

Self-efficacy, work-related emotions and desire to quit in teaching occupation: A test of reciprocal relations*

Irena Burić, Ana Slišković, Zvezdan Penezić, Ivana Macuka, Izabela Sorić
Department of Psychology, University of Zadar, Croatia



BACKGROUND

Considering the problem of teachers' turnover worldwide (Ingersoll, 2004), as well as the results of Croatian studies pointing at high level of occupational stress in teachers at all educational levels (Slišković, 2011; Slišković et al., 2016) and significant number of teachers who report readiness to leave teacher profession (Sorić, 2014), this paper is focused on **teachers' desire to leave the profession**, and its relations to **self-efficacy** and **work-related emotions**.

RESEARCH PROBLEMS

1) To test the reciprocal relations between teachers' self-efficacy and work-related emotions.

Regarding the fact that instruments which assess teachers' work-related emotions were not developed until recently (Chen, 2016; Burić et al, 2017; Frenzel et al., 2016), links between teachers' self-efficacy and specific work-related emotions in teachers are relatively unexplored area. Moreover, some emotions (e.g. anxiety) are more often seen as a consequence rather than as an antecedent of self-efficacy. However, there is some evidence that emotions may influence on self-efficacy. For example, experimental induction of positive / negative emotions increases / decreases the levels of academic self-efficacy in college students (Medrano et al., 2016). Therefore, we considered that positive and negative emotions which teachers experience in relation to their students may act both as antecedent and consequence of self-efficacy. More precisely, we expected that there will be reciprocal relations between teachers' self-efficacy and positive and negative work-related emotions assessed in two assessment points.

2) To test the predictive values of self-efficacy and work-related emotions in explaining teachers' desire to leave the profession.

In line with theoretical and empirical knowledge regarding self-efficacy in general (Bandura, 1992) and teachers' self-efficacy (Schwarzer, Schmitz, & Daytner, 1999), we expected a negative relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and desire to leave the profession.

On the basis of the previous studies on teachers' emotions (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Burić et al., 2017, Day & Gu, 2009; Zembylas, 2003; Chang, 2009; Macdonald, 1999), we expected that teachers who experience higher levels of positive emotions in relation to their students (joy, pride, love) will report weaker desire to quit. Contrary, we expected a stronger desire to leave the profession in teachers who experience higher levels of negative emotions in their interaction with students (anger, hopelessness and fatigue/exhaustion).

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted on the sample of **1525 Croatian teachers** (208 of them were male, 1279 were female, and 38 did not indicate their gender; 459 of them were class teachers, 459 subject teachers, 544 high-school teachers, and 125 of them did not indicate their position) by implementing two-wave full panel design with a time lag of six months. At the first assessment point, teachers were on average 41.49 years old (SD=10.05) and had 15.35 years of teaching experience (SD=10.66).

Teachers filled out self-report measures that assessed:

- **Teachers' Self-efficacy** (10 items; $\alpha=.83$; Schwarzer, Schmitz, & Daytner, 1999),
- **Teachers emotions experienced in relation to teaching and students** (29 items; six subscales: joy ($\alpha_1=.85, \alpha_2=.87$), pride ($\alpha_1=.87, \alpha_2=.87$), love ($\alpha_1=.84, \alpha_2=.89$), anger ($\alpha_1=.79, \alpha_2=.81$), hopelessness ($\alpha_1=.86, \alpha_2=.86$) and fatigue/exhaustion ($\alpha_1=.91, \alpha_2=.92$); *Teacher Emotions Questionnaire-TEQ*, Burić, Slišković & Macuka, 2017).

In addition, in the second assessment point, we assessed **Desire to quit** by two questions: "If in such opportunity, would you quit this job?" and "If in such opportunity, would you choose this profession again?" (reverse coded). Teachers responded by choosing one of four possible answers: 4=definitely yes, 3=probably yes, 2=probably not, and 1=definitely not.

RESULTS

Cross-lagged analysis revealed the reciprocal relations between emotions and self-efficacy. Teachers who had experienced higher levels of positive emotions assessed at first time point, also reported higher levels of self-efficacy six month later, and vice versa. The opposite trend was found for the relation between negative emotions and self-efficacy.

However, emotions predicted desire to quit only if assessed at the same time point (i.e. second wave) – teachers who experienced negative emotions to a greater extent had stronger desire to leave the teaching profession. The opposite was found for positive emotions.

Table 1. Fit indices of tested models

Model	AIC	BIC	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA (90% CI)
Stability model*	103875.55	104168.96	387.24**	64	.973	.961	.060	.058 (.052, .063)
Causality model (self-efficacy→emotions)	103861.24	104165.04	368.93**	62	.974	.962	.053	.057 (.051, .063)
Reverse-causation model (emotions→self-efficacy)	103815.46	104119.25	323.143**	62	.978	.968	.049	.053 (.047, .058)
Reciprocal model	103807.11	104121.56	310.79**	60	.979	.968	.045	.052 (.047, .058)
Reciprocal model + desire to quit	109506.33	109884.74	422.02**	81	.974	.961	.048	.053 (.048, .058)

Note: *latent variables assessed in the same time point and the same manifest variables assessed across two time points were allowed to correlate; ** $p<.01$

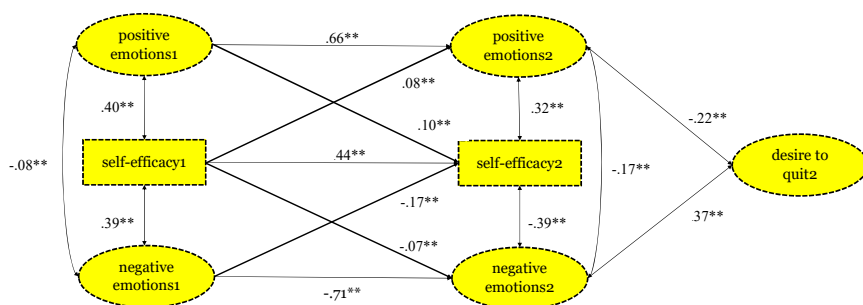


Figure 1. Final reciprocal model

Note. Indicators of latent variable of positive emotions were sums of scores on joy, pride and love scales; indicators of latent variable of negative emotions were sums of scores on anger, hopelessness and fatigue scales; indicators of latent variable of desire to quit were two questions (see Method section). Measurement part of the model yielded excellent fit indices ($\chi^2=346.05$, $df=61$, $p<.01$; CFI=.976, TLI=.964; RMSEA=.055 (.052, .057); and SRMR=.052).

CONCLUSION

In spite of limitations of the study (convenient sample, measures based on self-reports), this study is one of the rare that examined and confirmed the significant role of specific emotions which teachers experience in relations to their students in predicting self-efficacy and desire to quit within teacher occupation.

Moreover, results of this two-wave study confirmed the reciprocal relations between teachers' emotions and self-efficacy.

Moreover, results from the second wave demonstrated the predictive value of teachers' positive and negative emotions in explaining teachers' desire to leave the profession.

Contact mail :
buric.irena@gmail.com
aslavic@unizd.hr

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