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Teacher Burnout: What an Educator Needs To Know.

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Literature Review on Teacher Burnout

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Understanding Research Methods and Data

Literature Review on Teacher Burnout

Background Context

According to Bousquet (2012), teacher burnout is defined as the aftermath of teachers experiencing negative or stressful events in the teaching process. Teacher burnout is a response by educators to students and the teaching career due to insufficient support from the administration. Teacher burnout has been historically attributed to stress in the workplace that eventually brings a change of attitude and inability to cope with the work environment (Wong, Ruble, & McGrew, 2017). Burnout has also been related to the loss of motivation and stress due to a lack of inspiration in the workplace, which causes teachers to want to quit the job due to experiencing high levels of physical and psychological distress (Bousquet, 2012). Teacher morale can also be reduced by the student's unresponsiveness, which causes emotional and physical pain. Distress in the workplace has closely been associated with burnout in the workplace, and the effects of teacher burnout are critical to both individuals and organizations. Other scholars have suggested that teachers experiencing burnout have low self-esteem caused by a lack of moral and physical exhaustion. The greater the educator's enthusiasm, the more outstanding the students' achievement (Madigan, & Kim, 2021). Teacher Burnout is not a new concept. The purpose of this literature review is to examine what Teacher Burnout is, its historical presence timeline, the causes of teacher burnout, the self-efficacy and teacher burnout correlations, and the outcome of teacher burnout on society.

Effect of Burnout among Educators

Historically, teacher burnout is recognized as a psychological and mental state that profoundly affects the teacher's life, and it's common for educators and policymakers to ignore

the condition to its vitality. Bousquet (2012) suggests that teacher burnout to be caused by day to day distress that teachers experience and is due to the interaction between physiological and environmental factors. He also suggests that burnout in teaching professions is characterized by the emotional demanding relationships among students. Educators and especially special educators interact with children with a specific set of disability and require personalized attention to help realize the required outcome of the education. Secondly, students often have different personalities that teachers have to understand and work with to ensure that they tap to the student's understanding and help them learn as per the stipulated curriculum. As such, these educators are therefore prone to distress as they work to meet the requirements of each special child.

Bousquet (2012) also states that teacher burnout responds to pain and leads to teachers feeling less value and failures in their careers. Empirical evidence gathered shows that burnout among teachers accumulates overtime thus being difficult to detect and resolve in the early stages. The first stage of burnout manifests itself as stress – a variance between resources and demands. Students demand emotional attention from the educator causing emotional resource depletion. In the second stage of burnout, the teachers develop negative attitudes and general behavior towards their work, students and other teachers. They behave in mechanical and detached manner without considering the individual needs of the students in the classroom. The depersonalized behavior among burnout individuals is a defensive emotional mechanism that helps them cope with the environmental pressures that cause stress. The psychological distance created between the educator and the stressful environment is an inadequate stress relieving strategy as it elevates interpersonal challenges between the teacher and the students thus affecting student performance. In the final step, the teacher feels incompetent and less confident

towards achieving their professional goal. They also develop self-doubt leading to inability to achieve personal accomplishment within their career.

On the other hand, Seidman & Zager (1998) assert that teacher burnout is associated with a lack of career satisfaction, a lack of proper support to teachers by the system, and a lack of the required skills to cope with educational stress. Stress among workers in an organization is a natural phenomenon as people with different personalities and needs interact to fulfill a specific set goal; however, burnout is not a natural concept thus the increasing need for developing permanent remedies. To determine effectively the remedies for burnout among teachers, it is essential that the causes of burnout such as student misconduct and teacher's inability to cope be identified. Zager (1982) states that teachers with low self-esteem, high level of anxiety, poor organizational skills, and poor ego strength had negative attitude towards students and were more likely to develop burnout caused by organizational stress. Their counterparts on the other hand developed effective coping mechanisms and yielded better results on student performance.

Historically, the educators recognized teacher burnout as a negative response to teaching-related problems. Seidman & Zager (1998) suggest that burnout syndrome in teachers is associated with emotional tension, anxiety, and exhaustion due to the stressful events related to the teaching and learning process. Prolonged distress without proper intervention leads to burnout which is recognized as a syndrome related to inappropriate attitudes towards self and student's which is likely to lead to performance deterioration and uncomfortable symptoms rooted in behavior and emotions (Seidman & Zager, 1998). Bousquet (2012) suggests that teacher burnout is a response involving respiratory, endocrine, and nervous symptoms. Since prolonged distress affects the immune function, they affect the release of hormones, which cause people to act in a certain way. In addition, teaching is an emotional activity that involves chaos

and misunderstandings, and teachers are highly vulnerable to emotional distress, which contributes to their burnout (Bousquet, 2012).

Cause of Burnout among Teachers

Bousquet (2012) suggests that the leading causes of teacher burnout include overworking, student rudeness and lack of cooperation, additional requirements, a work environment that is not motivating, and poor relationships between colleagues. The challenges, therefore, lead to negative responses among educators. Teacher burnout is caused by increased distress in the workplace, which can lead to severe health implications in the long term. According to Pozo-Rico et al. (2020), lack of the strategies and skills, resources needed for stress management can be attributed to teacher burnout. Teachers who do not have the specific knowledge and skills to cope with the stress involved in day-to-day activities are likely to face the challenge of burnout. Thus, they are likely to be frustrated and dissatisfied with the teaching career, which is expected to lead to absenteeism or poor handling of the teaching activities.

In regard to teacher's dissatisfaction, a study carried out by National Education Association showed that about 35% of educators in public schools were not satisfied with their positions in their organizations. The source of dissatisfaction was based on emotional stress associated with interacting with students daily. A third of the 35% indicated that if they had a chance to start their career again, they would not pursue teaching (Zager, & Seidman, 1983). Over the years, there have been a high employee turnover rate and absenteeism among teachers mainly due to burnout. It has also contributed to student's negative attitude towards education and misbehavior within school facilities. Thus, teacher's dissatisfaction has contributed immensely to educator's burnout in educational facilities.

According to Pressley (2021), the factors that contributed to teacher burnout during Covid 19 were the new challenging environments and changing institutional practices of the teacher's role. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, about 8% of professional teachers left teaching because of burnout. The percentage was even higher among new teachers who had practiced in the profession for less than five years. The American government had recorded shortages among teachers caused by burnout and encouraged individuals to pursue the profession. Burnout among teachers before the pandemic promoted student demotivation and lowered overall student performance. With the new challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, empirical studies were carried out to understand the adverse effect the pandemic had on increasing burnout cases among teachers and remedies that may help reduce these effects.

The change of the work environment and the teacher roles is likely to cause significant levels of distress to the teachers and therefore contributes to job dissatisfaction. Teachers now have to utilize different instructional methods which include the virtual learning systems that make the teacher the sole learning process driver. What is expected of them varies and, therefore, leads to increased workloads, leading to anxiety, which contributes to burnout (Pressley, 2021). After the Covid 19 pandemic, about 19% to 30% of teachers left teaching, which can be attributed to the shortage of teachers experienced in several states (Pressley, 2021). The new challenges caused by the Covid 19 pandemic caused an increase in teacher burnout, which profoundly affects student performance. The new demands facing educators cause significant stress levels that lead to burnout.

Importance of Training Teachers of Self-Efficacy

Teacher burnout has a connection to teachers' self-worth and self-efficacy. Zaretsky & Katz (2019) suggest that teaching is emotional labor, and schools are common of both negative

and positive emotions. Self-efficacy and burnout are major psychological aspects that play major roles in an educational setting (Gholami, 2015). Teacher's self-efficacy theory is explained in the Banora's social cognitive theory and it addresses an individual's perception towards their capacity to succeed in their teaching profession. The theory also allows teacher's to realize the environmental opportunities presented to them on an environmental level and influence their beliefs towards identifying the opportunities and utilizing them towards achieving individual goals. Low levels of self-efficacy skills increases risks of burnout as such teachers have lower coping and adaptation abilities to environmental stress (Gholami, 2015). Thus, training educators on self-efficacy skills may offer a solution towards minimizing cases of burnout in educational facilities.

In addition, emotions require individual regulation, as they are sometimes not in line with personal feelings and involve two common behaviors: adaptive and non-adaptive regulation. Non-adaptive methods for emotion regulation lead to higher levels of anxiety and depression, while adaptive lead to the opposite of the phenomena. Burnout can be considered as a non-adaptive strategy associated with emotional labor. Emotional labor profoundly affects teacher efficacy, efficiency and the self-image that teachers hold towards themselves and colleagues (Zaretsky & Katz, 2019). The class is the primary source of the teacher's vulnerability, satisfaction, and self-esteem. The problematic situations in the classroom will therefore have an effect on the teacher's emotions and can lead to burnout in the long run. Gholami (2015) states that burnout is considered a negative non-adaptive remedy towards stress, it is essential that psychological strategies such as training on self-efficacy are implemented to reduce cases of burnout among teachers and reduce turnover rates in their midst.

Finally, according to Zaretsky & Katz (2019), negative emotions experienced in the classroom affect teachers' esteem, well-being, and job satisfaction, increasing the teacher's vulnerability to burnout. Pozo-Rico et al. (2020) suggest that the teacher's efficacy in teaching is positively related to their well-being. Reducing teacher stress in the classroom levels is essential and can be used as an intervention for teacher burnout. There is also a significant connection between the teacher's self-efficacy and how they manage and cope with stressful environments in the workplace (Pozo-Rico et al., 2020). Improving the teacher's self-efficacy comes a long way in ensuring they can manage stress and cope with the day-to-day activities in the classroom that contribute to burnout. The health of teachers is improved through training on self-efficacy and can also manage burnout.

Effects of Burnout in the Society

Teacher burnout affects society as it affects students, teachers, and organizations. Madigan & Kim (2020) argue that low student motivation and worse achievement have a profound linkage to teacher burnout. The only way students gain valuable knowledge and skills is through their teacher in classroom experiences. Therefore, teacher well-being is a significant part of classroom activities and affects student learning outcomes. Teacher burnout is also associated with several negative consequences, such as increased susceptibility to mental illnesses and irritability. Madigan & Kim (2020) further suggest that since teacher burnout is associated with lower job morale and absenteeism, it can lead to the teachers' loss of quality of life, which translates to the students. The well-being of the teacher ensures that they lead the education practice efficiently.

According to Bousquet (2012), student performance is affected by the teacher's well-being, while student misbehavior is likely to lead to teacher burnout in extreme cases. Teachers

are likely to have a negative view of the students who misbehave, which is expected to affect the student's educational outcomes. Madigan & Kim (2020) suggest that students who perform poorly academically and fail to excel in life are likely to have lower income and lead a low quality of life in society. Teacher burnout symptoms and lack of well-being impact students as they affect how they relate with the children in the classroom. The teacher themselves are also likely to be demotivated when colleagues in the school they teach experience burnout symptoms caused by students' disruptive behavior. When teachers experience burnout, it leads to loss of their social life due to stress caused by the feeling that they have failed in providing their goals.

However, Sass et al., 2010 suggest that teachers can be retained through support and stress management. Teacher burnout causes shortages of teacher in the institutions, and therefore they have been a need to maintain those in the workforce. There is a need to ensure job satisfaction and intervene for the teacher stressors rooted in the work environment, supervisors, and colleagues to combat teacher burnout (Sass et al., 2010). The supportive environments free of stress have been linked with teacher retention and improved job satisfaction. Society has a lot to lose due to teacher burnout, and its intervention is of great concern. The stability of the teacher workforce is profoundly affected by teacher burnout, and their effect on the education setting cannot be ignored (Wong et al., 2017).

Conclusion

Teacher burnout is the cause of the distraction of the teacher well-being in the workforce. The teacher needs to be addressed since it profoundly affects society as it affects the teacher workforce, the students, and schools in general. The teacher's self-worth and self-efficacy also contribute to teacher burnout; the higher the self-worth feelings in teachers, the lower the rate of teacher burnout while low self-esteem is associated with increased levels of teacher burnout. The

teachers' well-being contributes to reduced levels of teacher burnout and promotes teacher retention. Teacher burnout has significant implications, and high attrition levels have been linked with financial losses in thousands of dollars. Job satisfaction develops self-worth and self-efficacy that ensures teachers perform their responsibilities as required, promoting the educational outcomes and empowering students to achieve their best potential in school and lead a good quality of life later. Teacher burnout can be regulated in schools since their turnover is associated with profound effects in the society.

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