

Relations between burnout and emotional intelligence

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Introduction

Professionals involved in interpersonal relationships are probably the most vulnerable to burnout (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996) and teachers are particularly at risk due to their interactions with students, colleagues, administrators and parents (Chang, 2009).

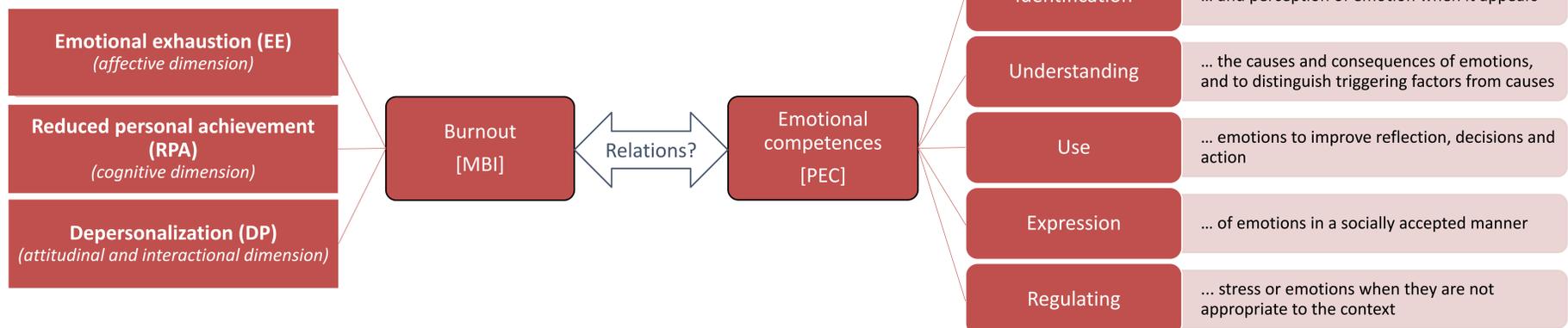
In school environments, teachers should sharpen their emotional intelligence to cope with these interactions (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009) and thus fostering emotional growth in teachers could reduce the high drop-out and burnout rates.

Few studies have examined the impact of emotional skills on teachers' burnout and only with short instruments that identified no more than a maximum of four distinct emotional competencies (Mérida-López & Extremera, 2017).



Objectives

To better understand the relationships between multiple emotional competences and different dimensions of burnout.



Method



Sample

- 202 Teachers (swiss primary schools, French-speaking):
- 87% ♀
 - aged 21 to 63 years old ($M = 41.4, SD = 11.0$)
 - 1 to 49 years of experience ($M = 19.1, SD = 11.6$)



Measures

- Maslach Burnout Inventory - Educators (Dion & Tessier, 1994) 22 items, 3 dimensions (α from .60 to .89)
- Profile of Emotional Competence (Brasseur et al., 2013) 50 items, 10 dimensions (α from .64 to .74)

Results

Pearson's correlations showed that each of the 10 emotional skills correlates significantly with one or more of the dimensions of burnout. Only coefficients greater than .20 (and significant at $p < 1\%$) were reported in the table.

Pearson's correlations between...		MBI-EE	MBI-RPA	MBI-DP
Years of experience				
PEC – Intrapersonal	Identification		-.30	
	Understanding		-.36	-.39
	Utilization		-.20	
	Expression	-.20	-.35	-.23
	Regulation	-.23	-.32	
PEC – Interpersonal	Identification		-.32	-.21
	Understanding		-.27	
	Utilization			
	Expression		-.21	-.26
	Regulation	-.25	-.28	

Multiple regression analyses highlighted that the Profile of Emotional Competence can predict a substantial percentage of variance of the *Depersonalization* (26%; $F_{(13,188)} = 5.01$; $p < 1\%$) and of the *Reduced personal achievement* (26%; $F_{(13,188)} = 5.11$; $p < 1\%$), when controlling gender, years of experience and well-being.

The dimension "Understanding of one's own emotions" has the highest (and significant) weighting in these two analyses ($\beta = -.40$; $p < 1\%$, and $\beta = -.25$; $p < 1\%$)

Références

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Discussion

The present study specifies different elements of the relations highlighted in previous studies (Mérida-López & Extremera, 2017) by showing that overall

- (1) intrapersonal emotional competences seem to be more correlated to burnout than interpersonal skills
- (2) most emotional skills are more specifically positively correlated with a lower reduction in personal achievement, then with less depersonalization and finally with less emotional exhaustion
- (3) understanding emotions seems particularly important to reduce depersonalization and loss of personal achievement, even when other emotional competences and socio-demographic variables are controlled for in multiple regression analyses.

Different concrete ways to approach this theme in training could be mentioned such as appropriate training on emotions to better understand and practice:

- how an emotionally challenged individual functions
- adaptive relevance of emotions and their functions (e.g., anger signals an injustice experienced and aims at reparation, sadness at loss and aims to overcome it)
- adaptive emotion regulation strategies (e.g., focusing on planning and positive thinking; accepting or positively re-evaluating; putting into perspective)

In view of the results, training emotional competences in teachers' education (particularly those that seem to play a predominant role), would be relevant for well-being, both in private and professional lives.

Specific strategies can be proposed derived from evidence-based research.

Tailored to the teachers' needs, such interventions should enable them to develop strategies to arm them against the many stressors to which they are subject to in their professional activity.