

Investigating the Relationship between Teachers' Burnout and EFL Teachers' Provided Strokes

Asst. Lect. Sajjad E. Aluaibi

Department of Political Sciences, College of Law and Political sciences ,
Aliraqia University, Iraq
sajadessamaleibi@alirqia.edu.iq

**التحقيق في العلاقة بين إجهاد المعلمين ومستوى النشاطات
المعرفية التي يقدمها مدرسو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية**

م.م. سجاد عصام العيبي

قسم العلوم السياسية كلية القانون والعلوم السياسية الجامعة العراقية
sajadessamaleibi@alirqia.edu.iq

Abstract:

The primary objective of the present study is to examine the levels of burnout among educators and to identify any potential age-related differences. To do so, 50 EFL teachers of an English Institute were asked to complete a questionnaire The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Moreover, 100 EFL Iraqi learners responded to the stroke scale in order to give their opinions about one of their language teachers in this institute by mentioning his/her age level. The collected data were analyzed subsequently. The results of the T-test of the independent samples indicated a significant difference between younger and older educators in respect of their burnout levels. Furthermore, the correlational analysis result revealed the teachers' age level could be associated with the stroke they provide for their students. As a result, it was implied that due to the lesser level of burnout among younger teachers, they provide more effective stroking behavior for their students. For future research, the findings will have profound implications for language instructors, in particular for the principals of educational institutions.

Keywords: Education, English, Stress, EFL teachers, Behaviors and Leisure Activities

1. Introduction

Stress and intention have received the attention of researchers in the current century. Freudenberger (1974) assumed burnout as a syndrome, and provided the main foundation for the theory of burnout. Freudenberger defined burnout as a situation in which people are affected by physical and behavioral symptoms. physical indicators of burnout consist of exhaustion and tiredness feeling, lowering the immune function, and some other common psychosomatic symptoms such as headaches and muscle tension.

Maslach and Jackson (1997, p.191) asserted that burnout becomes a common phenomenon in today's society, as this is not because of change in humans as a whole, but rather it may be because of basic changes in the physical and ideological atmosphere we live and work in. The researchers believe that the main reason for considering burnout as a critical issue for workers is the superseding of human values.

There is a high degree of professional dissatisfaction in special education, including teacher burnout. Many teachers give up their profession as they feel that they deal with too much paperwork. They suffer from a lack of administrative support. They are provided with enough supplies. Furthermore, they have excessive number of students, insufficient collaboration with their classmates, and have a deficiency of support from their relatives. (Brownell, Smith, McNellis, & Miller, 1997, p.36).

Brownell et al. suggested that not all teachers who leave their jobs are depressed and this may be due to the fact that they intend to choose another occupation (in and out of education), so they think that there is no need for this job any longer and hence they are not willing to expect any re offer or retirement.

Many researchers addressed the utmost significance of teacher-student interactions. For instance, Hamre and Pianta (2001,p.630) developed a TTI

framework (Teaching through interaction) based on which teachers and students can benefit from effective interactions by shading the light in the following domains— instructional support, classroom organization, and emotional support. Therefore, stroke is the lost part of teacher-student interactions. Stroke is a significant element in the educational process of teachers, it could be defined as all the actions that someone does to identify another one.

It is possible to presume that burnout is a contributing factor that contributes to a high rate of attrition and turnover in educational settings because it has become increasingly prevalent among instructors in recent years. Rather than being eliminated, burnout has become increasingly prominent on a global scale. This destructive idea poses a threat to the stability of not just the children and instructors but also the community as a whole. It is necessary to do additional study in order to discover potential methods of recognizing and preventing the signs of burnout in newly hired instructors.

Research on teacher burnout has been receiving no attention in Iraqi Language Institutes. More investigation is needed to carry out in this field, first to find the reasons behind this and then, notice the channel to escape this emotional inconvenience. It seems that these days, Iraq is facing many problems, which affected teachers' dissatisfaction and turnover in their jobs. Researchers said that burnout and stress might decrease efficiency when working with students and reduce teachers' job satisfaction (Borg, Riding, & Falzon, 1991, p.71). Still, there have been controversies among different researchers on the major predictable criterion leading to teachers' burnout.

The current study recognizes some of these criteria and adds more information to the existing literature on one other reason behind the development of burnout among EFL Iraqi teachers. Likewise, a further aim of the researcher in this

study was to identify whether the result of this study is differentiate from the results obtained previously by other researchers. To make a connection between teacher psychological feeling and students' perceived stroke from them, this study considers at the relationship between their perception of stroke and teachers' burnout in English classroom. The study also focuses on the significance of teachers' age and his/ her psychological contact he\she might have with their students.

It was further argued that if students do not get strokes for doing well in the classroom, they would seek for being noticed by looking foolish (Newell & Jeffery, 2013, p.85). This way, as bad behavior gets immediate attention, the students would get the teacher's attention more immediately. In the same vein, if the teachers give strokes skillfully, they will be able to help students feel that their contributions are recognized and valued (Newell & Jeffery, 2013, p.85). Regarding the role of the teachers in effective learning and social improvement (Sanders & Rivers, 1996), and that of the educational systems in creating a nourishing environment and enhancing good teacher characteristics (Birjandi & Bagherkazemi, 2010, p.135), this study was done to investigate students' conception on their teachers' stroke during their language learning.

This research seeks to contribute to the earlier investigation by taking careful consideration into burnout syndrome and one of the teachers' socio-demographic characteristics, and their relationships to the students' perceived strokes.

The aim of the present study is to observe the relationship between instructors' age and their burnout and student perceived stroke as well by answering the following research questions

RQ1. Is there any differences between younger and older teachers in their burnout level?

RQ2. Is there any significant relationship between younger teachers' burnout and students' perceived strokes in EFL classrooms?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Studies on Stroke and Burnout

Saboori and Pishghadam (2016, p.679) in their study on *teacher's burnout* through consideration of cultural aspects aimed to explore burnout among EFL English teachers by considering Hofstede's cultural framework. The findings indicated that burnout syndrome is related to the cultural dimension teachers come from. The results also indicated that uncertainty avoidance and resistance to involvement are two main predictors of emotional exhaustion. Furthermore, some criteria such as gender, restraint /indulgence, and uncertainty avoidance could be regarded as major predictors of personal accomplishment. Therefore, in this study, Saboori and Pishghadam claim that the burnout risk among EFL teachers might increase with the increasing rate of low indulgence, high degree of uncertainty and fear, and low femininity values. Hence, they suggested the integration of pre and in-service training courses for teachers to become aware of practical requirements of teachers.

In another study by Heidari and Gorjian (2017, p.243) on the effect of English teachers' burnout levels on the achievement of EFL learners, they showed that the burnout levels of teachers significantly affected the achievement of EFL learners.

Naji Meidani, Pishghadam, Ghonsooly, and Azar Hosseini (2018, p.3-4) examined the relationship between teachers' temporal intelligence and their burnout level. They found higher level of temporal intelligence in female teachers compared to their male counterparts

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

This study depends on a quantitative method to examine the relationship between teachers' burnout and one of their socio-demographic characteristics (age) and students' conceptions of stroke.

3.2. Teachers

The sample consisted of 50 EFL teachers of the Iraqi language center (ILI) in Baghdad, Iraq. Since in this study the major variable was the age of teachers, the researcher benefited from the retired teachers who used to teach English in this institute for the past 5 years. Junior teachers are working in this institute now. They were divided into two groups according to the treatment considered for them; one group of 25 older teachers and the other 25 younger EFL teachers. A convenient random sampling method is followed in order to select teachers due to accessibility criteria.

3.3. Learners

There were 100 EFL learners. They are female and male students, ages ranging from 15 to 22 years old. They were all at the intermediate level in the English language. In this study, the student participants are chosen based on convenience random sampling due to availability and manageability.

3.4. Instruments

Data collection instruments, which will be employed , are as follows:

3.4.1. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)

This study is using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach & Jackson 1981, 1986) which is the most common instrument used for assessing burnout. The unique and original MBI consisted of 47 items but the items were reduced to 25 and in the final version, 22 items were reminded to measure teacher burnout designed by Maslach et al. (1996) by following the Likert-type scale.

3.4.2. Student Stroke Scale (SSS)

Pishghadam and Khajavi (2014) were the developers of the Student Stroke Scale, which was used to measure teacher stroke. Following a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always), this measure contains 18 items that are aimed to examine verbal, nonverbal, positive, and negative strokes (always). These strokes are the four sub-components of the SSS. Pishghadam and Khajavi additionally ensured the quality and dependability of the data (2014).

3.5. Procedure

After obtaining authorization from the Institute, an ethical agreement is signed to preserve the anonymity of individuals. In this study, 50 teacher participants were selected. For collecting the data, the researcher appointed a date with the English language Institute to spread out the questionnaires.

To administer Student Stroke Scale (SSS) Survey, the researchers have given an overview of the study, addressing any potential students' concerns about the study in order to find the students' preferences for stroke they received from one of their English teachers in the educational institutions (filling out the introductory part of the questionnaire related to the teacher they want to give their opinion about was obligatory). As already mentioned, the students' responses were kept anonymous; there was no identifying information on the survey instrument itself.

Finally, participants were given a questionnaire to complete in 30 minutes. The participants must provide information regarding the age of the teacher they wanted to describe by filling out the SSS questionnaire.

4. Results

Prior to the administration of the questionnaire, its reliability indices were estimated through Cronbach Alpha. Table 1 demonstrates the reliability indices of the research instrument.

Table 1.
Reliability Indices of Maslach Burnout Inventory

| Instruments | Items | Cronbach Alpha |
|----------------------------|-------|----------------|
| Maslach Burnout Inventory | 22 | .90 |
| Student Stroke Scale (SSS) | 18 | .86 |

By following the information given in this table, an attempt has been made to interpret and analyze the results based on the collected data.

Analysis of the First Research Question

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality assessed normality is administered (see Table 2), A Kolmogorov significance value of more than .05 indicates inclination toward normality. Therefore, the normality assumption of all the stated variables is met.

Table 2.
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

| | |
|------------------------|-------|
| Burnout | |
| N | 50 |
| Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z | 1.186 |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | .120 |
| | |

Results of Descriptive Statistics

The students' scores in both groups were evaluated in terms of burnout level. Descriptive statistics including standard deviations and means for each group were calculated. Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the burnout scale for each group of teachers regarding their age level.

Table 3.
Descriptive Statistics Teachers' Burnout

| | group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---------|---------|----|------|----------------|-----------------|
| Burnout | younger | 25 | 2.80 | 0.48 | 0.11 |
| | older | 25 | 3.20 | 0.69 | 0.13 |

The t-test aimed at looking for any significant difference between the two groups. The results are stated in Table 4.

Table 4.
Independent-samples T-test for Burnout

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variance | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|---------|-----------------------------|--|-------|------------------------------|------|------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|-------|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| burnout | Equal variances assumed | 1.15 | 0.905 | 2.26 | 48 | .02 | -0.407 | 0.17 | -0.76 | 0.045 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 2.26 | 47.4 | .02 | -0.407 | 0.17 | -0.76 | 0.045 |

Table 4. presents the results of analysis for younger ($M=2.80$, $SD= 0.48$) and for elders [$M= 3.20$, $SD= 0.69$; $t(48) = 2.26$, $p=.02 < .05$]. Since $p=.02 < .05$, there was significant difference in results for younger and older groups of teachers.

Analysis of the Second Research Question

To answer the second research question of the study, the researcher needed to make a correlational analysis of the teachers' conception of burnout with respect to age level (the case of youngers) and students' view about the stroke they received from younger teachers. Pearson product moment correlations were used to determine if their burnout level at younger ages was related to the perceived students' stroke. Table 4.5 demonstrates the results of this analysis.

Table 5.
Correlations between Teacher' Burnout Level and Students' perceived Stroke (a Case of Youngers)

| | | Stroke |
|---------|---------------------|--------|
| burnout | Pearson Correlation | .49* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .01 |
| | N | 125 |
| | | |

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation between younger teachers' burnout and the students' stroke is significant ($r [125] = .49, p = .01$), indicating that teachers' younger teachers' burnout is related to the stroke they give to their students. So, the significant relationship between being teachers' youth and their stroking of the students can be found, and by regarding *p-value* ($.01 < .05$), the second null hypothesis could be rejected.

5. Conclusion

Psychological problems such as burnout syndrome are common problems many people suffered from. These days, in the field of language teaching some researchers showed their enthusiasm to pursue their research in this specific field on teachers. They are inclined to view this problem from different perspectives. In the present study, the researcher intended to investigate this psychological syndrome and benefited also from the stroke questionnaire by Pishghadam and Khajavy (2014). In their study on the students' perceived stroke and their academic motivation, they validated and developed a Student Stroke Scale. Their findings highlighted the importance of a stroke-rich environment in the educational setting.

Moreover, Yazdanpoor (2015, p.13) conducted an experiment with a Teacher Stroke Scale. Her findings manifested that there was a reverse correlation between teacher stroke and burnout. It was concluded that the stroke received by teachers either, negatively or, positively would shape teachers' attitudes toward their jobs and their students.

Regarding the findings of previous studies and taking the results of the present study into account, it can be assumed that a stroke-rich environment, whether provided by teachers to the students in the classroom environment or from upper levels by institutes' principals to the teachers is necessary for the development of students and teachers' efficacy in terms of their learning and teaching behavior. The findings can have multiple implications for language teachers, and institutes' principals as well.

In order to motivate teachers, particularly younger teachers, to establish stronger connections with their students in language learning classrooms, the administrators of the institutions should increase their awareness of the effective strategies (such as increasing remuneration or financial incentives) that are available. This is the first and most important phase

This study specifically examined the perceptions of stroke among Iraqi EFL students. Yet, future research can be conducted by concentrating on the perception of teachers about the stroke, taking into account their burnout. This investigation was conducted in Baghdad. Subsequent investigations can be conducted in other urban areas to examine the variations and resemblances in stroke patterns across different regions of the country.

This research focused solely on the age of teachers as the primary variable. Future investigations may explore other factors such as gender and educational qualifications. This study was conducted at the Iraqi Institute; further investigation can be undertaken in educational institutions.

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التحقيق في العلاقة بين إجهاد المعلمين ومستوى النشاطات المعرفية التي يقدمها مدرسو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

الخلاصة:

أن الهدف من عمل هذه الدراسة هو لاستكشاف فيما إذا كانت هنالك علاقة بين مستوى اعمار المعلمين والارهاق. ومن اجل القيام بذلك، طُلب من 50 مدرسًا عراقياً من معاهد تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية إكمال استبيان مخصص لاستكشاف مستويات الارهاق، استجاب 100 طالب عراقي للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لمقياس النشاطات المعرفية من أجل إبداء رأيهم حول مدرسي اللغة في هذا المعهد من خلال ذكر مستواه العمري. تم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها في وقت لاحق. أشارت نتائج اختبار T للعينات المستقلة إلى وجود فرق كبير بين المعلمين الأصغر والأكبر سنًا فيما يتعلق بمستويات الإرهاق لديهم. علاوة على ذلك، كشفت نتيجة التحليل الارتباطي أن مستوى عمر المعلمين يمكن أن يرتبط بالنشاطات المعرفية التي يقدمونها لطلابهم. نتيجة لذلك، كان من الواضح أنه نظرًا لانخفاض مستوى الإرهاق بين المعلمين الأصغر سنًا، فإنهم يوفرون سلوكًا أكثر فاعلية لطلابهم. النتائج قد يكون لها آثار كبيرة على معلمي اللغة وخاصة لمديري المعاهد التعليمية لعمل المزيد من البحث في هذا المجال.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعليم، اللغة الانكليزية، الاجهاد، معلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية والسلوكيات والنشاطات المعرفية

