

## Abstracts

### *The interplay between stress, professional identity and burnout among school counselors in Israel*

*Rotem Maor and Alla Hemi*

Continuous exposure to work related stress has psychological and physiological consequences for employees, especially for mental health professionals whose professions are known as demanding and stressful. The current study focuses on the relationship between role stress and burnout in the contemporary school counselors' role. We also aimed to examine whether professional identity might serve as a protective mechanism against burnout. The research assumptions were investigated using Mixed Methods, both quantitative and qualitative. 205 school counselors currently practicing in the Israeli education system responded to a questionnaire assessing their role stress, professional identity and burnout, which were analyzed quantitatively. Additional 12 counselors responded to open-ended questions, which were analyzed qualitatively. Results indicated that school counselors perceived non-counseling role stressors as more stressful than counseling role stressors. Furthermore, non-counseling role stressors contributed to burnout more than counseling role stressors did. Additionally, a negative correlation was found between professional identity and burnout. Lastly, professional identity moderated the relationship between role stress and burnout. Findings highlight the negative impact of non-counseling stressors and the importance of professional identity as a protective factor against burnout among school counselors.

**Keywords:** role stress; burnout; professional identity; school counselors.

## ***The school culture and the school counselor's role***

*Tamar Myteles and Dorit Tubin*

The school counselor's role has grown and evolved over the years, and requires clear priorities in order to perform it. Factors found to affect priorities are personal preferences, professional standards, and organizational constraints. The aim of this study is to explore the effects of an additional and less studied factor, namely school culture. Employing a multiple case study method, we studied similarities and differences between the cultures of two large high schools and the priorities in the roles of four school counselors. Interviews, observations, and document analysis served for data collection, and within- and between-case analysis was used for data analysis. The results reveal two different school cultures, with similarities and differences between the counselors' priorities. While the similarities are ascribed to comparable factors, such as professional standards and the organizational structure of a large high school, the differences in the counselors' priorities reflect two different school cultures. We conclude that a deep understanding of school culture increases the likelihood that the school counselor's role and priorities are not only shaped by this culture, but also affect it. Further theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

**Keywords:** school counselor; school culture; organizational structure; professionalism.

## *School counselors' stress perceptions*

*Alla Hemi and Rotem Maor*

Given school counselors' many responsibilities, the importance of their work and the misunderstanding of their role by others, it is clear that school counselors are vulnerable to harmful levels of stress. Existing stress scales provide insufficient solutions for measuring stress in the school counselor's contemporary role because they are not profession specific, are unidimensional or are outdated. Our purpose was to develop and validate a means of measuring school counselors' stress. Exploratory factor analysis on a pilot sample ( $N=72$ ) revealed eight factors: misunderstanding and lack of appreciation for the counselor's role, violence, lack of cooperation, task prioritization, bureaucracy, work-home conflict, serving as a mediator and dealing with discipline. Confirmatory factor analysis on a larger sample ( $N=205$ ) yielded a good fit for the eight-factor structure. Participants consistently reported higher levels of stress due to bureaucracy, work-home conflict and dealing with discipline than they did for misunderstanding and lack of appreciation for the counselor's role, violence and serving as a mediator. These differences strengthen the importance of measuring specific stressors rather than just a unidimensional stress construct. Additionally, qualitative methods were used for richer understanding of school counselors' perceptions of stress in their work. These findings might suggest additions to school counselors' training programs, such as non-counseling duties and ways of attenuating conflicts between non-counseling and counseling responsibilities.

**Keywords:** school counselors' role; stress factors; burnout; stress scale.

## ***In the absence of a home and a state – The hope among the refugee children in the School of Peace***

*Smadar Ben Asher, Ephrat Huss, Tsvia Walden, Eitan Shahar and Shifra Sagy*

The study focuses on refugee children living in a temporary transit camp on the Island of Lesbos in Greece and attending a unique school, which, under transit camp conditions, endeavors to provide the children with safety, security, and an adaptive learning experience. The research question was: Can children develop a high level of hope during prolonged hardship and distress?

The Children's Hope Scale was administered to 132 refugee children aged 6-16 attending the school. The general hope scores among the refugee children were similar to those in other children's populations. The Adolescent group's Hope scores were lower than in the other groups, and highest in the Intermediate group. Differences were also found between groups of children from different countries of origin.

Findings confirm that hope is a component of inner resilience and not necessarily dependent on external circumstances, even when those circumstances are harsh and threatening.

**Keywords:** refugee children; violence; hope; resilience; salutogenic approach.

## *The place of pets in families with children with autism spectrum disorder*

*Rachel Gilshtrum (Weinberger)*

It is very common among families in Israel to have pets, and they are considered beloved family members similar to children. Pets are also common in the homes of families with children with autism spectrum disorder. Pets in these families have the potential to make a significant contribution to the well-being of children and their families. Much literature describes the contribution of trained service dogs designed to keep children safe for their well-being and the well-being of their families. However few studies discuss the presence of pets, with no specific training, to have beneficial effect on children with autism spectrum disorders. This qualitative study examined how pets were perceived among seven families, each with a child with autism spectrum disorder in Israel. Personal phone interviews with the children's mothers were conducted. The study findings presented in four themes, clearly indicate the important place of pets among these families. The pets integration into each family and the special bond created between the pets and the children with autism spectrum disorder, contribute significantly to the children's functioning. This contribution offers optimism about better realization of their potential. The presence of a pet can simultaneously benefits all family members. They contribute to and reinforce family relationship: between all siblings, the parent unit, and the family as a whole. This contribution is of great importance when considering the potential difficulties in family functioning, as a result of the challenges faced by families with children with complex deficiencies. The findings also indicate the challenges facing families choosing to bring pets into their home and lives.

**Keywords:** sibling of children with autistic spectrum disorder; parents; pets; pets as family members; therapy; children with autism spectrum disorder; families; contribution to functioning.

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## *Adolescence experience in Jewish religious boarding school*

*Rivka Blau*

High school yeshivot for boys and ulpenot for girls are elitist educational boarding schools for many adolescents in Israel's religious Zionist sector. With their holistic, personality shaping education, these institutions foster values of religious and academic excellence, and point their graduates toward integrating into key positions in Israeli society. The present study is an examination of the place of the boarding-school experience in the identity-formation process of its students.

The participants, age 24-27, all graduates of these institutions, entered the school around age 14. In a narrative interview, they were asked to tell their life story, and to describe their boarding-school experience. Interview analysis yielded three types of experiences, with different experiences leading to different identity-formation developmental paths and various identity statuses. Participants with a secure attachment style experienced the boarding school as a natural continuation, and experienced foreclosure. Anxious-style participants experienced the school as a reliable environment and achieved moratorium status, and avoidant-style participants recreated the sense of absence, experiencing pain and loneliness.

The conclusions yielded recommendations regarding counseling adolescents toward boarding-school education.

**Keywords:** educational boarding school; adolescence; identity formation; identity achievement; attachment style.

## ***Humor, motivation and achievements in mathematics in students with learning disabilities***

*Saied Bishara and Avikam Gasit*

This study examined the association between humor, motivation, and achievements in mathematics in students with learning disabilities. For this study, 80 sixth-grade students with learning disabilities who attend integrated classes in a general education school were tested using three instruments: a questionnaire about incorporating humor in mathematics instruction, a questionnaire about motivation, and a mathematics achievement test.

The findings of this study show improved mathematics achievements and motivation in students with learning disabilities when humor is incorporated in mathematics classes. In addition, students with learning disabilities who were taught mathematics with humor scored higher on motivation and mathematics achievement at the end of the school year compared with the beginning of the school year. We conclude that incorporating humor in mathematics instruction can be recommended. The expected positive effect on motivation and achievements in this special population could have a positive impact on a variety of other pedagogical phenomena, such as dropout rates, academic achievements in other subjects, and social interactions.

**Keywords:** humor; motivation; mathematics; academic achievements; learning disability.

## *Motivation and self-image among fourth graders in public and public-religious schools*

*Stella Gidalevich*

Reading comprehension is defined as the ability to derive meaning from a written text, essential for academic success and work career. Ecological child development models emphasize the motivational-emotional factor as decisive in intellectual functioning, and a precondition for comprehension.

Self-esteem refers to a person's capabilities and life's significance. Academically, self-esteem is positively associated with academic achievements and motivation.

This study's goal was to examine the association between reading comprehension achievement, reading motivation and self-esteem among public and public-religious school 4<sup>th</sup> graders. Participating in the study were 104 4<sup>th</sup> graders at two Haifa district public and public-religious schools, tested on a summary of reading comprehension by the Ministry of Education, asking them to complete a motivational reading and self-esteem questionnaire.

Results attest to significant differences on various measures. Comprehending literary vs. theoretical texts, is easier for all students. Public-religious school students achieved better on interpretation and deduction, and reported higher reading motivation than their public school peers. By contrast, public school girls achieved more in language knowledge compared to public-religious school girls. Scholastic self-esteem was higher among boys than girls, and the public-religious school boys had the highest scholastic self-esteem. For both types of text, boys achieved more than girls, but girls reported higher motivation on the social factor reasons for reading. In addition, associations were found between reading comprehension achievements and motivation, particularly on the capability and sense of efficacy factor. A tie was also found between scholastic self-esteem and literary text achievements.

**Keywords:** reading comprehension; gender; religious school; motivation for reading; self-image.



## ***A sense of coherence and compassion Fatigue Among educators who have experienced the loss of a close person.***

*Timor Horvitz and Tzameret Ricon*

Following the loss of a loved one, educators return to work to face a dual challenge: mourning and meeting job requirements. Studies have showed that bereavement can trigger burnout as a significant element of dropout. They also identify sense of coherency (SOC) as a strengthening factor promoting quality of life and professionalism. This study sought to determine whether SOC is linked to the elements of compassion fatigue – burnout, secondary traumatic stress (STS), and compassion satisfaction (CS) – among educators who suffered loss. 34 educators, who suffered loss during their career, filled out questionnaires eliciting relevant information. The study revealed a significant negative correlation among SOC, burnout, and ST, and a significant positive correlation between SOC and CS. A significant negative correlation was also identified between CS and STS. Awareness among educational counselors' regarding the vulnerability of staff members who have suffered loss, and their approach to increasing SOC and CS, is essential for preventing CF and teacher dropout.

**Keywords:** loss; sense of Coherence (SOC); compassion fatigue (CF); burnout; secondary traumatic stress (STS); compassion satisfaction (CS).

## *Jewish teachers' handling of racist statements by students in the classroom*

*Shahar Gindi and Rakefet Erlich Ron*

This study examined the way teachers in secondary schools handled controversial issues about Jewish-Arab relations that arose in the classroom. The study data included 387 responses from teachers who were asked to recall a notable event in which they addressed the topic in class and describe it briefly. In many responses (158 reports) teachers described and cited racist statements by students. These were analyzed qualitatively, and are the focus of this work. The descriptions indicate that the statements often arose after topical events, and were initiated by students. The teacher's initiative or the curriculum rarely provoked the racist statements. Cross-case analysis revealed that racist statements overlapped with teacher avoidance 11% of the times, with cognitive strategies 32%, with moderating strategies 21%, and with emotional strategies 8% of the times. Teachers also reported positive or negative outcomes of the discussions regardless of the triggers or the type of strategy they used. Teachers' reports indicate that they are operating without a well-defined approach and without feeling supported, neither at the school level nor by the Ministry of Education. On the one hand, the blatant and extreme discourse makes teachers fear losing control of the classroom, and on the other hand, teachers are unaware of the educational importance of discussions on controversial issues for the student and society (regardless of the outcome of the discussion). The attempt to keep the school as a politically neutral space is crumbling due to the ongoing conflict that leaks into the school and requires systemic solutions.

**Keywords:** controversial political issues (CPI); racism; teachers; political education; teacher strategies.

***Self-efficacy, professional burnout and evaluating school counselor ability to provide support- differences between teachers who teach in Omets classes and teachers who teach in regular classes***

*Hen Gozlan and Tzameret Ricon*

The educational work of teachers is complex and includes multiple demands while coping with various factors within and outside school. Regard teachers who work with youth that consider being at risk, such as those who teach in "Omets" classes (classes of students at risk), it is obvious that they are required to demonstrate high professional self-efficacy in the face of the struggles that this complex classroom calls. This coping is sometimes accompanied with fillings of burnout.

School counselors are in charge of students and staff well-being. Therefore, as part of their role, they are supposed to provide support and assistance, systemically and individually, to the school staff, with one of its goals being to reduce the feeling of professional burnout. Despite the unique and central role of the counselor in the school system, the research on the counselor's assistance as perceived by teachers, has not yet been carried out.

The aim of the study was to examine whether there is a correlation between the teacher's self-efficacy, the assessment of the frequency of assistance with school counselor and the teachers' feelings of professional burnout. In addition, it was examined whether there are differences in assisting the school counselors between teachers who teach in 'Omets' classes and teachers who teach in typical classes, differences were also examined in professional self-efficacy and level of professional burnout.

The study population composed of 131 teachers, 66 teachers from "Omets" classes and 65 teachers from typical classes. Participants filled several questionnaires: demographic, Assessing the educational consultant ability of support, teachers' professional burnout (Friedman, 1999), and teachers' professional self-efficacy (Friedman & Kass, 2001).

Research findings showed no correlation between estimating the frequency of contact to the with school counselor and the teachers' feelings of professional burnout. Omets" teachers' sense of professional self-efficacy was higher than teachers of typical classes.

No significant differences were found between groups in evaluation of approaching educational consultant frequency and levels of professional burnout.

The findings of the study highlight the importance of focusing on proactive counseling work aimed at creating professional assistance relationships with teachers in order to strengthen their professional self-efficacy and prevent burnout.

**Keywords:** school counselor; self-efficacy; professional burnout; omets classes.

## *Home-work conflict among teachers*

*Shraga Fisherman and Smadar Ben Asher*

The home-work conflict has been extensively studied from the perspective of stress and the need to balance between the two demands. In the current study we follow recent research, which suggests that the challenge of balancing the two roles may have an empowering effect. We question the dichotomic view that every conflict has negative impact, and propose instead that while the tension between home and work can harm a person's well-being, it may also be enriching and constructive. We point to four possible dimensions of the home-work conflict: (1) home-constructive; (2) work-constructive; (3) home-obstructive; and (4) work-obstructive. To examine these possibilities, we have developed a questionnaire and validated it through exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis as well as by checking internal reliability. The aim of the research was to examine the association between home-work conflict and emotional well-being among three groups of teachers, distinguished by the number of years on the job. Three-hundred and twenty-four teachers responded to two questionnaires: a work-home conflict questionnaire (Fisherman & Ben-Asher, 2021) and a well-being questionnaire (Diener, 1984). Seventy-six of the teachers were in their internship year, while the other teachers were divided into two groups according to their median number of years on the job. The findings revealed that among intern teachers, the work-constructive factor (positive coefficient) was the main predictor, with work-obstructive as an additional factor (negative coefficient). In contrast, among teachers with several years' experience, the home-constructive factor was the main predictor whereas the two work-related factors barely contributed to the explained variance; and among teachers with the longest teaching experience, no significant correlation was found between the conflict factors and emotional well-being. Thus, the research hypothesis, which links the number of teaching years to the teacher's subjective experience, has been confirmed. An applicable conclusion deriving from the research is that educational counselors must consider ways to help teachers adopt the positive aspects of the home-work conflict in order to enhance their emotional well-being.

**Keywords:** home-work conflict; emotional well-being; teaching experience; obstructive conflict; constructive conflict.

## ***Words can hurt: Cyberbullying directed against teachers in Israel***

*Michal Dolev-Cohen*

The current study examined cyberbullying of teachers through reports of the victims themselves and those of bystanders who witnessed cyberbullying against their colleagues. Respondents included 269 teachers from across the country who answered self-report questionnaires. The research findings reveal a high incidence of online bullying of teachers, with 52% reporting being victims of online bullying and 77% of the bystanders reporting witnessing such abuse against fellow teachers. Moreover, in middle school homeroom teachers tend to report higher frequency of cyberbullying than do subject-area teachers. Only 22.7% of the bystanders and 21.4% of the victims themselves reported bullying incidents to those in positions of authority. These findings shed light on a behavior that occurs with considerable frequency, though very little attention is paid to it in the field of education. The article discusses the findings' implications both with respect to the teachers' experience and to the consequences for the students.

**Keywords:** teachers; cyberbullying; victims; bystanders; reporting.