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Research Paper

Burnout and self-efficacy among special education teachers

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ABSTRACT

Teacher burnout is a serious problem in education today, which directly or indirectly affects their teaching performance. Bandura and others (1986) have found that an individual's self-efficacy plays a major role in how goals, tasks, and challenges are approached. The special educators have to play different roles and some of the factors which are identified as stressors for special educators are workload, lack of perceived success, amount of direct contact with special children, programme structure and role clarification (Waseem 1993). Therefore, the purpose of this present study was to examine the relationship of teacher burnout and self efficacy beliefs of the special education teachers. The study was Ex-post facto in nature. The sample for the present study consisted of thirty five women special education teachers purposively chosen from five special schools in Chennai city. The women special educators were in the age range of 25 years to 40 years, having a work experience of 2 years to 10 years, salary ranging from to rupees 4000 to 12,000 rupees. The following standardised tools were used; The Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators' Survey (MBI-ES; Kokkinos, 2006; Maslach et al., 1996) and the Teacher Self-efficacy Scale (Scharwzer, Schmitz & Daytner, 1999). Pearson Product moment Correlation was calculated to understand the relationship between Burnout and Self-efficacy. One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was computed to find out the difference in Self efficacy and the dimensions of Burnout among the special educators with regard to the chosen demographic variables (namely, age, income and years of experience).

Keywords: *Burnout, Special Education Teachers, Self-efficacy*

Teacher burnout and attrition are epidemic in the field of special education. The annual attrition rate for special educators has been estimated to be between 8% and 10% (Whitaker, 2000), and special educators leaving the field is much greater in number than teachers of general education (Nichols & Sosnowsky, 2002). Working as a teacher, special educator or administrator, there are times when negative, adverse events at work (and home) can lead to experience a range of negative emotions such as anger, anxiety or feeling down. While these negative emotions are normal and understandable, when they become extreme, not only does their overall social-emotional well-being is impaired, but the ability to think clearly, solve problems, and continue to perform at a high level of professional effectiveness is greatly reduced, leading them down the precipitous path to burnout. Maslach & Schaufeli (1993),

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claim that the person's inability to adapt to his/her environment due to chronic stress, which exceeds his/her limits, leads to a burnout**.** This can be an emotional and a psychological condition which is caused by a long period of anxiety and similar emotional conditions. It may be true and is especially evident in people who work with other people such as special education. So this crucial factor causing burnout is a lack of professional skills resulting in teachers facing stressful situations more often than teachers whose competencies are higher. Thus, it may be assumed that it is not only competency itself but also "simply" the belief about competency (self-efficacy) that is helpful (Smetackova, 2017). The studies reviewed (Strecher, DeVellis, Becker, Rosenstock, (1986), Conner, M., & Norman, P (1995) suggest a strong relationship between self-efficacy and healthy behavioural change and maintenance, which involves paying careful attention to the thoughts, feelings, and environment so that it may possibly help by buffering them from the impact of stressful experiences.

According to Berry (2011) 43% of variability in the level of burnout reported by special education teachers could be attributed to differences in the outcome efficacy levels, the amount of experience in the field of special education, the levels of self efficacy of the teachers and the level of perceived agreement with families about the job responsibilities. Boomgard (2013) explored statistically significant differences in teachers' perceived self-efficacy but differences in teachers' perception of burnout where not found to be statistically significant. Likewise, Saricam and Sakiz (2014) investigated the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and burnout among special education school teachers in Turkey and the findings showed that there were significant relationships between teacher self-efficacy and burnout. Also, significant differences were found between genders and branches in terms of burnout and teacher self-efficacy. Whereas, Yulianti, Atomzeal and Arina (2018) reported that self-efficacy had significantly negative effect on burnout and a significantly positive effect on work satisfaction, whereas burnout had a significantly negative effect on work satisfaction and self-efficacy had a significantly positive effect on job satisfaction with burnout as intervening variable in Special Education Teachers.

While considering the role of demographic variables in self efficacy beliefs and burnout, Antoniou, Geralexis and Charitaki (2017) reported high scores in special educators' Self-Efficacy and no differentiation to Self-Efficacy in relation to gender, experience and age. Similarly, Motallebzadeh, Ashraf and Yazdi (2014) observed a significant relationship between teachers' age, gender, and their reports of burnout. The result also showed that the participants' self-efficacy has a reverse relationship with their burnout. Nuri, Demirok and Direktor (2017) analysed the self-efficacy and burnout of special education teachers in terms of different variables such as gender, teachers' educational levels, teachers' daily working hours, and teachers' daily student numbers. The findings of the study revealed that teachers with fewer working hours had lower self-efficacy scores than the teachers with more working hours. Statistically significant difference was also reported in depersonalization of burnout sub-dimension of teachers according to their professional seniority. Hence, the present study was an attempt to examine the relationship of teacher burnout and self efficacy beliefs of the special education teachers.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

The study aimed to explore the relationship between Burnout and Self-efficacy of Special education teachers in Chennai city.

Objectives

1. To assess the relationship between Burnout and Self-efficacy of Special education teachers.
2. To understand the influence of demographic variables (age, income level and years of experience) on Burnout and Self-efficacy of Special education teachers.

Hypotheses

1. There will be no significant relationship between Burnout and Self-efficacy among Special education teachers.
2. There will be no significant difference in Burnout scores of Special education teachers with regard to their age, income level and years of experience.
3. There will be no significant difference in the Self-efficacy of Special education teachers with regard to their age, income level and years of experience.

Sample

An Ex-post facto research design was employed in this study. Purposive sampling method was used to collect data from thirty five women special educators belonging to five special schools in Chennai. The sample thus chosen comprised of special education teachers who belonged to the age range of 25-40 years (Mean age = 31.49), income level of Rs. 4000 - Rs. 12,000 (Mean income = 8828.57) and years of experience range between 2 to 10 years (Mean years of experience 5.37).

Instruments

The following scales were used for the study:

Maslach Burnout Inventory - Educators' Survey: The Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators' Survey (MBI-ES; Kokkinos, 2006; Maslach et al., 1996) was used to assess teachers' burnout. The scale contains 22 items that fall on three subscales: emotional exhaustion (EE) (9 items), depersonalization (DP) (5 items) and lack of a sense of personal accomplishment (PA) (8 items). Participants rate how frequently they experience these feelings on a 7-point scale, ranging from never to every day. Each of these aspects is measured by a separate subscale. Internal consistency was established by Maslach by using Cronbach's coefficient alpha (N = 1,316) and ranged from 0.76 to 0.90 (Iwanicki & Schwab, 1981). The reliability coefficients for the sub-scales were the following: 0.90 for EE, 0.79 for DP and 0.71 for PA (Maslach et al., 1996). The reported test-retest reliability coefficient was (N = 53) 0.82 for EE, 0.60 for DP and 0.80 for PA.

Teacher Self-Efficacy scale : The Teacher Self-Efficacy scale (short form) is a 10 item measure developed by Ralf Schwarzer, Gerdamarie Schmitz, and Gary Daytner in 1999. The items were constructed following Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1997; Schwarzer, 1992, 1993). Alpha reliability coefficients for the Teacher Self-efficacy Scale were satisfactory, ranging from 0.76 to 0.82. This scale gives a total score on self efficacy.

Procedure

Permission was sought from the school authorities and consent was obtained from the special educators to participate in the study. The sample consisted of thirty five women special education teachers purposively chosen from five special schools in Chennai city. Participants completed the Teacher Self-efficacy Scale followed by the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators' Survey (MBI-ES). The researcher monitored the participants to ensure they worked independently, filling out the questionnaires in a group setting.

Statistics Used

Pearson Product moment Correlation was calculated for each of the factors of Burnout and Self-efficacy to understand the relationship between the variables. One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was computed to find out the difference in Self efficacy and the dimensions of Burnout among the special education teachers with regard to the chosen demographic variables (namely, age, income and years of experience).

RESULTS

The results of the study are as follows:

Table 1 Relationship between Self-efficacy and Burnout of Special Education Teachers

		Subscales of Burnout	
	Emotional Exhaustion	**Depersonalisation**	**Lack of Personal Accomplishment**
Self efficacy	- 0.19^{NS}	- 0.22^{NS}	0.22^{NS}

NS – Not Significant

Correlation between self-efficacy scores and the dimensions of burnout scores, i.e., Emotional Exhaustion (r = - 0.19, n = 35, p> .05), Depersonalisation (r = - 0.22, n = 35, p> .05) and Lack of Personal Accomplishment (r = 0.22, n = 35, p> .05) did not yield significant relationship. Hence, the hypothesis 1 was accepted. (See Table 1)

Table 2 Influence of Demographic Variables (Age, Income and Years of Experience) on the Burnout of Special Education Teachers

Sub-scales of Burnout	Demographic Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Emotional Exhaustion	Age	Between groups	497.87	14	35.56	
		Within Groups	492.00	20	24.60	1.44 ^{NS}
		Total	989.87	34		
	Income	Between groups	306.87	8	38.36	
		Within Groups	683.00	26	26.27	1.46 ^{NS}
		Total	989.87	34		
	Years of Experience	Between groups	74.55	8	9.32	
		Within Groups	915.33	26	35.21	0.27 ^{NS}
		Total	989.88	34		
Depersonalisation	Age	Between groups	182.77	14	13.06	
		Within Groups	431.92	20	21.60	0.61 ^{NS}
		Total	614.69	34		
	Income	Between groups	105.77	8	13.22	
		Within Groups	508.90	26	19.57	0.71 ^{NS}
		Total	614.67	34		
	Years of Experience	Between groups	92.22	8	11.53	
		Within Groups	522.48	26	20.10	0.57 ^{NS}
		Total	614.69	34		
Lack of Personal Accomplishment	Age	Between groups	922.08	14	65.86	
		Within Groups	1687.92	20	84.40	0.78 ^{NS}
		Total	2610.00	34		
	Income	Between groups	840.70	8	105.09	
		Within Groups	1769.30	26	68.05	1.54 ^{NS}
		Total	2610.00	34		
	Years of Experience	Between groups	684.17	8	85.52	
		Within Groups	1925.83	26	74.07	1.16 ^{NS}
		Total	2610.00	34		

NS – Not Significant

One-way analysis of variance was carried to find the influence of Age, Income and Years of Experience of the special education teachers on the sub-scales of Burnout. There was no significant difference between the age, income and years of experience and the sub-scales of burnout among the special education teachers. Thus, hypothesis 2 was accepted. See Table 2

Table 3 Influence of Demographic Variables (Age, Income and Years of Experience) on Self-efficacy of Special Education Teachers

Variable	Demographic Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Self-efficacy	Age	Between groups	268.76	14	19.20	
		Within Groups	587.42	20	29.37	0.65 NS
		Total	856.17	34		
	Income	Between groups	43.17	8	5.40	
		Within Groups	813.00	26	31.27	0.17 NS
		Total	856.17	34		
	Years of Experience	Between groups	131.91	8	16.49	
		Within Groups	724.28	26	27.86	0.59 NS
		Total	856.17	34		

NS – Not Significant

Likewise, the one-way analysis performed to find out the influence of the chosen demographic variables (such as, age, income and years of experience) on the self-efficacy of the special education teachers did not differ significantly. Therefore, hypothesis 3 was accepted. (See Table 3)

DISCUSSION

The results indicated that there was no significant relationship between burnout and the score obtained on self-efficacy. This is contrary to the findings established prior where the researchers indicated significant correlation between self-efficacy, self-esteem, school climate and burnout (Bayani, Bagheri and, Bayani, 2013). The study by Hakan Saricam & Halis Sakiz, (2014) also emphasized that teacher self-efficacy and burnout were strongly related concepts, showing that each variable and its domains predicted either an increase or a decrease in the other variable and its domains. Boomgard (2013) in his study noted that with foundational content and training in special education, self-efficacy changed and the support for teachers has been found to have an influence on teacher self-efficacy therefore, when their beliefs change; there were no statistically significant correlations between self-efficacy and all three subscales of the MBI. Thus, in the present study where the findings show no significant relationship between the two variables could be due to few management and policy makers taking measures to provide for upgrading knowledge in the field and availability of an enriching ambience and support among the co-workers these days may be few of the reasons.

With respect to influence of demographic variables the finding of this study was inconsistent with those of previous studies (Woolfolk and Hoy, 1990; Lamorey and Wilcox, 2005; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk & Hoy, 2007) or on self-efficacy, which could be because the existing study did not take into account the sufficient data such as experience with the specific group of students and another reason may be the limited years of experience that the participants have in this current study. Income is considered a significant predictor of teacher efficacy and previous study had suggested that there is a connection between teacher efficacy and salary (McCarty, 2013), and this study is not consistent with this finding. This could be probably because teachers feel satisfied with

their monthly income, as they equate their jobs with service attitude or the income through this source may not be their primary source to provide for their families. With respect to age as well, there was no significant difference, consistent with the studies (Hicks, 2012; Jenks, 2004; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2007; Voris, 2011).

Regarding socio-demographic variables and burnout, results showed no significant differences in burnout dimensions. It was found that there were no significant differences in burnout levels in respect to age. This result was consistent with the findings of Bataineh (2005) and Haddad (1998) and Keener (1986). The findings of this study in terms of years of experience contradict other burnout studies (Ross et al., 1989; Kruger et al., 1991) which found out that fewer years of experience resulted in more burnout. But, this result was consistent with the findings of Platsidou and Agaliotis (2008); Bataineh (2005) and Haddad (1998) who found that there were no significant differences in burnout levels in respect to marital status and teaching experience. Results of the study revealed that special education teachers have no significant differences with regard to monthly income in contrary to the findings of Al-Dyiar and Salem (2013). This means the income was not associated with teacher stress levels. Teachers with higher monthly income are not necessarily having higher stress levels than their colleagues with lower monthly income, and vice versa.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that there exists no significant relationship between burnout and self-efficacy among special education teachers. The study also shows that there was no difference with regard to the chosen demographic variables (such as age, income and years of experience) on the burnout and self-efficacy among special education teachers. The findings of the study may be utilised while designing an intervention programme to reduce burnout. Apart from enriching, the theoretical framework of self-efficacy and burnout will be helpful to understand special education teachers' perception of their self-efficacy beliefs in relation to burnout.

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Conflict of Interest
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