

The Influence of Professional Burnout on Teachers' Professional Satisfaction: The Case of Lithuania

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Abstract

Teacher professional activity, its quality and work efficiency are conditioned by social changes and educational reforms. The major question guides this analysis - the focuses on the teachers' professional burning that affect the vocational satisfaction. Analysis of scientific literature was selected for the theoretical explanation of the research problem as well as a quantitative research method was selected for the empirical research. The indicators on the questionnaire scales provided an opportunity to determine the links between Lithuanian teachers' professional burnout and vocational satisfaction according to different structural stress dimensions. Statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS 23. Based on the results of theoretical and empirical research, the main factors influencing the interaction between occupational burnout and professional satisfaction were identified. The current survey has established the main factors affecting teachers' professional burnout, the main of which is significantly reduced ability to work, productivity, separation from work and profession, loss of control and self-control at work. Teachers increase professional satisfaction by Seeking personal fulfillment and self-realisation and wishing to contribute to social well-being.

Keywords: Teachers' Professional Burnout, Professional Satisfaction.

Introduction

Teachers are facing new challenges that change the way they interact with the environment, change needs, and present long-term new changes. The article discusses the extent to which professional burnout is expressed in Lithuanian teachers' community as a whole, and its influence to teachers' professional satisfaction.

The aim of the research is to reveal the influence of teachers' professional burnout for professional satisfaction.

The problem: when researching the aspects of professional burnout and stress, it is seldom discussed: what is the strong / weak expression of burnout in the Lithuanian teacher community, what is its relationship with teachers' professional satisfaction.

Methods: To reveal the problem, an analysis of the scientific literature and a quantitative research strategy were chosen, for the implementation of which a written survey of general education school teachers was used according. The indicators on the questionnaire scales provided an opportunity to determine the impact of Lithuanian teachers' professional burnout on professional satisfaction depending on different factors of stress.

Theoretical framework

Teacher professional activity, its quality and work efficiency are determined by social changes and educational reforms. Teachers strive to adapt to unexpected challenges. However, the changing distribution of teacher roles affect professional satisfaction and social well-being. This can be a cause of constant teachers' professional burnout. More attention has been paid to research into teachers' professional burnout and stress in recent years (Denton, Chaplin & Wall, 2013; Hoglund, Klinge & Hosan, 2015).

The object of most research was the prevalence of teachers' professional burnout and stress (Maslach, 2003; Khan, Yusoff, 2014; Helms-Lorenz, Maulana, 2016; Fitchett, McCarthy et al., 2018) and the possibilities of its overcoming and reduction measures in the institution (Pellerone, Rapisarda, Trischitta, Vitale & Ramaci, 2020).

Lithuanian researchers examine the signs and causes of this phenomenon, distinguish risk and protective factors (Merkys, 2013; Stočkus, 2014; Kuniejūtė, 2016), as well as have been researching the peculiarities of professional burnout, have been searching connections with the teacher's age and gender (Merkys, Bubelienė, 2016, Navaitienė, Danilovienė, 2017). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), professional burnout is a syndrome resulting from chronic work-related stress, with symptoms characterized by "feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion; increased mental distance from one's job or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and reduced



professional efficacy" [8]. Summarizing the researchers' statements, teachers' professional burnout can be defined as: dissatisfaction with certain needs, in other words, increasing frustration with mental and physical symptoms that reduce self-esteem (Vollmer, 1998); long-term human response to constant emotional and interpersonal stress at work (Maslach, 2003); complete "drying out" of the personality (Smith et al., 2001).

Professional satisfaction is a pleasant and positive emotional state that is determined by the attitude towards the work done (Arnold, 2005); the totality of positive personal attitudes to work (Seta, 2000). Professional satisfaction contributes to teacher well-being because satisfied teachers are less sensitive to stress and burnout (Toropova, Myrberg & Johansson, 2020); are offering higher quality teaching and better learning support for pupils (Kunter et al., 2013). Evans (1997) presented two main components of professional satisfaction: 1) job comfort - the extent to which a person is suitable for working conditions and circumstances; 2) performance of work - to the extent that it is satisfied with personal achievements with meaningful aspects of work [7]. Professional satisfaction surveys make it possible to determine teachers' motivational status and the factors that cause positive emotions at work.

Methodology

An anonymous survey was conducted during the study. In the questionnaire, respondents assessed two variables - professional burnout (46 statements) and professional satisfaction (16 statements).

Study participants and study sample. The research set consisted of all 24,109 teachers working in Lithuania (2019–2020 ŠVIS data). 398 teachers participated in the survey (a representative sample of the survey - 381 respondents): 334 (84%) female and 64 (16%) male. This corresponds to the real relative distribution of men and women in the Lithuanian teacher community. The mean age of the study participants was 45.36 ± 13.14 years.

Organization of the study. The survey was conducted in 2019 in Lithuanian general education institutions. The teachers who participated in the survey had the opportunity to fill in the questionnaire online. The link of the survey together with a short description of the study has been sent by e-mail to Lithuanian general education schools. Statistical data analysis was performed using the Social Science Statistics Package (SPSS 23) for Windows.

Research ethics. The survey ensured the anonymity of the study participants and their consent to participate in the study. The questionnaire was accompanied by an introductory letter indicating the subject of the study, the purpose and researchers contacts. The research was performed on the basis of an instrument developed by Bubelienė D. (2010). The author allowed the free use of two scales, which are designed to determine the impact of burnout of Lithuanian teachers on professional satisfaction.

Research findings

The analysis of the data disclosed the influence of occupational burnout on the professional satisfaction of general education school teachers. Professional satisfaction is determined by internal (age, gender, level of education, length of service, career opportunities, recognition) and external (quality of management, salary, job content, co-workers, working conditions) factors. Professional burnout is a condition that is caused by an individual's work, and their relationship to their work may lead to this condition.

It has been hypothesized that male teachers and female teachers view professional burnout and professional satisfaction differently.

Table 1. Distribution of professional burnout and teachers' professional satisfaction by gender

Variables	Gender	N	Mean±SD	p value
Professional satisfaction_total	Male	64	46.7±10.2	0.498
	Female	334	45.1±13.6	
Professional burnout_total	Male	64	121.3±36.3	0.827
	Female	334	119.6±37.2	

In the study of female's and male's attitudes towards professional satisfaction, it was found (Table 1) that the difference was not statistically significant ($p = 0.498$). In the study of female's and male's attitudes towards occupational burnout, it was found (Table 1) that the difference was not statistically



significant ($p = 0.827$) either. It can be assumed that female and male have similar attitudes to both occupational burnout and occupational satisfaction.

The hypothesis: during the research, the opinions of teachers with different length of service differed in the assessment of teachers' professional burnout and professional satisfaction.

Table 2. Distribution of teachers' professional satisfaction and professional burnout according to the teacher's work experience

Teacher's work experience	N	Professional satisfaction_total		Professional burnout_total	
		Mean±SD	p value	Mean±SD	p value
1–10	113	50.0±13.0	0.018	126.4±44.0	0.419
11–20	86	43.3±12.9		122.1±36.4	
21–25	77	46.5±9.9		116.6±31.3	
26–30	65	43.4±15.0		120.8±34.7	
31–52	57	40.0±13.1		108.8±31.7	
Total	398	45.4±13.1		119.9±37.0	

During the survey of Lithuanian general education school teachers, it was clarified in which period of work at school professional satisfaction dominates among teachers and how professional burnout depends on the teacher's work experience. Both the joy of a teacher's job (mean=50) and the signs of burnout (mean=126) are most often experienced by teachers, who have been working at school for the first 10 years (Table 2). It is interesting to note that lower professional satisfaction (mean=40), but at the same time less stress, fewer signs of professional burnout (mean=108) are identified by teachers who have worked at the school for the longest time (more than 30 years).

The hypothesis: the assessment of teachers' professional satisfaction depends on gender.

Table 3. Assessing the intensity of teachers' professional satisfaction by gender

	Male, N (%)	Female, N (%)	
Do not feel professional satisfaction	27 (42.3)	162 (48.6)	$\chi^2=0,345$; $df=1$; $p=0,557$
Feels professional satisfaction	37 (57.7)	170 (51.4)	

The Chi-square criterion revealed (Table 3) that when comparing the responses of male and female teachers about professional satisfaction, they did not differ statistically significantly because value $p=x>0.05$. The hypothesis that the assessment of teachers' professional satisfaction depends on gender has not been confirmed. Both male and female teacher professional satisfaction assessment did not differ ($\chi^2=0.345$, $df=1$, $p=0.557$). Although the difference is not statistically significant (Table 3), male teachers are slightly (58%) more satisfied with the teaching profession than female teachers (51%).

Using linear regression analysis, this study analysed how teachers' professional satisfaction is dependent on professional burnout. The value of the coefficient of determination $r^2 = 0.411$ showed that the linear regression model is appropriate [2]. The ANOVA $p=0.000$, so it can be stated that professional satisfaction depends on at least one of the regressors. The coefficients of the sample regression equation $b_0=0.167$ and $b_1=0.655$, $\beta=0.641$. In summary, applying linear regression analysis, it was found that teachers' professional satisfaction is dependent on teachers' professional burnout, because it satisfies the conditions of linear regression analysis, when $p<0.001$ of all variables. According to the participants of the study, the most professional burnout is determined by three factors: significantly decreased working capacity, efficiency (mean rank = 2.24); separation from work and profession (mean rank = 2.23); feeling of loss of control and self-control at work (mean rank = 2.15). Using the Friedman criterion, it was found that the differences between the statements of the teachers who best meet the professional burnout are statistically significant ($\chi^2=60,4$, $df=2$, $p=0,000$).



Conclusions

- The study revealed that professional satisfaction in the work of a teacher depends on the length of service: teachers who work in the school for up to 10 years' experience the most joy in their work, and teachers who work in the school for the longest time experience the least joy. However, the study showed that the attitudes of male teachers and female teachers to the professional satisfaction and burnout experienced are similar (the difference is not statistically significant).
- The results of the research confirmed that teachers' professional burnout is associated with significantly decreased working capacity, efficiency; separation from work and profession; feeling of loss of control and self-control at work (the difference between the statements most relevant to teachers' professional burnout was statistically significant).
- The results of the study confirmed that teachers' professional satisfaction is influenced by factors of professional burnout. Professional satisfaction is an integral part of a teacher's job in order to overcome obstacles and challenges in professional activities, resolve work conflicts, create conditions for effective collective learning and contribute to the efficiency of the educational process.

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