

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 312 763

EA 021 415

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 TITLE The Relationship between Secondary Teachers' Perceived Levels of Burnout and Their Perceptions of Their Principals' Supervisory Behaviors. 1989 Update.
 PUB DATE Nov 89
 NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association (Little Rock, AR, November 7-10, 1989).
 PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Administrator Role; Collegiality; Leadership Styles; Organizational Climate; Participative Decision Making; School Supervision; Secondary Education; *Supervisory Methods; *Teacher Administrator Relationship; *Teacher Burnout; *Teacher Morale; *Teacher Supervision
 IDENTIFIERS *Mississippi

ABSTRACT

The empowerment of teachers through collaboration, a supervisory trend currently receiving much attention and emphasis, employs variability and encourages cooperative decisionmaking. Despite its apparent popularity, collaboration can be viewed as unwieldy and difficult to manage with teachers who are already working under less than desirable conditions and further burdened by excessive paperwork and other duties associated with accountability and the reform movements under way in many states. To investigate Mississippi teachers' perceptions of burnout and the possibility of a relationship between teacher burnout and principals' directive, collaborative, or nondirective supervision methods, the Supervisory Behavior Description Questionnaire (form 1) and the Maslach Burnout Inventory Form Ed were mailed to a random sample of 192 teachers of grades 9 through 12. The response rate was 62 percent. Analyses of data collected indicated greater teacher emotional exhaustion and depersonalization under collaborative supervision. It is possible to attribute this to several existing problems, all of which have increased teachers' duties and the demands on their time. Perhaps the greatest difficulty lies with the traditional supervision methods, where principals' directive supervisory behaviors did not permit teachers to develop appropriate decisionmaking and group interaction skills to participate in collaboration. (21 references) (KM)

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ED312763

The Relationship Between Secondary Teachers' Perceived
Levels of Burnout and Their Perceptions of Their
Principals' Supervisory Behaviors

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November 7-10, 1989

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Abstract

This study investigated teachers' perceptions of burnout and principals' supervisory behaviors. Instruments were the Maslach Burnout Inventory Form Ed and the Supervisory Behavior Description Questionnaire, Form 1. The random sample included 120 Mississippi teachers of grades 9-12. Data were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance at the .05 level of significance. Significant differences were found for MBI Subscales Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization and SBDQ Subscales Developing Curriculum, Staff Development, and Evaluation of Instruction.

The Relationship Between Secondary Teachers' Perceived
Levels of Burnout and Their Perceptions of Their
Principals' Supervisory Behaviors

Recent literature reveals that the empowerment of teachers through collaboration is a trend of supervision currently receiving much attention and emphasis. According to Adams and Bailey (1989), principals have a choice in how they lead their schools; and, most recently, principals have discovered that nonbureaucratic methods of leadership are proving more effective. This method employs variability and encourages cooperative decision making. The writers further stated that the empowerment of teachers increases "personal autonomy in decisions of preference, choice, and judgment, and increases motivation everywhere in the school . . . In other words, empowerment maximizes the opportunity for teacher leadership" (p. 90).

Tewel (1989) raised questions about the involvement of teachers in "shared decision making, school-based planning, and a collaborative approach to school management and teacher supervision" (p. 74). However, Tewel cited a successful project designed to introduce the concept of collaborative supervision. From this project, he was able to identify

responsibilities for both supervisors and teachers. He also identified the ingredients for failure:

- "1) Emphasizing short-term factors to measure program or planning effectiveness.
- 2) Not immediately countering staff views that the new process of supervision is 'just another program' that will soon pass.
- 3) Superficially training supervisors.
- 4) Concentrating on problems over which the team has no control, e.g., central school board policy.
- 5) Setting goals which are unattainable in the near future, given the resources and authority available.
- 6) Not intervening to stop early disappointments from discouraging teachers" (p. 83).

Tewel also admitted that difficulties are inherent in this approach to supervision, including resistance to it by supervisors and principals. He did not specifically mention teacher resistance, which surely must exist. Lortie (1975), however, stated that most teachers are accustomed to working in isolation and are infrequently involved in organizational issues; thus, they seldom take the initiative in dealing with these issues.

Maeroff (1988) suggested that without empowerment of teachers the accountability movement may not realize its full potential because "teachers are still largely the field hands on the plantation" (p. 52). He suggested that teacher empowerment is to be viewed as professionalization. He called empowerment another form of collaboration. He cited a recent survey on teacher involvement in decision making conducted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Teacher respondents reported most involvement in choosing textbooks and materials and shaping the curriculum. Teachers reported little involvement in evaluating teacher performance, choosing new administrators, selecting new teachers, or deciding school budgets. Fifty-seven percent reported no involvement in staff development. Most teachers did not wish to engage in a power struggle with the principal, but many wanted the power to function effectively. Because individual needs differ considerably, desires for empowerment likewise differ. Despite its apparent popularity with certain writers and theorists, collaboration may be viewed as unwieldy and difficult to manage with teachers already working under less than desirable conditions and further burdened with excessive paperwork and other duties

associated with the accountability and reform movements found in most states.

Supervision has long been a critical factor in the management of business, industry, and education. In business or industry, the term supervisor might represent a range from upper-level management down to the person directly in charge of a group to be supervised. In education, this term ranges from central office personnel to departmental supervisors. In most schools, however, the supervisor is the principal, and those supervised are teachers. Historically, teachers have been supervised, from the earliest lay boards, or church elders, to the present supervisors, who are usually trained to recognize and use new techniques derived from recent innovations and developments in fields such as psychology, child development, management by objectives, group dynamics, leadership, decision making, evaluation, and systems analysis.

In an effort to determine actual supervisory behaviors of principals of secondary schools in Mississippi and to determine if their supervisory behaviors were significantly related to teachers' perceived burnout, a study was conducted to answer the following question:

Is there a significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of their principals' directive, collaborative, or nondirective supervisory behaviors and teachers' perceptions of burnout?

To answer this question, two instruments were selected: the Supervisory Behavior Description Questionnaire, Form 1 (SBDQ), and the Maslach Burnout Inventory Form Ed (MBI). Based upon theoretical concepts and research, the SBDQ, developed by Sistrunk (1982), was designed to measure the preferred and actual supervisory behaviors of principals and administrators. This instrument has been used alone and in conjunction with a variety of other instruments, including the present study, which added a measurement of burnout. The SBDQ, Form 1, consists of eight subscales with three dimensions: Directive, Collaborative, and Non-Directive. The development of the eight subscales was based on Sergiovanni's (1982) work with Herzberg's (1966) theories of supervision and on Harris' (1975) ten tasks for supervision. For the present study, only the following subscales were employed:

- 1) Developing Curriculum
- 2) Organizing for Instruction

5) Staff Development

8) Evaluation of Instruction and Instructors.

The SBDQ, Form 1, validity was established with Cronbach Alpha coefficients for these subscales as follows: 1) .93; 2) .89; 5) .94 and 8) .94, with a total Alpha coefficient of .99 for the eight subscales of Form 1.

Maslach's (1982) work on the burnout inventory began with service-related professionals, particularly nurses and psychologists. The resulting survey, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was adapted to apply specifically to teachers. This instrument is composed of three subscales: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment. The MBI Form Ed has been used by researchers such as: Gold (1984), Belcastro, Gold, and Harp (1983), Iwanicki and Schwab (1981), and Powers and Gose (1986). Three of these studies: Gold (1984), Iwanicki and Schwab (1981) and Powers and Gose (1986) involved validity and reliability for the MBI when the subjects were teachers. Validity for the MBI subscales is as follows: 1) Emotional Exhaustion, .90; 2) Depersonalization, .79; and 3) Personal Accomplishment, .71.

Subjects in the present study were drawn as a random sample from the population of Mississippi secondary teachers in schools having any or all of grades nine through 12. Of the 192 teachers selected, 120, or 62 percent, completed usable surveys. Statistical analyses involved one-way analysis of variance and Scheffe post hoc tests.

A significant difference was found for the Collaborative dimension of the SBDQ, Form 1, Subscale One: Developing Curriculum and the MBI Form Ed subscale Emotional Exhaustion. Also, significant differences were found for the Collaborative dimension of Subscale One: Developing Curriculum; Subscale Five: Staff Development; and Subscale 8: Evaluation of Instruction and Instructors and the MBI Form Ed subscale of Depersonalization. One-way analysis of variance data for these significant differences are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

A Comparison of the Directive, Collaborative and Non-Directive Dimensions of Subscales 1, 2, 5, and 8 of the SBDQ, Form 1, and the Subscales of Emotional Exhaustion, and Depersonalization of the MBI, Form Ed

Variable	SS	MS	F Ratio
Emotional Exhaustion by			
Developing Curriculum			
Directive	.8085	.4043	.315
Collaborative	14.8258	7.4126	3.418*
Non-Directive	21.8195	10.9097	4.785*
Depersonalization by			
Developing Curriculum			
Directive	3.1564	1.5782	1.247
Collaborative	13.9877	6.9938	3.214*
Non-Directive	4.3715	2.1858	.900
Depersonalization by			
Staff Development			
Directive	25.5979	12.7990	2.158
Collaborative	70.0028	35.0014	4.145*
Non-Directive	16.7660	8.3830	1.400

(table continues)

Variable	SS	MS	F Ratio
Depersonalization by			
Evaluation of			
Instruction and			
Instructors			
Directive	81.1414	40.5707	8.691*
Collaborative	57.3998	28.6999	4.779*
Non-Directive	2.1713	1.0857	.352

*Indicates significance of F ratio at .05 level

($F > 3.07$; $df = 2, 117$)

Central tendency data for the comparison between the subscale of Emotional Exhaustion from the MBI Form Ed and the subscale of Developing Curriculum from the SBDQ, Form 1, are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Central Tendency Data for the Emotional Exhaustion
Subscale of the MBI Form Ed, the Collaborative
Dimension of Subscale One: Developing Curriculum from
the SBDQ, Form 1

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	F Ratio
Group 1				
(High EE)	51	3.1272	1.4969	3.418*
Group 2				
(Moderate EE)	44	2.7727	1.5381	
Group 3				
(Low EE)	25	2.2000	1.2910	
Total	120	2.8083	1.5024	

*Indicates significance of F ratio at .05 level
(F_>3.07;df 2,117)

There were more respondents (51) who reported higher levels of emotional exhaustion for the Collaborative dimension of the SBDQ, Form 1, Subscale of Developing Curriculum. Teachers perceived this supervisory behavior to produce more emotional exhaustion than Directive and Non-Directive supervisory behaviors by their principals. Maslach (1983) defined exhaustion as a pattern of emotional overload, with

subsequent emotional exhaustion resulting from additional stressors. Higher levels of emotional exhaustion indicated that teachers perceived collaboration as increasing rather than decreasing overload and fatigue. Teachers preferred either Directive or Non-Directive supervisory behaviors.

Central tendency data for the MBI Form Ed subscale of Depersonalization and the Collaborative dimension of Subscale One: Developing Curriculum, Subscale Five: Staff Development, and Subscale Eight: Evaluation of Instruction and Instructors are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Central Tendency Data for the Depersonalization
Subscale of the MBI Form Ed and the Collaborative
Dimension of Subscales One, Five and Eight of the SBDQ,
Form 1

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	F Ratio
Developing Curriculum				3.214*
Group 1 (High DP)	53	3.1321	1.5816	
Group 2 (Moderate DP)	34	2.7941	1.2975	
Group 3 (Low DP)	33	2.3030	1.4681	
Total	120	2.8083	1.5024	
Staff Development				4.145*
Group 1 (High DP)	53	5.1698	2.7227	
Group 2 (Moderate DP)	34	4.7059	3.1385	
Group 3 (Low DP)	33	3.3333	2.9439	
Total	120	4.5333	2.9815	
Evaluation of Instruction and Instructors				4.779*
Group 1 (High DP)	53	2.6226	2.5437	
Group 2 (Moderate DP)	34	2.5882	2.6528	
Group 3 (Low DP)	33	2.0606	2.0454	
Total	120	3.1833	2.5271	

*Indicates significance of F ratio at .05 level
(F₃>3.07;df 2,117)

The means for Group 1, with 53 subjects responding, indicated higher levels of depersonalization for the Subscales of Developing Curriculum, Staff Development, and Evaluation of Instruction and Instructors. Scheffe post hoc results for Developing Curriculum and Staff Development indicated Group 1 (High DP) differed significantly from Group 3 (Low DP). Depersonalization, as defined by Maslach (1983), is a detached, callous, and dehumanized response, a way of putting distance between oneself and the demands of others. By this definition, respondents indicated that in the pattern of collaborative supervisory behaviors, teachers withdrew or became detached rather than further involved. This finding is not consistent with recent literature on the subject; nor does it agree with Ward (1988), Ngugi (1984), Hanes (1962), Lieberman (1969), Kaufman (1981) and Balok (1981), who found that teachers preferred collaborative supervisory behaviors on the part of the principal. It does agree with the findings of Lambert (1988) and Tobia (1984).

For the SBDQ, Form 1, Subscale 8: Evaluation of Instruction and Instructors, Group 1 (High DP) differed significantly from Group 3 (Low DP) and Group 2 (Moderate DP) differed significantly from Group 3

(Low DP). The means for these groups indicated that teachers perceived both high and moderate degrees of depersonalization under collaborative supervisory behaviors when engaged in evaluation processes. Teachers withdraw when asked to collaborate during evaluation. Teachers at the secondary level indicated a preference for being left alone rather than involved.

In conclusion, Mississippi teachers reported greater emotional exhaustion and depersonalization under the collaborative supervisory behaviors of principals. It is possible to attribute this to several existing problems: low pay, accountability, educational reforms, increased paperwork, changes in accreditation of schools, and changes in certification requirements, all of which have increased teachers' duties and the demands on teachers' time. Perhaps the greatest difficulty lies with the traditional patterns of supervision in which principals' directive supervisory behaviors did not permit (or have not permitted) teachers to develop appropriate decision-making and group interaction skills to participate in collaboration. Whatever the reasons, the new direction for empowerment of teachers includes collaboration. It may become imperative that teachers accept this aspect of professionalization.

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