

Teacher Emotion Regulation: Investigating Associations with Compassion Satisfaction and Burnout

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INTRODUCTION

- Teaching is an emotionally demanding profession, often requiring teachers to manage intense and varied emotions on top of other responsibilities
- Previous work has demonstrated that teachers' cognitive reappraisal use is negatively associated with burnout while expressive suppression is positively associated with burnout (Chang, 2020; Doyle, 2024)
- Few studies have investigated relationships between teacher emotion regulation (ER) and other aspects of professional quality of life
 - Compassion satisfaction (i.e., pleasure derived from their helping role) is a strengths-based assessment of teachers' professional quality of life, and no studies to date have investigated its relationship with ER strategy use
- This study examines associations between reappraisal and suppression use with two aspects of professional quality of life: compassion satisfaction and burnout, contributing to a small but growing body of literature on teacher ER

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the associations between teachers' use of cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression and reports of compassion satisfaction?
We hypothesized that reappraisal would be positively associated with compassion satisfaction, while suppression would be negatively associated.
2. What are the associations between teachers' use of cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression and reports of burnout?
We hypothesized that reappraisal would be negatively associated with burnout, while suppression would be positively associated.

METHODS

- We surveyed 92 Oregon K-12 teachers in Spring 2024
- Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ)
 - Reappraisal
 - Suppression
 - Specifically asked teachers to consider the questions in the context of teaching
- Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)
 - Compassion Satisfaction
 - Burnout

Teachers' use of cognitive reappraisal is associated with compassion satisfaction and burnout.

Teacher's use of expressive suppression was not significantly associated with either compassion satisfaction or burnout.

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RESULTS

- Teachers engaged in reappraisal ($M = 4.93$, $SD = 0.99$) at significantly higher rates compared to suppression ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.20$), $t(90) = 8.30$, $p < .001$.
- Higher reported use of reappraisal was positively associated with scores on the Compassion Satisfaction scale of the ProQOL ($t(89) = 14.28$, $p < .001$) and negatively associated with scores on the Burnout scale ($t(89) = 4.87$, $p < .01$).
- No statistically significant associations were found for suppression ($p > .05$).

DISCUSSION

- Teachers report using reappraisal and suppression in the classroom context at similar rates as the general population
- Findings may indicate that reappraisal use serves as a protective factor in reducing burnout for K-12 teachers
- Teachers who report more frequent use of reappraisal also report higher compassion satisfaction
- No significant associations for suppression and burnout or compassion satisfaction
 - Additional analyses found that our sample generally report institutional factors (e.g., administration) as the primary reasons for considering leaving the profession
 - Perhaps institutional factors play a larger role in teacher burnout than teacher's individual characteristics, in contrast with previous findings.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Future studies should use comprehensive measures of ER such as ecological momentary assessment
- More research is needed to understand the relationship between reappraisal and compassion satisfaction
 - Perhaps general temperament/personality-level traits better explain this relationship
- Reappraisal use may present a promising target for interventions aimed at reducing teacher burnout rates
- Future research studying teacher ER should attend to the larger institutional context

For further questions, comments, or full list of references, reach out to Haley Brown (hbrown6@uoregon.edu)

Maybe a QR code for references?

