

# Teachers ‘Blog as a Tool for Motivating and Preventing Teachers’ Professional Burnout in the Era of Digitalization

Avdyukova A.Ye.\* Nikolaeva M.A.

*Ural State Pedagogical University, Yekaterinburg, Russian Federation*

*\*Corresponding author. Email: avdukova@bk.ru*

## ABSTRACT

The article focuses on the problem of digitalization of educational environment. The authors of the article confirm risks that arise due to involvement of teachers into the media space, one of which is development of emotional burnout and physical exhaustion of teachers. So, in addition to social, economic and technological factors that affect emotional burnout syndrome (EBS), there is a wary attitude of teachers themselves to development of media technologies and innovations in education. In this regard, there is a question raised about effective and safe use of digital technologies to increase media literacy of teachers in the era of digitalization. The authors justify objectivity of appearance of signs of emotional burnout of educators, among which there is a lack of ability to maintain working efficiency, constant fatigue, causeless headaches, etc. Among the reasons for appearing of EBS there have been pointed out: a high degree of workload of a teacher, frequent conflicting demands of society, low salary and a status of a teacher. The main reason for steadiness of signs of emotional burnout and physical exhaustion is the lack of social support, which is manifested in dissatisfaction with the current situation, the attitude of society to teaching activities and those forms of professional development that are offered to teachers in Russia. As a result, the authors of the study emphasize that there is a feeling of insecurity and reluctance of teachers to make an attempt to prevent development of burnout syndrome by traditional tools and methods. Since teacher blogs in social networks are currently gaining popularity in teaching community, the authors consider the teacher blog to be one of the tools for professional growth and prevention of teachers' burnout syndrome.

In connection with this state of matter, the authors conducted a study "Social networks as a tool for preventing the burnout syndrome of Russian teachers", the purpose of which was to study the potential for teachers to use blog materials in the educational environment as a means of preventing emotional burnout syndrome.

A content analysis of contents of teachers' blogs was also conducted. It is important that the content of personal blogs of teachers corresponds to several key thematic areas: a methodological collection; a tool for creating the image of a teacher; a motivational tool for colleagues; a block as a self-assessment of the results of one's own teaching activities.

Based on the results of the study, a number of arguments are given about the feasibility of using personal teachers' blogs to prevent development of emotional burnout syndrome.

**Keywords:** *digitalization, media education technologies, teacher blog, emotional burnout*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of global digitalization, pedagogical community, that is actively involved in developing and using media-educational technologies, highlights both positive and negative aspects of this process. The main positive results of media-pedagogy include media literacy, which, according to A.V. Fedorov, "helps a person to actively use the opportunities of the information field of television, radio, video, cinema, press, and the

Internet" (A.V. Fedorov, 2007). As N. B. Kirillova notes, the issue of the role of media education in the pedagogical environment has become one of the most relevant (N. B. Kirillova, 2018). On the other hand, including a teacher in additional media space can worsen the situation of emotional burnout, since even a media-competent teacher often finds it difficult to navigate the huge information flow of the media space. As a rule, young teachers adapt to innovations faster and better, they are less emotional, and spend less time and resources, and willing share their

teaching experience. But, as it is known, in our country, the majority of teachers working at schools are experienced and long-working te. They experience more difficulties to master media space and media education technologies, but at the same time they understand the need of innovation, as a result they are under stress that often leads to burnout. Syndrome of emotional burnout (G. Freudenberger, 1974) is understood as exhaustion, which causes a change in personal, psychophysiological and physical characteristics of a person.

The search for modern tools and methods to prevent burnout among representatives of various professional communities, whose activity is linked with constant communication and interaction, development and change, has been existing since the 70s of the last century. Meanwhile, the problem of preventing introduction of a feeling of constant fatigue, emotional and physical exhaustion, reduced receptivity and reactivity, activity and energy remains extremely relevant. Emotional burnout as a form of professional deformation of a personality for experienced teachers is subjectively a well-known phenomenon that appears unnoticeably due to: intense psychoemotional activity, a destabilizing environment, increased responsibility for performed functions, a dysfunctional psychological atmosphere of professional activity and, as a rule, a deterioration in productivity of interaction. At the same time, teachers themselves note that education should ensure constructive interaction between all participants of educational process in order to improve its quality (E. M. Ibragimova, L. T. Bakulina, M. G. Ibragimov, 2017).

The proposed means of preventing EBS are ineffective due to the fact that they are implemented in the plane of traditional psychological and pedagogical interaction, where a teacher does not feel protected and safe. That is, insecurity of a teacher "...dissatisfaction with the support received ... " affects all indicators of teacher's burnout (C. Fiorillia, P. Gabolab, A. Pepec, N. Meyland, D. Curchod-Ruedie, O. Albanesec, P.-A. Doudind, 2015).

The lack of social support is expressed, first of all, in imposition of irrelevant teachers' career enhancement, impossibility to participate in informal pedagogical communities, poor social and psychological protection of the teacher's status, which in its turn leads to a disturbance of psychological safety of a teacher.

Identical situation is also actual for other countries. For example, among problems faced by teachers in Romania (D. Potolea & L. Ciolan, 2003), there are those related to a social status of the profession, low pay, lack of motivation for a teaching career, non-stop development of teaching profession, generated by new requirements of society (N. Dutse, G. Panishoara, I. O. Panishoara, 2014).

Analysis of results of scientific-practical research in this direction suggested that the search for tools to prevent the development of EBS should be deployed in the direction of providing social support to a teacher via exposing him/her to interaction and communication in the media space of social networks. Moreover, teachers actively use opportunities of social networks for their professional activities, image formation, reputation management, etc.

According to the opinion of M. A. Nikolaeva "online reputation Management" (OnlineReputationManagement – ORM) is formation of a positive image of a brand, person or a company in the Internet – an eternal race to which it is necessary to be ready" (Nikolaeva M. A., 2015).

Firstly, it is a way to express yourself as a professional, share methodological developments with colleagues and parents, talk about difficulties and achievements in the profession, and secondly, it is an opportunity to communicate without breaking personal space, without feeling a burden of responsibility for an opinion expressed and request to provide with professional assistance.

On the one hand social networks as media platforms of contemporary educational environment have a number of advantages: transparency, accessibility, mobility, immediate feedback, ability to self-expression, to share one's experience and feel importance in profession. Today, a teacher can broadcast his/her experience "on the air". The brightest tool is the technology of blogging. In dictionary articles, "blog" is interpreted as a network journal of one or more authors, organized in reverse chronological order, respectively. A blog is a web site that contains constantly updated records of a person (blogger). A blogger can leave their entries as texts, images, or videos. A blogger is a person who runs a blog.

On the other hand, there are risks connected with the fact that educational blogging is conducted by young teachers who often don't have a specific psychological and pedagogical practice.

## **2. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH**

The methodology of this research corresponds to specifics of educational sphere in Russia. The study was conducted on the basis of the Ural state pedagogical University during 2019 and includes a ratio of quantitative and qualitative research data.

Operationalization of basic concepts has defined the methodology of online research. Content analysis of teachers' accounts was used to develop an online questionnaire. Variables for choosing teachers were: residence, teaching experience, and education. The online questionnaire in its final version included three blocks of 38 points. Statistical software SPSS was used in the process of analyzing and interpreting the obtained data.

Innovative potential of using a blog in the educational environment as a means of preventing EMS is a little-studied phenomenon. According to I. A. Kudryavtseva, "blogs, especially professional, teachers' ones, are a relatively new phenomenon among teachers. When creating blogs, teachers do not always realize what additional opportunities are open to them, as well as to other participants and readers of their blog" (Kudryavtseva, 2012).

The main issue of the research is to ensure a possibility of professional interaction and communication of teachers through teacher blogging as a tool of motivation to master the media space and prevent the syndrome of emotional

burnout, which develops as a result of psychoemotional stressful activities. This problem can be solved in several aspects.

Do teachers who have mastered media education technologies and run personal blogs have any prerequisites and signs of EBS? What role does blogging play in maintaining teacher's efficiency? What is the length teachers' career of those teachers' who turn to innovative tools and what is their purpose? How does the involvement of school teachers in blogging activity affect their manifestation of signs of burnout syndrome? Is it possible for teachers who read certain blogs to prevent developing burnout syndrome? Why do teachers create their blogs on social networks such as Instagram, Facebook, Vkontakte, Telegram, etc.?

The goal of the research is to consider media space of social networks as a tool that, on the one hand, contributes to motivation of teachers to master media space; on the other hand, to prevent development of burnout syndrome of school teachers in Russia.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There have been a content analysis of the content of 127 teachers' blogs study conducted within the research. These are blogs of teachers in primary education (43%), subject teachers (28%), tutoring (22%), teachers of additional education (12%).

Analyzing the content of a teacher's blog, the following thematic areas were identified: blog - methodological collection; blog - a tool for forming an image of a teacher; blog - a motivational tool for colleagues; blog as a self-assessment of results of their teaching activities.

Let's focus on the key thematic areas of teacher blogging, which are currently included in pedagogical media space of Runet in greater details.

1). the process of adaptation of a young teacher at school affects a personal aspect. The aim: to share internal experiences (fears of a young teacher, methodological inexperience, problems of interaction with class, teachers' and parents' groups, first victories and successes).

*Content characteristics:* emotionality, anxiety, vivid value judgments, sometimes inadequate criticism of the education system in our country, orientation to the West, low/average level of proficiency in pedagogical technologies, terminology, methods, etc.

This type of a blog is a launching pad for recognition of a young sucking teacher by teaching community. After a certain time, when the blog begins to gain popularity, subscribers perceive it as a blog recommendation for newly arrived young teachers. Such blog is as "baton", where young teachers draw advice, get recommendations, analyze difficult cases in their teaching practice.

*Age characteristics of authors:* from 20 to 25 years (they start teaching as students-interns). Purposeful, bold, determined, sensitive to everything new, capable of passion, independent, straightforward, critical and self-critical (however, self-esteem is contradictory, which leads to uncertainty, which is accompanied by sharpness

and swagger), they are characterized by maximalism, some of them have an identity crisis. At this age, there is a formation of professional thinking, self-affirmation in the professional and social spheres, the struggle for their "place in the sun".

2). Blog-methodical is a methodical collection which - affects professional and image aspects. Purpose: to declare yourself as a professional who has already achieved certain results. "Let's see how well I do my job! Why nobody notices!" (demonstration of professionalism and competence). A kind of "public report".

The reasons that contributed to creation of a blog and left a personal stamp on the content are the following:

- the need to share developments with colleagues and create a situation of success;
- the need to recognize professional skills of the teacher "from the outside";
- lack of support and recognition from school management and colleagues;
- the desire to be useful not only to children, but also to colleagues.

Sometimes these blogs are impersonal, but as they become more popular, it becomes necessary to make a claim about oneself.

*Content characteristics:* visual manuals, infographics, subject and thematic games, dating games, extracurricular activities, creative work, master classes on the use of information technologies in educational process, crafts, drawings, constructors, workbooks, etc. Bloggers with more than one thousand subscribers ask for a nominal fee for such content (from 100 to 350 rubles, workbooks from 200 to 450 rubles per a set).

*Type of content:* video sessions on application of guidelines, marathons to increase a number of subscribers and spread one's experience, life hacks, all types of activities that social networks offer today (surveys, tonalities, tests, etc.). Posting 2-3 times a week, aimed at keeping audience's attention to the page, quality of posts is high.

*Age peculiarities:* from 25 to 30 years old. Imaginative thinking is their characteristics. There is understanding of their professional activities. More and more people wonder if ratio of resources spent and received remuneration (salary) are relevant. Approaching the crisis of 30-year-olds.

3). Blog-history. The purpose of such blog is to broadcast every step of your professional life. The teacher tries on the role of a media person.

*Content characteristics:* Mixing professional and personal life in one blog. "Series, a story with a sequel". It is published almost all day of the teacher, starting from 8-00 until late at night, when the teacher-blogger tries to reflect on all actions, decisions and events. Among the most frequently publicly analyzed issues, we can highlight the following:

- "Why have I given an unsatisfactory mark for the term?"
- "How much have I got for this month?"
- "What present have I got for a teacher's day?"

- "Why have parents given on their child?"
- "How much do we need to be paid to "shut up" and work with a good quality?"
- "Why have students written a test poorly?"
- "What kind of crafts did the whole class do?"
- "How could we decorate a classroom by the 1<sup>st</sup> of September?"
- "What are lifehacks for a classroom corner?"
- "How can we take a selfie in class?»

Teachers-bloggers pay great attention external image of a teacher. This blog is actively gaining subscribers. Methodological developments, as a rule, are usually sold, although the price is symbolic. The blog contains many recommendations for reading books, using textbooks/tutorials, attending events, etc.

*Hidden motive:* to attract advertising budgets of producers stationary goods, bookshops, training centres. Let's refer this type of blogging to GPS (user-generated content).

*Type of content:* live broadcasts, video interviews, quotes, marathons to increase subscribers, lifehacks, challenges, all types of activities that social networks offer today (surveys, tonalities, tests, etc.). Regular posting, which works to keep audience's attention to one's personality, while the quality of posts is average (it is often copying of the content!).

*Age features:* from 23 to 27 (30) years. The content is gradually beginning to be influenced by personal life, as many bloggers have a family of their own.

It should be noted that there is a trend, when young teachers with less than 5 years of experience participate in teacher blogging, they actively share their experience with teachers who have been working in education for significantly more years.

To identify relationship between involvement in teacher blogging activity and prevention of burnout, 317 teachers were interviewed, 32.4% of whom work in the secondary/basic general education system; 40.2% - in primary education, 13.5% - in pre - school education; 5.7% - in higher education; 3.3% - in additional education; 2.5% - in secondary vocational education.

80,3% of the respondents have higher pedagogical education, 13.1 % have secondary pedagogical education, and about 7% have an education that allows them to work in the educational sphere.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The results of the research suggests that teachers should choose teachers' blogs in social networks purposefully and deliberately and use information obtained in their work, feeling inspiration, and joy, and interest. The content of blogs motivates teachers to improve and hone their teaching skills, find new instructional techniques, ability to solve private problems.

The wide geographical scope of the research showed significant influence of blogs in pedagogical community on teachers' efficiency.

11.9% of respondents have more than 25 years of teaching experience; 7.8% have 20-25 years of experience; 13.9% - 15-20 years; 18.4% - 10-15 years; 22.5% - 5-10 years; 25, 4 - less than 5 years.

92.7% of teachers noted that they are interested in innovations in education, and 75.2% actively apply new methodological techniques and solutions in their practice.

It's necessary to mention that of the basic values that determine attitudes, motives, interests and needs 69.8% of respondents have a family and home in the first place. Then, according to the hierarchy, values were distributed as follows: work (16.7%); material well-being (8.6%); recognition of colleagues (2%); recreation, entertainment (1.2%); friends (0.8%), career growth (0.8%).

It should be noted that disregard to recreation, entertainment and communication with friends leads to appearance of signs of emotional and physical burnout. For example, 75.5% of the surveyed teachers have recently felt constant fatigue, 72.2% emotional and physical exhaustion, and only 55.5% are able to maintain their performance throughout the school year.

65.7%, as teachers themselves note, have causeless headaches, sleep disorders, gastrointestinal disorders, changes in appetite (decrease or increase).

However, evident signs of emotional and physical burnout, and involvement in the activity of teachers-bloggers, teachers are more likely to experience positive emotions, such as: curiosity (72.3%); inspiration (48.7); joy (27.2%); surprise (25.7%); delight (17.3 %); pride (15.7%).

It should be noted that only a few respondents noted negative emotions (indifference - 1%, irritation - 2.6%, discontent - 3%). However, it is important that 8.4% of respondents do not experience anything. These data suggest that teachers purposefully choosing teachers' blogs compensate a lack of subjectivity when choosing social and professional support. Moreover, 54.7% of teachers often use methodological tips, recommendations, and developments of teachers-bloggers in their professional activities, 42.1% - sometimes, and 45.8% are ready to create their own teachers' blog.

A significant percentage of teachers turn to innovative teaching methods after seeing the results of their colleagues' implementations. This gives you an opportunity to discuss an innovation, get advice, highlight pros and cons, and try it themselves.

The teacher's involvement in the blogosphere gives teachers an opportunity to communicate, to reflect, to organize their experience, to share results. A significant percentage of teachers participating in the study are interested in creating their own blogs. Therefore, the

teacher's blog can be considered as a tool for motivating development of the media space.

The presence of a teacher in social networks and the manifestation of constant activity makes, to some extent, it possible to prevent developing burnout syndrome.

Teachers' blog opens up a new information environment for the teaching community and provides broad opportunities for organizing educational process and professional growth.

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