

Being Well and Striving Steady at Work – The Relationship of Social Support and Self-Concordant Goal Selection with Teacher Burnout

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Abstract: Teacher burnout is influencing the quality of teaching and the connection of teachers with their students, thus it is a phenomenon worth paying attention to. In the past, researchers showed that following goals that are intrinsically motivated, can work as protective factors for burnout syndrome. The present study investigates the relationship between teachers' burnout level and the motivational background behind their professional goals. We assumed that autonomous motivation in goals will be associated with low burnout level, and controlled motivation in goals will be associated with high burnout level. We assumed that positive emotions and social support are related to goals with autonomous motivation, and negative emotions are related to goals with controlled motivation, and we tend to create two clusters accordingly. We assumed that the negative cluster will be associated with high burnout level, and positive cluster will be associated with low burnout level. The results strengthened all of the hypotheses. High and medium burnout levels were associated with the negative cluster, and low burnout level was associated with the positive cluster. The present study provides a contribution for understanding the protecting factors for teacher burnout, and brings awareness on how teachers' work-related goals is connected to burnout syndrome.

Keywords: teacher burnout; intrinsic motivation; social support

1 Introduction

“The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.” (William Arthur Ward)

We are living in the age where it became important to care about not just our physical, but our mental health as well. Workplaces are more likely willing to pay attention to how their employees are doing while doing their job. However, this is

mostly true in the private sector in Hungary. In the case of teachers, nurses, and doctors, who are operating under governmental control, there is usually less attention and less material resources to care for employee's mental health. In contrast, burnout syndrome was discovered first and most prominently in the human service sector [1].

In this article, we bring more attention to the mental health of public education teachers in Hungary. Burnout syndrome is present among them, yet they have an important task and a big responsibility, to give good examples, educate, and be role models for the next generation. Previous studies investigated how job circumstances are influencing burnout development at teachers. Grayson and Alvarez [2] found that conflicted relations among students, administrative obligations, teachers' own problematic relations with students are all contributing to the development of teacher burnout. Foley and Murphy [3] in their research added, that the lack of order and organization in the classroom is also playing a role in teachers' burnout development. There are a lot of risk factors in teachers' work. In addition, it seems that there are less fewer less people in Hungary who are willing to commit to become a teacher, according to the data of the central statistical office (https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_eves/i_zoi010b.html). This results in diluting quality of graduated teachers.

In our research we explored the motivational factors behind teachers' professional goals based on the SDT theory and the Self-concordance model, and we investigated their effect on the burnout levels of teachers. We applied an approach and an assessment tool – the Personal Goals and Plans Inventory, based on the Self-concordance model – which hasn't been investigated in connection with burnout syndrome previously. The inventory measures the motivational background regarding professional goals, and the positive or negative emotions that are associated with them, as well as social support related to them. We hope that our work will contribute to a mentally healthier and more inspiring teacher community, and maybe motivate more people to choose this occupation as their vocation.

1.1 Burnout Syndrome

Burnout is a condition of emotional and mental exhaustion, it is the feeling of helplessness and incompetence, loss of goals and purpose, and the development of negative attitudes toward one's work, self and others [4]. Burnout unfolds by an elongated period of time (months or years), and as a result of chronic stress experienced by the individual. In their study, Maslach et al. [1] created an assessment tool for burnout (the MBI), in which three major dimensions were defined: emotional exhaustion (when one has low energy and is feeling drained), depersonalization (a negative, cynical attitude towards one's clients) and reduced personal accomplishment (the tendency to evaluate oneself negatively, especially in one's work with clients). It is unquestionable that when teachers are developing

burnout syndrome, it has a bad effect on their students. Burnout was discovered first among the employees of the human service sector (through interviews with hospital nurses), but shortly after developing MBI-HSS, the educators' survey of MBI (MBI-ES) had been created [5].

The developmental process of burnout was investigated by various studies, e. g.: [4], [6], [7]. While the former ideas investigated only personality-related factors in burnout development, the latter ideas considered burnout as a result of insufficient balance of job demands and job resources [6], which brought work environment factors into the focus as determinants for burnout development. In the model of Leiter [7], work environment characteristics are influencing both emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment dimensions of burnout, and these burnout factors are developing parallel throughout time. In Leiter's model, depersonalization can be viewed as a reaction, a non-adaptive coping mechanism to chronic stress experienced by the individual, and it is in direct connection with emotional exhaustion. A work environment factor, social support – which will be examined in the following – can be observed in this model as a negative influence regarding the development of depersonalization, and a positive influence on perceived personal accomplishment.

1.1.1 Teacher Burnout and Its Relation to Social Support

One of the first pioneers in burnout research, Herbert J. Freudenberger published the 12 step progress model of burnout [4]. According to the model, burnout starts with an excessive desire to prove in one's occupation. This exhausts one's energy supplies, and soon one's personal relationships start to deteriorate. Thus, support from friends and colleagues may disappear in lives of people with burnout syndrome. However, Leiter [7] in his study pointed out that social support has a major role in the development of burnout syndrome as a protecting factor (see Fig. 1), because it has a negative effect on the development of depersonalization and a positive effect on personal accomplishment. Several studies confirmed this finding regarding teacher burnout, e.g. [8]-[12]. Most of them found connection with all three dimensions of burnout, and found that support can serve as a protecting factor for burnout. Besides, Avanzi et al. [13] found that dedicated teachers receive more support in their work than non-dedicated ones. As previous studies showed [11], colleagues and principal's support is a great supply for teachers in their battle against burnout. In our study, we investigated professional and emotional types of support in work-related goals.

1.2 Motivational Background of Professional Goals

As Avanzi et al. [13] pointed out, dedicated teachers tend to get more support at work. Dedication is connected to one's work performance and goals. Is there a direct connection between teachers' burnout and the motivation behind their work-related goals? In the followings, we take a closer look at this question.

1.2.1 The Self-Determination Theory

In order to investigate how personal goals effect burnout, first, we examine Deci and Ryan's Self Determination Theory (SDT in the followings) [14]. The authors defined three basic needs that an individual is willing to fulfill: need for competence, need for relatedness, and need for autonomy. The way individuals satisfy these needs might have different motivations behind. The authors named amotivation, extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation as types of motivation. While amotivation and intrinsic motivation are ends of the motivation spectrum as amotivation indicates unconscious actions without motivation, and intrinsic motivation indicates an action that is fuelled by one's interest and enthusiasm, extrinsic motivation has different kinds of regulation types according to how close extrinsic motivation is to intrinsic motivation – i. e. how internalized the extrinsic goal is – on the spectrum. Accordingly, extrinsic motivation includes external regulation (when one does something to satisfy the pressure from the environment), introjected regulation (when there is some value in the activity for the individual, but the main reason is still to avoid a constraint), identified regulation (when one consciously values a goal) , and integrated regulation (when one feels that the goal or activity is personally important but it doesn't reach intrinsic motivation).

Deci and Ryan named the self-controlled regulations „autonomous” and the environment controlled regulations „controlled”. Accordingly, external regulation and introjected regulation are part of „controlled” reason, because they are motivated by either rewards or constraints from the environment or one's own ego satisfaction. On the other hand, identified regulation, integrated regulation, and internal regulation (connected to intrinsic motivation) are part of autonomous reason in the SDT, because they are controlled by the individual him/herself [14].

2.1.1 Self-Concordance Model

The question may be – why would anyone follow a goal only because of pressure from the environment, when one does not see any value in it and when it gives no joy and satisfaction? The reason was investigated by Sheldon and Elliot [15]. In their model, they refer to a “self”, which is similar to the idea of “transcendent function” of C. G. Jung, that is a more or less stable mental construction, and has the potential to control one's bio-cognitive thinking processes (conative processes). It means that we have a capability to decide out of a “higher” mode of consciousness, which is integrated and considers everything that matters to us. This way, one can maximize one's organismic need satisfaction. It may occur, however, that individuals select goals that are not representing the values and interests of this integrated self, because during decision making, they may be out of touch with it. Then, individuals start to follow goals that are not based on their true interests and values.

The actions and goals that rise from the integrated self – Sheldon also calls it “implicit personality” [16], are called self-concordant goals. The goals rising from the non-integrated self are called nonconcordant goals. Self-concordance model (SCM) is in connection with the previously introduced SDT by Deci & Ryan. According to SCM, intrinsic and identified regulation-goals are self-concordant goals, and introjected and external regulation-goals are nonconcordant goals. Sheldon [16] discovered, that “not all progress is beneficial” in one’s goal pursuing, and that self-concordant goals are also influencing one’s well-being, since individuals who follow nonconcordant goals reported negative emotional predominance after a period of time. In contrast, individuals who followed self-concordant goals, had higher well-being and were more positive emotionally. Elliot has a similar idea in his Goal Orientation Theory [17]. He implements the expression „mastery goals” for goals that lead to positive feelings, and „achievement goals” for goals that lead to negative feelings.

1.2.2 Self-Concordant Goals and Teacher Burnout

In the following we will introduce studies that investigated teacher burnout along with either the SDT or in relation with the SCM.

Fernet et al. [18] developed the Work Task Motivation Scale for Teachers (WTMST), which is based on the SDT model, and explores six work-related motivational factors of teachers (e.g.: class management, teaching, class preparation, evaluation of students). In the validation process of WTMST (Fernet et al. 2008), researchers included burnout measurement, and correlated the two constructs. The results showed that the correlations between burnout and the work-related task motivations show a pattern in line with the SDT theory: autonomous reason tasks were in reversed connection with progressed burnout, and controlled reason tasks had linear relationship with it.

In a longitudinal study of Julia Reid [19], the aim was to renew teachers’ professional and personal identity, by delivering a development-focused program with personal meetings throughout 3 consecutive months. There were 6 sessions during the 3 months. In the course of the renewal process, a value-based inventory (the AVI – reference: <https://www.minessence.net/avaluesinventory/AVI.aspx#.XkE5QzFKhPY>) was applied, and analysed for participants, which revealed their unconsciously held, yet important values and interests for them. By aligning the important values with their professional goals, participants’ well-being raised, and by the end of the program, their vitality was significantly higher than before [19].

2 Hypotheses

Based on the findings we introduced above, we made the following presumptions:

1) To confirm the results of Fernet *et al.* [18], we hypothesize that from the intrinsic toward the external regulations in goals there will be a linear relationship with burnout levels. We presume that external and introjected regulation will associate with high burnout level, identified and intrinsic regulation will associate with low burnout level.

2/a) To confirm the SDT model's and the SCM model's assumptions, we intend to create two separate clusters out of the motivational background of teachers' work-related goals. We presume that intrinsic and identified regulation-goals (i.e. autonomous reason-goals) will form a cluster together, and external and introjected regulation-goals (i.e. controlled reason-goals) will form another cluster together [14], [15].

2/b) We presume based on the findings of Sheldon [16], that positive emotions will be in the same cluster with self-concordant goals, and negative emotions will be in the same cluster with non-concordant goals.

2/c) We also presume that self-concordant goals (and positive emotions) will be in the same cluster with professional and emotional social support [13].

3) Our next hypothesis builds on our second hypotheses – it concerns the clusters' correlations with burnout syndrome. We presume that high burnout level will be associated with non-concordant goals and negative emotions, and low burnout level will be associated with self-concordant goals, positive emotions, and professional and emotional social support [18] – in case if our second hypotheses are confirmed.

3 Methods

3.1 Participants

The assessment was conducted with the help of the Institute of Applied Pedagogy and Psychology at Budapest University of Technology and Economics. The Institute has a postgraduate program for teachers in the public education. Teachers are attending this program from all over Hungary. Among them our sample was formed.

3.2 Measures

3.2.1 MBI-ES (Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey)

Teachers' burnout level had been assessed with the Maslach Burnout Inventory, Educators Survey [5]. In this inventory, participants have to answer 22 items on a 7-point Likert scale, about how frequently they experienced a certain symptom of burnout recently (e.g.: I feel that my work is emotionally draining. – statement for emotional exhaustion). 0 means: never, 6 means: every day. We asked permission to include MBI-ES in our study from MindGarden, the owner and distributor of the MBI assessment. The MBI-ES has been validated by Szigeti et al. [20] in Hungary. The Cronbach α was 0.86 for emotional exhaustion, 0.64 for depersonalization and 0.76 for personal accomplishment. In every dimension, there was a “low”, “medium” and “high” category, which is defined by the international standards. In our study we worked with overall burnout scores. In order to distinguish between the low, moderate, and high levels of overall burnout, we applied the following categorization (see in Table 1):

Table 1

Creation of overall burnout levels (by “dimension” we mean: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment). It does not matter *which* dimension is scoring low/medium/high for categorization.

	<i>Grouping criteria</i>
Low burnout level	low on all dimensions; low on two dimensions, moderate on one dimension
Medium burnout level	moderate on all dimensions; moderate on two dimensions, low on one dimension; high on one dimension, low on two dimensions; moderate on two dimensions, high on one dimension
High burnout level	high on all dimensions; high on two dimensions and moderate or low on one dimension; high on one dimension, moderate on the second dimension and low on the third dimension

3.2.2 Personal Goals and Plans Inventory

Personal Goals and Plans Inventory was created based on the SCM model by Sheldon & Elliot [15]. We chose this inventory because it builds on the four regulation types of SDT, included in the SCM: internal regulation, identified regulation, introjected regulation and external regulation. By filling out the inventory, participants have to list 4-6 personal goals that they would like to achieve within the next 3-6 months in their profession. Then, the 3 most concerning/important goals should be picked out, and each one of them should be rated about the background motivations, emotional associations and work

circumstances regarding the goals. There are 22 items altogether, and answers are checked on a 7-point Likert scale (1: not true, 7: absolutely true). We only included items in our analysis that were measuring what we intended to investigate: we included four items, for the motivational aspects of goals (based on the SDT model): intrinsic regulation, identified regulation, introjected regulation, and external regulation; two items that measure positive and negative emotions associated with the goals; and two further items about social support (emotional and professional), regarding the picked out goals. In Hungary, several studies have been conducted with the Personal Goals and Plans inventory, with satisfactory reliability coefficients, e.g.: [21]-[23]. Since it was applied in a modified form (some items were excluded) in our study, reliability (Cronbach-alpha) values will be introduced in the ‘Descriptive statistics’ part of ‘Results’.

4 Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

In Table 2 the distribution of the sample is presented. We have a female-dominant sample, which is a typical ratio in the teacher community in Hungary. The average age is 46, which refers to a middle-aged population, and one-third of the sample is a manager teacher (principal or VP). 16,2% of participants are teaching in public schools of Budapest, 25,3% in capital towns of counties, 40,9% in towns, and 17,6% in village schools. The average teaching experience in our sample is 17 years, and the standard deviation is 8,6, so most of the participants have at least about 10 years of experience.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics of the sample

N=494		
Gender	Male	97 (19,6 %)
	Female	397 (80,4%)
Age (years)	mean=46 SD=7,6 Min.=26 Max.=64	
Role	Principal or deputy	167 (33,8%)
	Teacher	327 (66,2 %)
Township (insitution's)	Capital city	80 (16,2%)
	County capital	125 (25,3 %)
	Town	202 (40,9 %)
	Village	87 (17,6 %)
Experience in years	mean=17 SD=8,6 Min.=0 Max.=38	

Regarding the descriptives of the applied inventories in the study, the Cronbach's alphas of the MBI-ES were: 0,872 for emotional exhaustion, 0,691 for depersonalization and 0,834 for personal accomplishment. In Table 3, the low-moderate high-level distribution is presented regarding the dimensions of MBI-ES [24]. Our sample measures highest on the emotional exhaustion dimension, and on the other dimensions the scores are generally low. This means that we have a relatively healthy, but somewhat emotionally drained sample.

Table 3
Distribution of the sample within the MBI dimensions

Emotional exhaustion	high	18,2%
	moderate	27,5%
	low	54,2%
Depersonalization	high	2,2%
	moderate	6,3%
	low	91,5%
Personal accomplishment	high	0,4%
	moderate	0,4%
	low	99,2%

The overall-burnout levels were created as it was seen in 'Methods'. There was no case where all dimensions measured high, and there was no example for the combination when two dimensions measured as moderate and one as high. Among the cases, 395 fell into low, 65 into medium and 34 into high overall-burnout levels. In case of Personal Goals and Plans Inventory, participants had to mark their answers three times for each items (regarding each of their selected professional goal). We provide the Cronbach's alpha values for autonomous reason (intrinsic and identified regulation), and controlled reason (introjected and external regulation), and the rest of the included items separately (see in Table 4). In the analysis, we worked with average values of all the included items.

Table 4
Cronbach's alpha values of the items of Personal goals and plans inventory

	Cronbach's alpha
Autonomous reason	0,731
Controlled reason	0,809
Positive emotions	0,632
Negative emotions	0,603
Emotional social support	0,767
Professional social support	0,733

4.2 Burnout Levels and the SDT Model

For data-analysis we applied SPSS 25 software. Because the distribution of the sample failed the normal distribution, we applied Kruskal-Wallis test to investigate the connection between burnout levels and motivational factors of work-related goals. Then, we applied Mann-Whitney U tests to have a clearer understanding of our results. According to the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test, when the four regulation-types (intrinsic, identified, introjected, and external) were related to the three burnout levels, the results were significant ($p < 0,001$) in all cases. By applying Mann-Whitney U tests, we created pairs of the three levels of burnout (low-medium/low-high/medium-high) and related them to the regulation types to discover the differences more precisely. The results are presented in Tables 5, 6, and 7. First, we related low and medium burnout levels regarding the four regulation types. Almost all regulation types are significantly differs regarding low and medium level burnout (see in Table 5). The rank values let us conclude the direction of the difference: in the case of introjected and external regulation, the rank values were higher, and in the case of identified and intrinsic regulation the rank values were lower. The directions were similar in the other Mann-Whitney U tests as well. However, between medium and high burnout levels, there was no significant difference regarding the regulation types, with one exception, identified regulation (see in Table 6). This points out that medium and high burnout levels are both associate with low-level of autonomous reason and higher level of controlled reason when following professional goals. Identified regulation means that one is seeing a value and a meaning in one's work, and this is significantly less prominent in the high burnout level group, which means that participants who has medium burnout level see more value and meaning in their work compared to participants with high burnout level. When comparing low and high levels of burnout (Table 7), all variables were significant, except external regulation. This may be a surprising outcome, as medium and low burnout levels differed significantly regarding all variables. This result points out that the values (and rank numbers) of external regulation were somewhat lower in high-level burnout-cases than medium level burnout-cases. This phenomenon might be a characteristic feature of this sample, yet reassures that there is little deviation between medium and high burnout levels with regard to most of the variables of goal-motivation.

Table 5

Results of Mann-Whitney U test (grouping variables: low and medium burnout level). Cases marked with a '*' are significant.

	Extern. reg.	Introj. reg.	Ident. reg.	Intrins. reg.
Mann-Whitney U	10138,5	9303,5	10874,5	8465,50
Wilcoxon W	88348,5	87513,5	13019,5	10610,50
Z	-2,724	-3,601	-2,053	-4,419
Asymp. Syg. (2-tailed)	0,006*	p<0,001*	0,040*	p<0,001*

Table 6

Results of Mann-Whitney U test (grouping variables: medium and high burnout level). Cases marked with a '*' are significant.

	Extern. reg.	Introj. reg.	Ident. reg.	Intrins. reg.
Mann-Whitney U	1082,00	900,00	834,00	1095,50
Wilcoxon W	1677,00	3045,00	1429,00	1690,50
Z	-0,170	-1,516	-2,021	-0,070
Asymp. Syg. (2-tailed)	0,865	0,130	0,043*	0,944

Table 7

Results of Mann-Whitney U test (grouping variables: low and high burnout level). Tests marked with a '*' are significant.

	Extern. reg.	Introj. reg.	Integr. reg.	Intrins. reg.
Mann-WhitneyU	5553,50	3770,00	4079,00	4264,50
Wilcoxon W	83763,5	81980,00	4674,00	4859,50
Z	-1,678	-4,299	-3,939	-3,547
Asymp. Syg. (2-tailed)	0,093	p<0,001*	p<0,001*	p<0,001*

4.3 Cluster Analysis

In order to create the clusters, first we created standardized values (Z-scores) for the included items of the Personal Goals and Plans Inventory, in order to be able to be compared with one another. Then, we did K-means exploratory cluster

analysis, which classified the selected items into 2 clusters. Cluster membership was defined by positive values of the variables in each of the two clusters. The results turned out as we expected: positive emotions, emotional and professional social support, identified regulation and intrinsic regulation became members of the same cluster, whereas negative emotions, introjected regulation, and external regulation became members of another cluster. The strongest defining variable of a cluster has the highest positive value. In the first cluster it is intrinsic regulation, in the second cluster it is negative emotion. We named the clusters 'positive' and 'negative', and cluster memberships were saved as a new variable in order to be applicable for further analysis.

To investigate the clusters' correlations with the three overall-burnout levels, we applied crosstabulation (Chi-square test). We found that the two clusters associate to burnout levels as we expected: among low burnout level cases, 265 cases associated with the Positive cluster, and 130 with the Negative cluster. In the case of medium and high burnout levels the ratios turned, as 22 and 5 cases associated with the first, and 43 and 29 with the second cluster. The Chi-square test was significant. The strength of the relationship between the variables was measured by the Cramer's V coefficient. Its value was $V=0,320$, which indicates a moderately strong relationship. The results of the crosstabs are illustrated in Figure 1 as well.

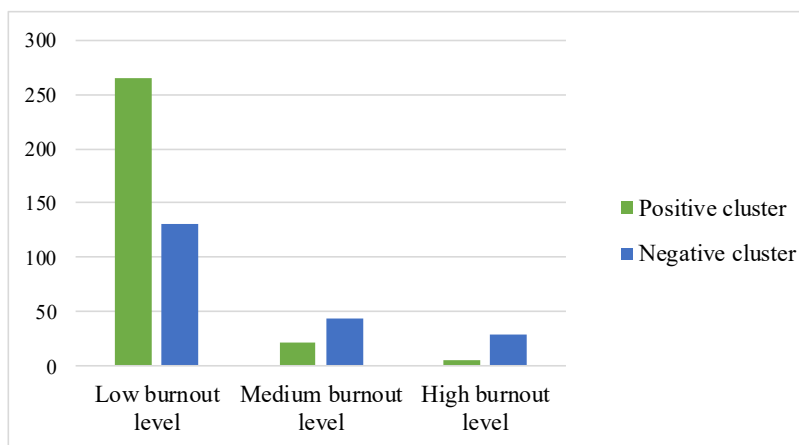


Figure 1

Results of the crosstabulation (burnout levels and clusters)

Conclusion

Based on the results of the Mann-Whitney U tests, we found that autonomous reason goals associated with low burnout level, and controlled reason associated with medium and high burnout levels, which confirms the results of the study of Fernet et al. [18]. There were significant differences between low and medium

burnout levels with respect to the regulation types, but there were no significant differences between medium and high burnout levels, except one variable: identified regulation. It means that in our sample, there is a “low burnout” group (low burnout level) and there is a “progressed burnout” group (medium and high burnout levels together), since they didn’t have significant difference, and it was also confirmed by the results of the Chi-square test as well. In crosstabulation, the two levels associated similarly regarding the two clusters. From the Mann-Whitney tests we could also draw the conclusion that considering professional goals as meaningful is still true in the medium burnout level-group, but not any more in the high burnout level group.

In the cluster analysis, clusters were formed as we expected in Hypothesis 2: identified and intrinsic regulation in goals fell into the same cluster (as autonomous reason). We could also confirm the results of Sheldon and Elliot [15], that positive emotions are associated with only self-concordant goals (as they shared the same cluster), and negative emotions were forming a cluster together with introjected and external regulation in goals (as controlled reason), so in those cases it is true that negative feelings are associated with feeling obligated to accomplish a goal (controlled reason).

As for social support, it associated with low-level of burnout, and the higher the burnout level, the lower social support is (regarding the results of the crosstabulation). This result reassures the findings of Freudenberger [4], who described in the 12-step model of burnout the part when interpersonal conflicts start to emerge – thus social support may deteriorate.

With regard to the connection of social support and motivation, Avanzi et al. [13] findings was also confirmed by our study, that dedication in work (measured as autonomous reason in goals) is associated with social support, as these variables became members of the same cluster.

As a conclusion with regard to our results, we could point out that there is a clear connection between the progressive levels of burnout and the motivational background of teachers’ work-related goals. With burnout syndrome, goals become less important, less interesting and more feeling like unwanted obligations to the individual. This is a big issue at teachers’ work since almost all of their goals are connected to educating children. Moreover, as Avanzi et al. [13] pointed out, dedicated teachers tend to have more social support. We believe that our article puts attention on an important issue. It also gives a foundation to the development of future burnout intervention programs, which may include the internalization of goals, as previously it was already proven to create professional renewal of teachers by internalizing their work-related goals [19].

Limitations

The limitations of the present research are that the sample regarding the burnout levels is not balanced: there are more cases in the low burnout level category than the other two. This may be due to the social desirability motivation of teachers.

Because of their work, teachers may think that they have to be all time role models for children and for society, and thus they have to be flawless. The uneven distribution of the sample may have influenced that we didn't find any significant differences between medium and high burnout levels, and that at one variable (external regulation) scored higher in medium level burnout cases than high level burnout cases. With a better distributed sample we could probably draw more distinct conclusions. It was also interesting and might be the subject of further investigation, why our sample was distributed between all the low, medium and high levels of the emotional exhaustion dimension of burnout, but there was no or little number of cases in medium and high levels of the other dimensions, depersonalization and personal accomplishment. It might be a characteristic of the teacher population in Hungary, but it is also possible that new standard values should be formed for the different levels of burnout dimensions regarding the teacher population in Hungary, in order to have an even distribution regarding the three levels. It would also be worth to look at burnout by the institution type and comparing the results with the fields of secondary education, vocational education and higher education. This way we would get a better understanding of burnout syndrome among all kinds of teachers in Hungary. When applying statistical analyses, the sample failed the normal distribution. Therefore, Variance analysis could not be applied, which may have led to less reliable results. The main limitation of our study is its cross-sectional nature, which includes biases of self-reporting and the inability to predict causality. However, in order to have a clearer understanding about the cause and effect relationships between the measured variables, Structural Equation Modelling is suggested for further investigations.

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