
BURNOUT AMONG TEACHERS AND THEIR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CASE STUDY IN BOYOLALI, INDONESIA

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Abstract

This research aims to explore burnout phenomena among teachers in Boyolali, its pattern, factors, and impact on their profession. This is ethnographic study which is involving some key persons who suffer burnout with snowball technique. The data are collected by documentations and in-depth interviews and then validated by using source triangulation technique.

Burnout is an issue discussed by many scholars and has been studied in many countries with some finding contradictions. In the US, burnout is caused by stress as a result of the length of working hours. Forty percent junior teachers in the US resign from their job in the first year and forty percent change their profession after 5 years experience.

In Indonesia, the country with very wide culture and social behavior, burnout studies are still rare. The government and the scholars focus on the teacher career development in other aspects. It is indicated that the reason of many junior and senior teachers (who are civil servant or not) is no other choice as a profession. Some studies find that burnout is indicated as behavior that breaks the rules caused by many factors in the individual peripheral.

Research found that, in Indonesian context especially in Boyolali in this case, generally burnout is encouraged by dissatisfaction of school policy, leader behavior, and lack quality of school management. Interestingly, despite the disappointments are high, they do not leave the job but their performances do not meet the standard. They teach not as it should be no updating material and monotonous methods. They leave their tasks for shopping, talking with their friends, and in some cases they have affair with student or colleague. In conclusion, there are some differences about burnout concept in Indonesia and US.

Keywords: Burnout, Teachers, Performance

INTRODUCTION

Professional development in teachers is a process that involved many resources. It is not an event but professional development is a process. Developing professionalism for the teacher should be based on the some strategies (Harwell & Ph, 2003).

Teachers are labeled as professional when they: 1) fully understand of the knowledge of the subject being taught; 2) very have high skill on managing classroom; 3) always improve their capability by self-learning or take additional education; 4) do some research to generate a new knowledge; 5) be very aware of the students' progress.

In order to develop professional teachers, many governments make some programs that can support it. There are some activities that teacher can join (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 2009): Informal dialogue to improve teaching, Courses and workshop, Reading professional literature, Education conferences and seminars, Professional development networks, Individual and collaborative research, Mentoring and peer observation, Observations visit to schools, Qualification programs

However, many teachers are not interest in following those programs. There are some factors

that can influence the participation of teachers in professional development (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 2009): Gender, Age, Education level, Differences between public and private schools, School location

Moreover, Fullan (1987) posits four factors for successful teacher professional development (Villegas-reimers, 2003):

- a. Redefinition of staff development as a process of learning
- b. The role of leadership at the school level
- c. The organizational culture at the school level
- d. The role of external agencies, especially at the local and regional level

Burnout is a three-dimensional syndrome made up of (emotional) exhaustion, cynicism (also termed depersonalization), and lack of professional efficacy (or reduced personal accomplishment) that develops in response to chronic occupational stress (Bianchi, Schonfeld, & Laurent, 2015; Dennis, 2008). Exhaustion means the feelings and physically drained and the energy is going down affected by overtaxing work. Cynicism refers to someone tend to withdraw from work because of de-motivated. Lack of professional efficacy includes feelings of

inadequacy and incompetence associated with loss of self-confidence (Bianchi et al., 2015).

There are some instruments commonly used to measure burnout: MBI-Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS), Maslach Burnout Inventory - General Survey (MBI-GS), and Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) (Demerouti, 2007). Every instrument has specific characteristics in measuring burnout. MBI-HSS is the most common instrument used to measure burnout by psychological and educational researchers. This instrument is based on the characteristics of burnout (exhaustion, depersonalization and (reduced) personal accomplishment). However, the MBI-HSS is specialized for use in human services professions.

Maslach Burnout Inventory - General Survey (MBI-GS) is the improvisation of MBI-HSS (Demerouti, 2007). Besides three factors of burnout (exhaustion, depersonalization and (reduced) personal accomplishment), in MBI-GS have three more generic burnout. The additional factors of burnout in MBI-GS are exhaustion; cynicism and professional efficacy; and respectively. MBI-GS can be used for any profession. Therefore, this research will use MBI-GS as an instrument to measure burnout among teachers.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research approach is ethnography. Ethnographic designs are qualitative research procedures for describing, analyzing, and interpreting a culture-sharing group's shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language that develop over time (Creswell, 2012). Ethnographic is used to explore the teacher's habit of learning and the culture of interaction among teachers.

The respondents are elementary, junior, and high school teachers in rural areas in Boyolali Regency. In order to select the most valuable respondents, the purposive random sampling will be conducted. Furthermore, we will take respondents from the most outlying elementary, junior and senior high school in four sub-districts: Selo, Simo, Cepogo, Musuk. However, the data will take in another sub-district if necessary.

The research uses three techniques including observation, documentation and in-depth interview. The observation method will deliver the habit of the teachers working and learning activities as a part of teacher professional development. This approach also captures the school or teacher's home geographic condition and the supporting infrastructure. The documentation technique to explore the number of teachers, students, the distance from teacher's home to the school, teacher's workload and the other document that can support

this research. The in-depth interview will explore the effect of all things we found from documentation and observation techniques on burnout. The data from these techniques will be validated with data triangulation method. After we conclude whether the burnout is occurred or not, we will explore the effect of burnout in teacher professional development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

There are some patterns of burnout among Indonesian teachers in Boyolali:

a. Teacher attitude while working

The in-depth interview reveals that in general, the teachers do not want to update their capabilities to the appropriate challenges in the global competition. For instance, a new curriculum has been applied by the government (curriculum 2013), however, many of them are reluctant to learn comprehensively that curriculum and just simply say that the curriculum is hard to implement and need high effort to understand every section. In addition, as a part of curriculum and education standard, teachers should update their syllabus and lesson plan in the beginning of the semester.

Interestingly, they still submit those documents but they do not update the essential materials but just simply change the year. Furthermore, some of them hire person (usually an academic staff) to edit and collect the syllabus and Lesson Plan to the academic vice principal. Most of them say that, they have been old so that they do not have any intend to follow every change including new technologies.

Burnout is also indicated by the respondents are likely to teach unscheduled even though the administrators have arranged the tentative schedule. They tend to alter the schedule randomly based on when they want to teach. This attitude makes some conflicts among students and teachers because some chaos occurred.

b. Interaction with the colleagues

The social aspect of teachers is really important in the working place. Even if some past researchers found that burnout can lead someone to feel not fit in with their colleagues, this research found difference phenomena. The respondents who are indicated suffering burnout still good in the relationship with colleague. It does not mean that there is no conflict but they still socialize with others.

c. Grumpy attitude

Teachers with burnout feeling are likely more angered than “normal” teachers. Some respondents explain that they frequently angry to their pupils and colleagues even if the very simple issues. This attitude especially occurred when they feel the job demands are really high and the deadline is almost over. In fact, in the normal situation, burnout teachers are more temperamentally than others.

d. Having Fancy Things

Research found poor performance and unwillingness to improve skill teachers are really like shopping and buying luxury accessories.

e. Vulnerable in illness

Almost all respondents suffering burnout are frequently getting unwell health condition. Some psychological experts say that the psychological condition influences the physical health. This term also occurred in the burnout teachers. They often absent teaching due to some illness. However, the researcher admit that, this results should be confirmed by the medical expert but based on the respondents experiences their felling (burnout) affect their health in turn worsen their performance.

Despite those patterns, there are some factors that encourage burnout among teachers:

a. Salary

Salary is blamed to be one of the most factors that can increase performance and make the employee happier if the salary is high. However, this research finds the contradiction. The government trough ministry of education has conducted some programs to increase teachers’ take home pay. Teacher professionalism certificate which is awarded to the teachers who have good performance allow them to get doubled in salary. Interestingly, after receiving the reward in every month, the teacher’s performance is precisely decrease. The respondents explain that, they do not have more any passion to work better and better because they have already reached the peak of their career.

b. The Principal Role

During the interview, we know that the supervising from the principal is a critical role. For the teachers who do not passionate in teaching and educating the pupils, they feel that there is no strict supervision and control by the principal. They argue that, the

principal only know every task is done and do not care whether the task is correct or wrong. As a result, there is a teacher that popularly with strict style but he is lazy in teaching. He usually gives his students an assignment and then leaves them and never checks their works.

c. Household problems

Burnout also can emerge caused by the problems from the teachers’ home. A respondent told that, she has been divorce and this condition affects her motivation in teaching. Furthermore, since she has to meet her family needs by herself, she should take the side job which is time consuming and in turn she does not have much time in teaching preparation and planning the skill upgrading.

d. Financial Problems

The teacher’s financial condition is indicated by one of some factors of burnout among teachers in Boyolali. As we have talked with our respondents with burnout indication, he told me that he know only focus on how to fulfill his family rather than focus on teaching. He has many loans from bank, friends and other debtors who are seized his salary into very tight. Due to this condition, he takes many side jobs and eventually his teaching schedule frequently change and absent to come to school.

e. Trend

Trend is something that currently popular in the society, it can be a fashion, style, and even car. Based on the data, following trend can be an indicator for teacher in feeling burnout in the working place. It seems normal if people follow trend, however, in this case burnout teachers are not working well whereas they follow every trend that suitable with them.

f. Changing policy

Indonesian government is striving to adjust their human resource to pursue global need of skills. Because of that, the ministry of education gradually adjusts the curriculum based on the global changes. This policy seems having negative impact on teachers in this research. They told us that the frequent changes on curriculum make them stress and force them to comprehend the new one which is totally different. This condition not only affects the senior but also the junior teachers. They think the curriculum is too fast to change, they have not fully understood the previous one but it has been changed. For instance, when the government arranged the

“Kurikulum 2013” replacing the previous one namely “kurikulum tingkat satuan pendidikan (KTSP), our respondents want to refuse this implementation because of the complexity. However, once the government decides to move to the new curriculum, all stakeholders including teachers must follow and should attend the technical guidance of the new curriculum implementation. Eventually, our respondents are obliged to accept the changes and in turn they do not enjoy while teaching.

Discussion

The past studies reveal that burnout is characterized by exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment. Most of those studies explore burnout among teachers by using some inventories such as Maslach Burnout Inventory and Oldenburg Burnout Inventory. Both questionnaires are common in the western countries.

Using ethnographic method and the signs of burnout from previous studies, the respondents are likely to feel burnout. Teachers’ behaviors such as not willing to attend on time, leaving the classroom, using old version of lesson plan, conflicting with colleagues, and having affair with students and/or with colleague are some patterns of burnout among respondents.

Generally burnout in this context is encouraged by dissatisfaction of school policy, leader behavior, personal and social problems; and lack quality of school management. These factors lead teachers to not develop their skills and capacities. In term of burnout teachers in developed countries such as in Europe and US, burnout can lead them to quit from work and change to another profession.

In Indonesia (Boyolali regency in this context) burnout does not make teachers leave their jobs. They still do their work but not as good as other who does not suffer from burnout. The future research can focus on how the model of solution for burnout in Indonesian context and why they are still work as teacher in spite of burnout that they feel.

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