Predicting Teachers' Burnout from their Achievement Goals

Lauren D. Goegan[1], Gabrielle N. Pelletier[2], Devon J. Chazan[2] & Lia M. Daniels[2]

Department of Education Administration, Foundations & Psychology (UofM) [1], Department of Educational Psychology (UofA)[2]

INTRODUCTION

- Teaching can be associated with high levels of burnout (Johnson et al., 2005).
- Burnout can result in lower job satisfaction and more interest in leaving the profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015; 2017).
- One way to combat burnout is to examine teachers' goals. Goal Orientations for Teaching (GOT; Bulter, 2007) identifies **4** types of goals:
  1. **Ability-approach Goals**: demonstrate superior teaching ability.
  2. **Mastery Goals**: to learn and develop understandings / skills in the profession.
  3. **Ability-avoidance Goals**: avoiding demonstrating inferior teaching abilities.
  4. **Work-avoidance Goals**: putting in as little effort a possible into the workday.
- We examined teachers goals and burnout in terms of **disengagement** and **exhaustion**.

CORRELATION TABLE FOR ALL STUDY VARIABLES

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Gender	-								
2. Age	**-.12**[*]	-							
3. Years	**-.16**[**]	**.87**[***]	-						
4. Stream	**-.31**[***]	-.03	-.04	-					
5. Ability Approach	-.02	**-.13**[*]	**-.16**[**]	.03	-				
6. Mastery	.04	-.02	.02	.05	**.30**[***]	-			
7. Ability Avoidance	-.07	**-.13**[*]	**-.17**[**]	.01	**.59**[***]	.07	-		
8. Work Avoidance	-.05	-.03	-.07	-.02	**.55**[***]	.07	**.55**[***]	-	
9. Disengagement	.01	-.05	-.06	.01	.01	**.30**[***]	**-.18**[**]	**-.22**[***]	-
10. Exhaustion	**-.14**[*]	.08	.04	**.20**[**]	-.02	.08	**-.17**[**]	**-.19**[**]	**.46**[***]

Note: [*] $p \leq .05$, [**] $p \leq .01$, [***] $p \leq .001$,

Ability-approach and **mastery** goals positively predicted **disengagement**, whereas it was negatively predicted by **ability-avoidance** and **work avoidance**

Ability-approach positively predicted **exhaustion**, whereas it was negatively predicted by **ability-avoidance** and **work avoidance**

METHOD

- We used a single survey to collect self-report data from 210 teachers in western Canada. These participants:
  - Identified as women (70%), men (29%) and non-binary (1%).
  - Ranged in age from 21 to 69 ($M = 38.78$).
  - Ranged in teaching experiences from 1 to 48 years ($M = 11.94$).
  - Were in the primary (51.6%) and secondary (48.4%) education stream.
- **Goals** were measured using Goal Orientations for Teaching (GOT; Butler, 2007)
- **Burnout** was measured using Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (Demerouti & Bakker, 2008)

"Lately, I tend to think less at work and do my job almost mechanically."

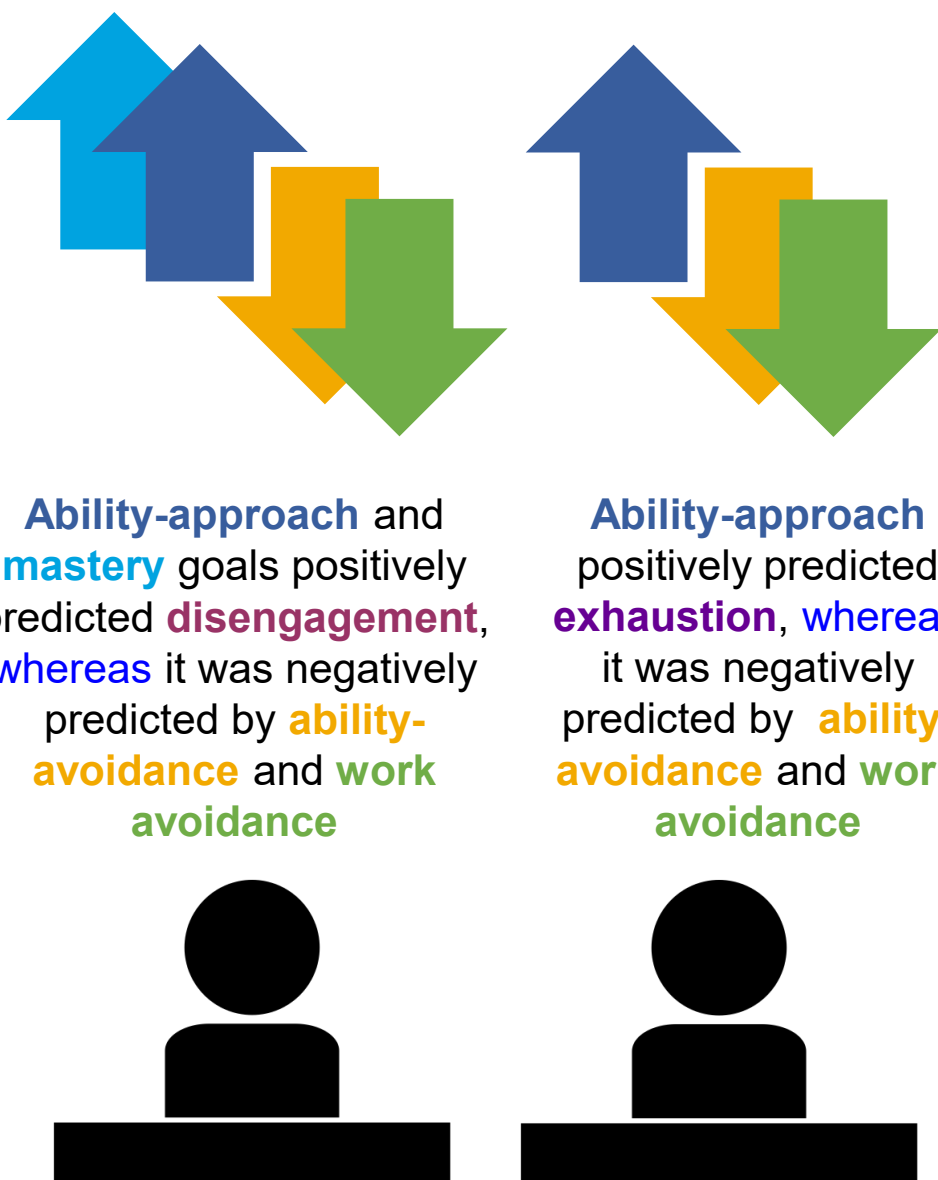*"There are days when I feel tired before I arrive at work."*

RESULTS

- We calculated **Cronbach's alpha** to measure the internal consistency for all study subscales.
  - These scores ranged from .65 to .80.
- We performed **correlation analyses** across all study variables
  - Significant correlations are bolded in the table above.
- We performed 2 **step-wise regressions**.
  - In Step 1, we controlled for demographics.
  - In Step 2, we entered the four goals.
- **Disengagement**
  - $F(8, 200) = 4.49$, $p < .001$
  - The final model explained 12% of the variance in disengagement.
- **Exhaustion**
  - $F(8, 202) = 3.19$, $p = .002$.
  - This final model explained 8% of the variance in exhaustion.

DISCUSSION

- Overall, the results speak to the importance of adaptive goals relating to burnout, and in particular, exhaustion and disengagement.
- To promote teachers' **adaptive goals,** it is important that professional development (PD) opportunities are relevant to the current needs and interests of the attending teachers (Harper-Hill et al., 2020). It might be worthwhile including teachers in the planning of potential PD offerings.
- To buffer possible **disengagement**, teachers might emphasize working collaboratively with colleagues, and sharing resources (Vangrieken et al., 2015). Additionally, despite having a curriculum to adhere to, teachers can promote active engagement in their work by taking time to bring in their own fresh perspective and creativity.
- To buffer teacher **exhaustion**, researchers suggest that teachers make a conscious effort to prioritize themselves and other personal goals/interests (Johari et al., 2018). For example, this could include leaving schoolwork at school as much as possible to promote work life balance.

REFERENCES

- Butler, R. (2007). Teachers' achievement goal orientations and associations with teachers' help seeking: Examination of a novel approach to teacher motivation. *Journal of educational psychology, 99*(2), 241--252. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.99.2.241
- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2008). Towards a model of work engagement. *Career development international, 13*(3), 209-223. https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430810870476
- Harper-Hill. K., Beamish, W., Hay, S., Whelan, M., Kerr, J., Zelenko, O., & Villalba, C. (2020). Teacher engagement in professional learning: what makes the difference to teacher practice? *Studies in Continuing Education.* https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2020.1781611
- Johari, J., Yean Tan, F., & Tjik Zulkarnain, Z.I. (2018). Autonomy, workload, work-life balance and job performance among teachers. *International Journal of Educational Management. 32*(1), 107-120. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-10-2016-0226
- Johnson, S., Cooper, C., Cartwright, S., Donald, I., Taylor, P., & Millet, C. (2005). The experience of work-related stress across occupations. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 20*(2), 178–187. https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940510579803
- Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2015). Job satisfaction, stress and coping strategies in the teaching profession-what do teachers say? International Education Studies, 8(3), 181–192. . https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v8n3p181
- Vangrieken, K., Dochy, F., Raes, E., & Kyndt, E. (2015). Teacher collaboration: A systematic review.*Educational Research Review, 15*, 17-40 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2015.04.002

Check out ACME projects at: https://sites.google.com/ualberta.ca/acme