

The Burnout among Mathematics Teachers in Middle schools in Saudi Arabia



Abdulrahman Alshammari

Northern Border University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a difficult profession that sometimes leads to the burnout of teachers, and is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. There are symptoms of burnout that can impact learners and teachers' behaviour and psychology to enhanced turnover, affecting learners and schools. Teacher burnout is regarded to be one of the most psychological issues that can gradually exhaust teachers. Teachers burnout can influence teaching objectives and educational environment, which make practitioners experience an indifference that can lead to health issues, absence of work, and the intention to leave the profession. Within the professional field, teachers reported higher burnout rates when compared to other occupations (Fisher, 2011). Several studies concluded that the occupational environment had a distinct correlation to an individual's behaviours. Teacher's perceptions of the work environment affected their physical and emotional well-being (Baran, 2012; Fernet et al. 2012; Lavian, 2012; Ortner, 2012). The multidimensional role of the teacher has been the focus of numerous studies. Teachers tend to have many roles including mentor, counselor, parent and disciplinarian. These extra roles, which go hand in hand with teaching, have displayed negative consequences including taking the focus off of teaching (Fernet, 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009) thereby, affecting a teacher's personal self-efficacy. Many studies show rising rates of employee turnover, absence, and sick leave of teachers at different instructional levels in latest decades, combined with a growing incidence of mental health issues influencing teachers (Carlotto & Palazzo, 2006). Researchers have tried to define factors that could be related to burnout syndrome (Gasparini et al., 2005; Yaegashi et al., 2009). As per the essence of a teacher's job and the environment in which these practitioners work, there are a variety of stressors that, if constant, may contribute to burn-out syndrome, undermining the career, social and emotional life of the teacher. The concept of burnout connected with life dissatisfaction and workplace depression (Hakanen & Ahola, 2012; Schaufeli & Hakanen, 2012; Biron & Toker, 2012) as the reason for the disability of workers raises important issues for practitioners, which have extensive implications for employees (including teachers), clients, employers and insurance providers (Hall et al., & Connor, 2016). There is a need for a better understanding of the risk factors, the protective factors against the development of burnout, and the different underlying mechanisms. Many researches mentioned that there are many issues could lead to burnout among mathematics teachers in Saudi Arabia, such as curriculum, students, teachers, supervisors, and administrative problems (Ali & Abdulhakim, 2013; Naser, 2010; Alrasi & Noor 2014). This study tries to understand the main sources that cause burnout of mathematics teachers using qualitative method.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Q1. What are the major sources of burnout of mathematics teachers at middle schools in Saudi Arabia?
- Q2. How can teachers overcome these sources?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The nature of the teachers' work

The teachers belong to the most exposed occupational burnout professional community, and in this population, there are greater burnout rates (Tucholska, 2008). Doing the teaching profession in the contemporary, dynamically changing and complicated environment is a big challenge and is burdened with high requirements that expose educators to severe and long-lasting stress. Teachers should, on the one hand, fulfill great requirements linked to their professional position, such as contacting with other individuals, emotional participation in workplace, continuous improvement of educational skills as well as working in a stressful job setting and the need to cope with challenging circumstances continuously (Żłobicki, 1999). Teachers are required to carry out many different tasks and perform many functions simultaneously, such as: model function, didactic function, instructional function and educational function. The model function is related to providing the students with a good example and establishing a constructive personal pattern for them. The teaching role is to be an effective teacher who offers learners with credible information based on the recent science accomplishments in a thorough and clear manner. The instructional function is about being a skilled coach who can

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facilitate and improve the process of acquiring knowledge and basic skills. The instructional role relates to be a guide, which promoting the discovery and stimulation of personal potential, promoting developmental tasks, and shaping the accountability for the development of learners (Gaś, 2001). The above-mentioned requirements related to the profession of teacher also include challenges associated with the dynamic development of civilization, social changes, fast development and effect of mass media, the spread of computer techniques, Changes in social awareness and elevated expectations of institutional education are presently posed (Żłobicki, 1999). In addition, the teaching profession is characterized by indirect effects of work, and potential rewards are away over time, which can give rise to a lot of frustration. Other stressful factors of a teacher's work include low pay and low social status. All of these factors add to the reality that the professional group of teachers is especially exposed to burnout syndrome. It should also be stressed that burnout syndrome mainly influences those involved in work in schools where high standards of job are important (Kirenko & Zubrzycka-Maciąg, 2011). The biggest danger of occupational burnout happens, according to some studies, in teachers who think in their own ideals and seek to achieve that (Pines, 2000). They are deeply engaged in their job and are doing it with great passion, but they experience a powerful disappointment in a scenario where they do not see the anticipated outcomes.

Burnout among teachers and its symptoms

According to Maslach (2000), burnout is defined as an emotional exhaustion syndrome, depersonalization and decrease in performance level, which often occurs in people working in professions requiring very intense interpersonal contact with patients, clients or the public" (Zimbardo, 2005, p. 512). However, burnout symptoms can happen among all vocational groups (Golembiewski, 1989), so many researchers suggested a more comprehensive concept of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). They modified descriptions of basic dimensions (and scales to measure them) taking into account: 1) exhaustion covering emotional functioning and physical condition rather than emotional exhaustion; 2) cynicism understood as a distanced attitude towards work, as well as coldness and indifference towards the people or clients instead of depersonalization; 3) reduced professional efficiency instead of feeling the lack of personal accomplishments.

However, in relation to teachers and social professions, Maslach and Leiter (2008) propose to continue to take into account the three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and the lack of personal accomplishment. The development of the occupational burnout of teachers, comparable to that of assistance workers, involves three major stages varying in severity and type of symptoms (Maslach, 2000; Kirenko & Zubrzycka-Maciąg, 2011). Emotional exhaustion is connected with the first phase of professional burnout. It is a warning stage in which the teacher demonstrates reluctance to perform professional responsibilities and decreased interest. As a result of exhausting the possibility of engaging in contacts with students, the teachers distance themselves from student affairs and loosens ties with them. At this stage, the following mental and somatic symptoms may occur: decline in activity, feeling bored, irritability, persistence of tension, constant fatigue, gastrointestinal disorders, headaches. The second phase is called depersonalization and occurs when the above-mentioned symptoms persist for a long time (Maslach, 2000). Depersonalization involves carelessness and absence of concern for student affairs, as well as their dehumanization, labeling and instrumental dealing (Kirenko & Zubrzycka-Maciąg, 2011). It is correlating with the need for mental distance in professional contacts in relation to students or other individuals. In this sense, depersonalization is a protection against the overload of strained mental and emotional resources. To increase the distance between them and students, the teachers use such techniques as: shortening time for close contact with students, use of tests instead of conversations in students' unwillingness to engage in extracurricular activities, unfair punishment, and blame students, etc. (Kirenko & Zubrzycka-Maciąg, 2011). The above-mentioned behaviors lead to diminish job meaning and job satisfaction, but first and foremost, they make it impossible for teachers to achieve professional successes, which in turn causes a feeling of lack of personal accomplishment. The third phase is associated with the further development of symptoms in teachers at the physical, mental and somatic levels. It appears when they become chronic. Somatic symptoms are particularly noticeable here and take the form of diseases such as, for example, hypertension or stomach ulcers. On the psychological level, these teachers suffer from depression, a sense of loneliness, and isolation from others. Teachers affected by burnout are convinced that they have failed in professional life and have a lower self-esteem. They perceive themselves and their own accomplishments in a negative light, feel misunderstood by their superiors and lose the ability to adapt to function in a demanding professional environment. This causes further increase of difficulties in solving problems in working with students. This stage of burnout may manifest itself through aggressive and escapist escape and may even alter the profession's choice (Sylwia et al., 2018).

The other issue involves here is that burnout has not been formally diagnosed yet, as it is not included in the international classifications for mental and psychological illness (CIM 10), while it was included in the American Psychiatric Association within adjustment disorders and it is an unadaptive reaction caused by several stressful psychosocial factors, and the reaction appears in the form of responses that lasts for a period of three months and appears immediately after the individual is exposed to stressful factors, so he suffers from a disorder in the social or professional function so that he experiences great psychological suffering, taking into account that these reactions of the individual do not coincide with the stress factors that he was exposed to, meaning that his responses are exaggerated (Bqdour, 2015). While the diagnosis of burnout, in addition to its distinctive and non-distinctive symptoms, depends on the psychological factor as the main driver in the emergence of the other, as its diagnosis is directed to the psychological inter-study and the global analysis of its various behaviors inside and outside the work environment, to rely on measures for measuring levels of burnout and other measures that support the diagnosis .

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Burnout within the Educational Community

While teaching demands increase, burnout appears to be on the rise within the educational community (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Emerging research indicates that teacher burnout creates a widespread school settings issue (Leung et al., 2011). School districts are looking for highly qualified individuals to educate students with skills that will help all their future efforts beyond the setting of middle school. Rigorous educational demands can certainly hinder the process (Oakes et al., 2013). Prior research explored this multi-dimensional concept including emotional, physiological, psychological and even physical factors that contributed toward teacher burnout (Brown, 2012). Collie et al. (2012) Concluded that in their quantitative research analysis, the school environment and social emotional learning patterns are predictors not only of tension, but also of job satisfaction and longevity. Experiences, both positive and negative, have had an extreme influence on a teacher's perception of the workplace and his or her own personal capabilities. The work environment often has a powerful impact on the burnout of teachers. (Skaalvik, 2007 & Fernet et al., 2012; Baran et al., 2012). Teacher burnout described as adverse attitude experienced by a number of teachers who tend to become multidimensional and chronic as teachers do not receive the support needed to improve their careers (Fernet, 2012). The significance of variables such as accomplishment, gratification, and success can empower an individual but lacking those essential securities leave doubt and dissatisfaction among even vested individuals (Buchanan, 2012; Collie et al., 2012; Kipps, 2013; Klassen et al., 2010). A positive school climate that included all interactions, resources, and materials, served as a common theme that dictated whether attributes of burnout were prevalent (Collie et al., 2012). While Collie et al. (2012) utilized a quantitative research strategy, Hursen (2014) wanted to gain a deeper insight into the phenomenon. Hursen studied how 30 different teachers, from a variety of years of experience and history, each perceived viewed themselves as lifelong learners or not. A qualitative design composed of conducting individual interviews looked into what the teacher's perceptions were pertaining to what they saw as factors that influence the lifelong learning process. The researcher's results found that educational policies, financial difficulties and learner profiles affected life-long learning processes. Teacher's suggested that it was difficult to keep up with day-to-day tasks. Lack of pressure within the school setting by administrators, lack of funding for further professional development, and time constraints put a damper on their enthusiasm to broaden their current knowledge basis (Hursen, 2014). Research also indicated that this deficiency of enthusiasm from teachers would eventually reflect negatively on a teacher's performance and motivation. Research reinforced that teachers with signs of discontent with their positions fall into manners of inadequacies in the planning and execution of lessons (Klassen, 2010; Pas et al., 2010). High burnout rates have also been linked to increased discipline problems within the classroom, leaving the teacher to doubt his or her ability to cope with the demands of the profession (Pas et al., 2010). Can (2011) reiterated that pressure in the workplace would ultimately affect the ability of the person to operate and to deal with it in a normal capacity, as this mental problem distorts the individual's thinking process to an unhealthful level.

Research Method and tool

This research is a qualitative study explored the middle school mathematics teachers' perspectives in Saudi Arabia regarding teacher burnout. The qualitative approach for this study allowed the researcher to intimately gain knowledge about burnout tendencies and attempted to understand the perspective of the mathematics teacher (Cilesiz, 2011). Semi-structured e-mail interviews were conducted with 6 middle school mathematics teachers in different schools in the north region in Saudi Arabia. The researcher put into his account that the selected teachers must have at least a bachelor's degree in mathematics and a teaching experience of 5 years at least to ensure that they experienced a burnout. The main goal of selecting this small sample rather than a large sample, was to go in depth in the interviews and understand the issue being researched. In previous studies, the primary research method tended to be from a quantitative discovery process. While the quantitative studies have welcomed the educational community with extensive information, this structured and measurable technique does not have the capabilities to capture the true essence of what the participants are actually feeling and experiencing.

E-mail Interviews

The e-mail interview allows the interviewee more time to control both when they want to respond as well as the quantity of the response. In particular, the asynchronous e-mail interview can provide more thinking time for the respondent. E-mail interviewing can be an applicable alternative to face-to-face, telephone and, CMC interviewing (e.g. Skype) and Meho (2006) provides an overview of this emerging interview methodology. E-mail interviews can offer opportunities to reach greater numbers of potential research participants (especially where they at a geographical distance). It is inexpensive and the resulting data does not need to be transcribed. E-mail interviews give the interviewees comfort to answer all interview questions. Several studies showed that participants felt a degree of confirmation for their engagement when online connection was extended during long time (Tuffin & Bowker, 2004). E-mail interviews minimize, if not remove, some of the issues linked with face-to-face or telephone interviews, such as the effects of interviewer/interviewee that may arise from visual or nonverbal signals or a difference in status between the two, such as shyness, race, age, and so on.

Findings

In this chapter, the researcher logically presented the findings of the study, which developed from the research questions. Participant responses from the interviews evolved into prevalent themes that were obtained from analysis of the data. Participant's perceptions

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of the service quality were thoroughly expressed and conveyed utilizing exact quotations from the participant's own words. The participant's actual experiences attributed to a distinct synthesis of previous theoretical perspectives that had previously been revealed throughout the extensive literature review. The selected participants for the study described their experiences and perceptions of exactly what they feel they individually experienced (Cilesiz, 2011).

Participant Characteristics

The participants included different characteristics that could have an impact on the interpretation of the data results. Based on the literature review, a small number of participants were solicited to support the sample size (Cilesiz, 2011; Creswell et al., 2009; Patton, 2015). All participants were male teachers from in the middle schools. The number of participants were six.

The following results from the study are grouped according to the main research questions and the pertinent sub-questions as described by the participants

Research question 1: What are the major sources of burnout of mathematics teachers at middle schools in Saudi Arabia?

The first question examined the major sources of burnout of mathematics teachers at middle schools in Saudi Arabia? The researcher compared and contrasted all participant responses. Two themes emerged regarding what mathematics teachers identified as major contributing factors toward teacher burnout. The two themes are as the following:

- Curriculum challenge.
- Students behavior challenges.

Theme 1: Curriculum challenge

All participants agreed that mathematics curriculum is the one major factor contributing toward teacher burnout. One of the participants said "I am challenged with lesson plans this year and different curriculums for three grades. I teach all middle school curriculums. Another participant mentioned that the ministry of education has improved the mathematics curriculums under a project of curriculums development. Participants agreed that the curriculum is very long, and some ideas are greater than the age of a student in this stage. The other participant added some examples of the curriculum difficulties, such as English and metric conversions, conversion between units of mass and then link between these units. How to ask a child in this age to save all these conversions and values. Most of participant (5 out of 6) identified that the lessons in one chapter are incoherent, for example, the first chapter includes the powers and roots, order of operations, algebraic variables and expressions, equations characteristics, sequences, and then return at the end of the chapter to the equations and functions. They mentioned that in the old mathematics curriculum, each chapter talks about a single subject even if dwell on it, but the student can link between its ideas. Participants showed that the number of classes is insufficient. Five classes weekly are not enough for this huge curriculum, which led us to exploit the activity classes. All participants expressed that they are obliged to teach the entire curriculum on time, regardless of students understanding, which has compelled us to expedite the lessons explanation and not doing most of exercises. Three participants revealed that curriculum planners do not take into their account that there are about 15 sessions are lost because of students' absence in the first and last week each semester, in addition to the national day leave and the suspension of study due to weather conditions. These situations make teachers race against time to complete the curriculum regardless of students' achievement.

Theme 2: Students behavior challenge

All participants expressed that behavior challenges as a major contributing factor toward teacher burnout. One of the participants said, "It is not easy to deal with about 40 students in the classroom". There is a big challenge to manage that large number of students in a 4*6 classroom size. They just need a constant behavior management. Another participant stated "The behaviour of students is the biggest challenge, causing stress when teaching and difficult to be managed". Participants agreed unanimously that teachers should be firm with students throughout the session in order to be disciplined. Participants saw that there is no deterrent punishment for a naughty student. One added, " All that teacher can do is to take a disrespectful student to a student counselor or school administration and sign a pledge to him or call his father ". In some cases, the school administration transfers that student to another school, and the student may start again his problems. Two participants mentioned that there two of their colleagues were assaulted by students, and the school administration role is to modify the student's behaviour before being punished. And in very rare cases, the student is dismissed from the school. One participant displayed that the students sometimes break the teachers' cars. 5 participants mentioned that some students ask silly questions while teaching is in progress to make students laughing and distract the teacher's mind to waste lesson's time. One participant added, " The role of the teacher has changed from teaching to classroom control, keeping order in it, and reducing undesirable student behavior within the classroom, which in turn affects the lesson progress and the amount of information provided in the class". Participants talked about the common behavioral problems, which include: non obedience the teacher, boredom, excess movement, and speak without permission.

Research Question 2: How can teachers overcome these sources?

The second question was about how mathematics teachers at middle schools overcome burnout in schools' settings. Participants expressed their experiences and suggestions to overcome burnout in the classrooms. Participants expressed their struggles and stressors that they face in daily bases. One participant said, " When school year starts, our burnout starts". Regarding Mathematics

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curriculums, another participant stated that the curriculums planners should be aware of what mathematics teachers struggling from and try to find solutions. All participants saw that mathematics supervisors stay informed of what is happening to teachers. Participants suggested to mathematics curriculum designers to take into account to diminish the curriculums in order to be understood by students and reducing stresses on teachers. In addition, 4 participants suggested that mathematics curriculums should be divided to main lessons and optional lessons. They added, main lessons must be taught in full and optional lessons are subject to time and teacher decision. 2 of participants explained that there are 6 or 7 sessions every day in middle schools with different subjects and usually the school administration put mathematics session in the end of the day. They see that students cannot understand mathematics in the end of long study day, and both teachers and students are exhausted. All participants revealed that they cannot overcome curriculums challenge in current situation due to the oblige to teach all lessons. One participant stated, "because of my long experience in teaching mathematics, " I am frustrated and despaired by the lack of consideration of the real circumstances surrounding mathematics teachers". Most of them wish to transfer to primary schools to get rid of stressors. 5 of participants said we apply every year to transfer to primary schools, but we there is no opportunity to leave our schools. All participants mentioned that all teachers (new and old) experience the same stressors and there is no appropriate initializing for new teachers. 3 Participants described their first days of teaching and the shocks that they countered. One added, " I thought clearly to leave teaching profession, but my colleagues advised me to be patient and not to lose job". Participants admitted that they cannot do anything to overcome burnout and stresses that they live with, and they try to acclimatize themselves with their profession.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The first question was about the major sources of burnout of mathematics teachers at middle schools in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The semi-structure interviews that conducted were generated two themes about the main sources of burnout among middle schools' mathematics teachers, and they are curriculum challenge and students behaviour challenge. The first theme was about curriculum challenge. The participant teachers agreed that mathematics curriculum is one of the major factors contributing toward teacher burnout. Teachers mentioned that the developed mathematics curriculum content is too long with many topics. Teachers of science and mathematics, particularly those who work in classrooms with less resources, face big stress, even affecting their body and mental health (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). The new curriculum is caused more professional stress for the mathematics teachers. Kango (2015) stated that the most important problems and obstacles to the development of teaching mathematics at the Arab world are the overcrowded curricula with subjects, and the existence of some exaggeration in the presenting of mathematical subjects, which leads to complications suffered by the student and reputation of the mathematics itself, and the extent of students' acceptance Math. While Duwaish (2016) recommended to conduct further studied the curriculum of mathematics in the middle stage, and what influences them in terms of making sure that they are achieved in a balanced way the lower and higher mental levels, as well as making sure that it achieves the general goals of teaching mathematics. In relating to the difficulties of mathematics, some studies showed that many middle school students do not gain fundamental mathematical skills (Maccini et al., 2007). Experimental evidence indicates that the issues of these students can be traced back to fundamental mathematical knowledge deficit that emerged during primary school. (Moser Opitz et al, 2013; Zhang et al, 2019). The teacher must give all his attention for that, his students should be seen as different in their abilities, and they are not on one level in terms of mentally abilities. Teacher should present the lesson based on the individual differences of his students. Some students have poor desire to learn mathematics because of their sense of the uselessness of studying some topics, and if the teacher succeeds in connecting the curriculum to actual life, he will be very successful in fixing this problem.

The second theme was about students' behaviour challenge. The participants mentioned that the students behaviour is one of the main sources of burnout. The challenge of students behaviour was a critical issue for teachers during classroom teaching. The role of teachers was mainly turned to discipline students rather than teaching them, which made the burden on them double and burnout become inevitable unless it is remedied. Educating each student within the schoolroom, regardless of emotional and social diversity, which may be exhausting and stressful for teachers (Killer et al., 2009). The polite behaviour of students is negatively associated with exhaustion (Dorman, 2003). Furthermore, the extent to that teachers believe in their ability to manage classroom, affects burnout. Teachers' sense of effectualness to interact students decreases burnout (Jillson, 2020). Swaid (2016) sees that students with bad behavior are often have a lack of self-confident and feel that what they do has no value. If the teacher ignores the disrespectful behaviours of the students, the respect of the students for this teacher is reduced and reflected directly on the students' interaction with the teacher, and the student's respect for the teacher is influenced by his personality and behavior in the classroom. Teachers should show their appreciation of any effort made by the student and show him the importance of this effort in his life and others' live, such as attending school, bringing his school tools, not disturbing in the classroom, cleanliness, participation with classmates, writing the assignment, as well as his participation in the lesson even a few (Young, 1991). In the school setting, some teachers practice some personal and educational behaviours intentionally or unintentionally, and the results of which are contrary to what was planned ((Meltzer et al, 2000). According to Ibrahim and Hasaballah (2002), most teachers are interested in gaining students' respect for them and make a deliberate effort to obtain it in naive ways, such as tolerating of giving high grades or bearing student mistakes, and this treatment can often be counterproductive; which is a loss of respect. The productivity of teachers and

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students is influenced by the type of relationship that brought them together in the school environment. The nature of this relationship ranges from a high-level inter-social relationship to a low-level inter-social relationship. In the light of that relationship, teachers are described by many qualities, such as the teacher is an ideal and good person, and he is a boring and hated person. Accordingly, one of the most important obstacles to effective class interaction is the lack of a scientifically qualified teacher, who does not have high personal and professional qualities (Al-Safafa, 2005). Goodman (2009) argues that respect is a major virtue and a fundamental value in schools and an educational and guiding process, not merely a theoretical practice, and it is also a sacred social value in schools and beyond for its association with religious and moral beliefs. This respect is a reciprocal concept and not a right of one party without another.

The second question was about how mathematics teachers at middle schools overcome burnout in schools' settings. Participants expressed their experiences and suggestions to overcome burnout in the classrooms. Participants emphasized on their experiences on dealing with mathematics curriculum and how to overcome it during semesters. All participants expressed their struggling with long mathematics curriculum and their suggestions to curriculum designers to take into account the cornerstone in the educational process, which is students, and their understanding should be a priority rather than finishing curriculum on time. Alfouhrih (2017) argues that the curriculum crisis is not about knowing how to make these curriculum, but the crisis in how to provide a climate of implementation and this climate is represented in school and unfortunately cannot provide all the possibilities to achieve the quality of a global curriculum by transferring the experiences of countries in the standards and their philosophy to the standard levels that must be available within each education institution. In fact, the researcher sees that the participant teachers are struggling in the field as they described, and it is important to discuss their concerns regarding mathematics curriculum. 4 participants suggested that mathematics curriculums should be divided to main lessons and optional lessons, and this a substantial suggestion would relieve stressors on the teachers. Participants mentioned that they cannot do anything to overcome burnout and stresses that they live with, and they try to acclimatize themselves with their profession. Some studies mentioned that specific coping techniques can even have a negative impact on the mental health of a person. Reducing stress by using such as blaming blame on others may increase mental health issues such as sleep disorder, depression, and anxiety. (Hardesty, Suldo, & Shaunnessy, 2008). A study conducted by Betoret (2006) on Spanish teachers to find out teacher coping resources, burnout, and stress. He discovered that teachers at their schools were found to be less stressed and more driven and satisfied in their job, for those who got a higher amount of coping support. In addition, it was also discovered that these teachers were less burned out. Many studies have confirmed that the coping styles are significant and direct factors in the stress function scheme, helping to create a more suitable and efficient social support system for advancing the curriculum reform, ensuring physical and mental health of the science and mathematics teachers, as well as promoting the career' growth development of science and mathematics teachers and further sustainable education development (Guglielmi et al., 1998).

The bottom line is that burnout is not permanent, and it can be avoided. The performance of the working individual in his role represented in a balanced life in terms of nutrition, motor activity and mental relaxation are vital and complementary to the institutional efforts to avoid psychological burnout, and Jarar (2011) recommends following the following steps:

- 1 - The individual realizes or recognizes the symptoms that indicate the imminent occurrence of psychological burnout.
- 2- Determining the causes through self-judgment or by resorting to tests that clarify the reasons for him.
- 3- Setting priorities in dealing with the reasons that were identified in the previous step. In practice, it is difficult to deal with them all at once.
- 4- Applying methods or taking practical steps to face pressures, including: making friendships to ensure access to psychosocial support, managing time, developing hobbies, facing life as a challenge to self-abilities, moving away from the work atmosphere whenever possible, and seeking the help of specialists and personal recognition of the problem to increase positivity in face it.
- 5- Evaluating the practical steps taken by the individual to confront the problem to judge its effectiveness and to take alternatives if necessary.

CONCLUSION

This qualitative study examined mathematics teachers' views in middle schools in Saudi Arabia concerning sources of burnout that they confront in schools' settings. Burnout among teachers is considered one of the most psychological problems that can exhaust teachers gradually. Burnout among teachers can affect teaching goals and the educational environment to the extent that these professionals experience a process of dehumanization and apathy, which can contribute to health problems, absenteeism, and intent to leave the profession. The first question was about the major sources of burnout of mathematics teachers at middle schools in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The semi-structure interviews conducted with 6 teachers generated two themes about the main sources of burnout among middle schools' mathematics teachers, and they are curriculum and students behaviour challenges. The participant teachers agreed that mathematics curriculum is one of the major factors contributing toward teacher burnout. The challenge of students behaviour was a critical issue for teachers during classroom teaching. The role of teachers was mainly turned to discipline students rather than teaching them, which made the burden on them double and burnout become inevitable unless it is remedied. The second question was about how teachers overcome burnout at middle schools and their suggestions for curriculum designers.

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All participants expressed their struggling with long mathematics curriculum and their suggestions to curriculum designers to take into account the cornerstone in the educational process, which is students, and their understanding should be a priority rather than finishing curriculum on time. Participants concluded that they cannot do anything to overcome burnout and stresses that they live with, and they try to acclimatize themselves with their profession. Many studies has established that coping styles are significant and direct influences in the stress function process, helping to develop a more efficient and successful social support system for advancing curriculum reform, ensuring the physical and mental health of science and mathematics teachers, and encouraging the career growth of science and mathematics teachers and further sustainable development in education.

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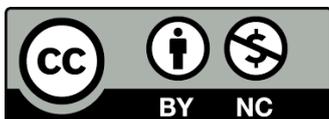
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