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The Peculiarities of Relationships between Values and Professional Burnout of Pre-School Teachers

Tetiana KOLTUNOVYCH[1]

Abstract

This study was carried out among 408 pre-school teachers working in kindergartens of state property in Chernivtsi (Ukraine) and Chernivtsi region. The present research aims to uncover the main accents of psychological knowledge of values at pre-school teachers with different levels of professional burnout. Research objectives reduced to: 1) identify the nature of the relationship between values and pre-school teachers professional burnout; 2) highlight the functional role of values in shaping pre-school teachers professional burnout. Methodics of research were: questionnaire "Emotional Burnout" V. V. Boyko and "Questionnaire of S. Schwartz to study the personal values". The article empirically proven assumptions about the existence of the relationship between burnout and values, the determination of burnout at various stages of its formation not only the individual values ("Conformity", "Power", "Hedonism" on the level of normative ideals; "Benevolence", "Power" on the level of personal priorities), but also according to their structural organization at the both levels; defined leading and basic values, which carry the strongest influence on the burnout forming.

Keywords

Pre-school teachers' professional burnout, values, value structure, leading values, basic values.

Introduction

Peculiarity of human existence consists in the values-based attitude to the world, since personal values are significant inner controllers of human activity, interaction with the world and self-concept.

The global destruction of social stereotypes, change of social conditions and social sense of values which are observed nowadays result in that the mechanism of values creation ceases to be the leading one, giving way to adaptive mechanisms. All of the above leads to the loss of the so-

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called basic sense of security and to occurrence of complex existential feelings: loneliness, inner vacuum, loss of sense of living or activity etc.

Unfortunately, for present-day society is typical such system of evaluation of success, authoritativeness and adequacy which is based on person's financial security. A professional, more often starts to worry exceptionally about self-efficacy and professional achievements, putting financial values in the forefront and at the same time driving the pleasure from one's professional activity and its results into the background. According to the famous Austrian psychotherapist A. Längle (2008, p. 7-9), such non experiencing of professional values is a result of personal focusing on the goals and formal motivation, and is the reason of intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts which lead to transformation of the people and things person interacts with and person's activity into means for achieving certain goals, into pragmatic values. It leads to worsening of moral and psychological atmosphere in the staff, and results in unwillingness to go to work (alienation from work), decline of relations with the other people, with activity, with oneself; to inability to feel the values and widen one's personal values-based outlooks and living space; to seclusion from the new values etc.

Moreover, modern political, economic and other social events present a serious threat not only to moral and psychological health of the teacher, but also create grounds for complex values-based conflicts. Therefore, peculiar compensatory attempt of the person to renew harmony, integrity, and to fill inner emptiness become psychosomatic disorders, deformation of behavior including professional burnout.

In our research we proceed from the interpretation of professional burnout as a process of gradual loss of emotional, mental, somatic and physical vitality, life energy under the influence of continual stress in professional area, that reveals in the symptoms of emotional exhaustion, depressed mood, chronic fatigue, cynicism, complete loss of meaningfulness of one's activity, communication and absence of pleasure, insomnia, use of psychotropic substances, sometimes suicidal thoughts.

Most of the researches by foreign scientists denote the conflict of personal and professional values or professional values, philosophy and organizational demands as determinants of professional burnout (A. Hartman, 1991, p. 195-196; C. Lloyd, R. King & L. Chenoweth, 2002; S. J. Noone & R. P. Hastings, 2011).

For example, M. V. Borisova (2003) considers lack of agreement in the sphere of values as one of the determinants of teacher's burnout.

According to the results of the research by S. O. Nalichaeva (2011, p. 21), these are values-based semantic specifics that determine burnout

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resistance and form self-actualizing potential of the person, which is based on self-actualization values.

Several aspects of professional burnout value-semantic conditionality was investigated by M. V. Borisova (2003); N. E. Vodopianova & O. S. Starchenkova (2009), A. Längle (2008); S. O. Nalicheva (2011); V. O. Orel (2005); A. Hartman (1991); C. Lloyd (2002); C. Maslach, W. B. Schaufeli & M. P. Leiter (2001) and others.

However, the question of influence of values on the formation of professional burnout remains unstudied, particularly similar research are absent among kindergarten teacher.

The urgency of the problem and its lack of scientific development defined goal presented scientific work, which is to highlight the main emphasis the main accents of psychological knowledge of values at pre-school teachers with different levels of professional burnout.

Research objectives reduced to:

1) identify the nature of the relationship between values and phases and symptoms of pre-school teachers professional burnout;

2) highlight the functional role of values in shaping professional burnout pre-school teachers.

Methodology

Methodics of research were: questionnaire "Emotional Burnout" V. V. Boyko, which enables us to investigate the burnout syndrome as a dynamic model within the procedural approach (Raigorodskii, 2001, 160-169), "Questionnaire of S. Schwartz to study the personal values" (Karandashev, 2004).

In research participated 408 pre-school teachers in Chernivtsi city and its region.

The average age of the preschool teachers is 32.16 years, experience - 9.9 years. The sample was homogeneous.

The processing and interpretation of the obtained results was performed on the analytical and structural levels with the use of procedures of the descriptive statistics, variance and correlation analyses, nonparametric statistical tests (Kruskal-Wallis H-Test), methods of correlation ratio (ή), "polar groups" (J. M. Flanagan) and "express-$\chi 2$" (A. V. Karpov).

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Research results

As we can see from tab. 1, the mean of "Total indicator of burnout" is 127.05 points.

Table 1. Assignment of respondents according to structural-dynamic indices of the professional burnout *(N = 408)*

Symptoms and phases of burnout	Mean	The level of formation (%)			Dominate symptom (%)
		high	medium	low	
Experiencing stressful circumstances	10.73	29.17	23.04	47.80	18.39
Dissatisfaction with themselves	6.27	5.64	17.90	76.47	3.19
Reach an impasse	6.55	12.75	17.90	69.37	9.07
Anxiety and depression	10.23	21.82	25.74	52.45	14.22
Phase "Intension"	**33.78**	**12.50**	**28.68**	**58.82**	**–**
Inadequate selective emotional response	15.76	53.44	29.66	16.92	35.79
Emotional and moral disorientation	11.50	30.15	25.25	44.61	14.22
Expansion of scope emotional savings	12.03	34.56	22.06	43.39	24.51
Reduction of professional liability	14.87	45.59	29.17	25.25	35.79
Phase "Resistance"	**54.22**	**38.97**	**43.87**	**17.14**	**–**
Emotional deficit	9.91	21.57	32.36	46.08	11.52
Emotional alienation	10.96	22.06	30.40	47.55	12.26
Personal alienation	8.28	15.69	22.80	61.52	11.28
Psychosomatic & psycho-vegetative disorders	9.80	19.61	24.51	55.89	13.97
Phase "Exhaustion"	**38.97**	**13.97**	**34.56**	**51.47**	**–**
Total indicator of burnout	**127.05**	**18.88**	**43.14**	**37.99**	**–**

Moreover the level of indices on this scale doesn't get to maximum numbers (from 19 points to 281 points), and, in correspondence with the interpretation of results, reflects the not complete formation of Phase "Intension" (33.78 points), stipulated by the exhausting permanence or increasing of psycho traumatic factors, the initial period of formation of Phase "Exhaustion" (38.97 points), which is accompanied by the decrease of the general energetic fitness and weakening of the nervous system, and the final stage of formation of Phase "Resistance" (54.22 points), which is characterized by resistance to the increasing stress.

In general in the sample three stages of burnout are formed in 4.17 % respondents, two - in 11.28 %, one - in 30.40 %, none - in 14.46 % respondents. At least one phase is formed in 45.84 % respondents, in 70.59 % respondents at least one phase is on the stage of formation. In 4.66 % respondents all three phases are at the stage of formation, in 26.96 % - two,

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in 38.97 % - one. High level of formation of professional burnout (HBL) was revealed in 18.88 %, medium (MBL) - in 43.14 %, low (LBL) - in 37.99 % respondents.

Using the method of "polar groups" the sample according to "Total indicator of burnout" was divided into three groups - 60 respondents in each: the group of respondents with high, medium and low levels of formation of professional burnout.

Based on an estimated mean and rank values by the "Questionnaire of S. Schwartz to study the personal values" was found that the lowest average values in the three groups of respondents received on scales "Stimulation", "Power" and "Tradition"; on scale "Hedonism" in the groups with HLB i MLB; on scale "Achievement" in the group with LLB (tab. 2).

Table 2. Ranks values in the groups of respondents with different levels of burnout *(N = 180)*

Group respondents with HLB			**Group respondents with MLB**			**Group respondents with LLB**		
Types of values	**M**	**R**	**Types of values**	**M**	**R**	**Types of values**	**M**	**R**
Level of normative ideals (belief)								
(1) Conformity	5.06	1	(1) Conformity	5.15	1	(1) Conformity	5.32	1
(2) Tradition	4.94	2	(2) Tradition	4.95	2	(2) Tradition	5.09	2
(3) Benevolence	4.89	3	(3) Benevolence	4.81	3	(3) Benevolence	5.06	3
(4) Universalism	4.68	4	(4) Universalism	4.71	4	(4) Universalism	4.87	4
(5) Self-Direction	4.43	5	(5) Self-Direction	4.46	5	(5) Self-Direction	4.46	5
(6) Stimulation	4.31	6	(6) Stimulation	4.33	6	(6) Stimulation	4.3	6
(7) Hedonism	4.19	7	(7) Hedonism	4.17	7	(7) Hedonism	4.25	7
(8) Achievement	4.19	7	(8) Achievement	4.16	7	(8) Achievement	4.23	7
(9) Power	3.55	9	(9) Power	3.51	9	(9) Power	3.43	9
(10) Security	3.35	10	(10) Security	3.51	10	(10) Security	3.26	10
Level of individual priorities (behavior)								
(1) Conformity	2.39	1	(1) Conformity	2.74	1	(1) Conformity	2.77	1
(2) Tradition	2.18	2	(2) Tradition	2.68	2	(2) Tradition	2.67	2
(3) Benevolence	2.10	3	(3) Benevolence	2.46	3	(3) Benevolence	2.47	3
(4) Universalism	2.06	4	(4) Universalism	2.34	4	(4) Universalism	2.43	4
(5) Self-Direction	1.96	5	(5) Self-Direction	2.26	5	(5) Self-Direction	2.40	5
(6) Stimulation	1.92	6	(6) Stimulation	2.24	6	(6) Stimulation	2.38	6
(7) Hedonism	1.72	7	(7) Hedonism	2.15	7	(7) Hedonism	2.13	7
(8) Achievement	1.72	7	(8) Achievement	1.95	7	(8) Achievement	2	7
(9) Power	1.45	9	(9) Power	1.50	9	(9) Power	1.98	9
(10) Security	1.32	10	(10) Security	1.05	10	(10) Security	1.04	10

Footnotes: M - arithmetic mean, R - rank; HLB - high level of professional burnout, MLB - medium, LLB - low.

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On the basis of the theory of dynamic relations by S. Schwartz & W. Bilsky, there are 10 values-based types which from groups of opposite values, which motivate person to corresponding behavior in terms of benefit/ price. The 10 groups can conflict or be compatible with each other.

As it can be seen from the table 3, among the respondents of three groups values of "Conservatism" ("Security", "Conformity", "Tradition") prevail over values of "Openness to change" ("Stimulation", "Self-Direction", "Hedonism"), over "Self-exaltation" ("Power", "Achievement", "Hedonism") at level of normative ideals and at level of individual priorities as well. It is necessary to admit, that values of "Conservatism" contradict values of "Openness to change": there is an opposition between value of autonomy of the outlooks and actions of the person and value of preservation of traditions, maintenance of social stability.

Table 3. Averaged indicators of competitive values-based types among respondents with different levels of professional burnout *(N = 180)*

Rival values types	Values at belief level at groups of respondents with			Values at behavior level at groups of respondents with		
	HLB	**MLB**	**LLB**	**HLB**	**MLB**	**LLB**
Self-transcendence	4.81	4.83	4.97	2.12	2.71	2.72
Self-exaltation	4.02	4	4.05	1.57	1.50	1.72
Conservatism	4.72	4.71	4.88	2.07	2.35	2.44
Openness to change	3.99	4.05	4.01	1.67	1.97	2.12

Values of "Self-transcendence" contradict values of "Self-exaltation". This result shows that teachers are more directed at social than at personal results, that is striving for conformity, social order, justice, equality and restraint, devotion, readiness to help are more typical for them rather than aspiration for success, authority, wealth, pleasure, exciting life, creativity and freedom. Apparently these values are the most professionally typical for them.

Coefficients calculated according to Kruskal-Wallis H-Test, are indicative of the absence of statistically significant differences between the groups of respondents according to values at the level of belief. At the same time at the level of behavior there are statistically significant differences according to the scale of "Conformity" ($H = 7.318$, $p \leq 0.05$ - HLB < MLB, LLB) and "Benevolence" ($H = 14.811$, $p \leq 0.01$ - HLB < MLB, LLB).

Therefore, restraint of actions and impulses that can be harmful to the others and do not correspond to social expectations is typical of respondents with MLB. Obviously, constant self-control, comparison of oneself with the established norms leads to the state of constant tension and

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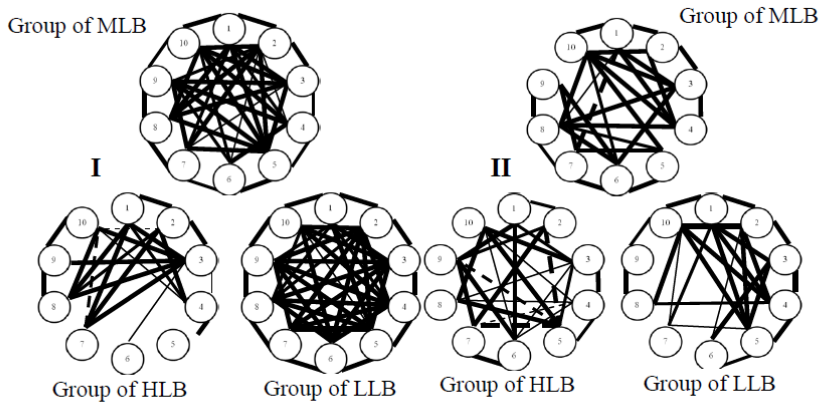
exhaustion. At the same time, for respondents with HLB desire to keep and increase welfare of close people is less typical than for respondents with MLB and LLB.

Results of correlated analysis (r-Spearman) show the absence of a single orientation of relations between values and professional burnout; show their mainly reverse character and differences not only in groups of respondents with different levels of professional burnout, but at different levels of the existence of values.

Further interpretation of the data took place at the structural level and included the analysis of intercorrelation matrixes and built relevant structures of values.

As we can see from pic.1, structuregrams of values are more integrative in groups of respondents with MLB and LLB both at the of belief level and at the level of behavior. So, we can assume that the moral core protects the individual from professional burnout. The calculation of Structural indices confirms this result.



Pic. 1. Values structures of groups of respondents with different burnout levels

0,01 0,05 0,10

Footnote: I – level of belief; II – level of behavior;
positive relationship at the level of statistical significance ; ; ;
negative relationship at the level of statistical significance ; ; .
(1) Conformity, (2) Tradition, (3) Benevolence, (4) Universalism, (5) Self-Direction, (6) Stimulation, (7) Hedonism, (8) Achievement, (9) Power, (10) Security.

At the level of behavior values structure of respondents with LLB is more integrated also.

From the tab. 4 it can be seen that DIS is absent at the level of conviction in the groups of respondent with MLB and LLB. This indicates

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more integrated structure of values in these groups as compared to the structure of values among the respondents with HLB.

Table 4. Degree of organization of values structures in three groups of respondents *(N = 180)*

Groups of respondents	Structural indices					
	Index of Coherence (CIS)	Index of Divergence (DIS)	Index of Organization (OIS)	Index of Coherence (CIS)	Index of Divergence (DIS)	Index of Organization (OIS)
	Level of normative ideals			Level of individual priorities		
with HLB	49	6	43	51	9	42
with MLB	99	0	99	74	3	71
with LLB	116	0	116	62	0	62

The OIS index in the group of respondents with LLB is 2.7 and 1.2 times higher than in groups of respondents with HLB and MLB accordingly, this allows to admit the presence of differences of values-based structures at this level in three groups.

The highest index of OIS is defined in the group of respondents with MLB, but the presence of DIS indicates on smaller integration of this group in compared with a group of respondents with LLB.

The low rate of OIS and high index of DIS in the group with HLB indicate on low integration of structure, deformation and levelling of individual values, low adaptive capacity burned-out pre-school teachers.

A more thorough study the diversity of value structures have revealed the distinctive features in their composition.

In tab. 5 we see that structural weight (W) on the value structure at the level of belief in group with HLB are much lower than in the other two groups.

Table 5: Basic and leading components in the values structure in three groups of respondents *(N = 180)*

Types of values	Groups of respondents with														
	HLB					MLB					LLB				
	R>0	R<0	Σ_R	W	rank	R>0	R<0	Σ_R	W	rank	R>0	R<0	Σ_R	W	rank
Level of normative ideals															
(1) Conformity	5	0	5	14	**2**	7	0	7	19	7	6	0	6	15	10
(2) Tradition	5	1	6	13	4	9	0	9	22	**2**	9	0	9	26	**3**
(3) Benevolence	8	0	8	20	**2**	8	0	8	21	4	9	0	9	27	**2**
(4) Universalism	4	1	5	4	8	7	0	7	16	9	9	0	9	26	**3**

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(5) Self-Direction	0	1	1	|-3|	9	9	0	9	26	**1**	9	0	9	25	5
(6) Stimulation	1	0	1	1	10	6	0	6	13	10	8	0	8	24	6
(7) Hedonism	3	1	4	7	6	7	0	7	17	8	7	0	7	21	8
(8) Achievement	5	0	5	14	**2**	7	0	7	21	4	9	0	9	24	6
(9) Power	3	0	3	9	5	8	0	8	21	4	9	0	9	29	**1**
(10) Security	4	2	6	7	6	8	0	8	22	**2**	7	0	7	18	9
leading values	(7), (6)					–					–				
Level of individual priorities															
(1) Conformity	5	0	5	10	4	5	1	6	10	7	6	0	6	17	**3**
(2) Tradition	3	1	4	4	9	4	0	4	12	6	6	0	6	16	5
(3) Benevolence	6	0	6	12	**2**	6	0	6	18	**3**	5	0	5	15	6
(4) Universalism	6	1	7	10	4	5	0	5	15	5	6	0	6	17	**3**
(5) Self-Direction	4	3	7	2	10	4	0	4	9	8	7	0	7	18	**1**
(6) Stimulation	6	0	6	11	**3**	6	0	6	17	4	3	0	3	6	8
(7) Hedonism	3	2	5	5	8	4	1	5	7	10	3	0	3	4	10
(8) Achievement	4	0	4	8	7	8	0	8	20	**1**	3	0	3	8	7
(9) Power	4	1	5	9	6	3	0	3	9	8	2	0	2	5	9
(10) Security	5	0	5	13	**1**	7	0	7	19	**2**	7	0	7	18	**1**
(1) Conformity	5	0	5	14	**2**	7	0	7	19	7	6	0	6	15	10
leading values	(8), (9), (1)					(1)					(3)				

Footnotes: R > 0 - the number of positive relations, R <0 - number of negative relationships, ΣR - sum of positive and negative connections, W - structural weight; highlighted in bold basic values.

In the structure of values of teachers with HLB "Benevolence", "Conformity", "Achievement" are basic. It is almost deprived of "Self-Direction" (W = -3) and "Stimulation" (W = 1).

"Self-Direction", "Tradition", "Security" are basic components of values structure of teachers with MLB.

"Power", "Benevolence", "Tradition", "Universalism" - are in the values structure of teachers with LLB.

Common basic value for respondents with HLB and LLB is "Benevolence", and for respondents with MLB and LLB – "Tradition". It is necessary to admit that their W lowers as far as the level of burnout grows.

The leading values in the group of respondents with HLB are "Hedonism" ($p \leq 0.01$) and "Stimulation" ($p \leq 0.05$). These values were not determined as basic, but they do form correspondent values structure of pre-school teachers who burn out.

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Obviously the conflict between "I WANT" (desire for diversity, deep experience to support the optimal level of activity) and "I HAVE" (lack of pleasure, enjoyment of life) to cause total exhaustion and burnout.

At the level of behavior are determined the following basic values: in the group of respondents with HLB – "Security", "Benevolence", "Stimulation"; with MLB – "Achievement", "Security", "Benevolence"; with LLB – "Self-Direction", "Power", "Conformity" and "Universalism" (tab. 3).

The value "Power" is basic in values structure of three groups, but its W lowers with the growth of professional burnout.

The value of "Benevolence" is basic in the values structures of respondents with HLB and MLB, though it has higher W in values structures of respondents with MLB.

As it can be seen, basic values in values structures in group of respondents with LLB differs from basic values in structures of respondents with HLB and MLB.

Value "Achievement" has the highest weight in the structure of values of respondents with MLB. Obviously, desire of pre-school teacher to achieve personal success according to social standards as the component of this value, causes exhaustion and burnout (groups of respondents with LLB and HLB this value takes seventh position (W = 8).

The leading values in the structure of pre-school teachers with HLB are: "Achievement" ($p \leq 0.01$), "Power" ($p \leq 0.01$) and "Conformity" ($p \leq 0.05$), with MLB – "Conformity" ($p \leq 0.01$), with LLB – "Benevolence" ($p \leq 0.05$).

Analysis of correlation matrices in three groups of respondents by method "express-$\chi 2$" indicate their qualitative heterogeneity ($\chi 2_{емп.} < \chi 2_{кр.}$) both at the level of belief ($\chi 2_{емп.} = 0.27, -0.04, 0.15$, at $\chi 2_{кр.} = 0.79$), and at the level of behavior ($\chi 2_{емп.} = 0.59, 0.12, 0.23$, at $\chi 2_{кр.} = 0.79$). Thus, the increase of total indicator of burnout reflects significant internal changes in the values structure.

Therefore, a fundamental restructuring of values at the level of behavior and weaken the strength of relationships between components takes place during the transition from middle to high the levels of burnout, as evidenced by the similarity by basic values at structures of these two groups.

As a result of calculation the coefficient correlation ratio (ή) found significant ratios of two types (ή values → burnout and on the contrary), indicating the complexity and reciprocity relationship between these constructs (tab. 6).

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Table 6: Statistically significant coefficients of determination and correlation ratio

Levels of values	The impact of values on burnout			The impact of burnout on values		
	Types of values	ή	η^2	η^2	ή	Types of values
Level of normative ideals	(1) Conformity	0.318**	0.101**	0.051**	0.226**	(1) Conformity
	(7) Hedonism	0.237**	0.056**	0.018	0.134	(7) Hedonism
	(9) Power	0.299**	0.090**	0.015	0.122	(9) Power
Level of individual priorities	(1) Conformity	0.187	0.035	0.068**	0.261**	(1) Conformity
	(3) Benevolence	0.303**	0.092**	0.061**	0.247**	(3) Benevolence
	(9) Power	0.245**	0.060**	0.026	0.161	(9) Power

*Footnote: ** - $p \leq 0,01$*

As it can be seen from the tab.6, value "Conformity" at the level of belief in 10.1% of cases determines the formation of burnout. It is necessary to indicate the double-sided influence between these variables, but the coefficient of influence of "Conformity" on burnout is more significant. In 5.6% of cases burnout is determined by "Hedonism", in 9 % - "Power".

At the behavior level professional burnout is in 6% of cases determined by value "Power" and in 9.2 % - "Benevolence". At the same time, linear correlation (r-Spearman) doesn't confirm the presence of correlation ties between burnout and authority on two levels of its existence. It is necessary to admit that defined values refer to oppositional motivation types and reveal values-based foundation of the crisis, which accompanies teachers in the process of burnout. Burnout in 6.8% of cases makes impact on "Conformity".

Conclusions

Obtained results indicate the existence of relation between professional burnout and values of teachers at the level of normative ideals and at the level of real behavior. These results present an empiric argument in the favor of conclusion concerning important role of values-based and meaningful characteristics in the formation of professional burnout and concerning determinacy of burnout at different levels of its formation by certain regularities of structural organization of values.

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