



Education at the Crossroads

New Thoughts of the Changing Era

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This collection of 22 essays focus on the much-discussed issues related to the educational scenario today. With the first-hand experience of 'digital divide' of the remotest district of West Bengal, we are well equipped to address the situation from perspectives, not noticed before. Variety of issues have been discussed, lot more need to be focused upon too. But the need of the hour is well addressed in this critical book.

A multi-disciplinary analytical approach has been adopted while discussing the issues related to digital pedagogy and transformation of traditional classroom teaching. A new era is knocking at our door, only need is to respond with critical insight. The barriers are necessary to point out, so that immediate measures can be taken to smoothen the journey towards an exemplified digital education system.

This book will serve as a handbook of new thoughts about education of this new era. Researchers as well as students will be benefitted from the well-chosen essays on the challenges, globally faced by all.

Signs of Teacher Burnout and Socio-Emotional Support during Covid-19

Sushant Kumar Nayak

Introduction

“With school being held virtually as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, teacher burnout is certainly still a key topic. It’s easy to feel more isolated, alone, and anxious. Learning a whole new normal – whether it is adjusting to the new homework environment, the distance learning platform, or just monitoring the current pandemic crisis –can be overwhelming. As a result, stress that may have already been present is exacerbated,”

Dr. Crestie Smith

It is important, as teachers, to maintain collegial contact through phone calls, audio and/or video conferencing, online classes and e-mails. Without a doubt, the teachers are going through the same things, feeling those same apprehensions and falling to burn out syndrome. That’s why the support we can provide to one another is invaluable, just as it is during this unprecedented time till the normal school environment restored. Burn out is a work related syndrome that most often occurs in face to face service condition and constant interaction (Farber, 1991). It is a gap between expectations of successful professional performance and an observed far less satisfying reality. Burn out is a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job and is defined by the dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism and inefficiency (Maslach, Leiter, 2001).

Burn out has been associated with various forms of job withdrawal – absenteeism, intention to leave the job, indifferent attitude towards professional work, low professional commitment and actual turnover. However, for people who stay on the job; burn out leads to lower productivity and effectiveness in work. People who is experiencing burn out can have a negative impact on their colleagues, both by causing greater personal conflict and disrupting job tasks. Thus burnout can be contagious and perpetuate itself through informal interaction of the job. On the other hand burn out has a negative consequence for students as well (Burkee et. al, 1996) and for teacher families (Westman, 2001). The exhaustion component of burn out is more prone to health hazards and negative effects on mental health, anxiety, drops in self-esteem.

Objectives

In the tune of the nature of the problem, the researcher has formulated the following objectives for the present study. They are;

1. To highlight Potential sources of burnout among teachers.
2. To enlist Potential symptoms of teachers experiencing burnout.
3. To suggest the measures that compensates the teacher burnout during these covid-19 times with the help of socio emotional support.
4. To enlist various ways and methods to cope with the stress and teacher burnout

Background of the Study

In recent decades, Maslach’s work on burnout has emerged as the dominant framework for studying burnout because of the defining psychological constructs she developed. Particularly, scholars have adopted the MBI (Maslach Burnout Inventory) scale developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981) which measures the psychological syndrome of burnout in three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy.

Emotional Exhaustion

This is the core element of burnout and the most obvious manifestation of this complex syndrome. Maslach et al. (2001) noted that when people describe themselves or others as experiencing burnout, they most often refer to the experience of exhaustion. Evers et al. (2004) referred it as a draining source of emotion and enthusiasm for professional work. Schwarzer et al. (2000) described fatigue, debilitation, loss of energy, and wearing out as characteristics of this component. However, emotional exhaustion is a personal psychological status which cannot capture other behaviours that relate to burnout. Maslach et al. argued that “the emotional demands of the work can exhaust a service provider’s capacity to be involved with, and responsive to, the needs of service recipients” (p. 403).

Cynicism/depersonalisation

According to Maslach (1976), besides experiencing emotional exhaustion, human service providers or teachers who burn out tend to become more indifferent to the people they serve or to their colleagues. Maslach described this syndrome as cynicism or depersonalisation. This is a form of strong pessimistic attitude and low feeling within the working periphery, posing a threat to the cohesiveness of staffs and professional motivation of the group. Depersonalisation is to actively ignore the service recipients in an attempt to put distance between them and oneself (Maslach et al., 2001). Evers, et al. (2004) defines depersonalisation as “a negative callous and detached attitude towards the people who one works with, i.e. patients, students” (p. 132).

Exhaustion or depersonalisation might interfere with effectiveness. When a person feels exhausted or indifferent toward serving or helping people, it is difficult to gain a sense of accomplishment. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy reflects an individual’s beliefs in his or her own capabilities to pursue a course of action to meet given situational demands. Therefore, a teacher who is inefficacious may have lower competence in his or

her own capabilities in instructional activities. Maslach et al. (2001) suggested that “the lack of efficacy seems to arise more clearly from a lack of relevant resources, whereas exhaustion and cynicism emerge from the presence of work overload and social conflict (p. 403).”

Stressor

A stressor is any event, experience or environment stimulus that causes stress in an individual. These events or experiences are perceived as threats or challenges to the individual psychologically leading to negative outcomes in performance. Stress is defined by Seyle is “a non-specific response of the body reacts to a physiological level to any type of demand”. These demands are called stressors. We have the ability to perceive an event as pleasant or unpleasant and this perception plays an integral part in stressors development. The presence of stressor over an extended period of time can eventually deplete the person’s physical, emotional and professional efficiency. The following warning signs of negative stress (Jerry, McBeath, 1990) are:

Emotional Sign:	Behavioural signs:	Physical signs:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – General Irritability – Boredom – Stagnation – Mind going blank – Desire to quit job – Unable to enjoy or compliment colleagues success – Free floating anxiety – Unknown fear – Always feeling under pressure – Disappointment with self and others – Feeling life is not much fun 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tendency to overwork – Difficulty with routine daily work – Decrease in job performance – Less time for recreation – Forgetting deadlines, appointments – Blaming others for poor performance – Making a foolish mistakes – Automatic expression of negative feelings – Restlessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fatigues – Headache – Weakness – Weight gain or loss – Insomnia – Stuttering or other speech difficulties – Vomiting – Trembling and nervous tics – Missed menstrual cycle

Previous researches in the field pointed out that once teacher burnout has been developed, it is easier to prevent it rather than to reverse it. If one recognises the warning signs of impending burnout in himself / herself, it will get worse if he/she leave it alone. But if one take steps to get one's life back into balance, one can prevent burnout from becoming a full-blown breakdown. Tims, Bakker and Derks (2013) showed that employees who craft their own job demands and resources increase their levels of work engagement and reduce the risk of burnout. Recent research suggests that employees with only mild symptoms of burnout use a range of strategies e.g. selection, optimisation, compensation (Bakker, Demerouti, and Leiter, 2014) to keep their job performance at acceptable levels. Besides studies related to factors leading to teacher burnout, studies related to its solutions and prevention strategies have also been conducted.

Method

Meta-analysis type study and qualitative description method has been adopted in this paper.

Expected Outcomes

Hendrickson (1979) discussed how to recognise teacher burnout and what to do about it. He offered seventeen suggestions for fighting burnout. Reed (1979) gave suggestions for preventing teacher burnout which include changing grade levels taught, building up self-esteem through positive reinforcement, involving teachers in decision making, promoting professional growth, releasing the pressure etc. A similar study was done by Sabel and Sabel (1982) describing burnout syndrome among special education teachers. They discussed burnout reducing techniques consisting of reduction of student-teacher ratio, shorter work hours, shared student load and training in stress management. Some techniques which can be used to prevent burnout problem are mention below:

- keeping a stable constructive relationship with colleagues and administrators;

- seeking assistance from professional counselors in case of occupational or personal distress;
- practicing a healthier lifestyle involving exercise, meditation, relaxation, and proper nutrition;
- acquiring proper time-management skills;
- accepting the personal and situational limitations and avoiding being overly perfectionist;
- striking a balance between professional time and personal time;
- setting realistic goals and priorities and scheduling accordingly

With this some other methods have been suggested to cope with teacher burnout with the help of Socio-Emotional Support is:

- Take care of your health
- Turning things around
- Trust students more
- Look for the positive
- Help another teacher
- Learn something new and share it with your students
- Start the day with meditation: One should start the day spending at least fifteen minutes meditating or reading something inspiring.
- *Develop healthy habits*: Development of healthy habits will provide energy to deal with life's hassles and demand.
- *Management of time*: Proper management of time will help in eliminating stress.
- *Have a break from technology*: Shut down all gadgets and relaxed your body and mind.

- *Avoid unnecessary stress:* Be positive and try to avoid unnecessary stress.
- *Be creative:* Thinking in creative manner will fill you with pleasure.
- *Have Realistic Goals:* Setting the goals high is motivating, but setting it too high can be stressful.
- *Avoid Conflicts:* Avoiding conflicts will save a lot of time and energy.
- *Believe in yourself:* Do not do others want. Take your own advice and do what you want.
- *Positive and optimistic attitude towards profession:* Positive thinking and optimistic attitude will make you free from stress.

Conclusion

The present article not only explained burnout among teachers but also explained how teachers can actively work to prevent burnout and also provided some techniques that faculty can take in order to heal from burnout and return to their previous state of health and pedagogical success during this Covid-19 crisis. Teachers should endeavor to attend stress-management interventions, not only for themselves but to understand others around them better. Intervention programs can be prepared in co-operation with administrators and counselors to prevent teachers burnout. Teachers with high levels of burnout need help in structurally changing their working conditions and health status, and we hope that the present article offers a framework with which this can be achieved.

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