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AUTHOR Cadavid, Victoria; Lunenburg, Fred C.
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ABSTRACT

Investigations are needed to illuminate how teachers at different degrees of burnout perceive stressful situations (either internally or externally) and how they perceive the control of pupil behavior. This paper summarizes a study exploring whether there is a direct relationship between: (1) locus of control and teacher burnout; (2) pupil control ideology and teacher burnout; and (3) locus of control and pupil control ideology. To test these hypotheses, operational measures such as the Pupil Control Ideology, the Internal-External Locus of Control Scale, and Maslach Burnout Inventory were used. The study sample consisted of 191 public school teachers from 13 schools located in a large Midwestern city. The schools are interracial and cross-cultural centers employing primarily Afro-American, Caucasian, and Hispanic teachers serving students of similar ethnic backgrounds. Results supported the first hypothesis that described individuals with an external locus of control as probably having fewer coping strategies than those with an internal locus of control. Findings also supported the second hypothesis; teachers who have a custodial pupil control ideology will most likely also experience more emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a lack of personal accomplishment. The third hypothesis was also supported; teachers with a custodial pupil control ideology appear to have an external locus of control. (46 references) (MLH)

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LOCUS OF CONTROL, PUPIL CONTROL IDEOLOGY, AND DIMENSIONS OF TEACHER BURNOUT

Victoria Cadavid
Chicago Public Schools

Fred C. Lunenburg
University of Louisville

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LOCUS OF CONTROL, PUPIL CONTROL IDEOLOGY, AND DIMENSIONS OF TEACHER BURNOUT

In recent years, educators have become increasingly interested in the problems of teacher stress and burnout (Cherniss, 1980; Adams, 1990; Allen, 1990; Carrington, 1990; Cotton, 1991; Giller, 1991; Spielberger & Sarason, 1991). Burnout directly affects the professional lives of teachers in their work, particularly through its effect on their emotional well being. In addition to interest in teacher burnout, researchers have underscored the saliency of pupil control in the organizational life of public schools (Waller, 1932; Gordon, 1959; Jackson, 1968; Silberman, 1970; Cusick, 1973, 1983; Glasser, 1990). Investigations are needed to illuminate how teachers at different degrees of burnout perceive stressful situations (either internally or externally) and how they perceive the control of pupil behavior.

The amount of burnout that one person perceives relative to another person may be a function both of their internal-external locus of control and their pupil control ideology; that is: Do internally controlled teachers experience higher or lower levels of burnout than externally controlled teachers? Are pupil control ideology and teacher burnout related? And, is there an association between teachers' locus of control and their pupil control ideology? In particular, the following three hypotheses guided the investigation:

H.1. There will be a direct relationship between locus of control and teacher burnout.

H.2. There will be a direct relationship between pupil control ideology and teacher burnout.

H.3. There will be a direct relationship between locus of control and pupil control ideology.

Knowledge of these relationships can help improve our understanding of teacher burnout and its prevention and intervention practices in schools.

LOCUS OF CONTROL

Locus of control can be conceptualized as a continuum ranging from internal at one extreme to external at the other. The internal-external locus of control construct is an expectancy variable situated within Rotter's social learning theory (Lefcourt, 1976; Phares, 1976; Rotter, Chance, & Phares, 1972; Strickland, 1977). The degree to which an individual perceives events to be dependent on his own behavior or as a result of luck, chance, fate or powers external to one's own conceptual realm compose the I-E construct. According to the theory, an individual's potential behavior in a situation is a function of a person's expectation that the given behavior will secure available reinforcement, and the value of the available reinforcement to the person. When a person perceives the absence of a specific behavior in his repertoire which will secure a reinforcement which will effect the situational end result, this person is said to have an external locus of control. On the other hand, when the individual has a generalized expectancy that situational outcomes are a consequence of his behavior, he is said to have internal control.

Rotter (1954) further postulated behavior to occur as a function of expectancy and reinforcement well within a defined situation. In the event the situation is new or ambiguous, the individual will then rely on his or her generalized expectancies that have worked successfully in the past. More specific expectancies are drawn upon when the dimensions of the situation are clearly defined or just routine. The I-E is a generalized expectancy that occurs when individuals have learned that events are contingent or non-contingent upon their behavior.

Individuals holding internal expectancies are more likely to take responsibility for their actions than are external individuals (Davis & Davis, 1972; Phares, Wilson, & Klyver, 1971), and to attribute responsibility to others in situations where it is clearly indicated that the situation is beyond their control (Phares & Wilson, 1972; Sosis, 1974). In task situations where performance plays a big role, internals are perceptually alert and attentive (DuCette & Wolk, 1973; Wolk & DuCette, 1974) and appear to put together and process information effectively for solving problems (DuCette & Wolk, 1972). Externals, on the other hand appear to repeat tasks regardless of failure and make more erratic shifts than internals (Phares, 1957).

PUPIL CONTROL IDEOLOGY

Following the lead of earlier research on pupil control (Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1973), the concepts of humanistic and custodial pupil control ideologies were used to contrast types of individual orientations

and the types of school organizations that they seek to rationalize and justify. A brief description of each prototype is presented below (Hoy & Miskel, 1991).

The model of custodial orientation depicts a classroom atmosphere with a rigid and highly controlled setting concerned primarily with the maintenance of order. Students are stereotyped in terms of their appearance, behavior and parents' social status. Teachers who hold a custodial orientation conceive of the school as an autocratic organization with a rigid pupil-teacher status hierarchy; the flow of power and communication is unilateral downward. Students must accept the decisions of teachers without question. Student misbehavior is viewed as a personal affront; students are perceived as irresponsible and undisciplined persons who must be controlled through punitive sanctions. Impersonality, pessimism and watchful mistrust imbue the atmosphere of the custodial school.

On the other hand, the model of the humanistic orientation conceives of the school as an educational community in which students learn through cooperative interaction and experience. Learning and behavior are viewed in psychological and sociological terms rather than moralistic ones. Self-discipline is substituted for strict teacher control. The humanistic orientation leads teachers to desire a democratic atmosphere with its attendant flexibility in status and rules, sensitivity to others, open communication and increased student self-determination. Both teachers and pupils are willing to act on their own volition and to accept responsibility for their actions.

Several studies have examined the relationship between various teacher characteristics and predispositions and pupil control ideology. These studies have found an association between humanistic pupil control ideology and low dogmatism (Lunenburg & O'Reilly, 1974), open organizational climate (Lunenburg, 1984), a commitment to emergent values (Helsel, 1971), high creativity (Halpin & Goldenberg, 1973), acceptance of themselves and others (Brenneman & Willower, 1975), a high level of self-actualization (Jury, 1972), and positive teacher self-concept (Halpin, Halpin, & Harris, 1982).

TEACHER BURNOUT

Burnout in an individual is inferred to result from job strain which can lead to maladaptive coping responses and poor work performance (Spielberger & Sarason, 1991). As a syndrome, one exhibits inappropriate attitudes towards clients, as well as various physical or emotional symptoms which range from insomnia to ulcers and a general deterioration of performance (Noshpitz & Coddington, 1990). Other symptoms include high absenteeism, lack of commitment, abnormal desire for vocations, low self-esteem, and an inability to take work seriously (Adams, 1990).

Teaching professionals, especially special education teachers, are subjected to a considerable amount of student hostility. Teacher aggression in response to frustration and anger may sometimes be expressed indirectly instead of directly. This inability or

unwillingness to ventilate or retaliate in some acceptable manner such as talking it out, furthers a teacher's predisposition to burnout.

Unwillingness of students to work toward learning is a major cause of despair and dissatisfaction which lead to burnout. Workers, in general, are strongly motivated to strive and achieve a sense of competence and psychological success in their work, however, their efforts may become frustrated in a work setting characterized by unpredictability and lack of personal control. When staff chronically feel ineffective, unsuccessful, and powerless, results may be learned helplessness. Learned helplessness is a concept; it is when a person thinks that nothing he or she does can prevent unhappy or negative things from occurring. This condition results after repeated failure and despair. Learned helplessness leads to passive, defensive coping behavior related to burnout. Examples include emotional withdrawal, apathy, depression, dissatisfaction, cynicism, and preoccupation with self (Cherniss, 1980).

PROCEDURES

To test the hypotheses of the study, operational measures of locus of control, pupil control ideology, and dimensions of teacher burnout were necessary.

Instruments

The measurement instruments selected were those frequently used in previous research to operationally define the constructs investigated in

this study. An attempt was made to select those instruments with demonstrated psychometric properties. The Pupil Control Ideology (PCI) form (Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1973) operationally defines faculty orientations toward the control of students. The Internal-External Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966) operationally defines the internal-external locus of control of faculty. Dimensions of teacher burnout were operationally defined by the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Locus of Control. The Internal-External Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966), called the Social Reaction Survey for purposes of this study, was used to measure the extent to which faculty had an internal or external locus of control. It consists of 29 forced-choice items of which 23 are keyed and six are fillers. Respondents choose one statement out of each pair of 29 statements. It is scored in the direction of externality such that a higher score indicates external orientation. A total score of 12 or less out of 23 assesses an individual as internally controlled and a score of 13 or more assesses one as externally controlled. Test-retest reliability estimates reported by Rotter (1966) range from .55 to .76, and test-retest reliability coefficients of .43 to .84 have been reported by Hersch and Scheibe (1967). Internal consistency of the scale ranged from .65 to .79 (Rotter, 1966).

Pupil Control Ideology. The Pupil Control Ideology Form (PCI) measures the pupil control ideology of educators on a humanistic-custodial continuum. It consists of 20 Likert-type items. Responses are scored from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree); the higher the overall score, the more custodial the ideology of the respondent.

Prior studies by Willower, et al. (1973) using the PCI Form determined split-half reliability coefficients in two samples of .95 (N = 170) and .91 (N = 55) with the application of the Spearman-Brown formula. Validity of the instrument was supported by principals' judgments of some of their own teachers. Further evidence of validity was established by a comparison of PCI scores of personnel from schools known by reputation to be humanistic, with scores of personnel from other schools that were not humanistic at the same grade levels.

Teacher Burnout. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981), which was entitled Human Services Survey to disguise the purpose of the study, was used to measure dimensions of teacher burnout. It consists of 22 items forming three subscales: Emotional Exhaustion, Personal Accomplishment, and Depersonalization and is rated on both frequency of feeling and intensity of the feeling on each subscale producing six dimensions. The frequency scale ranges from 1 (a few times a year or less) to 6 (every day). A value of zero is given if the respondent never experiences the described attitude or feeling; a separate box labeled "never" is used in this event. The intensity scale ranges from 1 (very mild, barely noticeable) to 7 (major, very strong).

The Emotional Exhaustion subscale, consisting of nine items, describes feelings of being emotionally over-extended and exhausted by one's work. The five items on the Depersonalization subscale describe unfeeling and impersonal responses to coworkers or recipients of services. The Personal Accomplishment subscale consists of eight items describing feeling of competence and success towards one's achievements. The higher mean scores of Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization

subscales correspond to greater degrees of experienced burnout, whereas lower scores on Personal Accomplishment correspond to greater degrees of burnout. One final score for burnout is not computed; instead, six separate scores are derived for burnout.

Internal consistency of the MBI was estimated by Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951) for two samples (n = 1316 for frequency) and (n = 1789 for intensity). The reliability coefficients for the subscales were as follows: .90 for Emotional Exhaustion Frequency, .87 for Emotional Exhaustion Intensity, .79 for Depersonalization Frequency, .76 for Depersonalization Intensity, .71 for Personal Accomplishment Frequency, and .73 for Personal Accomplishment Intensity (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Data on test-retest reliability (n = 53) ranged from .53 to .89 for the six dimensions of the MBI and were significant beyond the .001 level (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Convergent validity was established by Maslach and Jackson (1981). Individual MBI scores were correlated with behavioral ratings made independently by persons who knew the individual well, such as a spouse or co-worker. Second, MBI scores were correlated with the presence of certain job characteristics that were expected to contribute to experienced burnout. Third, MBI scores were correlated with measures of various outcomes that had been hypothesized to be related to burnout. All three sets of correlations provided substantial evidence for the validity of the MBI.

Sample

The sample for the study consisted of 191 public school teachers from

thirteen schools located in a large metropolitan city in the Midwest. The schools included representation from the North, South, Southeast, Southwest, and Central regions of the city. The schools are inter-racial and cross-cultural centers employing primarily Afro-American, Caucasian, and Hispanic teachers who serve students of similar ethnic backgrounds. The Locus of Control Scale, Maslach Burnout Inventory, and Pupil Control Ideology Form were personally administered by a researcher to the professional personnel during regularly scheduled faculty meetings. Virtually the entire faculty in each school completed the instruments.

RESULTS

In order to test the hypotheses of the study, Pearson product-moment coefficient of correlation was employed. Hypothesis one predicted a direct relationship between teacher-locus of control and dimensions of teacher burnout. The findings indicate that teacher-locus of control was positively related to Emotional Exhaustion Frequency ($r = .15$, $p < .05$), Depersonalization Frequency ($r = .25$, $p < .001$), Emotional Exhaustion Intensity ($r = .15$, $p < .05$), Depersonalization Intensity ($r = .15$, $p < .05$), and negatively related to Personal Accomplishment Frequency ($r = -.31$, $p < .001$), and Personal Accomplishment Intensity ($r = -.29$, $p < .001$). These correlations indicate that locus of control is significantly related to all six dimensions of burnout. However, the correlations were low and the variance (r^2) accounted for is slight, 10% even in the case of the relationship which yielded the highest correlation coefficient obtained.

Hypothesis two predicted a direct relationship between the pupil control ideology of teachers and dimensions of teacher burnout. For this hypothesis, pupil control ideology was related to five of the six dimensions of burnout as follows: Emotional Exhaustion Frequency ($r = .15$, $p < .05$), Depersonalization Frequency ($r = .25$, $p < .001$), Depersonalization Intensity ($r = .18$, $p < .01$), Personal Accomplishment Frequency ($r = -.30$, $p < .001$), and Personal Accomplishment Intensity ($r = -.19$, $p < .01$). The hypothesis was partially confirmed. Five of six dimensions of burnout were directly related to pupil control ideology in the expected direction. However, as with the first hypothesis the correlation coefficients were low. Pupil control ideology accounts for no more than 9% of common variance of the burnout dimensions.

Hypothesis three predicted a direct relationship between teacher-locus of control and the pupil control ideology of teachers. The computation of r for this hypothesis yielded a significant relationship between pupil control ideology and locus of control ($r = .12$, $p < .05$). Even though the relationship is significant the common variance accounted for by pupil control ideology is no more than 1%.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study relative to the internal-external dimension did closely correspond to findings in the locus of control literature; that is, external locus of control has been linked with a particular way of coping. The individual with an external locus of control is perceived to see obstacles as insurmountable in comparison to

intenals who perceive these obstacles as generally surmountable since they hold a belief in their own control (Butterfield, 1964). These results suggest the more internal an individual is, the more he or she reacts constructively towards frustration while the more external the individual, the less constructive reaction is (Anderson, 1977). We may relate these findings to teachers who are found to have external locus of control. These teachers may feel some of the duties and responsibilities they are given are insurmountable, that is, they may perceive their every day tasks as quite difficult. They may feel they cannot deal with the responsibilities. Instead of looking constructively at the tasks or demands, in order to see how they may be carried out, they may act unconstructively; that is, they may complain in vain.

The results of this study supported the hypothesis which described individuals with an external locus of control as probably having fewer coping strategies or perceiving past reinforcement strategies as outside their control (Anderson, 1977). This may be a factor related to teacher burnout. That is, when the person is found burned out, he or she may perceive himself or herself as somewhat depleted of coping strategies. These individuals are evidently experiencing burnout and not properly making appropriate adjustments to their situational problems. They may be perceiving these events as being outside their control (external control).

It was predicted that pupil control ideology was related to teacher burnout. This prediction indicated that teachers with a custodial pupil control ideology would be more likely to be burned out. This hypothesis

arose from the literature. A person with a custodial orientation is conceived of perceiving students as irresponsible, non-trusting, and undisciplined (Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1973). The findings of the study supported the prediction. The data indicated teachers who have a custodial pupil control ideology will most likely also experience more emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a lack of personal accomplishment. It appears that a teacher who possesses this type of pupil control orientation will be most at risk to burnout. It may well be worth the administration's while to consider inservices related to examining how teachers perceive students and the likely results. In this way teachers may be able to determine their own pupil control orientation, whether custodial or humanistic, and investigate the possible factors which may be related to having each one. If a teacher has a custodial PCI, then that teacher may be at risk to also develop or experience some or all of the burnout dimensions. On the other hand, the teacher who holds a humanistic PCI is less likely to experience these same dimensions of burnout.

In reference to the predicted relationship between pupil control ideology and locus of control of teachers, the hypothesis was supported. This prediction indicates that teachers with a custodial pupil control ideology appear to also have an external locus of control. These teachers probably have had past experiences in which they did not perceive they had control, thus they felt outcomes were unrelated to them. Teachers with such experiences continue to reflect these same feelings of not being in control. The results of the data indicated an

association between external locus of control and custodial PCI. Thus, an externally controlled teacher is more likely to also have a custodial pupil control ideology and he or she may perceive students as requiring firm discipline and direction from the teacher (Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1973). The internally controlled teachers are more likely to perceive students in a more positive manner; that is, see students as self-disciplined, trustworthy, responsible (Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1973). Again, it would benefit the school administration to try to nurture a humanistic attitude in teachers while making them aware of where they are found to be on the locus of control continuum and in their PCI orientation. Teachers can then be told of the relationship between pupil control ideology and student-teacher relationships. Results of past studies of teachers who have humanistic pupil control ideology have found students to have high self-concept as learners (Lunenburg, 1983), have positive attitudes toward teachers (Lunenburg & Stouten, 1983), and produce a favorable quality of school life (Lunenburg & Schmidt, 1989).

When viewing the results of the profile of a burned out teacher, our data indicate that these teachers tend to have custodial pupil control ideology, exhibit a tendency to be more externally controlled. A surprising discovery: Those teachers who were burned out and were more externally controlled would be more likely to choose teaching again than their non-burned out counterparts. This may suggest that they do not see themselves as being more comfortable or more successful in another profession. Since there was also a correlation between burned out teachers and higher pupil control ideology scores, this indicates that

burned out teachers also view students more negatively than their non-burned out colleagues. If the educational system strives for excellence, teachers' mental health should be a priority because they are the agents who achieve excellence in students.

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