PREDICTORS OF EDUCATOR WELLNESS AND BURNOUT

Mykal Kuslis
Assistant Principal-Bullard-Havens Technical High School
Dissertation Chairperson: Dr. Marcia A. B. Delcourt
Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Pauline E. Goolkasian, Dr. Reine M. Issa, Dr. Stephanie D. Wozniak

Abstract

Educator wellness is an important component for the success of educators in the classroom and the longevity of their careers. The purpose of this mixed methods survey research study is to explore the connections between demographic factors as well as personal wellness of educators and indicators of educator burnout. Approximately 125 full-time educators across the United States will be surveyed.

Statement of the Problem

Stress is particularly prevalent among educators, with nearly 30% reporting clinically significant levels of stress (von der Embse, & Putwain, 2015). There does exist a gap in the research of educator wellness in relation to burnout in that current researchers have not explored the construct through a well-developed theoretical understanding of wellness and have not examined the school setting (urban, suburban) as a predictor of potential burnout (Brasfield, Lancaster, & Xu, 2019).

Definition of Key Terms

Term	Definition
Burnout	A state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion caused by a long-term exposure to emotionally challenging situations (Zivcicova, & Gullerova., 2018).
Stress-educator	A response syndrome of negative affects (such as anger or depression) resulting from an educator's job (Kyriacou, & Sutcliffe, 1978).
Wellness	A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being as well as the absence of illness (World health Organization, 1967). Overall wellness consists of emotional, spiritual, physical, social, intellectual, and psychological health, and that in defining each of the domains, the importance of knowledge, attitude, perception, behavior, and skill in each of the wellness areas is vital (Renger, Midyett, Mas, Erin, McDermott, & Papenfuss, 2000).

Review of the Literature

While several research studies have linked wellness to educator burnout (Brasfield, Lancaster, & Xu, 2019; Cenkseven-Önder, & Sari, 2009; Kaur & Singh, 2014; Milfont, Denny, Ameratunga, Robinson, & Merry, 2008), these studies have not included many demographic variables. Research indicates a relation-ship between an increase in wellness practices and a reduction in educator's propensity for burnout (Griva & Jokes, 2003; Kittel & Leynen, 2003; Sann & Goethe, 2003). This study will focus on work by researchers such as Maslach et al. (2001), Brasfield, et al. (2019) and Ingersoll, et al. (2018) to gather additional information about educators' self-perceived wellness and burnout indicators in order to better understand potential connections between these concepts.

Review of the Literature

Topic/Author	Participants	Wellness Findings
"Wellness during midlife and older adulthood: A different perspective" (Foster & Levitov, 2012).	170 midlife individuals from northeast Ohio; 108 were males and 62 were females with an average age of 60 with a range from 50-78 in 2012	Midlife individuals and older adults ascertain the 6 factors of the perceived wellness scale differently than originally intended. While older individuals do recognize physical and social health, they recognize the remaining factors as either optimism and existential despair.
"An empirical investigation of a theoretically based measure of perceived wellness" (Harari, Waehler, & Rogers, 2005).	317 college students from two different universities in 2005	Criterion validity evidence for the revised PWS total score accounted for a large proportion of the variance in negative psychological functioning. The implications of these results are that the PWS total score (as well as Impression Management) relates to individuals' self-reports of depression, anxiety, and other symptoms.
"Conceptualization and measurement of the spiritual and psychological dimensions of wellness in a college population" (Adams, Bezner, Drabbs, Zambarano, & Steinhardt, 2000).	112 undergraduate students in a quiet classroom condition in 2000	The PWS has been shown to possess excellent estimates of factorial and construct validity, as well as internal consistency reliability, alpha=.91. This result reinforces the overall importance for optimism and a sense of coherence as components of psychological well being. A greater sense of coherence or resilience leads to a more optimistic view of life.

Topic/Author	Participants	Burnout Findings
"The impact of resilience on role stressors and burnout in elementary and secondary teachers" (Richards, Levesque-Bristol, Templin, & Graber, 2016).	415 Teachers (174 elementary, 241 secondary), who taught in 3 adjacent school districts in the Midwest of the United States.	Independent-samples t tests indicated that secondary teachers reported significantly higher depersonalization than elementary school teachers, $t(413) = -2.52$, $p = .012$, $d = .24$, but there were no differences for stress, burnout, and resilience. Teachers who perceived high levels of role stress and burnout, but remained in the profession, were less likely to feel satisfied with their work and committed to the organizational role. They did not teach at the same level of quality as their peers.
"Teaching emotions, stress, and burnout among teachers in secondary education" (Balanescu, 2019).	132 teachers in lower and upper secondary education were sampled following a convenience procedure	Out of 43 stressful events identified within focus groups, teachers reported having experienced 26.3 of the events ($SD=6.17$). Overall, age, gender, didactical qualification, and professional experience explained 23% of the variation in the criterion of burnout.
"Differences in the values of the Burnout Dimensions on Teachers with and Without Symptoms or Health Problems" (Menghi, Rodriguez, & Onate 2019).	223 teachers working in educational institutions (elementary school level), these people had symptoms or experienced health problems within the last year before the survey	Higher level of emotional fatigue and depersonalization was obtained for teachers who had health problems in the previous 12 months. Of the teachers showing symptoms, 10 percent experienced stress.

Research Questions

1.-3. To what degree and in what manner do the predictors of district economic status, educators' age, educators' years in education, educators' school setting (suburban or urban) and six factors of wellness (Psychological, emotional, social, physical, spiritual, intellectual) predict each of the following (a) **educators' self-perceptions of emotional exhaustion**, (b) **depersonalization, and** (c) **personal accomplishment** ?
4. What are common wellness practices, sources of stress and burnout, and supports for educators practicing at the preK-12 level?
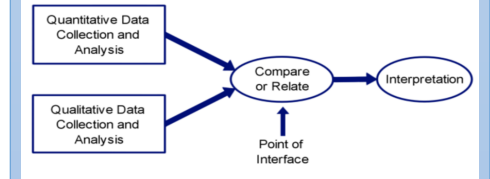
Participants and Sampling

Approximately 125 educators across the United States will be targeted using the Qualtrics platform. Participants will answer the 3 following qualifying questions prior to the survey.
1. Are you currently employed as a certified teacher in the United States?
2. Are you currently employed as a full-time teacher in the United States?
3. Do you work in a Local Educational Agency (LEA) or similar public, private, or regional school district?

Research Design

This study will use a mixed methods survey design to examine educators' self-perceptions of wellness, burnout, and their responses to four open-ended questions. The study will utilize a convergent design in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected in parallel, analyzed independently, and synthesized (Creswell, 2014). In this study, quantitative data will be used to test whether a variety of demographic differences (percent of free or reduced-price lunch) and school setting (urban, suburban) as well as self-perceived wellness impact each of the three areas of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment).

Instrumentation

Instrument	Purpose	Administration Time
Demographic Survey	To determine specific demographic variables targeted as independent variables. This section contains 17 questions.	5 Minutes
Open-ended Questions	To gain a deeper understanding of educator sources of stress and predictors of burnout. This section contains 4 questions	5 Minutes
Perceived Wellness Survey (PWS) (Adams, Bezner, & Steinhardt, 1997)	The PWS will be administered to all educators in the study in order to gain an understanding of self-perceived levels of wellness. The PWS contains 36 questions in 6 subscales (evenly distributed). The PWS has high validity and reliability.	10 Minutes
Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educator Survey (MBI-ES) (Maslach, Jackson, Leiter, Schaufeli, & Schwab, 2018)	The Maslach Burnout Inventory is a psychological tool consisting of 22 questions relating to occupational burnout. The MBI-ES contains 22 questions in 3 subscales. The MBI-ES has high validity and reliability.	10 Minutes

Data Analysis

Research questions 1-3 will be analyzed using a multi-linear regression procedure using a stepwise format (Creswell, 2013).

Question 4 will be analyzed using Descriptive, inductive and deductive coding to explore and understand the open-ended responses.

Descriptive coding will be used to label data to summarize the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data in a word or short phrase (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

Predictor Variables	Descriptive Coding
1. Demographic Factors (district economic status (% free/reduced lunch); educators' age, years in education, and school setting (suburban and urban) 2. Six Factors of Wellness (Psychological, emotional, social, physical, spiritual, intellectual)	**6 Wellness Components** 1. Physical 2. Social 3. Emotional 4. Spiritual 5. Psychological 6. Intellectual
Criterion Variables Perceived Burnout Factors 1. Emotional Exhaustion 2. Depersonalization 3. Personal Accomplishment	**3 Components of Burnout** Teachers perceived burnout in: 1. Emotional Exhaustion 2. Depersonalization 3. Personal Accomplishment