BURNOUT AMONG THE CHILDCARE EDUCATORS IN THE PRIVATE
CHILDCARE SECTOR

IN THE AREA OF NORTH CO. KILDARE AND CO. DUBLIN

Inga Emolina

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Arts degree,
(Social Science Specialization) at DBS School of Arts, Dublin.

Supervisor: Dr. Bernadette Quinn

Head of Department: Dr. Bernadette Quinn

April 2011

Department of Humanities & Social Science

DBS School of Arts
Acknowledgements

I am delighted to have this opportunity, to say thank, to my supervisor Dr. Bernadette Quinn for her encouragement, energy and for her time and thank for sharing her knowledge.

I should like to thank to all participating educators for their response and time.

I repeat my gratitude to my family for all their encouragement, patience and support of my study over the past four years.
Abstract

Teachers are one of the significant people who are influential in determining the quality of our living, upon them, rest significant part of our hope and our future. A high expectation of education and the ability to deliver that expectation leads educators to stress. More often educators become frustrated and feel unprepared to meet the challenge of educating children. Consequently burnout is becoming a concern.

This study sought to determine the level of burnout experiencing by childcare professionals and are that related to a lack of administrative support and work related factors, using the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey, Third Edition (MBI-ES) (Maslach et.al., 1996) along with a demographical data survey.

Results of this study indicate that there was no significant feelings of burnout experienced by childcare professionals as well as majority of childcare professionals have administrative support and felt positive about their work environment.
# Table of Contents

**Introduction** ........................................................................................................... 7

*Introducing to the literature of burnout*........................................................................7

*Defining burnout*.........................................................................................................8

*Causes of burnout*.......................................................................................................9

*Consequences of burnout*..........................................................................................10

*Categorizing burnout*.................................................................................................11

*Theory of alienation*...................................................................................................12

*Defining alienation*......................................................................................................12

*Sociology and alienation*............................................................................................13

*Growth and development of childcare setting in Ireland*............................................16

*Issues among the childcare professionals*....................................................................17

**Purpose and objectives of this study** ...................................................................... 20

**Research methods** .................................................................................................. 23

*Materials*.....................................................................................................................23

*Participants*..................................................................................................................25

*Design*..........................................................................................................................26

*Procedure*...................................................................................................................27
Results

Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey, Emotional Exhaustion
Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey, Depersonalization
Maslach educators Inventory Educators Survey,
Personal Accomplishment
Childcare adequate supervision
Educator’s access to manager
Supervisor support
Support from co-workers

Discussion

Research Findings
Implications and Contributions
Limitations of the Research
Recommendations of Future Research

Reference list

Appendix A Demographic information
Appendix B Survey of Decker Bailey and Westerrgaard
Appendix C Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey
Tables

Table 1 Response categories on the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey .................................................................45

Table 2; 3; 4 Results of the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey .................................................................46

Table 5 Childcare adequate supervision .................................................................47

Table 6 Educators access to manager ..................................................................47

Table 7 Supervisor support .....................................................................................48

Table 8 Support from co-workers .........................................................................48

Table 9 Job satisfaction ..........................................................................................49

Table 10 Job dissatisfaction among the educations .................................................49

Table 11 Supervised children’s age group ...............................................................50

Table 12 Participants highest professional degree ..................................................51
INTRODUCTION

Introducing to the Literature of Burnout

Occupationally burnout occurs from past and present problems and work overload that continuously are loading up (James, Gilliland, 2001). Problems may have variety of sources, for instance demanding bosses, unending paper work, unbending institutional policies and procedures and miscommunication (James, Gilliland, 2001).

Burnout is a global phenomenon of substantial significance, that affects companies and organizations at all levels, economically has a huge amount of money loss each year, because of employees inadequate functioning in their jobs (Tonder, Williams, 2009). Burnout has become crucial issue with its negative impact for institutions whose aims is to achieve and produce quality products and provide highest standard of service to remain successful in an increasingly competitive environment (Tonder, Williams, 2009).

The term burnout, characterize reaction to long term stress, that specifically is linked to emotional strain of working frequently and intensively with other peoples (Horn & Schaufel, 1998). Most accepted conceptualization of burnout is found in the work of Maslach and Jackson (1986). They consider burnout as a symptom emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion of these three dimensions comes closest to an orthodox reaction to stress (Maslach, Schaufeli 1993). Emotional exhaustion refers to a depletion of a person’s emotional resources and the feeling that the individual has nothing left psychologically (Horn & Schaufel, 1998). Depersonalization is as the development of indifferent and negative attitude towards others. Personal accomplishment is the third dimension of burnout that involves negative evaluation
in working with people, perceiving themselves as being less effective in their job (Horn &
Schaufel, 1998). Maslach and Jackson (1986, 1996) developed self reported questionnaire the
Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Service Survey (MBI-HSS), General Survey (MBI-GS)
and Educators Survey (MBI-ES) on these three dimensions to measure burnout (Horn &
Schaufel, 1998). Studies on teachers burnout in North-America, indicate, that male teachers
reported higher scores on depersonalization, and the female teachers reported higher scores
on emotional exhaustion (Horn & Schaufel, 1998). Different results were obtained among
Dutch teachers, where feelings of emotional exhaustion were higher among males (Horn &
Schaufel, 1998). Dutch and North-American studies suggested, that experience in teaching
rather than age, is more strongly related to burnout (Horn & Schaufel, 1998). Burk and
Greenglass (1989) found that educators spend a large amount of their time in isolation from
their colleagues – neutralizing a key support function (Croom, 2000).

Defining Burnout

Years ago burnout was viewed and understand as an individual’s problem, that were related
to individuals deficiency in personality (Tonder, Williams, 2009), however the other research
suggested that is the individuals work environment, where evidence of resent studies states
burnout as a complex individual-societal phenomenon which affects tens of millions of
organizations and institutions service workers in all occupations (Tonder, Williams, 2009).

Freudenberg defines burnout as a state of physical and emotional depletion, that develops
from conditions in work, experiencing feelings of failure, exhaustion and worn out(Tonder,
Williams, 2009). Maslach states that burnout is a syndrome, significant in occupational fields
such as teaching, healthcare, human services, which diminished personal accomplishments,
and comprised emotional exhaustion(Tonder,Williams, 2009). Shaufeli and Enzmann suggest
burnout as a state of mind with its negative work-related persistent, with symptoms like
dysfunctional work attitude, declining motivation and exhaustion (Tonder, Williams, 2009). Burnout has its origins in situational and person factors any ‘normal’ individual may experience in work or at home.

**Causes of Burnout**

Number of studies has reported high levels of satisfaction in work with children and that the low pay and values attached the work makes childcare workers vulnerable of turnover (Ralfe, Metcalfe, Anderson, Meadows, 2003). In Ireland, full-time childcare professional hours worked in facility, ranges between 35 to 40 hours per week, with rate of pay 16.500 – 20.000 annually (CDVEC, 2002). Studies suggest, that one of the reason for staff turnover in childcare are stress in work and high expectation of the job, but status and value awarded of work are low (Ralfe, Metcalfe, Anderson, Meadows, 2003). Another number of studies have indicate high work load (Bunting, 2000, Dinham and Scott, 2000, Witehead et.al., 2000, Nayolor, 2001, Wragg, 2004, Caulter and Abney, 2009). Separate studies focusing on teachers in British Columbia and Canada, Naylor (2001) found that teachers work more than 60 hours per week (Caulter and Abney, 2009). Maintain discipline in work environment was another stressor identified by teachers (Able and Sewell, 1999, Wragg, 2004, Taylor et.al.2005, Caulter and Abney, 2009). Taylor (2005) in his study of Arkansas teachers found that 46.7 % of teachers felt they spent too much time in dealing with disciplinary problems (Caulter and Abney, 2009). Lack of administrative support as well has been identified as a cause to burnout, as well as poor staff relationships and lack of support from colleagues and administration (Caulter and Abney, 2009).
Consequences of Burnout

Many different studies have been researched to investigate the causes associated with stress and burnout in teachers. Studies from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Israel and United States have found very same cause of burnout in professional educators (Caulter, Abbey, 2009), many of studies reported high work load and long working hours as a main cause of stress and burnout. Lack of administrative support was another cause of burnout among teaching professionals (Caulter, Abbey, 2009) poor staff relationships with lack of friendly atmosphere among staff members and support from colleagues and management. Stress, has extreme negative influence, and impact on productivity, and quality of work and health issues of employers. Stress induces burnout, that has become serious concern for individuals that are employed in helping professions and among them are childcare professionals (Decker, Bailey, Westergaard, 2002). Research states that the burnout is the key factor in high staff turnover, statistical evidence shows that each year 26 to 41 per cent childcare workers in residential setting has a turnover (Decker, Bailey, Westergaard, 2002). From burnout suffers millions of people that work in human services and affecting their welfare including turnover, absenteeism, lowered productivity, and psychological problems (James, Gilliland, 2001). Burnout is, as an internal psychological experience, that involves feelings, motives, attitudes and expectations (James, Gilliland, 2001), and have hundreds of different symptoms, that person may experience, such as: negative self – concept, feelings of hopelessness, disillusionment, negative attitude towards work and life itself, which is caused by long-term involvement in emotionally demanding situations (James, Gilliland, 2001).
**Categorizing Burnout**

Tonder (2009), in his research refers to Schaufeli and Buuk, that categorized burnout symptoms, into five categories: Affective manifestation with signs of, depressed mood, aggression and anxiety; Cognitive manifestation: feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, poor job related esteem, sense of failure, impaired cognitive skills – memory and attention, pessimisms, negativism, distrusts, reduced empathy, critical attitude towards colleagues, supervisor and management. Physical manifestation: absence of work, complaints of stomach ache, flue and sinuses, cholesterol and coronary heart disease. Behavioural manifestation: staff turnover, substance abuse, absenteeism and impaired work performance. Motivational manifestation: loss of enthusiasm, interest, disappointment, resignation and submission, interpersonal conflicts (Tonder, Williams, 2009).

Edelwich and Brodsky as cited in R. K. James, et.al., (2001), recognize four stages of burnout, where most likely individuals goes through (R.K. James, B.E. Gilliland, 2001, p. 618):

First stage: Enthusiasm. Individuals start work, with high hopes and unrealistic expectations. If such idealism is not being supported, and defined what worker can reasonably expect to accomplish, it may lead to the stage of stagnation.

Second stage: Stagnation occurs, when employer financial, personal and career needs are not being met. Awareness may come from notifying other people, who are perceived as less able, moving up to career ladder faster, low self confidence of doing job well, pressure from home. Individual will move to the stage frustration if intrinsic and extrinsic reinforcement will not occur.
Frustration – this stage indicates that the worker is in trouble. Worker becomes suspicious about his own effectiveness, values and impact of his effort. In organizational setting, burnout has been observed as highly contagious among staff members, one person’s frustration is likely to have domino effect on other employers. In this stage failure to receive administrative support to resolve problem will lead to final stage apathy.

Fourth stage apathy this is a burnout crisis stage:” It is a chronic indifference to the situation and defies most efforts at interventions”( R.K. James, B.E. Gilliland, 2001, pg., 618).

Childcare professional, recurrent experience of personal failure and inadequacy, may lead to a sense of meaninglessness and normlessnessnes resulting to become alienated.

THEORY OF ALIENATION

Defining Alienation

Many research were taken to rediscover Marx classical idea of alienation, surveys were studied by standard techniques and individualistic psychological approaches. According to Marx human beings achieve their fluffiness humanity through their labour – ‘an essentially social process – that the human world is created’ (Watson, 2009). However the conditions that underlie labour performance makes significant difference to the extent to which human beings are fulfilled (Watson, 2009). Workers under the capitalism are forced into an unequal relationship with their manager (owner)-to whom they sell their power of labour. Employer exploits the workers in terms of requiring to do more work than the workers themselves would need to do. In capitalist context workers were not allowed to achieve creative fulfilment and since the worker do not use their own material and neither they have control
over the products of their labour, refer to Marx, they cannot achieve their potential self-
realisation – thus they are alienated (Watson, 2009).

Alienation has been found as an objective condition pertaining to the structural relations of
domination and subordination, appropriation and exploitation and power or control in society
(Sweitzer, 1981). Other empirical researches investigate objective condition of work, where
objective dimensions in these studies included measures of the substantive complexity of
work, degree of individuals responsibility on job, extent to which workers have immediate
control over the process of work and production, and the conditions of occupational self –
direction(Sweitzer, 1981). Manifestation of possible behavioural indicators of alienated
labour are suggested as overload and unrested labour, absenteeism, turnover, accidents at
work and insubordination. Research, that were studied by Meissner (1981) deals with
technical constrains of work, where Schweitzer investigates, social structural conditions, with
measures of anomic discrepancy between status and achievements (Sweitzer, 1981). Richard
Schacht (1971) declare, that the term alienation differs from the classical ideas of Karl Marx
and Erich Fromm, where for them is common, for men to be unaware of their alienation it is a
fact about many men that they are alienated from themselves (Schacht, 1971, p. 154).

Sociology and Alienation

For sociologists ‘alienation is a psychological state of an individual’ (Schacht, 1971, p.154).
General context in which the term alienation occurs in sociological literature or types of
alienation emerge: interpersonal alienation, work alienation, politico economic alienation,
and socio-cultural alienation (Schacht, 1971).

Individuals who are alienated are experiencing primary role requirements as simple but
stifling and restrictive bereft of meaningful challenges (Mitchell, 2000). These persons later
seek opportunities for creativity, self-expression and greater freedom. In our society human beings are looking to internalize and aspire to the culturally promulgated goals of wealth, social stability, material well-being, but who achieve those goals are only few, who have access to legitimate, institutionalized means. In social structural level alienation occurs as a result of imperfect integration between goals and means, individuals failure between aspiration and realistic expectations, discrepancies between capacities to perform and occupational role performance (Mitchell, 2000).

Persons recurrent experience of personal failure and inadequacy could lead to a sense of meaninglessness and normlessness resulting in some cases deviance (Mitchell, 2000), explanation are used in variety of deviant behaviours that range from juvenile delinquency to political demonstrations (Decker, Bailey, Westergaard, 2002).

To acquire legitimate identity within social order Decker, et, al., (2002) accords to Seeman (1959), who sets out four key elements: Competence in occupational role; Usefulness at work, home, family and community; Belonginess achieving through various active commitment, locating person in society where he belongs; Power or potency individual fulfils his own life, have some positive effect and impact on society (Decker, et al., 2002). One’s sense of competence, usefulness, belongingness and power does not functioning in role performance and social world, and in particular institution within that social world, alienation occurs. Individual becomes alienated, experiencing and feel failure of competence within society.
Decker, et al. (2002) sets out five key areas that were defined by Decker (1976) as significant mark, in analyzing alienation (Decker, et al., 2002).

Powerlessness - “Powerlessness is a feeling of an inability to influence the forces that affect one’s chances for success in life. It refers to a lack of influence over social institutions and forces. At its root, powerlessness is a feeling of drift or helplessness in an unresponsive universe” (Decker, 1976, p. 21 as cited in: Decker, et al., 2002).

Role estrangement - “Role estrangement is an individual’s sense of being related to solely as a role, e.g., as a clerk or student. In this dissociation from his/her role, he/she perceives that nothing he/she does is valued for itself, but only for its effect on others. Role estrangement includes the belief that rewards are not important” (Decker, 1976, p. 21 as cited in: Decker, et al., 2002).

Cultural estrangement - “Cultural estrangement is an attitudinal state in which the individual voluntarily separates himself/herself from the predominant value system. A culturally estranged individual may have full knowledge of those values and the means to achieve them, but he/she explicitly rejects them” (Decker, 1976, p. 22 as cited in: Decker, et al., 2002).

Meaninglessness - “Meaninglessness is an individual’s perception that he/she lacks adequate knowledge and furthermore, that it is impossible for him/her to acquire that knowledge because the world is so complex. To resolve meaninglessness, individuals often adopt simplistic solutions to life problems” (Decker, 1976, p. 22 as cited in: Decker, et al., 2002).

Guidelessness - “Guidelessness is a disproportion between the individual’s desires and his/her means for achieving those desires. It is the feeling that social rules are either ineffective or unrealistic. The guideless individual feels resentment towards the society that fails to provide him/her with sufficient opportunity to achieve his/her desires” (Decker, 1976, p. 22 as cited in: Decker, et al., 2002)
**Growth and Development of Childcare Setting in Ireland**

Sector of childcare in Ireland has been increasingly gaining attention in later years. Debates has been made, how to provide highest standard of care for children in early years and support for their families. Historically, the past century in Ireland, children lives have changed dramatically, like the environment where the youngest children live, play and grow. For the best part of the twentieth century children were cared for in family home and went to school after the age of three or four. Most of Irish families were largely agrarian, where children worked on the farm. Families in that time were large sizes, twice as large on average as families in rest of Europe. Children lived in home environment where they experienced frequent comprised members of the extend family. Refer to Fallon (2004), emigration was a way of life, where majority of children grow with knowledge, that when they grown up they would leave and not return (J. Fallon, 2004). The Catholic Church had considerable influence in many aspects of Irish family life. Low numbers of mothers in workforce resulted a low priority for pre-school education. Due to increasing industrialisation and urbanization in 1950’s, led to new changes in Ireland. Family sizes began to reduce and substantial numbers of women began to enter in paid labour force (J. Fallon, 2004).

In past years Ireland experienced economic boom with rise of high levels of employment growth as well as mothers’ participation in labour. The obvious consequences of these circumstances were that more children were cared outside home than before, facing shortages of childcare provision. During these changes, demand of childcare facilities occurred and increase private commercial childcare sector. New policies were implemented to expand provision to meet the childcare needs of working parents, as well as early education policy were implemented, that recognize the importance of positive early years experiences. There are three main government department involved that develop key policies in supporting
provision of Early Child Care Education (ECCE), Department of Justice and Equality and Law Reform (J. Fallon, 2004).

Childcare services providers are required to follow and implement in their services regulations that are set out in Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 and the Child Care (Pre-School) (No2) (Amendment) Regulation 2006, to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of pre-school children attending to their services. Childcare sector in Ireland has been expanding in past years which are reliant for supply of labour and its retention for the quality of its provision. According to Central statistics Office between the years of 2002 and 2007 increased, non-parental childcare facilities from 42 % to 48 % for pre-school children (CSO, 2009). Preschool children that were cared by childminders refer to CSO has spent the longest hours in childcare setting, almost 35% were in childcare for 31 hours per week. Across all childcare types over 20% of pre-school children used more than 30 hours in childcare (CSO, 2009).

**Issues Among the Childcare Professionals**

Majority of childcare settings in Ireland are private properties, and there is concern, that childcare workers may become exploited by their owner. Process of professionalism self-definition is the prime task for childcare worker in terms of development, to provide high standard and quality of work. Professionalism in the development of childcare workers are in struggle, refer to Decker et al., (2002) childcare workers continuously seeking legitimate identities within the service system and inevitably come in contact and conflict with social institutions in ones struggle for identity (Decker et al., 2002). Communication, interaction and support are another concern among the childcare workers as well as relationships with management, supervisors and colleagues (Decker et al., 2002). Process of self-definition
along with conflict with established setting, forms the essence of alienation (Decker et al., 2002). Decker et al., 2002 suggest in terms of alienation useful is analyzing problem areas between the childcare professionals and to look at the availability of opportunities for childcare workers to achieve of feelings of competency, usefulness, belonging and power through their work role performance (Decker et al., 2002). According to Decker et al., (2002), understanding causes of alienation, avails to ground theoretical understanding of burnout, among the childcare workers (Decker et al., 2002).

Teachers are one of the significant people who are influential in determining the quality of our living. Upon them, rest markable part of hope and our future, of coming generation (Veatch, 2006). Educators work involves length of preparation, interaction with large numbers of children, develop curriculum for appropriate age group, individual and group meetings and evaluation and feedback concerning and learning activities of children, and working with parents. More often teachers become frustrate and feel unprepared to meet the challenge of teaching children (Forman 1981, Dinkmeyer & Carlson 1973, Thomson, 1982). Consequently burnout became more and more common problem, Reed (1979) as cited in Thomson (1982) express the growing concern among principals about the teachers who are experiencing burnout as it is very contagious and have domino effect, affecting the entire faculty of a school.

The job of being childcare educator is both demanding and challenging. Childcare professionals draw upon physical, emotional and intellectual resources in order to be effective in their work environment. Childcare professional responsibility is to cooperate with children’s parents and families in order to benefit child education and development, recognize respects and values. It seems that professionals that work in human services are vulnerable to burnout (Horn & Schaufel, 1998, Maslach et al., 1996). Childcare workers often find themselves working over 40-hour week as they organize and supervise daily and
weekly plans for successful childcare development, evaluate record and report for each child in their care and observe academic development.

Childcare worker duties and responsibilities are set out in publication of CDVEC Childcare in Ireland, which states, childcare professional responsibility is to supervise children who attended the setting. Implement and review activities appropriate to child individual age group and needs as well as provide and organize activities for children’s physical, emotional, social, intellectual and language development. Observe and record all procedures as required in terms of care and control, safety and highest standard of childcare practice (CDVEC, 2002).

The high expectations of education and the childcare worker ability to deliver the education, might lead educator to become vulnerable to alienation.
**Purpose and Objectives of this Study**

Previous researches that were investigated on burnout mainly were conducted in schools and settings of United States, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Netherlands, United Kingdom and Israel. Studying literature it appears that research on childcare professional burnout as well as no paper relating to burnout and alienation among the childcare workers in private commercial sector has not been published in Ireland.

This research project sought to determine, the level of burnout and alienation experienced by childcare workers under the work conditions in environment of private childcare setting in Co. Dublin and North Co. Kildare area, using the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey, Third Edition (MBI-ES) (Maslach et.al., 1996) along with an demographical data survey. Demographical data survey addressing the following areas: age, gender, marital status, experience in childcare, adult/child ratio, supervised age group, supervisory support, co-worker support, access to manager and job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

*The general research question for this study is:*

Do childcare professionals experience burnout and is that related with lack of support and work related conditions.

*Specifically this research addressed four questions:*

1) The extent to which educators experience personal accomplishment in their work.
2) The extent to which educators experience depersonalization in relationship with children, colleagues and others.
3) The extent to which educators experience emotional exhaustion in their work environment.
4) Do factors such as a lack of administrative support and co-worker support, and work conditions are related to burnout.

It is hypothesised that individuals who are employed in helping professions, experience burnout, particularly in first years of educating, where some literature suggest that it is related to lack of such factors, as supervisory support, co-worker support, inadequate salary and work related conditions.

According to Maslach et al., (1996) the MBI-ES can be correlated with other informational studies as demographic data, job characteristics, job performance, personality or attitudes measures, and health information.

Multiple research studies by Maslach et al., (1996) using the MBI-ES identified organizational factors that contribute burnout. The primary variable have been shown to be related to educators burnout are role conflict, role ambiguity, participation in decision making, reward systems, need deficiency, freedom and social support networks (Maslach et.al., 1996 as cited: Anderson & Iwanicki, 1990, Pierson-Hubeny & Archambault, 1984, Jackson, Schwab & Schuler, 1986, Schwab & Iwanicki, 1982).

Decker et al., (2002) in his study found issues that steaming among childcare workers, which have impact on burnout, such as lack of administrative support, co-worker support, job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Childcare worker interdependence and integration within childcare centres: lack of support and lack of supervision that creates lack of trust among co-workers. Lack of identification in work environment, and negative attitudes towards childcare workers, limited opportunities for childcare workers both: development and support.

Decker et al., (2002) studies among the childcare workers have found five domains of alienation experienced by childcare workers that have significant relationship with burnout.

In work environment childcare workers experienced sense of powerlessness in expanding
their roles and responsibilities, role-estrangement, have sense of meaninglessness in their role
and have feeling of guilelessness – they have professional needs, but did not see in the
perspective to fulfil these needs at the present facility, and feeling of cultural estrangement.
METHOD

Materials

To collect data for this study researcher used two separate tools: a demographical data survey that was based on survey developed by Decker, Bailey, and Westergaard, (2002) and purchased license for 250 participants of the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey, Third Edition (MBI-ES) (Maslach et.al., 1996).

The demographical data survey was based on similar surveys used in prior research referring to Decker et al.,(2002). The purpose of obtaining the Demographic data survey was two-fold; first, the information was used to provide character of participants and their professional background. Second the Demographic data survey was used to help detect any patterns that would be significant to alienation, it asked participants to provide with information in following four areas: administrative support, co-worker support, job-satisfaction, job-dissatisfaction in causing nine areas: overcrowding, lack of supervision, salary, job satisfaction, inadequate education, inadequate training, job safety, lack of support and outline-other. These factors have been examined in earlier research on childcare professional burnout in residential setting in Northern Kentucky in study of Decker et al.,(2000).

In addition to Demographic data survey participants were asked to complete the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey, Third Edition (MBI-ES) (Maslach et.al., 1996). The Maslach Burnout Inventory is recognized as the leading measure of burnout in education, human services and other helping professionals. MBI-ES (Maslach et.al., 1996) is recognized as a valid and reliable measure of teachers’ burnout that is design to assess the three aspects of the burnout syndrome: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Lack of Personal Accomplishment (Maslach et.al., 1996). The MBI-ES questionnaire consists of 22 statements dealing with frequency scale, whose range is between 0 ‘never’ up to 6 ‘daily’,
with which teachers experience specific feelings, thoughts and attitudes toward their work environment and students/children in their care. Participants were asked to indicate the frequency at which they experienced these feelings by selecting from a list of six response choices. These response choices and their numerical values are as follows: 0 - Never; 1 - A few times a year or less; 2 - Once a month or less; 3 - A few times a month; 4 - Once a week; to 5 - A few times a week; and 6 - Everyday. The MBI-ES measures burnout on three sub-scales: Emotional Exhaustion – chronic emotional fatigue resulting from counselling and teaching a large number of individuals on a continual basis; Depersonalization – an indifferent and negative attitude toward students characterized by the use of disparaging labels to describe children; and Personal Accomplishment – the contribution a teacher makes for the well-being and intellectual advancement of students. According to this instrument as feelings of Emotional exhaustion and depersonalization increase, feelings of personal accomplishment decrease. High scores for emotional exhaustion and depersonalization along with low scores for personal accomplishment indicate greater feelings of burnout (Maslach et.al., 1996). That is a score of less than 39 on the personal accomplishment sub-scale means a high degree of personal accomplishment. The response categories and their corresponding values for Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment on the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey, Third Edition (MBI-ES) (Maslach et.al., 1996) are presented in Table 1.
Table 1.

*Response categories for Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment on the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Emotional Exhaustion</th>
<th>Depersonalization</th>
<th>Personal Accomplishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>27 or over</td>
<td>13 or over</td>
<td>0-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>17-26</td>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>32-38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0-16</td>
<td>0-6</td>
<td>39 or over</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The numerical values for personal accomplishment are reversed; a score of less than 31 on the personal accomplishment sub-scale indicates a high degree of personal accomplishment.

Results were entered into the statistical analysis software application SPSS Statistics 17.0 for processing.

**Participants**

Using random sampling, data for this study were collected from private commercial childcare sector. To achieve best results for this research, two hundred and nine (209) questioners were posted or dropped in to Crèches in the area of South and West Dublin and North Co. Kildare. A total of one hundred and fifty six (156) childcare workers responded for a 75 % return rate. Participation included 155 females (94.4 %) and 1 male (.6 %) participants age group ranged between 19 to 59 years old, with higher numbers of participants between the ages of 21-26 year olds. Higher percents of marital status indicate that 51.3 % of the participants were single, married 27.6 % and living with partner 16.7%. Highest educational degree held by participants in this study was Fetac Level 5, with 54.5 % and 23.7 % of participants held
Fetac Level 6, Bachelors degree 5.8 % of participants. Educational work experience in childcare field, ranged between one year and 24 years of educating, 18.6 % of childcare workers had one year of experience in childcare and significant 58.3 % of participants ranged between 3-7 years of educating in childcare field.

Prior the data collection researcher contacted owner of the crèche and or manager to enquire permissions, allowing childcare participation in this study. Participants were childcare professionals eighteen years old and over, who were employed in private own childcare settings, in the area of South and West Dublin and North Co. Kildare. Childcare centres were randomly selected in the areas of South and West Dublin and North Co. Kildare.

Participants were asked voluntary to take part in this study, to complete Demographic survey data and Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey, Third Edition (MBI-ES) (Maslach et.al., 1996).

**Design**

Design of this study is quantitative, quasi experimental research design, which investigates relationship between childcare professionals’ burnout and quality of work. Variables in this correlation research are:

IV - Childcare professionals that are employed in childcare settings

DV – Burnout
**Procedure**

Permission to conduct the study was sought from crèches managers or owners. The purpose of the study was explained on the cover page on the given questionnaires and on the permission letter to manager. Then the crèches managers inform their staff of the research.

Copies of Demographical data and Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey, Third Edition (MBI-ES) (Maslach et.al., 1996) along with separate envelopes for completed questionnaires were posted or dropped in to crèches. All eligible participants were asked to participate. The dates of collection was set of the interval of seven working days, data then were collected individually by researcher.

Maslach et.al., (1996), points on the wealth of research on burnout and significant resource in its way of building understanding of the role of ones job, in identifying the ‘holding back’ areas within the school system, where recommendations would be made to improve the work conditions and well being of educators.
RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between burnout and work conditions among the childcare professionals.

Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey, Third Edition (MBI-ES)

The Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey (MBI-ES) provides three separate measures of burnout: emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP), and personal accomplishment (PA).

Emotional Exhaustion

Scores for emotional exhaustion can range from zero to 54, where the lower score is considered favourable, indicating lower feelings of being drained or emotional exhaustion (Maslach et al., 1996). Scores that fall between zero and 16 indicates low feelings of emotional exhaustion, scores between 17 and 26 indicates moderate feelings of emotional exhaustion, and scores of 26 and higher indicate high feeling of emotional exhaustion. Table 2 shows the childcare workers score for emotional exhaustion on the MBI – ES. Participants mean score for emotional exhaustion is 14.9420, these score indicates that childcare workers experienced low levels of emotional exhaustion.
Table 2.

Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey
Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Accomplishment</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>33.3199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>14.9430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depersonalization</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>2.2709</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Depersonalization*

Scores for depersonalization may range from zero to 30, lower score is considered favourable indicating lower feeling of negativity and cynism towards children in their care (Maslach et al., 1996). Scores that fall between zero and 8 indicate low feeling of depersonalization, scores between 9 and 13 indicate moderate feeling of depersonalization, and scores of 14 and higher indicate high feelings of depersonalization.

Table 3, shows the mean score for depersonalization on the MBI-ES, childcare worker mean score for depersonalization is 2.270, that indicate low feelings of depersonalization among educators.
Table 3.

Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey
Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Accomplishment</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>33.3199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>14.9420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depersonalization</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>2.2709</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Personal accomplishment*

Scores for personal accomplishment may range from zero to 48. Opposite to the scores for the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, a higher score for personal accomplishment is considered favourable indicating a high feeling of achievement and competence in one’s job. Table 4, shows the score for personal accomplishment on the MBI – ES, among the participants, that is 33.3199, these score indicates moderate feelings of personal accomplishment among childcare workers.

Table 4.

Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depersonalization</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>2.2709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Accomplishment</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>33.3199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>14.9420</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographical data survey that was examined in earlier research by Decker, Bailey and Westergaard (2002), was used to help, to detect any patterns that would be significant to alienation and contribute the feeling of burnout.

Scores for access to manager participants reported always with 66.7 %, which indicates majority of childcare worker access to manager, if they needed, at any time within working hours, 26.3 % of participants reported sometimes, they have access to manager.

Feeling of supervisor support in work environment, significant 62.2 % of participants reported always, and 30.1 % reported sometimes.

Support from co-worker 57.1 % of participants reported always and 39.1 % reported sometimes.

Adequate supervision in work environment, participants’ reported with 74.4 % - as always and 18.6 % sometimes, they have adequate supervision.

Job satisfaction on a scale of 1–10, rate marked with 1–worst job/10–job is very satisfying. 35.9 % participants rate their job satisfaction with rate of 8, and 19.9 % of participants’ rate with mark 7 their job satisfaction, and 17.9 % marked their job satisfaction on rate of 9.

Job dissatisfaction at the facility that participants were employed 73.7 % reported that job dissatisfaction exist among the childcare workers.
Major issue among the childcare workers was salary, 67.9 % of participants reported dissatisfaction about the educator salary.

 Supervised children’s age group ranged between 6 months and after-school care, majority of the educators supervised children age group were from two to five year olds with 65.4 %. Standard of adult/child ratio reported 88.5 % of participants felt adequate and 55.8 % of participant went over their adult/child ratio.

In order to test the relationships between the burnout and work related conditions – administrative support and supervision, correlation statistics were not used to determine the significance, as there were low degree of burnout experienced among the childcare professionals.
DISCUSSION

Research Findings

This study investigated the level of burnout and lack of administrative support and work related conditions, experienced by childcare workers in environment of private childcare setting in Co. Dublin and North Co. Kildare area, using the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey, Third Edition (MBI-ES) (Maslach et al., 1996) along with an demographical data survey. Demographical data survey were addressing the following areas: age, gender, marital status, experience in childcare, adult/child ratio, supervised age group, supervisory support, co-worker support, access to manager and job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

The general question this research addressed was:

“Do childcare professionals experience burnout and are that related with lack of support and work related conditions”.

Results of this study indicate that there was no significant feeling of burnout experienced by childcare professionals as well as majority of childcare professionals have administrative support and felt positive about their work environment. According to Maslach et al., (1996) a low degree of burnout is reflected in low scores on Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization subscales and in high scores in Personal Accomplishment subscales. This state provides a definitive contrast to burnout providing a positive goal for interventions.
Specifically this research addressed four questions:

1) The extent to which educators experience personal accomplishment in their work.

2) The extent to which educators experience depersonalization in relationship with children, colleagues and others.

3) The extent to which educators experience emotional exhaustion in their work environment.

4) Does factors such as supervisory support, co-worker support and work conditions are related to burnout.

Based upon the analysis it appears, that work related factors such as lack of administrative support and job dissatisfaction among the childcare professionals did not have an effect on participants’ feelings of burnout.
Implications and Contributions of the Research

Several possible explanations are considered by researcher the reasons why studies have failed to support the hypothesis. Examine more literature on educators’ burnout significant numbers of research highlights the considerable attention and awareness of educators’ burnout which have led to implement preparation programs in work setting to prevent burnout.

Numbers of studies were investigating educators who have successfully avoided the experience of burnout, with coping mechanism implemented in work environment to stay energized, positively engaged with children and fulfilment through their work. A wide range of induction programs have been implemented in work environment to help educators to deal with stress and succeed in their roles. Programme includes professional growth activities and casual contact with other colleagues (Veatch, 2006). Induction programme organize group learning opportunities that address specific topics relevant to educators, and also involves experienced professional working on one to one with educator (Veatch, 2006).

Especially design programs were developed to reverse this trend and have met with success that improved teachers’ morale and provide alternative to educators’ burnout (Thomson, 1982). Effectiveness of participants who undertake the programs that combat burnout has been shown significant changes in the attitudes and effectiveness that resulted better relationships, greater awareness, quality of teaching and more achievement and meaningful goals (Thomson, 1982).

Mentoring and induction programs support educators to become skilled at teaching and give advice in the areas where most is needed.
A directed effort for supporting teachers also improves job satisfaction which raises feelings of personal accomplishment and professional satisfaction leading to higher retention rate (Veatch, 2006).

Another study suggests that supervisor has a key role in promoting education and training within the work environment. Reynolds, indicate the more highly trained educators the more less likely he or she will to experience burnout. Supervisor as a role model, by demonstrating positive attitudes and positive work habits indirectly convey to workers many strategies for combating burnout (Reynolds).

Research studies by Pozo-Munoz, Salvador-Ferer, Allonso-Morilljero, and Martos-Mendez (2008) suggested that support from co-workers plays crucial role as a coping strategy in difficult situation in work context. Shared work experiences with colleagues and acknowledge their problems as a common among other educators leads to strength companionship that enable them to acquire further recourses to successfully cope with difficult situation (Pozo-Munoz et al., 2008).

Significant influence plays social support in mitigating the negative effects of burnout; this has been found on human service workers (Pozo-Munoz et al., 2008). Social support increases professional self-esteem and promotes workers ability to cope with problems arising in work.

Another possible explanation is that demographic survey failed to gather critical information that might have affected the research results. For example service provision: full-time care, sessional care, or afterschool club, participants hours worked per week in the childcare setting, perceived level of support from supervisors, and co-workers, implemented induction and mentoring program in work environment, and social network support.
Limitations of the Research

As with all studies, this study is also characterized by constraints that suggest investigation of the results that should be considered. The first limitations relates to the participants of childcare educators that were secured through the manager and supervisors through the use of self-reported questionnaires. While the educators participate willingly they tend to under reported behaviours which deemed inappropriate by the researcher as they reported attitudes that viewed as appropriate in the view of others. This reason of behaviour could be explained that their manager or supervisor may gain access to their responses.

Second limitations relates to childcare facilities where numbers of selected full-time childcare services refused researcher permission, to allow childcare educator participation in this study. Most of the data were received from sessional care, were educators are part-time employers, which is to be considered affected the results of this study.

Thirdly the sample size of this study was quite moderate, larger samples of childcare educators obtained would be more helpful. Numbers of questionnaires also needed to exclude as they were partly completed as well as large number of questionnaires unreturned.

A fifth limitation refers to demographic survey, as it failed to gather critical information that might have affected results.

Potential impact of the timing was another limitation of this study.
Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for future research are based upon the limitations of this study. Future study could be repeated with larger sample of participants that include full-time educators, low levels of burnout were achieved in this study, possibly due to small sample size and most of participants were employed in sessional provision which is part-time care. A larger scale study could be generating statistically significant results.

Numbers of studies, indicate factors that significant correlate with educators’ burnout, according to Maslach et al., (1996) they are: job characteristics, job performance, personality or attitudes measures, and health information.

Literatures on educators’ burnout have particularly focused on primary and secondary educators, future studies would be recommended to focus on literature that investigated burnout among the childcare professionals who are employed in preschool services.

Several empirical studies have focused on programs that are implemented in settings and design to reverse burnout. Literature highlights the impact on induction programs which shows effectiveness in combating burnout (Veatch, 2006) future study should also address: the implemented induction and mentoring program in work environment, and how high level of support are perceived from supervisors, and co-workers, and social network support.
References


Bertha Capen Reynolds. Combating burnout: Between client and community.


Appendix A  Demographic information

Please circle the number or fill in the blank as appropriate.

1. Your age: ______ years

2. Your gender: 1. female 2. male

3. Marital Status:
   Single _______ Married________
   Widow_______Divorced_______separated_______
   Living with partner_______Other (please indicate) ________

3. Highest Professional Degree:
   Leaving Certificate, ________ Certificate in Childcare Fetac Level 5, ________
   Certificate in Childcare Fetac Level 6, ________ Teachers Diploma, ________
   BA Hons Degree, ________ Masters Degree, ________
   Doctorate, ________ Other (please indicate) ________

4. Experience in the childcare (length of time): _______________ years

5. Experience at this childcare setting (length of time): _______________ years

6. What is the adult/child ratio on your shift? Staff/children _______________ years

7. Do you feel this is adequate?
   Yes_______ No_______

8. Do you sometimes go over adult/child ratio?
   Yes_______ No_______
9. Please indicate, what are the children’s age group, that you supervise: 

Appendix B  

Decker Bailey and Westergaard (77) 

Please rank the following questions:

Do you feel you have adequate supervision?

Never___  Rarely___  Sometimes___  Always___  Not Applicable___

Do you have access to your centre manager?

Never___  Rarely___  Sometimes___  Always___  Not Applicable___

Do you feel your supervisor supports you?

Never___  Rarely___  Sometimes___  Always___  Not Applicable___

Do you think you get support from your co-workers?

Never___  Rarely___  Sometimes___  Always___  Not Applicable___

Please indicate your perceptions of your job satisfaction.

On a scale of 1–10, rate your satisfaction with your job. 1–worst job/10–job is very satisfying

Rate of my job satisfaction______________

Does job dissatisfaction exist among the childcare workers at the facility you are employed?

Yes _________   No __________

If job dissatisfaction does exist, please list the following causes in your facility using a scale from 1 to 6. Number 1 indicates a very strong cause of job dissatisfaction and number 6 indicates no effect on job dissatisfaction:
Overcrowding  Lack of supervision  Pay  Job satisfaction
Inadequate education  Inadequate training  Job safety  Lack of support
Other (please list) 

Appendix C  Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey

The Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators survey is copyrighted material and cannot be reproduced in this research. Contact mindgarden.com for additional information.

Instruction: On the following page are 22 statements of job-related feelings. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If have never had this feeling, write number “0” (zero) in the space before the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you feel it by writing the number from 1 to 6 that best describes how frequently you feel that way. An example is shown below.

How often:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>A few times a year or less</td>
<td>Once a month or less</td>
<td>A few times a month</td>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>A few time a week</td>
<td>Every day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Often</th>
<th>Statement: I feel depressed at work.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.________ I feel depressed at work.

If you never feel depressed at work, you would write the number “0” (zero) under the heading “How Often.” If you rarely feel depressed at work (a few times a year or less), you would write the number “1”. If your feelings of depression are fairly frequent (a few times a week but not daily), you would write the number “5”.
### Table 1.

*Response categories for Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment on the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Emotional Exhaustion</th>
<th>Depersonalization</th>
<th>Personal Accomplishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>27 or over</td>
<td>13 or over</td>
<td>0-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>17-26</td>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>32-38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0-16</td>
<td>0-6</td>
<td>39 or over</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. The numerical values for personal accomplishment are reversed; a score of less than 31 on the personal accomplishment sub-scale indicates a high degree of personal accomplishment.*
Table 2; 3; 4.

Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Accomplishment</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>33.3199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>14.9420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depersonalization</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>2.2709</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.

![Graph: Adequate supervision]

Table 6.

![Graph: Access to manager]
Table 7.

![Bar chart showing Supervisor supports with percentages for rarely, sometimes, always, and not applicable.]

Table 8.

![Bar chart showing Support from co-workers with percentages for rarely, sometimes, always, and 7.00.]

49
Table 9. On a scale of 1–10, marked with 1–worst job/10–job is very satisfying

Table 10.
Table 11.