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Teaching with Purpose: How Calling Buffers Burnout's Impact on Teacher Behaviors

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Research consistently demonstrates that burnout is related to more counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) and fewer organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs). Nonetheless, there is limited research on the relationship between calling orientation (a sense of purpose and passion for one's work) and the behavioral outcomes of burnout, particularly within the context of teachers in the United States. The current cross-sectional study seeks to address this gap by investigating whether teachers' sense of calling moderates the relationship between burnout and both CWBs and OCBs. A total of 108 Kindergarten to 12th grade (K-12) teachers were recruited via Prolific to participate in an online survey. Participants answered questions about their calling orientation, burnout levels, CWBs, and OCBs. We hypothesized that burnout would be positively associated with CWBs and negatively associated with OCBs, and that a strong calling orientation would buffer these relationships. The survey results supported the prediction that teachers experiencing high levels of overall burnout were more likely to engage in CWBs. Importantly, teachers with a strong sense of calling were less likely to engage in CWBs, even when experiencing reduced personal accomplishment. Contrary to expectations, overall burnout was not associated with OCBs, nor did it interact with calling orientation to predict OCBs. The findings suggest that fostering a sense of calling could help minimize CWBs and enhance teachers' commitment to their work. Future research should explore how teacher recognition, professional development opportunities, and interventions that promote purpose or meaning can further support teacher well-being and reduce CWBs.

Keywords: burnout, calling orientation, counterproductive work behaviors, organizational citizenship behaviors, teaching

Burnout is a pervasive issue in the workplace and a key topic in Industrial-Organizational Psychology (Maslach et al., 2001). Burnout is detrimental to individual well-being and costly for businesses, with organizations losing $120 to $190 billion USD annually due to burnout and employee stress (Weiss, 2020). To address this issue, the present research explores whether a calling orientation—a sense of purpose and passion for one's work (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997)—buffers the effects of high levels of burnout prevalent among teachers (Marken & Agrawal, 2022). Despite extensive research on burnout, a notable gap remains in the literature regarding the moderating role of calling orientation in the relationship between burnout and engagement in counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs)— actions that harm and benefit an organization, respectively (Schnake, 1991; Spector et al., 2006). By understanding this relationship, organizations, and educational institutions can better tailor interventions to mitigate the consequences of burnout and foster more resilient and engaged workers.

Burnout and its Consequences

Burnout is a multidimensional concept comprised of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 2001). Emotional exhaustion refers to feelings of being overextended and drained of one's emotional and physical resources. The second dimension of burnout is depersonalization, which refers to negative, callous, and detached behaviors. The last dimension of burnout is reduced personal accomplishment, which is a sense of reduced self-efficacy or accomplishment. All three dimensions are responses to prolonged exposure to job stressors (Maslach & Leiter, 2008).

Employees who are burned out are more likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) and less likely to engage in organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs; Turek, 2020). CWBs are a set of actions or conscious decisions intended to harm the organization and/or the organization's stakeholders (Spector et al., 2006). These include abuse, production deviance, sabotage, theft, and withdrawal. In the context of teaching, examples of teacher CWBs could include absenteeism, misusing resources, plagiarism, and overall lack of caring for their students. CWBs are costly to organizations and hurt morale. Given that CWBs and burnout are strongly linked (Liang & Hsieh, 2007), it is crucial for organizations to prevent burnout among their employees as this may not only reduce CWBs but may also increase OCBs (Turek, 2020).

OCBs and CWBs are often viewed as opposites, as CWBs hurt the organization while OCBs benefit it (Dalal, 2005). Therefore, it is advantageous for organizations to encourage OCBs, as these behaviors benefit the organization without incurring additional costs.

OCBs are defined as behaviors that are not formally required by a particular job but are desired by the organization, such as punctuality, helping others on work-related issues, and volunteering (Schnake, 1991). These behaviors can be directed toward the organization or coworkers (Spector et al., 2010). In the context of teaching, OCBs are vital not only to the educational institution but also to its students. Examples of teacher OCBs include volunteering for extracurricular activities or paying for their own school supplies. Despite not being part of the job description, these behaviors are typically expected from those in the teaching profession (Litvinov, 2023). However, research indicates that burnout reduces engagement in OCBs (Turek, 2020).

Combating Teacher Burnout

Teachers are burning out at an increased rate (Pressley, 2021). Widely used to understand teacher burnout, the job demands-resources model argues that burnout occurs when the demands of the job outweigh the available resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2021). Common sources of stress include teaching unmotivated students, maintaining classroom discipline, confronting time pressures and workload demands, exposure to significant changes, evaluations by others, difficult relationships with colleagues, administration or management, and poor working conditions (Kyriacou, 2001). Reports suggest that teachers in the United States experience reduced autonomy in the classroom, along with declining levels of support from administrators and school districts (Walker, 2016). The growing emphasis on standardized testing, coupled with recent political scrutiny of curricula, has further limited teachers' ability to make decisions about classroom management and instructional strategies (Heubeck, 2023; Stanford, 2023).

Research suggests that teachers can combat burnout by reducing job demands and increasing job resources. One way to do this is through job crafting (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), which allows teachers to customize their work environment to align with their skills, preferences, and values. This proactive approach helps buffer against burnout by promoting autonomy, fostering resilience, and enabling teachers to navigate challenges while preserving their sense of meaning and purpose (Van Wingerden & Poell, 2019).

Another approach is through perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986). The negative effects of burnout are mitigated when employees perceive that their organization values their contributions and prioritizes their well-being (Turek, 2020). This support can come from various sources, such as the school district or administration, through measures such as open communication channels and formal recognition programs (e.g., Hsieh et al., 2022).

Teacher Calling Orientation

Given the documented decrease in autonomy and organizational support, we examine the role of personal resources in alleviating the negative effects of burnout. Specifically, the current research investigates teachers' sense of calling as a potential protective factor against burnout.

Teaching is one of the top three professions at high risk for burnout alongside human services and health care (Maslach & Goldberg, 1998). Notably, the common thread among these jobs is that they are socially valuable and fueled by workers' fulfillment. Socially valuable and fulfilling jobs are the two most important requirements for a *calling* orientation (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). A *calling* is work that people feel true passion for and that brings a sense of fulfillment. Calling orientation refers to someone who feels called to do the work they do. In contrast to a calling, individuals can view their work as a *job or career* (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). A *job* provides financial support and is based on necessity rather than passion. As such, it is not considered a major part of their life. Although a *career* could involve some passion for one's work, the main goal is to advance within the field.

Teaching is often thought of as a calling position due to its social value and potential to bring a deep sense of fulfillment. However, a calling orientation can be a double-edged sword. People who are driven by a passion for their work often encounter occupational hazards. For teachers, these occupational hazards may be physical or psychological, including workplace violence, disease transmission, and false accusations (Berlanda et al., 2019). Furthermore, teachers are often not well-compensated. Nevertheless, teachers commonly enter the profession because they feel a calling to inspire and shape young minds rather than being motivated by the expected payout (National Society of High School Scholars, 2020). Due to these conditions, passion can lead to increased rates of burnout (Vallerand et al., 2003).

Since teaching is an occupation at high risk for burnout— leading to more CWBs and fewer

OCBs— it is critical to explore these relationships. One key objective of education is to develop knowledgeable individuals who can contribute to society. Faced with rising teacher shortages (Schmitt & deCourcy, 2022) and high turnover (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017), schools may hire unqualified teachers, increase class sizes, or cut programs, harming student learning. Therefore, school administrators should nurture and recognize teachers' sense of calling, as this ultimately benefits the workplace. Even when burned out, teachers with a strong sense of calling are less likely to engage in CWBs.

Present Research

Interestingly, much of the work on the behavioral outcomes of teacher burnout has been conducted outside of the United States (e.g., Kassandrinou et al., 2023). For example, a study conducted with both private and public school teachers in Pakistan found correlations between the different dimensions of burnout and CWBs (Makhdoom et al, 2019). However, the applicability of these findings may be limited, as teachers in the United States work longer hours than teachers in other countries, are paid less than their college-educated counterparts, and have experienced a steady and steep decline in wages over the past three decades (Schmitt & deCourcy, 2022).

Furthermore, there is little existing literature on the impact of teacher's calling orientation. Two separate studies conducted in China suggest that calling orientation may be a protective factor against burnout for university teachers (Lian et al., 2021) as well as for kindergarten, primary, secondary, and high school teachers (Zhao et al., 2022). However, neither of these studies directly examined CWBs or OCBs. The present research aims to bridge this research gap by examining the impact of calling orientation on the behavioral outcomes of burnout among teachers in the United States.

Teachers are subjected to numerous stressors in their jobs, which contribute to their high burnout rate (Maslach et al., 2001). As described above, employees who experience burnout are more likely to engage in CWBs and less likely to engage in OCBs (Turek, 2020). To address this issue, the current study explores whether teachers' level of calling orientation moderates the impact of burnout (Duffy et al., 2016). Specifically, we hypothesize that calling orientation helps buffer educators from the negative effects of burnout.

In the current study, we surveyed teachers across the United States to assess their calling orientation, burnout, and engagement in CWBs and OCBs, using a self-report survey with a cross-sectional design. Consistent with past research, we predict that teacher burnout will be associated with more CWBs and fewer OCBs, particularly among teachers with a low calling orientation. In contrast, we predict that teachers with a high calling orientation will be protected from the negative effects of burnout, which will result in fewer CWBs and more OCBs. In summary, we expect higher levels of burnout to be positively associated with counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) and negatively associated with organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs). Additionally, we propose that calling orientation will interact with burnout to predict both CWBs and OCBs.

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited from Prolific, an online research platform known for providing higher-quality data and more diverse participant samples compared to other common recruitment methods, such as Amazon's Mechanical Turk (Tang et al., 2022). Prolific participants typically outperform those on other platforms in terms of comprehension, attention, and honesty (Peer et al., 2017). Prolific's pre-screeners ensured that participants were kindergarten to 12th grade (K-12) teachers in the United States.

The final sample consisted of 108 teachers (38% male, 58.3% female, and 3.7% non-binary). Participants ranged in age from 23 to 78 years old (M = 38.38, SD = 11.64). The sample consisted of 83.3% White or European-American, 5.6% Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish Origin, 3.7% Black or African-American, 3.7% Asian or Asian-American, 0.9% Native American or Alaska Native, 0.9% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and 1.9% Other. Participants' length of tenure ranged from 1 year to 37 years (M = 10.04 years, SD = 6.76).

Procedure

After providing informed consent, participants completed four measures through a Qualtrics survey: calling orientation, burnout, counterproductive work behaviors, and organizational citizenship behaviors, followed by demographic questions on age, gender, race/ethnicity, and tenure. The measures were presented in a fixed order, with items randomized within each scale. Partic-

ipants were compensated two dollars for their time.

Measures

Calling Orientation

To determine each teacher's level of calling, participants completed Dik et al.'s (2012) Brief Calling Scale. This scale consists of four questions that ask participants if they have found their calling or if they are searching for their calling. Since we were interested in the general presence or search for a calling, we chose the Brief Calling Scale, which also helped minimize participant fatigue (Dik et al., 2012). Sample items include, "I have a calling to a particular kind of work," and "I am trying to figure out my calling in my career (reverse coded)." Participants rated their agreement with each statement on a 1 (Not at all true of me) to 5 (Totally true of me) Likert scale. The four items were averaged to determine participants' overall level of calling (α =.79).

Burnout

To measure burnout, participants completed the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educator Survey. The Maslach Burnout Inventory has been validated and shown to be reliable across a wide range of settings and populations (Maslach et al., 1997). The 22-item inventory measures the three dimensions of burnout. Sample items include, "I feel emotionally drained by my work" and "I feel very energetic (reverse coded)." Participants responded to each statement using a 0 (*Never*) to 6 (*Every day*) Likert scale. The 22 items were averaged to determine participants' overall level of burnout (α = .93). We also calculated the scores for the three dimensions of burnout.

Emotional Exhaustion. We computed the average score across the nine corresponding items to determine participants' level of emotional exhaustion (α = .95).

Depersonalization. We computed the average score across the five corresponding items to determine participants' level of depersonalization (α = .76).

Reduced Personal Accomplishment. We computed the average score across the eight corresponding items to determine participants' level of reduced personal accomplishment (α= .86).

Counterproductive Work Behaviors

To measure engagement in CWBs, participants completed the 10-item Counterproductive Work Behaviors Checklist, which includes an equal number of organization- and person-focused items (Spector et al., 2010). The short form was selected to reduce time and response burden, while also aligning with the OCB measure. Sample items include, "Ignored someone at work" and "Came to work late without permission." Participants responded to each statement using a 1 (*Never*) to 5 (*Every day*) Likert scale. The 10 items were averaged to determine participants' level of engagement in CWBs (α = .79).

Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

To measure engagement in OCBs, participants completed the 10-item Organizational Citizenship Behaviors Checklist (Spector et al., 2010). The short form is parallel in structure to the CWB measure and was also chosen to minimize participant fatigue. Sample items include, "Volunteered for extra work assignments" and "Lent a compassionate ear when someone at work had a work problem." Participants responded to each statement using a 1 (*Never*) to 5 (*Every day*) Likert scale. The 10 items were averaged to determine participants' level of engagement in OCBs (α = .88).

Demographics

Participants provided demographic information at the end of the survey, including age, gender, race/ethnicity, and tenure in their current teaching position. Age was reported in years using a free-response field. Gender was reported in response to the question, "What is your gender?" with four options: Male, Female, Non-binary, and Other (with a request to specify). Race/ethnicity was reported in response to the question, "What is your race/ethnicity?" with the following options: White or European-American, Black or African-American, Asian or Asian-American, Hispanic, Latinx or Spanish Origin, Native American or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and Other (with a request to specify). Tenure was reported in response to the question, "How many years have you worked in this role?" with a free-response field.

Analytical Approach

Responses were analyzed using separate multiple linear regressions for CWBs and OCBs. Multiple linear regression analyses were conducted to assess the strength and direction of continuous predictor variables (American Psychological Association, 2018). Specifically, calling was examined as a moderator of the relationship between burnout and both CWBs and OCBs. Each set of behaviors was predicted from mean-centered burnout, mean-centered calling, and their interaction, with significant interactions followed up with simple slopes analyses at high and low levels of calling. Additionally, exploratory analyses were performed to examine the role of each of

the three dimensions of burnout on CWBs and OCBs (Bernhard, 2006; Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2021).

Results

Descriptive statistics and the interrelations among all the study variables are presented in Table 1.

Counterproductive Work Behavior

Overall Burnout

The variables accounted for 17% of the variance in CWBs (R^2 = .17, F(3,104) = 6.98, p < .001). As predicted, burnout was associated with more CWBs (b = .12, t(104) = 2.60, p = .01). However, calling was not associated with CWBs (b = -.07, t(104) = -1.38, p = .17). Additionally, the interaction between burnout and calling was not significant (b = -.06, t(104) = -1.46, p = .15), which might suggest that calling orientation does not moderate the effect of burnout on CWBs. For exploratory purposes, we repeated the same analysis with each of the three dimensions of burnout.

Emotional Exhaustion. The variables accounted for 12% of the variance in CWBs (R^2 = .12, F(3,104) = 4.21, p < .01). Emotional exhaustion was not associated with CWBs (b = .04, t(104) = 1.41, p = .16). However, calling was associated with fewer CWBs (b = -.12, t(104) = -2.40 p = .02). The interaction between emotional exhaustion and calling was not significant (b = .001, t(104) = .05, p = .96), which indicates that the effect of calling on CWBs is not dependent on levels of emotional exhaustion.

Depersonalization. The variables accounted for 19% of the variance in CWBs (R^2 = .19, F(3,104) = 8.34, p < .001). Depersonalization was associated with more CWBs (b = .10, t(104) = 2.95, p < .01). Additionally, calling was associated with fewer CWBs (b = -.10, t(104) = -2.20, p = .03). However, the interaction between depersonalization and calling was not significant (b = -.05, t(104) = -1.56, p = .12), which suggests that calling orientation does not moderate the effect of depersonalization on CWBs.

Reduced Personal Accomplishment. The variables accounted for 17% of the variance in CWBs (R^2 = .17, F(3,104) = 6.94, p < .001). Reduced personal accomplishment was not associated with CWBs (b = .07, t(104) = 1.27, p = .21). However, calling was associated with fewer CWBs (b = -.11, t(104) = -2.16, p = .03). Additionally, the interaction between reduced personal accomplishment and calling was significant (b = -.11, t(104) = -2.27, p = .03).

Simple slopes for the relationship between reduced personal accomplishment and CWBs were tested at low (one standard deviation below the mean) and high (one standard deviation above the mean) levels of calling. At low levels of calling, there was a positive relationship between reduced personal accomplishment and CWBs (b = .17, t(104) = 2.67, p = .009). However, at high levels of calling the relationship was no longer significant (b = -.04, t(104) = -.54, p = .59). The results demonstrate that high levels of calling may buffer against the negative effects of reduced levels of personal accomplishment on CWBs (see Figure 1).

Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

Overall Burnout

The model did not account for significant variance in OCBs (R^2 = .04, F(3,104) = 1.54, p = .21). Contrary to predictions, the results indicated that burnout was not associated with OCBs (b = .01, t(104) = .13, p = .90). Similarly, the relationship between calling and OCBs did not reach conventional levels of statistical significance (b = .16, t(104) = 1.83, p = .07). The interaction between burnout and calling was also not significant (b = -.03, t(104) = -.43, p = .67), which might suggest that calling orientation does not moderate the effect of burnout on OCBs. For exploratory purposes, we repeated the same analysis with each of the three dimensions of burnout.

Emotional Exhaustion. The model did not account for significant variance in OCBs (R^2 = .06, F(3,104) = 2.05, p = .12). Emotional exhaustion was not associated with OCBs (b = .07, t(104) = 1.28, p = .21). However, calling was associated with more OCBs (b = .21, t(104) = 2.48, p = .02). The interaction between emotional exhaustion and calling was not significant (b = -.02, t(104) = -.37, p = .71), which indicates that the effect of calling on OCBs is not dependent on the level of emotional exhaustion.

Depersonalization. The variables accounted for 8% of the variance in OCBs (R^2 = .08, F(3,104) = 2.97, p = .04). Depersonalization was not associated with OCBs (b = .06, t(104) = 1.11, p = .27). However, calling was associated with more OCBs (b = .20, t(104) = 2.60, p = .01). The interaction between depersonalization and calling did not reach conventional levels of significance (b = -.10, t(104) = -1.71, p = .09), which indicates that the effect of calling on OCBs is not dependent on the level of depersonalization.

Reduced Personal Accomplishment. The vari-

ables accounted for 14% of the variance in OCBs (R^2= .14, $F(3,104) = 5.61$, $p < .01$). Reduced personal accomplishment was associated with fewer OCBs (b = -.28, $t(104) = -3.41$, $p < .001$). However, calling was not associated with OCBs (b = -.003, $t(104) = -.04$, p = .97). Additionally, the interaction between reduced personal accomplishment and calling was not significant (b = .002, $t(104) = .03$, p = .98), which suggests that calling orientation does not moderate the effect of reduced personal accomplishment on OCBs.

Discussion

While there is extensive research on burnout, CWBs, OCBs, and calling orientation separately, there is little research that integrates the four concepts, especially in samples of American teachers. The current study investigated the relationship between calling, burnout, CWBs, and OCBs among K-12 teachers. Consistent with predictions, teachers who experience greater overall burnout engaged in more CWBs. This effect may be explained by levels of depersonalization, as teachers who felt more depersonalized engaged in more CWBs. Contrary to predictions, overall burnout was not associated with OCBs, although exploratory analyses revealed a significant relationship between reduced personal accomplishment and OCBs. Although not explicitly hypothesized, exploratory analyses also revealed that calling was associated with more OCBs when the dimensions of emotional exhaustion or depersonalization were analyzed in place of overall burnout.

Although we did not find strong evidence for the moderating effect of calling on the relationship between overall burnout and CWBs and OCBs, exploratory analyses of the three burnout dimensions provided partial support for this moderating relationship, particularly between reduced personal accomplishment and CWBs. At low levels of calling, reduced personal accomplishment was associated with more CWBs. However, at high levels of calling, the relationship was no longer significant. The results suggest that even when faced with feelings of incompetence or a lack of achievement and productivity, having a calling orientation can act as a buffer against the negative effects on CWBs. Stated simply, individuals who are deeply committed to their profession are less likely to exhibit behaviors that harm their organization and its stakeholders even during times of self-doubt or feelings of inadequacy. These findings highlight the potential protective role of calling orientation in mitigating the adverse effects of reduced personal accomplishment, ultimately fostering a more positive and productive work environment among educators.

Limitations and Future Directions

We did not find strong support for our predictions, which may be due to several limitations that future research could address. First, some of the established measures used were short versions, and both the OCB and CWB scales were domain-general, rather than specifically designed for educators (e.g., many items assessed behaviors towards coworkers rather than students). Future research could develop more domain-specific scales to better capture counterproductive and extra-role behaviors in teaching, directed at both students as well as coworkers. Additionally, using the full-length versions of these scales may provide more nuanced insights.

Second, we combined different types of educators to achieve an adequate sample size. As a result, the findings may have masked challenges that are unique to specific contexts (e.g., school districts, grade levels, teacher education levels). Future research could include interviews with teachers to gather more qualitative insights into their work environments, offering richer data beyond what a survey alone can provide.

Third, our sample size was limited by the constraints of the Prolific platform, which had a small pool of active K-12 teachers. Future research could employ snowball sampling to recruit a larger and more representative sample of teachers. This approach could also improve generalizability, as financially stable educators may be less likely to participate in online crowdsourcing platforms offering low monetary incentives. Additionally, the sample may have excluded teachers who left the profession due to extreme burnout, potentially introducing bias by omitting the perspectives of those most affected.

Finally, the current study used a cross-sectional design, limiting the ability to draw causal conclusions. Additionally, all our measures relied on self-report, which could introduce common method bias and may have been influenced by social desirability. Future research could address this limitation by incorporating ratings from supervisors or peers alongside self-report data. A longitudinal approach would also be valuable to examine how burnout and a sense of calling evolve over time, and

to assess their long-term effects on OCBs and CWBs.

Theoretical Implications

In the current research, we focus on calling orientation, particularly among educators. The findings have the potential to inform multiple areas of research, with several opportunities for future studies on this topic, given the gap in the literature. Teaching is often intertwined with a sense of calling, which is associated with deep passion and internal motivation. While some research exists on the positive effects of calling orientation for teachers, most of these studies have been conducted outside the United States (Lian et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2022).

The present study highlights the relationship between reduced personal accomplishment, calling, and CWBs. Specifically, teachers who experience a strong sense of calling may be less likely to engage in CWBs, even when faced with a sense of reduced personal accomplishment. At the same time, past research suggests that such passion can be exploited by organizations or supervisors, potentially leading to increased workloads and higher burnout (Kim et al., 2020). Therefore, we encourage researchers to examine both the beneficial and detrimental effects of a calling orientation (e.g., Cardador & Caza, 2012). Future research could explore similar relationships in other calling-oriented professions and further investigate the interplay between calling orientation, burnout, and engagement in CWBs and OCBs.

Practical Implications

Teachers regularly report being underpaid, overworked, and underappreciated. Educational institutions may attempt to address teacher burnout by identifying the stressors or reducing the strains of teaching (e.g., stress management workshops or fitness programs). As mentioned earlier, the job demands-resources model can be used to explain teacher burnout. To reduce CWBs and promote OCBs, organizations may attempt to balance the job demands and/or job resources. However, the demands and resources may not always be amenable to change. For instance, the COVID-19 pandemic presented a formidable challenge for educators, and teacher pay in the United States continues to remain low (Marken & Agrawal, 2022).

The current study introduces an alternative way for organizations to minimize the negative effects of burnout on the workplace by focusing on personal resources. To foster a calling orientation, administrators could invest in teacher recognition or professional development opportunities to actively engage teachers in their profession, or they could introduce interventions that focus on developing a teacher's sense of purpose and meaning (e.g., Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Our results suggest that educators with a strong sense of calling are less likely to engage in CWBs, even when experiencing feelings of reduced personal accomplishment. Therefore, it is crucial to foster educators' sense of calling to minimize engagement in CWBs and promote sustained engagement and commitment to their work. Together, these strategies would help teachers reconnect with their sense of purpose in the profession, while also supporting their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Building on these findings, fostering a sense of calling in educators could strengthen their resilience and long-term commitment to the teaching profession. Connecting teachers to their sense of purpose may also improve the overall school climate and culture. Even in the face of burnout, teachers with a strong sense of calling are more likely to maintain professionalism and avoid behaviors that could disrupt students and staff. More practically, reigniting this passion could help reduce teacher attrition and further boost workplace engagement.

Conclusion

Research indicates that teachers face numerous stressors and are increasingly experiencing burnout (Pressley, 2021). This study found that teachers' sense of calling appeared to act as a buffer, mitigating the negative effects of reduced personal accomplishment on CWBs. These results suggest that a calling orientation may serve as a protective mechanism against burnout, emphasizing the importance of nurturing teachers' sense of purpose. These insights not only benefit student outcomes but also contribute to the overall well-being of educational institutions.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Study Variables

	Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Calling	3.71	0.97	-						
2.	Burnout	3.32	1.08	-.56**	-					
3.	Emotional exhaustion	4.42	1.59	-.47**	.92**	-				
4.	Depersonalization	2.74	1.31	-.35**	.80**	.65**	-			
5.	Reduced personal accomplishment	2.45	0.97	-.55**	.70**	.44**	.42**	-		
6.	Counterproductive work behaviors	1.58	0.46	-.32**	.36**	.27**	.36**	.30**	-	
7.	Organizational citizenship behaviors	3.05	0.74	.20*	-.11	.01	.03	-.37**	.11	-

Note. $^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$.

Figure 1

Moderating Effect of Calling on the Relationship Between Reduced Personal Accomplishment and Counterproductive Work Behaviors