Analyzing the Role of Bureaucratic Expectations in the Teaching Profession with Secondary School Teachers

By

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A research paper submitted in conformity with the requirements For the degree of Master of Teaching Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify the techniques used by secondary school teachers in balancing the documented increase in bureaucratic workload and expectations, while adequately performing their respective roles in the classroom. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews with three secondary school teachers from the Greater Toronto Area. Findings suggest that teachers believe bureaucratic practices to contain both positive and negative aspects. Teachers indicate that the majority of these expectations can be demanding and stressful, and may be the result of a disconnect between administration and the teaching staff; some expectations, however, promote the safety and personal growth of the instructor. The teachers indicate lifestyle alterations such as social support and exercise as factors that can function as coping mechanisms against these stressors. The implications of these strategies suggest that there needs to be greater field-study conducted by policy makers to understand the importance of designing policies derived from an in-depth and thorough understanding of the teacher’s in-class experiences.

Keywords: Bureaucracy, Stress, Social Support, Coping Mechanisms
Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge and thank, first and foremost, Allah (swt), for providing me with the countless and indescribable blessings that made this journey even possible. Mama, who simply and whole-heartedly did what mothers do best. Haroon, who stopped at nothing until he made sure I had what I needed. Khala and Khalu, who put themselves in the toughest of scenarios so that I could be at my easiest. Baba, who taught me the meaning of selflessness and bravery. Roshaan and Anoosh, who always gave me the hard needed truth and love. Aira, for whom I have stuck through this entire process. Sadiyah, for making my work good enough to be published. The participants, for providing me with honest and invaluable input. Rose Fine Meyer, for giving me the tools I needed to build this work, and for always being available for the students regardless of hectic schedules.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Research Context and Problem

The administrative and education systems in Canada work on an assistance basis such that there is no federal or national organisation that governs education; each province and territory has their own designated mechanisms and policies surrounding education (Government of Canada, 2015). The education system is designed to be comprehensive, diversified, and widely accessible, speculated to reflect the sociological aspects in regards to the importance of education (CMEC, 2015).

Techniques such as standardisation of teaching material and incorporation of research into the teachable material have led to significant changes in the education system (Richard et al., 2014; Schneider, 2012). Recent studies suggest that changes in the bureaucratic expectations placed upon teachers have led to increased teacher workload-associated stress in non-instructional and instructional categories. Teachers are now experiencing an increase in bureaucratic expectations and responsibilities such as the need to attend more meetings, pressure to meet interpersonal and intrapersonal goals, and perhaps more importantly, to fulfil the demand for the completion of paperwork (Meyer & Rowan, 2008; Pantic & Wubbles, 2012; Richard et al., 2014).

Educational personnel, especially teachers and principals, are now being placed under increased bureaucratic expectations, with an increase in administrative workload leading to a reduction in the time available for teachers to interact with their students. The enhanced workload from practices such as lesson planning and formation of IEPs (Individual Education Plans) are now being documented to show considerably higher levels of stress and work-
associated frustration in teachers (Ermenc et. al, 2015; Richard et. al, 2014). Studies are showing that this increase in workload is reducing the time teachers have for interacting with students, impacting their interpersonal and intrapersonal reflective strategies. The majority of their time is now being used in planning and preparation, rather than in instruction and interaction (MacDonald et. al, 2010). Teachers are spending a minimum of 17% more time on tasks unrelated to active instruction, with instructional time reduced to less than half of the total time spent in the classroom (Tarc and Smaller, 2009; Smaller et. al, 2005). With these documented increases in bureaucratic workload in educational systems over the past few years, enhanced workload has not only been correlated with increased job stress in teachers, but also with problematic behaviours in classrooms (Mantzicopoulos, 2005; Smaller et. al, 2005;).

Importantly, it is not only teachers who are being impacted by the increase in bureaucratic expectations. Considering the fact that students spend a significant time at school interacting with teachers, it is important to understand the implications of the enhanced bureaucratic expectations as it pertains to the quality of life for teachers and students alike. Numerous studies, identified below, have identified the link between teacher stress and the effect it has on the classroom. Enhanced stress and decreased job satisfaction and motivation in teachers have been shown to negatively impact student behaviour and academic performance (Yoon et. al, 2002; Hastings, 2003; Collie et. al, 2012). Because of these impacts, it is critical to understand how this issue is being mediated by those in the educational field (Smaller et. al, 2005; Tarc and Smaller, 2009).

The goal of those in the field of education has been to benefit each student in the classroom according to their needs, however, in light of the recent research discussed, it is clearly being demonstrated that the implementation of beneficial strategies may not be happening
as it should due to the reduction in time available to the teachers. It is thus crucial to understand the mechanisms that are allowing teachers in these stressful positions to balance the enhanced workload, while providing students with a quality environment in the classroom, both academically and interpersonally.

1.1 Research Purpose

In light of these issues, the purpose of this study is to learn the techniques that secondary school teachers are using to balance the increase in workload, while adequately performing their respective roles in the classroom such that students receive the support that is required. Secondary school is a dynamic time for students and teachers; there are greater chances for extracurricular activities, as well as enhanced pressure in regards to academics due to potential post-secondary education upcoming (Pounder et. al, 1996; Leung et. al, 2009; Tuominen-Soini and Salmela-Aro, 2014). Additionally, adolescence is a time of greater turbulence for students, and research has shown the importance of a positive experience throughout adolescence, which can resonate into the future years (Dumont et. al, 1999; Kim and Schneider, 2005). One of the most impactful factors during adolescence is positive social support, especially from parental figures, peers, and teachers, which has been documented to have positive effects on students’ mental wellbeing as well as academic performance (Canty-Mitchell et. al, 2000; Rosenfeld et. al, 2000; Demaray et. al, 2003; Duncan et. al, 2005; Kim and Schneider, 2005). Thus, the secondary grades during which most students are adolescents are of significant relevance not only due to the level of impact teachers can have during this time, but also due to the fact that they provide a setting where teachers can integrate into students’ lives more socially through extracurricular activities. Although that is also possible during the junior/intermediate years, the impact of teacher involvement through mediums such as extracurricular activities has the potential to hold
greater significance in students’ lives during high school (Canty-Mitchell et. al, 2000; Demaray et. al, 2003) For this reason, it is imperative to understand the actions adapted by teachers during secondary schooling, in order to mediate the negative effects of bureaucratic workload, while also integrating themselves into the lives of their students through social and academic settings.

By identifying the practices adapted by Ontarian secondary teachers to balance bureaucratic and student needs, I hope to identify practical strategies which can be shared with other teachers and educative personnel to help their instructional regimes. I aim to share these findings with not just the educational research community, but also with parents and other personnel in mentoring roles in order to help support and enhance their methods and techniques in the field.

1.2 Research Questions

The primary purpose of this study seeks to identify techniques that are being used by teachers to balance the increase in bureaucratic expectations, while providing adequate academic and social support to their students. As well, I hope to identify some strategies that teachers are incorporating that are working to ease their stress levels. Additional questions addressed within this study are:

- What techniques are teachers using to design/alter their lessons to balance their overall teaching workload?
- What personal changes have they introduced to aid the efficiency of this balance?
- What are some of the issue that teachers encounter, and what strategies do they use to overcome these issues?
- How do they see these changes affecting their professional future?
• What are some of the strategies they would use, were they in a policy-making position, to offset some of the problem?

1.3 Reflexive Positioning Statement

As someone who has experienced and observed the positive and negative effects of teachers’ behaviours in the classroom, I find it crucial to understand the positive strategies that teachers may be using to enhance learning in their classrooms while juggling bureaucratic responsibilities. Teachers play an extremely important role in the lives of their students; their behaviour has the potential to impact their students in numerous ways. Supportive teachers who worked to form a positive social relationship with me led me to fall in love and excel at their respective subject, as well as providing me with the confidence that I needed to succeed in school. Conversely, a lack of positive support from teachers led me to lose interest and even dislike the subjects associated with those teachers, an issue which hindered my future career options. Due to the importance and impact of teacher behaviour in classrooms, it is pivotal for me to identify factors that have the potential to mediate the situation. These findings have the potential to not only aid teachers currently in the field but also teacher candidates like me by helping us become familiar with some of these important strategies.

1.4 General Overview of the Study

In order to respond to the research question, qualitative research was conducted using purposeful sampling to interview three teachers about the best practices in balancing the increase in bureaucratic expectations, while finding opportunities to provide adequate academic and social nourishment to their students and themselves. In Chapter 2, I reviewed the literature present in the role of bureaucracies in the education system, as well as the harm associated with
teacher stress and lack of social support. I concluded Chapter 2 by highlighting successful strategies teachers have used to combat such issues. In Chapter 3, I elaborated on the methodology that I used to perform the research. In Chapter 4, I reported on the findings from the research and discuss their significance in association with the research already present on the matter. In Chapter 5, I discuss the impact that these findings may have on the educational community, as well as on my own experience as a teacher. I conclude by highlighting further questions which will be raised by these research findings, and suggest future pathways to enhance this research.
Chapter 2: The Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I review the existing literature pertaining to the topics of bureaucracy and stress and their associated effects on the classroom. More specifically, I review the development and effectiveness of bureaucracy on the education system. Next, I consider the associated negative effects on teachers and students, specifically underlining the implications on their health. Finally, I highlight certain strategies adapted by present school systems to mediate stress levels in the classroom, discussing their effectiveness and exploring possible alternatives.

2.2 Bureaucracy

The aim of this section is to shed light on the development of the bureaucratic processes over the years, particularly in regards to how it began and what the theories are surrounding the concept. It is important to understand broadly the role of bureaucracy in society before discussing how it has impacted the education system.

2.2.1 Bureaucracy: purpose and viewpoints

The term ‘bureaucracy’ is one that has been culturally fluid, with its definition changing in accordance to the influence of the social context of its time. Bureaucracy was conceptually defined as a government administration with subdivided compartments mediating its domains in which the administrative system is in charge of mediating a large and impactful institution (Olsen, 2006).

The formal introduction of the concept of bureaucracy is attributed to German sociologist, Max Weber, who brought the concept of the system to popularity (Sashkin, 2003; Gajduschek, 2003). According to Olsen (2009), bureaucracies have been excellent tools which
bring positive impact on the concepts of unity and coordination, along with enhancing the precision, speed, and predictability of the workers in the field. Other supporters of the bureaucratic system believe it to be related to economic and social growth, as well as leading to a reduction in poverty and democratic inequality due to the hypothesised disregard bureaucracies hold for factors such as wealth (Olsen, 2009; Evans and Rauch, 1999; Henderson et. al, 2003). Critics of the bureaucratic infrastructure state it to be complex and inflexible; with little or no space for personal development or input, and its dehumanising nature has been one of the most discussed negative aspects of its working methodology (Gajduschek, 2003; Olsen, 2006; Raadschelders, 2009). There have been vast discussions of a “trade-off” between the hierarchal natures of the bureaucratic regime, with the lack in reliability in communication between different levels leading it to be speculated as an ineffective structure (Gajduschek, 2003).

In light of the conflicting viewpoints on the mechanisms of the bureaucratic regime and the involvement of the bureaucratic concept in current social methodology, it is important to consider the implications of its mechanisms in the education system.

2.2.2 Bureaucracy: involvement in the education system

Max Weber believed bureaucracies to contain certain characteristics which gave them their unique properties, the most significant of which were noted to be the bureaucracy’s adherence to rules and regulations, the existence of a hierarchical system, the importance of thorough training, and following general protocol (Verdugo, 1997). The last two were hypothesised to hold the most significant implications in regards to the education system, as the management of bureaucracies was mediated by written documents, such that policies and procedures were “codified” and that workload went “beyond the working day” (Verdugo, 1997).
In schools today, teachers are required to continuously produce documents as part of the bureaucratic protocol in the form of lesson plans, day plans, and so on. The workload tends to extend beyond the “working day” in the form of the development of such paperwork, planning for school activities, attending meetings, and other non-teaching activities (Tarc and Smaller, 2009; Smaller et. al, 2005). Bureaucracies have thus had the “iron cage effect” on school systems whereby rules and regulations now dictate the extent and format of the methodology of the implementation of academic material and teachers are being governed by rules formed by individuals preceding them in the hierarchy (Verdugo, 1997; Center and Blackbourn, 1992).

Bureaucracy in the educational system has also been speculated to lead to impersonal and ‘robotic’ school systems, with the presence of a large gap between theories, policies, and practice (Moore, 2014). These policies and expectations do not take into account the instructive process and take away the autonomy of teachers in their own classrooms, thus planting the potential seed for frustration and stress (Moore, 2014; Berliner and Biddle, 1995). Additionally, educational bureaucracies form regulations and procedures which largely involve paperwork, interfering with the task of instruction and leading to teachers having less time to spend with their students and responding to their needs (Berliner and Biddle, 1995; Moore, 2014; MacDonald, 2010). Berliner and Biddle (1995) believe educational bureaucracies to be a waste of resources, existing to create unnecessary issues. This enhanced emphasis on preparation rather than implementation, without the realistic consideration for the in-class instructive process, may only lead to harm. Verdugo (1997) states that these expectations are required from the employees without considering the context of their situation. Further critics of the negative impact of bureaucratic expectations on teachers state that due to the inherent drawbacks in the structure of bureaucratic regimes, where teachers are not rewarded for their accomplishments and cannot achieve their aims, teachers
enter the profession with an unrealistic set of goals which they cannot achieve due to the extensive expectations of this system, thus placing them at a disadvantage from the very beginning (Verdugo, 1997; Bacharach and Conley, 1986; Center and Blackbourn, 1992).

Chubb and Moe (1990) further add to the list of potential negative bureaucratic side-effects, by stating that schools with higher academic performance ratings differ in their practices, as compared to low performance schools. They believe that this difference in student output is due to the negative effects of bureaucracy, with the only solution being the elimination of the bureaucratic involvement in school systems and the establishment of autonomy and freedom for the teachers (Chubb and Moe, 1990; Moore, 2014).

These potential negative effects of bureaucracies are now being identified as some of the underlying factors behind the increased stress and decreased job satisfaction among teachers and the increase in stress and the reduction in job satisfaction is not only impacting the wellbeing of the teachers, but is also affecting the academic output of the students and the school and classroom climate (MacDonald et. al, 2010; Smaller, 2005; Lennon, 2010; Conner et. al, 2014).

2.3 Stress

My aim in this section is to discuss how stress impacts teachers and students. As discussed previously, research suggests that increased bureaucratic load is leading to greater levels of stress in teachers. As increased stress is significantly associated with the increased bureaucratic expectations and pressures, it is then important to understand how it can affect the human body and its implications for teachers and the student-teacher relationship.

2.3.1 Biopsychosocial aspects of stress: how can teachers be affected?
While stress may be seen as primarily psychological in nature, it is important to recognise the presence of its biological side-effects. Stress is one of our body’s responses to a demanding situation and has the capability of making the individual more susceptible to diseases because of its ability to weaken the immune system (Segerstorm and Miller, 2004; Cohen et. al, 2006). Stress is also associated with changes in the workplace, an example being the increase in bureaucratic expectations and the associated subsequent stress levels in teachers, which can then cause issues such as insomnia, depression, anxiety, and eventually, diseases of the heart, brain, and musculoskeletal system (Kivimaki et. al, 2002; Linton et. al, 2004; Nunomura et. al, 2006; Bayram et. al, 2008; De Kloet et. al, 2005). Notably, the duration of the stressor impacts the severity and the likelihood of these diseases: the longer the individual is placed under stress, the more severe and likely the development of health issues (Suls et. al, 2005; Salleh et. al, 2008).

The implication, then, is that the longer teachers are exposed to stressful factors, the greater the chances of them developing health issues. With an increase in bureaucratic workload, the problem may only get worse with teachers developing health issues earlier on in their teaching careers, thus affecting the quality of their professional output as well as the progression of their life.

Data from the research field, discussed subsequently, has also highlighted direct effects that these increases in stress levels, as attributed to bureaucratic load, are having on the professional aspect of a teacher’s career. The increase in bureaucratic expectations such as higher requirements for paperwork and documentation is now emerging as one of the primary causes of a reduction in job satisfaction, followed by the more severe instances of teacher attrition and resignation (Rabenhorst et. al, 2011; Tye and O’Brien, 2002). Administrations respond to this reduction in teacher supply by increasing class size and prolonging the work hours of the
remaining teachers, which further enhances teacher stress (Tye and O’Brien, 2002; Rabenhorst, 2011; Brundage, 2007). According to research, with this increased load, more than one fifth of a regular day in a teacher’s life is spent on tasks that are not related to teaching, again diminishing the quality of their interaction with their students (Tye and O-Brien, 2002).

Another worrisome biopsychosocial aspect is the potential effect that this increase in bureaucratic demand is having on the classroom; leading to a reduction in job satisfaction and motivation, these increased expectations are further impacting the quality of instruction provided by the teacher, as well as affecting the classroom environment and student behaviour (Healy and McKay, 2000; Struthers et. al, 2000; Klassen and Chiu, 2010; MacDonald et. al, 2010; Tsouloupas et. al, 2009). Therefore, increase in bureaucratic expectations on teachers is not only singularly affecting the teachers, but is also holding negative and potentially persistent implications for the wellbeing of the students.

2.3.2 Teacher stress: what implications does it hold for students?

Research indicates that the extent of stress in teachers impacts their job satisfaction, as well as greater levels of stress causing greater variance in a teacher’s coping mechanisms in regards to mediating the classroom environment (Klassen and Chiu, 2010). The teacher’s workload stress impacts the efficiency of their classroom management, thus holding further implications for the quality of learning for the students (Klassen and Chiu, 2010; MacDonald et. al, 2010; Conner et. al, 2014). Teacher-student relationships have also been associated with personal and academic success in students, holding implications for students’ future achievements and developmental wellbeing (Ray, 2007; Conner et. al, 2014). Stress has been identified as a factor that significantly impacts the quality of a student-teacher relationship;
teachers experiencing higher levels of stress have been shown to have greater issues in their classrooms than those who have lower levels of stress (Ray, 2007). Along with working individually, the relationship between greater teacher stress, reduced job satisfaction, and reduced motivation also affects the level of student involvement and behaviour in the classroom in a negative fashion, thus impacting student output (Mantzicopoulos, 2005; Roorda et. al, 2011). Additionally, due to increased bureaucratic pressure, teachers have been seen to have little time and motivation to alter their teaching material, with some teachers’ teachable material remaining stagnant throughout their career (Tye and O’Brien, 2002; Mantzicopoulos, 2005; Roorda et. al, 2011).

In addition to enhanced stress and reduced job satisfaction and motivation affecting the classroom, another factor associated with increased bureaucratic load is the potential effect that it has on the teacher’s time. The more planning that a teacher must do, the less time they will have to devote to their students. Teachers have indicated that due to the increased time they must allocate to planning, paperwork, and other bureaucratic expectations such as attending meetings, they have less time for teaching (Tye O’Brien, 2002; MacDonald et. al, 2010). This affects the quality of instruction as this reduction in available time is causing teachers to spend more time planning than actually teaching the material and combined with the obligation to update material in accordance to dynamic curriculum expectations, teachers levels’ of frustration and stress are significantly impacting their professional output (Tye O’Brien, 2002; MacDonald et. al, 2010; Smaller et. al, 2005).

It is thus of crucial importance that stress-mediating factors should be identified sooner rather than later, as earlier identification holds healthier implications through the faster
development of coping mechanisms and strategies that can be adapted to mitigate the effect of stress on those in the educational paradigm.

2.4 Mediating Mechanisms

In this section, I talk briefly about current factors that have been implicated to hold positive results in managing levels of stress and its effects in the classroom, along with the premise of social support and the implications that it may hold in a school setting in response to stress, for teachers and students alike.

2.4.1 Mediating stress in the classroom: associated factors

Despite there being insufficient amount of literature about mediating stress due to bureaucratic factors, there are various factors and strategies that have been identified which have displayed the potential of affecting stress levels. In regards to stress levels in the classroom, the amount of contact that teachers have with students has acted as an agent which has had the ability to impact stress levels; in classrooms with diminished levels of student-teacher familiarity and interaction, there were greater problems in regards to academic output, as well as behaviour management problems (King and Martin, 1981; Conner et. al, 2014). These problems diminished when student-teacher interaction increased (King and Martin, 1981; Conner et. al, 2014). This hints towards the possibility that greater frequency of positive interaction with students may be a method to diminish the negative effects of teacher stress in the classroom.

In regards to behavioural issues in the classroom, management strategies that target student misbehaviour fall into two categories: proactive and reactive strategies (Clunies-Ross et. al, 2008). Proactive strategies are behaviours which a teacher can adapt before issues begin to
demonstrate themselves, whereas reactive strategies are those that are adapted after issues have already been acted out (Clunies-Ross et. al, 2008). Proactive strategies are ones that are used as prevention mechanisms rather than as a consequence, and interestingly, the type of strategy used has been noted to affect stress among teachers. Teachers who use reactive strategies respond in a negative manner to student-related issues compared to teachers who use proactive strategies, along with reporting higher levels of stress and frustration (Clunies-Ross et. al, 2008).

With less time available for teachers to give to students, combined with the stress that teachers experience, it is essential to understand the dynamic between bureaucracy and stress in the school system. Another strategy which has been shown to reduces levels of stress in teachers and positively enhance the quality of student-teacher relationships is consultation (Conner et. al, 2014). During consultation, a teacher and a counsellor work through issues regarding the classroom, especially those involving the development of students. Teachers who have adapted this strategy have seen improvement in their classroom environment (Conner et. al, 2014). The presence of supportive personnel trained in consultation services has also had the ability to reduce levels of stress in teachers, further demonstrating the importance of support.

2.4.2 Social support: What implications does it hold?

Broadly speaking, social support is a type of assistance that an individual receives in a social context. Social support can be divided into four subtypes: emotional, tangible, informational, and companionship support (Wills, 1991). In classroom settings, it is emotional, informational, and tangible support which need to be looked at as these are the support paradigms that encompass aspects such as empathy, love, and encouragement; guidance and advice; and a
sense of belonging shared among the community (Heaney and Israel, 2008; Langford et. al, 1997; Umberson and Montex, 2011; Wills, 1991; Conner et. al, 2014).

Social support has been associated with numerous benefits, such as enhanced psychosocial wellbeing in workplace environments, as well as stronger coping mechanisms and reduced depression and anxiety in response to stressful events (Taylor et. al, 2011). Furthermore, it has also been associated with less severe responses to diseases such as HIV, stroke, and cancer (Turner-Cobb et. al, 2002; Pennix et. al, 1998).

There are many sources of social support, such as peers, parents, and significant others. Interestingly, social support from teachers and other school personnel has been seen to hold significance implications for well-being in youth (Chu et. al, 2010). In students, perceived positive social support from teachers has been associated with enhanced satisfaction from life, as well as greater levels of happiness (Conner et. al, 2014; Murray & Zvoch, 2011; Suldo and Huebner, 2006; Natvig et. al, 2003).

In regards to the significance of social support in school settings, high performance schools differ in the sense that their student faculty feel greater social bonds with their instructors, understanding that their teachers care for them (Connor et. al, 2014).

Although social support, consultation, and the greater interaction with students may help the student-teacher relationship, one might explore what implications these strategies hold for the teachers. How can teachers help their students, while also reducing their own stress levels and maintaining their motivation and satisfaction with their job? Although the idea of social support seems promising due to the positive results associated with the idea, how these measures can be incorporated into workable strategies is questionable. Are the strategies being used by teachers to successfully target these issues working on a socially supportive premise? Throughout my
research, it is my goal to find answers to inquiries. Strategies that use the premise of social support may be the answer to how teachers can balance the strenuous expectations posed on them by rigorous bureaucratic systems.

2.5 Conclusion

In this literature review, I examined the research pertaining to bureaucracy, its relationship to stress among teachers and implications for the students, and some of the coping mechanisms in use. This review highlighted the negative effect of bureaucratic load and demand on teachers, as well the consequence it can hold for the wellbeing of teachers and students.

The review also discussed the strategies that have been adapted to mediate stress, as well as showing that there are limited strategies that directly target stress mediation in the context of increased bureaucratic demand and the negative effects of stress it causes.

By identifying methods used by current teachers that directly target the increased bureaucratic expectations and the associated stress with such pressures, it is my hope to identify strategies which can be used to directly mediate this problem.

By identifying these factors, it is my hope to use these findings to not only aid teachers in the field, but also Teacher Candidates like myself, by helping us become familiar with these important strategies in order to enhance the working of the current education system and increase the benefit of its constituents.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction:

In this chapter, I have explained the methodology chosen for my research on the topic of the role of bureaucracy and its effects on the education system, and the rationale for the chosen choices. The chapter begins with a discussion on the research approach and procedure, followed by a discussion about the participants of the study, the sampling criteria and procedures, and finally, the type of instrument chosen for data collection. I have identified the technique used for data analysis, along with identifying relevant ethical issues pertaining to the study, followed by a discussion on the limitations of the study, as well as discussing the applicable strengths.

3.1 Research Approach & Procedures:

This study was conducted under the qualitative research paradigm; it involved a review of literature relevant to the research purpose and question, as well as using semi-structured interviews with the teachers (participants). Quantitative research is a type of research that uses statistics and mathematical strategies to analyse areas of interest, and where numerical data such as percentages are used to explain varying empirical observations which can be generalised to larger populations (Lichtman, 2012; Johnson and Christensen, 2008). In contrast, qualitative research asks broader questions in the sense that researchers look for themes that are specific to the participants of the study (Bogden and Taylor, 1997; Johnson and Christensen, 2008; Lichtman, 2012). Qualitative methods, such as using interviews, allow researchers to explore phenomenon in greater depth due to the provision of greater room for alteration, thus allowing for deeper understanding (Lichtman, 2012; Johnson and Christensen, 2008). It is due to the aim
of understanding subject matter in a more comprehensive sense, that smaller samples are used (Bogden and Taylor, 1997). Along with the smaller sample sizes, another aspect of qualitative studies that allows researchers to analyse subject matter in depth is the use of questions that address multiple aspects of a scenario; the questions are more than just yes or no questions, allowing for surfacing of answers that are richer and more informative in nature (Merriam, 1998). Finally, it is also important to note that qualitative research designs place greater focus on the participant rather than the researcher, allowing for the emergence of personal, in-depth responses that reflect significant experiences (Jones, 1995).

As my research aims to consider the techniques applied by individual teachers to mediate bureaucratic demand while providing adequate support to themselves and their students, a qualitative research study was more suitable. It allowed me to investigate the individual teaching methodology and techniques of a small group of high school teachers. It also allowed me to ask the important ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions, which were pertinent to my inquiry on the subject matter on how teachers are balancing the increased bureaucratic expectations while providing academic and social support to their students.

### 3.2 Instruments of Data Collections:

Qualitative studies use documentation, observations, and/or interviews to obtain data for the intended research purposes (Merriam, 2002). Interviews are generally divided into three types: structured interviews that follow strict protocol and script during the interview process, unstructured interviews that resemble “guided conversations”, and semi-structured interviews that contain pre-determined, open-ended questions (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006; Farstad and Bjørnholt, 2012; Whiting, 2008).
Semi-structured interviews allow for the addition of questions that emerge during the interview process. This aspect offers greater flexibility, allowing for the incorporation of material that may greatly benefit the results of the study (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006; Whiting, 2008). This is important because during the interview process, features or scenarios from the teacher’s life may emerge that may be great assets to the results of the study. It is due to the greater flexibility and incorporation of pre-determined interview settings, that the instrument of data collection for this study was semi-structured interviews. This was important to my research because it allowed for the emergence of unique and diverse methodologies which have provided me with a rich source of techniques which I discuss in my paper.

3.3 Participants:

In this section, I will be reviewing the criteria for choosing the intended participants. I will also include brief biographies of the chosen participants.

3.3.1 Sampling criteria

In order to qualify as participants in the study, the teachers were examined under the following criteria:

1. Teachers were to have worked at a secondary school for five years or more
2. Teachers were to have worked in a Canadian school board for five years or more
3. Teachers were to have been living in the Greater Toronto Area
4. Teachers were to vary in gender
5. Teachers varied in age and ethnicities
6. Teachers were involved with students outside of the classroom
In order to address the research questions, the participants that I interviewed had been working in a Canadian school system for at least five years. This was so that they would have been exposed to the changes occurring in bureaucratic expectations over time. Additionally, participants had had exposure to high school students for at least five years. Furthermore, to maintain a reasonable geographic parameter, participants had been working in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Lastly, teachers varied in gender, age, and ethnicity to allow for the incorporation of numerous cultural factors, thus increasing the diversity of the obtained data from the chosen sample.

3.3.2 Sampling procedures:

Sampling procedures can be divided into two broad types: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is the type of sampling method where all members of a population have a determined probability to participate in the study, whereas non-probability sampling is where participants are chosen based on elements of interest (Suresh et. al, 2011; Jung, 2015). The three types of non-probability sampling are Convenient, Theoretical, and Purposeful Sampling. In Convenience or Accidental Sampling, participants are selected based on their location, that is, easy accessibility (Suen et. al, 2014). Theoretical Sampling involves collection of data that builds on previous findings, such that previous findings guide future sampling (Draucker et. al, 2007). Purposeful Sampling is when the researcher chooses participants based on who they think will be a rich source of information pertaining to the needs of the study (Palinkas et. al, 2015).

In order to meet the expectations of the study, I used a combination of convenience and purposeful sampling. Participants were chosen based on convenience and purposeful sampling in
the sense that they were identified using existing connections with the teaching faculty, as well as needing to meet the defined criteria to qualify as participants. The reason behind the use of these sampling techniques was due to the previous experience I had had with members of the teaching faculty, due to which I had greater confidence in them providing me with rich information needed for this study.

3.3.3 Participant Bios:

1. Anna is a French and Social Sciences teacher in the secondary division in Toronto. She started her 12th year of teaching in 2016, and has experience in the school system from Senior Kindergarten to Grade 12.

2. Sebastien has been teaching Economics in the secondary division, with 2016 being his 12th year in the field.

3. Luther has been teaching Business Studies in the secondary division, with 2016 being his 10th year of teaching.

3.4 Data Analysis:

Aptly stated by Thorne (2000), qualitative research uses a variety of “philosophical positions, methodological strategies, and analytical procedures”. Analysis of data in qualitative studies general comprises of four ‘steps’, beginning with understanding the topic of interest, followed by forming links between what is already known about the topic with the findings from the study (Thorne, 2000; Morse, 1994). The next step is to form possible explanations for the new findings, concluded by situating the new information within the context of what is already known about the subject (Thorne, 2000; Morse, 1994).
The analysis of the data that I obtained began with the transcription of interviews, followed by the coding of the data from the transcripts in accordance to the research question. The transcripts were coded individually and as whole, according to underlying themes. The data was analysed according to the relationships between the themes and/or categories involving the effects of bureaucratic load on the lives of teachers. It was presented in the form of common themes, methodologies and techniques experienced and adapted by teachers to balance these expectations, and the significance of these findings in light of existing research.

3.5 Ethical Considerations:

Any research study holds the potential to violate basic ethical considerations such as the loss of privacy. To reduce these risks, I did the following: first and foremost, all participants were kept anonymous with the assignment of pseudonyms. Second, the participants’ confidentiality was protected via the removal of any identifying markers, such as school names, in the study. Furthermore, teachers were given the interview questions ahead of time, in order to give them the opportunity to formulate appropriate answers. They were notified of their right to refrain from answering any uncomfortable questions, as well as having the right to withdraw participation from the study during any point in the interview process. Teachers were also presented with the option to read their interview transcripts and make alterations to them should they see it fit to do so. Additionally, all the data pertaining to the interview is stored on a password protected laptop and will be destroyed after five years. Finally, participants were asked to sign a consent letter (Appendix A), which informed them of the interview and recording procedure. The letter provided an overview of the study, discussing briefly about the effects of bureaucratic load and the aim to identify methodologies to mediate the expectations of this
increased load, as well as addressing ethical implications and the structure of the interview (one 30 to 45-minute semi-structured interview).

3.6 Strengths and Weaknesses:

In regards to the limitations of the study, the most significant issue is the lesser degree of generalisability that comes with qualitative studies, as well as the potential for the presence of bias (Lichtman, 2012; Johnson and Christensen, 2008). Although qualitative research has been criticised to not contain extensive generalisability and contain bias, and thus may seem limiting, it is an extremely important research method that allows researchers to analyse the reasons and ways by which specific phenomenon occur. The research also allows for analysis of the phenomenon of interest in greater depth due to the wider lens that qualitative research adapts (Lichtman, 2012; Johnson and Christensen, 2008). The study will also be able to allow for the analysis of phenomenon in the natural environment, with a dynamic view on human behaviour. These factors will allow for greater richness in the findings, allowing for greater understanding and interpretation of social behaviour (Lichtman, 2012; Johnson and Christensen, 2008).

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed the research methodology, beginning with the approach adapted for the research procedure, followed by the description and explanation behind choosing qualitative research. I then discussed the use of interviews as the primary instrument of data collection. I explored the different types of interviews, while focusing on semi-structured interviews and its associated benefits. I then talked about the participants and the selection criteria that were chosen for the research purpose, which explored the effect of bureaucratic load on secondary school teachers in the school system. I also discussed the use of purposeful
sampling, which was chosen so I was able to select teachers whom I knew excelled at balancing this load while supporting both themselves and their students. I then talked about data analysis with a discussion on examining interviews as individual pieces and as wholes, with the aim to identify overlapping patterns and methodologies in the interviews. I proceeded to describe the ethical conundrums and issues involved in research studies, such as risk of participation, the right to withdraw, and consent, and discussed potential ways to manage these issues. I concluded this chapter by discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the study, such as a small sample size but personal, unique accounts provided by individuals in the targeted field. In the following chapter, I state the findings of the research.
Chapter 4: Findings

4.0 Introduction:

The purpose of the interview was to analyze the role of bureaucratic expectations in the classrooms of secondary teachers. I interviewed three teachers who have been in the profession for nine years or more; each teacher presented their own invaluable insight to the effects of bureaucratic load on their planning, mental health, and their relationship with their students. I found overarching themes, with the experiences of the participants relating to one another. The three themes were:

1. Teacher’s Perceptions
   a. The negative role of bureaucratic expectations
   b. The positive role of bureaucratic expectations

2. Support
   a. For the Teachers
   b. For the Students

3. Moving Forward
   a. Self-Regulation
   b. Reciprocal Communication between hierarchies

4.1 Perception

One of the most predominant themes across the three interviews was the importance of perception in the understanding of the impact and the role of bureaucratic expectations in the educational paradigm. The differences in perception can be divided into two sub-themes: the
negative aspects of bureaucratic expectations, and the positive aspects of bureaucratic expectations.

4.1.1 The negative role of bureaucratic expectations

All three teachers agreed that bureaucratic tasks are burdensome and not particularly necessary. Anna stated, “I do think that there are times, perhaps, that it’s onerous to document everything in a class of thirty.” This documentation can take the form of anything from making IEPs, to the increase in the number of report cards. Sebastien commented,

There are more IEPs that are required of us as more students with learning difficulties have been identified, so there is more paperwork in that respect…I think we report more; there used to be 4 report cards, now there are six.

The research supports their experiences and shows that there has been a steady increase in the number of IEPs implemented over the previous years (LDAO, 2016). It is important to note here that the bureaucratic demand has increased, but which types of expectations are deemed important and which are deemed redundant need to be understood. Sebastien clarified that:

Certain things like IEPs are essential. Proper reporting is essential, although I think we do it too much. As a home form teacher, there are duties in terms of lockers, signing off policies, distributing other material, so the sheer amount of paper is overwhelming… I say openly that this report card is useless. I might be honest [to the students] that these bureaucratic expectations are ridiculous.

This differentiation on the type of demand was present in Luther’s comments as well. He expressed that there are parts of these expectations that feel redundant. Like Sebastien, he stated, that “it could be as simple as sheets that you have to fill out for absence, or field trip forms.
Sometimes they ask for the same type of information, sometimes they ask for information that is not as important.” Luther also discusses additional negative impacts of these bureaucratic expectations, stating that “it interferes with classroom management and teaching styles.” He states that the stress due to these expectations varies and is the highest when there are “many things happening in a week; deadlines, things to get done, work to do for my students.” This interference with management styles and the use of valuable teacher time mirrors the research already present on the subject, where these bureaucratic expectations are wasteful and stressful (Berliner and Biddle, 1995; Moore, 2014; MacDonald, 2010).

All three teachers discussed the impact these expectations can have on family time; Sebastien states that these expectations “might take away from family time.” He discusses the impact of extended exhaustion and workload, stating, “I have a daughter at home and you try to be 100% present and sometimes you can’t.” The aspect of the family being a mitigating factor is something that was also recognised by Luther, who states that when balancing these aspects, a personal lifestyle alteration is working with your family, explaining that “you work with your partner or family life [so] they understand some of the increased expectations.” Anna adds to this concept, stating, “I’m lucky, I suppose, that I don’t have great expectations on my time outside of school. I don’t have children. I don’t have someone to care for…I suppose a person who would have those expectations, would find it more difficult to achieve those expectations.”

The teachers identified the role of the administration in adding to these negative aspects involving the current bureaucratic progression. All three teachers commented on the involvement of the administration in this increase in expectations. While discussing how the recent changes have made the job of teaching harder, Anna commented that “In the past, they would still have said document your work, but the principals would have done that work for you.” In regards to
the choosing of grades and content, this is also where administration affects the trajectory of a teacher’s year. When asked what affects the grades chosen, Luther stated that “It depends on what I’m given or allocated by the administration.” To build on the role of the administration in the teaching career, Luther discussed some of the challenges he has faced in his career, stating that “some of the biggest challenges are the change of administration, different leadership styles… [The challenges] depend on the agenda that they work with.” This concept of the administration’s agenda and their responsibilities trickling down to the staff were further shared among all three teachers. Sebastien added that in schools, everyone “is running their own agenda. Admin are running their own agenda to seek advancement, to better their name…you have a nightmare kid and they won’t suspend. Mainly because it looks bad on schools to have high suspension numbers.” He also stated that these changes and challenges are “admin covering themselves…some of those report cards aren’t necessary, they just do them so that when parents come to the teachers and admin and ask why my son isn’t doing well, they just point to the fact that they got an interim report card.”

Along with teachers being asked to do work such as assigning lockers, designating forms, there is the aspect of committees in schools. Luther stated that “We are forced into certain committees…so that kind of work has been downloaded to teachers.” Anna agreed and stated that the work of some of these people gets “downloaded on to us.” This involvement of the administration and the apparent ‘miscommunication’ between these levels in the system is a pre-documented negative aspect of bureaucratic structures, with discussions pertaining to the “trade-off” between the hierarchal natures present in the system itself (Gajduschek, 2003). These teachers’ comments mirrored one of the negatives aspects of bureaucratic expectations discussed earlier in the paper, in regards to a lack of proper communication and implementation between
those who are making the decisions and those who are implementing them (Center and Blackbourn, 1992; Verdugo, 1997).

4.1.2 The positive role of bureaucratic expectations

Whereas all teachers agreed to some degree that these expectations have the potential to be burdensome, all of them agreed on the fact that it is part of the job. Anna explained that all individuals who choose this profession, need to be aware that teaching “is not a job, it is a profession.” Luther stated that “it is a part of the job, so you deal with it.” He added that “It is another way to show that there is a sense of accountability and transparency for the admin, but also for the school board, parents and students.” This notion of accountability is mirrored by Anna, who explains that “at the end, it is also to protect myself, right? ... It’s covering your butt, and … it takes the middle man away.” Both Luther and Anna emphasised bureaucracy as a “part of the job.” They discussed how it has improved their teaching methodologies. Luther commented that “it has made me better, making me aware of what I need to do and why I’m doing it.” This concept of these bureaucratic expectations bringing greater awareness in the teaching paradigm is shared by Anna who states that “it may have made me more aware [of the responsibilities of this profession].”

The positive aspects of bureaucratic work mechanisms discussed by the teachers are in a consensus on the subject itself; bureaucracies have been identified as useful tools which impact the experience of the workers by aiding in the precision, speed, preparedness, and predictability of the work (Olsen, 2009). The important distinction, however, is the type of demand itself. According to the teachers, while bureaucratic expectations such as lesson planning and assessment strategies have helped to make them better instructors, other expectations such as joining committees, filling out forms unrelated to the instruction process itself, have been
onerous and not particularly useful. Furthermore, it was highlighted by all three teachers that majority of the bureaucratic work deemed unnecessary and tedious was work presented due to a shift in the party accountable; the teachers addressed the implication that a majority of the unnecessary work may be reduced if administration and those higher in the hierarchal pyramid did that work themselves.

4.2 Support

4.2.1 For the staff

In regards to the support present for the staff, the schools used in this study have social workers present for staff members as a support mechanism. Anna also acknowledges the presence of the social worker but added that the presence of her department head “who I can talk to and collaborate with if I need to … makes a huge difference.” Sebastien also acknowledged the presence of the social worker, but elaborated that “the support worker is probably overextended and very busy.” This lack of accessibility of the support for the staff was a commonality between Luther and Sebastien, as Luther also stated that they can speak to them “depending on how approachable they are.” He believed that when a problem or issue arose, teachers needed to “identify the issue” and reach out to administration or to their doctors, family physicians, unions, and other teachers. Luther further discussed that these supports that are present in the schools do not work for everyone. He stated, “I have friends outside…what I do is effective for me, it may not be the same for everyone. It is a personal thing.” All three teachers have provided comments which provide consensus on the importance of social support, with the presence of it enhancing their experience in the work place in a positive manner, a fact supported by present research (Conner et. al, 2014). More importantly, however, they have identified an area of weakness, where accessibility comes into the picture; the presence of support may be
there, but the approachability and availability may prevent the support from being of optimal benefit to teachers.

4.2.2 For the students

All three teachers had positive relationships with their students and believed it to be crucial to understanding their students in order to support them. Anna discussed the importance of getting to know one’s students by getting to know their interests, to connect with them, to “know some of their troubles, issues, dreams.” Luther shared similar sentiments, expressing the importance of getting to know one’s students, understanding their struggles and experiences. He discussed the importance of counselling and how that is a big part of teaching, a sentiment shared by Anna. Luther explained that “it is my job to see how they are coping and either get them more support, consult with their parents about their lack of coping.” When asked about strategies that he uses, he said, “it can be as simple as trying to cheer them up…taking extra time for them…telling them to go take a break when you need it, talking to their parents, having them do group work”. Other methods Luther used to support students, in addition to covering the curriculum to cover the needs of students, were teaching “life skills because I find them to be more important.” His implementation and instruction in teaching these skills, such as “communication, financial literacy, use of technology, thinking and planning”, has helped him in his classroom, helping to “alleviate a lot of classroom management issues.”

Another aspect of student support was through the role of teachers outside the classroom. Anna discussed being a “staff adviser for student council. I coach girls’ basketball, I participate in character education.” She further stated that additional mechanisms are in place for students to better their learning, “whether it is support from a guidance counselor or a social worker, or just peer support…Academic, personal, mental, all of that is necessary.” She discussed the importance
of raising aware of mental health in your students, stating, “I often challenge my students to go get a mental health check done, because you get your teeth checked, body checked…why don’t you get a mental health check done?” Similar to the previous teachers, Luther believes that for the growth of students and their mental health, it is important to have “wellness clubs in the school…to have clubs, sports teams, giving guidance inside and outside the classroom.”

In regards to the supports available for the staff and students to better manage the stressors of the expectations, there was a consensus among the teachers that although there is the presence of a support mechanism in the schools, it is important to find that support through other sources as demand may outweigh the supply. Additionally, to be supportive for students, the teachers agreed that it was crucial to get to know their students through extracurricular activities and through being an active, supportive listener. These findings on the importance of getting to know students and being a part of their lives outside the classroom may serve to provide a solution to the findings that in classrooms with diminished levels of student-teacher familiarity and interaction there were greater problems in regards to academic output and behaviour management problems (Conner et. al, 2014; King and Martin, 1981;).

4.3 Moving forward

All three teachers discussed strategies that can be used to mediate this increase in expectations and workload, which can be divided into the subthemes of intrapersonal changes and interpersonal approaches.

4.3.1 Self-Regulation

To alleviate the stress that is enhanced due to increased workload, the teachers suggested lifestyle changes. Luther discussed the importance of working out, and to eat healthy. He
believes in mediating stress through changing one’s diet in that making oneself stronger physically can serve them mentally. He discusses the importance of taking time off for oneself, and to understand one’s personal limits and not take on more work than can be handled. He concludes on the note of how important it is to take care of oneself because “if you can’t do that for yourself, how will you help your students?” Sebastien also believes in the importance of taking care of oneself. He thinks it is important to “exercise when you can get it…leaving time every night to destress….and proper sleep is really, really important.” In regards to sleep, Anna also agrees that sleep plays an extremely important role in how you respond to your surroundings, stating that “lack of sleep might make me cranky”. These factors indicated by the teachers serve as resources to better the teachers, which is important because, as indicated previously in the paper, greater teacher stress affects the level of student involvement and behaviour in the classroom in a negative fashion, thus impacting student output (Mantzicopoulos, 2005; Roorda et. al, 2011).

Teachers also discussed the importance of self-regulation. Luther states that it is crucial to plan ahead. He emphasised the importance of expanding your social circle by connecting “with people outside the field so that you can get a better idea of public versus non-public. Be in touch with the outside so that you can be better prepared for what is out there.” Luther also emphasized the importance of time management for success in the teaching profession, stating that “you have to manage your time and allocate it.” He provided ideas that may be implemented to work with this concept, stating that planners should be used, “agendas, various technologies, Moodle….have your email on your phone.” Similarly, Sebastien stated that “organisation is critical in terms of the paperwork expectations”, a thought mirrored by Anna as she states that “being organized, creating schedules, deadlines for yourself is very important.”
All three teachers also indicated the importance of experience and time. Anna explained that “The first couple of years are more stressful. You have a lot of expectations.” There was a consensus that it improves with time and experience. Sebastien stated that that “the biggest challenge is the beginning. Just an overwhelmed, lost kind of feeling.” He discussed how these emotions and factors improve over time. “We don’t get appraised very often, in the first few years you do, and when you are appraised first, your paper trail is evaluated but not so much a veteran…You cope with it in time.” A consensus existed of the importance of time management and experience, and the skills gained through the increase in exposure to this profession.

Another one of the methods that aid this coping mechanisms are the factors of organization. Further discussed in the following sections, Luther adds that you need to “plan ahead…using planners, agenda.” Sebastien states that “if you are unsuccessful, there are going to be more expectations placed on you that way, but if you are successful, then there really isn’t much.” Anna provided her consensus by saying that “I am a very organized person, so I feel….being organized, creating schedules, deadlines for yourself is very important.” In addition to the previously noted factors of time management and experience, organization skills also emerged as an important factor associated with success in the profession.

4.3.2 Reciprocal communication between hierarchies

In regards to approaches that could be adapted to enhance the functioning of the system as whole, Luther stated the importance of bureaucratic decision makers to be reflective and aware of the issues that are present in the field. He wants them to “go to the classroom, see what is there, go to schools, and do your data and fact finding.” Luther also acknowledged that the “key concern for such a big organization is finding time.” This sentiment is shared quite strongly by Sebastien, who thinks that when it comes to altering the working regime, what teachers can
do is “practically nothing.” He believes that change in such a large organisation such as the Toronto District School Board is “next to impossible” because the system is “too large and complex, too much inertia, too many people pushing from all sides.” Anna believes change to be possible but for that to happen, decisions needs to be made in the higher levels of the bureaucratic structural regime. Her ideas of strategies that can help mediate this increased load is to have smaller classrooms because that could “mean, sometimes, fewer problems.” She thinks having Education Assistants in targeted classrooms could be highly beneficial, along with providing more resources for student success, such as larger staff and more support personnel. When asked about what she would like the decision makers to know, she said, “come and walk a week in my shoes, how about that? ... Do some field work.”

Overall, all the teachers suggested that to improve and enhance the implication of positive teaching and behavioural strategies, it is vital to plan one’s strategies, to be organised and manage time and resources effectively. They also suggested that to better the educational paradigm, it is imperative that decision makers design these strategies according to field observation. The discussed strategies hint once more towards the disconnect present in bureaucratic structures from a lack of proper communication and implementation between those who are making the decisions and those who are implementing them (Gajduschek, 2003; Verdugo, 1997; Center and Blackbourn, 1992).

4.4 Conclusion

The findings of the study not only mirrored the facts from persisting literature, but provided additional strategies that can be applied in the field. In the next chapter, I discuss the impact that these findings may have on the educational community, as well as on my own
experience as a teacher. I conclude by highlighting further questions which may be raised by these research findings, and suggest future pathways to enhance this research.
Chapter 5: Discussion

5.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to analyze the impact of institutional bureaucratic expectations on teachers in the classroom and its effects in regards to teacher practice and support. Specifically, I was inquiring what strategies secondary school teachers are using to balance the increase in bureaucratic workload, while adequately performing their respective roles in the classroom and balancing their professional practices and personal health. The findings of the study reaffirm that a lack of communication between administration and teaching staff is one of the major factors causing teacher stress. It also provides some insight into possible solutions to balance these issues.

5.1 Overview of findings

The findings of the study reaffirm the notion that the bureaucratic expectations in the educational system are “onerous” and exhaustive, especially considering the increases in class size and the numeracy of the demands themselves. In affirmation with LDAO (2016), teachers agree with that “more IEPs [that] are required of us…I think we report more” Importantly, however, teachers differentiated on the type of expectation and its necessity; teachers highlighted the importance of IEPs and report cards, stating that “certain things like IEPs are essential. Proper reporting is essential”, however they agreed that reporting has become excessive and possibly redundant. In addition to the excessive nature of these expectations, the teachers discussed the impact of them on their personal lives. They all agreed that excessiveness of these expectations has taken away from the time they can give to their families, as well as to themselves, thus impacting the quality of their lifestyle.
Interestingly, one of the underlying factors behind the increase in these expectations was attributed to the role of the administration and how it conducts itself. All of the participants suggested that one of the primary reasons behind an increase in expectations is due to the work by the administration in their respective roles. The participants agreed that a majority of the administrations’ work gets “downloaded” on to them, whereas previously that was not the entire case. The implication is an apparent ‘miscommunication’ between multiple levels in the education system, as previously discussed in chapter four, where I documented some of the negative aspects of bureaucratic structures, with discussions pertaining to the “trade-off” between the hierarchal natures present in the system itself (Gajduschek, 2003). As noted, the teachers’ comments mirrored one of the negatives aspects of bureaucratic expectations discussed earlier in the paper, with regards to a lack of proper communication between those who are making the decisions and those who are implementing them (Center and Blackbourn, 1992; Verdugo, 1997).

The teachers highlighted techniques which, when applied, serve the potential to have aspects of the bureaucratic expectations work towards their favour. Findings suggest that teachers need to be organized and learn to manage their time wisely; doing so can not only help them improve their teaching practice, it could also allow for the removal of “the middle man”, thus providing them with a sense of accountability and a ‘safety net’. As previously noted, the positive aspects of bureaucratic work mechanisms, discussed by the teachers in this study, are clear; bureaucracies have been identified as useful tools which impact the experience of the workers by aiding in the precision, speed, preparedness, and predictability of the work (Olsen, 2009).
As a potential solution to the issue, teachers indicated the necessity of effective support that could be present for those teachers who experience the stress caused by the expectations. The findings show that there is an absence of support mechanisms for the teachers, and that oftentimes teachers are expected to take care of issues themselves. The findings suggest that whereas the presence of support may be there, the lack of availability of people and/or resources may prevent the support from being of optimal benefit to teachers.

The teachers indicated techniques that they used to remediate these problems, and how they perform their professional service towards their students, whilst balancing their health needs adequately. Findings suggest that teachers balance these expectations through techniques which can be implemented within classrooms and/or extracurricular activities; despite the presence of these issues, teachers can support their students by getting to know their interests and concerns. The teachers suggested that in addition to reaching out to the students personally, they should be taught to take care of themselves through various strategies such as having discussions with parents, and by implementing more group work in the classroom. These aspects take little extra time outside of the classroom and have proven to be effective in practice. The findings also suggest that if a teacher can manage additional time outside the classroom it is helpful if they work with students through teams and groups, such as student council work, coaching a sports’ team, organizing “wellness clubs”, or organizing other groups that allow direct interaction with their students.

In regards to their own biopsychosocial health, findings suggest that teachers need to ensure the presence of a support system outside of the workplace. They indicated the necessity of an active lifestyle with effective workouts, eating healthy, and getting adequate sleep, to make them strong physically and mentally. The findings also suggest that it is imperative that teachers
take the time to understand and identify their limits so that they take on the amount of work that they can handle. As previously mentioned, factors of organization and self-management have the potential to alleviate the stress brought on by these expectations. Teachers should plan their strategies effectively, use “agendas, various technologies, Moodle…have[ing] your email on your phone”, and to be “organized, [as] creating schedules, deadlines for yourself is very important.”

The teachers indicated that overall, with time and experience, workers in the field learn the essential tips and tricks to manage these issues, and that the greatest impact of these expectations is at the start of the career.

Finally, teachers consider it to be of vital importance to have a clear, reciprocal communication between those in the decision making positions and those who are in the classrooms. Findings suggest that teachers truly believe that bureaucratic decision makers need to be reflective and aware of the issues that are present in the field. The decision may take time due to enormity of the stakeholders making policies, however it is necessary.

5.2 Implications

5.2.1 Broad: The Educational Research Community

The findings from the study indicate that there needs to be a change in policy with regards to practices in the classroom. The findings of the study indicate that strong communication in the educational community is required and decision makers need to design strategies and expectations that are more reflective of classroom situations. Specifically, there needs to be greater research conducted on the implications of current practice and the impact in the classroom. Whether that is regarding the translation of policies to the classroom or the onus
of responsibility of whom should carry out the decisions, researchers in the field need to analyze
the connections between the designed policies in light of the situations in classrooms. There also
needs to be further research conducted in regards to the role of all those involved in the
education system, with greater clarity regarding roles and responsibilities.

In conclusion, the implications of this study in regards to the educational field is that of a
need for greater research in regards to an often disconnect between decision making and practice,
as well as a need for a reform in current policies that are more indicative of the situations found
in classrooms.

5.2.2 Narrow: Your Professional Identity and Practice

The study highlighted numerous practices that have the potential to aid teachers in the
classroom. The findings suggest that it is crucial for teachers, especially those starting their
careers, to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Teachers need to identify their strengths and
weaknesses and while being conscious of them, they need to identify practices and strategies for
their classrooms that works best for them. Additionally, teachers need to be efficient planners,
and two techniques through which they can accomplish this is learning how to manage their time
efficiently, and to be organized in their practices. Teachers also need to be able to take care of
their health as that can be a direct reflection as to how they respond to their work and their
students. Findings suggest that they need to sleep well, eat healthy, exercise, and perhaps most
importantly, have a support system on which they can rely on when they need it.

5.3 Recommendations
In light of the findings from the study, there needs to be some changes in the often established practices in the classroom. Policy decision makers can achieve this through extensive interviews conducted with those in the field. They should ensure that voices are heard from as many schools as possible, preferably through anonymous surveys which can be inexpensive, and which allow teachers to express their thoughts freely and honestly. These surveys should address issues such as the appropriate number of students in a classroom, the duties of the administration versus those of teachers, and the quantity and quality of unit and lesson planning. There also needs to be an increase in the support provided to teachers in regards to options for counselling and psychological support, with personnel designated to aid in the development of mental health for teachers and others in the education system. Finally, there needs to be a feedback system established where teachers, administration, and policy makers can continually modify and address any issues stemming from a misunderstanding of roles and/or policies, in order to allow for the efficient working of educators to ensure the optimal quality of education for the students.

5.4 Areas for further research

Future research on these matters should address the issue of disconnect between administration and the teachers. Studies should aim to find the links between the potential miscommunication between different hierarchal levels and the possible causes behind them. Future studies should also aim to identify ideal classroom practices brought forth from the research. Finally, future research should also aim to uncover the extent of the differences in responsibilities across all levels in the education system, as brought forth from the study.
5.5 Concluding comments

As an individual seeking to provide the most optimal experience to her students, understanding the roles and expectations of a teacher are pivotal to me. It is important for me to understand the responsibilities of a teacher and the obligations I must fulfill. Therefore, it is crucial that I try to understand factors which affect the teaching experience. This study has highlighted extremely useful information which can help me improve my practice, but has also provided me with insights into areas that can be problematic. As teachers, we need to be aware of factors that can affect our teaching practices, of ways that we can design strategies and methods that will work optimally in our favour, and of our students. It is extremely important for us to understand these factors, so that we can improve our teaching and maintain good health. It is imperative for us to understand these factors, as one of the participants in the study stated, if we cannot take care of ourselves “how will you help your students?”
MTRP References


https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED502354


https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED358571


*Learning/Work*, 123.


Appendix A: Letter of Signed Consent

Date: February 20, 2015

Dear ______________,

I am a graduate student in the Junior-Intermediate division at OISE, University of Toronto, and am currently enrolled as a candidate of the Master of Teaching program. As a Teacher Candidate looking to gain future employment in the Ontario School Board, I am interested in learning about the effects of the increase in bureaucratic expectations placed upon teachers, and its impact on the their classroom. Findings from this study may be helpful for not only those looking to become teachers, but also for current teachers, policy-makers, and other members of the educational community. I firmly believe that your experience in the school system will provide significant insight for the topic.

I am writing this report as a requirement to my Masters of Teaching degree. My course instructor who is supporting this process this year is Dr. Rose Fine-Meyer. The purpose of this assignment is to provide us with a method that we can use to conduct research. I will be collecting data in the form of semi-structured interviews which may last 30-45 minutes. The interviews will be recorded on a device. I would appreciate it greatly if you would allow me to interview you; the time and place can be of your choosing and convenience.

The contents from the interview will be used for academic purposes, in the form of an assignment which will take the appearance of a final paper, as well as presentations to my classmates and/or during a conference. In order to ensure your privacy, I will not be using your name or any other information that may identify you in my work. Furthermore, due to the potential legal aspect involving bureaucratic policies in the study, I will provide you with the interview questions ahead of time, in order to provide you with the opportunity to formulate safe answers. You also have the full right to refrain from answering an uncomfortable question, as well as having the right to withdraw participation from the study during any point in the interview process. I will also share the interview transcripts with you, which you may edit should you wish to make any changes.

There are no other know risks to you for participating in this study.

If you agree with the outlined process, please sign the attached form.

Sincerely,
Manaal Hajira

E-mail: manaal.hajira@mail.utoronto.ca
Instructor’s Name: Dr. Rose Fine-Meyer
E-mail: rose.fine.meyer@utoronto.ca

Consent Form

I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw from this research study at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by, Manaal Hajira, and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described. I agree to have the interview audio-recorded.

Signature: ______________________________________

Name: (printed) _______________________________________________

Date: ______________________________________
Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study, and for making time to be interviewed today. This research study aims to learn the effects of the increase in bureaucratic expectations placed upon teachers, and its impact on their classroom. This interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes, and I will ask you a series of questions focused on the increased bureaucratic expectations as seen through the past years. I want to remind you that you may refrain from answering any question, and you have the right to withdraw your participation from the study at any time. As I explained in the consent letter, this interview will be audiorecorded.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

**Background Information**
1. How long have you been living in Canada?
2. How many years have you worked as a teacher in the Canadian school system?
   a. What grades have you taught so far?
   b. What made you choose these grades?
   c. Which grade was the easiest to teach – why? Hardest?
3. How has the school system changed so far – from the time you were a student, to present day?
4. How would you describe yourself in regards to the level of care and attention that you believe your students should get from you?
5. How does stress affect you – think about physical and psychological changes?

**Teacher Perspectives/Beliefs**
1. What are the biggest challenges that you have faced in your teaching career?
2. What are your thoughts on the bureaucratic expectations expected from you?
3. How has the recent bureaucratic load and demand for greater paperwork changed so far, in your opinion?
   a. Has it affected your perception of the profession?
   b. How has it affected your teaching methodologies?
   c. What has been your emotional response to the increased expectations?
   d. Would you consider yourself to be under greater stress due to the increase in these pressures?
4. Have you discussed these matters with your colleagues? What have been their remarks?
5. How do you see these issues affecting your students, and yourself in the long run?
6. If at all, have these changes impacted the type of interactions you have with your students?

**Teacher Practices, Support, and Challenges**
1. What methods have you adapted for yourself to respond to these changes?
a. Could you outline Personal Methods, such as life style changes, which have helped you cope with the process?

b. Stress relieving mechanisms?

2. What strategies have you adapted to minimize the effects of these changes in your classroom? Any alteration to your
   a. Lesson Plans?
   b. Assessment/Evaluation Methods?
   c. The Material you choose to teach?

3. How has this increase affected your motivation and satisfaction with your job?

4. Social support has been outlined to be an extremely beneficial factor for students, especially during high-school.
   a. What are your thoughts on the idea of social support?
   b. Through what strategies have you been socially supporting your students?
   c. How important do you think this may be for your students, and for yourself?

5. How have you integrated into your students’ lives
   a. Outside of the classroom?
   b. Inside of the classroom?

Next Steps

1. What support systems do you have available to you, if any?
   a. How effective are they?
   b. How would you change them?

2. What are strategies that can be used to mediate the increased load, while ensuring the continued support for students?

3. If you wanted bureaucratic decisions makers to be aware of these issues, what would you say to them?

4. If you were in a policy making position, what would you do to mediate this situation?

5. What advice do you have for the teacher candidates like myself, and for those already in the field?