Abstract

The paper focuses on the problem of professional burnout among female teachers and the impact of diverse factors on their burnout. The study aims to consider the coping mechanisms of teachers at different levels of burnout and the ways in which their experience and age are factored into their emotional well-being. Based on socio-demographic and psychological questionnaires, the study sampled 209 female teachers. The research pinpointed that as age and experience were inversely related to the indicators of emotional burnout. There were differences in the use of coping mechanisms by teachers with high and low levels of emotional burnout: the former more frequently used the ineffective strategies of “Avoidance”, “Asocial action” and “Aggressive actions”, while the latter often used the adaptive strategies of “Social joining”, “Seeking social support” and “Assertive actions”. The results will help to better understand burnout mechanisms and improve the effectiveness of burnout prevention programmes.

Keywords

Age, anxiety, coping strategies, depression, emotional burnout, experience.

Introduction

The term “emotional burnout” describes a psychological state for those who, within the framework of their profession, are obliged to be in very close emotional contact with other people. The so-called ‘helping professions’ are at risk, with health-care and social workers, teachers, as well as psychologists amongst the frontrunners in regularly affording assistance to other people in their care, with its attendant hazards. According to Maslach and Jackson (1981: 99) ‘burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do ‘people-work’ of some kind.’ Three main components of burnout syndrome are emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment as it was identified by Maslach, Jackson and Leiter (1996).

Teacher burnout has been a major concern in psychology and received a great deal of attention from many researchers (Byrne, 1991; Lau, Yuen and Chan, 2005; Unterbrink et al., 2007; Bettini et al., 2017; Kamtsios and Lolis, 2016; Roohani and Dayeri, 2019; etc).

According to the study of Pinel-Martinez, Perez-Fuentes and Carrión-Martinez (2019), MBI “Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual” by Maslach and Jackson (1986) is the most applied medium in the study of burnout. Teachers that are burned out may experience one or more of the three components of this burnout syndrome (Maslach, 1999).

There have been studies to investigate the effects of personal characteristics on teacher burnout levels. According to Pinel-Martinez, Perez-Fuentes and Carrión-Martinez (2019) the Socio-
demographic variables were the most repeated among the publications being gender (91.43%), age (77.14%) and teaching experience (34.29%).

As it was revealed by Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001: 409), that ‘age is the one of all the demographic variables that have been studied, that has been most consistently related to burnout’. Studies on teachers’ age and working experience have indicated blended results. Some of the studies revealed age as an effective factor on burnout, especially on any emotion exhaustion component. Byrne (1991: 207) stated that ‘burnout is a multidimensional construct, the facets of which are differentially affected by particular background variables; gender, age, and type of student taught are highly salient background variables associated with educator burnout’.

According to this researcher, age appears to be a very differentiating variable with respect to the emotional emaciation component of burnout.

In some studies, young teachers showed significantly higher levels of emotional exhaustion than their older colleagues (Anderson and Iwanicki, 1984; Maslach and Jackson, 1981). Findings were less consistent for the other two dimensions of burnout. Maslach and Jackson (1981) found that younger teachers scored considerably higher on the depersonalisation, and lower on the personal accomplishment scales, Iwanicki and Schwab (1981) found no noticeable age differences in these dimensions for teachers. For the burnout dimension, the highest relationship was a positive correlation between depersonalisation and age, and there was a positive correlation between personal accomplishment and age (Sunbul, 2003).

Lau, Yuen, and Chan (2005: 491) also stated that ‘teachers who were younger or without finishing their professional training and thus of junior rank were more consistently burned out’. Vodopyanova and Starchenkova (2008) considered that not only elderly people got burned out but also younger ones too. According to Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001: 409) among ‘younger employees the level of burnout is reported to be higher than it is among those over 30 or 40 years old’.

There have also been findings showing no significance between age and burnout. So, Sadeghi and Khezrlou (2014) assume that only the level of teachers’ education had a significant, moderate, and positive relationship with burnout from among the factors of age, gender, marital status, and level of teachers’ education. Furthermore, it was shown that gender and age were not associated with burnout directly, however depressive symptoms and overcommitment had a substantive relationship with general burnout (Szigeti et al., 2017).

Although years on the job would appear to be an important variable in terms of burnout, research findings do not support this notion. In their studies of teachers, Anderson and Iwanicki (1984); Schwab and Iwanicki (1982) revealed no significant findings with respect to the emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation dimensions (cited in Byrne, 1991). On the other hand, Mo (1991) discovered that ‘graduate teachers with less teaching experience, especially those with 5 years or below, showed higher levels of burnout in the emotional exhaustion dimension’ as is indicated in the research of Lau, Yuen and Chan (2005: 494). Brunsting, Sreckovic and Lane (2014) updated the literature and reviewed the previous studies on burnout. They found that restricted teacher experience contributed to teacher burnout.

Tymbota et al. (2017: 63) manifested that ‘the highest susceptibility to the influence of emotional burnout symptoms was in the age group up to 36.6 years, while the lowest susceptibility to the negative impact was found in the age group above 58.6 years’. This was explained by the phenomenon of emotional shock at the beginning of teaching profession.

On the other hand, Bertel and Weston (2010) state that the incidence of burnout is most prevalent among teachers who are half way through their teaching career, having between 7 and 12 years of experience (middle-aged teachers).

The research of Mousavy and Nimehchisalem (2014) proves that elderly teachers were perceptibly
more faded than their younger colleagues, regarding their depersonalisation and personal achievement mean scores. Brewer and Shapard (2004) also revealed that elderly teachers have higher burnout levels than younger ones. Interesting results were obtained by Mukundan and Khandehroo (2016), concerning the influence from the factor of four different age groups (younger than 25, 26-35, 36-45, older than 46) on the three categories of the burnout. Teachers of the third three age groups encountered with emotional exhaustion, but older teachers did not have a rather high burnout due to this component. Depersonalisation was significantly higher among participants older than 25 whereas for the group of young teachers (younger than 25), it could not be fixed as indicatively higher. Teachers, younger than 25 and older than 45, were characterised by a significantly higher level of reduced personal accomplishment. On the other end, the age range between 26 and 45 confirmed that they did not indicate any substantial sign of diminished personal accomplishment.

It was reported that female staff showed higher emotional exhaustion than male colleagues (Maslach et al., 1996; Lackritz, 2004; Purvanova and Muros, 2010). The high level of emotional exhaustion in women-teachers also was registered by Martin (2000). There is some evidence to link between burnout with anxiety and depression (Schonfeld and Bianchi, 2016).

It is crucial to note that burnout is not an inevitable attribute of a ‘helping’ profession. Prevention and correction can significantly downsize the exposure of negative psychological factors (Jenaro, Flores and Arias, 2007). Clipa (2017: 125) states that ‘there are efficient ways to trace the causes of teachers’ stress, and that they have adequate ways of coping with it.

It was reckoned that if adequate coping strategies are developed, then the person will be able to work effectively for many years. Velikaya (2015: 38) highlights the need for ‘teacher development and a demand for continuous professional development in a particular university context’ as an momentous task.

In the study of Vodopyanova and Starchenkova (2008: 34-36), the group with a low level of burnout was characterised ‘by the use of more “healthy” coping strategies: assertiveness, readiness for social contacts, and the search for social support’. Similarly, Vodopyanova and Starchenkova (2008) obtained inferring data that the teachers featured with a high level of burnout, marginally more often utilize their behavioural strategies as “avoidance” and “aggressive actions”, and more rarely “search for social support, than their colleagues, having a low level.

Smetackova and Viktorova (2018: 336) noted that it is ‘necessary to search for protective factors’. Based on previous research, they expected that teacher self-efficacy and positive coping strategies could be two of them. However, the mutual relationship between all three variables, burnout syndrome, self-efficacy and coping strategies, has not been deeply examined yet. The analysis supported the close relationship between burnout, self-efficacy and coping among Czech grammar school teachers. Also, a solid connection was detected between negative coping and burnout symptoms. Austin, Shah and Muncer (2005) outlined significant relationships between ways of coping and levels of distress, proving that technologies such as ‘escape avoidance’, ‘accepting responsibility’ and ‘uncontrolled aggression’ were used as negative coping strategies and the only one strategy, ‘exercise’, was indicated to be an effective way of coping.

Kamtsios and Lolis (2017) investigated the profiles of burnout in Greek school teachers. It was noted that teachers with high levels of depersonalisation and emotional exhaustion, and low levels of personal accomplishment used maladaptive coping strategies, while the teachers with lower levels of burnout used adaptive coping strategies to get problems sorted. Antisocial and passive strategies tended to be related to lower mastery of teachers. Active coping was related to lower emotional distress for men and women (Hobfoll et al., 1994).

In this paper, attention is focused on the problem of professional burnout among school teachers. Thus, the study aimed to re-examine the coping mechanisms and two socio-demographic factors
The object of the study was emotional burnout with the subject of the study being the factors of emotional burnout in teachers, i.e. coping strategies, experience and age. To maintain or increase stress tolerance, the teacher needs to find and adequately use resources that help to overcome the negative effects of stressful situations. It is also crucial to find out how teachers overcome these stressful situations; what strategies they practise and their behavioural patterns for getting beyond of stresses. In addition, it is necessary to clarify what factors protect them against emotional burnout, and to determine whether experience and age influence the degree of burnout.

At the moment, there is controversial data describing the influence of experience and age on the burnout phenomenon.

Two empirical hypotheses were formed. We assumed that indicators of emotional burnout, anxiety, and depression would correlate with the age and the length of teaching experience. It was also surmised that teachers at high and low levels of emotional burnout opt for different coping strategies. The following section liaises with the description of the Materials and Methods implemented in the scientific research. The ‘Results’ section evokes some data on teacher’s burnout and its three components, the impact of age and the duration of their working experience on burnout components and also on anxiety and depression. After that the analysis of the teachers’ coping strategies follows. The section entitled ‘Discussions’ describes the results and the section ‘Conclusion’ contains an assessment of the achieved results and suggests possible future directions of the work.

**Materials and Methods**

**Participants**

The study was conducted at a teachers’ Internet forum devoted to the work of school teachers. 750 teachers took part in the work of the forum within a week. An announcement was placed on the Internet site asking for support in research. The participants were asked to complete surveys related to professional burnout of teachers. 226 teachers responded to our invitation to take part in the Internet survey. It should be noted that only a few male teachers (12) responded to the survey. Thus, they were not included in the experimental group. Neither were those respondents who received more than 14 points on the Social Desirability scale. The latter indicated some insincerity. As the study was conducted remotely, it allowed us to involve teachers from all over Russia, as well as from Kazakhstan, Belarus, and the Ukraine.

As a result, the sample covered 209 women-teachers. The work experience of the teachers started from 3 months to 35 years; age spans laid between 20 and 63 years.

**Materials**

The authors’ demographic questionnaire contained questions on gender, age, working experience, marital status and family of the respondents. The MBI questionnaire on professional burnout for teachers and lecturers based on the three-factor model of Maslach and Jackson (1996) in adaptation (Vodopyanova, 2016) was applied. The questionnaire included 22 items divided into three subscales: Emotional Exhaustion (EE - 9 items), Depersonalisation (D - 5 items), and Reduced Personal Accomplishment (PA - 8 items). The items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (every day). Scores on the scales were added separately. It allowed us to determine the level of professional burnout. The Crowne-Marlowe Social Desirability Scale (CM-SDS) (Crowne and Marlowe, 1960) enabled us to assess the sincerity of the respondents. The hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) (Zigmond and Snaith, 1983) was applied to evaluate the levels of anxiety and depression. The research also turned to the questionnaire of
coping strategies for stressful situations by Hobfoll et al., (1994), in adaptation by Vodopyanova (2016). For calculations of integral levels of burnout, we used the data from Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Low level of burnout</th>
<th>Moderate level of burnout</th>
<th>High level of burnout</th>
<th>Very high level of burnout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 point</td>
<td>2 points</td>
<td>3 points</td>
<td>5 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional exhaustion</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>5-15</td>
<td>16-24</td>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>More than 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>6-16</td>
<td>17-25</td>
<td>26-34</td>
<td>More than 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depersonalisation</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>5-12</td>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>More than 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>11-13</td>
<td>More than 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced personal accomplishment</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>37-48</td>
<td>34-28</td>
<td>27-23</td>
<td>22 and less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>37-48</td>
<td>35-28</td>
<td>27-22</td>
<td>21 and less</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: The calculation of integral level of burnout (source: Vodopyanova, 2016)

The integral burnout indicators were chosen from the Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low level of Burnout</th>
<th>Moderate level of Burnout</th>
<th>High level of burnout</th>
<th>Very high level of burnout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-4 points</td>
<td>5-6 points</td>
<td>7-9 points</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: The integral burnout indicators (source: Vodopyanova, 2016)

**Instruments**

To analyse the differences in coping strategies and clinical indicators in the groups, the H-test of Kruskal-Wallis and the Mann-Whitney test were deployed. To analyse the relationship of age and experience with coping strategies and clinical indicators, the Mann-Whitney criterion and the Spearman rank correlation criterion were applied. The obtained results were processed using the SPSS statistical software package for Windows.

**Procedure**

At the outset of the study, the survey was carried out remotely in 2018. The teachers, participating in Russian teachers’ forums, were invited to take part in the research. They were asked to answer the questions of four surveys and fill in a questionnaire. All participants were informed about the objectives of the research and participated willingly.

The demographic information about the teachers was provided by a demographic questionnaire. After that the participants were requested to answer the questions of The Crowne-Marlowe Social Desirability Scale, The MBI questionnaire, The hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) and the questionnaire of coping strategies for stressful situations by Hobfoll et al., (1994), in an adaptation by Vodopyanova. Those respondents who received more than 14 points on the Social Desirability scale were not included into the experimental group. The latter indicated some insincerity. For the interpretation of individual results, tables of test norms were implemented. Based on the analysis of the test results on the burnout questionnaire, 3 groups of respondents were formed, with different levels of their development of burnout – i.e. very high, high, and medium. Then these three groups were compared by following the parameters of the surveys used.

**Results**

The first experimental subgroup embraced female teachers, amounting to 103 people, with indicators of an extremely high level of emotional burnout (10 points or more), accounting for 49% of the total sample. The second subgroup included female teachers with a high level of burnout (7 – 9 points), working out at 74 participants, or 36% of the total sample. The third subgroup comprises female teachers with a moderate level of burnout (5-6 points), they numbered 32 people, or 15% of the total sample. None of the respondents showed a low level of burnout.
The results (See Table 3) highlight that school teachers had symptoms of burnout. Some female teachers had very high rates of the components of this syndrome. This means that they are at risk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The components of burnout syndrome</th>
<th>Emotional exhaustion</th>
<th>Depersonalisation</th>
<th>Reduced Personal accomplishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderate level of burnout</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High level of burnout</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very high level of burnout</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: The average indicator values of burnout for the three groups of teachers, 2019 (source: own calculation)

The leading factor affecting the overall burnout is depersonalisation - 5.0. That implies high emotional dismissal and indifference. It is peculiar to groups with high and very high levels of burnout. They teach formally, without joining the process and not empathising with the students. This can manifest itself as a cynical attitude towards children. The group with a very high level of burnout is also characterised by strong emotional exhaustion - 4.1. They are not interested in working, they do not have positive feedback from teaching, and they are oppressed by general dissatisfaction with life in general. Interestingly, the degree of satisfaction of a pedagogical worker as an individual and as a professional varies insignificantly (Reduced Personal Accomplishment). The characteristics of groups according to their level of burnout is presented in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burning out level</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Very high</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of examinees</td>
<td>32 (15%)</td>
<td>74 (36%)</td>
<td>103 (49%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle age:</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 20 to 30 (N = 95)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 31 to 40 (N = 48)</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 41 to 50 (N = 50)</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 51 and above (N = 14)</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average working experience:</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 0 to 6</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 6 to 10</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 10 to 15</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 16 and above</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: The characteristics of groups according to their level of burnout, 2019 (source: own calculation)

The result revealing the relationship of age and experience with indicators of emotional burnout is presented in Table 5 according to Spearman rank correlation criterion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>0.909 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional exhaustion</td>
<td>-0.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depersonalization</td>
<td>-0.215 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal accomplishment</td>
<td>0.266 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>-0.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>-0.076</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at a significance level of 0.01.

Table 5: The relationship of age and experience with indicators of emotional burnout, 2019 (source: own calculation)
From Table 5 one can see that the experience correlated with age at a significance level of 0.01. However, the high correlation between the age and the length of experiences is logical and predictable. We also see that as the length of service and age increase, the general indicator on the scales of depersonalisation decreases and the indicators on the scale of professional success grow. That is, the older the teacher is, the more successful they feel. No relationship between anxiety and depression with age or experience was identified.

The results of comparison of the groups with moderate and very high levels of burnout according to the H-test of Kruskal-Wallis and the Mann-Whitney criterion are reflected in Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The moderate level of emotional burnout (M (SD))</th>
<th>Very high level of emotional burnout (M (SD))</th>
<th>The Mann-Whitney criterion (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assertive actions</td>
<td>16.58 (3.03)</td>
<td>15.28 (3.37)</td>
<td>0.034 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Joining</td>
<td>25.14 (3.14)</td>
<td>21.87 (4.49)</td>
<td>0.02 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking social support</td>
<td>26.47 (2.86)</td>
<td>23.91 (3.96)</td>
<td>0.001 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cautious action</td>
<td>20.05 (3.53)</td>
<td>20.57 (4.22)</td>
<td>0.719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instinctive action</td>
<td>16.73 (3.6)</td>
<td>17.51 (3.66)</td>
<td>0.285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>16.73 (4.31)</td>
<td>19.33 (4.35)</td>
<td>0.003 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect actions</td>
<td>17.55 (4.12)</td>
<td>18.73 (4.28)</td>
<td>0.192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antisocial action</td>
<td>12.85 (3.43)</td>
<td>15.4 (5.56)</td>
<td>0.025 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive actions</td>
<td>16.5 (4.09)</td>
<td>19.94 (5.44)</td>
<td>0.001 **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*M (SD) - mean (standard deviation)
* differences are significant, p <0.05
** differences are significant, p <0.01

Table 6: Comparison of the groups with moderate and very high levels of burnout, 2019 (source: own calculation)

It can be seen from Table 6 that there are significant (p <0.01) differences between groups with a moderate burnout level and a very high burnout level. In the moderate-level group strategies such as “Social joining”, “Seeking social support”, “assertive actions” are more often activated. While “Avoidance”, “Antisocial action”, and “Aggressive actions” strategies are more typical of the group with very high level of burnout.

**Discussion**

The specificity of our sample was determined by the fact that there were a lot of female teachers with high and very high burnout levels and there were no low levels at all. The limitations of the study should be considered, because the teachers with a higher level of burn out syndrome were probably more reluctant to respond to the questionnaire. The leading factor affecting the overall burnout is depersonalisation - 5.0 and strong emotional exhaustion - 4.1. The result partly supports the previous research findings by Maslach et. al. (1996), Lackritz (2004), Purvanova and Muros (2010) and Martin (2000) about the high level of emotional exhaustion in female teachers. But in our research the female teachers were characterised by a high level of depersonalisation in the first place.

During the study, the first hypothesis that indicators of emotional burnout, anxiety, and depression would increase with the age and the length of teaching experience was confirmed to be the opposite. The result was consistent with that of the previous research findings by Anderson and Iwanicki, 1984; Maslach and Jackson, 1981; Mo, 1991; Lau, Yuen and Chan, 2005; Brunsting, Sreckovic and Lane, 2014.

As teachers age and teaching experience accrued, indicators of professional burnout, anxiety and
depression did not increase in our research. So, we obtained the results: as the length of service and age outgrown, the burnout symptoms on the depersonalisation scale became less pronounced, and the indicator on the scale of professional success increased. Our results are consistent with that of Sumbul (2003), that professional accomplishment correlated positively with age, but our result was different concerning the connection of depersonalisation and age. Regarding emotional fatigue our results were consistent with the results of Mukundan and Khandehroo (2016), that elderly women teachers suffered less emotional exhaustion. Nevertheless, our results on depersonalisation were opposite to the results of their research. Our results were partly similar to their findings on the connection of personal accomplishment and age. We also reckon that female teachers of the age group from 26-45 (middle aged teachers) were more successful than younger teachers. Also, our research did not denote the reduction of personal accomplishment after the age of 45, but the quantity of the teachers of the oldest group who participate in our research was not extensive enough to validate our final results. Nevertheless, our results are totally opposed to the results of Mousavy and Nimechisalem (2014). In their research elderly teachers demonstrated higher levels of depersonalisation and lower levels of personal accomplishment than younger teachers, that is interpreted as that older teachers felt themselves vastly more burned out than their younger colleagues. It can be explained by the specific target group of their research (English teachers in Malaysia).

We witness that a very high level of burnout is typical for young female teachers. This may be due to dissatisfaction with work and unjustified expectations. Teachers encounter with substantial levels of stress and, unable to adequately overcome them, correspondingly very quickly burn out. Most likely, some teachers simply leave the profession due to their inability to run their workflow. Therefore, the group with an average level of burnout is much older. Their average age is 39.6. These are people who have learned to respond constructively to stress. The analysis also showed that the level of anxiety and depression among teachers varied depending on the degree of professional burnout. As teachers dwindle, their anxiety and depression rates increased. That corresponds with the results of (Schonfeld and Bianchi, 2016). The length of service and age according to our research did not correlate with anxiety and depression at all.

It is crucial to note that our sample was still specific. Recruitment was conducted via the Internet. This made it possible to reach teachers from distant regions, but the older group of teachers, turned out to be much less involved than younger people. Therefore, it is relevant to continue the study and engage teachers of older age and being more experienced.

The second hypothesis that there is distinction in the use of coping strategies by women-teachers with high and low levels of emotional burnout has been confirmed. Given the absence of low-burnout groups in our sample, we compared the groups with medium, high, and very high burnout levels. As a result of a comparative analysis, differences between groups with medium and very high levels of burnout were identified with the following coping strategies: “Assertive Actions”, “Social Joining” and “Seeking Social Support”, “Avoidance”, “Asocial Actions” “Aggressive Actions”. In the group with a moderate level of burnout, coping strategies were more pronounced: “Assertive Actions”, “Entering into Social Contact” and “Search for Social Support”. And in the group with a very high level of burnout, the following strategies were more pronounced: “Avoidance”, “Asocial Actions”, “Aggressive Actions”. All differentiations were confirmed at a significance level of 0.01. The group with a high level of burnout took the middle place between the two groups mentioned above. Our result is consistent with that of Hobfoll et al. (1994).

It was revealed that as the emotional exhaustion accrues, the severity of non-constructive coping models, such as “Avoidance”, “Aggressive Actions” and “Cautious Actions”, increases. The assertive actions use, grounded on constructive behaviour pattern, was also reduced. As the depersonalisation rate intensified, the involvement of non-constructive models, such as
“Avoidance”, “Indirect Actions”, “Asocial Actions”, “Aggressive Actions” and “Impulsive Actions”, increased. At the same time, the exploitation of constructive prosocial behaviour patterns decreased: “Entering into Social Contact” and “Search for Social Support”. As the sense of professional unsuccessfulness escalated, the frequency of using constructive strategies “Entering into Social Contact”, “Search for Social Support” and “Assertive Actions” downshifted. And the frequency of unproductive models exploited such as “Avoidance” and “Aggressive Actions” increased. These data were similar to the results obtained within other studies (Clipa, 2017; Smetackova and Viktorova, 2018; Vodopyanova and Starchenkova, 2008; Austin, Shah and Muncer, 2005; Kamtsios, 2017).

We acquired similar data in this study. Strategies of avoidance and aggressive actions were not constructive for teachers. The first strategy did not allow effective solutions to the professional difficulties arising. It failed to establish pedagogically expedient relations with students and colleagues, which led to an upgrowth in the level of psychological stress and a risk of burnout. Aggressive behaviour did not contribute to the productive solution of professional concerns. This behaviour adversely affected the overall atmosphere in the team. It is possible that the frequent involvement of the strategy of “Aggressive Actions” was a compensatory mechanism, with teachers at a high level of burnout. In this way, they tried to compensate for an adverse emotional state, as well as negative attitudes towards work.

In the course of the study, scientists came to the conclusion that “healthy” coping represents such behaviours that contribute to the preservation of health and successful (constructive) coping with professionally complicated situations. Such constructive models as active prosocial behaviour can effectively withstand stress and prevent burnout of specialists. At the same time, non-constructive behaviours such as antisocial and passive actions may also lead to burnout. However, the question remains what in this model the cause is and what the consequences are. Do non-constructive models lead to burnout? Or is this behaviour a result of burnout? To clarify the issue, it is necessary to conduct additional research. Moreover, the established link between burnout and the use of non-adaptive strategies can be of practical use. Perhaps, informing teachers of adaptive strategies and learning how to use them in training can reduce the risk of burnout.

**Conclusion**

An inverse relationship was found between age, experience and burnout symptoms. In the studied sample, the symptoms of burnout were most pronounced among women-teachers from 20 to 30 years of age. No relationship between anxiety and depression with age or experience was detected. The study revealed conspicuous differences in the coping strategies utilizing among groups with different levels of burnout. The group with a very high level of burnout was characterised by the application of non-adaptive (passive, asocial and aggressive coping strategies) and the rare use of adaptive assertive and prosocial coping strategies, in particular, the search for social support. The symptoms of burnout were associated with various coping strategies. Adaptive strategies were directly related to professional success and back to burnout factors such as exhaustion and depersonalisation. Non-adaptive coping strategies (aggressive actions, antisocial actions, avoidance, impulsive actions, indirect actions) had one or two direct links with burnout factors and an inverse link with professional success.

It is substantial to develop psycho-prophylactic measures that could shrink the risk of burnout and neutralise its negative consequences for teachers at the outset of their professional activities. One of the important components of burnout syndrome prevention was the correction of non-adaptive behavioural strategies and the formation of adaptive coping strategies with professional stresses, which embrace confident behaviour and social interaction skills. It is important to increase the sample size of teachers over 50 years of age, because for a more aged group, prolonged stress.
factors may stimulate and one may also expect emotional burnout, which will require other preventive recommendations. It is also impossible to ignore the fact that over the past 20 years new sources of stress have emerged in the teacher’s work, which could only but adversely affect the new aspects of the problem of emotional burnout. The practical implications of this study lay within the following concepts. First, the teachers’ inclined to understanding that coping mechanisms can help straight out the effectiveness of burnout prevention programmes aimed at increasing the adaptive capacity of teachers; second, teachers develop productive coping strategies that adequately meet the challenges of the profession. The results can be used by social psychologists, school psychologists and educational psychologists for the prevention and correction of emotional burnout of teachers.

References


