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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between perceived lack of social support, perceived self-efficacy in eliciting support at the workplace, and the three successive burnout symptoms (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) in a sample of 277 Dutch secondary school teachers. The study hypothesized that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in eliciting support from colleagues and principals would mediate the effect of perceived lack of support on the level of burnout. Teachers completed the Dutch version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory for Teachers, the Teacher Interpersonal Self-Efficacy Scale, and the Emotional Support Subscale of the Social Support List-Discrepancies. Results showed that teachers' perceived lack of support from colleagues and principals had a significant effect on their self-efficacy beliefs in eliciting support from them, and those self-efficacy beliefs predicted their level of burnout. Teachers' level of burnout predicted the extent to which they felt lack of support. The study found an additional effect of the personal accomplishment dimension of burnout on perceived self-efficacy. It is concluded that perceived self-efficacy in eliciting support at the workplace was a usable construct in the prediction of teacher burnout. Future research directions are suggested. (Contains 68 references.) (SM)

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Teacher Burnout and Self-Efficacy in Eliciting Social Support

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Abstract

A non-recursive model with relationships between perceived lack of social support, perceived self-efficacy in eliciting support at the workplace, and the three successive burnout symptoms - emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment - was tested in a sample of 277 secondary school teachers in the Netherlands. Results showed that teachers' perceived lack of support from colleagues and principals had a significant effect on their self-efficacy beliefs in eliciting support from them, while these self-efficacy beliefs were shown to predict their level of burnout. The hypothesized feedback-loop was also confirmed; teachers' level of burnout predicted the extent to which they feel lack of support. An additional effect of the personal accomplishment dimension of burnout on perceived self-efficacy was suggested. It was concluded that perceived self-efficacy in eliciting support at the workplace is a usable construct in the prediction of teacher burnout. Future directions in research are suggested.

Teacher Burnout and Self-Efficacy in Eliciting Social Support

Introduction

Teaching is found to be a very stressful occupation. Studies about teacher stress and burnout report negative aspects of teachers' work such as student apathy and disruptive behavior, overcrowded classrooms, and involuntary transfers. Moreover, inadequate salaries, demanding parents, time constraints, isolation, and a lack of support from principals and colleagues contribute to the negative image of the profession. More often than not, a lack of recognition for work completed, apathy, an increase in burnout among many colleagues, and the multiplicity of roles teachers are expected to play more or less complete the despondent outlook on the job (Bakker & Schaufeli, 1999; Borg & Riding, 1991; Brouwers & Tomic, 1998; Byrne, 1991b, 1994; Farber & Miller, 1981; Friedman, 1991; Greenglass, Burke, & Konarski, 1997; Hock, 1988; Mazur & Lynch, 1989; Russell, Altmaier, & Van Velzen, 1987).

These aspects of the teaching profession are considered to be stressors, and a major reason that an increasing number of teachers are leaving the job (Farber, 1991; Jenkins & Calhoun, 1991). More and more teachers feel unable to cope with the stressors of their job, and the result is high levels of burnout. Teachers suffering from burnout usually experience a growing number of problems, including a decrease in mental and physical well-being and a deterioration in their relationships with students, colleagues, and principals (Byrne, 1994; Hock, 1988). In the long run these problems may cause them – temporarily – to leave employment. Unfortunately, it is not unusual for these problems to lead to early retirement.

Burnout is described as "a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people in some capacity. Emotional exhaustion refers to feelings of being emotionally overextended and depleted of one's emotional resources. Depersonalization refers to a negative, callous, or excessively detached response to other people, who are usually the recipients of one's services or care" (Maslach, 1993, pp. 20, 21). Reduced personal

accomplishment is described as "a person's negative self-evaluation in relation to his or her job performance" (Schaufeli, Maslach, & Marek, 1993, p. 17).

The definition of Maslach (1993) indicates that burnout only occurs among "professionals" in so-called social occupations such as nursing, social work and teaching. These occupations are distinguished from others by their demanding and emotionally stressful relationships. This distinguishing feature is therefore an obvious starting point when attempting to acquire a closer understanding of the burnout process. In their study on teacher burnout, Brouwers and Tomic (1998) focused on the demanding and stressful nature of teachers' relationships with students and found that teachers' perceived self-efficacy in managing student behavior was a significant predictor of their level of burnout.

Since demanding and stressful relationships are a distinguishing characteristic of professions in which burnout is an issue, it may safely be posited that the extent to which relationships with other members of the school team, i.e. fellow teachers and school principals, are supportive and enjoyable, is an important predictor of teachers' level of burnout. A number of studies have shown that a perceived lack of support from *colleagues*, offering friendship and help, may be an important element in a teacher's experience of burnout (Brownell & Pajares, 1997; Burke, Greenglass, & Schwarzer, 1996; Burke, Shearer, & Deszca, 1984; Dignam & West, 1988; Punch & Tuettemann, 1990; Ross, Altmaier, & Russell, 1989; Schwab, Jackson, & Schuler, 1984). Studies also suggested that teachers who feel they have supportive *principals* appear to be less vulnerable to burnout than their counterparts who feel they lack these supportive relationships (Bacharach, Bainberger, & Mitchell, 1990; Brissie, Hoover-Dempsey, & Bassler, 1988; Burke & Greenglass, 1989a, 1993; Jackson, Schwab, & Schuler, 1986; Kuzsman & Schnall, 1987; Russell, Altmaier, & Van Velzen, 1987; Travers & Cooper, 1993; Zabel & Zabel, 1982).

The present study focuses on the relationship between the emotional support offered by fellow teachers and principals, and teacher burnout. Pines and Aronson (1981) found that emotional support was rated by professional workers as one of the most important social support functions. Emotional support refers to the degree to which a person's basic emotional need to solve problems at work are gratified through interaction with others (cf. Thoits, 1982). Basic emotional needs include affection, good advice, and reassurance and encouragement. Emotional support is brought about by interactions with others that meet the needs of the receiver. The level of perceived support can be assessed by measuring the discrepancy between a person's need for emotional support and the amount and intensity of the supportive interactions he or she actually experiences (Van Sonderen, 1991).

In studies on the relationship between peer and principal support on the one hand and burnout on the other, teachers are mostly represented as passive persons awaiting the support they longed for. However, it should be borne in mind that the person involved is a human being who can exercise an influence over his or her social environment (Bandura, 1997). Teachers need not just wait for colleagues or principals to give them the necessary support, but can actively elicit support from them.

The present study hypothesized that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in eliciting support from colleagues and principals mediate the effect of perceived lack of support on the level of burnout. Perceived self-efficacy refers to "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Self-efficacy beliefs are the result of learning processes. Bandura (1997) mentions four different sources of information based on these learning processes; First of all, enactive mastery experiences that serve as direct indicators of capabilities; second, vicarious experiences that alter efficacy beliefs through the observation of other people performing similar tasks; third,

verbal persuasion in which others can guide individuals to believe in their own capabilities; and fourth, physiological and affective states that indicate one's vulnerability to dysfunction.

Self-efficacy beliefs are associated with a particular domain of functioning. Studies of teacher efficacy grounded in self-efficacy theory are often focused on the domain of influencing student learning, conceptualized as personal teaching efficacy, and less on interpersonal domains of functioning (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). However, interpersonal aspects of the work of teachers such as maintaining classroom order and functioning in the school team, appeared to be important predictors of burnout (Brouwers & Tomic, 1998; Byrne, 1991b, 1994; Friedman & Farber, 1992; Greenglass, Burke, & Konarski, 1997). When studying burnout, it is therefore highly important to focus on interpersonal domains of functioning in the case of teacher self-efficacy beliefs.

In this study, teachers' perceived self-efficacy is linked to the eliciting support from colleagues and principals domain. Eckenrode (1983) was the first one who investigated perceived self-efficacy with respect to this particular domain of functioning. However, although he used the perceived self-efficacy construct, his definition of it is very different from Bandura's, and refers to "the belief in the benefits versus costs of seeking and accepting help from others" (p. 516). His "Efficacy of Help-Seeking Scale" was therefore not usable as a measure for assessing teachers' confidence in their capabilities to elicit support from their colleagues and principals.

To assess teachers' perceived self-efficacy in different interpersonal domains of functioning, Brouwers and Tomic (1999a) developed the Teacher Interpersonal Self-Efficacy Scale. This scale consists of three subscales: Perceived Self-Efficacy in Classroom Management, Perceived Self-Efficacy in Eliciting Support from Colleagues, and Perceived Self-Efficacy in Eliciting Support from Principals. As predicted – based on Bandura's (1986, 1997) statement that self-efficacy beliefs are linked to specific activities – confirmatory factor

analysis showed that the measurement model, in which the items of the three subscales were allowed to load on the factors concerned, fitted the data significantly better than models in which items of the subscales were allowed to load on one more general perceived self-efficacy factor.

Given the important role that relationships with colleagues and principals play, it is valuable to specify teachers' beliefs about their efficacy in eliciting support from them (Cohen, 1988). In a research review of the negative effect of a weak perceived self-efficacy on depression, Kavanagh (1992) emphasized the importance of perceived self-efficacy in eliciting support when he stated that "self-efficacy about mobilizing assistance (...) would appear to be a useful area to begin looking at. (...) Skills in effectively eliciting support and in preserving the sources of support for future crises may turn out to be an important focus for assessment and intervention" (p. 188). Guglielmi and Tatrow (1998) indicated the ability to establish and maintain supportive social networks as one of the individual characteristics in mediating the relationship between stress and illness. The present study examined the indirect route of a perceived lack of collegial and principals' support to burnout via teacher perceived self-efficacy in eliciting support, an aspect that has never been studied before.

Hypotheses

Figure 1 About Here

Figure 1 shows the hypothetical model tested in the present study. First, it was expected that teachers' perceived lack of emotional support from the school team, i.e. principals and colleagues, has a negative effect on teachers' perceived self-efficacy in eliciting support from them. The most influential indicator of one's capabilities to bring about a specific kind of behavior is enactive mastery experiences (Bandura, 1997). People's lack of positive

experiences in a certain area of life has a negative effect on their perceived capabilities to bring about positive experiences in that area of life. Teachers who feel that colleagues or principals support them less than they actually desire, may therefore start to doubt their capabilities to elicit support from them.

Although a perceived lack of social support has never been studied as a predictor of weak self-efficacy beliefs in eliciting support in particular, it has been tested with regard to teacher efficacy beliefs in general. These studies found that the experienced levels of support from colleagues and principals predicted teachers' beliefs about their efficacy (Louis, 1998; Raudenbush, Rowan, & Cheong, 1992; Rosenholtz, 1989). Chester and Beaudin (1996) found that opportunities to collaborate with colleagues and the attention that supervisors gave to the performance of teachers contribute to changes in beginning teachers' self-efficacy beliefs. Supportive relationships can enhance the level of perceived self-efficacy in others by modeling effective coping attitudes and strategies to manage problem situations, by demonstrating the value of perseverance, and by providing positive incentives and resources for efficacious coping (Bandura, 1997). In a study on teacher burnout, Byrne (1994) found that support from colleagues predicted the level of teacher's self-esteem, nearly a synonym of general perceived self-efficacy (Brockner, 1988).

Second, it was expected that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in eliciting support from principals and colleagues has a negative effect on teachers' level of emotional exhaustion. When teachers feel unable to elicit the support needed to cope with the stressors in their work environment, they may get the feeling to have little or no influence on these stressors. Teachers who judge themselves to be poor obtainers of support from colleagues and principals are less inclined to ask colleagues and other people for advice and help (Bandura, 1992). Consequently, they are apt to get stuck in their work.

Strong self-efficacy beliefs in eliciting support from others can reduce vulnerability to burnout both directly and through the cultivation of socially supportive networks, i.e. colleagues and principals. In a study among secondary school teachers in Hong Kong, Chan (1998) found that teachers who use the strategy of seeking of support from colleagues and principals to cope with the many stressors of their work environment suffer less from psychological distress than their fellow teachers who did not use that coping strategy.

Third, following the process model of burnout proposed by Leiter and Maslach (1988), it was expected that emotional exhaustion arises first. Once emotional exhaustion occurs, teachers may attempt to cope with it by detaching themselves from the others they work with and developing a cynical, cold, and distant attitude towards them (depersonalization). In turn, depersonalization induces a negative self-evaluation of their own job performance (reduced personal accomplishment). The Leiter and Maslach (1988) process model of burnout has been confirmed in both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies (Byrne, 1994; Van Dierendonck, Schaufeli, & Sixma, 1994; Lee & Ashforth, 1993).

Fourth, it was expected that the level of teachers' negative attitudes towards the people they work with on the one hand and towards their own job performance on the other would have an effect on the extent to which teachers experience a lack of support from principals and colleagues. People often dislike associating with people who have negative feelings about themselves (Coyne, 1976). Most people interpret depersonalization, manifest in cynicism and non-involvement, and someone's negative self-evaluation as being repulsive. As Maslach and Leiter (1997) stated: "When people express the negative emotions of burnout, social relationships can be devastated. Normal conversations become charged with hostility and irritation, turning everyday social encounters into unpleasant occasions. (...) This is how burnout begins its downward spiral. As these negative emotions get expressed, they generate negative and dysfunctional responses. (...) The self-imposed social isolation has its costs too,

because it erodes the ability to get the emotional nurturing that comes from the love and support of your friends and family" (p. 30). Thus, negative feelings encourage negative responses from others. Exhausted, depersonalized teachers with a negative attitude toward their own job performance are less likely to make friends and to maintain the close interpersonal relationships at the workplace which are so necessary to cope with the many stressors at work (Burke, Greenglass, & Schwarzer, 1996).

The present study aims to test whether the hypothetical model was empirically sound. It was conducted among a sample of secondary (vocational) school teachers using questionnaires.

Method

Participants

Participants in the study were 277 teachers working in secondary (vocational) schools in the province of Limburg in the Netherlands. 203 of the participants were male (73%) and 74 were female (27%) teachers. Their average age was 45.87 years (SD = 8.82) with a range of 21 to 62 years. The average teaching experience was 21.28 years (SD = 9.74) with a range of 0 to 39 years. In comparison with all teachers working in secondary (vocational) schools in the province of Limburg in 1997 (CFI, 1998), the sample of the present study was representative in terms of sex ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 1.38$, $p = .24$), but not in terms of age ($t = -2.96$, $p = .01$).

Measures

Burnout. Burnout was measured using the Dutch version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory for teachers (MBI-NL-Ed; Schaufeli & Van Horn, 1995; Schaufeli, Daamen, & Van Mierlo, 1994; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). The questionnaire included 20 items divided into three subscales: Emotional Exhaustion (EE; 8 items), Depersonalization (D; 5 items), and Personal Accomplishment (PA; 7 items). The items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging

from "never" to "every day". Scores on the scales were added separately. High scores on the scales EE and D, and low scores on the PA scale are indicative of burnout. Examples of items are: "I feel emotionally drained from my work" (EE); "I feel burned out from my work" (EE); "I've become more callous toward people since I took this job" (D); "I feel students blame me for some of their problems" (D); "I feel exhilarated after working closely with my students" (PA); and "I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job" (PA). In a study among secondary school teachers (N = 916), Schaufeli and Van Horn (1995) found Cronbach's Alphas of .87, .71, and .78, respectively.

Perceived Self-Efficacy in Eliciting Support. Perceived self-efficacy in eliciting support was measured with two subscales of the Teacher Interpersonal Self-Efficacy Scale (Brouwers & Tomic, 1999a). The Perceived Self-Efficacy in Eliciting Support from Colleagues Subscale was used to assess the extent to which teachers feel confident about eliciting support from colleagues, while the Perceived Self-Efficacy in Eliciting Support from Principals Subscale was used to assess teachers' self-efficacy belief in eliciting support from principals. Both scales included 5 items measured on a 6-point Likert scale and have a strongly agree/strongly disagree response format. Examples of items are: "I am able to approach principals if I want to talk about problems at work"; "When it is necessary, I am able to get principals to support me"; "I am confident that, if necessary, I can ask my colleagues for advice"; and "I am able to approach my colleagues if I want to talk about problems at work." In a study of the factorial validity of the Teacher Interpersonal Self-Efficacy Scale, Brouwers and Tomic (1999a) found that the Perceived Self-Efficacy in Eliciting Support from Colleagues Subscale and the Perceived Self-Efficacy in Eliciting Support from Principals Subscale measure different self-efficacy beliefs.

Perceived Lack of Emotional Support. Perceived lack of emotional support was measured using 6 items of the Emotional Support Subscale of the Social Support List – Discrepancies

(SSL–D; Van Sonderen, 1991). This subscale was used to measure the extent to which teachers feel a discrepancy between their need for supportive interactions with colleagues and principals on the one hand and the amount and intensity of supportive interactions actually offered by them on the other. Perceived lack of emotional support was measured separately for colleagues and principals. The items were measured on a 4-point Likert scale with a response format ranging from 0 "I sense a lack of; I wish to receive more" to 4 "it occurs too often; I wish to receive less." Since none of the participants in the present study scored the category "it occurs too often; I wish to receive less" on one or more items of this scale, it was not necessary to test curvilinear relationships with other measured variables. In a Dutch study of the relationship between social support and well-being, Van Sonderen and Ormel (1997) used this scale and found a Cronbach's Alpha of .90 (N = 304).

Procedure

Principals of randomly selected schools in the province of Limburg in the Netherlands were asked to cooperate in the study. They were mailed questionnaires and asked to hand them out to every teacher in their school along with a letter explaining the nature and general aim of the study. Follow-up letters were mailed to them about three weeks later.

Analysis

Before the fit of the hypothesized structural model could be tested, it was first necessary to determine whether the proposed two-factor measurement models of emotional support and perceived self-efficacy in eliciting support were specified adequately. The two-factor models were tested with confirmatory factor-analyses (CFA) and compared with one-factor models. In the one-factor models items related to both principals and colleagues were specified to load on one general factor, whereas in the two-factor models the items related to principals were allowed to load on one factor and the items related to colleagues were allowed to load on the other factor.

The decision-tree framework for sequential chi-square difference tests proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) was followed to determine whether the hypothesized structural model fitted the data best. In this framework a saturated submodel was formulated to determine whether the fit of the hypothetical model could be improved significantly. A saturated submodel is a model in which all parameters relating the constructs to one another are estimated. The best fitting model is the one (1) which does not significantly differ from the saturated submodel and (2) which is the most parsimonious.

The confirmatory factor analyses and the sequential chi-square difference tests were carried out with the AMOS 3.6 computer program (Arbuckle, 1997) using the maximum likelihood estimation procedure. Evaluations of the models were based on the chi-square likelihood ratio, the Root Mean Square Residual (RMR), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI; McDonald & March, 1990), and the Normed Comparative Fit Index (CFI; Bentler, 1990). To assess TLI and CFI, null models were specified, i.e. models in which the variables are mutually independent. The fit of a model is acceptable when TLI and CFI exceed .90 (Bentler & Bonett, 1980).

Results

Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, internal consistency measures (i.e., Cronbach's Alpha), and intercorrelations of the scales. The reliability of the scales was .71 or higher, which is adequate according to the criterion of .70 suggested by Nunnally (1978).

Table 1 About Here

Results of the confirmatory factor analyses showed that the two-factor models of perceived lack of emotional support as well as perceived self-efficacy in eliciting support were specified adequately; the incremental fit indexes exceeded the criterion of adequate fit of

.90. The two-factor models fitted the data significantly better than the one-factor models (respectively, $\Delta\chi^2_{(1)} = 475.60$, $p < .001$; $\Delta\chi^2_{(1)} = 657.39$, $p < .001$), which was in accordance with the expectations (see Table 2).

Table 2 and 3 About Here

Table 3 presents the fit indexes of the models. The difference between the hypothetical model and the saturated submodel was significant ($\Delta\chi^2_{(5)} = 14.73$, $p = .01$), indicating that the hypothetical model could be improved significantly. Inspection of MI-indexes suggested that the greatest improvement of the model fit could be reached by adding a path to the model from personal accomplishment to perceived self-efficacy. Self-efficacy theory gave reasons for this additional path. According to this theory, enactive mastery performances are the most influential source of efficacy information (Bandura, 1997). Teachers who day in day out, feel that they are not performing well may start to doubt their own capabilities to execute the courses of action required to accomplish their job goals (Brouwers & Tomic, 1998), including eliciting support in the workplace to help them cope with stressors in their work environment. In this view, teachers' accomplishments are a source of information from which they derive their efficacy beliefs. It was therefore assumed that the way in which teachers evaluate their performance will influence their self-efficacy beliefs. When this path was freed, the model fit improved significantly ($\Delta\chi^2_{(1)} = 6.60$, $p = .01$). Since the modified model did not differ significantly from the saturated submodel ($\Delta\chi^2_{(1)} = 8.13$, $p = .09$), no improvements could be made. This means that the model fit could not be improved significantly by addition of direct effects of perceived lack of support on emotional exhaustion, perceived lack of support on depersonalization, perceived self-efficacy on depersonalization, or of emotional exhaustion on

personal accomplishment. The incremental fit indexes of the modified model exceeded the recommended criterion of .90 (TLI = .90, CFI = .91), which meant that the modified model fitted the data well.

Figure 2 shows the so-called standardized solution of the modified model. The path-coefficients must be interpreted as standardized regression coefficients. Perceived self-efficacy in eliciting support appears to mediate the effect of a perceived lack of support by colleagues and principals on emotional exhaustion. The three burnout dimensions influence one another in the predicted way: emotional exhaustion has a strong effect on depersonalization, which has in its turn a moderate effect on personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion had no significant direct effect on personal accomplishment. The effects of personal accomplishment on a perceived lack of support and perceived self-efficacy in eliciting support were respectively moderate and low.

Discussion

This study tested the empirical fit of a non-recursive model with relationships between perceived lack of emotional support from colleagues and principals, perceived self-efficacy in eliciting support from them, and the three burnout dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Results show that the assumed effects are significant and that an effect of personal accomplishment on perceived self-efficacy must be added to the model.

Perceived lack of emotional support appears to predict teachers' level of perceived self-efficacy in eliciting support from the school team. This means that teachers who feel they lack support from colleagues and principals have less confidence in their capabilities to elicit support from them than their counterparts who feel they receive sufficient support from the school team. Teachers who often feel that colleagues and principals do not give them the support they need are going to doubt their ability to master the social environment.

Teachers' level of perceived self-efficacy was not only predicted by the extent to which they feel a lack of support, but also by their evaluation of their own job performances, conceptualized as personal accomplishment. This means that teachers who are not satisfied with their job performance may begin to doubt their abilities to elicit the necessary support from the school team. An interpretation of this finding is that more general self-confidence is reduced when teachers' attitude toward their own job performance is negative. When teachers' general self-confidence is low, it is conceivable that they will also have difficulty asking a colleague for advice. In a study on perceived self-efficacy in classroom management, Brouwers and Tomic (1998) also found a relationship between personal accomplishment and self-efficacy beliefs. They interpreted this finding in the light of the self-efficacy theory, which states that enactive mastery experiences are the most influential source of efficacy information (Bandura, 1997). Teachers who, day in day out, feel that they are not performing well may begin to doubt their own capabilities to execute the courses of action required to accomplish their job goals. In this view, teachers' accomplishments are a source of information from which they derive their self-efficacy beliefs.

Teachers' perceived self-efficacy in eliciting support from the school team, i.e. colleagues and principals, appears to predict the level of the teachers' emotional exhaustion. This means that teachers who are in need of support from the school team but who have at the same time little confidence in their abilities to elicit such support are more prone to burnout symptoms than their counterparts who rated their capabilities as high in this regard. Although the concept of self-efficacy specified for the activity of eliciting support has never been studied before, the results found can be compared with studies in which self-efficacy in other domains of functioning was found to predict burnout. In a study among a sample of public school teachers, Chwalisz, Altmaier, and Russell (1992) linked self-efficacy beliefs to the domain of dealing with the most stressful event teachers had experienced on the job during

the academic year. They found that teachers who doubted their abilities to cope with stressful events reported a higher level of burnout than their counterparts who showed more self-confidence in this sphere. Since seeking support is one of the coping strategies to handle job stressors, the self-efficacy assessment of Chwalisz et al. (1992) encompasses eliciting support from colleagues and principals. Another self-efficacy belief studied in relationship with teacher burnout was linked to managing student behavior (Brouwers & Tomic, 1998). Results of that particular study showed that teachers' belief in their capabilities to maintain classroom order and discipline was a significant predictor of burnout.

This study has a few limitations. First, although the hypothetical model was adapted by adding a path between personal accomplishment and perceived self-efficacy, the sample was not large enough to justify splitting it into two halves. It was therefore not possible to cross-validate the adapted model. Second, the cross-sectional research design makes it impossible to say anything about the direction of causal connections. The devising of a training program is only useful when longitudinal evidence shows that the relationships between self-efficacy beliefs and burnout are in the predicted direction. A longitudinal test of these relationships is therefore strongly recommended. Third, the study is based on self-assessment measures. It is a well known fact that this research strategy is sensitive to social desirability. It is therefore important to develop measures which are not or less sensitive to social desirability and which will allow the same research questions to be answered (Schaufeli, Enzmann, & Girault, 1993).

Findings of the present study showed that the hypothetical non-recursive model, consisting of effects of perceived lack of emotional support from colleagues and principals on perceived self-efficacy in eliciting support from them and subsequently on the three burnout dimensions – emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment – was empirically sound. The indication that the significant relationships reflected a self-reinforcing cycle shows that the development of a training program to boost teachers' confidence in their

abilities to deal with the many stressors at work might be very important for them. It would be desirable to continue the research necessary to reach this result.

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Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, Internal Consistency Measures (i.e., Cronbach's Alphas), and Intercorrelations of the Scales (N = 277).

	M	SD	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Lack of Emotional Support from Principals	7.22	4.04	.95	--						
2. Lack of Emotional Support from Colleagues	9.55	2.77	.89	.58	--					
3. Self-Efficacy in Eliciting Support from Principals	16.17	6.02	.94	-.63	-.49	--				
4. Self-Efficacy in Eliciting Support from Colleagues	18.61	4.24	.92	-.30	-.52	.56	--			
5. Emotional Exhaustion	17.88	8.88	.90	.42	.37	-.38	-.30	--		
6. Depersonalization	6.94	4.24	.71	.28	.33	-.30	-.33	.56	--	
7. Personal Accomplishment	26.09	6.23	.85	-.26	-.32	.36	.40	-.35	-.44	--

Note. All Intercorrelations $p < .01$.

Table 2

Goodness-Of-Fit Indexes of the Measurement Models (N = 277)

	χ^2	df	p	RMR	TLI	CFI
Perceived lack of Emotional Support						
Null Model	2692.70	66	.000	.24		
1-Factor Model	713.76	54	.000	.05	.69	.75
2-Factor Model	238.16	53	.000	.02	.91	.93
Self-Efficacy in Eliciting Support						
Null Model	2519.33	45	.000	.76		
1-Factor Model	805.05	35	.000	.16	.60	.69
2-Factor Model	147.66	34	.000	.05	.94	.95

Table 3

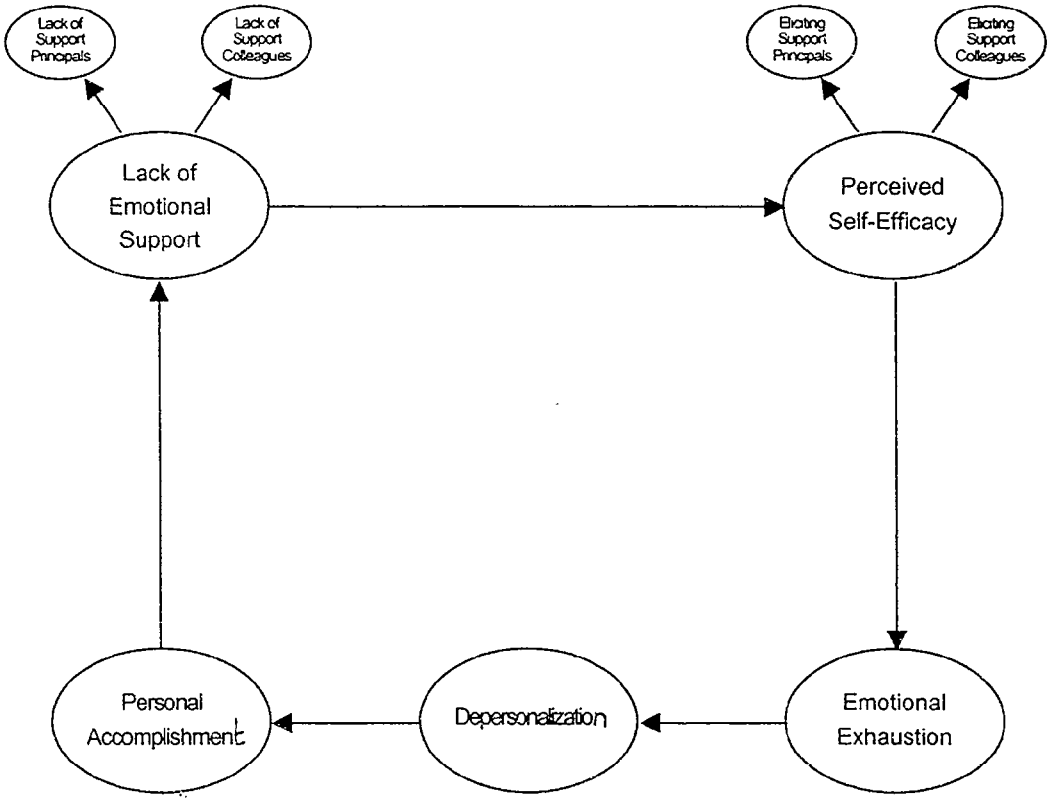
Goodness-Of-Fit Indexes of the Structural Models (N = 277)

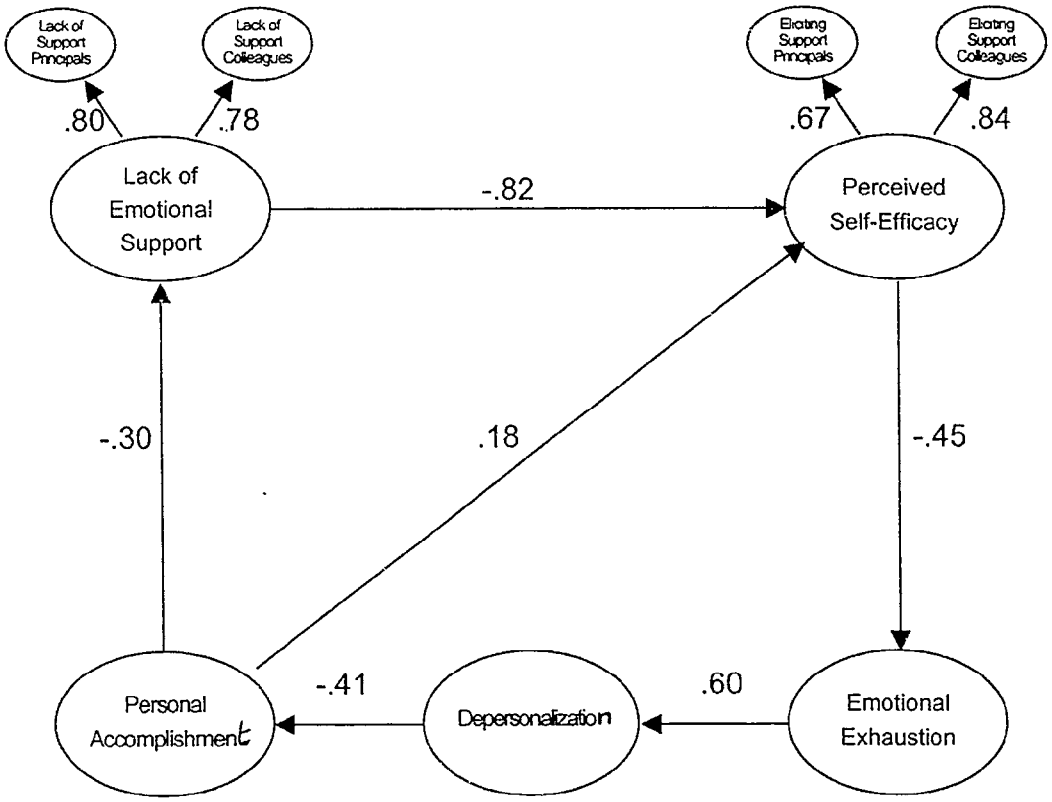
	χ^2	df	p	RMR	TLI	CFI
Null Model	9167.20	861	.000	.43		
Saturated Submodel	1593.94	805	.000	.09	.90	.91
Hypothetical Model	1608.67	810	.000	.09	.90	.90
Modified Model	1602.07	809	.000	.09	.90	.91

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Hypothetical Model.

Figure 2. Modified Model, Standardized Solution.


Lack of Support Principals
Lack of Support Colleagues
Eliciting Support Principals
Eliciting Support Colleagues
Lack of Emotional Support
Perceived Self-Efficacy
Personal Accomplishment
Depersonalization
Emotional Exhaustion


Lack of Support Principals
Lack of Support Colleagues
Elicating Support Principals
Elicating Support Colleagues
.80
.78
.67
.84
Lack of Emotional Support
-.82
Perceived Self-Efficacy
-.30
.18
-.45
Personal Accomplishment
-.41
Depersonalization
.60
Emotional Exhaustion