

Mentees' Burnout and Mentors' Self Efficacy: A Study with the Pre Service ESL Teachers in Sri Lanka

Darshana Samaraweera, Junainah Abd Hamid, Abdol Ali Khatibi, S.M. Ferdous Azam and Isuri Dharmaratne

¹Management and Science University, Malaysia, E-mail: darshananie@gmail.com

²Management and Science University, Malaysia, E-mail: profjunainah@gmail.com

³Management and Science University, Malaysia, E-mail: alik@msu.edu.my

⁴Management and Science University, Malaysia, E-mail: drferdous@msu.edu.my

⁵Management and Science University, Malaysia, E-mail: misuri.rd@gmail.com

Abstract: Mentor mentee relationship is a very decisive factor within a mentoring context in any field. If the mentors are professional and efficacious mentees will be motivated very easily. If the mentees are new to the system their motivation kindled thus, will take them a long way in the academic field. Purpose of this study was to find whether the mentors' self-efficacy could have any effect on the burnout level of the mentees. For this, a sample of 180 pre service English language (ESL) teachers and 86 school mentors was selected from the three National Colleges of Education (NCOE) while they were on their one year internship period with school mentors. Data were collected using two standard instruments (The Copenhagen Burnout Inventory and a tool developed to measure self-efficacy based on guidelines developed by Albert Bandura) and analyzed using the SPSS version 21. Findings show that there is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables and therefore, mentors' self-efficacy should be a very important consideration in pre service teacher development.

Keywords: burnout, mentoring, mentors, self-efficacy.

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Introduction

Relationship between the mentee and mentor is a crucial factor in making any mentoring programme a success. Especially, this relationship could determine the novice teacher's professional future. When it comes to burnout of novice professionals, which is a negative experience (Rodriguez-Hidalgo *et al.*, 2014, Zang and Sapp, 2008) at all the times the amount of support mentors can extend to the novice teachers to keep them away from burnout is a researchable area. In most of the initial teacher development programmes all over the world pre service teachers are coupled with a mentor with the objective of making them ready for the challenges they face in real life teaching (Samaraweera, 2018). It is during this mentoring intervention they develop their "perceived self-efficacy" related to teaching. In this context, the mentor's responsibility is very crucial and the selection of mentors has to be a very

careful process. If the mentors fail to create an efficacious teacher, there is a risk of the pre service teachers being burnt out since their expectations of the mentoring cannot be met. So making an investigation of the relationship between the mentors' self-efficacy and burnout of mentees is felt to be a timely contribution to the field of teacher development. So, the purpose of this study is to engage in an analysis to determine the nature of relationship between the burnout level of the mentees (pre service ESL teachers) during the internship and their mentors' perceived self-efficacy.

Burnout

Christina Maslach and Herbert Freudenberger introduced the construct of burnout in 1970s as a result of their observation of people who complained of being "fatigued" as a result of the burden of their work. Though there wasn't a warm welcome initially, as a result of extensive work of many other researchers like Wilmar Schaufeli, Susan E. Jackson who followed Maslach and Freudenberger, burnout became a well-accepted area of research within a short period of time.

When defining burnout Maslach and Jackson (1981) present it as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism" that can be identified among "those who do people-work of some kind". Thus burnout was initially identified as a syndrome that occurs among "human service workers" because of the pressure they receive from those who obtain their services and work conditions they experience in a "stressful" setting (Mede, 2009). Burnout thus conceptualized according to Maslach and Jackson (1981) and many other researchers can directly affect the lives of workers in many ways. As Maslach (2014) points out consequences of burnout range from reduced sufficiency to serious health, family and societal concerns like depression to domestic violence and substance abuse respectively when not paid proper attention.

Schaufeli *et al.*, (2001) categorize burnout as "mild" and "clinical" depending on the support the individuals need when burnt out. The seriousness here, is that people with "mild burnout" are seemingly healthy and therefore, might be neglected until they reach the stage of "clinical burnout" where they need clinical support. So, it is very important to identify the individuals at a very early stage and make necessary interventions to support them. Mentoring could be seen as a fine way of handling burnout during the formative years of professionals (Samaraweera, 2018).

Teacher Burnout

Teacher burnout is one of the greatest challenges to the successful implementation of an education system. The challenge with the teacher burnout is very diverse. When they are mildly burnt out they may either remain as burnt out teachers developing negative "feelings about students and colleagues" (Skaalvick and Skaalvick, 2009). This could create unhealthy environment within the context of school. When the teachers are of the level of "clinical burnout" the case may become worse with several adverse results like teachers leaving the system, absenteeism, turnover, poor performance, violence, and many more (Yoleri and Bostanci, 2012; Maslach, 2014). When teacher burnout is considered burnout of "early career teachers" (Buchanan *et al.*, 2013) is a topic to be considered seriously since the decisions made by such teachers regarding their career affects the system strongly.

Pre service teacher burnout is also a very important area to be considered in burnout literature. Since there is a clear gap between what pre service teachers experience during internship and what they will actually experience once they become teachers in reality

(Buchanan *et al.*, 2013), investigation of the internship period is seen as a special area in burnout research.

Perceived Self Efficacy

Having a clear understanding of one's ability to perform the tasks entrusted to them (Bandura, 1993; Berg *et al.*, 2014,) determines the success or the quality of the outcome of any process. Grounded on Bandura's (1977) "Social Cognitive theory" the construct of Perceived Self efficacy describes how much an individual worker is ready to accept and cope with the challenges (Bandura, 1977) they encounter in professional life. Self-efficacy as contended by Saks (1995) is connected to many other variables concerned with the professionals "such as job satisfaction, intention to quit the job, training and job adjustment of the newcomers" and therefore, is closely linked to the effectiveness of delivery when teachers are concerned.

One of the most important relationships to be considered when it comes to teachers is the relationship between perceived self-efficacy and burnout. This is because of the powerful effect teacher efficacy has to boost the motivation of teachers and at the same time it "reflects teachers' competence beliefs for teaching tasks" Fives (2003, given in Samaraweera, 2018). That is, the teachers with high teacher efficacy are more motivated and competent since they know how to handle the situation. According to Brouwers and Tomic (1999) there is a tendency of teachers leaving the job at any moment since they get demotivated. Though there could be many reasons for this, their low teacher efficacy could be one of the major reasons as pointed out by Brouwers and Tomic (1999). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2009) too have highlighted the strength of the relationship between self-efficacy and burnout emphasizing how self-efficacy makes teachers motivated so that they are not burnt out.

Mentoring of Pre Service Teachers

As Eby (2010) points out mentoring is a professional development practice where two professionals; a novice and an expert work together to help the novice achieve higher standards of work, which can theoretically be identified as bringing of Krashen's idea of "Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)" in to practice (Samaraweera, 2011; 2018). Showing the importance of mentoring Adler (1983) reiterates how "young men and women" can be supported to take up higher standards through mentoring since mentors can help them tackle the problems and issues in professional life. Specifying the benefits of the mentor's support DeFreitas and Bravo (2012) have very clearly shown that mentoring relationships have the power to enrich the mentees' self-efficacy when the mentors are "knowledgeable". This explanation shows another aspect of mentoring; the need for employing teachers with high levels of self-efficacy as mentors.

The Study

In this context, the purpose of the present study was to understand the relationship between pre service ESL teachers' burnout and their mentors' self-efficacy in the Sari Lankan context. For this a group of randomly selected 180 pre service ESL teachers spending their third year internship period at schools with school mentors after completing the two year initial training programme at three National Colleges (NCOE) were selected along with their 86 school mentors. At the moment of the study there were a total number of 340 internship pre service ESL teachers from the three NCOEs. Table 1 presents how the sample was selected for the study.

Table 1. Sample selected for the study

NCOE	No. of total interns	No. Selected for the study	No. of mentors
	160	79	40
	130	71	36
	50	30	10
Total	340	180	86

Two data collection instruments were used during the study to collect data related to burnout status of the pre service ESL teachers (mentees) and the self-efficacy level of the mentors. An adapted version of the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI, Kristensen *et al.*, 2005) was used to measure burnout status of the pre-service ESL teachers who came under the study.

The CBI is a burnout inventory that was developed by Kristensen *et al.*, (2005) in Denmark during the PUMA project (a Danish project on Burnout, Motivation, and Job Satisfaction). There are three subscales in the CBI namely; personal burnout, work-related burnout, and client-related burnout measured on a five-point scale: always, often, sometimes, seldom and never. The tool used to measure the second variable; self-efficacy of the school mentors of the pre-service ESL teachers who came under the study was an adapted version of the tool developed by Enochs and Riggs in 1990 and later revised by Bleicher in 2004 to measure self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service science teachers.

According to Ravikumar (2013), who used the same tool which has been developed based on Albert Bandura's self-efficacy theory, the tool targets at measuring two main components "(a) personal science teaching efficacy (PSTE) and (b) science teaching outcome efficacy (STOE) (p.67)". In adapting the survey instrument, two major changes were made; (a) replacing the word 'science' with "English language" and (b) replacing the term "science experiments" with "pair and group work" to reflect what happens in the language classroom. Further, the two subscales found in the first instrument were also renamed as; "(a) personal English language teaching efficacy (PELTE) and (b) English language teaching outcome efficacy (ELTOE)".

The process of data collection using the two instruments thus prepared took place at two occasions. The CBI was administered at the three NCOEs with the sample of pre service ESL teachers selected for the study when they visited the college for monthly meeting, and the instrument for mentors' self-efficacy was sent to their mentors through the mentees along with the questionnaire consent letter. Data collected in this manner were analyzed using the Version 21 of SPSS and the findings are discussed in the next section.

Findings

When the data collected through the CBI were analyzed, it was found that the sample of pre service ESL teachers, though they are still new to the field, have developed a certain levels of burnout. The burnout statistics thus revealed are presented in table 2.

Table 2. Burnout statistics of the pre-service ESL teachers under internship

	Mean	SD	Mode	Median
Total burnout	27.51	±13.71	14	26.81
PB	35.09	±14.94	29	33.33
WB	21.83	±14.91	8	20.83
CB	25.62	±17.76	0	25.00

Out of the three subscales of burnout, personal burnout records the highest mean of 35.09 with a mode of 29. What this shows is that the sample of pre service teachers record comparatively moderate levels of tiredness, which in time to come may treacle down to the other levels (work and clients) too. When considered the main objective of the present study; to understand the relationship between burnout and mentors' self-efficacy, revelation of burnout levels of the sample seems to be encouraging. It is with this base we need to understand the self-efficacy levels of the mentors who came under this study. Table 3 shows the self-efficacy statistics of the school mentors of the pre service ESL teacher who came under the study.

Table 3. Self-efficacy statistics of the school mentors

	Mean	SD	Mode	Median
Self-efficacy	4.12	±.319	4	4.00
ELTOE	4.23	±.211	4	4.25
PELTE	4.02	±.601	5	4.00

When analyzed the data collected from the school mentors it is evident that on average the self-efficacy level of the mentors is at considerably a higher level (4.12 ±.319). Further, it is clearly understood that the mean scores of two subscales also are satisfactory. With this result it was decided to perform a regression analysis to identify the relationship between burnout of pre service ESL teachers and their school mentors' self-efficacy. Results from the regression analysis are given in table 4.

Table 4. Result from Regression Analysis for MSE and burnout

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p-value	VIF
Constant	-73.474	20.944		-3.508	.002	
MSE	24.537	5.068	.675	4.842	.000	1.000

According to table 4, the p-value for MSE is less than 0.05 and therefore it is possible to conclude that there is a statistically significant relationship between mentors' self-efficacy and burnout of pre-service ESL teachers. The r squared value was 0.456 which means their mentors' self-efficacy explains only 45.6% of the variation in burnout of pre-service ESL teachers. However, though there could be other factors that contribute to the burnout of the pre service ESL teachers, mentors' self-efficacy plays a significant role.

The equation: Burnout= -73.474 + 24.537 (MSE).

Conclusion

What the findings of the present study indicate should be considered with gravity when planning mentoring interventions for the pre service teachers. Since nearly 50% of the burnout is explained by mentors' self-efficacy, selection of mentors is a process that needs much attention by the teacher educators and policy makers in the field of pre service teacher development. If the mentors' self-efficacy levels could be measured before mentees are assigned to them, high quality mentoring can be expected with high levels of motivation from the mentees. Such motivation could help teacher education institutes send a cohort of teachers who could continue for many year without being burnt out. The conclusion need to be made

here is that the important variables mentioned in the present study; burnout, self-efficacy of mentors should be made integral considerations in their training programmes.

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