

Factors Contributing to Stress and Burnout among Elementary School Teachers in the United States and Germany

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Presentation Outline

- Rationale/significance of the research
- Method and findings
- Implications and future directions
- Visits to classrooms

Introduction

- Teacher stress and burnout is a world-wide phenomenon (Kyriacou, 2001)
- Burnout: a psychological syndrome and combination of emotional exhaustion, tendency to depersonalize others, and reduced sense of personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981)
- Stress: the degree to which work demands cause pressure (Gugliemi & Tatrow, 1998)

Introduction

- United States: high teacher turnover rate (25-33%) in first three years of teaching, national shortage of qualified teachers (NCES)
- Germany: 74% of all teachers retired early compared to 46% of early retirements in other professions (Schaarschmidt, 2005), often due to mental health issues; >50% of teachers exhibited work-related behaviors, putting them at risk for burnout

Significance

- Informs efforts in
 - increasing teachers' coping skills to prevent burnout and attrition
 - promoting job satisfaction, teacher health and wellness
 - maximizing student achievement
 - understanding cross-cultural similarities and differences

Predictors of Stress and Burnout

- Cultural and societal factors
 - Educational systems
 - Educational leadership (Hancock & Müller, 2008)
- School-specific factors
 - Type of school, job demands and available resources
 - Interactions with students and parents
- Teacher-specific factors

Teacher-specific Factors

- Demographic variables
 - Gender, age, marital status (Körner, 2002)
 - Years of experience (Forlin, 2001)
- Individual personality, characteristics, coping resources
 - Locus of control (Byrne, 1999)
 - Self esteem (Greenberg et al., 1992)
 - Social support (Greenglass et al., 2003)
 - Self-efficacy (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000)
 - Self-acceptance (Lambert et al., 2008)

Research Purposes

- To replicate in Germany a study of teacher stress, coping, and burnout that was conducted in the U.S.
- To examine relationship of elementary teachers' years of experience, perceived occupational stress, and preventive coping/self-acceptance to burnout symptoms in the United States and Germany
- To explore which type of factors/predictors (teacher- or school-specific) are more strongly associated with burnout in both samples

Participants and Settings

U.S. Sample

- 451 elementary teachers (grades K-5) from 13 schools within three adjacent counties in North Carolina
- Response rate: 77.62% (within school rates: 59.26% to 96.77%)

(McCarthy, Lambert, O'Donnell, & Melendres, 2009)

German Sample

- 469 elementary teachers (grades 1-4) from 62 Baden-Württemberg schools in four districts (Freiburg, Karlsruhe, Stuttgart, Tübingen)
- Response rate: 60.56% (within school rates: 17.65% to 100.00%)

Survey Procedures

U.S. Sample

- Questionnaires were distributed during staff meetings
- Returned to school office
- Teachers offered incentives

German Sample

- Translation
- Principals were contacted by email
- Options: (a) Researcher administering during a staff meeting, (b) printing and postage reimbursement, (c) researcher provided questionnaires, envelopes, and postage, (d) individual summaries of results for their schools

Independent / Predictor Variables

- Perceptions of classroom demands
 - CARD measure (Lambert et al., 2001)
- CARD occupational stress score (D-R)
- Self-acceptance
 - PRI Self-Acceptance Scale (McCarthy & Lambert, 2001)
- Years of experience (number of years at current school, number of years in profession)

Dependent Variable

- Burnout: Measured by *Maslach Burnout Inventory - Educator Survey (MBI-ES; Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996)* and *MBI-D (Enzmann & Kleiber, 1989; German version)*
 - Emotional Exhaustion (EE): feeling of being overextended emotionally
 - Depersonalization (DP): a cynical stance towards others
 - Personal Accomplishment (PA): lowered feelings of competence

Measures

- Classroom Appraisal of Resources and Demands (CARD) – 84 items
 - Demographics and classroom characteristics, classroom demands (5-pt scale), helpfulness of resources (5-pt scale)

Instruments/Measures

- Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) – 22 items
- Preventive Resources Inventory (PRI)
Self-acceptance – 16 items
 - Measures how well a respondent is able to accept personal weaknesses and strengths when faced with challenging life situations

Analyses

- Three level HLM measurement models
- Items responses within burnout construct, scale scores within teachers, teachers nested within their schools
- Overwhelming majority of variance in burnout scores was between teachers within schools, not between schools ($< 1\%$) for both samples

Findings – Burnout and Self-Acceptance

Main Differences in Means

	U.S. Sample	German Sample
Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)		
Emotional Exhaustion (EE)	20.56*	14.96
Depersonalization (DP)	4.46	3.90
Personal Accomplishment (PA)	13.28	13.68
Total Score	38.10*	32.51
Self-acceptance	4.01*	3.82

Findings – Association between Burnout Symptoms and Predictor Variables

Predictors	U.S. Sample	German Sample
Years at current school	EE ↑	EE ↓
Years at current school	--	DP ↓
Years at current school	Burnout ↑	Burnout ↓
New to teaching (1-2 years)	--	EE ↓
Years of experience	--	DP ↑
Stress	EE ↑	--
Stress	DP ↑	--
Stress	--	PA ↑
Stress	Burnout ↑	Burnout ↑

Findings – Association between Burnout Symptoms and Predictor Variables

Predictors	U.S. Sample	German Sample
Self Acceptance	EE ↓	EE ↓
Self Acceptance	DP ↓	DP ↓
Self Acceptance	PA ↓	PA ↓
Self Acceptance	Burnout ↓	Burnout ↓

Summary of Findings

- Self-acceptance is the strongest predictor for burnout in both samples.
- Number of years in current school is strongly associated with level of burnout (U.S. sample ↑; German sample ↓).
- For teachers in German sample, higher stress level is associated with lower sense of personal accomplishment and self-acceptance.

Implications

- It is important to address individual teacher development (e.g., coping and teaching skills).
- It is beneficial to promote organizational improvement of schools (e.g., provision of resources, leadership development, social support).

Future Research

- Develop more complex models including school level variables, cultural work values, job satisfaction, intentions to leave education
- Examine different grade levels

Future Research

- Explore differences in teacher support and induction programs in both countries
- Collect observational data to explain differences found in the study regarding teachers' coping skills and perceptions of resources and demands

Observations & Interviews in Baden-Württemberg

- ❖ We spent an entire school day in each classroom and conducted a follow-up interview with each teacher.
- ❖ We interviewed administrators when they were available.
- ❖ We visited schools in the following cities:
 - Endersbach
 - Ludwigsburg
 - Stuttgart
 - Radolzell







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Fr. 26.6.2009
Zauberkleber



Female teacher/aide on the left side of the classroom.

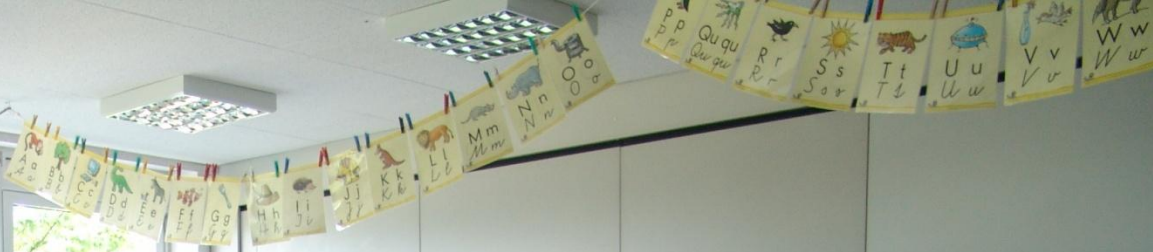
Male teacher in the center-right of the classroom, gesturing towards the children.

A group of approximately 15 young children of various ethnicities gathered around a table, engaged in an activity.





9



Der 23.6.
ist der Tag der offenen Tür
Wir danken
Ihnen für Ihre
Unterstützung
Herzliche Grüße





Kleinmann

Bäckerei Konditorei

Ellinge

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