
Embitterment, Self-Efficacy and Mental Health Problems in private school teachers in Pakistan

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Abstract

The current research is aimed to explore the predictive relationship between embitterment, self-efficacy and mental health problems in private school teachers. Cross-sectional research design was used and a sample of 300 participants were selected through purposive sampling with the age range of 19 to 62 years ($M, 31.00$ $SD, 7.90$) and 150 men and 150 women. Three scales were used Post-Traumatic Embitterment Disorder (PTEDS), Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES), and Depression Anxiety Stress Scale- Short Form (DASS-21SF;). Results showed that workplace embitterment has a significant positive association with mental health problems and a significant negative association with self-efficacy in teachers. The current research findings has important implications for educational authorities including school administrators and teachers in terms of helping teachers in dealing with workplace bullying and stress to enhance their professional growth and performance.

Key words: workplace embitterment, self-efficacy, mental health, private schools, teachers

INTRODUCTION

The teaching profession may be a very rewarding profession yet associated with a high burnout rate and stress (Larrivee, 2012). The stress and burnout in teachers may be associated with burdens, disappointments, conflicts, feeling a lack of justice, recognition and praise for their work, and so on (Linden & Maercker, 2011). All these stressful issues may lead to many negative consequences including anxiety, depression, somatic problems, and embitterment (Hartney, 2008). Embitterment is a distinct state of mood experienced by all human beings as a result of negative life events (Linden & Maercker, 2011). Embitterment is a reactive emotion composed of feelings of frustration, disappointment, anger, aggression, shame, humiliation, despair, hopelessness, revenge, and rampage in a response to the events such as, when things go unexpected or out of control, being let down by others or treated unjustly, things have gone worse despite repeated effort, being criticized unfairly or denigrated by others and things become unbearable for the individual (Barnow & Balkir, 2013).

There may be several factors in the workplace that give rise to feelings of embitterment such as, workload, poor support, bullying, injustice and humiliation. However, features of embitterment might imply from a single event (Senksy, 2010). Embittered individuals feel helpless and victims of external critical events and resist receiving help, which make them more vulnerable to develop mental health issues including depression and anxiety (Linden, 2003; Znoj, 2016).

Among other areas of human functioning sense of self-efficacy is also influenced by negative emotional and cognitive state. Self-efficacy is a person's belief about his/her capabilities to accomplish a certain task, which influences performance (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2005) even in difficult and critical life situations (Smith, 1989). Self-efficacy of the teachers might be measured through the confidence they have in their teaching abilities (Klessen & Chiu, 2010). Teaching efficacy can be defined as teachers' judgment about their ability to take certain actions and achieve desired goals (Ashton, 1985), of student achievement (Ross, 1994). Teachers' self-efficacy is related with performance in the classroom (Milner, 2002), their ideas to control

students (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990) as well as school context (Goddard & Goddard, 2001). Teachers with high efficacy beliefs are thought to work harder and more consistent as well as less stressed (Lohman, 2006), are more likely to motivate and encourage students, introduce new teaching methods, and form more positive relationships with students (Mojavezi & Tamiz, 2012) and manage classroom well (Yüksel, 2014). Teachers with lower self-efficacy are associated with higher drop outs (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000) as well as Teacher self-efficacy poor classroom management ultimately leading to higher stress and early job leaving (Lentfer & Franks, 2015).

Teacher's self-efficacy influence their teaching behaviors and job performances, as researches proved that low self-efficacy result in higher level of job related stress and difficulties (Betoret, 2009). Teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to have alternative teaching ideas, understand students' problems and cope with their emotional and behavioral difficulties (Poulou & Norwich, 2002). However, low self-efficacy is said to be an important factor in developing PTSD symptoms and revengeful feelings, which are the important characteristics of post-traumatic embitterment disorder (DiGiuseppe, & Froh, 2002).

Moreover, low self-efficacy is a risk factor to develop mental health issues (Linden, & Maercker, 2011). Mental health can be defined as the capacity of human beings to keep a balance between themselves and external environment and cope with normal stresses and distresses of life and work productively (Bhui & Bhugra, 2007). Teachers' mental health has a great importance because it has significant effect on students (Pine, 1975), if the teachers have positive mental health characteristics they are able to create positive environment for students' growth (Miller & Wiltse, 1979). Factors related to the workplace such as workload, and classroom factors, (i.e., students' misbehavior), not only impact teachers' self-efficacy but also lead to the high level of stress in teachers (Boyle, Borg, Falzon, & Baglioni, 1995), which results in the negative mental health consequences (Jepson & Forrest, 2006).

Some researchers highlighted the role of self-efficacy in causing stress that further results in burnout in teachers (Schmitz & Schwarzer, 2000; Schwarzer & Renner, 2000), and teachers burnout leads to the physical and mental health issues (Burke & Greenglass, 1995). Research findings also have shown that one's own beliefs of efficacy can influence behavior and is an important source of stress. It was also revealed that low-self-efficacy beliefs are linked with anxiety depression and helplessness ((Bandura, 1986; Delcourt & Kinzie, 1993).

According to Linden, experiences that lead to post-traumatic embitterment are mostly from the workplace, and it has been reported in several researches that stress and traumatic events impaired the individual's self-efficacy (Linden, & Maercker, 2011). Since self-efficacy is an important self-referential trait that enables individuals to cope with difficult situations, impairment in it can lead toward the mental health issues. Several researches found the significant negative relationship between the self-efficacy and mental health issues, such as, anxiety, stress and depression (Tahmassian, & Jalali, 2011).

In short, teachers who experience higher embitterment and will have low self-efficacy will lead them towards mental health issues and poor class management as well as higher burn out and this study aims to find out this relationship between embitterment, self-efficacy and mental health problems in private school teachers. This study will identify that how private school teachers are experiencing embitterment and how it is related to their self-efficacy and mental health issues. To objectives of this research are to find out the relationship of embitterment , self-efficacy and mental health issues with key demographic variables like age, gender as well as years of experiences and level of school in private school teachers.

METHADODOLOGY

Participants

Sample of 300 teachers of the age range 19-62 was selected, teachers were chosen from the private schools only in order to generate comparable sample. The sample was drawn through using purposive sampling. Inclusion criteria included the teachers who had experience of two years and above and teachers who had the job experience less than two years were excluded from the study. Demographic information was obtained by designing a demographic form including information like age, gender, level of school they work in, year of experience and teaching levels.

Post-Traumatic Embitterment Disorder Self-Rating Scale (PTEDS). Post-Traumatic Embitterment Disorder Self Rating Scale (PTEDS; Linden, Baumann, Lieberei, & Rotter, 2009) was used to explore the feelings of embitterment in teachers Urdu translated version of this scale was used. The scale has 38 items, which were rated on four point likert scale. The Internal consistency and test-retest reliability of the scale were high, alpha $\alpha = 0.93$.

Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES). Generalized Self-efficacy scale (GSES; Schwarzar & Matthias, 1995) was used to identify the consequences of workplace embitterment on teachers' self-efficacy. The GSE was a self-report measure of self-efficacy. There were total 10 items on scale and scoring was done on four point likert scale. Urdu version of this scale was used in the present study. Cronbach's Alpha for this scale is between .76 and .90

Depression Anxiety Stress Scale –Short Form (DASS-21SF). The Depression Anxiety Stress Scale 21 (DASS-21; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) was used to investigate the mental health of the teachers by measuring three related negative emotional states of depression, anxiety and stress. It has 21-item, rated on four point likert scale. Its alpha $\alpha = .76$ to .90. The Urdu translated version of this scale was used in the present study.

Different private schools were approached and pilot study was conducted in order to assess the user friendliness. For the main study, the private schools were categorized into two categories level "A" and level "B" on the basis of their fee structures. Each institute was visited by the researcher to give the brief description of the aims and objectives of the current research and for obtaining consent from the authorities. They were assured of confidentiality that all information was only used for research purposes.

Once the permission was granted from the authorities, purposive sampling was used to select participants. 150 participants were chosen from level "A" schools and 150 from the level "B" schools. In 150 participants from each school level, 75 were males and 75 were females. All the participants were then provided with the final research protocols for testing including demographic Performa, and other tools. After completion of each testing, participants were given the time for debriefing, questions and feedback.

Statistical Analysis: Data was analyzed with the protocol comparing Post-Traumatic Embitterment Disorder Self-Rating Scale, Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale and Depression Anxiety Stress Scale

RESULTS

Method of correlation was used in order to access the relationship of the variables. Table 3 shows the significant relationship between workplace embitterment and self-efficacy and mental health of the teachers.

Table 1. Demographics*Frequencies and percentages of the demographic characteristics of the participants.*

Demographics	Frequencies (f)	Percentages (%)
Gender		
Male	150	50
Female	150	50
Age		
19-25	73	24.30
26-29	75	25.00
30-36	79	26.30
37 and above	73	24.30
Years of work experience		
1-2	97	32.30
3-6	98	32.70
7 and above	105	35.00
Levels of schools		
Schools with fee 1500 and below (Category A)	150	50.00
Schools with fee above 1500 (Category B)	150	50.00

Note f= frequencies and % =percentages

Table 2. Inter factor Correlation*Summary of Inter factor Correlation, Means and Standard Deviations of PTEDS, GSES, Factors of DASS and Total of DASS 21*

Factors	PTEDS	GSES	Stress	Anxiety	Depression	DASS Total
PTEDS	---	-.45***	.73***	.65**	.73***	.72***
GSES		---	-.51***	-.41***	-.52***	-.52***
Stress			---	.73**	.79***	.92***
Anxiety				---	.74***	.89***
Depression					---	.92***
Total DASS-21						---
<i>M</i>	27.41	18.09	6.99	5.76	5.77	18.53
<i>SD</i>	13.35	5.19	3.46	3.24	3.43	9.28

Note. *M*= mean; *SD*= standard deviation; PTEDS= Post-Traumatic Embitterment Disorder; GSES= Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale; DASS-21= Depression Anxiety Stress Scale; ***p<0.01.

The relationship of variables was assessed through using method of correlation and it significant results were found, which showed that there is a positive correlation between the workplace embitterment and mental health problems of the teachers, such as, depression, anxiety and stress. Negative correlation was proved among workplace embitterment and self-efficacy of the teachers. . There is also negative correlation between self-efficacy and mental health problems among teachers. Thus, the three hypotheses are accepted.

Table 3 : Regression Analysis

Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Workplace Embitterment, Self-Efficacy and Mental Health among Private School Teachers (N=300)

Model	SEB	B	t	p<
Step1 (R=.463, $\Delta R^2 = .209$)				
Age	.46	.41	7.51	.000***
Gender	1.01	.12	2.13	.033*
Step2 (R= .801, $\Delta R^2 = .639$)				
Age	.34	.12	2.92	.004**
Gender	.68	.07	1.91	.057*
PTEDS	.03	.73	18.83	.000***
Step3 (R= .825, $\Delta R^2 = .676$)				
Age	.32	.09	2.45	.015*
Gender	.66	.09	2.78	.006**
PTEDS	.03	.63	15.81	.000***
GSES	.07	.22	5.92	.000***

Note. All results are presented, Note: SEB= Std. Error Beta, B= Standardized Coefficients Beta, t=t-value, Note: Step1, $F(2, 299) = 40.45, p > 0.000$, Step 2, $F(3, 299) = 177.23, **p < 0.01$, and Step 3, $F(4, 299) = 156.92***p < 0.001$

The above table specifies that in step 1, all demographics found to be significant, in which age was the negative while the gender was significant positive predictor of mental health problems. In step 2, age was negative while the gender and PTEDS were significant positive predictors of mental health problems in which females have more mental health problems and experience more post traumatic embitterment symptoms. In Step 3, gender and PTEDS were found to be significant positive predictor while the age and GSES was significant negative predictor of mental health problems among private school teachers.

Table 4: Prevalence of workplace embitterment

Prevalence of workplace embitterment in male and female teachers (N=300)

Categories	f	%
Mild	54	18.1
Moderate	97	32.3
Severe	94	31.3
Very severe	55	19.1
Total	300	100

Note f= frequencies and % =percentages

The prevalence of workplace embitterment was determined by using the total score of the participants on post traumatic embitterment scale. The sample was divided into four categories of severity of according to means and the standard deviations with mild (1 SD below the mean), moderate (at the mean), severe (1 SD above the mean) and very severe (2 SD above the mean).The table shows that more than half of the sample was experiencing embitterment at moderate, severe and very severe levels

DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis of the study that there was a negative relationship between workplace embitterment and self-efficacy was accepted as significant negative correlation was found between them in the present study. Traumatic and stressful events cause significant impairment in individual's self-efficacy that further lead to the poor mental health consequences. (Gabler, & Maeckers, 2011). On the other hand, self-efficacy can be the protective factor in relation to the traumatic events, such as, individuals with high levels of self-efficacy less likely to be effected from the traumatic events and remains resilient (Cheevar, & Hardin, 1999).

The hypothesis, "there is a significant positive relation between workplace embitterment and mental health problems" is also accepted. Job stress is proved to be an important determinant in poor health and work-related injuries (WHO, 2009). Job stress can cause physical as well as mental health problems that can lead from depression to the suicide (Mental health and the workplace - trades union Congress, 2000). Researches on teachers' mental health indicate that mental health of the teachers has been affected by the workplace factors such as, verbal insults, deliberate damage of personal belongings, threats of violence from pupils (Bauer et al, 2007). According to Linden, the embitterment can be associated with a number of mental health issues, such as, helplessness, hopelessness, anger, aggression, poor mood and motivation and can even end up to the suicide or murder (Linden, Rotter, Bumann, & Lieberei, 2007). As it was proved that teachers suffer from the workplace embitterment that can affect their health in several ways, sources of teachers' stress were also identified, such as, unavailability of sufficient resources, work pressure, large class sizes, poor performance of the students, and poor opportunities of promotions (Tahseen, 2015).

Significant positive relation between self-efficacy and mental health was also proved. There is also plethora of researches in the literature that show the similar findings. A research study showed the evidence that a person with high self-efficacy will interpret the critical events manageable, and feel less stressful in threatening situation, hence regulate his/her emotions successfully (Carr, 2004). Individuals who experience situations in control will perceive less threat and are less likely to have mental health issues as compared to the individuals who perceive events as uncontrollable. These individuals are more likely to feel helpless, anxious and stressed in critical situations that have detrimental effects on their mental health Hashemi, 1993). High self-efficacy increases individuals' achievements and boosts their mental health and reduces stress and risk of depression and other mental health disorders. On the other hand, people who think that they are unable to cope with critical situations and doubt their capabilities are more vulnerable to depression (Bandura, Pastorelli, Barbaranelli, & Caprara, 1999).

The present study, found that women have more workplace embitterment and mental health issues as compared to the males. Females are more likely to suffer from anxiety, stress and depression than male gender. The reason behind can be the significantly distinct roles and responsibilities of both genders in the society. Women also experience lack of autonomy and control over their lives that cause anxiety and depressive symptoms in them (World Health Organization, 2020). Other reason can be the less expressiveness of the men in our society as compared to the women.

Present study revealed that there is a significant positive relation between age and self-efficacy and significant negative association between age and mental health issues. Researches on young adults showed the evidence that cognitive impairments along with depression and anxiety are common in young adults (Castaneda, Tuulio-Henriksson, Marttunen, Suvisaari, & Lonnqvist, 2008). People in their 20s and 30s have highest levels of anxiety and depressive

symptoms because in this age people have multiple options and choices and therefore they're fearful to make wrong decisions. Older people become wiser with age; they have learnt a lot from their life experiences and have better emotional regulation and decision making power as compared to young adults.

CONCLUSION

Hence, present study and existing literature support that, workplace embitterment has positive relationship with mental health problems and negative association with self-efficacy of the teachers.

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