



Self-efficacy, work task Motivation and Burnout in Iranian primary school`s teachers

Esmael Mohammaddost ^{a*}, Hassan Nodehi ^b

^a M.A in Educational Management, Islamic Azad University, Neyshabur Branch, Neyshabur, Iran

^b Assistant Professor of in Educational Management, Hakim Sabzevari University, Sabzevar, Iran

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Abstract

Introduction: The aim of present study was examines the role of job self – efficacy and work task motivation in predicting burnout in Iranian primary school`s teachers.

Materials and Method: In descriptive- correlational design a total of 181 teachers participated in this study. Data were collected with three questionnaires include: Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES), Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) and Work Tasks Motivation Scale for Teachers (WTMST). The data collected was analyzed through stepwise regression.

Results: The results obtained revealed that external regulation in teaching tasks was negatively predicted emotional exhaustion. Interjected regulation in teaching tasks, external regulation in administrative tasks and teacher`s self-efficacy were negatively predicted depersonalization. Finally, Amotivation in teaching tasks and external regulation in class preparation tasks were negatively and teacher`s self-efficacy was positively predicted personal accomplishment.

Conclusion: Results of this study indicated that teacher`s self-efficacy and work tasks motivation plays a role in explaining Iranian primary school teachers` burnout. Practical implications of these findings are discussed.

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*Corresponding Author: Email: esmail.m.dust@gmail.com

1. Introduction

The tasks of teachers are demanding and heavy. The onerous nature of the profession of a teacher is particularly shown in the oppressive quantities of stress they experience in their job. Especially when comparing professions according to the degree of stress experienced, it appears that teaching is a very stressful job (Evers, Brouwers, & Tomic, 2002). Investigations showed that teachers experience feelings of exhaustion during their career (Farber, 1991; Aftab, Shah, & Mehmood, 2012; Mohammadi, 2006; Rostami, Noruzi, Zarei, Amiri, & Soleimani, 2008; Saberi, Moraveji, & Naseh, 2011). Burnout emerged approximately 25 years ago as a term to describe a physical and emotional reaction to occupational stress characterized by exhaustion and occupational inefficacy (Wheeler, Vassar, Worley, & Barnes, 2011). Maslach and Jackson (1986) described burnout as a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people in some capacity. Emotional exhaustion refers to feelings of being emotionally overextended and a strong depletion of one's emotional resources. Depersonalization refers to a negative, callous, and detached attitude towards the persons that one works with, i.e., patients, clients, or pupils. Reduced personal accomplishment is assessed through a person's negative self-evaluation in relation to his or her job performance (Schaufeli, Bakker, Hoogduin, Schaap, & Kladler, 2001). Studies show that burnout in Iranian teachers related with psychological health (Mohammadi, 2006; Rostami et al., 2008) and quality of work life (Pardakhtchi, Ahmadi & Arezoomandi, 2009).

Burnout among teachers has been associated with many factors. Teachers' actions and behaviors are related to their beliefs, perceptions, assumptions and motivational levels. That's why; research on teachers' beliefs is of vital importance in organizing teaching and defining ways of understanding

(CalisMasi, & Yeteral, 2010). A significant teacher characteristic within the area of beliefs and assumptions is self-efficacy (Gavora, 2011). The concept of self-efficacy was originally developed by Albert Bandura to constitute a part of his social-cognitive theory. Bandura defined self-efficacy as a belief in one's own ability to organize and perform a certain task. In other words, efficacy of self is people's faith in their ability to be successful in a certain condition (Bandura, 1997). As such, self-efficacy is a self-system that controls most personal activity, including appropriate use of professional knowledge and skills. Teacher self-efficacy is the belief that teachers have in their own abilities and skills as educators (Gavora, 2011). Based on social cognitive theory teacher self-efficacy may be conceptualized as individual teachers' beliefs in their own ability to plan, organize, and carry out activities that are required to attain given educational goals (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007) used self-efficacy for instruction, adapting education to individual students' needs, motivating students, keeping discipline, cooperating with colleagues and parents, and coping with changes and challenges in their framework. Teacher's self-efficacy is related with many schools outcomes. For instance, Abu-Tineh, Khasawneh and Khalailah (2011) indicated that teacher's self-efficacy has the highest and significant relationship with classroom management styles. Hsiao, Tu, Chang and Chen (2011) showed that there is a strong positive relationship between Teachers' Self-efficacy and innovative Work Behavior. In the other study Gorozidis and Papaioannou (2011) obtained significant relations between teachers' self-efficacy and achievement goals. In the other hand, teacher burnout has been shown to be moderately related to teacher self-efficacy (e.g. Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Egyed & Short, 2006; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008; Betoret, 2009; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Bayani, Bagheri & Bayani, 2013; Khezerlou, 2013). In oldest research

Evers, Brouwers and Tomic (2000) showed that the self-efficacy was significantly and negatively related to the depersonalization and emotional exhaustion dimensions of burnout, and significantly positively related to the personal accomplishment dimension. Recently, Aftab, Ali Shah and Mehmood (2012) in their studies were found significant relationships between Burnout dimensions and self-efficacy.

Another feature of teachers that can be associated with burnout in them is the motivation in job tasks. One of the most fundamental elements of success and the proper function of human forces in the organizations is work motivation that make them to participate in the plans have been developed by the organization (Ahmed & Ali, 2009). Pelletier, Séguin-Lévesque and Legault (2002) believe that there's a relationship between the teachers' motivation and the students' one. In the last years, the researchers have been more interested in the study of the teachers' motivation. However, George, Louw and Badenhorst (2008) have mentioned that due to that a teacher do the different tasks in his work environment, it's very difficult to determine his motivation in each task. In fact, the teacher's motivation process is not the same process; it's different in each task. However, despite of the different psychological theories related to the motivation of teachers (self-efficacy and control resources), few studies have focused on the quality of the motivation process. One of the important theories to understand the concept of teachers' job motivation is Self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002). SDT is an approach to human motivation in which autonomous motivation is deemed essential for optimal functioning. Autonomous motivation refers to the experience of choice in initiating behavior. Teachers are autonomously motivated when they perform their job for the intrinsic value of achieving meaningful and interesting goals or because they personally grasp the value of their

work activities. SDT distinguishes between intrinsic motivation (doing something for its own sake) and extrinsic motivation (doing something for an instrumental reason). The theory also proposes that extrinsic motivation can be internalized, meaning that by acquiring and accepting new values or goals, people become autonomously motivated to engage in behavior that expresses these values and goals. Thus, internalization can give rise to different forms of extrinsic motivation that may be aligned on a continuum, with external regulation at the low end, followed by interjected and identified regulation. External regulation occurs when behavior is regulated to obtain a reward or avoid a constraint. Interjected regulation is the process whereby an external demand becomes an internal representation. Individuals put pressure on themselves through internal coercion (e.g., anxiety, guilt, or shame) to ensure that they behave in a certain way. Finally, identified regulation is defined as behavior that individuals choose to engage in because they value it. Instead of succumbing to external or internal pressures, individuals experience choice while performing the activity, even if the activity is not interesting. Given that identified behavior is accepted as one's own, it is regarded as autonomously regulated (Fernet, Guay, Senécal & Austin, 2012). Fernet, Senécal, Guay, Marsh, and Dowson (2008) in their study on teacher motivation indicated that autonomous types of motivation (intrinsic motivation and identified regulation) toward work activities are negatively related to burnout, whereas controlled types of motivation (interjected and external regulation) are positively associated with burnout. Pelletier et al., (2002) indicated that the high levels of motivation in work lead to job satisfaction and prevention of job burnout. Fernet, Guay and Senécal (2004) indicated that the low levels of motivation in such context lead to the loss of job satisfaction, anxiety, depression and

burnout. Based on Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007) and Fernet et al., (2008) frameworks in teacher's self-efficacy and work task motivation, this study would examine the role of teacher's self- efficacy and work task motivation in prediction of teachers burnout.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Participants were teachers working in primary schools in the province of North Khorasan in Iran. Teachers were asked to fill out the questionnaire and consent form and return them in a prepaid envelope. A total of 181 teachers (122 men, 59 women) were selected with cluster sampling and participated in the study. Participants' mean age was 24.2 years (SD = 1.32) and mean years of experience was 2.91 years (SD=0.47); 54.1% of the participants was married.

2.2. Measurement

2.2.1. Job burnout

The Maslach Burnout Inventory- Educator's Survey (MBI-ES, Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996) is the most widely and well-known measure of teacher burnout that has been used in more of studies about burnout. The three separate components, measured by the MBI are: 1) emotional exhaustion (e.g., "I feel emotionally drained from my work"), 2) depersonalization (5 items; e.g., "I've become more callous toward people since I took this job"), and 3) personal accomplishment (8 items; e.g., "I have accomplished many worthwhile things at this job"). Responses to all items are scored on a 7-point scale ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (daily). The evidence for the validity and the reliability of Persian versions of The Maslach Burnout Inventory has been reported for Iranian samples (Bayani et al., 2013). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha values for these subscales were 0.74 and 0.84, respectively.

2.2.2. Teacher Self-Efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy was measured by a

multidimensional 24-item Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). The scale had six dimensions measured by four items each. The dimensions were: instruction, adapting education to individual students' needs, motivating students, keeping discipline, cooperating with colleagues and parents, and coping with changes and challenges. The scale was constructed according to Bandura's recommendations for item construction, including barriers in the item formulations. Responses were given on a 7-point scale from "Not certain at all" (1) to "Absolutely certain" (7). The six sub-scales are extensively described elsewhere. Cronbach's alphas for the scales were 0.83, 0.90, 0.83, 0.91, 0.77, and 0.81, respectively (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Keramati (2014) evaluate psychometric indexes of this scale in Iranian sample and obtain one factor in this scale. In present study the Cronbach's alpha value for scale were 0.75.

2.2.3. Teacher's Motivation

Teacher's motivation was measured with the Work Tasks Motivation Scale for Teachers (WTMST; Fernet et al., 2008). The WTMST includes five motivational constructs related to different work tasks. Each task is assessed by five subscales (intrinsic, identified, Introjected, and external regulation, and amotivation). Items are scored on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (does not correspond at all) to 7 (corresponds completely). The original validation of the WTMST provides support for assessing teachers' motivation toward specific job tasks. Seadatee Shamir (2014) attempt to evaluate psychometric indexes of this scale in Iranian teachers. He shows that the scale has valid construct validity (0.81) and internal consistency in Iranian teachers (0.78).

3. Results

First, results suggested no major violations of statistical assumptions. Some univariate outliers were found, and in line with Tabachnick and Fidell (1996), we brought these cases closer to the mean

by assigning to them a value that is within the 3-SD boundary. Then, multivariate normality was examined, revealing the presence of 10 outliers, which were deleted. Second, gender differences were examined using a multivariate analysis of

variance where a significant Wilks's Lambda (Value=0.86, df= 3,218, p= 0.0005) suggested that male and female teachers scored differently on several variables of the model.

Table1. Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for the Model Variables

Prediction variables	Burnout			M	SD
	Emotional exhaustion	Depersonalization	Personal accomplishment		
<i>WTMST</i>					
Class Preparation					
IM	-0.05	0.04	-0.05	8.02	0.72
IDR	-0.005	-0.10	0.02	20.06	0.95
ER	0.07	-0.05	-0.34**	2.56	0.95
Teaching					
IM	0.07	-0.08	-0.02	13.46	0.86
IDR	0.09	-0.10	-0.03	20.17	1.03
INR	-0.07	-0.16*	0.03	14.73	0.87
ER	-0.15*	-0.09	-0.15*	9.33	0.84
AM	-0.09	-0.09	-0.43**	3.91	1.44
Evaluation of students					
IM	-0.05	0.01	0.09	20.16	0.83
IDR	0.04	-0.03	-0.06	20.12	0.98
AM	-0.07	0.03	-0.03	3.97	0.87
Classroom Management					
IM	-0.06	-0.12	-0.06	13.44	0.61
IDR	0.02	-0.06	-0.002	20.09	1.08
INR	0.00	-0.04	-0.10	14.67	0.84
ER	-0.01	-0.05	-0.04	9.33	0.88
AM	-0.05	-0.002	-0.004	9.38	0.86
Administrative Tasks					
IM	-0.02	-0.07	-0.03	14.74	1.04
IDR	-0.01	-0.07	-0.01	20.17	0.81
INR	-0.10	-0.04	0.03	9.38	0.94
ER	-0.10	-0.16*	0.01	9.32	0.84
AM	-0.06	-0.13	-0.05	3.94	0.83
Complementary Tasks					
IM	-0.07	-0.13	-0.10	20.03	1.12
IDR	0.01	0.01	-0.06	20.09	0.86
INR	0.04	0.02	-0.02	14.76	0.80
ER	0.02	0.02	0.06	4.20	1.42
AM	-0.06	-0.05	0.08	4.03	1.10
<i>Teacher's self-efficacy</i>	0.002	-0.14*	0.27**	31.85	5.39
<i>M</i>	40.87	28.73	24.05	****	
<i>SD</i>	1.99	1.31	1.50		

Note: * P 0.05, **P 0.01, M= Mean, SD= Standard Deviation, IM= Intrinsic Motivation, IDR= Identified Regulation, INR= Introjected Regulation, ER= External Regulation, AM= Amotivation

Univariate tests indicated that male teachers had less Depersonalization (M= 28.47), and personal accomplishment (M= 23.69) than did female teachers (M=29.22, and 24.73, respectively), F= 17.92, and 27.73 (all p=0.0005). However, the size of these univariate effects was small (explaining 6% and 7% of the total variance, respectively). It might be interesting to test whether the model applies equally to male and female students, but the small magnitude of gender effects suggests that controlling for the variance explained by gender might be unnecessary.

Before testing the regression model, we examined the relations among work tasks motivation's subscales; teacher's self-efficacy and burnout (see Table 1). External regulation in teaching tasks was negatively associated with Emotional exhaustion

(r= -0.15, p 0.05). We found that introjected regulation in teaching tasks(r=-0.16, p 0.05), external regulation in Administrative tasks (r= -0.16, p 0.05) and teacher's self-efficacy (r=-0.14, p 0.05) were negatively associated with depersonalization. Finally, external regulation in class preparation tasks (r= -0.34, p 0.01), external regulation and amotivation in teaching tasks (r= -0.15, p 0.05 and r=- 0.43, p 0.01) were negatively and teacher's self-efficacy (r= 0.27, p 0.01) was positively associated with personal accomplishment.

Further analyses were conducted to determine whether work tasks motivation's subscales or teacher's self-efficacy was more strongly related to the teachers burnout. Results of stepwise regression are displayed in Table 2.

Table2. Results of stepwise regression

Predictor	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	B	Beta	t	Sig.
step 1: Emotional exhaustion	0.15	0.02	0.02	5.56*				
External regulation in teaching tasks					-0.36	-0.15	-2.36	0.02
step 2: Depersonalization	0.25	0.06	0.05	4.99**				
Introjected regulation in teaching tasks					-0.22	-0.15	-2.26	0.03
External regulation in administrative tasks					-0.21	-0.14	-2.10	0.04
Teacher's self-efficacy					-0.03	-0.13	-2.01	0.05
step 3: Personal accomplishment	0.56	0.32	0.31	34.75**				
Amotivation in teaching tasks					-0.38	-0.37	-6.35	0.0005
Teacher's self-efficacy					0.08	0.30	5.37	0.0005
External regulation in class preparation tasks					-0.36	-0.23	-3.91	0.0005

Note: * P 0.05, **P 0.01

The regressions of emotional exhaustion on external regulation in teaching tasks revealed a significant multiple R² of 0.002, F=5.56, p=0.02. External regulation in teaching tasks was negatively predicted emotional exhaustion (Beta= -0.15, t= -2.36, p=0.02). Teacher's self-efficacy and other work tasks motivation subscales were non-significant in this model. Other results of table2 showed that introjected regulation in teaching tasks (Beta= -0.15, t= -2.26, p=0.03), external regulation in administrative tasks (Beta= -0.14, t= -2.10, p=0.04), and teacher's self-efficacy (Beta= -0.13, t= -2.01, p=0.05) were negatively predicted

depersonalization (R²= 0.06, F=4.99, p=0.002). Finally, the regressions of personal accomplishment on amotivation in teaching tasks, teacher's self-efficacy and external regulation in class preparation tasks revealed a significant multiple R² of 0.32, F=34.75, p=0.0005. Amotivation in teaching tasks (Beta= -0.37, t= -6.35, p= 0.0005) and external regulation in class preparation tasks (Beta= -0.23, t= -3.91, p=0.0005) were negatively and teacher's self-efficacy (Beta= 0.30, t= 5.37, p=0.0005) was positively predicted personal accomplishment.

4. Discussion

The main purpose of present study was

investigating the role of work tasks motivation and self-efficacy in burnout of Iranian private school's teachers. Findings showed that emotional exhaustion only predicted based on external regulation in teaching tasks and this variable 2% of emotional exhaustion variance. The results related to depersonalization indicated that interjected regulation in teaching tasks, external regulation in administrative tasks and teacher's self-efficacy can only explain 6% of the variance. At last, the results related to personal accomplishment indicated that motivation in teaching tasks, external regulation in class preparation tasks were negatively and teacher's self-efficacy explain just only 32% of the criterion variance. Fernet et al., (2012) indicated that teachers' perceptions of both autonomous motivation and self-efficacy are important correlates of burnout. Teachers, who gradually perceive themselves as less autonomously motivated and efficacious in accomplishing their classroom tasks, even as they perceive greater pressure to do so, are more likely to be more exhausted at the end of the school year. Accordingly, if autonomous motivation is an additional motivational factor that buttresses personal energy, it might consequently delay the burnout process. The other findings of this study indicated the relationship between self-efficacy and Iranian teachers' job burnout. This finding correspond with the research findings of (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Egyed & Short, 2006; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008; Betoret, 2009; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Bayani et al., 2013; Khezerlou, 2013). In a cross-sectional study among teachers in the Netherlands Brouwers and Tomic (1999) demonstrated that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs about classroom management were significantly related to their burnout level. However, longitudinal research showed that the teachers' self-efficacy beliefs were only related to the depersonalization and personal accomplishment dimensions of burnout, and not to emotional exhaustion (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007) argued that low expectation of classroom management increases occupational stress, which may increase

depersonalization. Since self-efficacy beliefs are heavily based on experiences, it is also reasonable that teacher burnout may affect teacher self-efficacy. Consequently, the relation between teacher self-efficacy and teacher burnout is likely reciprocal.

Although the findings of this study need to be further validated, the correlations between self-efficacy and motivation provide insights into how to develop effective interventions to promote teachers' well-being. Specifically, it allows identifying specific aspects of teachers' tasks that may cause or prevent burnout.

The results of present study suggest that burnout may be precipitated by motivational factors and teacher's self-efficacy. In this sense, interventions to teacher's burnout, at least in terms of these aspects. Fernet et al., (2012) proposed that promoting professional development, such initiatives could support teachers' feelings of competence in the classroom, and lead them to appreciate and value their work more. Also, educational interventions may help teachers develop the requisite attitudes and competencies to more effectively deal with problematical work situations. For instance, teachers may be able to manage classroom overload and disruptive student behavior if they value class management and feel that it is important (autonomous motivation), or if they feel effective in coping with situations (self-efficacy). The main limitation of this study was its cross sectional design based on self-report measures. We must therefore be cautious about generalizing these findings, and should emphasize the need for cross-replication studies with more representative teacher samples. Strictly speaking, the applied cross-sectional design cannot provide any proof of causality. A temporal sequence between variables is required to establish a cause-effect relationship. Longitudinal studies are therefore required. When using cross-sectional survey studies, the data analysis with structural equation modeling would appear to be the first step to at least obtain an idea of causality, as in this research work.

However, these findings may be beneficial to

educational policy makers if they want to develop a positive work environment for their employees, to teachers if they want to diagnose the work parameters affecting negatively their performance, and whoever in the field if he/she is interested in student achievement and development.

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