Teacher self-esteem, self-efficacy and perception of school context as predictors of professional burnout

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Abstract

This study had two major objectives: (1) to examine the relationship between self-efficacy, self-esteem, school climate, and teacher burnout in an Iranian sample and (2) to examine to what extend self-efficacy, self-esteem, and school climate predict burnout among secondary school teachers. Participants of this study were 280 (147 female, 143 male) teachers. They completed the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educator's Survey (MBI-ES, Mashlach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996), the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), the Norwegian Teacher's Self-Efficacy Scale (NTSES; Skaalvik E., & S. Skaalvik, 2007), and the Teacher's Perception of the School Context (Skaalvik, 2010). Correlational analysis indicated that self-efficacy, self-esteem, and school climate were significantly involved in teacher burnout. The results of multiple regression analysis indicated that burnout was affected differently from three predictor variables.

Keywords: teacher burnout, self-efficacy, self-esteem, school climate

Introduction

During the last decade, burnout has attracted considerable attention in the literature of behavioral sciences (e.g. Ashforth, & Lee, 1996; Hakanen *et al.*, 2006)

The term "burnout" developed in the 1970's by Freudenberger, and first recognized as a social problem rather than as a scholarly concept by Maslach and Schaufeli (1993).

Burnout has been defined as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion (fillings of fatigue that develop as one's energies become drained), depersonalization (the development of negative and uncaring attitudes towards others) and reduced personal accomplishment (a deterioration of self-confidence and dissatisfaction in one's achievements) (Maslach, & Jackson, 1996; & Maslach, Schaufeli, &, Leiter, 2001; Maslach & Leiter, 2005).

Traditionally, Burnout Model (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach *et al.*, 1996) focused on the helping professions and human services such as social work, health care, psychotherapy, police work and teaching (Hamama, 2012; Schaufeli, Leiter, & Maslach, 2008). Many researchers, across different jobs and several countries, have reported the consistent impact of burnout on one's social, physical, psychological, and occupational functioning such as headaches, fatigue, heart disease, allergies, depression, anxiety, family conflicts, absenteeism, and reluctance to go to work (Huebner, & Huberty, 1984; Hobfoll & Freedy, 1993; Schaufeli & Enzman, 1998; Bonde, 2008; Grossi *et al.*, 2009).

Teaching is one of the most stressful jobs in the world and this can lead to teachers suffering from burnout (Smith, & Bourke, 1991; Travers, & Cooper, 1996; Van Dick, &wanger, 2001; Pillay, Goddard, &Wills, 2005; Eres, & Atanasoska, 2011; Muthuvelayutham, & Mohanasundaram, 2012). Burnout among teachers has received considerable research

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attention (e.g., Pines, 2002; Hakanen *et al.*, 2006; Moneta, 2011). For example, it has been estimated that 35 % of teachers were extremely dissatisfied with teaching, with up to 20 % being burned out (Farber, 2000). Teacher burnout effects on students and learning environment (Hughes, 2001; Yoon, 2002; & Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Several studies have reported the prevalence burnout among Iranian teachers (e.g. Rashidzadeh, 2002; Mohammadi, 2006, & Saberi *et al.*, 2011).

Numerous variables have been studied in relation to teacher burnout including demographic factors (e.g. gender, age, year of experience, educational level, and job status, social support, classroom climate, class size, teaching load, work environment, self-efficacy, emotional intelligence and locus of control). Etzion, & Pines (1986), Burke, *et al.* (1996), Lau *et al.* (2005) and Timms *et al.* (2006) reported a higher rate of burnout among women than men, although overall, these findings have been inconsistent (Bauer *et al.*, 2007; Özkanal, Kampüsü, 2010; &Salami, 2011). Research findings have been inconsistent with regard to the relation between teacher burnout with marital status, year of experience and age (Mo, 1991; Jackson, 1993; Egyed, 2006; Lackritz, 2004; Bayram *et al.*, 2010; Fisher, 2011).

Teacher burnout has been shown to be related to personality characteristics, such as extraversion, neuroticism, and introversion (Zellars *et al.*, 2000; Cano-Garcla *et al.*, 2005; Pishghadam, & Sahebjam, 2012). Many researcher found that teacher burnout and self-efficacy were significantly correlated (Brouwers, & Tomic, 2000; Evers *et al.*, 2002; Schwarzer, & Hallum, 2008; Skaalvik E., & S. Skaalvik, 2010). Finding indicated that emotional intelligence and locus of control was related to teacher burnout (Subbul, 2004).

Sarros J.C. and A.M. Sarros (1992), Greenglass *et al.* (1997), Song (2008) and Kim *et al.*, (2009) found that teachers who score low on social support reported a higher degree of burnout. Other factors that have been examined in regard to teacher burnout are perceived school environment and motivational variables (Fernet *et al.*, 2012).

Several studies found teacher burnout to be associated with self-esteem, school climate and classroom climate (e. g. Schonfeld, 2001; Dorman, 2003; Grayson, & Alvarez, 2008).

In this paper we have considered two goals. Firstly, we have examined relations between teacher burnout and teacher self-efficacy, self-esteem, and school climate. Next, we have attempted to predict the teacher burnout from combination between the above-mentioned variables.

Methodology

Participants and instruments: Participants in this study were 280 (143 male, 143 female) teachers from secondary schools in Shahrood in Iran. They participated voluntarily, without any remuneration. The instruments for data collection are the following:

The Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educator's Survey (MBI-ES, Mashlach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996) is the most widely and well-known measure of teacher burnout that has been used in more of studies about burnout (Hastings, Horne, & Mitchell, 2004). The three separate components, measured by the MBI are: 1) emotional exhaustion (EE; 9 items; e.g., "I feel emotionally drained from my work"), 2) depersonalization (D; 5 items; e.g., "I've become more callous toward people since I took this job"), and 3) personal accomplishment (PA; 8 items; e.g., "I have accomplished many worthwhile things at this job").

The items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from never to every day. The evidence for the validity and the reliability of Persian versions of The Maslach Burnout Inventory has been reported for Iranian samples (Pishghadam, & Sahebjam, 2012).

Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) is a one-dimension instrument which measures global felling of self-worth or self-acceptance using simple statements. Participants answered on a 4-point Likert scale (1 =strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree) the extent to which they agree with statements such as, "I am a person of worth". Evidence for validity and the reliability of Persian version of Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale for Iranian sample has been reported (Mohammadi, 2005).

Norwegian Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (NTSES; Skaalvik E., & S. Skaalvik, 2007): The NTSES consists of 24 items and four dimensions that measure teacher self-efficacy, focusing on the dimensions of instruction, adapting education to individual student's needs, motivating students, keeping discipline, cooperating with colleagues and parents, and cope with change (e.g. "How certain are you that you can explain central themes in your subjects so that even the low-achieving students understand?"; "How certain are you that you can control even the most aggressive students?"

Studies show that NTSES is a reliable and valid assessment instrument for research (Avanzi *et al.,* 2013).

Teacher's Perception of the School Context (Skaalvik E., & S. Skaalvik, 2010): The Perceived School Context Scale was developed by Skaalvik (2010) and Farsi version was translated by researchers. The Teacher's Perception of the School Context consists of five dimensions with 15 items: discipline, time pressure, parents, autonomy, and supervisory support (e.g. "My teaching is often disrupted by students who lack discipline"; "In my daily teaching I am free to choose teaching methods and strategies"). The Perceived School Context Scale has been shown to have good reliability, with coefficient alphas ranging from .071 to .083(Skaalvik E., & S. Skaalvik, 2010).

Results

The means, standard deviations and internal consistencies of the Maslach Burnout Inventory, Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale, Norwegian Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale, and Teacher's Perception of the School Context are presented in Table 1. As Table 1 shows, the internal reliability estimates for the different scales are acceptable and most are quite good.

Table1. Mean, Standard Deviations, and Internal consistency (α) By Sex for Four Scales.

Scales	α	Men (n=143)		Women (n=147)	
		M	SD	M	SD
1. Maslach Burnout Inventory	.89	33.5	19.5	26.3	15
2. Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale	.81	21.4	5	21.5	4.3
3. Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale	.88	97.2	20.2	102.4	18.5
4. Teacher's Perception of the School	.76	48.4	9.2	53.9	10.1

The intercorrelations among the different variables are presented in Table 2. As seen in Table 2, significant correlations between the Maslach Burnout Inventory and Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (r = -0.76, p < 0.001), Norwegian Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (r = -0.67, p < 0.001), and Teacher's Perception of the School Context (r = -0.66, p < 0.001) were found in the male teacher. Furthermore, scores on the four scales were found to be significantly correlated in the female teacher.

Table 2. Correlation Matrix for Four Scales by Sex.

Scales	Men (n=143)				Women (n=147)			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1. Maslach Burnout Inventory								
2. Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale	-.76*				-.68*			
3. Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale	-.67*	.59*			-.63*	.47*		
4. Teacher's Perception of the School	-.66*	.60*	.54*		-.70*	.48*	.56*	

Stepwise multiple regression analyses were used to identify the effects of self-esteem, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher's perception of the school context on teacher burnout. For these analyses, teacher

burnout was chosen as the dependent factor. The regression analysis results were reported in Table 3.

Stepwise multiple regression analysis for the entire sample was used to determine which combination of variables (self-esteem, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher's perception) best predicts teacher burnout. Self-concept entered the equation first. In step 2, teacher's perception of the school context scores were entered to the prediction of teacher burnout. In the third step, teacher self-efficacy was entered. The regression analyses with this model produced three predictor variables, self-esteem, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher's perception, on teacher burnout which accounted for 68% of the variance in predicting teacher burnout.

Table 3. Summary of stepwise multiple regression analysis for variables predicting teacher burnout.

	Variable	β	SEB	P
Step 1	Constant	88,336	3.437	000
	Self-esteem	-2.72	.156	000
Step 2	Constant	108,909	3.522	000
	Self-esteem	-1.851	.157	000
	Teacher's Perception	-.766	.073	000
Step 3	Constant	116,322	3.527	000
	Self-esteem	-1.522	.157	000
	Teacher's Perception	-.584	.075	000
	Teacher Self-Efficacy	-.239	.039	000

$R^2 = .513$ for step1; $R^2 = .648$ for step 2; $R^2 = .689$ for step 3($P < 0.001$)

Discussion and conclusions

The current study examined the relationship between self-esteem, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher's perception of school context with teacher burnout in an Iranian sample. We found that teacher self-efficacy significantly correlated to teacher burnout, which were consistent with the findings of Brouwers, & Tomic, 2000; Evers *et al.,* 2002; Schwarzer, & Hallum, 2008; and Skaalvik E., & Skaalvik, 2010.

Another finding of this study was that self-esteem correlates statistically significantly with teachers' burnout. This result support and extend previous research findings on the relations between self-esteem and burnout that reported by Rosse, & Wayne, 1991; Byrne, 1999).

Our findings replicate and confirm the results of previous studies which showed that teacher's perceptions of school context are associated with teachers' burnout (Dorman, 2003; Grayson, & Alvarez, 2008; Skaalvik E., & S. Skaalvik, 2010).

The findings of the study indicated that self-esteem, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher's perception of school context can be considered as significant predictors of teachers' burnout. In other words, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher's perception of the school, and self-esteem affect teachers' burnout.

The results of the multiple stepwise regression analysis produced a model composed of three predictor variables (self-esteem, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher's perception of the school context) that explained 68% of the variance of teacher burnout for the combined sample of male and female.

A few limitations need to be considered when interpreting these results. Research participants were a random sample of Iranian teacher in secondary education. Thus, the findings may not generalize to teachers in other levels. The sample was selected from only one city. This sample may not be representative of all teachers in Iran.

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