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Emotional Well-Being as a Function of Professional Identity and Burnout among Homeroom and Subject Teachers

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Abstract: The Israeli homeroom teacher's role is relatively unique. Correlations between professional identity, burnout, and emotional well-being have been researched among various teacher populations. This study researched these correlations among teachers and homeroom teachers in three seniority groups. Professional identity, burnout, and emotional well-being questionnaires were answered by 431 teachers in Israeli elementary schools, around half of who were homeroom teachers. MANOVA analysis produced different interactions between seniority groups and position, regarding emotional exhaustion and depersonalization in burnout, and self-efficacy in professional identity. Regression analysis for predicting emotional well-being according to professional identity and burnout, produced different models among the groups, reflecting different aspects of two kinds of roles.

Keywords: Emotional well-being; Professional identity; Teacher burnout; Subject teachers; Homeroom teachers.

1. Introduction

In Israel, unlike most of the Western world, the homeroom teacher has many educational, pedagogic, therapeutic, and administrative roles. He or she has a large number of duties, significant responsibility, and is held in high esteem by the system. In light of the small number of studies on Israeli homeroom teachers and the uniqueness of their role, it is interesting to study their various aspects.

From the standpoint of the studies that indicate correlations between being overburdened and having many roles, and burnout, more burnout can be expected among homeroom teachers compared to other teachers. Due to the correlation between burnout and emotional well-being, we can expect a lower level of emotional well-being among homeroom teachers.

However, following the studies indicating correlations between the education system's appreciation and professional identity, we can deduce that the homeroom teachers' professional identity will be greater than that of subject teachers. Due to the link between professional identity and emotional well-being, we would presume that homeroom teachers' emotional well-being would be better than that of subject teachers. This study, the first of its kind, wishes to compare homeroom teachers and subject teachers regarding professional identity, burnout, emotional well-being, and the correlation between them. Another innovation is the use of professional identity and burnout as multidimensional and continuous variables.

In light of Nutov (2011) distinction between the class manager in most USA schools and the homeroom teacher in Japan, China, and Russia, it will be beneficial to compare the professional identity, burnout, and emotional well-being of these two pedagogical philosophies regarding the teacher's role, as one of the factors when considering which is preferable.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Homeroom Teachers

In Israel, being the homeroom teacher is seen as one of the most important roles in the school, and includes both the educational and organizational facets of the class (Tzidkiyahu and Ronen, 2008). The homeroom teacher bears responsibility for all the organizational, scholastic, and educational aspects of the class as a whole, and the child as an individual (Nutov, 2011; Tzidkiyahu and Ronen, 2008).

He or she must provide solutions for everything connected with the class as a group and the students as individuals. The homeroom teacher is responsible for building the class as a group; he or she must direct the pedagogical meetings; check each student's attendance at school and in the lessons; concern him or herself with the students' welfare, their relationships with other students, the other class teachers, and their families. In addition, he or she must concern him or herself with the classroom climate, education regarding moral values, and social activity. The homeroom teacher is viewed as occupying a significant and central role in the school. Similarly, Nutov (2011) claims homeroom teachers are viewed as the system's elite.

A [Israel Ministry of Education \(1997\)](#) defines the homeroom teacher's role and responsibility: "The homeroom teacher is responsible for all the social and scholastic issues of the class students".

[Nutov \(2011\)](#) notes that few studies focusing on the homeroom teacher's role had been carried out before hers. [Bakshi-Brosh \(2005\)](#) showed homeroom teachers have a higher status at school than subject teachers. She writes that even if the homeroom teacher has few hours to devote to her role compared to the subject teacher, the student will still be seen as "belonging" to the homeroom teacher. Their relatively high status is thanks to their empowerment, and being close to the administration. This closeness is also expressed in the study by [Telem \(2005\)](#), who pointed out the way the homeroom teacher serves as a link connecting the class and other position holders, including the principal.

[Nutov \(2011\)](#) quotes a study from China, that noted a long list of tasks carried out by homeroom teachers. Nutov explains that Chinese homeroom teachers have similar tasks to those of their Israeli counterparts, with many being primarily counseling tasks.

[Tzidkiyahu and Ronen \(2008\)](#) also list areas of the homeroom teachers' responsibility. These include educational fields, such as: education for values, treating the individual, responsibility for class social life, and social activities. Administrative fields, such as: responsibility for checking attendance, the examination schedule, etc. Areas that are mainly coordination and communication with the student's immediate environment: connections with parents, connections with internal school bodies (administration, subject teachers, etc.), and connection with extra-school bodies (inspectorate, youth movements, etc.). The authors note the fact that the homeroom teacher "serves many masters". He is the administration's emissary, and this means he must pass on information to parents and students. He must make sure the class is organized as a functioning framework, in accordance with the school rules and regulations. In this capacity, he must be an expert in the school's organizational structure as an institution with bureaucratic characteristics. He must know how to impose rules, arrangements, and laws, in accordance with this structure. His role also includes humane educational factors. In this capacity, he must lead a social entity – the class. Within this entity, the homeroom teacher and the students each have their own opinion. The homeroom teacher and students create a dialogue with the aim of developing reflective thinking among the students, about themselves, their studies, and their goals as a group. The authors call the two roles: a bureaucratic role and a humanistic role and claim the relationship between them determines how the homeroom teacher's role is perceived.

[Nutov \(2011\)](#) claims the homeroom teachers' role in the USA, England, Australia, and New Zealand, is mostly bureaucratic-managerial, and is expressed in running the morning meeting when attendance is checked, letters to parents are distributed, and instructions and notices are given out. In Japan, China, and Russia, the homeroom teacher's role is mainly pedagogic-counseling. At the same time, Nutov notes that there are unique schools in the USA (Smaller Learning Communities) where a homeroom teacher called an "advisor" has a largely parallel position to his or her Israeli counterpart.

Due to the uniqueness and importance of the position in Israel, in the current study we have chosen to examine the differences between homeroom teachers and subject teachers regarding professional identity, burnout, and the correlation between them and emotional well-being.

In light of the differences between most schools in the USA and Israel, Japan, and Russia regarding the role of the teacher with responsibility for the class ([Nutov, 2011](#)), it is important to also examine the repercussions of the various roles on the teachers' professional identity, burnout, and emotional well-being.

2.2. Emotional well-being

There are many definitions of emotional well-being. According to the [Wellness \(n.d-b\)](#) Farlex Partner Medical Dictionary (2012) wellness is defined as "a philosophy of life and personal hygiene that views health as not merely the absence of illness but the full realization of one's physical and mental potential..." ([Wellness, n.d-a](#)). [Mosby's Medical Dictionary \(2009\)](#) defines wellness as "a dynamic state of health in which an individual progresses toward a higher level of functioning, achieving an optimum balance between internal and external environments" ([Wellness, n.d-a](#)).

Many view well-being in the context of a person evaluating his or her quality of life, happiness, and satisfaction with what he or she does ([Campbell, 1981](#)), or events and situations ([Adams et al., 1997](#)). Others emphasized the area of behavior: normal interpersonal relationships and mastery of age appropriate skills, and the area of psychology: a sense of belonging, meaning, direction in life, and a sense of self-satisfaction ([Cowen, 1994](#)).

[Compton \(2001\)](#) focused on the tripartite structure of mental health, comprised of subjective well-being, personal growth, and a value system. [Diener and Biswas-Diener \(2000\)](#) explained Subjective Wellbeing (SWB) as how people value their lives. They claimed well-being includes variables such as satisfaction with life and marriage, life without depression or anxiety, moods, and positive feelings. High-level emotional well-being is expressed in a high frequency of satisfaction with life and feelings of happiness, and a low frequency of unpleasant feelings such as sadness and anger.

[Hettler \(1976\)](#) co-founder of The National Wellness Institute (NWI), proposed the Six Dimensions of Wellness model, one of which is the occupational dimension. [Snyder and Lopez \(2002\)](#) argued that normal functioning must include six dimensions of emotional well-being: self acceptance, positive relations with others, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, and autonomy. Following [Hettler \(1976\)](#), many studied the correlation between work and career satisfaction and emotional well-being.

[Howard and Howard \(1997\)](#) claimed work is critical for emotional well-being. [Ciulla \(2000\)](#) demonstrated that employment provides a person with a sense of being connected to broader society, with values and life goals. [Ashmos and Duchon \(2000\)](#) argue that people are hungry to find meaning in their lives, through work, among other means. [De](#)

Klerk (2005) added that when a person succeeds in finding meaning to his life through employment, he feels a sense of emotional well-being. De Klerk thus joined Wicken (2000) who showed how job satisfaction contributes to emotional well-being, since it includes using a person's aptitudes for a significant goal that enables that person to express his or her values. Recently, some researchers have distinguished between cognitive and emotional satisfaction from employment, and found that both were connected to emotional well-being (Judge and Klinger, 2008; Zimmerman, 2010).

Researchers noted a negative correlation between burnout and emotional well-being among teachers (Lavanchy et al., 2004; Levesque et al., 2004; Milfont et al., 2008; Parker et al., 2012). Levesque et al. explained this correlation by the link between burnout and negative physical phenomena. Gilad-Hai (2013) pointed out that teachers in experimental schools are willing to invest more than what is required in their work, and feel greater emotional well-being than teachers in regular schools. The additional work does not reduce their sense of well-being, but increases it due to the satisfaction the teachers feel in the schools that focus on integrating innovation.

As a result of their long-term study, Day and Kington (2008) discovered correlations between professional identity, dropout, and emotional well-being among teachers in England.

Since the current research goal is to examine the correlation between emotional well-being, professional identity, and burnout, it is important to mention in particular the long-term study by Parker et al. (2012) who found a correlation between emotional well-being, burnout, and factors connected with teachers' goal orientation and coping strategies.

2.3. Teachers' Professional Identity

Beijaard et al. (2000) maintained we understand very little about the process leading to the forming of teachers' professional identities. Rodgers and Scott (2008) called for teachers to strengthen professional identity awareness. Beijaard et al. (2000) point out that teachers' professional identity affects their feeling of professional efficacy, as well as readiness to cope with changes in the educational process. The researchers concluded that it is important to examine how teachers form professional identity, for reasons including its effect on judgment and professional decisions.

Kramer and Hoffman (1981) defined teachers' professional identity as a feeling of belonging to, and identification with, the profession. Kramer and Hoffman (1981) and Galante (1985) found professional identity was a key predictor of teacher burnout. Friedman (2000) maintains professional identity is the internal response to the question, "Who am I as a professional?" This definition is very similar to that of the concept "professional self image," and Friedman doesn't distinguish between the two concepts. Similarly, Kozminski (2008) also points out that professional identity answers the question "Who or what am I as a professional?"

Fisherman and Weiss (2011) drew readers' attention to the existence of two perspectives of professional identity: psychological and professional. This distinction is similar to that made by Lee and Yin (2011), between emotions identity and professional identity.

We can place Turner (1978) in the psychological school, focusing on a person's identification with work. Turner even set a person's ability to cut himself off from his work, or change jobs, as a criterion of professional identity. Similarly, Avraham (1986) concept of professional identity includes perception of one's qualities, talents, feelings, professional values, and interactions with other people he has contact with while working. Among those espousing the professional viewpoint, we may include Moore (1970), who focused on the person's social evaluation as a professional, professional status, and the profession's image.

Coldron and Smith (1999) describe a teacher's professional identity as the teacher's personal and social biography. They believe part of this identity is individual choice, while part is assigned by society. Thus, Coldron and Smith accept the opinions of Loudon (1991) and Goodson (1992), who maintain a teacher's identity is composed of personal and social biographies. They believe these two biographies affect the teachers' experiences as teachers, and their personal identity as teachers. Tickle (1999) raises several similar points. He sees two components to teachers' professional identity: (a) how teachers see themselves; (b) how society views them. The first incorporates aspects such as what is important in one's work and professional life, while the second includes how colleagues, parents, customers, and pupils, see the teacher. Tickle adds an understanding of interaction between teachers' self perception and how they think their environment views them.

Recently, Rodgers and Scott (2008) stated four assumptions regarding professional identity: (a) built and dependent on a range of contexts (social, cultural, historical, and political); (b) built via relations with others; (c) dynamic, and (d) strives to be coherent.

We may learn about the confusion surrounding teachers' professional identity from Beijaard et al. (2004). They surveyed 22 studies about teachers' professional identity, and divided them into three groups: research focusing on how teachers shape professional identity, characteristics of teachers' professional identity, and life stories as an expression of professional identity. Examining the studies illustrated an interesting point. There was no definition of professional identity in 45% (N=10) of the studies, 55% contained different definitions of teachers' professional identity, while 11 out of 12 focused on teachers' comments on their work. This finding supports the conclusions of Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1986), who opined that the world of teaching is subjective, and what is important is how teachers interpret their teaching. Corley (1998) also adopted this approach, and spoke of "adopting the role of teachers." As expected, the ten studies surveyed by Beijaard et al. (2004) dealt with teachers' life stories.

Fisherman and Weiss (2011) suggested distinguishing between a professional story, or narrative, and professional identity, where the narrative is the story of a teacher's professional life as seen and defined by the teacher, and

professional identity is somewhat more objective and quantifiable. The concept “professional narrative” may be compared to what [Friedman and Gavish \(2003\)](#) term the crystallization of the professional self.

The professional narrative is, possibly, what many describe as the teacher’s various voices continuing an endless, internal conversation which enables the teacher to understand herself, while someone external (the researcher) studies the teacher’s interpretations of reality ([Riessman and Speedy, 2007](#)).

If this approach has any truth, then every teacher encompasses two professional entities: professional identity and professional narrative. Professional identity is shaped in an approximately linear process, from a diffuse professional identity to a stable and crystallized professional identity. However, professional narrative is constructed by an ongoing process throughout the teacher’s professional life. It is highly flexible, complex, multifaceted, and constantly interacts with the teacher’s educational, psychological, cultural, and social surroundings.

The study by [Fisherman and Weiss \(2011\)](#) introduced the concept of professional identity according to an empirical study including a pilot study, in which “experts” responded to a questionnaire, and follow-up study which included a sample of teachers in Israel. Factor analysis resulted in four factors, estimated as representative of professional identity: (a) career choice confidence; (b) professional efficacy; (c) sense of mission, and (d) reputation.

2.4. Burnout

There is a broad consensus regarding the very serious implications of teacher burnout ([Friedman and Gavish, 2003](#)). According to [Jennett et al. \(2003\)](#), all teachers are liable to experience burnout at some stage. Researchers noted that burnout is the primary motive for leaving the teaching profession ([Leung and Lee, 2006](#); [Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2007](#)).

Burnout influences the teacher’s moral behavior in school, and hinders achievement of Department of Education goals. A burned out teacher affects school culture and may even affect his or her colleagues’ work satisfaction ([Friedman and Gavish, 2003](#)). The teaching profession is considered to be one of the most exhausting ([Kokkinos, 2007](#); [Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2010](#); [Stoeber and Rennert, 2008](#)). [Kyriacou \(1987\)](#) described teacher burnout as physical, emotional, and behavioral exhaustion. In his opinion, teacher burnout includes phenomena associated with tension, frustration, anxiety, anger, and depression, and in extreme cases, mental breakdown. [Maslach and Jackson \(1981\)](#) suggested three categories of teacher burnout, which [Friedman \(1999\)](#) validated. According to the researchers, one can distinguish three burnout categories: bodily and mental exhaustion, non-fulfillment, and depersonalization. Many researchers discussed the development of burnout in the teacher’s lifecycle.

[Schwab \(1983\)](#) described a three-stage development of burnout:

- 1) Fatigue, emotional dryness, and the desire to remain at home.
- 2) Negative feelings about students (the teacher finds it hard to remain calm and demonstrate support for his students).
- 3) The loss of the feeling of self-realization through one’s work, and frustration.

[Friedman \(1999\)](#) described teacher burnout in the following way: The teacher begins his work as an educator with enthusiasm, energy, and a sense of mission. When confronted with difficulties and pressures from teaching, doubts begin to appear regarding his or her personal ability, and everything connected with exploitation of his intellectual resources and self-fulfillment as a teacher. Feelings of non-realization increase along with fatigue levels. Finally there is almost insurmountable fatigue, characterized by the desire to cut off contact with students and abandon teaching.

2.4.1. Factors behind Teacher Burnout

Many researchers have addressed factors involved in teacher burnout. These may be attributed to three groups: personal, environmental, and organizational ([Friedman and Gavish, 2003](#); [Gavish, 2002](#)).

2.4.1.1. Personal Factors

Some emphasized professional orientation ([Farber, 1991](#)), low self image ([Friedman and Lotan, 1985](#)) and external locus of control ([Mazur and Lynch, 1989](#)), lack of confidence ([Holt et al., 1987](#)), personality ([Kokkinos, 2007](#)), low self-esteem ([Brenninkmeijer et al., 2001](#); [Byrne, 1999](#); [Villa and Calvete, 2001](#)), coping style ([Kyriacou and Pratt, 1985](#)), a sense of having scant control ([Santavirta et al., 2007](#)), work engagement ([Hakanen et al., 2006](#)), self-efficacy ([Brouwers and Tomic, 2000](#); [Pas et al., 2012](#); [Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2007;2010](#)), self-regulation ([Ghanizadeh and Ghonsooly, 2014](#)) and professional self image ([Avraham, 1972](#); [Friedman and Farber, 1992](#); [Friedman and Lotan, 1993](#); [Hughes et al., 1987](#)). In this context it should be noted that Friedman and Farber maintain there is a mutual relationship between professional self image and burnout, with poor professional self image causing burnout, affecting teacher professional self image.

2.4.1.2. Environmental Factors

Environmental causes of burnout include teacher-student interaction ([Byrne, 1999](#); [Darling-Hammond, 1990](#); [Farber, 1983](#); [Friedman and Farber, 1992](#); [Lortie, 1975](#); [Nias, 1999](#)), teacher-colleague interaction ([Dvir, 2007](#); [Kokkinos, 2007](#)), teacher-principal interaction ([Billingsley and Cross, 1992](#); [Byrne, 1999](#); [Mazur and Lynch, 1989](#); [Rozenholtz, 1989](#)) and teacher-parent interaction ([Cohen et al., 1999](#); [Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2007](#)).

2.4.1.3. Organizational Factors

Organizational factors influencing burnout were: low salary (Trendall, 1989), lack of respect from society (Mazur and Lynch, 1989), few advancement opportunities (Fimian and Santoro, 1983; Travers and Cooper, 1996), role conflict (Byrne, 1999; Mazur and Lynch, 1989; Smylie, 1990), overload (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2007), organizational changes (Farber, 2000; Lasky, 2005), school-level (Pas *et al.*, 2012), and unreasonable demands (Kokkinos, 2007; Santavirta *et al.*, 2007; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2007).

Various models were developed during the 1990s to describe the origins of burnout. Thus, for example, Maslach and Leiter (1997) developed the model of correspondence between human strength and six components of the working environment: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values. Later, the concept of commitment to work was developed as representing the work environment (Maslach *et al.*, 2001).

Gavish (2002) describes the three main approaches to burnout research differently:

- 1) The Theory of Conservation of Resources (COR): This theory was developed by Taris *et al.* (1999). They believe demands of the profession threaten the individuals' resources, and therefore become a source of tension, leading to fatigue. Resources help overcome the need to cope with defensive behavior, and improve the teacher's feeling of competence, neutralizing burnout. Ashforth and Lee (1997) support this approach, having performed statistical analysis on sixty earlier studies.
- 2) Organizational Factors: Friedman (2000) and Friedman and Farber (1992) maintain the diminishing of the feeling of competence caused by environmental factors contributes to burnout. Friedman and Farber note that in circumstances where environmental-organizational factors are driven by individuals with a high degree of self confidence, achieving goals and expectations will probably contribute to burnout. Teachers sure of their talents expect those talents will lead to appropriate financial compensation. When it fails to arrive, or is a disappointing amount, likelihood of burnout increases. Friedman (2000) refers to such a situation as a gap between expected levels, as opposed to observed levels of self-confidence.
- 3) Existential Perspective: Pines (2000) maintained burnout is the expression of the absence of existential significance the individual expected to derive from working. Burnout is connected to career choice, parts of which are tied to unconscious aspects of the person, motivated by childhood experiences, gratification of needs, etc. Choice carries hope, aspirations, and a very high level of involvement of self. Professional success lends significance to a person's actions. When teachers fail to achieve these aspirations, they feel they lack importance and become burned out. The models discussing balance between demands from employees and their resources (DCM) should be added to those already mentioned, with the most famous being Bakker's Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker *et al.*, 2003; Hakanen *et al.*, 2006).

In light of the studies that pointed out the correlations between too many roles, tasks, and responsibility, and burnout, we assumed the homeroom teachers would be relatively more burned out than the subject teachers. Due to the uniqueness of the homeroom teacher's role, and its prestige, we presumed that the homeroom teachers' professional identity would be greater than that of the subject teachers.

Since no previous studies were found on the topic, we did not offer a hypothesis regarding the differences between the two groups of teachers regarding the correlation between their professional identity, burnout, and emotional well-being.

3. Method

3.1. Sample

Since most teachers in Israel are female, the study sample included 431 female teachers, 49% homeroom teachers (N=209) and 51% subject teachers (N=232). The length of time teaching ranged between 1-45 years, with the average seniority 15.01 (SD=6.87).

3.1.1. Tools

3.1.1.1. The Teacher Burnout Questionnaire for Measuring Teacher Burnout (Friedman, 1999)

This scale is an improvement over the previous scale for measuring teacher burnout. It was developed by Friedman and Lotan (1985), and based on the burnout scale of Maslach and Jackson (1981). The scale included 14 items, comprising 3 sub-scales:

3.2.1. Emotional Fatigue

Individual examples: "I feel teaching is physically difficult for me." "I feel teaching tires me out too much." In Friedman (1999) internal reliability was calculated according to Cronbach's alpha, and found to be $\alpha=.90$. In the present study, internal reliability was $\alpha=.89$.

3.2.2. Non-Fulfillment

For example: "I feel I'm not realizing myself in teaching. I feel as a teacher I'm not getting along in life." In Friedman (1999) internal reliability was calculated according to Cronbach's alpha, and found to be $\alpha=.82$ while in the present study, $\alpha=.81$.

3.2.3. Depersonalization

For example: “I feel my students don’t really want to learn” and “I thought I would like students much better than the ones I have now.” In Friedman (1999) internal reliability was calculated and was $\alpha=.79$. In the present study, internal reliability was calculated as $\alpha=.77$.

3.3.1. Teachers’ Professional Identity Scale (Fisherman and Weiss, 2011)

This scale is based on the scales developed by Kramer and Hoffman (1981), Galante (1985), and Fisherman (2004). The scale items were selected from the above-mentioned scales, interviews with the teachers’ teachers, and questionnaires distributed to the teachers’ teachers. A detailed description of the scale’s development can be found in Fisherman and Weiss (2011). A preliminary analysis (an E.F.A., of 41 items, to which 180 teachers responded, produced 4 tested factors in relation to 27 items. Reliability of the factors, according to the Cronbach’s alpha formula was from 59 to 92... factor analysis supports A.F.C.) indicates a complete match between the 4-factor model and the empirical data. The context measurements were above .95, and error measurement less than .05.

The four factors found: (a) career choice confidence: including items such as “I realize my potential through teaching, I’m certain I did well by choosing teaching.” The reliability of that factor, according to Cronbach’s alpha formula in the original research, was $\alpha=.92$. In the present study, $\alpha=.94$; (b) professional efficacy: expresses the degree to which the teacher feels she has the knowledge, skills, and tools to be a good teacher. Example statements: “I know the tricks of the trade in teaching, and what to do in that profession.” The factor’s reliability, according to Cronbach’s alpha in the previous study, was $\alpha=.88$. In the present research, $\alpha=.92$; (c) sense of mission: expresses the degree to which the teacher feels teaching is a mission. Example statements: “For me, teaching is a calling,” “I’ve always felt my mission in life was to be a teacher.” The reliability of this factor, according to Cronbach’s alpha, was $\alpha=.65$ in the original research, but $\alpha=.89$ in the present study; (d) reputation: expresses the teacher’s view of the profession. Example statements: “When I see a teacher, I feel admiration for him,” “When someone acts disrespectfully toward teachers I feel he is hurting me.” The reliability of this factor according to Cronbach’s alpha is $\alpha=.59$. In the present research (after removing item #27, which caused a reduction in reliability) $\alpha=.68$.

3.3.2. Emotional Wellbeing Questionnaire (Satisfaction with Life Scale – SWLS)

The original scale was compiled by Diener (1984), and translated into Hebrew by Shmotkin and Lomranz (1998). The scale examines how satisfied each individual is with life, meaning the respondent is asked to subjectively judge his or her satisfaction with life. The questionnaire contains five statements on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 7 (“strongly agree”). The questionnaire scores range from 5 to 35. A score of 20 represents the mid-point, meaning the respondent has an equal sense of satisfaction and lack of satisfaction. The more the score falls below 20, the less satisfaction, and the higher it rises above 20, the greater the satisfaction. In the study by Steger and Kashdan (2007), reliability for the test-retest method lay between .79 and .89. Diener (1984) reported a reliability level after two months of $r=.83$, and internal consistency of $\alpha=.82$. Internal consistency measured with Cronbach’s alpha in the current study was $\alpha=.89$.

4. Results

The sample of teachers was divided into three groups according to seniority in teaching and at the 33rd and 66th percentile. The first group included seniority of 1-7 years. The second ranged from 8-18 years seniority, and the third 19-45 years.

The decision to prefer dividing the groups according to seniority according to the 33rd and 66th percentiles, despite the accepted division into beginner and veteran teachers was based on the research goal of comparing homeroom teachers to subject teachers. In Israel, the trend is to try not to appoint new teachers as homeroom teachers, and therefore, a comparison between new and veteran teachers would be less effective.

A two-way 2x3 MANOVA was performed with the goal of examining the differences between seniority groups and position regarding professional identity, burnout and well-being, with 2 being the two job groups, and 3 the three seniority groups.

The results show significant differences in the main effect between the seniority groups: ($F(3, 427) = 4.39$, $p<.000$), $\eta^2=.10$ and the job effect ($F(2, 428) = 3.59$, $p<.000$), $\eta^2=.08$.

The interaction between seniority and job was found to be significant regarding emotional exhaustion: ($F(6, 424) = 2.66$, $p<.05$), $\eta^2=.02$. Regarding depersonalization

($F(6, 424) = 3.67$, $p<.02$), $\eta^2=.03$, and regarding professional efficacy ($F(6, 424) = 3.06$, $p<.05$), $\eta^2=.02$.

Figures 1, 2, and 3 below describe the interaction findings.

Figure-1. Interaction of job*seniority relative to emotional exhaustion

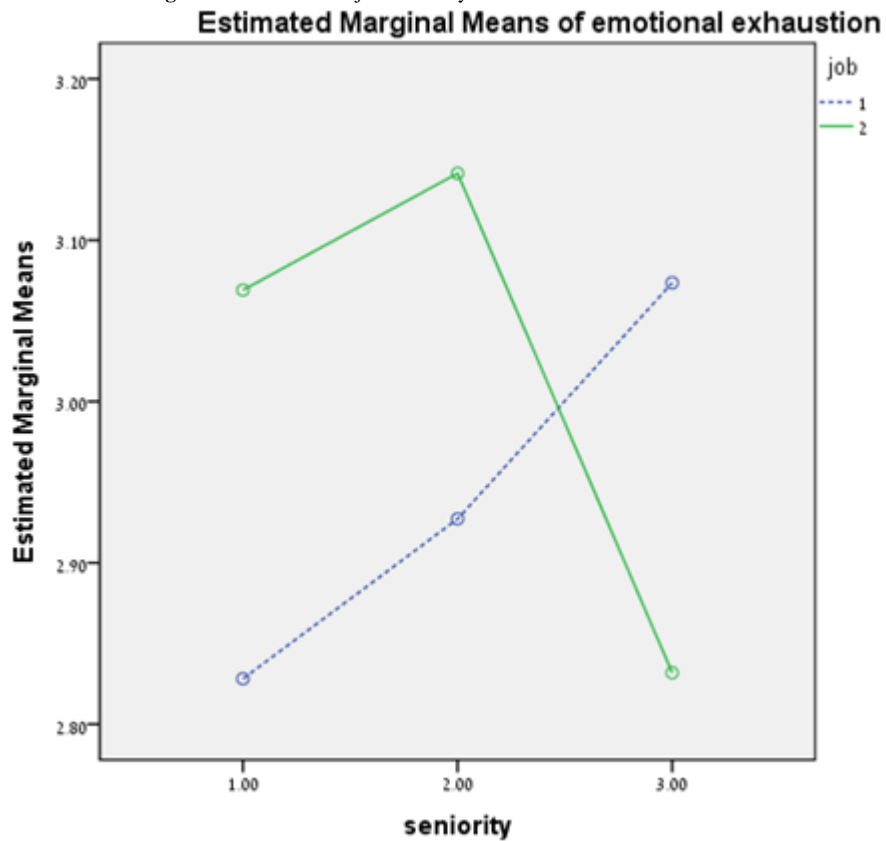


Figure 1 shows a different pattern among subject teachers and homeroom teachers. The teachers feel more emotional exhaustion in comparison to the homeroom teachers in the group with low seniority, and those with most seniority feel less exhausted. The homeroom teachers feel less exhausted in the group with low seniority, but they feel more exhausted in the group with most seniority.

Figure-2. interaction job*seniority relative to depersonalization

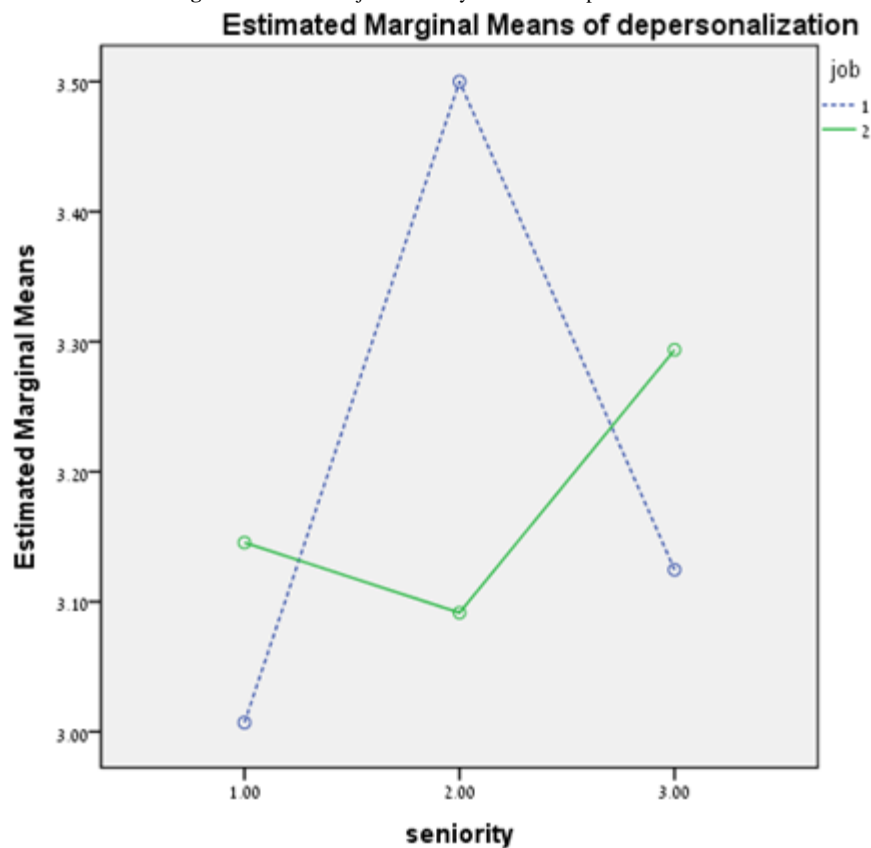


Figure 2 shows that at the beginning of their professional careers and in the third seniority group, teachers and homeroom teachers are similar regarding depersonalization. In the second seniority group, the homeroom teachers

felt more burnout regarding depersonalization as compared to the subject teachers.

Figure 3. interaction job*seniority relative to professional efficacy.

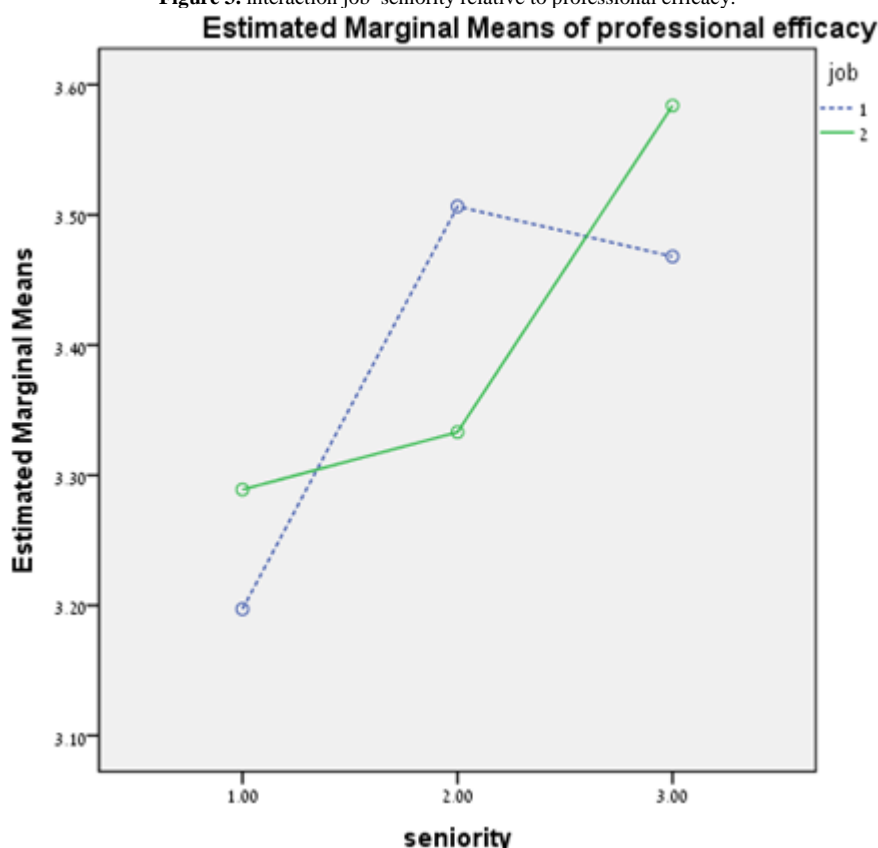


Figure 3 shows a clear increase in the sense of professional efficacy between the group of new homeroom teachers and the middle group, followed by stability. Among the subject teachers, it seems there is stability in the sense of professional efficacy among the group of new teachers and the medium seniority group, and a rise in the sense of professional efficacy is only apparent in the group with the most seniority.

Post hoc analysis using the Duncan test, carried out to examine the source of the differences, showed significant differences in the general professional identity score, and in professional efficacy and reputation factors. Since the job variable included only two values (homeroom teachers and teachers), the analyses were only carried out for the variable of seniority. The analysis results appear in Table 1.

Table-1. Means, SD and post-Hoc Comparisons for Multiple Comparisons of Professional Identity for Three Teachers' Groups

	A N=60		B N=90		C N=90		p	Significant post-hoc analysis
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Well-being	5.66	.07	5.60	.11	5.60	.08	n.s.	
Burnout	2.81	.06	3.11	.09	2.89	.06	n.s.	
Exhaustion	2.95	.08	3.03	.11	2.95	.08	n.s.	
Non- fulfillment	2.44	.08	2.76	.11	2.56	.09	n.s.	
Depersonalization	3.01	.07	3.30	.09	3.21	.07	n.s.	
Professional identity	3.21	.04	3.30	.05	3.35	.04	<.02	c>a
Confidence	3.20	.05	3.23	.06	3.31	.05	n.s.	
Mission	3.36	.04	3.42	.06	3.41	.05	n.s.	
Efficacy	3.24	.04	3.42	.05	3.53	.04	<.03 <.00	b>a c>a
Reputation	2.95	.04	3.16	.06	3.00	.04	<.03	b>a

With the goal of examining the differences between the groups (role*seniority) regarding the relationship between emotional well-being and professional identity and burnout, linear stepwise regression was performed among teachers and class teachers in each of the seniority groups to predict well-being by the professional identity factors and burnout factors. Analyses were performed on each group separately.

The results appear in Table 2.

Table-2. Results of stepwise linear regression analysis for well-being by professional identity factors and burnout factors among teachers and class teachers

	Step	Variables	B	SE B	η^2	R ²	R ² Δ	F
Low Seniority								
Teachers	S 1	Fatigue	-.25	.25	-.31	.10		11.67***
Class teachers	S 1	Non-fulfillment	-.38	.38	-.14	.18		12.44 ***
	S 2	Mission	.63	.25	.43	.27	.09	13.48 ***
	S3	Depersonalization	-.42	-.21	-.39	.37	.10	
Medium Seniority								
Teachers	S 1	Confidence	.61	.61	.91	.28		15.11***
	S2	Efficacy	-.60	1.2	.48	.33	.05	10.79***
Class teachers	S 1	Confidence	-1.38	1.38	.76	.58		57.88 ***
Most Seniority								
Teachers	S 1	Confidence	.78	.78	.52	.27		28.81***
Class teachers	S 1	Confidence	.87	.87	.39	.58		115.37***
	S 2	Mission	.68	-.21	.29	.63	.05	72.01 ***
	S3	Depersonalization	-.34	.26	-.22	.66	.03	52.69***

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 2 shows that teachers and homeroom teachers show different predictive patterns in each seniority group.

4.1. New Teachers Group

While emotional exhaustion predicted emotional well-being among subject teachers (negative predictive coefficient and around 10% variance), among the homeroom teachers, a lack of self-fulfillment (negative coefficient), sense of mission (positive coefficient), and depersonalization (negative coefficient) predicted around 37% of the variance.

4.2. Medium Seniority Group

Among the subject teachers, career choice confidence (positive coefficient) and professional efficacy (positive coefficient) predicted emotional well-being and explained 33% of the variance. Among homeroom teachers, career choice confidence (positive coefficient) predicted 58% of variance (!).

4.3. Group with Most Seniority

Among the subject teachers, career choice confidence (positive coefficient) predicted emotional well-being and explained 27% of the variance. Among homeroom teachers, career choice confidence (positive coefficient), sense of mission (positive coefficient), and depersonalization (negative coefficient) predicted emotional well-being and explained 66% of variance (!).

5. Discussion

The study's primary goal was examining the differences between homeroom and subject teachers in three seniority groups, regarding professional identity, burnout, sense of emotional well-being, and the correlation between them.

The MANOVA analyses produced three significant interactions, two regarding burnout (emotional exhaustion and depersonalization) and one regarding professional identity (professional efficacy).

5.1. Burnout

Regarding emotional exhaustion, it was found that in the new teachers group, the subject teachers experience more emotional exhaustion relative to the homeroom teachers, while the group of veterans feel less exhausted. The homeroom teachers feel less exhausted in the group with low seniority, but more exhausted in the group with most seniority. During their first seven years of working, subject teachers experience more emotional exhaustion relative to the homeroom teachers. These findings are surprising considering that the homeroom teachers have much more work and responsibility than the subject teachers. Perhaps we can ascribe the difference to the personal relationship with the student. Friedman and Gavish (2003) note the personal teacher-student relations as one of the reasons for teacher burnout. Fisherman (2014) noted that personal relationships, one of the most important components of the New Horizon reform, are very difficult for subject teachers to maintain. In contrast, the homeroom teacher has constant

personal interaction with her students; a weekly hour is devoted to raising issues unconnected to material studied, and she is expected to organize social activities and create a successful study climate based on a positive personal relationship. In Israeli elementary schools, the homeroom teacher teaches her class for many hours relative to the subject teacher or to teachers worldwide (Tzidkiyahu and Ronen, 2008). Perhaps, due to these facts, the homeroom teacher feels she has positive personal connection with her students that fulfills the system's expectations. Possibly this is the reason she feels less exhaustion than subject teachers. After 18 years of work, the homeroom teacher feels tired. Sometimes she may feel apathetic regarding the children's problems, sometimes the students feel she is too old or that she finds it difficult to understand them. Their inner world is relatively unfamiliar to her, there have been rapid technological developments, the cultural and media environment has changed, and she has trouble keeping up with the developments. These feelings can be expressed in the homeroom teacher's sense of emotional exhaustion. In contrast, the subject teacher has different expectations. She expects of herself to keep updated regarding disciplinary and pedagogic knowledge, to teach effectively, interest the students, and help them attain satisfactory achievements. Sometimes she does not expect to maintain personal relationships with her students. After having passed what she considers the critical years, she is able to continue teaching. Maybe, for this reason, the subject teacher's emotional exhaustion remains reasonably static in the low and medium seniority groups, and is reduced in the group with most seniority.

This explanation can also help us explain the finding connected with depersonalization. At the beginning of their professional careers and in group with most seniority, teachers and homeroom teachers are similar regarding depersonalization. In the medium seniority group, the homeroom teachers felt more burnout regarding depersonalization as compared to the group of subject teachers. Depersonalization expresses the teacher's alienation towards the student, and contradicts a personal relationship between them. Teachers and homeroom teachers feel the need to create warm and close personal relationships with their students during their first years working in elementary schools. Later, the subject teachers focus more on teaching their subjects and less on interpersonal relationships, while the homeroom teachers greatly value these relationships. When the homeroom teachers encounter difficulties in developing and maintaining personal relationships with the students, they feel burnout within the area of depersonalization. The subject teachers who attach less importance to the relationships do not feel burnout in this area. Later in their professional lives, both homeroom and subject teachers find balance between their expectations regarding interpersonal relationships, and those they actually create. The subject teachers' expectations in this area remain modest, and do not, therefore, cause burnout. The homeroom teachers moderate their expectations; after many years, they are limited in their ability to create interpersonal relationships, the age gap between them and their students, and are more aware of their capabilities and skills, and therefore feel less burnout in this area. Clearly this explanation needs support from additional studies with suitable methods.

5.2. Professional Identity

There is a clear increase in the sense of professional efficacy between the group of new homeroom teachers and the medium seniority group, followed by stability. Among the subject teachers, it seems sense of professional efficacy is steady among the new teachers and medium seniority groups, and a rise in the sense of professional efficacy is only apparent in the group with the most seniority.

As noted above, the role of elementary school homeroom teachers is complex and difficult. Perhaps, at the beginning of their professional life, they lack confidence in their ability to fulfill their complex role. As demonstrated in the theoretical background, there is no training program for homeroom teachers in Israel, and they were therefore trained as subject, rather than homeroom, teachers. They are thus highly motivated at the beginning of their educational path but, perhaps, have a low level of professional efficacy. As they spend years in education, they gain experience, practical knowledge, and successes, and their sense of professional efficacy increases and remains stable during the third stage of seniority. There is stability between the first and second stages of the subject teachers' professional lives, and an increase between the second and third. The subject teacher who "survived" the first five critical years is relatively confident of her professional efficacy. Perhaps when she reaches the third stage of her professional seniority, she must choose one of three alternatives: retiring, advancing to a more senior teaching position, such as a subject coordinator, or continuing to work as a subject teacher. If she chooses to advance or continue, she will almost certainly do so because she is confident in her professional ability, and therefore possesses a high sense of professional efficacy.

5.3. The Connection between Professional Identity, Burnout, and Emotional Well-Being among Homeroom and Subject Teachers

In all three seniority groups and two position groups (subject and homeroom teachers), there were different patterns of predicting emotional well-being according to professional identity and burnout factors.

5.3.1. The Low Seniority Group

Emotional exhaustion predicted emotional well-being (negative coefficient) among the subject teachers, with the proportion of variance explained around 10%. The negative correlation between exhaustion in burnout and emotional well-being is understood, and was found to be in accordance with the studies by Maslach and Leiter (1997) and Martin (2010), brought in the theoretical background. Unlike the subject teachers, among homeroom teachers, the factors of lack of self-actualization (negative coefficient), a sense of mission (positive coefficient), and

depersonalization (negative coefficient) predicted emotional well-being and explained 37% of the variance. This model is interesting. The factors of lack of self-fulfillment and depersonalization in burnout, and of sense of mission in professional identity, explained 37% of the variance for emotional well-being. It would seem the homeroom teacher views her educational work as self-fulfillment and chose to be a homeroom teacher because she sees her role as a mission and greatest possible utilization of her talents. The fact she continues working despite the position's complexity, indicates, perhaps, that her work is central to her life and emotional well-being. The importance of the depersonalization factor to the work of the homeroom teacher was discussed above, and this finding joins it. It would seem that two of the burnout factors, together with the sense of mission, are connected with the homeroom teacher's emotional well-being.

5.3.2. The Medium Seniority Group

Among the subject teachers, career choice confidence and professional efficacy (positive predictive coefficients) explained 33% of the variance for emotional well-being, and among the homeroom teachers, confidence in professional choice explained 58% of the variance for emotional well-being. The medium seniority group included subject and homeroom teachers with 8-18 years seniority. At this stage of their career, both subject and homeroom teachers begin to think about their future in their career. The decision to remain in education, particularly as teachers, is not self-understood. Her children have usually grown up, and the teacher does not feel comfortable teaching due to the relatively short working hours and vacations. If the subject and homeroom teachers have remained in their job, it is either because they are sure of their professional choice or because they have no other choice. If they are sure of their choice, their sense of emotional well-being will be high, and if, unfortunately, they had no choice or alternative but to remain in education despite wanting to leave, both their career choice confidence and emotional well-being will be low, since they feel "trapped" in their work.

Among the group of subject teachers, the professional efficacy factor joins that of career choice confidence, to predict emotional well-being. Perhaps the reason is connected with the skills required for teaching. During her first years of employment, the teacher is very busy with class management, reinforcing study habits, etc. Now she feels the need to re-examine her teaching abilities. The preconditions for classroom study are present, and she feels that improving her students' learning is dependent on her developing her teaching skills. In addition, after several years teaching, the teacher feels that a significant amount of time has passed since she was trained, and now she needs to renew and go deeper into studying and developing new methods. Perhaps this is the reason why professional efficacy contributes to predicting subject teachers' emotional well-being. Homeroom teachers focus on creating personal relationships and helping students with individual concerns. When they sense that they succeed in "reaching" their students, they feel able to continue teaching, so professional efficacy did not join career choice confidence among homeroom teachers in this seniority group.

5.3.3. The Group of Veterans

Among the subject teachers, career choice confidence (positive coefficient) predicted 27% of the variance. At this stage of her professional life, if the teacher decided to remain in teaching, it is because she is confident in her professional choice, and therefore she has a strong sense of emotional well-being.

Among homeroom teachers, career choice confidence (positive coefficient), a sense of mission (positive coefficient), and depersonalization (negative coefficient) predicted 66% of variance for emotional well-being. As noted above, after 18 years of teaching, the homeroom teacher may feel exhaustion. She is usually in her 40s, sometimes has less patience than she did previously, and is liable to be concerned about whether she is still suited to being a homeroom teacher. She is considered a veteran, experienced teacher, and it is not difficult for her to continue teaching without being a homeroom teacher. If she chooses to continue, it is because she is confident with her professional choice, and feels she has a social and national mission in education. As mentioned above, the main condition for being a homeroom teacher is the interpersonal relationship, and therefore, if she has burnout in the depersonalization factor, she will have poor emotional well-being. Therefore, career choice confidence and sense of mission predict emotional well-being with a positive predictive coefficient, and depersonalization is added with a negative coefficient.

To summarize the regression, it is important to note three main points:

- 1) Only in the low seniority group, most predictors among both groups were burnout factors. In the second and third seniority groups, most of the predictors of emotional well-being were professional identity factors. The centrality of professional identity in the subject and homeroom teacher's life can be seen from here.
- 2) In all three seniority groups, the proportion of variance explained for the homeroom teachers was higher than for the subject teachers. This is an interesting finding and may testify to the centrality of professional identity and burnout in the lives of homeroom teachers, compared to subject teachers. Of course, to be sure of this explanation, a study is needed focusing on the question of the centrality of teaching to the life of the subject and homeroom teachers.
- 3) An increase can be seen in the proportion of variance explained for emotional well-being according to professional identity and burnout with an increase in seniority, among both the subject and homeroom teachers. We would also like to suggest that this increase emanates from the place education occupies in the teacher's life. The more seniority the subject and homeroom teacher have, the more education increases in significance for emotional well-being and life, if they decided to remain in the field.

6. Educational Recommendations

To choose homeroom teachers meticulously, particularly in the medium and highest seniority groups. To examine if candidates for homeroom teachers are exhausted, and whether they see their students as “people” and not “students”. To help the homeroom teachers in the second and third seniority groups see and interpret their success, to flood the homeroom teachers with educational successes, and help them feel less exhausted and more “containing” in all possible ways.

To finalize and define the homeroom teacher’s roles, responsibilities, and authority. To develop a training program for homeroom teachers and aid them at the beginning of their professional journey in forming their professional identity as both subject and homeroom teachers.

To help teachers improve their emotional well-being, it is important to distinguish between the different seniority groups. During the initial years, it is worth investing in preventing and reducing burnout, while in the middle years investment should be made in professional identity. In the veteran group: among subject teachers – in confidence in professional choice in professional identity, and among homeroom teachers – in confidence in professional choice, the sense of mission in professional identity, and in viewing the student as a person.

7. Study Limitations

We believe the study limitations are connected to the sample. It is important to conduct a similar study on an additional sample of male teachers, on teachers in post-elementary schools, and on teachers from various cultures.

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