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Review

A multivariate meta-analysis of student misbehavior and teacher burnout



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ABSTRACT

A multivariate meta-analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between student misbehavior and the three dimensions of teacher burnout (i.e., emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment). A total of 21 independent samples were included in the analysis, which provided a total of 63 effect sizes. Our results indicated that students' misbehavior related significantly with the three dimension of teacher burnout. The largest effect was between students' misbehavior and teacher emotional exhaustion, followed by depersonalization, and then personal accomplishment. Moderator analyses revealed that grade level, teacher age, country, percentage of female teachers, and year of publication each explained some variability among the effects. Practical recommendations and recommendations for future research are discussed.

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1. Introduction

Teacher burnout has become a critical concern for many interested in teacher attrition (Chan, 2006). In the United States of America, it has been documented that half of new teachers are leaving the profession within the first five years (Lambert & McCarthy, 2006), it is important to explore what factors might contribute to this alarming trend. One of the major reasons for teacher attrition is job dissatisfaction, with almost 25% of these departures due to problems related to student misbehavior (Ingersoll, 2003). Thus, it is not surprising that researchers have linked student misbehavior to teacher feelings of burnout (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Betoret, 2009; Gelman, 2008; Kokkinos, 2007).

Teachers indicate that student misbehavior interferes with their teaching activities (Robers, Zhang, Truman, & Snyder, 2012). Moreover, student misbehavior has been reported as the most salient stressor related to teacher burnout (McCormick & Barnett, 2011). However, there is not agreement regarding the magnitude of this relationship. In this study, we explore the evidence of the relationship between student misbehavior and teacher burnout. Our main research questions include: (a) What is the strength of the relationship between student misbehavior and teacher burnout? and (b) Does this relationship vary across publication type, school grade level, number of items in the misbehavior scale, country of origin, year of publication, country of origin, percentage of female teachers, or years of experience (these terms are defined below within the methods section)?

1.1. Teacher burnout

The construct of burnout has been an important focus of psychological research for almost four decades. The term burnout was first coined by Freudenberguer (1974, 1975) to describe the demotivation and emotional exhaustion he witnessed in volunteers working at a free health clinic. He noticed that these feelings developed over time and were often accompanied by various physical and psychological symptoms, including nausea, headaches, sleeplessness, irritability, and frustration (Freudenberguer, 1975; Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993). Around the same time, Maslach (1976) recognized that many workers in human service professions were not only emotionally depleted, but also had negative attitudes regarding their clients. Since Freudenberger's and Maslach's inaugural works, more than 6000 academic publications have been written on job burnout (Schaufeli, Leiter, & Maslach, 2009).

Burnout is a multidimensional construct, comprised of the following components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment. *Emotional exhaustion* refers to a worker not having the emotional resources to give of oneself psychologically (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). This component is often considered the primary element of burnout (Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter, 1996; Maslach, Jackson, and Schwab, 1996; Schaufeli & Taris, 2005). *Depersonalization* describes the cynical feelings a worker exhibits toward his or her clients. Finally, *lack of personal accomplishment* denotes a worker's feelings of dissatisfaction about his or her achievements in the workplace (Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter, 1996; Maslach, Jackson, and Schwab, 1996).

While burnout has been examined in a variety of human service professions, of particular interest to educators is the study of burnout among teachers. Teacher burnout has been studied in numerous countries, which suggests that it is an issue of international concern. Research on problems related to teacher burnout has been conducted in countries such as Australia (e.g., McCormick & Barnett, 2011), Canada (e.g., Fernet, Guay, Senécal, & Austin, 2012), Cypress (e.g., Kokkinos, 2007), Finland, (e.g., Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006), Israel (e.g., Friedman, 2003), the Netherlands (e.g., Brouwers & Tomic, 2000), Norway (e.g., Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007), Spain (e.g., Betoret, 2009), the United Kingdom (e.g., Hastings & Bham, 2003), and the United States (e.g., Carson, Plemmons, Templin, & Weiss, 2011).

Most researchers interested in studying teacher burnout use some form of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to measure how emotionally exhausted, depersonalized, and/or unaccomplished teachers feel (Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter, 1996; Maslach, Jackson, and Schwab, 1996). Three general forms of the MBI currently exist: the MBI-Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS; Maslach & Jackson, 1996), the MBI-Educators Survey (MBI-ES; Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter, 1996; Maslach, Jackson, and Schwab, 1996), and the MBI-General Survey (MBI-GS; Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach, & Jackson, 1996). Researchers

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