

Burnout among Secondary School Teachers in Malaysia Sabah

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify the relationship between burnout among urban and rural secondary school teachers in Sabah. The study involved 114 teachers currently working in five urban secondary schools in Kota Kinabalu district and five rural secondary schools in Kota Belud district, Sabah. This is a quantitative study in the form of a survey with two (2) questionnaires. Part A contains demographic data while the second part B contains 22 Burnout measurement items using the second version of the Burnout Maslach Inventory (MBI) used to collect instrument data. They were then analyzed using descriptive and t-test to compare two groups. The results of this study indicate that aspects of teacher personalization need to be taken into account as this study clearly shows that there are significant differences between teachers in urban and rural areas. The survey data also showed that rural teachers experienced moderate personalization.

Keywords: Burnout Level, Depersonality, Teacher, high school, city, rural

Introduction

Each profession has its own importance in society. The college profession is one of those that has its own challenges. This is because it is the duty of a teacher to provide a generation of students with proper knowledge. According to Jolen (2001), teachers are regarded as the person who has a significant impact on their students' cognitive development, ability and physical, social and behavioral skills. The task of educating a student is getting more challenging today. As time went on, the job of a teacher has becoming more difficult time to time. Today, the role of a teacher is not only limited to the task of teaching and guiding students, but it also involves management matters such as clerical tasks (Balan & Murnizam (2013).

Prolonged work stress can cause teachers to feel uncomfortable doing their job, to assume that their workload is a burden and that they are unable to achieve job satisfaction. This has led to health problems, emotional disturbances and discord among teachers, that will cause an increase in teacher absenteeism, isolation from other teachers and many teachers who will choose an early retirement from their job because they are unable to comprehend the challenges of today's college profession. Besides that, teachers with burnout problems not only refuse to pay attention to students but also affect students negatively. Challenges faced by teachers are also influenced by the environment. Therefore, researchers argue that it is necessary to study the relationship between burnout levels among urban and rural secondary school teachers. The purpose of this study was to identify burnout levels among high school teachers, the difference between burnout emotional exhaustion with work location, the difference between burnout depersonalization with work location and finding out the difference between decreasing burnout achievement with work location.

Burnout is a work-related syndrome typically experienced by a customer service-oriented profession whose job involves a third party, or a client. These professions are better known as assisting professions such as teachers, lecturers, doctors, police, counter clerks and nurses (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993). Generally, burnout is often associated with job satisfaction, retirement or resignation and also decrease in psychological health. This means that burnout has to do with the negative thoughts and behaviors of the employer, client, or organization. Workers who suffer from burnout tend to exhibit negative and unfriendly behaviors toward their environment, which in turn will negatively impact an organization's image and reputation (Balan & Nagashekhara, 2012).

Objectives

1. To find the level of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and self-achievements among secondary school teachers in Malaysia Sabah
2. To identify differences in burnout emotional exhaustion with job location
3. To find difference in burnout depersonalization with job location
4. To know the difference in self-achievements with job location

Hypotheses

1. There were no significant differences in burnout emotional exhaustion with job location
2. There were no significant difference burnout depersonalization with job location
3. There is no significant difference in self-achievements with job location

Methodology

Design of Research: This is a quantitative study in the form of surveys, will be analysed using descriptive and t-test to compare two groups.

Study Location: The study's location is at the Secondary School in Kota Kinabalu and Kota Belud. As the state of Sabah is very broad and consist of five divisions namely the West Coast, Kudat, Inland, Sandakan and Tawau. The researchers used the Cluster Sampling procedure to select only (1) one section in this study due to the limited research time capacity and also to avoid sampling bias. As a result of the paper selection, Kota Kinabalu district was selected as the School town and Kota Belud district was selected as the study area.

Respondents: The subject of the study involved 114 teachers currently working at five (5) urban Secondary Schools in Kota Kinabalu district and five (5) rural Secondary schools in Kota Belud district, Sabah.

Instrument of Study: The instrument used in this study was a set of questionnaires which consisting of (2) two sections. The first part (A) contains demographic information while the second part (B) contains 22 items of Burnout measurement using the second version of the Burnout Maslach Inventory (MBI).

Respondent Demography: The demographic section is the part that explains the profile of all respondents who have answered the questionnaire form. Demographic information as available includes school location, gender, age, race, religion, marital status and job types. These demographic factors were selected because they are associated with the stress and burnout, as stated in previous research findings. It is also chosen because it can put pressure on teachers. Based on the processed data, the respondents' demographic profiles are as follows:

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Respondents

Demographics	Diversity	Frequency	Percentage%
Job Location	City	71	62.3
	Rural	43	37.7
	Total	114	100
Gender	Male	30	26.3
	Female	84	73.7
	Total	114	100
Age	24-30 years	28	24.6
	31-35 years	29	25.4
	36-40 years	25	21.9
	41-45 years	12	10.5
	46-50 years	9	7.9
	51-60 years	11	9.6
	Total	114	100.0
Races	Malay	67	59.6
	Bumiputera	30	26.3
	Chinese	10	8.8
	Indian	1	0.9
	Others	5	4.4
	Total	114	100.0
Race	Islam	84	73.7
	Kristian	26	22.8
	Buddha	3	2.6
	Hindu	1	0.9
	Total	114	100.0
Marital Status	Married	80	70.2
	Single	30	26.3
	Divorced	4	3.5
	Total	114	100.0

Table 2: *Frequency Schedule & Percentage of Respondents for Each Burnout Subcategory*

Item burnout	Level	Score	Frequency	%
Exhaustion Emotion	High	27-54	28	24.6
	Moderate	17-26	14	12.3
	Low	0-16	72	63.1
Depersonalization	High	14-30	10	8.85
	Moderate	9-13	90	78.9
	Low	0-8	14	12.3
Decrease Self Achievements	High	37-48	74	64.9
	Moderate	31-36	17	14.9
	Low	0-30	23	20.2
Total			114	100

The following table presents the scores according to the level set in the MBI to identify the burnout level of each respondent. The finding in the table indicates that 72 or 63.1% of teachers has low emotional exhaustion. This shows that teachers in secondary schools in Sabah have stable emotions and are not having burden by work that they are facing. Only 28 (24.6%) of the teachers showed high emotional exhaustion due to workload. 14 people or 12.3% of the study population showed a moderate level for this subset. This shows that in terms of teachers' emotional exhaustion they are still low and in control.

On the other hand, the sub personalization scale shows that 78.9% of teachers still provide a balanced response and provide good service to their students. The medium level was 10 people (8.85%) while on the higher level were 14 teachers or 12.3% that were depersonalized.

Decreased self-esteem means feelings of inadequacy and success in working with others. This sub-sample showed 74 (64.9%) of teachers at high levels of self-achievement, while 17 (14.9%) of teachers were at moderate levels. The lower level showed 23 (20.2%) of teachers are having lower level in decrease self achievements

Table 3: *The mean value of the burnout subscale*

Subscale	Total Repondent	Total min
Exhaustion Emotion	114	17.63
Depersonalization	114	6.14
Decrease Self Achievements	114	23.64

Based on the min analysis, emotional exhaustion was at a moderate level of 17.6, while depersonalization was also at a low level of 6.1. The decrease in self-achievement shows a high min of 23.6. This explains that teachers exhausted at work yet at the same time love their work. Plus, they seem like they do not want to continue their careers. This was prove when 64.9% of the respondents achieved a high self-esteem score which signaled a sense of incompetence and competition for career advancement. The first hypothesis is that there is no significant relationship between burnout and secondary school career.

Table 4: Mean values between subsets by Job Location.

Subscale	Job Location	n	min
Exhaustion Emotion	City	71	16.7042
	Rural	43	19.1628
Depersonalization	City	71	5.3944
	Rural	43	7.3953
Decrease Self Achievements	City	71	23.1268
	Rural	43	24.4884

The results from the above indicate that the min number for emotional exhaustion of teachers in the city is at 16.7 lower compared with the min of rural teachers of 19.1. These means the value indicate that teachers in urban areas are less emotionally exhausted than the teachers in rural areas.

The min value of teacher personalization in urban areas was 5.39 compared to rural teachers of 7.39. Both groups of respondents are at a low level of depersonalization. This indicates that both location factors do not give any affect on the services given to their students.

For lower self-achievement, show the min score is on the higher level. The difference between urban and rural was not so high with an urban min score of 23.12 and the rural min score of 24.49.

Table 5: Mean differences in Exhaustion Emotion, Depersonalization and Self-Achievements with respect to Job Location.

Variable	Job Location	n	Min	SD	p	t
Exhaustion Emotion	City	71	16.704	13.99	0.102	.39
	Rural	43	19.162	16.06		
Depersonalization	City	71	5.394	5.999	0.011	0.14
	Rural	43	7.395	8.127		
Self-Achievements	City	71	23.126	12.656	0.667	0.59
	Rural	43	24.488	8.593		

Table 5 shows that there is no significant difference between emotional exhaustion scores with job location ($t=39$, $p> 0.05$). Thus, first hypothesis “there were no significant differences in burnout emotional exhaustion with job location” is acceptable.

Findings also shows significant difference in depersonalization with job location ($t=.14$, $p < 0.05$). This shows that teachers who teach in urban areas show little difference in depersonalization. Thus, second hypothesis “there were no significant difference burnout depersonalization with job location” is rejected.

It is also unveiled that is no significant difference in self-achievements with job location the obtained ($t = 0.59$, $p > 0.05$) was found in significant at tabulation value. This means that the type of school, whether it is urban or rural schools, does not have a significant difference in achievement. Therefore third hypothesis “there is no significant difference in self-achievements with job location” is also accepted.

Discussions: Burnout analysis, however, shows that the phenomenon of burnout is not critical among teachers. Based on the minimum value, emotional exhaustion is at a moderate level while depersonalization is at a relatively low level of 78.9%. What is being emphasized here is the relatively low level in self-esteem in terms of mean value as well as percentage of 64.9%. This shows that teachers have no desire to compete with their peers but succeed in their careers. This is likely due to the relatively low competition of teachers' career paths and time-based promotion. As can be seen from the decisions that have been made, teachers still have a caring attitude toward students as customers.

The results of this study are also similar to the findings of Gooh, Amirmudin, & Mohd Hafiz (2012) who show burnout levels of teachers. Similarly, a study conducted by Lim and Salleh (2002) showed that location does not play any role in this burnout situation. Therefore, the workload that the rural teacher and the urban teacher are the same as the curriculum requirements of the Ministry of Education Malaysia (Balan & Melissa, 2019).

However, the aspect of teacher personalization should be paid attention as this study clearly shows that there are significant differences between urban and rural teachers. The survey data also show that rural teachers experienced moderate personalization. Lost the feeling concerned, being cynical and ignore other people's feelings can lead to neglect in terms of responsibility. In line with the discussion in chapter 2, by using COR theory, which states that negative impacts can make them lose their energy to work, which may cause them prone to stress and that will affect their mental health (Ferlis & Balan, 2009).

Recommendations and Particulars: This study found that overall burnout of teachers was still at moderate level, but some teachers experienced burnout at a high level. So, here are some suggestions to improve the quality of this profession.

- 1. Improving the Status of the College Profession:** There is no denying that the college profession has a high status and is highly regarded by the community. However, the profession has to improve its own status over time. In addition to the increasing responsibilities of teachers, they should be given incentives to increase their motivation level in carrying out their daily tasks.
Incentives such as salary increments are considered necessary as well to balance various tasks. Besides, the quality of the school environment, especially the teachers' room, needs to be improved so that the teachers feel comfortable in their work environment. The teaching materials and equipment have to be examined and monitored to be in good condition.
- 2. Mental Health of Teachers:** Teachers need to provide mental health management services by providing more counsellors in the organization. This is because, despite the overall burnout level at moderate levels, the study of Gooh, Amirmudin, & Mohd Hafiz (2012) showed that teachers' mental workload level was 39.9% (high) and 60.1% (very high). Therefore, there is a need to focus on the workload experienced by teachers in order to increase their ability and motivation level to work.
- 3. Continuing Investigation Teacher Problems:** Research on teachers' problems needs to be carried out not only by the Ministry but also by researchers at the university level. It is important that the problem be detected and resolved or minimized. However, the main problem is the cooperation of the teachers in obtaining data as well as the problem of honesty. This is because they are busy and find it difficult to take time to fill out the questionnaire.

Conclusion: The findings of this discussion show that the behaviour burnout is not very serious. However, some of the respondents showed that burnout behaviour, but they were not very common. However, such a small number also should be given attention so that it does not become a worse situation and has a serious impact on students learning in school.

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