinking experience a lower frequency of burnout (Evers et al., 2005).

Finally, novice teachers make up a group principals need to be especially cognizant about in terms of management. Novice teachers who are well prepared to manage the issues associated

with student behavior report lower levels of stress and higher levels of teacher efficacy initially than those who feel their undergraduate training was better. (Pas et al., 2012) To address this, many principals institute peer mentoring programs or spend more time interacting with novice teachers. These efforts, however, do not guarantee a positive outcome, and those that occur with the principal appear to hold more value if conducted in a quality manner than those mentoring sessions that take place with colleagues. Collaborative interactions with colleagues are actually negatively related to self-efficacy when new teachers are experiencing difficulties within their classrooms (Devos et al., 2012). The mere implementation of these support efforts without a true administrative commitment appears to do little. Instead, principals need to work on developing supportive relationships and holding follow up meetings with novice staff members.

Principal's Role in School Climate

A principal plays a critical role in establishing the organizational structure of the school. The principal's attitude and vision set the tone for the entire staff by establishing the goal structure and whether that goal will be mastery or performance oriented. Mastery-goal structures are negatively related to feelings of depression, while a performance goal-structure predicted its development. The mastery-goal approach was also positively related to self-efficacy (Devos et al., 2012). This understanding is important for principals to have in order to motivate staff members in nondetrimental ways. If a principal can create a working environment that values motivation and effort instead of comparison and competition, teacher outcomes can be improved. Interestingly, one research study showed higher administrative ratings for those who came out of coaching or athletic director positions and into principalships than those who were considered curriculum leaders serving as department heads. The explanation was simply that department heads tend to be standards oriented, while coaches are more experienced from a motivational

standpoint. Interestingly, the most important factor in administrative background was the principal's tenure at the school (Shen et al, 2012). Teachers are motivated by those who are similarly invested in the school community.

As the ambassador for the school, a principal also plays an important role in modeling and developing better relationships with students and parents. Research has clearly shown that teachers' well-beings can be positively benefited for strong teacher-student relationships (Split et al., 2011) Principals facilitate these relationships by establishing supportive school environments where the value of teachers is visible to the student body through the principal-staff interactions they observe. They also help to establish a collaborative workplace where colleagues feel comfortable supporting each other.

Within the school community, principals need to foster a supportive culture because social support, or the lack thereof, has been shown to be an important tool to fight burnout. Positive peer collaboration has been cited among the most popular methods for combating teacher stress (Fisher, 2011) Teachers who engage in more upbeat communications that celebrate positive aspects of the job with fellow staff members experience less burnout (Kahn et al., 2006). Not surprisingly, part-time teachers show higher burnout due to less frequent association with other staff members (Bauer et al., 2006). Social support can be found at home and differences have been shown between married and unmarried staff members. Married teachers are found to be better off (Bauer et al., 2006). Social support of family and friends is negatively correlated with emotional exhaustion, one of the main characteristics of burnout (Klusmann et al., 2008).

Although social interactions are generally beneficial, negative interactions can intensify the effects of teacher burnout. Discussion of unpleasant aspects of teaching with colleagues is associated with higher levels of burnout (Kahn et al., 2006). Worn-out teachers seek out

likeminded colleagues. Consequently, their negative opinions are reinforced, which makes the situation worse overall (Farber, 2000). One study showed that the self-efficacy of new teachers only benefitted from frequent collaborative interactions when those teachers were having few difficulties, and those who were experiencing considerable difficulty had a negative relationship with interactions (Devos, 2012). Further, stress linked to professional relationships decreases from primary to secondary schools, yet stress from relationships with students increases (Buunk et al., 2007). In summary, primary teachers may not benefit from “lounge talk”, while secondary teachers may not achieve stress relief from interactions with students.

Principal’s Role as an Advocate for Teacher Wellness

The health of a teaching staff has a significant impact on the overall effectiveness of a school, and administrators need to advocate for social and psychological support programs for its teachers. In today’s age of corporate-sponsored wellness programs and employee assistance, the push for coping strategies in schools is conspicuously absent. Instead, teachers are bombarded by increasing demands and ever-present criticisms, all the while support and resources are being diminished. Principals need to actively encourage positive coping strategies and push for training or intervention when necessary.

One interesting idea in the fight against burnout is to provide enrichment for teachers in terms of emotional regulation abilities (ERA’s). This is useful for a number of reasons. First, teachers who are more able to regulate their emotions within the classroom will form stronger relationships with students and create a more positive classroom environment. Second, teachers with a higher ERA tend to develop more supportive relationships with their colleagues and principals, which lead to a greater sense of personal accomplishment (Brackett et al., 2010). Overall, teachers with higher ERA’s report higher job satisfaction and less burnout while

remaining effective in the classroom for a longer period of time. Intervention programs that promote Epstein's theory of constructive thinking may be successful in treating burnt-out teachers because teachers with a positive self-oriented or positive other-oriented method of thinking experience a lower frequency of burnout (Evers et al., 2005).

Direct therapies present even more alternatives for addressing burnout. Teachers participating in behavioral/music therapy groups found relief and social bonding through the program. In particular, music-therapy and inoculative support groups reported a variance in depersonalization and personal accomplishment, but not emotional exhaustion (Cheek, 2003). Barry Farber (2000), a well-regarded researcher and expert on burnout, has argued that a one-size-fits-all approach will not work for the issue. Farber suggests different types of psychotherapy treatments need to be prescribed for three kinds of burnout: "the worn-out teacher," "the frenetic, classically 'burned-out' teacher," and "the under challenged teacher," (p. 677).

Regardless of the psychological strategies employed to fight burnout, the development of positive coping strategies is a must for those in high risk positions. Chronic work stress is strongly correlated with two major indicators of burnout, emotional exhaustion and depressive symptoms. If stress cannot be mediated through active and meaning-based coping strategies, teachers will become defensive, and the relationship between the teacher and students will deteriorate thus causing greater stress and increasing the likelihood of burnout (Steinhardt et al., 2011). The use of problem-focused coping strategies is an effective predictor of positive performance and achievement outcomes. Put simply, teachers who employ better coping strategies avoid developing further classroom issues which may foster the development of further

stressors. Although the research on this impact is mixed in terms of overall teacher well-being, it is important to note (Parker et al., 2012).

The promotion of physical activity through wellness programs is also a popular approach to this issue. Exercise and increased physical activity have been shown to be effective means of coping with work time stresses. A significant difference in coping methods was found between high school teachers with different stress levels. Teachers reporting high levels of stress were more likely to use negative coping strategies such as throwing objects and escape-avoidance tactics, while the two groups in the lowest stress levels used exercise and relaxation. In fact, exercise was the most popular activity for 80% of lower stress levels teachers (Austin et al., 2005). Interestingly, this exercise does not have to occur outside of work time. In another study, emotional exhaustion among child-care workers dropped as both work and leisure-time physical activity increases (Carson et al., 2010).

The Principal and Teacher Preparation Programs

As the primary hiring agent in many school districts, principals need to vocalize to universities the need for stronger teacher education programs. Changes need to be made in teacher preparation programs to address social and emotional competence because of the growing demands placed on the teaching profession (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Evers et al., 2005). In particular, coping skills and emotional regulation need to be addressed during teacher preparation to increase resilience among perspective educators (Brackett et al., 2010; Kahn et al., 2006).

Better psychological services are necessary in teacher education programs, along with access to behavioral psychologists to assess and prepare candidates. College students today are more likely to be prone to depression through greater acceptance of anti-depressant therapy and

changing society norms. Before, these individuals could not have functioned in undergraduate programs, yet now are succeeding and entering the field of education. Still, teachers who cannot make emotional connections with students or who are easily frustrated and lack flexibility will struggle in student teaching and beyond. Schrier (2008) goes as far as suggesting a “three-strikes-and-you’re out” (p. 297) to remove students who cannot cope from the teacher education programs altogether. Basically, if a teaching candidate exhibits the inability to deal with the emotional demands of teaching on three occasions, he should be directed to another course of study.

Additionally, better preservice training in classroom management is crucial in building greater teacher efficacy and lower burnout in novice teachers. Teachers who reported feeling more prepared for challenges also reported lower levels of burnout in their careers. Interestingly, however, the same study also showed that although better prepared teachers felt less burnout early in their careers, the difference in burnout levels diminishes over time (Pas et al., 2012). Further, student behavior stressors have been shown to be the primary antecedent of teacher burnout (Chang, 2009).

Chapter IV: Recommendations and Conclusion

Recommendations

The connection between administrative support and teacher satisfaction is clearly established. Current administrators should receive more training on the symptoms of teacher burnout and efforts that can be made to avoid or alleviate its effects. Although it is difficult to justify delegating financial resources to teachers when funding is short, the impact of burnout and its attributes—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and loss of teacher efficacy—is profound in terms of the effectiveness of schools throughout the nation. Further, university administrative education programs need to address the issue of teacher burnout within the curriculum. The scope of the problem is overwhelming, and administrators need training on how to deal with it.

Additionally, systematic support and wellness programs need to be developed within the schools to provide training for teachers and education on alternatives to cope with stress. Research has clearly shown that by learning basic coping skills, teachers can become better equipped to deal with the demands of the profession. The implementation of exercise programs alone would help to drive down stress-related healthcare costs and reduce absenteeism. Teacher attrition rates could drop, and the schools could have a more experienced, yet still invigorated workforce. Many of the factors that frustrate teachers are beyond their control, but efforts can be made to provide coping skills. Ironically, research has shown that culture and support are moiré important than money and resources (Shen et al., 2012)

Finally, more attention needs to be paid towards providing additional support for novice teachers. Teacher education programs need to be realistic with students about the demands of the job and selective about those admitted into their programs. They also need to provide solid

classroom management training because poor management has been shown to negatively affect emotional well-being. Once employed, administrators should work closely with new teachers, not solely as evaluators but rather as supports. Positive relationships need to be fostered with experienced staff members where new teachers feel safe asking for feedback and assistance.

Areas for Further Research

Most of the research explored in this paper focuses on the symptoms and manifestations of burnout, as well as the principal's role in preventing its development. Little has been discussed about explicit and systematic methods to address the issue in teachers so that a common treatment can be developed. This has not been the case in other field such as nursing and fire fighting where concerted efforts are being made to recognize the problem and rehabilitate its victims. The current research in education is geared strongly toward programs that address students directly without regard for the teachers that provide the services on which our youth depend. Clearly, more work needs to be done to identify the best methods to deal with the phenomenon.

Summary and Conclusion

Teacher burnout is a destructive force in today's educational establishment, and its effects should not be trivialized. Characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and decreased teacher efficacy; burnout threatens educational quality by leading to early attrition and loss of productivity. Common characteristics have been observed, yet little has been done explicitly to impact the issue. Undoubtedly, the role of the principal has been shown to be a huge determinant in burnout, and positive leaders have been shown to be effective deterrents to its development. Principals need to work diligently to provide support in classroom management,

create collaborative social environments within schools, and promote teacher wellness and coping strategies.

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