

The impact and regulatory mechanism of educational psychology on teacher burnout

Huai Xia^{1,2}, Zheng Hua Li²

1. Shanghai Polytechnic University, Shanghai 201209, China

2. Sehan University, Southkorea 58447, Republic of Korea

Abstract: Teacher burnout has become an important psychological obstacle to improving the quality of education. Educational psychology provides theoretical support for its mechanism analysis and intervention path. This article analyzes the role of educational psychology in teacher burnout from four dimensions: emotion regulation, achievement motivation, role cognition and teaching effectiveness. On this basis, it proposes the regulatory mechanism of emotion regulation system construction, motivation reinforcement, role cognition optimization and efficacy reconstruction. The purpose of this study is to provide scientific paths and practical guidance for alleviating teacher psychological exhaustion, improving professional happiness and promoting the healthy and sustainable development of the teaching staff.

Keywords: Educational Psychology; Teacher Burnout; Emotion Regulation

Introduction

In the context of the continuous deepening of educational reform and the continuous increase in teacher work pressure, burnout has gradually become a common psychological dilemma among teachers, mainly manifested in emotional exhaustion, work indifference and reduced personal sense of achievement. Educational psychology is an important science that studies the psychological and behavioral changes of individuals in the process of educational activities. It has multiple functions such as regulating emotions, strengthening motivation, reconstructing cognition and improving effectiveness^[1]. This study attempts to use the theoretical framework of educational psychology as a basis to deeply analyze its influencing mechanism in the process of teacher burnout and explore feasible intervention paths to achieve the effective integration of psychological support and educational practice.

1. Overview of educational psychology

Educational psychology is a discipline that studies the psychological activities and development laws of individuals in the educational process. It involves many aspects such as learning motivation, cognitive structure, emotional regulation and behavior management. Its core is to reveal the psychological mechanisms of both teachers and students in the teaching interaction process to optimize educational strategies and promote individual development. For teachers, while providing a scientific basis for teaching methods, educational psychology also profoundly affects teachers' self-cognition, emotional management and professional behavior adjustment. Educational psychology theory can effectively help teachers understand their own psychological state and the causes of professional burnout. It is a multi-complex and stressful environment in the current educational ecology, promoting scientific and systematic coping strategies, and improving professional adaptability and psychological resilience^[2].

2. The impact of educational psychology on teacher burnout

2.1 Lack of emotion regulation leads to continuous overdraft of psychological energy

The teaching profession is essentially a highly emotional labor. In the multiple scenarios of student management, home-school communication and teaching pressure, the strength of individual emotion regulation ability has become a key factor affecting mental health. Teachers lack theoretical guidance and practical training in educational psychology on emotional awareness, emotional expression and regulation. Negative emotions are easily accumulated and cannot be effectively vented, which leads to emotional exhaustion and decreased psychological energy. Studies have shown that teachers who lack the ability to regulate emotions are more likely to be anxious, irritable and powerless, and their job satisfaction and commitment are significantly reduced, which eventually leads to professional burnout. If educational psychol-

ogy cannot be internalized as a teacher's daily emotional management strategy, then their cognitive resources and psychological carrying capacity will be quickly depleted under the high pressure of teaching.

2.2 Achievement motivation deviation weakens the sense of teaching commitment and achievement

Achievement motivation is a core psychological driving force that motivates teachers to maintain their enthusiasm for teaching and continuous input. However, when external evaluation criteria in educational situations overemphasize quantitative performance (such as enrollment rates and assessment rankings), teachers' motivation systems will shift from internal drive to external control, and teachers will lose interest in teaching and mission identification. This motivation shift not only weakens teachers' enthusiasm for classroom input, but also makes teachers rely on external feedback for the source of their sense of achievement. Once the feedback is not good, it is easy to induce self-doubt and career denial. The research focus of educational psychology is on "goal-oriented theory, etc." and "cognitive regulation of motivation." If these theories are not effectively applied in the professional growth of teachers, the structure of their achievement system may be unbalanced, and long-term work in a state of low sense of value and low motivation will aggravate professional burnout.

2.3 Cognitive conflict in teacher roles leads to value imbalance

There are many role attributes of the teaching profession: it is not only a transmitter of knowledge, but also a guide for students, a class manager, and a bridge between home and school. When teachers face role ambiguity and expectation conflicts in their actual work, such as the tension between management roles and education roles, conflicts between student expectations and administrative requirements, etc., cognitive imbalance is easy to occur. Without the support of the role cognition theory of educational psychology, it is difficult for teachers to construct a clear self-role positioning and thus fall into the dilemma of confused values, self-identity crisis and loss of professional significance. Teachers who are in this cognitive conflict for a long time are more likely to become burnout and confused about their work, thereby weakening their dedication and creativity to the teaching position^[3].

2.4 Low teaching self-efficacy weakens professional confidence reserves

Teaching self-efficacy, as a teacher's perception of their ability to complete teaching tasks and solve educational problems, is the core psychological basis for the formation of teachers' professional confidence. If teachers often encounter daily teaching difficulties such as cold student feedback, failed teaching innovation, and difficult classroom control, and lack the guidance and support of the "self-efficacy construction" theory of educational psychology, it is easy to cause self-denial and loss of professional confidence. This low sense of efficiency restricts the motivation of teachers to continue to try and develop, causing teachers to gradually fall into a vicious circle between ability doubt and professional anxiety.

3 The regulatory mechanism of educational psychology on teacher burnout

3.1 Establish a systematic emotion regulation system to enhance psychological resilience

In view of the fact that teachers' psychological energy is overdrawn due to the lack of an effective emotion regulation mechanism during the teaching process, schools should build a systematic emotion support system and other institutional and practical operation levels based on the emotion regulation theory of educational psychology to enhance teachers' psychological resilience. On the one hand, schools can establish psychological counseling rooms for teachers and regularly conduct group counseling courses such as emotional cognitive reconstruction training and stress coping skills training, mindfulness meditation and other workshops led by professional psychological counselors to help teachers perceive and accept their own emotions at the cognitive level and grasp emotional expression and guidance methods at the behavioral level; on the other hand, schools should establish "psychological rest mechanisms, etc." to reasonably regulate teachers' workload during high-pressure periods (such as the end of the semester and before teaching and research evaluations), and set up "psychological adjustment days" or "soul care periods" to give teachers a short-term recovery space away from stress sources.

3.2 Strengthening the internal achievement-driven path to reshape the sense of teaching value

In response to the phenomenon that teachers lose their professional commitment and sense of achievement due to the external control deviation of achievement motivation, schools should reconstruct the internal driving structure of the teacher achievement system based on the “motivation attribution theory, etc.” and “self-determination theory, etc.” of educational psychology^[4]. In practice, schools can introduce “experimental projects of autonomous teaching design” to encourage teachers to create personalized teaching plans based on the actual situation of students, and give them periodic demonstrations and feedback from peers, thereby improving their autonomy, competence and sense of belonging in the teaching process. At the same time, the construction of a teacher incentive mechanism based on process outcome evaluation is no longer solely based on admission rates or evaluation indicators, but requires strengthening teaching reflection, curriculum development, etc. Non-quantitative indicators such as recognition of educational innovation stimulate teachers’ inherent desire to explore teaching content and methods.

3.3 Optimize the cognitive structure of teachers’ roles to alleviate psychological role conflicts

Schools should use the “role conflict theory” and “social cognitive reconstruction model” of educational psychology to conduct research and help teachers establish clear and rational role positioning to avoid burnout caused by value imbalance. First, schools need to organize “role cognition clarification training” to guide teachers to clarify the boundaries between teaching responsibilities and educating responsibilities, administrative tasks and academic growth, and clarify the “controllable-uncontrollable” role content to reduce ineffective psychological burdens. Second, carry out “multi-role situation simulation workshops” to enable teachers to feel the psychological expectations from parents, students, class teachers and teaching and research staff from different perspectives through case deduction and situational role play, which promotes the recognition and coordination of other people’s role expectations. In practice, schools can also develop “role load perception tools” to assist teachers in recording specific role tasks completed within a week, and carry out structured reflection and work adjustments based on this. In order to better promote self-integration, schools should create a “professional identity co-construction community” to encourage teachers to conduct in-depth discussions and peer support around core issues such as “What is a contemporary teacher” and “What kind of teacher do I want to be” to enhance their internal sense of identity of their professional identity.

3.4 Improve the cognitive perception of teaching effectiveness and rebuild professional competence beliefs

In response to the phenomenon that teachers lose their professional confidence due to low self-efficacy, schools should systematically rebuild teachers’ positive cognitive evaluation of their own teaching abilities based on Bandura’s “self-efficacy theory, etc.” In practical operations, schools can build an “empirical teaching observation system”; organize teachers to participate in open classes of the same grade and different stages to observe each other, supplemented by standardized feedback tools. For example, through the “Teaching Behavior Detailed Observation Form”, teachers can draw useful reference information from excellent practices in the industry to enhance their experience as effectiveness role models. Further promote the “progressive success experience plan” to split the complex teaching tasks into progressive goals, such as first completing a differentiated teaching attempt, then conducting classroom design with student participation, gradually accumulating successful experience, and reconstructing self-efficacy beliefs. In platform construction, schools can introduce “teacher professional growth archive system and other content” to record teachers’ teaching achievements, reflection logs, student feedback and training processes, etc., allowing teachers to intuitively track their own growth trajectory and promote the coherence and stability of ability cognition.

Conclusion

Teacher occupational burnout does not come from a single external pressure, but is a complex product of multiple psychological mechanisms that have been accumulated for a long time. While revealing deep-seated causes such as lack of emotional regulation, imbalanced motivation, role conflict and lack of efficacy, educational psychology also provides us with a set of systematic regulatory mechanisms and intervention strategies. Teachers can achieve the transformation from “exhaustion state” to “active competence” state by building a positive psychological regulation system, enhancing internal drive construction, optimizing role positioning, and reconstructing teaching beliefs. In

the future, education managers and researchers should further promote the implementation of educational psychology intervention methods in practice, build a normalized psychological support system, and lay a solid foundation for teachers' physical and mental health and education quality assurance.

References

- [1]Ge Jinglin. Standardized measurement of teacher burnout and analysis of influencing factors[J]. China Standardization, 2024, (04): 190-192.
- [2]Zhao Hengshan, Lian Jia. Causes and countermeasures of teacher burnout under the psychological contract theory[J]. Asia-Pacific Education, 2023, (16): 43-45.
- [3]Yu Guoliang, He Yan. Role theory and teachers' mental health problems and their adjustment[J]. Mental Health Education in Primary and Secondary Schools, 2022, (25): 4-9.
- [4]Hou Ruili, Niu Wenliang, Wei Liqin, Wang Yue, Zhang Nan. The impact of psychological capital on job burnout of undergraduate teachers[J]. Chinese Modern Doctor, 2020, 58 (18): 148-151+155.