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EDUCATOR BURNOUT PREVENTION

A MASTER'S THESIS  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
OF BETHEL UNIVERSITY

BY  
ANNA STROEBEL

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
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EDUCATOR BURNOUT PREVENTION

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### **Abstract**

Burnout is a universal experience that impacts many educators. Within the first five years of teaching, 40% of educators will leave the profession (Mielke, 2019). Teachers of high needs students, including special education teachers, are at an even greater risk without adequate support to meet those needs (Ansley et al., 2019). Nationally, educator burnout is becoming concerning as many schools struggle to find experienced teaching staff. The sustainability of education is dependent on understanding and preventing burnout. Burnout prevention is a rapidly expanding area of study that is highly impactful for educators. While research suggests personal prevention strategies that educators can implement, such as meditation and mindfulness activities, most current research indicates that the relationship between a teacher and their working environment is the most significant predictor and opportunity for prevention.

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

### Context

The demands of teaching only continue to increase. Students require individualized education, accommodations, modifications, differentiation, social-emotional support, and engaged teachers. Teachers who are burnt out cannot provide this type of engagement, leading to a lack of student engagement and staff shortages (Sokmen & Kilic, 2019). When burnout is discussed in schools to support the rising number of burnout teachers, solutions depend on the educator practicing "self-care." While self-care is relevant to educator burnout, it is not the central focus of burnout prevention literature. Burnout research helps teachers comprehend the signs that may lead to burnout. Educators need camaraderie, security, good salaries, and fair workloads (Dikes & Williams, 2015).

When educators are skillfully able to detect school cultures that lead to low self-efficacy, depersonalization, and emotional exhaustion, they are more in control of adjusting and practicing autonomy. The school administration and culture function as a significant predictor of burnout. For instance, secure school environments (approaching student behaviors safe, validating manner), verbal praise, and self-sufficiency are highly related to burnout, which is primarily the administration's responsibility to cultivate (Yavuz, 2018). Even more extensive, though, are school systems completely. Minimal funding leads to few mental health supports, low teacher wages, unmanageable workloads, few resources, and weak administration support. Being an educator is an extraordinary chance to impact the lives of many students. Teaching is a highly values-based position (Skaalvik, 2017). Increased turnover rates in the first five years of teaching suggest something needs to adjust for educators to remain in their professions (Mielke, 2019). Until education is a high priority in society and these values reflect in funding and sufficient support to meet needs, teachers and students will continue to endure the effects.

## Theoretical Framework

Research related to burnout began in the early 1970s, although not specifically under the term burnout. Originally burnout was known as a "potential hazard for people working in human services and caregiving occupations" (Maslach & Leiter, 2021, p.17). Related areas of study in the 1970s by clinical and social psychologists analyzed a psychological disorder named "professional depression," focusing on emotions, motivations in the workplace, and interpersonal relations. Later, industrial-organizational psychologists prioritized workplace attitudes and behaviors and conceptualized burnout as a form of job stress. Current research suggests that the educator burnout experience occurs after undergoing prolonged work-related stress and is best described when analyzing three combined factors, including depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and decreased professional accomplishment (Maslach & Leiter, 2021).

After Herbert Freudenberger created the term burnout in 1974 and early studies emerged on burnout, the Maslach Burnout Inventory, first published by Christina Maslach in 1981, became the primary measurement tool to assess burnout in individuals and organizations. Now the inventory is in its fourth edition and is still a widely used tool to measure an individual's risk of developing burnout by analyzing current DP, EE, and low PA rates. According to Maslach and Leister (2021), the inventory aligns with the World Health Organization's definition of burnout. A widely accepted definition of burnout is a work experience that institutions must manage, distinguished by three dimensions: energy depletion or mental space from one's occupation, low self-efficacy, and high rates of cynicism (Maslach & Leister, 2021).

Maslach and Leister (2021) published an article to describe current best practices for using the Maslach Burnout Inventory ethically and accurately. In the article, Maslach and Leister (2021) explain that the survey must analyze each dimension to interpret burnout correctly. For

instance, if a study only examines the presence of emotional exhaustion, these symptoms may be related to depression or chronic illness and not necessarily professional burnout. Therefore, the survey comprises statements about each of these components separately (emotional exhaustion, low personal accomplishment, and depersonalization) based on common themes amongst interviews and case studies regarding personal feelings and attitudes in the workplace.

The primary goal of research studies that use this tool to measure burnout is to understand what specific work environment factors influence EE, low PA, and DP. The survey is designed for personal and professional use and can be helpful for organizations to understand potential interventions for burnout within their organization. The tool is not meant to indicate a medical diagnosis and should not be used to "diagnose" individuals with burnout but rather to analyze themes and trends throughout a group (Maslach & Leister, 2021). Most of the research compiled in this literature review uses the research and survey developed by Christina Maslach in 1981 to understand burnout. This framework is primarily accepted throughout burnout literature entirely.

### **Research Rationale**

Teachers are at an elevated risk of leaving the profession of teaching prematurely due to exhaustion, loss of energy, or in other words, a clinical state of burnout (Akin, 2019). Between 8-15% of teachers will leave teaching each year, and about 40% of teachers will leave the education field within the first five years of their teaching career (Mielke, 2019). *Burnout* is a term created by clinical psychologist Herbert Freudenberger in 1974, who studied stress due to work, employment, and organization (Akin, 2019). The term burnout is defined as people's inability to meet high demands resulting from their excessive workloads (Freudenberger, 1974). Today, professional burnout is known as a state of being that can occur after experiencing



prolonged stress in the work environment. Therefore, as teachers enter and navigate their careers, they must understand the causes, symptoms, and prevention strategies to negate the chance of burnout both for the well-being of themselves, students, and the longevity of their career.

Burnout is a universal experience that affects people across professions, gender, race, and socioeconomic status (Nagoski, 2019). Occupations with high rates of burnout include healthcare, teaching, social work, and other various helping careers. People in these types of jobs may experience exhaustion related to a mental, physical, and emotional withdrawal that can occur when caring for people with significant needs for a great length of time. When a person is experiencing elevated levels of burnout, they will undergo a complex experience consisting of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 2001). Studies indicate that whether people in “helping” professions experience burnout are subject to variables both in and out of the employee's control (Nagoski, 2019). Nevertheless, burnout results in severe costs both socially, personally, financially, and professionally, resulting in poorer physical health, absenteeism, low morale, and a higher risk of mental illness (Maslach & Leiter, 2017).

A study completed by Akin (2019) concluded that teachers who experience symptoms of burnout exist regardless of the type of school (primary and secondary schools), gender of the teacher, class size, type of position, marital status, or child status. These findings indicate that solutions to burnout can be analyzed across various school settings and incorporate both qualitative and quantitative measures to address the exact interventions to decrease the chance of burnout for teachers. Studying current research and conducting new research is instrumental in developing manageable and effective solutions for teachers and schools to prevent and recognize the symptoms of burnout. High rates of burnout in teaching indicate the crucial need for current

and prospective teachers to empower themselves with the tools to prevent and treat signs of burnout and information for school systems to create environments with effective interventions in place to both prevent and respond to professional burnout. When teachers are empowered with this information, not only can burnout be prevented, but teachers can be highly effective educators (Akin, 2019).

### **Definition of Terms**

Depersonalization represents the increased amount of negativity or mental distance that occurs when teaching. High rates of DP may result in an educator feeling disengaged in their work and therefore impact their ability to provide meaningful instruction and have purposeful relationships with students and staff. Exhaustion, specifically emotional exhaustion, occurs when an educator is enduring feelings of depletion and energy loss. When educators are emotionally or physically exhausted, it creates an environment where they are no longer able to support the needs of their students or themselves. EE is the most widely researched aspect of burnout concerning educators. Educators often need to provide continual longitudinal support for students and staff, leading to potential long-term stressors and an elevated risk of EE. Decreased professional accomplishment describes the belief that an educator must complete the necessary tasks and expectations to do their job well. Finally, low professional efficacy sometimes referred to as self-efficacy, impacts school staff's ability to feel equipped to do their job effectively. While burnout is to be avoided and administration should seek engagement for educators in schools, further research is needed to understand each of these levels of burnout and interventions and factors associated with the increase and decrease of burnout levels within each profile (Maslach & Leiter, 2021).

Engagement which is defined by Maslach and Leiter (1999), refers to the positive opposite of burnout. Meaning that there is a negative correlation between employee burnout and employee engagement as assessed by the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Those who experience prominent levels of professional engagement are more likely to experience high energy, professional efficacy, and increased involvement. Therefore, organizational engagement is a related area of study, especially in terms of discovering interventions for burnout and increased engagement. For educators, improved engagement results in highly effective teaching practices (Maslach & Leiter, 1999).

### **Guiding Research Question**

Teacher burnout describes teachers' experience when they can no longer teach or effectively teach due to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low personal accomplishment. Understanding the complex nature of how and why a teacher experiences burnout is essential to understanding preventative measures and warning signs of burnout in a teaching career. Current research provides the basis for integrating effective preventive measures for teacher burnout by defining it, identifying burnout, and understanding factors that increase the risk of burnout. This literature review aims to conceptualize an answer to the question, *how can teacher burnout be prevented?* To fully explore an answer to this question, the following literature review will focus on three central emphases: defining teacher burnout, exploring factors that lead to teacher burnout, and identifying the symptoms of burnout.

## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature in this thesis is a collection of Education Journals, ERIC, and EBSCO MegaFILE for publications from 2015 – 2021 and includes research conducted in all countries. The original research list was also narrowed by only examining peer-reviewed articles that concentrated on the guiding question outlined in Chapter 1, "*how can teacher burnout be prevented?*" The keywords used in these searches were "teacher burnout," "compassion fatigue," "educator burnout, and "teacher wellness." Therefore, the structure of this chapter is to review the literature on teacher burnout in seven sections in this order: teacher wellness; job person fit; workload; control; reward; community; fairness; and values.

### Factors That Lead to Burnout

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### Measuring Teacher Burnout

Measuring teacher burnout can be challenging due to the self-reflective nature of burnout identification. Throughout the research, there are three primary scales researchers have used to measure burnout within the occupation of education: Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach & Jackson, 1982), The Burnout Measure (BM) (Pines & Arosen, 1988), and Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) (Kristensen et al., 2005). Analyzing the quality of these instruments will help determine burnout earlier in teachers, which can then provide earlier interventions to lessen the consequences of burnout.

## Wellness

Donahoo et al. (2018) created a study meant to examine the relationship between compassion fatigue and prayer or meditation support group access in a group of 27 special education teachers. Participants included staff from a rural Kentucky school district, ages 25-65, male and female, with a range of 1-20 years of teaching experience. Seventy-eight percent of the population reported dealing with significant emotional outbursts from students. The pilot study included pre and post-test demographic questions, professional quality of life assessment, and a 10-item perceived stress scale. The results were analyzed through statistics analytics software. First, participants attended a presentation discussing compassion satisfaction and stress. Following the training, half of the participants received daily reminders to engage in prayer or mindfulness practices. Additionally, study members were given access to support groups to attend. If the participants wanted to pursue additional or outside therapy and support, they could do so but needed to indicate so on their pre and post-test. The results indicate that perceived stress scale scores significantly decreased for members of the study who engaged in the highest amount of prayer or mindfulness practices over six weeks.

For this study, the use of meditation or prayer conceptualizes the more extensive practice of mindfulness. Further on, the special education teachers were asked to engage in mindfulness and report their stress levels throughout the study. Findings indicate that text reminders given to increase mindfulness did not affect compassion satisfaction or the use of social support groups. The participants were divided into two groups, half with members engaging in mindfulness acts <20 times within two months and the other participating in >20 mindfulness practices. Some engaged in 60 or more mindfulness practices during this period. Statistics analytics software shows that those who practiced mindfulness more over this period experienced great compassion

satisfaction, less compassion fatigue, and more enjoyment related to their work (Sharp Donahoo et al., 2018).

Cook and Babyak (2019) compiled a study to understand whether spirituality predicted or influenced the existence of teacher stress. Participants included 105 middle school teachers across three schools in Northeast Texas. Sixty percent of the participants were female, 40% male, and 47.6% were 37 years old or older. Spirituality was measured using the daily spiritual experience scale and teacher stress by the teacher stress inventory. The surveys were administered via email, and participants were chosen using convenience sampling of the 180 surveys initially sent out to middle school teachers in the area. Furthermore, the results were analyzed using simple regression analysis. Significant findings include that higher spirituality scores in this study notably predicted middle school teachers' work and time management stress scores.

Cook and Babyak (2019) evaluated this sample population to address whether a teacher's spirituality affected their professional distress, student discipline or motivation, or professional investment in their teaching career. No statistically significant results came from this study regarding distress, discipline, motivation, or investment. However, the results indicate that spirituality has a positive correlation with time management and workload-related stress. More specifically, spirituality scores impacted stress resulting from inadequate time to complete the necessary tasks for their job and stress due to high workloads. These findings suggest that spirituality scores that measure involvement in spiritual organizations increase workload and time management stress for middle school teachers in Northeast Texas.

Braun et al. (2018) researched mindfulness, well-being, job stress, and its effect on occupational burnout and depressive and anxiety symptoms among 58 middle school teachers.

Each participant taught in the Northwestern USA and was previously part of a more extensive mindfulness and teacher well-being program. The teachers were majority White (82%), 69% female, with an average of seven years of teaching experience, and the majority with a master's degree. The study assessed the relationship between teacher's mindfulness skills and their daily interaction with students in the classroom. Observations also occurred to rate emotionally supportive interactions with students during the participant's "most stressful" class. Mindfulness practices significantly predicted lower job stress, depressive and anxiety symptoms, burnout, and increased emotionally supportive classroom interactions. Additionally, findings suggest that workplace burnout decreases in classrooms with extensive organization and emotional support. Thus, this study suggests that mindfulness may improve teacher well-being and interactions between teachers and their students.

Questionnaires were distributed according to each category assessed, including the Maslach Burnout Inventory. Observation data were collected over two observations in the teacher self-identified "most challenging class" through the Classroom Assessment Scoring System-Secondary. Data analysis revealed that teachers who practice mindfulness more often are more likely to experience less stress, greater well-being, less burnout, and less depressive and anxiety symptoms. According to Braun et al. (2018), this may be because mindful teachers are more likely to endure challenging experiences without feeling drained. Bivariate correlations reveal that as years of teaching increase, so does classroom organization. Additionally, more years of teaching resulted in higher anxiety symptoms and burnout scores, while observed emotional support in classrooms increased with age. In the presence of occupational burnout, analysis indicates that higher stress levels can increase emotional support in classrooms. Occupational burnout also indicated lower amounts of classroom organization. Besides the

significance of mindfulness interventions, the study also suggests that the more significant occupational burnout, the less quality instruction and emotional support students receive in the classroom (Braun et al., 2018).

Each of these studies suggest that when teachers incorporate more mindfulness practices in their daily life, they are more likely to experience less stress related to teaching (Braun et al., 2018; Sharp Donahoo et al., 2018). Although even with the incorporation of mindfulness practices there are other related factors that can shift the impact of mindfulness benefits, such as age, years in teaching, and gender (Braun et al., 2018). Compassion fatigue, which is related to burnout, especially the sub-dimension of emotional exhaustion, was also influenced using mindfulness and prayer. Participants who engaged in mindfulness and or spiritual practices such as prayer not only reduced compassion fatigue but also increased overall job satisfaction. While each of these studies suggest a heavy correlation between mindfulness and a reduction of burnout or burnout symptoms, more research is needed among a more diverse range of participants to effectively determine the effects of mindfulness and other practices associated with well-being on teachers as a factor that increases or decreases the risk of burnout.

### **Job Person Fit**

Maslach and Leiter (2017) share that a consistent theme throughout burnout literature and their 35 years of burnout research is that a problematic relationship can occur between the person and their work environment, leading to burnout. The Areas of Work-life model created by Maslach and Leiter (2000) summarizes the types of stressors that can lead to an incompatible job person fit. Including workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values. When a person's work-life stressors indicate misalignment, there is likely to be a correlation between burnout and reactionary outcomes, including employee health risks, absenteeism, low quality of



work, and low student engagement. The person-organization fit is the harmony between the workplace and the individual regarding values and motivations and the common characteristics between both entities (Sekiguchi, 2004). Studies emerging on teacher burnout can easily be categorized through the lens of the AW model.

## **Workload**

A workload that is not manageable over short or extended periods will likely result in symptoms of burnout. Teachers and all work employees require the opportunity to rest and recover from work, and not being able to do so will lead to exhaustion. Workers who have manageable workloads and adequate time for recuperation are more likely to exhibit engagement in their profession (Maslach & Leiter, 2017). Dikes and Williams (2015) conducted a study that compared levels of burnout assessed through the Maslach Burnout Inventory with ten demographic variables of sixty-five special education teachers. The results from the study were analyzed with frequencies and measures. Results indicate that special education teachers with caseloads larger than 26 reported the highest exhaustion rates, whereas teachers with caseloads between 11 and 15 reported the lowest exhaustion rates.

Similarly, special education teachers who spent 4-6 additional hours each week completing paperwork had the highest exhaustion rates. Although the study also found that special education teachers who work 7-10 extra hours a week completing paperwork had the second highest rates of EE while showing the highest rates of DP and low PA. These findings indicate that the workload significantly correlates with burnout and that reducing burnout likelihood for educators should include a paperwork reduction. The same study also found that the number of students taught within a day impacted symptoms of burnout. Special education teachers who taught more than 31 students a day reported the highest rates of DP, and those who

taught between 21-30 were the most exhausted. Those who taught between 1-10 students a day scored the lowest for EE and DP while displaying a powerful sense of professional efficacy. These conclusions validate the significance of workload and suggest that the ideal number of students to teach throughout the day for special education teachers is one-10. Doing so reduces the chances of experiencing burnout symptoms (Dikes & Williams, 2015).

Kaynak (2020) created a qualitative study designed to assess the contextual factors that influence the well-being of elementary teachers in the United States. The participants were chosen using purposeful qualitative sampling. There were nine participants, including seven females and two male elementary school teachers in the Midwest United States. The school had 500 students, 60% white, 30% Hispanic, and 10% African American. In addition, 75% of the student body qualified for free and reduced lunch, and the school is recognized as a Title 1 school. The data was collected using questionnaires, formal interviews, and teacher journal entries. The initial survey given to teachers was meant to collect demographic information, employment history, and teaching experience. Kaynak (2020) conducted extensive interviews with each participant covering attitudes towards teaching, workload, and student, parent, and colleague relationships. Lastly, each teacher was asked to keep a journal over six months to track additional thoughts they had relating to these topics and their well-being. The following data from these efforts were analyzed using thematic analysis.

Major themes from the study that negatively impacted the well-being of these teachers include testing, lack of power, heavy workloads, student's behaviors, and a sense of scrutiny from colleagues and administration. These findings suggest that when these pressures are minimized, teachers will experience a greater sense of well-being. According to Kanyak (2020), alleviating these pressures include teachers having self-efficacy, a reasonable workload,

supportive school culture, a sense of autonomy, and supportive school culture. The participants in this study thematically reported that their well-being increased by seeing student growth and having positive relationships with supportive colleagues (Kaynak, 2020).

Wong et al. (2017) formulated a study to understand the effect of teacher burnout on student Individual Education Plan (IEP) outcomes. The study shows that the impacts of teacher burnout extend beyond teacher attrition and impact the quality of learning and the learning outcomes for special education students. Wong et al. (2017) apply the Maslach and Leiter (1999) model of burnout to assess the distinction between general teaching stress and stress originating from working with students with disabilities. In extension, the indirect implications of teaching quality and student engagement were also assessed. The participant sample included 79 special education teachers as well as one randomly selected student from their caseload. The average age of the student was five years and nine months years old, and they spent an average of two and a half hours with one-on-one support. The teachers had an average of 11 years of teaching experience and 12 students on their caseload. Ninety-six percent of all teacher participants were female. Findings from the study imply that "personal accomplishment" or PA is related to IEP outcomes. Additionally, teacher stress directly influenced student engagement and teaching quality (Wong et al., 2017).

The surveys used in this study measured teacher stress, student engagement, teacher burnout, and teaching quality. Progress towards IEP outcomes was determined by two independent consultants who used progress monitoring data and observations to determine the student's achievement while being unaware of the purpose of the study. Data regarding teacher burnout, stress, and quality were collected at the beginning of the school year, and student engagement and IEP outcome data were collected at the end of the school year. Analysis of data

shows that teacher stress was the only significant predictor of teaching quality and student engagement. Personal accomplishment was the only directly significant predictor of IEP outcomes. Emotional exhaustion was an indirect predictor as emotional exhaustion impacts student engagement, and student engagement directly influences IEP outcomes. Similarly, depersonalization indirectly affects IEP outcomes by influencing student engagement and teaching quality, directly affecting IEP outcomes. These findings suggest that if personal accomplishment data is analyzed at the beginning of the school year, the results directly predict student IEP outcomes. Results also suggest that burnout components, especially personal accomplishment, significantly predict distal student outcomes, while teacher stress predicts proximal outcomes such as teaching quality and student engagement. Distal impacts of low personal accomplishment insinuate that high workloads, lack of resources, and lack of support contribute to low PA, and therefore direct indicators of IEP outcomes (Wong et al., 2017).

Gilmour and Wehby (2020) compiled a study that assessed the effects of the number of students with disabilities taught and teacher turnover. Teachers involved in the study were both mainstream non-certified special education staff and certified. The study was a three-year longitudinal study to determine if teacher turnover related to the number of SWD in the classroom. Participants from the study were teachers with SWD in their classrooms in North Carolina (n 116,827). Most of the teachers are White (82%), female (80%), and taught in an elementary school (58%). Fifty-five percent of the schools in this study represent rural communities, and about half of all the schools are labeled as a title I school. This study is significant because few studies related to teacher turnover and special education and the effects of SWD with increased inclusion in the mainstream classroom. Data were analyzed using multilevel logistic regression models from a large state dataset to measure the percentage of

SWDs a teacher educates and associations with turnover, if this relationship differs by student disability, and how these correlations are influenced by special education certification. Findings show that classrooms with a more considerable number of SWDs correlate significantly with teacher turnover. Additionally, teachers with students under the emotional behavioral disorders category dramatically increased teacher turnover (Gilmour and Wehby, 2020).

The average teacher in North Carolina has a classroom with 20% of their students as SWD. Most of these students had a learning disability, health, or speech needs. In addition, most students were White (52%), with the next largest race category being Black (26%). Percentages of disability categories in classrooms varied, with autism accounting for 1.77% of students and emotional behavioral disorders as .86% of students. Type and level of certification were the primary identifiers for training for teaching SWD. Results show that 15% of teachers either left teaching or moved schools during the three years. Teachers who moved or left teaching were often special education certified teachers and less frequently trained in North Carolina. Characteristics of schools where teachers frequently left include a higher Black student body population, a higher percentage of FRL, a higher number of violent incidents per 1,000, and larger minority populations. Lastly, classrooms with higher numbers of SWD resulted in more considerable teacher turnover. All these findings were statistically significant. This study suggests that there is a need to provide more training and support for teachers of SWD. Especially for teachers in high-need schools (Gilmour & Wehby, 2020).

Research suggests that teachers are highly influenced by the level of workload they experience. Kaynak (2020) and Williams and Dikes (2015) compiled evidence that suggests that high workloads have a negative impact on staff. Specifically, that large class sizes, large caseloads, and a supportive school environment influence teacher's ability to have professional

efficacy. Kayak (2020) highlighted that teachers with heavy workloads also experience a lack of positive relationships with their students and colleagues. Wong et al. (2017) further elaborates on the effects of heavy workloads as not only negative for teachers but also the learning outcomes for special education students. Wong et al. (2017) determined that teacher stress directly correlates with the success of special education students in meeting their IEP objectives, student engagement, and teaching quality. Therefore, not only is stress harmful to teachers, but it also predicts student outcomes. Gilmour and Wehby (2020) collected data that showed teachers with greater numbers of students with disabilities, a larger percentage of violent incidents per 1,000, free and reduced lunch numbers, and a majority Black student population undergo the highest rates of turnover or teachers leaving the profession. Each of these studies suggest that heavy workloads and greater needs among the student population lead to teacher stress and burnout. Teacher and student engagement increases when there is a supportive school environment and a reduced number of high-needs students per teacher (Wong et al., 2017).

## **Control**

Maslach and Leiter (2017) share that research on burnout points toward the correlation of engagement and autonomy in the workplace. Specifically, employees are most engaged in their work when they can make decisions and have the necessary resources to do their job effectively. Self-efficacy is the degree to which teachers feel they can do their jobs masterfully. Teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to believe that they can produce positive outcomes for their students and assume their effectiveness. Self-efficacious teachers can self-reflect, maintain elevated levels of responsibility for student growth, and have positive expectations for student achievement (Yildizli, 2017). O'Brennan et al. (2017) completed a study that inspected high school staff members' reports of burnout linked to staffing demographics and attitudes of self-

efficacy, connectedness, and school-level variables, such as suspension rate and urbanicity. The data is from 3,225 high school staff in 58 high schools (grades 9–12) across Maryland.

Multilevel analyses showed that understandings of connectedness, safety, self-efficacy, and staff demographics are primarily related to experiences of teacher burnout. Results further indicate that when teachers are confident in their ability to provide meaningful instruction and respond to crises competently (self-efficacy), they are less likely to experience symptoms of burnout. When teachers cannot see themselves as equipped to fulfill their responsibilities and recognize that their competence is essential to effective teaching, they are likely to experience stress and low self-efficacy. The correlation between burnout and self-efficacy implies that teachers who share increased stress levels early in their careers are more likely to undergo emotional exhaustion, which will lead to burnout. Equipping teachers with the tools that support high efficacy and proficiency early on in their careers can lower burnout chances later (O'Brennan et al., 2017).

Yıldızlı (2017) completed a study that analyzed the correlation between self-efficacy, goal orientations, and burnout levels among 495 teachers in the Central Anatolia region of Turkey. Quantitative hypothetical models were created and evaluated using the listed variables. The participants in the study were from various school levels, including primary and secondary schools. Yıldızlı found a significant correlation between teachers who felt ill-equipped to manage student behavior or meet students' needs (self-efficacy) and high levels of burnout. Like O'Brennan et al. (2017), the information suggests that when teachers do not feel equipped to manage and educate their students at the expected rate, they are likely to experience emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can lead to burnout in their careers (Yildizli, 2017).

Both of these studies validate those self-efficacious teachers who are confident in their ability to complete the expected responsibilities of the job are less likely to experience symptoms of burnout. Yıldızlı (2017) suggests that as teachers develop effective teaching practices, they will be more able to endure challenges and that these attitudes will impact their teaching trajectory. Likewise, O'Brennan et al. (2017) suggest that if teachers can manage their workloads in their first and continuous years of teaching, they are more likely to express self-efficacy in their work and stances towards education. Yıldızlı (2017) focused on the overlap of goal orientations and self-efficacy concerning burnout. O'Brennan et al. (2017) discuss the impact of connectedness and school climate as primary influencers of self-efficacious teachers. The studies vary in the variables studied that influence the self-efficacy of their participants while overlapping in their results that teachers with high self-efficacy are less likely to experience symptoms of burnout (O'Brennan, 2017; Yildizli, 2017).

Ebersold et al. (2019) conducted a study to identify how perceived autonomy from the school principal affects teachers' well-being. Mediators studied from this relationship include "need satisfaction" and "need frustration." The participant sample included 49 secondary teachers in Germany, with 31 females and 18 males. These gender variables are consistent with teacher gender ratios in Germany. The average age of a participant was 41 years old; responses included ages <30 to >50 years old. Forty of the participants also lived in a permanent relationship with a partner. The data was collected through the Work Climate Questionnaire (WCO), Life Satisfaction Survey, and the Maslach Burnout Inventory. Statistical analysis through SPSS 24 was used to interpret the data. Parallel multiple mediation analysis indicates that need satisfaction, particularly autonomy satisfaction, mediates the need for autonomy support and positive affect (Ebersold et al., 2019).



The study's findings highlight the importance of distinctly understanding teachers' psychological need satisfaction and need frustration to better comprehend teachers' overall well-being. Sociodemographic labels influenced the study results as women had more favorable outcomes than men regarding positive affect and, therefore, greater need satisfaction. Those in the study who labeled themselves in permanent relationships also had more favorable scores showing higher need satisfaction. Overall, the study shows that need satisfaction is a mediator for all teachers regarding perceived autonomy support from the school principal. Furthermore, teachers experience a positive effect when their psychological needs, especially autonomy, are met with an autonomy-supportive principal. These findings imply that school principals that promote teacher autonomy better support teacher well-being and suggest a need for developing interventions for teachers undergoing frustration in the workplace due to a lack of autonomy (Ebersold et al., 2019).

Sokmen and Kilic (2019) studied burnout variables, job satisfaction, teacher engagement, and autonomy. Participants included 55% female and 44% male, age 18-61 and 0-41 years of experience. In addition, 59% of the convenience sample had between 0-10 years of teaching experience. This quantitative research study was conducted in three different tiers. The first level includes data from 146 primary school teachers in Turkey using a version of the autonomy scale. The second level included linguistic evidence collected from 32 teachers. Finally, the third level tested the relationship between variables from data representing 716 primary school teachers. Data and their relationships from these three tiers were analyzed using the SPSS 18 package of the LISREL 8.8 program and path analysis. Each teacher was given a series of questionnaires, including the Maslach Burnout Inventory, teacher job satisfaction scale, teacher sense of efficacy scale, engaged teacher scale, and teacher autonomy scale. Significant findings from the study

include that teacher self-efficacy was shown to predict job satisfaction, teacher engagement, and autonomy positively reduce the likelihood of burnout. Autonomy also revealed a positive correlation with teacher engagement.

Results from the study show that self-efficacy has a strong relationship with the variables presented in the study. First high self-efficacy predicts a greater sense of autonomy. The relationship suggests that when teachers feel more competent in their ability to do their job, they are more likely to take the initiative and make decisions related to their work confidently. The research from this study also shows that as self-efficacy increases, so does job satisfaction. These findings mean that self-efficacious teachers are more likely to find satisfaction in the workplace, have meaningful relationships, and enjoy their overall work environment. Teachers with more job satisfaction also have more positive interactions with their students and build strong relationships with them, impacting their academic performance. Congruent with other studies, Sokmen and Kilic (2019) also found that the elements of burnout, depersonalization, and emotional exhaustion negatively correlate with self-efficacy, and personal accomplishment has a positive correlation with self-efficacy. Self-efficacy, therefore, impacts both the primal sense of job satisfaction and distal chronic effects of burnout. In this current study, there were no significant findings to suggest that autonomy impacts job satisfaction. However, the research does show that autonomy has a significant positive relationship with teacher engagement. Autonomous teachers were more likely to be engaged in their schools and work responsibilities (Sokmen & Kilic 2019).

Sokmen and Kilic (2019) and Ebersold et al. (2019) agree that teachers with a greater sense of autonomy will also be more efficacious. Ebersold et al. (2019) focused on a principal's impact on creating an environment that promotes independence and found that principals

significantly impact a teacher's sense of autonomy. Additionally, teachers who experience reduced autonomy in their early years of teaching are more likely to undergo burnout (Ebersold et al., 2019). Sokmen and Kilic (2019) had similar findings as their study showed higher autonomy resulted in greater teacher engagement, and self-efficacy directly correlated with overall job satisfaction. The results of this study intermixed reveal that autonomy and professional efficacy are correlated with greater job satisfaction and reduced burnout. Factors that influence autonomy include school environment, administration leadership, and the teacher's professional effectiveness (Ebersold et al., 2019; Sokmen & Kilic, 2019).

### **Reward**

Burnout risks increase when employees are not rewarded or recognized for their work. Over time a lack of reward in the workplace can lead to inefficacy and a low sense of professional accomplishment. Conversely, when there are elements of reward and recognition meaningful to the employee, they are more likely to develop professional efficacy (Maslach & Leiter, 2017). Yavuz (2018) compiled a study that assessed the relationship between job dissatisfaction and special education teachers regarding certain variables, including teacher salaries and receiving praise from administrators. Four hundred sixty-five teachers working in special education settings participated in the study, and the team collected the data through a general survey model. The data was analyzed using SPSS 22. While the study examined trends depending on age, gender, and the number of years teaching, there were no statistically significant findings regarding these factors. However, the results did show a statistically significant relationship between job satisfaction and salary, having supportive relationships with colleagues, and receiving praise from the administration.

According to this study, job satisfaction was higher among special education teachers with the highest salaries. For example, 14% of the teachers in the survey reported that they were satisfied with the wages they received, while 85% of teachers indicated that they were not content with their salary. Teachers with the highest salaries showed the highest job satisfaction according to the surveys (Yavuz, 2018). Additionally, when comparing job satisfaction to praise received from administrators, there was a significant correlation between receiving praise and high job satisfaction rates. Conversely, when there is little to no recognition or support from administrators for challenging work, job satisfaction decreases (Yavuz, 2018).

A study by Yildiz and Kilik (2021) discusses the relationship between job satisfaction and teacher motivation. Four hundred and fourteen teachers participated in the study using the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Survey. The participants were chosen using a random cluster method, and all members of the study reside in Turkey. The survey data incorporated quantitative and qualitative data and was analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, multiple linear regression analysis, and Pearson correlation analysis. Findings from the research suggest that extrinsic motivation is lower than their intrinsic motivation and their intrinsic satisfaction is higher than their extrinsic satisfaction regarding their teaching career. The results also indicate that there is a meaningful relationship between motivation regarding job satisfaction dimensions. Research shows that job satisfaction affects student success (Abazaoğlu & Taşar, 2016) and reported that educator motivation is correlated to student motivation and educational accomplishment (Bernaus et al., 2008).

The study results reveal that there is a significant distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for teachers. Furthermore, teacher's internal satisfaction is higher than extrinsic satisfaction in terms of their attitudes towards teaching. These findings suggest that a

teacher's inner satisfaction is more motivating than external factors. Moreover, the research indicates that internal and external motivation is highly compatible with personal regulation. When teachers reported elevated levels of personal regulation (autonomy), they were more likely to have higher intrinsic and extrinsic motivation scores. Therefore, when teachers have autonomy over their choices, they are more likely to have greater motivation and higher job satisfaction. Inquiries between the two types of motivational scores show a significant correlation between job satisfaction and motivation. This study suggests that the factors that influence motivation for teachers are likely to affect job satisfaction as well (Yildiz & Kilik 2021).

Safari (2020) researched the correlation between teacher job satisfaction and burnout among 159 teachers in Iran. The study included teachers from all school levels. Various demographic variables included 91 teachers in grade-level schools, and 63 were university professors, 96 males, and 63 females, ages 25-65. Participants in the study were given questionnaires, including the Maslach Burnout Inventory to measure burnout and the Employee Satisfaction Survey to assess job satisfaction. Data analysis occurred through SPSS 24 and showed that job satisfaction among teachers in Iran is high, although highest for university professors, and burnout levels are moderate. Data analysis also reveals a negative correlation between burnout and job satisfaction, meaning that as job satisfaction increases, burnout decreases. In the study, job satisfaction scores correlated with various "job conditions," suggesting that work variables can predict job satisfaction levels.

The study concludes that university teachers experience more job satisfaction and less perceived burnout than schoolteachers. Results suggest that this is due to workplace conditions, including the nature of the job and work climate. Furthermore, job satisfaction levels influenced perceived burnout decreases as teachers with higher job satisfaction due to pay, workplace

climate, supervision, and promotion increase. Additionally, teacher experience influenced job satisfaction levels as teachers with more years in teaching reported greater job satisfaction than younger teachers. This result indicates that teachers who stay in the profession will experience more job satisfaction in time. Discussions from the study include considerations of the relationship between job satisfaction and burnout elements—namely, personal accomplishment and emotional exhaustion. The study supports the notion that PA and EE are highly influenced by aspects of job satisfaction and can, therefore, function as a protective factor for perceived burnout (Safari, 2020).

Each of these studies contemplates the effect that reward has on teachers' overall job satisfaction or burnout. Degirmenci and Yavuz (2018) found that regardless of demographic variables, teachers were heavily influenced by variables such as salary satisfaction, praise from administration, and relationships with colleagues. The more satisfied teachers are with each of these variables the greater their job satisfaction. Yildiz and Kilik (2021) studied the role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in teachers and discovered that teachers experience more intrinsic satisfaction than extrinsic satisfaction. Furthermore, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation was heavily influenced by a sense of autonomy in the work environment. While Yildiz and Kilik's (2021) study reveals that intrinsic motivation is of greater importance to the teachers in the study, it also finds that teachers experience little extrinsic motivation in their jobs. Lastly, Safari (2020) reiterates that factors such as pay and access to promotions do promote job satisfaction. Each of these studies exposes that reward does influence how teachers perform in the workplace and promoting intrinsic and extrinsic motivation opportunities can be beneficial to promoting job satisfaction and decreasing the likelihood of burnout.

## Community

A teacher's relationships with other staff members and students in the building influence the risk of burnout. A lack of support, trust, or continued conflict increases emotional exhaustion and depersonalization in the workplace. Conversely, engagement in the workplace increases when the teacher feels supported and in harmony with their work relationships (Maslach & Leiter 2017). School climate refers to the relationships, support, and behavior management that impact the atmosphere in which teachers work. Environment extends beyond the physical school and refers more to the relational factors that increase self-efficacy in the school building (O'Brennan et al., 2017). Relationships with students and attitudes towards behavior management are significant aspects of school climate. Einar and Sidsel Skaalvik (2017) found that the student-teacher relationship significantly influences depersonalization and personal accomplishment. Their study sought to analyze how four potential stressors in the school environment (discipline problems, time pressure, low student motivation, and value dissonance) were related to dimensions of teacher burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment). The study included 1145 teachers, grades first to twelve, and data were analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis and SEM analysis. The study measures the student-teacher relationship through the teacher's view of discipline problems and low student motivation. The findings show that repetitive frustration due to behavior management and low student motivation may, in time, lead to a sense of helplessness and low self-efficacy for the educator.

Further on, when a teacher sees the student as interfering with the overall learning in the classroom, they are more likely to feel a lower personal accomplishment and higher depersonalization and emotional exhaustion (Skaalvik, E. S., 2017). Safety in schools coincides

with increased burnout levels; as O'Brennan et al. (2017) measured, a teacher may feel unsafe for assorted reasons, including physical and emotional potential harm from students and staff.

O'Brennan et al. (2017) found that as teachers have an increased lack of physical and emotional safety in a school building, they are more likely to exhibit symptoms of burnout. Berg and Cornell (2016) completed a study that examined the relationship between school climate, teacher perceptions of safety, and burnout. The participant sample included 9,134 teachers in 389 middle schools across Virginia and 75 % of the population was female. The teaching experience of the selection had 53% of ten or more years, 23% with six to ten years, and 24% with one to five years of experience. Using the authoritative school climate theoretical framework, the study aimed to assess whether schools with high disciplinary structure and support correlated with less teacher-directed aggression and distress. The study collected feedback from students on the type of corrective structure, teacher feedback on perceptions of safety, and staff-related safety infraction data from the Department of Education. To assess the data, the team used multilevel modeling. According to this framework, authoritative schools have high behavioral expectations alongside supportive relationships between staff, students, and administration. Findings strongly support that middle schools across Virginia with authoritative frameworks experience lower verbal and physical aggression rates towards teachers, and teachers have lower amounts of distress. Thus, authoritative schools provide both structure and support for teachers and students and significantly increase the perception of safety and, therefore, less grief in the workplace.

Key findings also include that two-thirds of teachers reported that students said insulting things to them that school year and 6% reported having experienced physical aggression from a student. These percentages are reflective of national averages in middle schools. In addition, female teachers reported higher amounts of verbal aggression from students and higher



emotional and physical distress related to teaching than male colleagues. Additionally, teachers with more experience reported a higher perception of safety and less victimization in their careers. Although their levels of distress when undergoing verbal or physical aggression from students were much more significant than educators with fewer years of experience. Teachers in schools with more students of color and students of lower SES reported higher victimization rates and a weak perception of safety, yet interestingly low levels of distress—suggesting a need for more research regarding teacher distress and school context (Berg & Cornell, 2016).

Schools with a more authoritative climate reported a more significant perception of safety, less victimization, and less distress after experiencing physical or verbal aggression. These findings were consistent between teacher survey results and the Department of Education data. This information suggests that an authoritative school climate (supportive and structured) can reduce teacher distress in the workplace and have fewer instances of victimization towards teachers (Berg & Cornell, 2016).

Regarding safety, Sayman et al. (2018) designed a qualitative research study to understand how critical incidents faced by special education teachers influence the type of needs and training necessary for future teachers. The study compiled narratives from students in special education programs during a full year of practicum teaching. Participants filled out critical incident narratives twice a term, and the data helped identify themes leading to teacher stress, burnout, and job satisfaction. The study uses the Critical Incident Technique method to collect and analyze the data. This method, created in 1954, consisted of specific procedures to collect and interpret human activity during critical events.

Each of the participants in this study held a bachelor's degree and was in a program that provided alternative licensure in special education. Many states have created alternative

programs for licensure to combat chronic low special education teacher staffing. In addition, teachers in this program all taught in the western United States in predominately Hispanic Title I schools. Participants were chosen through a convenience sample of those in the program that consented to participate. The central question in this study was to understand if the critical incidents that a teacher faces in their work impact their overall perceptions of teaching. Special education teachers are especially susceptible to experiencing these incidents while working with students with disabilities. The results were analyzed by identifying and categorizing critical themes through a triangulation method. The three primary themes from the incidents include student behavior, collaboration, and job satisfaction. Participants had both negative and positive reactions to these incidents. For instance, after a significant behavioral occurrence, the teacher noted how they were pleased with their response and positively viewed the incident. Collaboration spoke to these teachers' interactions with other staff members, and job satisfaction grouped various experiences that contributed to teachers' feelings of support and access to resources. Results from the study indicate that the critical incidents revolving around these themes provide both drastic positive and negative effects on teachers. The themes presented suggest that special education teaching programs should focus on collaboration and behavior-based evidence-based practices (Sayman et al., 2018).

O' Brennan et al. (2017) exposed that reducing burnout correlates with a positive school climate. School climate extends beyond the physical building and refers explicitly to teachers' relationships with students, staff, and administration. When teachers feel connected to those around them, they are more likely to describe their school and the people within as trustworthy and safe. O'Brennan et al. (2017) studied the correlation between connectedness and burnout levels and assessed a strong correlation between elevated levels of emotional exhaustion and

depersonalization and low rates of personal achievement. These results suggest that connectedness with students and staff in the building can contribute to school climate attitudes, reducing the likelihood of burnout (O'Brennan et al., 2017).

Bozgeyikli (2018) compiled a study to assess the relationship between the psychological needs of special education teachers according to the scale of the psychological needs (success, relationship, autonomy, and dominance) and the presence of professional burnout. A descriptive survey was administered to 238 special education teachers selected through a random simple sampling method. Forty-five percent of the sample identify as males, 55.5 % identify as females, and 69.7 % of the group is married. The quality of life in the study is analyzed using the professional quality of life scale, which measures compassion fatigue and burnout, and the new quality of life scale, which measures psychological needs. The data was articulated using multiple linear regression analysis. Results from the study indicate a prevalent positive relationship between quality of life for special education teachers and their prevalence of psychological needs. Additionally, the study suggests a negative correlation between compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction among special educators. Thus, findings suggest that the elements of the psychological needs scale highly influence the quality of professional life for special educators.

According to Herkert (2000), the new quality of life scale for measuring autonomy, success, dominance, and relationship is based on the social-psychological needs of employees in the workplace (Herkert, 2000). The relationship aspect is the desire that a staff member must engage in social relationships at work and the fulfillment they receive from these interactions. Whereas success is the achievement one can reach with their work and receive recognition. Next, autonomy derives from the self-determination theory and describes one's ability to determine

choices and outcomes. Lastly, dominance refers to the desire to assert authority over others. The study findings show a positive correlation between burnout and compassion fatigue and a significant correlation between compassion satisfaction and the four psychological need categories. Success and relationship indicated the weakest relationship with compassion satisfaction out of the four categories. The research suggests that as special education teachers' psychological needs are met, their compassion satisfaction rises (Bozgeyikli, 2018).

Katsantonis (2020) assembled a quantitative study examining the contextual variables of teacher stress and well-being on a large scale across fifteen countries. The participant sample included 51,782 primary school teachers. The sample group completed a variety of scales, including workplace well-being and stress scales, workload stress scales, student behavior stress scales, school climate scales, self-efficacy scales, job satisfaction scales, and team innovativeness scales. The data were first analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM), which was used to understand the protective factors for teacher well-being; next, the analysis comparatively assessed the influence of gender. Then, a multiple group confirmatory factor analysis was used to distinguish between work stress dimensions and organizational cultures. The data were then clustered into five homogenous corporate school cultures. Thus, the study was built to evaluate three elements, including the protective factors for teachers' psychological well-being, the impact of gender on protective factors, and to discover the differences in workplace well-being and stress across the five clusters.

Findings from the study include that self-efficacy among teachers is negatively associated with work-related stress, workload stress, and student behavior stress. Additionally, teachers with higher self-efficacy regarding classroom management and student engagement reported lower stress levels and workplace well-being. Teachers who had higher job satisfaction also had

less workplace-related stress. Further on, the study found that teachers reporting positive school climates, including effective behavior management systems, also communicated perceptions of workplace well-being and job satisfaction. In terms of gender, the study revealed no significant findings that suggest gender as an influencer of protective factors towards stress (Katsantonis, 2020).

A study compiled by Oakes et al. (2020) examines prevention strategies regarding low self-efficacy and burnout among educators. The population included 120 random sample educators. The sample group was majority female (94.12%), White (90%), general education teachers with an average of 14 years of teaching experience. Ages ranged from 24-62, and most of the sample group held a master's degree (51.67%). The team implemented an integrated, comprehensive three-tiered support prevention model in fourteen elementary schools in a Midwest state. Each school that participated in the program underwent a year-long training to design the prevention model for their building. Thus, the data analyzed in this study comes from the second year of implementation for each elementary school. In addition, the study examined the year-end data from teacher surveys regarding the fidelity of three-tiered prevention implementation, social ratings of the program, and teacher self-efficacy and burnout levels. Significant findings from the study include that emotional exhaustion ratings were high while depersonalization and personal accomplishment scores significantly improved across the fourteen sites. Overall, teacher self-efficacy improved concerning both instructional practices and classroom management.

The three-tiered prevention model used in this study divides student needs within a building into three levels, known as tier one, tier two, and tier three. Tier one is general whole building support that every child receives. Tier two provides extra targeted support to a specific

group of students. Tier three is the most focused intervention for a small group of students. The students are placed in these tiers depending on their needs through data tracking. When the three-tiered model is integrated with fidelity, it is designed to target better the needs of students and support teachers in meeting their needs through systems. After two years of this system, implication teacher self-efficacy rose, especially in terms of classroom management. However, instructional practice self-efficacy increased, but not significantly. Educators reported low levels of depersonalization (77%) and increased personal accomplishment (80.3%) after using three-tiered prevention. These numbers vary drastically from national averages, where depersonalization is higher and personal accomplishment is lower (Oakes et al., 2020).

Yavuzkurt and Kiral (2020) conducted a study that explored the relationship between job satisfaction and friendship for teachers in schools. The sample included 269 teachers selected through a random sampling method in secondary schools. The study used the Minnesota job satisfaction scale, and the workplace friendship scale was administered as data instruments. The data was analyzed using the relational screening model and descriptive, inferential statistical techniques. Primary findings of the study include that job satisfaction measures varied depending on marital status, years of teaching experience, and age. The study shows a significant change in friendship satisfaction depending on marital status and gender for workplace friendship. Overall, the study found a positive correlation between friendships in the workplace and job satisfaction for secondary school teachers.

Comparatively, females reported more significant opportunities for friendships in the workplace, while perceptions of friendship scores were similar between males and females. Regarding marital status, teachers who identify as single report more friendships while at work. Gender and marital status proved to be the most significant influencers of friendship opportunity,

as age, years of teaching, branch, and seniority had minimal effect on friendship opportunities for teachers. Marital status also influenced job satisfaction. The study found that single teachers reported statistically more significant job satisfaction rates than their married colleagues. Internal and external job satisfaction was measured, and the results indicate that teachers have high internal and lower levels of external satisfaction. Lower levels of external satisfaction are due to low salaries, lack of promotional opportunities, and experiencing economic challenges. Internal and external satisfaction rates were highly influenced by age. Teachers ages 35 and below and between the ages of 46-50 had the highest rates of job satisfaction. Lastly, the study confirmed a moderate correlation between friendship perception and job satisfaction. These findings suggest that increasing workplace opportunities for communication, collaboration, and relationships promote job satisfaction for teachers (Yavuzkurt & Kırıl,2020).

Kasalak and Dağyar (2020) studied the relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction from 426 teachers across 50 countries. The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) obtained data from 2008, 2013, and 2018. The results were then analyzed using a meta-analysis of the total data. The data summary suggests a correlation between self-efficacy and job satisfaction and potential moderators for these scores. Furthermore, findings indicate that self-efficacy is not only highly correlated to job satisfaction but is also a protective factor against work-related stress and burnout. One purpose of the study was to see the differences in the self-efficacy and job satisfaction relationship longitudinally and between countries. One fundamental discovery included that between 2008 and 2018, teachers reported higher amounts of self-efficacy, which in turn builds job satisfaction. A reason for this is the increase in access to technology and information that educators are continually gaining access to.

Regarding any variances between countries, there was no statistically significant evidence to suggest that the teacher's location impacted their self-efficacy or job satisfaction. Although there were some impacts on self-efficacy depending on the type of society the teacher taught in. Teaching in collectivist cultures reported higher collaboration rates, teamwork, and interpersonal relationships, indicating higher self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Data demonstrates that individualistic societies increased their self-efficacy by pursuing information and found greater reward in freedom and individual effort. Therefore, both collectivist and individualist societies have impacts on self-efficacy and job satisfaction. In general, teachers across four continents from this study communicate that they experience high self-efficacy and job satisfaction rates (Kasalak a&Dağyar, 2020).

Ansley et al. (2019) created a study to assess the relationship between teacher turnover and the number of students taught with multiple risk factors. Prior data suggest that it is not the presence of high-needs students existing within a school that decreases job satisfaction and the lack of support available to teachers to meet the increased needs of students. The data in this study was collected through a survey designed to measure teachers' job satisfaction in schools with multiple risk factor students. The schools included are public schools with emotional behavioral setting IV students. These students were primarily categorized under other risk factors, as most had a history of trauma, academic struggles, and emotional-behavioral regulation (Ansley et al., 2019). Findings through correctional analysis support the notion that teachers with supportive school leadership and positive relationships with colleagues dramatically increase job satisfaction. In addition, results indicate that job satisfaction is mostly influenced by working conditions rather than the difficulty level of students.



Participants from the study were all from one setting-four, emotional, behavioral program. Overall, the participants from this school had high ratings in terms of job satisfaction. Although these findings may not prove statistically significant given the small sample size, the results also show that special education teachers can experience job satisfaction despite teaching challenging students. Furthermore, the study confirms that job satisfaction and job conditions positively correlate. When special education teachers share support from their administration, colleagues, and lower workloads, teacher self-efficacy, and job satisfaction rise. These findings support the idea that educational leadership, relationships, and working conditions contribute to job satisfaction despite challenging students (Ansley et al., 2019).

A case study assembled by Grant (2017) discussed the attrition and retention of special education teachers. The qualitative study looked at why two first-year special education teachers left the career after their first year of teaching. The two novice teachers were chosen from a convenience sample from a middle school in North Carolina based on their decisions to leave special education after their first year of teaching. The data from this study was collected through an interview and surveys. Both teachers taught in inclusion classrooms within a middle school and had bachelor's degrees, one in special education and the other in social work. In addition, the teacher with a teaching degree had spent time in a self-contained room in an elementary school for their student teaching experience.

The data collected included closed and open-ended questions. The close-ended survey questions asked the participants to rate their experiences based on their level of agreement. The open-ended questions allowed the two teachers to give specific feedback regarding their experience and recommendations to prevent future attrition and retention of special education teachers. The survey responses revealed that both participants did not view their administration

as supportive, including not being comfortable approaching administrators with needs. They also did not feel that the administrators were sensitive to their needs as first-year teachers. The most important feedback from the open-ended questionnaire was that paperwork expectations were difficult to manage. The respondents reported that they could not keep up with paperwork with the additional responsibility of co-teaching. The teacher also noted that when they mentioned this concern to the administration, they were told they would be written up if it happened again.

Additionally, a teacher reported that the amount of paperwork was challenging to complete with the additional workload of lesson planning. Other themes include those relationships with co-teachers were complex, the challenge of providing adequate modifications and accommodations for students in general education classrooms, and the lack of resources to meet student needs. All these factors contributed to the decision for both teachers to leave the field of teaching after their first year, citing that they were not prepared and not supported to do their job effectively (Grant, 2017).

A prominent theme among all studies that address burnout, job satisfaction, and teaching is that school climate influences an educator's ability to thrive. Ansley et al. (2019) summarize these findings by showing that educator burnout is influenced less by student needs and more by the level of support given to meet those needs. Grant (2017) reflects this finding as they analyzed data for two special education teachers leaving the field; the primary complaint was a lack of support to meet student needs. Schools with a supportive culture may look like an authoritative school climate, as referenced in Berg and Cornell's (2016) study. Authoritative school climates often result in greater job satisfaction for teachers because the school climate feels safe, and educators feel supported. In each of these studies, behavior management arose as a primary concern for teachers and schools. Effective and supportive structures and staffing to meet those

needs resulted in greater job satisfaction (Berg and Cornell, 2016). Part of the school climate includes relationships with students and staff in the building. Yavuzkurt and Kiral (2020) addressed the demographic variables that influence a teacher's access to friendships in the workplace. They found that being female and single increased the likelihood of friendships in school. While Katsantonis, 2020 found no evidence to suggest that gender or marital status influences stress for educators. Overall, school climate primarily impacts a teacher's experience teaching. Significant factors contributing to job satisfaction include positive work relationships, supportive school culture, adequate resources, and safety (Ansley et al., 2019; Berg & Cornell, 2016; Grant, 2017).

### **Fairness**

When a workplace is not perceived as equitable to the employee, they are likely to see their work environment as unfair. When there are issues of fairness from the employee's perspective, research indicates that they will have increased feelings of cynicism or depersonalization towards their workplace (Maslach & Leiter, 2017). Fináncz et al. (2020) conducted a study to understand the crossover between early childhood educators and their professional well-being. Through quantitative, cross-sectional, descriptive research, the study assessed 1010 early childhood educators in rural and urban regions of Hungary. The participants were chosen using non-random sampling, the average age being 45, and 95% of the population having an undergraduate degree or higher. The primary focus of their well-being was the mental health of these educators regarding different workplace conditions. Surveys were the primary measurement tool, including standardized ones and others, to grasp numerous factors contributing to their teaching environment. In Hungary, early childhood consists of two settings: nurseries and kindergarten. All children over the age of three are in kindergarten. Meaningful

change markers were noticed between these settings as nurseries had significantly less favorable environmental conditions than kindergartens. Burnout was assessed for each of the participants and while burnout among the sample was low, over three-quarters of the participants indicated mild depressive symptoms.

Mild depressive symptoms occurring in 76% of the sample population shows a weak significant correlation with the number of years spent in the career, with an increase in depressive symptoms rising with teaching experience. The study also found a correlation between depressive symptoms and financial stability. For example, the starting salary for a graduate teacher is 40% less than the national average salary. Results from the surveys show that an increase in financial instability also increased depressive symptoms among Hungarian educators. Additionally, most participants in the study communicate that while their work environment is positive, their appreciation for their profession is low. Furthermore, the study proves that the more hostile the work environment is for the educator, the more unfavorable their mental health conditions are likely to be. These results suggest that interventions for teacher well-being include improving work climate conditions (Fináncz et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Nuri et al. (2017) compiled a study to assess special education teachers' self-efficacy and burnout relationship in Turkey. The study included seventy special educators, including 46 in setting three and four schools and 24 students programmed in the mainstream setting. The teachers taught across 21 primary grade level schools. In addition to self-efficacy and burnout data, the information was also considered in terms of different variables, including gender, years of teaching, working hours, level of education, and the number of students on caseload. Burnout data was collected using the Maslach Burnout Inventory, and self-efficacy was measured through the Teacher Self Efficacy Scale. The data was then entered into SPSS and

analyzed using a T-test. Significant results include that teachers with longer working years experienced greater depersonalization, and those with fewer working hours experienced less self-efficacy.

The participants involved in the study completed their forms during the spring semester of school. Regarding gender, there were no significant differences between burnout scores. However, gender did influence self-efficacy; females experienced more confidence in classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement. The teacher's educational level did not impact instructional strategy self-efficacy or classroom management score, but it did measurably influence student engagement. Teachers with a graduate degree reported greater self-efficacy in the sub-dimension of student engagement than undergraduate colleagues. The results also show no significant impact of educational level on burnout in special education teachers. Lastly, teachers with one to five years of experience report medium levels of burnout and increase as years in teaching increase. The sub-dimension of depersonalization was the most clinically significant area to increase along with more years in education. This study suggests that self-efficacy is impacted by gender and educational degree variables, while the sub-dimension depersonalization increases as years in teaching accumulate (Nuri et al., 2017).

Similar to the impacts of community and reward, fairness is the worker's interpretation of equality in the work environment (Maslach & Leiter, 2017). Fináncz et al. (2020) study included a large sample that reported unfavorable work conditions, depressive symptoms, and high rates of depersonalization. Maslach and Leiter (2017) validate these findings by summarizing that the long-term effects of a shared sense of fairness in the work environment can lead to high rates of depersonalization. Both Fináncz et al. (2020) and Nuri et al. (2017) highlight the changes in output that occur between teachers with higher salaries, reasonable work demands, and

educational levels. These studies communicate that work climate and equity support for new teachers and teachers without a graduate degree are essential in minimizing depersonalization (Fináncz et al., 2020; Nuri et al., 2017).

## **Values**

When a worker does not align with the organization's values, they choose between what they must do and what they want. Teachers with value conflicts are at a greater risk of burnout because there may be misaligned motivations and goals than the more extensive school system in which they work (Maslach & Leiter, 2017). A study conducted by Enal and Sidsel Skaalvik (2017) validated these findings of the importance of connectedness in school climate by showing a positive correlation between value dissonance and emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low levels of personal accomplishment. Value dissonance, a term that describes a person who does not align with an organization's values, corresponds with burnout when a staff member experiences value dissonance towards the organizational climate. Teaching is highly values-based, and the study confirms that when a teacher feels that their values integrate with what and how they teach, they are more effective educators. Choosing to teach is likely to be driven by the importance of making a difference in children's lives and helping children grow (Watt & Richardson, 2008). This information suggests that value dissonance, a new area of research concerning teacher burnout, should continue to be a subject of research as a predictor of teacher burnout. Future research can hypothesize that a value dissonance between the teacher and the school climate (students, teachers, staff, or administrators) can create a sense of indifference for the teacher. Not being able to teach out of one's values may lead to depersonalization, and not being about to teach in a meaningful way may lead to a reduced sense of accomplishment (Skaalvik, 2017).

These studies suggest the connection between a hostile school climate and high rates of burnout among teachers (Skaalvik, 2017, O'Brennan et al., 2017). The variables studied that contribute to an adverse school climate vary between studies, while each indicates a significant correlation between school climate attitudes and burnout. For example, Enal and Sidsel Skaalvik (2017) suggest that value dissonance to the more significant organizational climate can lead to a low sense of accomplishment, while classroom behavioral management concerns can lead to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Similarly, O'Brennan et al. (2017) validate the importance of connectedness to people within the school building, including students, and find that the perception of safety both emotionally and physically influences burnout levels. These studies emphasize the importance of relationships, support, and protection within the school building as preventative measures for burnout (O'Brennan et al., 2017; Skaalvik, 2017)

## **CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

### **Summary of Literature**

Burnout is becoming a crisis in the United States for educators (Akin, 2019; Mielke, 2019). A recent study revealed that 32% of US teachers are currently considering leaving teaching long-term, and 42% have considered quitting their job within the last month (Mielke, 2019). In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated the factors that cause burnout, and educators and school systems are experiencing the backlash. While self-care practices such as mindfulness and meditation are protective factors against symptoms of burnout, most research points toward school structure and climate as the most effective tool in protecting educators from the realities of burnout (Akin, 2019; Braun et al., 2018; Sharp Donahoo et al., 2018).

Special education teachers and educators instructing students with high needs are at a greater risk of burnout (Ansley et al., 2019; Grant, 2017; Nuri et al., 2017). Surprisingly, research indicates that these teachers are not at a greater risk because of the students they teach but because of the lack of support given to meet their students' needs adequately (Ansley et al., 2019; Grant, 2017). Evidence revealed in the Ansley et al. (2019) study shows that teachers working with setting four students reported overall high job satisfaction ratings. These results are primarily due to staff reporting that they and their students receive adequate support to meet student needs (Ansley et al., 2019). Similarly, another school highlighted in the study by Berg and Cornell (2016) shows that schools with fewer students from less economically disadvantaged backgrounds and students of color also have fewer burnt-out teachers. Additionally, teachers with higher ratios of special education students in the mainstream classroom held comparable



results (Berg & Cornell, 2016). The study clarifies that a likely reason for these findings is that schools with more significant student needs are not given adequate support to meet those needs.

When considering the types of support, educators need to promote both teacher and student engagement (Maslach & Leiter, 2000; Sekiguchi, 2004). The Areas of Worklife model helps differentiate teachers' needs in school systems. Areas of Worklife framework categorizes themes regarding burnout by defining critical areas that promote professional engagement when aligned with the worker. These include workload, control, reward, values, community, and fairness (Maslach & Leiter, 2000; Sekiguchi, 2004). When workers do not experience alignment professionally in each of these areas, they are more likely to experience a lack of job satisfaction and or symptoms of burnout (Degirmenci & Yavuz, 2018; Maslach & Leiter, 2000; Sekiguchi, 2004).

Workload is the amount of work an employee is required to do to do their job effectively (Dikes & Williams, 2015; Kaynak, 2020). Heavy workloads are a dominating theme throughout educator burnout literature (Dikes & Williams, 2015; Kaynak, 2020; Wong et al., 2017). Several studies have supported that teachers often are unable to keep up with the work required to meet the needs of their students and the expectations of the larger school organization (Dikes & Williams, 2015; Kaynak, 2020; Wong et al., 2017). There are assorted reasons for this: large class sizes, lack of premade resources available, and low staffing numbers (Gilmour & Wehby, 2020; Wong et al., 2017). Special education teachers often undergo large caseloads, making completing paperwork a challenging task (Ansley et al., 2019; Wong et al., 2017). Dikes and Williams (2015) show that special education teachers with caseloads between 12-15 have the lowest exhaustion rates. When teachers have heavy workloads, they are likely to work extended hours outside of their pay and not complete the work necessary to do their job well (Ansley et al.,

2019; Dikes & Williams, 2015). The result of this is low teacher professional efficacy, or in terms of burnout, low personal accomplishment. Increasing demands placed on teachers amidst budget cuts and increasing student needs make professional efficacy challenging (Ebersold et al., 2019; Sokmen & Kilic, 2019). Providing necessary support, staffing, caseloads, class sizes, and funding to teachers according to student need is the primary protective factor against heavy workloads (Dikes & Williams, 2015; Kaynak, 2020; Wong et al., 2017).

Control summarizes the need that workers must be autonomous in their work (Kasalak & Dağyar, 2020; Oakes et al., 2020; O'Brennan et al., 2017). Sokmen and Kilic (2019) found that schools with administration supporting autonomous teachers resulted in higher job satisfaction and reduced work stress. The first step to developing healthy autonomy in the classroom is professional self-efficacy (Kasalak & Dağyar, 2020; Oakes et al., 2020; O'Brennan et al., 2017). Teachers with manageable workloads and school climates that promote autonomy are likely to experience job satisfaction and teacher engagement (Dikes & Williams, 2015; Kaynak, 2020; Sokmen & Kilic, 2019; Wong et al., 2017). Employees who are not recognized for their work are at risk of burnout (Yavuz, 2018; Yildiz & Kilik, 2021). A reward is essential to providing a feeling of personal accomplishment for educators. Research supports that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is present for educators, while overall, educators experience higher rates of intrinsic motivation (Dikes & Williams, 2015; Kaynak, 2020; Yildiz & Kilik, 2021). These findings suggest that many teachers associate their work as valuable and suggest that there are few high-paying teaching positions and few opportunities for promotion (Dikes & Williams, 2015; Sokmen & Kilic, 2019). One study revealed that teachers who are more satisfied with their salary have more teacher engagement (Yavuz, 2018). Additionally, schools with administration

offering more positive teacher feedback resulted in greater teacher engagement (Degirmenci & Yavuz, 2018; Dikes & Williams, 2015; Sokmen & Kilic, 2019).

Community or school climate is a significant area of the current research on burnout and education (Berg & Cornell, 2016; Skaalvik, E. S., 2017). Teachers often leave the teaching profession because there is a lack of support, a sense of safety, or a collaborative teaching community (O'Brennan et al., 2017; Skaalvik, E. S., 2017). Educators with concerns in behavior management are highly influenced by the school-wide systems in place and administration support regarding behaviors and student needs (Berg & Cornell, 2016; O'Brennan et al., 2017). Findings from the burnout research support that teachers need a school climate with adequate systems to support collaboration, safety, and belonging (Berg & Cornell, 2016; Bozgeyikli, 2018). Value dissonance describes when a worker's and organization's values are misaligned (Maslach & Leiter, 2000). Since teaching is a high values-based profession, an alignment between values is critical for many educators (O'Brennan et al., 2017; Skaalvik, E. S., 2017). While value dissonance is sustainable for a brief time, long-term effects include either leaving the organization or depersonalization and a low sense of personal accomplishment (Sayman et al., 2018). School climates support teachers' needs when the values of the school and educators align (O'Brennan et al., 2017; Sayman et al., 2018; Skaalvik, E. S., 2017).

### **Professional Applications**

Burnout is a valuable area of research for people in any profession. For educators, burnout is especially poignant given the high percentages of people that leave their careers (Mielke, 2019). By recognizing the signs, causes, and symptoms of burnout, educators can make effective decisions about the trajectory of their work and hopefully catch burnout before it is too late. By understanding the areas of the work-life model, teachers can understand early on what

factors contribute to long-term support and self-efficacy in their careers. When teachers align their compatibility with a school system, they may experience more support, self-efficacy, engagement, and reward. When educators experience prolonged stress in the work environment, changes must occur to ensure the long-term engagement of both educators and their students. Burnout research is critical to addressing long-term solutions to low staffing numbers and staff leaving the profession. By understanding the key factors that contribute to low personal accomplishment, depersonalization, and emotional exhaustion, schools can adjust to better support teachers and their student population.

There are unreasonable expectations put on many educators. Outside of following curriculum and meeting state standards, teachers are trying to meet the *diverse* needs of each student in their classroom or on their caseload academically, socially, and emotionally. Little support exists in many schools to support each student's independent mental health needs. Research shows that teachers of students with high needs are more likely to leave the profession, not because of the high needs but because there is not adequate support to meet those needs (Ansley et al., 2019). Covid-19 adds a layer of stress. Students returning from distance learning or growing up in a pandemic have vastly unique needs than before 2020, yet standards, expectations, and funding have not adjusted to these current student challenges. Being an educator is an incredible opportunity to impact the lives of many children positively. Teaching is a highly values-based position, and therefore, it can be assumed that most people entering the field of education are doing it to have an impact rather than for the money and fame (Skaalvik, E. S., 2017). High turnover rates in the first five years of teaching indicate something that needs to change for teachers to stay in their careers (Mielke, 2019). Burnout research helps educators understand the signals that may lead to burnout. Teachers need friendship, safety,

support, adequate salaries, and reasonable workloads. When teachers are better able to notice school cultures that lead to low self-efficacy, depersonalization, and emotional exhaustion, they are more in control of adjusting or changes to sustain a career in teaching. Job person fit is a helpful way to understand burnout symptoms because it blames neither the teacher nor the system; instead, how the two work together. Unfortunately, many school systems are not helping teachers succeed nationally and internationally. The school administration and culture function as a significant predictor of burnout. For instance, safe school environments (approaching student behaviors in a safe, supportive manner), positive feedback, and autonomy are highly related to burnout and the administration's control to facilitate them. Even larger though is school systems entirely. Minimal funding at a national, state, and district-level leads to few mental health supports, low teacher salaries, unmanageable workloads, and few resources. Until education is a high priority in society and these values reflect in funding and adequate support to meet needs, teachers and students will continue to bear the consequences.

### **Limitations of the Research**

The research included in this literature review was selected from between the years of 2015 and 2022. All research was peer reviewed and related to education. Topics such as “educator stress” and “educator job satisfaction were also included in the research included. Being that the topic of education is large more specific research was included, including burnout related to first year teachers, special education teachers, and experienced teachers.

Many of the research studies involving burnout are primarily homogenous. Sample sizes for studies completed in the United States included high numbers of White females. While this sample reflects the demographics of many teachers in the United States, there are severe implications of not fully revealing the impacts of race and gender on the topic of burnout.

Additionally, data regarding educator burnout may reveal different results depending on the sample size and the demographic of children that the school serves. Furthermore, many of the studies included in this literature review include participants outside of the United States. While the findings were significant, the context should be considered when applying the research to a different school context.

### **Implications for Further Research**

Future research is needed regarding specific interventions schools can implement to protect educators from burnout. While raises in salary can be beneficial, schools require structure and support that extends beyond raising teacher salaries. Additionally, research surrounding burnout as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic will be fundamental in the coming years as the world responds to the effects of the stress of the pandemic. Also, there is a significant need for burnout research to highlight the experience of teachers of color. Unfortunately, extraordinarily little information discusses the effects of burnout regarding race or compiles adequately large sample sizes.

### **Conclusion**

Combatting burnout is poignant for the sustainability of quality education. Research shows that the primary functions of burnout are systemic or organizational issues. Pushes toward self-care are helpful and necessary for teachers but are not sufficient to solve the shortage of educators in the United States. School administration can benefit from understanding burnout to provide solutions and prevention strategies that target the factors that can eventually cause burnout. These include creating a safe, supportive response to behavioral concerns, providing

teachers autonomy, reducing workload expectations, providing opportunities for community and friendship, and providing adequate resources to meet student needs.

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