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The Expression of Teacher Professional Burnout in Lithuanian Preschool Education

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Abstract: Burnout by educators of educational institutions is already a vital problem in some national education systems. Lithuania is not an exception. The current research concentrates on the situation of preschool teaching, as there is a lack of research investigating this particular group of teachers. Taking into account the fact that professional burnout syndrome begins imperceptibly, but later causes serious consequences not only for the educator himself/herself but also for the entire educational process, it is appropriate to conduct a research that aims to evaluate the manifestation of the burnout syndrome expressions of Lithuanian preschool teachers. Research methods: analysis of the scientific literature, quantitative research approach, aiming to evaluate the expression of professional burnout of pedagogues of Lithuanian preschool education institutions. Data were collected while using questionnaire survey the sample consists of respondents who represent the studied population, i.e. educators of preschool education institutions in Lithuanian cities and districts. During the quantitative research survey, 240 preschool teachers were interviewed. The results of the research showed that approximately one out of seven preschool education teachers experience severe burnout. The were revealed the major issues of the nature of professional burnout, highlighting its complexity, involving increasing emotional and physical fatigue, depersonalization, and decreased professional aspirations. Factors such as age, qualification category, and working hours also have influence on the professional burnout level. Management factors such like heavy workloads, poor relationships among the teachers and administration, large group sizes contribute to teacher burnout. These factors have direct impact on the interactions with children, parents, colleagues, and managers. Burnout reduces motivation, organizational ability, and can lead to job dissatisfaction and workplace changes. Additionally, the negative impact on the educational process, such as creating an unfavourable learning environment and increasing the workload for other staff may be cleared out.

Keywords: Preschool education, Teachers, Causes of burnout, Professional burnout, Effects

Introduction

At the end of the 20th century, psychologist Freudenberg (1974) was the first to study the phenomenon of professional burnout and revealed the links of this syndrome with the mental and physical exhaustion. The author studied the manifestations of health care workers' personality factors, paying great attention in his work to human emotional exhaustion and loss of motivation to work (Freudenberg, 1974; Dreskinytė & Stanisloviene, 2019). It was the beginning of an intensive attention to the topic of burnout. The research of this phenomenon led to better understanding of human feelings and reactions, inspired the investigations of how and why burnout syndrome occurs, and how to find out the ways to fight with this syndrome, looking for ways to prevent it. Further on, one of the most famous researchers in this field - social psychologist Maslach (1976) - was interested in this phenomenon and developed personal research. This researcher focused specifically on the

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emotional state of persons working in the social service sphere, but when talking about professional burnout, this researcher emphasized the prolonged reaction of the process itself to constantly recurring stressors of various kinds at work (Maslach 1976; Abromaitienė & Stanišauskienė, 2014). The sources of scientific literature present a great number of various definitions of the phenomenon of professional burnout. The burnout syndrome itself is relevant and very widely studied, although there is no unified scientific description of the above mentioned syndrome. Still, it is emphasized that professional burnout is a multidimensional phenomenon consisting of the following components:

- emotional exhaustion (a person feels that he/she has exhausted all his/her physical and emotional resources, there is a feeling of overwork. This factor is characterized by the fact that a person feels constantly tired);
- depersonalization (an indifferent attitude towards work, colleagues, customers appears. The person behaves, speaks mockingly or cynically, as a result of which conflict situations at work start to arise);
- decreased level of personal achievements (negative attitude towards the work one does and self-depreciation, constantly puts oneself in a negative mood, expects failure in work situations).

While striving to reveal the constituent parts of the phenomenon of professional burnout and analyzing the model presented by Maslach (2003), it becomes clear that professional burnout is defined as a kind of counter-reaction to long-lasting stress. The authors generally agree that emotional exhaustion is the first stage of professional burnout syndrome (Navaitienė & Danilovienė, 2017). Smitch (2008) distinguished the differences between the phenomena of stress and burnout: a person under stress feels as if he/she is "drowning" in his/her work and responsibilities, while a person experiencing burnout feels "drowned" (Smitch, 2008; Abromaitienė & Stanišauskienė, 2014). It is already noted that an increasing part of society suffers from the syndrome of burn out, it is one of the most pressing problems today (Leiputė & Padvilikis, 2018). It is emphasized that the process of burnout does not appear suddenly, it is a gradually occurring state of a person, which acquires another level over a certain period of time and becomes a significant element for the quality of interpersonal and work relations (Navaitienė & Danilovienė, 2017). Professional burnout is a relevant phenomenon for the modern society in the labour market, and the burnout syndrome among educators is a relevant topic as well, as they are considered to be the group of a high burnout risk. Daily challenges related to the specifics of the teacher's work are also associated with a high risk of burnout syndrome.

The problem. Currently educators face more and more tasks and responsibilities. The institutions that employ them need to adapt to the growing demands. If we want to perform the successful educational reform, it is very important to understand and recognize the problems of the pedagogue in time, as the professional burnout syndrome begins imperceptibly, causing serious consequences not only for the pedagogue himself/herself, but also for the entire educational process and its management (Bubelienė & Merkys, 2016). Burnout of educators in preschool education institutions is a relevant problem, but there is a lack of research that reveals how professional burnout affects the professional activities of preschool teachers and what influence it has on the management of the educational process in preschool education institutions.

Research questions:

1. What are the manifestations of professional burnout and what are the reasons for its occurrence?
2. What are the pre-school teachers experiences of professional burnout?
3. How does professional burnout affect the professional activities of preschool teachers?

Research object. Professional burnout of teachers.

The purpose of the study is to highlight the expression of professional burnout of preschool education institutions teachers: the levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and the level of personal achievements demonstrated during the professional burnout.

Research methods: scientific literature, quantitative research.

Method

A questionnaire was used to collect the data for the quantitative study, answering the questions online. Online access was chosen because we want to interview preschool teachers throughout Lithuania, and it is convenient

for the respondent. Also, it is very important to mention that it allows for more efficient surveying and having survey data in one system/location. The survey was conducted using the online platform www.apklausa.lt. In order to reach the required respondents, the link to the survey was sent to Lithuanian preschool institutions and colleges by e-mail, distributed on the Facebook social network in closed groups of preschool education pedagogues. The questionnaire consists of 2 parts: the burnout syndrome assessment questionnaire and sociodemographic questions. Maslach (2003) standardized questionnaire MBI-General Survey (Maslach Burnout Inventory, abbreviated MBI) was used for the evaluation of burnout syndrome. The questionnaire consists of 22 statements measuring three dimensions of burnout syndrome: professional (emotional) exhaustion, depersonalization, lack of self-realization (reduced personal achievements). Each statement in the questionnaire is rated on a frequency scale ranging from never (0) to every day (6). The occupational (emotional) exhaustion scale consists of 9 statements, for example, "I am tired when I get up in the morning and start the working day.", "I feel like I am about to break down." The depersonalization scale consists of 5 statements, such as "comparing the current situation with the beginning of my work, I think I have become really less sensitive to the people I care about." The scale of lack of self-realization consists of 8 statements, such as "I think that through my professional activities I make a positive impact on the lives of the people I care about.", "I feel that I have accomplished many valuable things at work."

These three subscales are examined separately. Individual subscales of the MBI questionnaire are used in the study of individual components of burnout syndrome, so it is believed that this specificity of calculation allows for more accurate results. The burnout syndrome is evaluated according to the sum of the collected points. High scores on the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization subscales indicate high levels of burnout, while low scores concerning lack of self-realization reveal high levels of burnout (see Table 1).

Table 1. The subscales of burnout syndrome and their evaluation

The Subscales of Burnout Syndrome	Low PS level	Average PS level	High PS level
Professional (emotional) exhaustion	< 17	18 - 29	> 30
Depersonalization	< 5	6 - 11	> 12
Lack of Self-realization	> 40	34 - 39	< 33

The survey included 8 sociodemographic questions: gender, age, length of service, etc., in which the respondents could choose the answers that suited them. In 5 questions it was possible to write personal answer, there were given "other options" as well. 2 questions were open-ended, where respondents had to write their answers. 140 respondents working in pre-school educational institutions of Lithuanian cities and districts took part in the survey (see Figure 1).

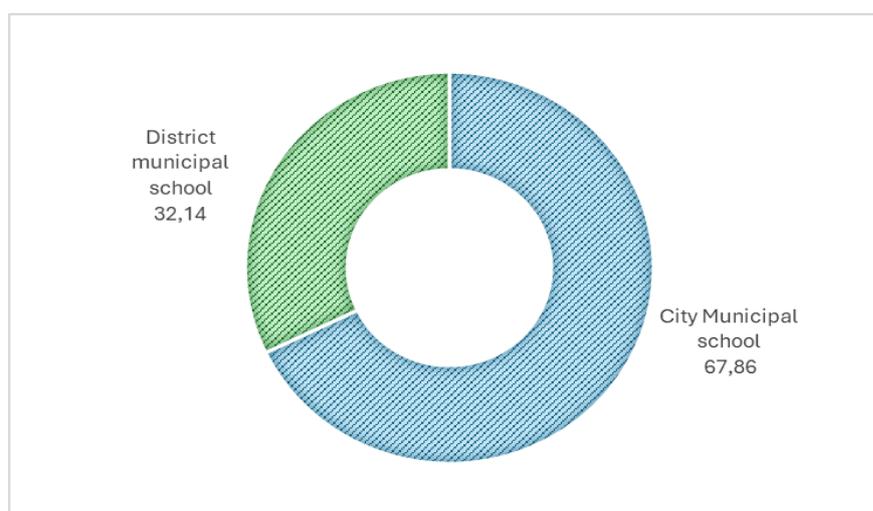


Figure 1. Distribution of respondents according to working place in the city and in the district

According to the data of the educational management information system, there is a very small proportion of male pedagogues in pre-school educational institutions, so it was not surprising that only 2 men and 138 women participated in the survey. Sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 2. Data analysis demonstrated that the two largest groups of respondents are pedagogues aged between 31 and 40 (35%) and between 41 and 50 (27.86%). The smallest group of respondents consists of pedagogues over 60 years old

(3.57%). The average age of the pedagogues who participated in the survey is 43 years. The majority of respondents (47.14%) have obtained a university education. Respondents who chose the other option indicated that they had obtained higher education (N=5), three pedagogues indicated that they were currently working and studying. The average length of service is 14 years. The majority of respondents (57.86%) have a work experience of 10 years; 27.14% of respondents have more than 20 years of work experience. The qualification category of the majority of respondents (52.86%) is a teacher and only 1.43% has the qualification category of teacher expert. Most of the respondents (92.14%) work in a preschool educational institution. Five respondents have chosen another option and indicated that they have worked in a "kindergarten-multifunctional center" and "school-kindergarten".

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to sociodemographic characteristics

Criterion	Number of Respondents	%	
Age	Up till 30	15	10,71
	31-40	49	35
	41-50	39	27,86
	51-60	32	22,86
	Over 60	5	3,57
		Number of Respondents	%
Education	Professional bachelor	52	37,14
	University bachelor	66	47,14
	Master	14	10
	Other	8	5,71
	Number of Respondents	%	
Work experience	Up till 5 years	46	32,86
	6-10	35	25
	11-20	21	15
	21-30	15	10,71
	Over 30	23	16,43
	Number of Respondents	%	
Qualification	Teacher	74	52,86
	Senior Teacher	40	28,57
	Master Teacher	24	17,14
	Teacher Expert	2	1,43
	Number of Respondents	%	
Educational institution	Institution of Preschool Education	129	92,14
	Primary school	2	1,43
	High school	3	2,14
	Progymnasium	1	0,71
	Other	5	3,57

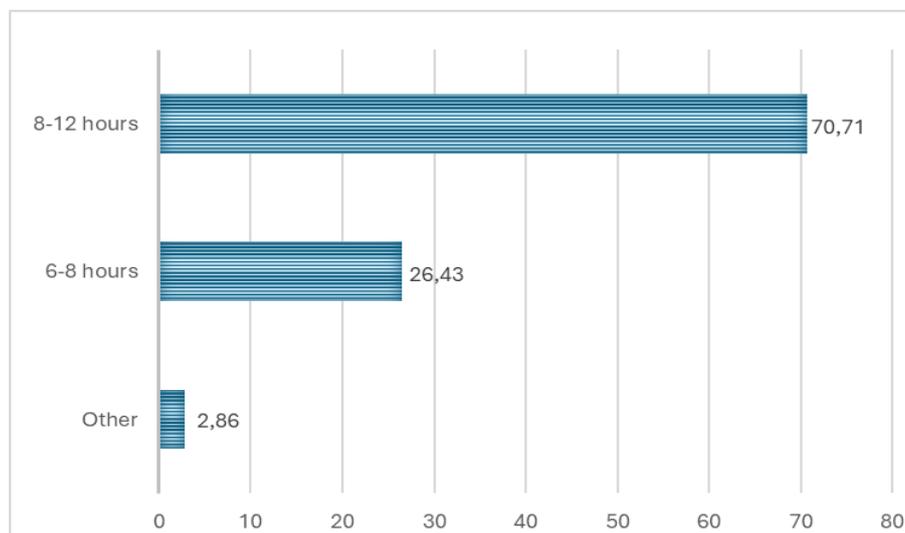


Figure 2. The number of working hours of teachers per day

According to the number of working hours per day (see Figure 2), the respondents were divided as follows: 37 (26.43%) respondents work 6-8 hours; 99 (70.71%) 8-12 hours; 4 respondents chose another option and stated: "I work half-time"; "there are days when I work 5.5 hours and 11 a. m."; "6-9 a. m."; "0-6 a. m., 6-11 a. m." Research data were processed using SPSS Statistics 18 software. Statistical analysis of data was performed, averages, modes, medians, standard deviations were calculated, dispersive variance analysis of independent groups ANOVA was applied. The data is organized and presented in the form of charts and tables.

Results and Discussion

This study presents data on the professional burnout of Lithuanian preschool teachers according to three manifestations of the burnout syndrome: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and decrease in personal achievements. After analyzing the data of individual dimensions of burnout syndrome: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and self-realization decrease (see Table 3), it can be stated that teachers of preschool education institutions experience an average level of burnout syndrome. Preschool teachers had a mean emotional exhaustion scale score of 27, a depersonalization scale score of 10, and a self-realization scale score of 34.

Table 3. Data of burnout subscales

Manifestation of the burnout syndrome	Professional emotional exhaustion	Depersonalization	Self-realization decrease
Mean	27	10	34
Moda	39	5	45
Mediana	26,5	9,5	35,5
Standard deviation	12,78	6,49	8,89
Minimal meaning	0	0	10
Maximal meaning	51	30	48
The level of the burnout syndrome	Average level	Average level	Average level

After analyzing the obtained quantitative research data, the distribution of respondents' professional burnout according to all burnout subscales was determined. The results of the study are presented in Figure 3.

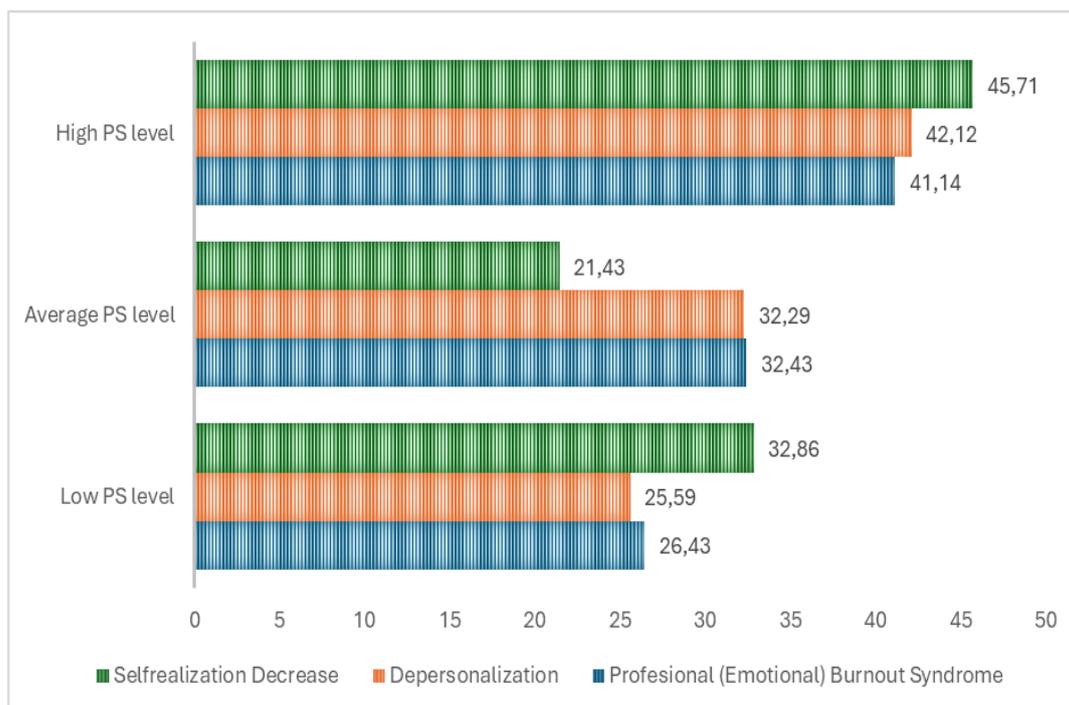


Figure 3. Manifestation of burnout syndrome according to the dimensions

Analyzing the emotional exhaustion subscale, the research data show that 42.12 % of preschool education teachers who participated in the survey experience a high level of emotional exhaustion; 31,43 % of the participants experience an average level of emotional exhaustion, i.e. experience fatigue, lack of energy, depletion of physical and emotional resources, feel fatigue, irritability, frustration at work and tension. The research data revealed that a high level of depersonalization (withdrawal, cynical behaviour, creating distance from other persons, formal, cold communication with people) prevails among 40 % of the research participants. 32.29 % of teachers who participated in the survey experience moderate level of depersonalization.

The results of the subscale of the decrease in personal achievements revealed that 45.71 % of pedagogues experience a high level of self-realization decrease, which is interpreted as a decrease in the sense of competence, the emergence of a sense of ineffectiveness, a negative evaluation of one's work, and the inability to meet other people's expectations. A low level of self-realization decrease is characteristic to 32.86 % of preschool education pedagogues who participated in the study. Thus, the professional burnout of teachers of preschool education institutions manifests itself in all three dimensions.

A high degree of professional burnout is determined when high results are obtained in the scales of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, low results are demonstrated in the scale of personal achievements. An average degree of burnout is defined when there are obtained average scores of all three scales; a low degree of burnout is defined when there are received low scores on the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization scales and high scores on the personal achievement scale. 14 % of participants experience high professional burnout; the average degree of professional burnout is 4 % of respondents, 7 % of respondents do not experience professional burnout syndrome. 74 % pedagogues are characterized only by a certain manifestation of individual components of professional burnout (see Figure 4).

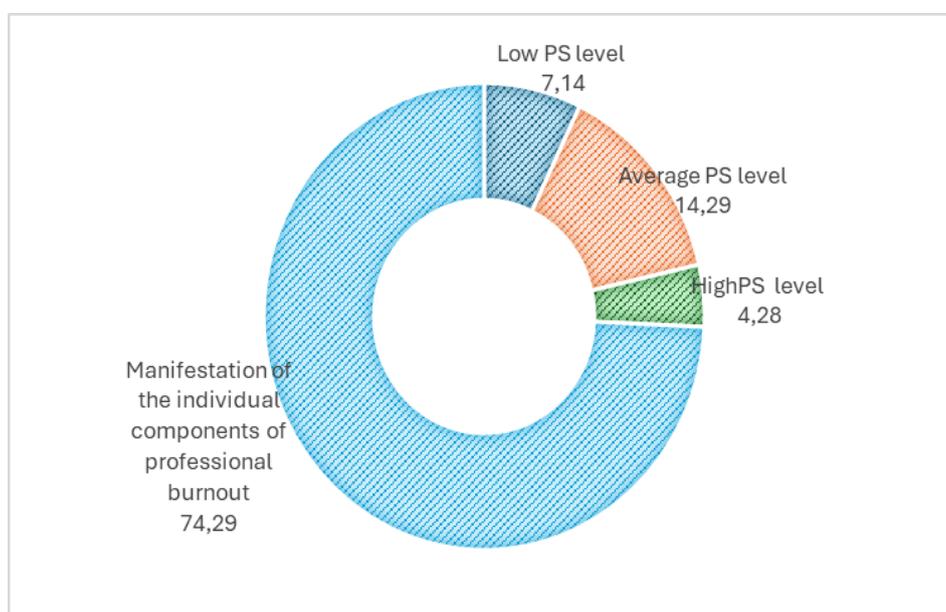


Figure 4. The degree of manifestation of professional burnout syndrome among educators

In order to reveal the relationship between the burnout of pre-school teachers and the three dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal self-realization, the Spearman correlation coefficient was calculated. The obtained data show (see Table 4) that there is a moderately strong relationship between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization of preschool teachers, which is statistically significant. There is a very weak negative correlation between depersonalization and personal achievement. This result indicates that personal accomplishments are valued more with stronger depersonalization. There is a very weak negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and personal achievement that is not statistically significant. It can be said that when analysing the responses of preschool teachers, the strongest dependence is between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, i.e. emotional exhaustion promotes symptoms of depersonalization. Maslach (2003) states that emotional exhaustion is the first stage of burnout syndrome. At the beginning, a person experiences emotional exhaustion, later he/she becomes cynical and formal in his/her relations with others, which is depersonalization, i.e. the development of the second component of the burnout syndrome.

Tabbe 4. Results of correlation analysis of burnout dimensions

Subscales	Emotional exhaustion	Depersonalization
Depersonalization	0,67	Correlation coefficient r
	0.0<0,05	Statistical significance of correlation P
Lack of personal self-realization	-0,12	Correlation coefficient r
	0.085>0,05	Statistical significance of correlation p
		-0,18
		0,0178<0,05

Analyzing the manifestation of professional burnout of preschool teachers, the following tendencies of emotional exhaustion were cleared out (see Table 5). A quarter of educators (25.71%) indicated that they feel emotionally exhausted from work several times a month/several times a year. 12.86 % of educators feel this way every day, and slightly more (19.29 %) indicated that they feel that way several times a week. Only a small number of educators claims that they never (2.86%) or once a year (3.57%) feel emotional fatigue from work. At the end of the working day, several times a week almost a third (28.57%) of educators feel completely exhausted, and 16.43% finish work every day as being completely exhausted. A quarter of pedagogues (24.29%) stated that they feel exhausted several times a month, 15 % of pedagogues - once a week. More than a quarter (27.14%) of pedagogues start the working day tired several times a month, and 18.57 percent - several times a week. The results of the research revealed that 19.29 % of preschool teachers feel constant stress when working all day with people several times a year; 21.43 % feel completely drained from work and 21.43 % think they are about to break down. Several times a month, teachers feel frustrated with their work (25%), think they work too hard (19.29%) and feel constant stress (16.43%).

According to the opinion of the pedagogues who participated in the survey, emotional exhaustion for preschool teachers manifests itself in physical and emotional fatigue, exhaustion; teachers declare that the close communication with people every day causes them tension and stress, which leads to disappointment in their work. Mikalauskas et al. (2016) describes emotional exhaustion as a state in which a person feels physically and emotionally exhausted, unable to meet the demands placed on him/her, which leads to stress and frustration at work. A person uses up his/her emotional resources and experiences emotional fatigue, he/she does not have the energy to start a new activity or communicate with other people.

Table 5. Emotional exhaustion assessment results (percentage)

Statement	Never	Once a year	Several times a year	Several times a month	Once a week	Several times a week	Every day
I feel worn out from work.	2,86	3,57	25,71	25,71	10	19,29	12,86
At the end of the day, I am completely exhausted.	2,14	2,86	10,71	24,29	15	28,57	16,43
I am tired when I get up in the morning and start my work day.	16,43	4,29	14,29	27,14	13,57	18,57	5,71
Working all day with other people is a systematic strain for me.	21,43	15	19,29	11,43	11,43	10,71	10,71
I feel completely drained from work.	7,86	9,29	21,43	13,57	12,86	18,57	16,43
I feel frustrated at work.	21,43	12,86	13,57	25	8,57	12,14	6,43
I feel like I'm working too hard.	10,71	7,14	19,29	19,29	10,71	17,14	15,71
Working directly with people means constant stress for me.	29,29	12,14	12,14	16,43	8,57	8,57	12,86
I feel like I'm about to break.	21,43	15,71	21,43	9,29	11,43	12,14	8,57

Analyzing the depersonalization assessment data of the respondents (see Table 6), it can be stated that more than half (52.86%) of the pedagogues who participated in the survey never treat the people they care for as if they were impersonal "things". However, the rest of the pedagogues (47.14%) admit that they think that they treat the people they care for as impersonal "things". A quarter of educators (24.29%) never think that they have become less sensitive to the people they care for and almost half (44.29%) of pre-school teachers are not afraid that their

work will make them hard-hearted. 40.71 percent of respondents, once a week or more often, say they think they have become less sensitive; 21.44% are afraid that they will become hard-hearted because of work.

The results of the survey showed that 45.71 percent of respondents worry about the people they care about, but 32.14% say that sense of care about other people disappears a few times a month or more. The results also revealed that 18.57 % of educators never think that the people they care about might put the responsibility on them for some of their problems. 17.14 % indicate that several times a week they feel that number of the people they care about, put the responsibility for the problems on the teachers. While summing up, it can be said that the signs of depersonalization for pre-school teachers are manifested by cold communication, negative attitude towards oneself and other people, emotional detachment from people and their problems. The emergence of professional burnout among educators is determined by symptoms of depersonalization: negative feelings and relationships with other people, indifference towards others and psychological detachment (Oliveira et al., 2021).

Table 6. Results of the assessment of depersonalization (percentage)

Statement	Never	Once a year	Several times a year	Several times a month	Once a week	Several times a week	Every day
I feel like I treat some of the people I care about as if they were impersonal "things".	52,86	7,14	12,14	10	7,14	7,14	3,57
Comparing the current situation to the situation when I started to work, I think I have become really less sensitive to the people I care about.	24,29	10	12,86	12,14	12,86	17,14	10,71
I'm afraid that work will make me hard-hearted.	44,29	11,43	7,86	15	7,86	4,29	9,29
don't really worry too much about what might happen to the people I care about.	45,71	12,14	10	14,29	7,14	3,57	7,14
I feel like many of the people I care about put the blame for some of their problems on me.	18,57	12,86	16,43	13,57	10,71	17,14	10,71

The results of the assessment of reduced personal achievements (see Table 7) revealed that every day more than half (58.57%) of preschool teachers easily understand the feelings of the people they care for and are happy to see their success (48.57%). The teachers' answers show that they manage to solve the problems of the people they care for very effectively every day (27.86%), several times a week (28.57%). A similar number of teachers (27.86%) say that they feel full of energy several times a week. Educators (41.43%) believe that every day they have a positive influence on the lives of the people they care for and are able to create a stress-free environment for them every day (33.57%). Only a small number of pedagogues (2.14%) indicate that they never think that their professional activities have a positive influence on the lives of the people they care for, are able to understand people's feelings or solve their problems. The research revealed that some preschool teachers (6.43%) never feel energetic, think that they are not capable of creating an environment without tension at work (2.86%), think that they have not made valuable achievements (3.57%), which indicates reduced personal achievements. According to researchers (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001), a decrease in achievement is a decrease in confidence in one's own abilities, competence at work and a low estimation of personal success and achievements at work.

In the scientific literature, the following factors characterizing the burnout syndrome are defined: individual (people's demographic characteristics and personality traits) and determined by the work environment - organizational (Abromaitienė & Stanišauskienė 2014; Kavaliauskienė & Balčiūnaitė, 2015; Stočkus, 2014; Pacevičius, 2006; Maslach, 2003). In order to assess whether the estimates of the subscales of professional burnout are influenced by the respondents' age, education, length of service, pedagogical qualification, gender, geographical location of the school, length of the working day, ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) of independent groups was used to analyze the data. According to the obtained p-value, the researchers decide whether they can consider the differences between independent groups to be statistically significant. If $p < 0.05$, the differences are considered statistically significant.

Table 7. The results of the assessment of self-realization decline (percentage)

Statement	Never	Once a year	Several times a year	Several times a month	Once a week	Several times a week	Every day
It is easy for me to understand the feelings of the people I care for.	2,14	1,43	4,29	10	7,86	15,71	58,57
I am very effective at solving the problems of the people I care for.	2,14	3,57	5,71	17,86	14,29	28,57	27,86
I believe that through my professional activities I make a positive impact on the lives of the people I care for.	2,14	3,57	5	12,86	16,43	18,57	41,43
I feel full of energy.	6,43	7,14	10,71	19,29	17,86	27,86	10,71
I can easily create a tension-free environment with the people I care about.	2,86	4,29	12,86	13,57	12,86	20	33,57
I feel invigorated, rejuvenated, when I can watch up close when the people I care for are doing well.	5	5	9,29	7,14	10	15	48,57
I feel that I have accomplished many valuable things at work.	3,57	2,86	6,43	10,71	12,14	28,57	35,71
At work, I deal with emotional issues very calmly.	10	6,43	12,86	22,14	11,43	20	17,14

After analyzing the estimates of the subscales of professional burnout according to age groups, the qualification category of pedagogues, and the length of the working day, statistically significant differences were determined (see Table 8). Comparing the subjects by age groups, statistically significant differences were found between the age of the respondents and the intensity of emotional exhaustion. Analyzing the averages of the variables, it is possible to see that educators aged between 31 and 40 years experience a high level of emotional exhaustion. No statistically significant differences were found between the subscales of depersonalization, self-realization decline and the age groups of educators.

After analyzing the estimates of the subscales of professional burnout according to the qualification category of the pedagogues, it was found that the qualification category of the pedagogues has no influence on the professional burnout, assessing it according to the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization of the pedagogues. However, when assessing the relationship between the decrease in self-realization and the available qualification category, it is revealed that expert teachers believe that they do not achieve their personal professional goals and underestimate their abilities, competence, and feel a decrease in the sense of productivity and efficiency.

When comparing subjects according to the ratio of self-realization decline and available qualification category, statistically significant differences were determined ($p=0.033<0.005$). Analyzing the estimates of the professional burnout subscales according to the length of the working day, the results revealed that the length of the working day does not affect the decrease in self-realization, i.e. no statistically significant differences were found. However, the obtained results show that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization depend on the length of the working day. Educators working 6 to 8 hours a day experience high levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. The obtained results are significant, but a more detailed study is needed to research why pedagogues who work fewer hours a day experience professional burnout.

Data analysis revealed that no statistically significant differences were found in terms of education, seniority, gender and geographical location of the institution (see Table 9). This means that these factors do not influence professional burnout among educators.

Table 8. Demographic and professional factors affecting professional burnout

	Number of respondents	Means of emotional exhaustion subscale scores	Standard deviation	Means of depersonalization subscale scores	Standard deviation	Means of self-realization subscale estimates	Standard deviation
Age group							
Up till 30	15	28,13	14,04	12.8	7.37	33.4	9.44
From 31 to 40	49	36,33	12,42	10.41	6.67	33.49	7.98
From 41 to 50	39	26,74	11,34	10.67	5.54	35.67	9,2
From 51 to 60	32	23,81	14,23	8.94	6.92	34.47	9.97
Over 60	5	28,20	15,25	11.8	5.89	34.2	8,04
	p meaning	p=0,000<0,05		p=0.415>0,05		p=0.831>0,05	
Qualification category							
Teacher	74	26,08	13,41	9,70	6,70	36,59	9,27
Senior teacher	40	24,68	12,63	8,88	5,97	38,10	8,52
Master teacher	24	26,63	11,97	9,67	6,21	34,08	8,79
Teacher expert	2	31,50	4,95	12,50	4,95	21	8,49
	p meaning	p=0.844>0.05		p=0.825>0.05		p=0.033<0.05	
Time of work experience							
From 6 to 8 hours.	37	36,05	9,90	16,54	5,56	30,46	8,72
From 8 to 12 hours	98	27,17	13,20	10,76	6,74	33,71	9,10
	p meaning	p=0.000<0.05		p=0.000<0.05		p=0.063>0.05	

Table 9. Demographic and occupational factors that do not influence occupational burnout

	Number of respondents	Means of emotional exhaustion subscale scores	Standard deviation	Means of depersonalization subscale scores	Standard deviation	Means of self-realization subscale estimates	Standard deviation
Education							
Professional bachelor	52	28,79	11,33	10,40	6,41	34,87	8,04
University bachelor	66	29,18	11,15	10,86	6,28	33,95	8,35
Master	14	30,64	11,08	9,93	8,19	33,36	10,17
	p meaning	p=0.861>0,05		p=0.862>0,05		p=0.771>0,05	
Work experience (year)							
From 5 years	46	27,07	12,89	11,26	7,08	33,13	8,66
From 6 to 10	35	27,69	12,35	10,46	6,25	35,29	7,92
From 11 to 20	21	24,81	11,77	9,57	4,40	35,33	10,05
From 21 to 30	15	28,13	14,53	9,73	6,27	36,07	9,52
Virš 30	23	26,26	13,78	10,09	7,61	33,26	9,52
	p meaning	p=0.927>0.05		p=0.855>0.05		p=0.665>0.05	
Sex							
Males	2	17,50	14,85	8,50	0,71	31,50	23,33
Females	138	27	12,76	10,48	10,48	34,38	8,72
	p meaning	p=0.298>0.05		p=0.79>0.05		p=0.651>0.05	
Preschool educational institution							
City	95	27,55	13,11	11,11	6,21	33,69	8,82
Rural	45	25,42	12,07	9,07	6,92	35,69	8,98
	p meaning	p=0.359>0,05		p=0.082>0,05		p=0.215>0,05	

Analyzing the expression of professional burnout among teachers of preschool education institutions, it became clear that teachers are characterized by tendencies of emotional exhaustion: constant tension, physical and emotional fatigue, exhaustion and long-lasting stress are felt at work, which leads to frustration. The signs of depersonalization for the pre-school educators who participated in the study are manifested by cold communication, a negative attitude towards themselves and other people, and emotional detachment from people and their problems. The pre-school teachers who participated in the study, who experienced a decrease in personal achievements, do not feel energetic at work, underestimate their achievements, do not think that their professional activities have a positive impact on the lives of the people they care for. Kavaliauskienė and Balčiūnienė (2014) emphasize that professional burnout is a multidimensional phenomenon consisting of the following components: emotional exhaustion (a person feels that he/she has exhausted all his/her physical and emotional resources, there is a feeling of overwork. This factor is characterized by the fact that a person feels constantly tired); depersonalization (an indifferent attitude towards work, colleagues, customers appears. The person behaves, speaks mockingly or cynically, as a result of which conflict situations at work begin to arise) and decreased personal achievements (negative attitude towards the work he/she does and self-depreciation, constantly puts himself/herself in a negative mood, expects failure in work situations). The signs of professional burnout revealed in the study are similar to those described by other authors. Smith & Johnson (2015) suggest that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization are common symptoms of burnout experienced not only by early childhood educators but also by other educational workers.

In the course of the study, the relationships between the professional burnout of preschool teachers and various socio-demographic variables were looked for. It turned out that the burnout of preschool educators who participated in the study did not depend on sex, education, length of service, and the geographical location of the educational institution, but the study revealed that the professional burnout of preschool educators is influenced by the age, qualification category, and length of the working day.

The study revealed that educators between the ages of 31 and 40 experienced high levels of emotional exhaustion. This confirms the conclusion of the study conducted by Abromaitienė and Stanišauskienė (2014), that many respondents admit that they experienced the feeling of the signs of professional burnout, especially emotional exhaustion, around 35-40 years of life (after 10-15 years of work). Pacevičius (2006) states that, of all demographic characteristics, age has the strongest influence on burnout. A study by Maslach et al. (2001) found that younger and middle-aged workers are more prone to burnout. Raižienė and Bakšytė (2010) point out that older pedagogues tend to burn out less, because they have a formed view of the world and have acquired more wisdom. After analyzing the received data in terms of pedagogical qualification, it was found that expert teachers experience a high level of self-realization decline, comparing them with preschool teachers of other categories. The results of the study conducted by Stočkus (2014) revealed that professionals with higher qualifications have a higher level of emotional exhaustion.

When analyzing the estimates of the professional burnout subscales according to the length of the working day, the obtained results are significant. It was found that the pre-school educators who worked 6 to 8 hours a day experienced a high level of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization compared to educators who worked longer hours. Initial research on burnout at work identified high workloads as the primary cause of teacher burnout (Chang, 2009). Abromaitienė and Stanišauskienė (2014) note that the workload is characterized not only by long working hours and overtime (as a quantitative workload), but also by a mismatch in the nature of the work, when the employee lacks the ability or motivation for a certain type of work (as a qualitative workload).

Conclusion

Professional burnout is described as a process that is usually related to unsatisfied personal needs and expectations at the workplace. This process manifests itself in the ever-increasing frustration of the person, the symptoms of emotional and physical fatigue that appear. Professional burnout is defined by three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduction in personal professional aspirations. It is a complex process that is influenced by both individual and organizational factors. The causes of professional burnout of teachers working in preschool educational institutions are usually associated with organizational work factors: heavy workloads, poor professional relationships and a large number of children in groups. However, individual factors of professional burnout defined by preschool education institutions' pedagogues are also important. They are lack of managerial knowledge, self-doubt and personal character traits.

The results of the study revealed that preschool teachers often experience emotional exhaustion. More than half of the educators who participated in the study feel emotionally exhausted several times a week or even every day. Depersonalization, the reduction of personal aspirations are also significant and quite common among the pedagogues who participated in the study.

Summarizing the results of the study, it was found that preschool teachers experience an average level of burnout syndrome. The study revealed a link between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, suggesting that emotional exhaustion can promote depersonalization symptoms. The study revealed that the burnout of preschool teachers does not depend on gender, education, length of service and the geographical location of the educational institution. However, it should be noted that the level of professional burnout may vary depending on the age of educators, the length of the working day and the qualification category. Educators of preschool education institutions aged between 31 and 40 years' experience a high level of emotional exhaustion, pedagogues working from 6 to 8 hours a day experience a high level of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and a high level of self-realization decline was seen in expert teachers.

The study revealed significant aspects related to professional burnout and its impact on teachers' professional activities. These findings correlate with the findings of other researchers who have also examined the effects of professional burnout on teachers and the educational process. Smith and Johnson (2016) observed that teachers experiencing professional burnout may have difficulty organizing their thoughts and activities, which may lead to a decrease in performance. Brown and White (2017) suggest that teachers who experience burnout may begin to question their career choices and lose confidence in their abilities. Johnson et al. (2018) highlight the importance of the role of leaders in ensuring the effectiveness and well-being of teachers.

Recommendations

In order to delve deeper into this topic, it is suggested to conduct interviews with pedagogues experiencing burnout. Also there were conducted interviews with school leaders about help and support to prevent staff burnout. As for educators, it could be suggested that they learn to manage their own agenda, actively share responsibilities and functions with colleagues, and take an independent interest in ways to reduce and manage stress and prevent professional burnout. Institution managers can be recommended here to plan seminars and/or training for teachers on stress management, relaxation techniques and prevention of professional burnout. It would also be desirable to create a support and assistance system for teachers who feel signs of professional burnout. In addition, regularly review teachers' workloads and give them time and space for non-contact work, and distribute tasks effectively in work groups and teams, avoiding overloading the same teachers.

Scientific Ethics Declaration

The authors declare that the scientific ethical and legal responsibility of this article published in EPESS Journal belongs to the authors.

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