

## FEATURES OF CREATIVE BURNOUT AMONG EDUCATIONAL WORKERS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM

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**Abstract.** The purpose of the study is to form and determine the main ways to reduce creative burnout among employees of educational institutions. The object of the research is the employees of the educational service in Ukraine and their creative burnout. Through the methods of analysis and synthesis of scientific and practical literature, we came to the conclusion that the following three methods should be used, as they will allow us to see which group of educators is estimated to have creative burnout. Due to the application of the IDEF0 methodology, the main ways to reduce their creative burnout have been identified. The reflected results received their practical application for the group of respondents in which, according to the assessment, a state of creative burnout was found. The value of this research lies in the systematization of existing methods for the formation of a certain methodological approach to assessing creative burnout and practical methods for reducing it. The results obtained showed that in a certain number of respondents, creative burnout decreased. The study has limitations and they relate primarily to the fact that, in addition to the methods we have chosen for assessing creative burnout, there are others that should be used in future research.

**Keywords:** burnout, creativity, creative burnout, educational workers, model, public administration.

### Introduction

Among the list of factors influencing the quality of human life, one of the most influential is professional activity. The activities of specialists of the “person-to-person” system (teacher,

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psychologist, social worker, doctor, etc.). Regardless of the roles and functions they perform, they belong to a group of professions with an increased level of moral responsibility for the health and life of individuals, population groups, and society as a whole.

Such working conditions lead to certain disorders, creative deformations or occupational diseases, and this, in turn, can lead to deprofessionalization or even desocialization of the individual.

Violations can relate to various aspects of the labor process – professional activity, the personality of a professional, professional communication. These violations are manifested in the fact that a person is not able to use his personal capabilities and means. She feels mental fatigue or loss of her professional skills. As a result, mental, emotional stress increases, which is associated with stress in the workplace. Anxiety, depression, emotional burnout syndrome, psychosomatic disorders, dependence on psychoactive drugs (including alcohol, tranquilizers, etc.).

One of these professions is teaching. The teaching profession is full of many stress genes, such as social assessment, daily routine, psychological and physical stress, and the like. The manifestations of stress in a teacher's work are varied. The most common of them are frustration, increased anxiety, irritability, exhaustion. Teachers work in an emotionally tense atmosphere that requires constant attention and control in the "student–teacher–parents" system.

Destruction that occurs in the process of performing work and negatively affects its performance is a professional deformation. They give rise to professionally undesirable qualities and change a person's professional and personal behavior.

Creative deformation of a professional personality is a change in personality traits (stereotypes of perception, value orientations, character, methods of communication and behavior), which occur under the influence of long-term professional activity. Creative deformation negatively affects both labor productivity and the relationship of the individual in the professional and personal spheres. Over time, fatigue, depletion of the repertoire of ways to perform activities, loss of professional skills and abilities, and decreased performance are formed. Changes in the emotional and personal sphere negatively affect labor productivity, interaction with other people, as well as the development of the personality itself. A person develops a stereotype of behavior both in professional activity and personal life.

One of the essential manifestations of the creative deformation of teachers is the syndrome of emotional burnout. Burnout syndrome is a state of emotional mental exhaustion, physical fatigue, resulting from chronic stress at work.

The development of the syndrome of creative exhaustion is preceded by a period of increased activity, when a person is completely absorbed in work, refuses his needs, forgets about himself, then the first sign comes – exhaustion.

Exhaustion is defined as a feeling of overexertion and depletion of emotional and physical resources, a feeling of fatigue that does not leave after a night's sleep. After rest (weekend, vacation), these manifestations decrease somewhat, however, upon returning to the previous work situation, they are restored.

The second sign of creative burnout syndrome is personal detachment. Professionals who experience burnout use alienation as an attempt to cope with emotional stressors at work.

In extreme manifestations of a person, in his professional activity, almost nothing worries, almost nothing evokes an emotional response – neither positive nor negative circumstances. Interest in the client (patient, student, student) is lost. He is perceived as an inanimate object, the very presence of which is unpleasant. The third sign of burnout syndrome is a feeling of losing one's own effectiveness or a drop in self-esteem. A person does not see prospects for his professional activity, job satisfaction decreases, faith in his professional capabilities is lost.

In psychology, there is still no unified understanding of the psychological structure of creative burnout. Understanding the essence of creative burnout, determination, structure, and stages at the conceptual level is extremely controversial. This is because of different approaches to their description. Each of the approaches focuses on only one aspect of creative burnout and focuses only on a specific group of factors and determinations. Meanwhile, the lack of accumulated experience and theoretical generalization of the practice of using psychological means of preventing and correcting creative burnout in education requires additional research. That is why it applies to research that covers all substructures of the activity of educational workers and is aimed at identifying personal and organizational factors of creative burnout, developing a set of psychological tools for adaptation and psychological support for educational workers, especially during crises of professional and creative development.

The purpose of the study is to form and determine the main ways to reduce creative burnout among employees of educational institutions. The object of the research is the employees of the educational service in Ukraine and their creative burnout. Through the methods of analysis and synthesis of scientific and practical literature, we came to the conclusion that the following three methods should be used, as they will allow us to see which group of educators is estimated to have creative burnout.

## **1. Literature review**

The ability to think creatively even earlier was called one of the main skills of the future, and with the advent of lockdown and crisis, this skill has become indispensable in making any decisions.

If an employee knows how to move away from templates and generally accepted rules and find a new solution, his value instantly increases. At the same time, companies that allow creativity and do not restrict their employees to rules or prohibitions are valued no less.

Nowadays, creative thinking is talked about almost at every step: some argue that creativity should be started at school (if not earlier), others offer hundreds of trainings that will help to improve this important skill, which, according to some researchers, saved peace. One way or another, but in today's unstable world, thinking outside the box is really useful.

The issues of researching the problems of the development of creative thinking and how it can replace creative burnout are very relevant and are the attention of many scientists and scientific works. So, for example, it is necessary to consider the general principles of organizing creativity laid down in the works of Puccio and Cabra (2010) and Chen (2012), this allows to better understand which areas should be analyzed and evaluated in order to understand the essence of the problem of creative burnout.

The issue of overcoming the phenomenon of creative burnout has been actively discussed for many years in scientific circles. For example, some authors (Politika et al., 2021) determined that the most effective way to overcome this phenomenon is the use of gaming technologies. In this context, they proved, through subjective assessment, that gaming technology reduces stress levels, workplace dissatisfaction, and team interactions.

In turn, Kyrian et al. (2020) proved that creative burnout directly depends on demographic and socio-economic factors. From this, we can conclude that without taking into account this factor, it is impossible to implement effective techniques for overcoming it.

How important it is to avoid burnout, not only creative but also psychological and professional, is described in many works (Mandy et al., 2004; Ju et al., 2016). It is necessary to understand in detail the very phenomenon of burnout before proceeding with its assessment. Burnout syndrome is physical, emotional, or motivational exhaustion. This syndrome is commonly regarded as a stress response to work and emotional demands arising from a person's excessive dedication to their work, with a concomitant neglect of family life or leisure.

Many aspects of the impact of burnout on work are described in Asad and Khan (2003). It is interesting how a person manifests himself in such a period. In order to form an effective model for reducing creative burnout in educators, we highlighted several scientific literatures that we examined (Mozayan et al., 2012; Piven & Derakhshanrad, 2017; Proudfoot et al., 2015). Separately, we note that our research is based not only on the studied literature, but also on conducting communication with the group of respondents who were selected. Note that the issue of practical application of the methodology and interviews with respondents is not a new method in the scientific and practical literature. The literature (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998; Schaufeli et al., 2009) describes how, in research practice, respondents are involved in order to reflect the veracity or vice versa of the questions posed. In our case, there is a certain difference here, which is clearly manifested in the fact that our primary goal is not to prove this or that hypothesis, but to determine which group of respondents is more creative than burnout, since this is a very individual and subjective thing.

Burnout is very noticeable precisely in the psychological state of the employee, and then the level of creative thinking suffers. The aspects of such influence are well described in Zainab et al. (2020) and Schmid (2004) and we took into account a number of its aspects during the formation of our own model of reducing creative burnout among educators.

Taking into account the scientific contribution of many researched works, it should be noted that today the original value in the formation of a set of existing methods for assessing burnout and thus determining the level of creative burnout is relevant in order to effectively apply the model of its reduction.

## 2. Methodology

The key step was to diagnose the parameters of creative burnout in 250 employees of the education system (over 10 educational institutions in Ukraine). For this, a survey and questionnaire method was applied. The questionnaire method is a psychological verbal-communicative method, in which a specially designed list of questions – a questionnaire – is used as a means for collecting information from the respondent.

In order to determine the number of employees of educational institutions who have creative burnout, it should be noted that today there is no one universal methodology. Through the methods of analysis and synthesis of scientific and practical literature, we came to the conclusion that the following three methods should be used, as they will allow us to see which group of educational workers is estimated to have creative burnout:

1. Methodology for assessing neuropsychic tension and self-assessment of anxiety, which is proposed by Spielberger (1972) and Nemchin (1983). The self-guided anxiety technique (Spielberger, 1972) diagnoses the study of the level of situational anxiety (reactive anxiety) and the level of anxiety as a stable characteristic (personal anxiety). The overall final score for each of the subscales ranges from 20 to 80 points. The higher the final indicator, the higher the level of anxiety (situational or personal). To interpret the indicators, approximate assessments of anxiety are used: up to 30 points – low, 31–44 points – moderate; 45 points and more – high, very high anxiety ( $>46$ ) can be directly associated with the presence of a neurotic conflict, emotional breakdowns and psychosomatic diseases. Low anxiety ( $<12$ ) – the emotional state is depressed, inactive, with a low level of motivation. Sometimes very low anxiety parameters are the result of the displacement of anxiety by a person in order to show himself in the “best light”. Anatol'yevich Nemchin's method for assessing neuropsychic tension provides that the questionnaire is a list of signs of neuropsychic tension. Compiled according to clinical and psychological observations (30 key characteristics, divided into three degrees of severity). The minimum number of points that a respondent can score is 30, the maximum is 90. Weak neuropsychic stress – from 30 to 50 points, moderate “intense”) – from 51 to 70 points and excessive (“extensive”) – from 71 to 90 points;

2. The methodology for determining creative and psychological burnout (Rukavishnikov, 2002) is aimed at integral diagnostics of creative and mental “burnout”, covering various personality substructures. It consists of 75 questions. Diagnostics of creative and mental burnout is carried out on three scales: psychoemotional depletion of personal withdrawal; professional motivation. The quantitative assessment of creative and mental burnout on each scale is carried out by decoding the answers into a three-point system (“often” – 3 points, “usually” – 2 points, “rarely” – 1 point, “never” – 0 points) and the total score. Processing is carried out on “raw” points. The overall index of creative and mental burnout is calculated by simply summing the results across all scales. Then, using the normative table, the level of creative and mental “burnout” is determined for each scale;

3. The methodology for assessing creative and professional stress (Vodop'yanova & Starchenkova, 2017) is designed to measure the degree of burnout in types “person-to-person” (but can be used for other types as well). There is a basic technique for identifying creative burnout at work. In total, the questionnaire has three scales: a) “emotional exhaustion” (appears in experiences of decreased emotional tone, loss of interest in the environment or emotional oversaturation; in aggressive reactions, bouts of anger, the appearance of symptoms of depression). The answers to points 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16, 20 are summed up (the maximum amount of points is 54); b) “depersonalization” (manifested in deformation, or depersonalization, of relations with other people: increased dependence on others or, conversely, negativism, cynicism of attitudes and feelings towards colleagues

Table 1. Topics of questions that were asked to respondents according to the methods we selected for research (source: created by authors)

Methodology	Topics of questions to respondents
Methodology for assessing neuropsychic tension and self-assessment of anxiety	It is suggested to read the sentence and cross out the corresponding number on the right, depending on how “you feel at this moment”. It was proposed to fill out a test form and after that, the calculation is made by summing up the points scored by the test subjects.
The methodology for determining creative and psychological burnout	It is proposed to answer several statements about feelings associated with work. It was asked to read the statements and decide whether or not the respondent felt something like that.
The methodology for assessing creative and professional stress	It is determined how often the respondent experiences the feelings listed in the questionnaire. To do this, mark the answer option “never” for each item on the answer sheet; “rarely”; “sometimes”; “often”; “daily”.

and clients. Answers on points 5, 10, 11, 15 are summarized, 22 (maximum score – 30); c) “reduction of personal achievements” (it turns out to be in a tendency to negatively evaluate oneself, to reduce the significance of one’s own achievements, to limit one’s abilities, to be negative about official duties, to reduce self-esteem and professional motivation, to reduce one’s own dignity, in relieving oneself of responsibility or removing (“releasing”) from others. The processing of the results is carried out by comparing with the “key”. The larger the sum on each scale, the more pronounced the respondent has different manifestations of creative burnout at work.

The topics of the questions were used according to the methods we chose for the research, the methods, to the respondents, as shown in Table 1.

As a result, we will single out the respondents who, according to the results of the assessment, have problems with creative burnout, and it is because of the application of the IDEF0 methodology (Kryshtanovych et al., 2021) that we will identify the major ways to reduce their creative burnout.

The IDEF0 model, in comparison with the “goal tree” method, in our opinion, better allows depicting goals and sub-processes to achieve it. It also reflects better what results we want to get.

### 3. Research results

Table 2 presents the results of a study of the level of anxiety and nervous tension for respondents.

The results shown in Table 2 shows that a third of the respondents have the marginal indicators of anxiety and nervous tension. The overwhelming majority recorded the average indicators of these parameters.

Reactive, or situational, anxiety is characterized by tension, anxiety, nervousness. The respondents with high levels of reactive anxiety have impaired attention and sometimes fine coordination of movements.

Table 2. Levels of anxiety and nervous tension among respondents (source: created by authors)

Parameter		Average value	%	Number of respondents
Personal anxiety	Low	24.3	16.74	36
	Average	43.6	59.07	127
	High	62.8	24.19	52
Reactive anxiety	Low	19.4	21.4	46
	Average	39.8	50.7	109
	High	70.3	27.9	60
Nervous and mental stress	Low	41.2	24.19	52
	Average	68.4	46.51	100
	High	82.8	29.3	63

Personal anxiety is a persistent condition. It characterizes a person's tendency to perceive a wide range of situations as threatening, to react to such situations with a state of anxiety. Very high personal anxiety is directly related to the presence of a neurotic conflict, emotional and nervous breakdowns, psychosomatic diseases and, as a result, a lack of creative thinking. A certain level of anxiety is a natural and obligatory feature of an active personality. Therefore, there is an optimal level of "useful anxiety" for each person.

Personal anxiety is usually diagnosed in people who strive to feel their need, importance and want career growth, and do not receive positive ratings from management, which increases anxiety and leads to professional stress. Neuropsychic stress usually manifests itself in two forms: by the type of increase in excitement or by the type of development of inhibitory reactions. Extreme forms of response depend on individual personality traits or are caused by very acute mental factors.

The danger of neuropsychic stress for a professional is that it disorganizes behavior, inhibits previously gained skills, leads to inadequate responses to external stimuli, causes difficulties in the distribution of attention, narrows the amount of attention and memory, induces impulsive actions and destroys the desire for creative thinking. Such changes in the mental sphere undoubtedly have a negative effect on the level of efficiency and activity of specialists and the level of creativity. A feature of behavior in a state of neuropsychic stress is its inflexibility, lack of lability and plasticity. Therefore, neuropsychic stress disrupts the structure of complex professional activity.

Next, we determined the features of the parameters of creative and mental burnout among the respondents. Table 3 shows the results of testing according to the method of creative and psychological burnout.

Super-high rates of creative and mental burnout in Figure 1.

According to Table 3, high rates of creative and psychological burnout were recorded in 49 people (22.79% of the total number of respondents in the pilot study). The vast majority of respondents were diagnosed with average rates of creative and psychological burnout in all parameters. The substantive characteristics of the scales are: high and ultra-high indicators of psychoemotional exhaustion were recorded in 29.76% of respondents. In such persons, the

Table 3. Parameters of creative and mental burnout according to the second method (source: created by authors)

Parameter		Average value	%	Number of respondents
Psycho-emotional exhaustion	Extremely low	–	–	–
	Low	12.7	7.91	17
	Average	27.8	62.33	134
	High	47.5	12.09	26
	Above	60.2	17.67	38
Personal removal	Extremely low	–	–	–
	Low	13.7	9.77	21
	Average	26.5	60.47	130
	High	34.8	18.60	40
	Above	46.7	11.16	24
Professional motivation	Extremely low	–	–	–
	Low	10.2	13.49	29
	Average	23.1	56.74	122
	High	28.9	15.35	33
	Above	41.9	14.42	31
Index of creative and psychological burnout	Extremely low	–	–	–
	Low	40.8	19.53	42
	Average	76.8	56.74	124
	High	109.5	12.56	27
	Above	117.9	10.23	22

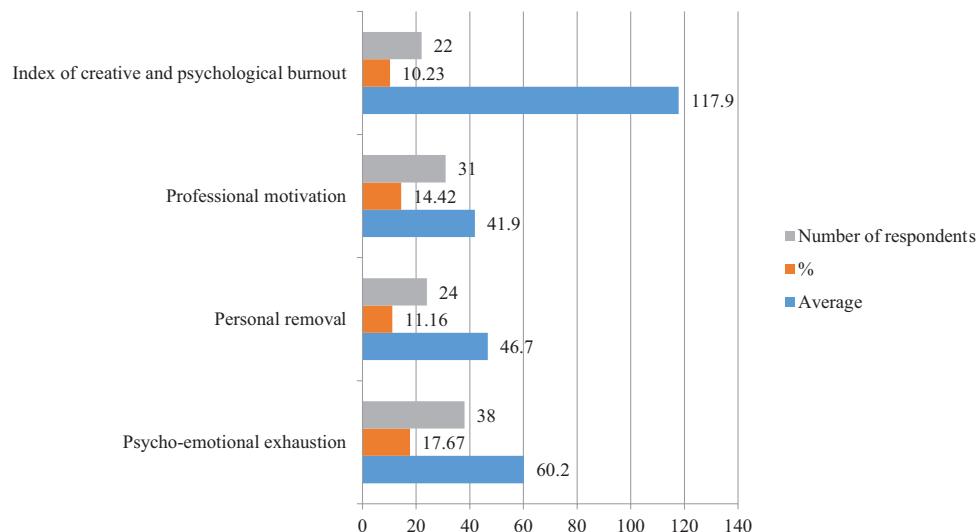


Figure 1. Super-high rates of creative and mental burnout (source: created by authors)

process of depletion of emotional, physical, energy resources can be found out. Exhaustion manifests itself in chronic emotional and physical fatigue, indifference and coldness in relation to others, the manifestation of depression and irritability. High and ultra-high scores on the scale "Personal removal" were recorded in 29.76% of respondents (in the same, who scored high points on the scale "Psychoemotional stress"). The scale captures a specific form of social maladjustment of an employee. Personal removal turns out to be a decrease in the number of contacts with others, an increase in irritability and intolerance in communication situations, negativism towards other people.

High and ultra-high indicators on the scale "Professional motivation" were recorded in 22.79% of respondents. In them, the level of work motivation and enthusiasm is super high. They strive to achieve high results in their work, are sensitive to failures, constantly revise their own professional competence.

Next, we investigated the level of creative and professional stress and its indicators. Table 4 and Figure 2 show the results of the study.

According to the data given in Table 4:

- Emotional exhaustion was recorded in 31.6% of respondents. They usually have a decrease in the emotional background, indifference or emotional oversaturation;
- The indicators of depersonalization were high in 25.12% of the respondents. In such persons, problems arise in relations with others: dependence on others increases or, conversely, reactions of negativism, cynicism of attitudes and feelings towards colleagues and clients grow;
- High scores on the scale "reduction of personal achievements" in 27.44% of respondents. They clearly show tendencies towards a negative assessment of oneself, a decrease in the significance of one's own achievements, limitations of one's capabilities, negativism in relation to official duties, as well as self-esteem and professional motivation decrease, and there is an evasion of responsibility.

Based on the results of our assessment according to the three selected assessment methods, we formed a group of respondents (65 people) who had high rates of creative burnout, and it is on them that the proposed model of ways to reduce the level of creative burnout will be applied.

Table 4. Creative and professional stress levels (source: created by authors)

Parameter		Average value	%	Number of respondents
Emotional exhaustion	Low	16.7	15.81	34
	Average	32.6	53.02	114
	High	51.3	31.16	67
Depersonalization	Low	8.4	19.07	41
	Average	17.9	55.81	120
	High	26.8	25.12	54
Reduction of personal achievements	Low	14.7	12.56	27
	Average	30.2	60	129
	High	46.4	27.44	59

Integrally, the entire system we simulate is denoted by the A0 block. In accordance with this, all inputs (I), outputs (O), controls (C) and mechanisms (M) will be connected to the block by limit arrows and codes in Figure 2.

As can be seen from Figure 3, the decomposition of the first level of the context diagram of the functional model IDEF0 of reducing creative burnout represents four blocks that reflect the assurance of achieving A0.

Presented in Figure 3 A1–A4 represent the steps to achieve A0, our principal goal: reducing the level of creative burnout. Process management directives A1–A4 result from decision making to help reduce burnout.

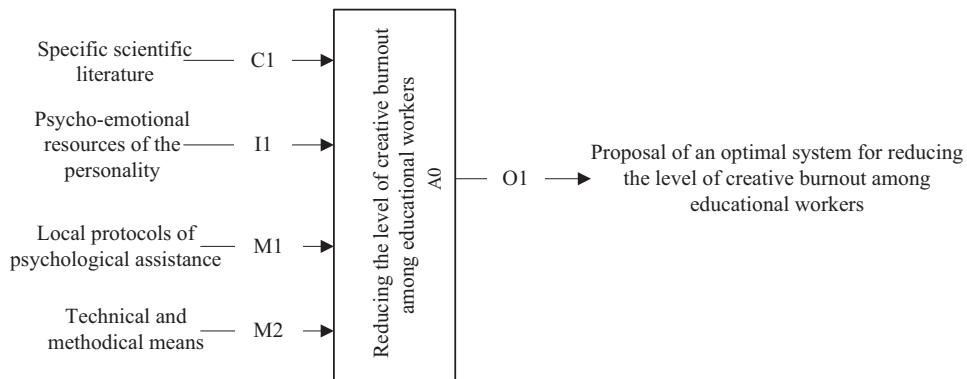


Figure 2. Complex diagram of the IDEF0 model reducing the level of creative burnout  
(source: created by authors)

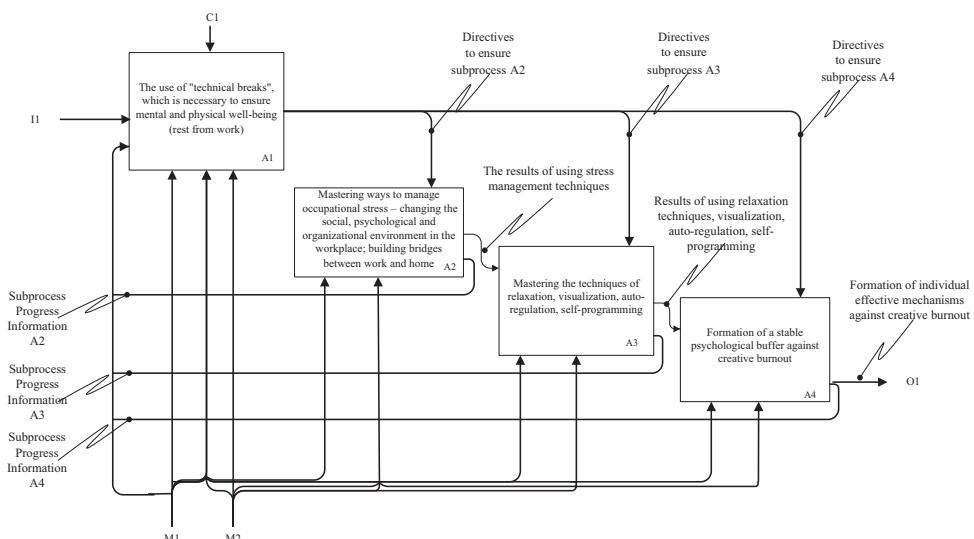


Figure 3. The decomposition of the first level of the context diagram of the functional model IDEF0 of reducing creative burnout  
(source: created by authors)

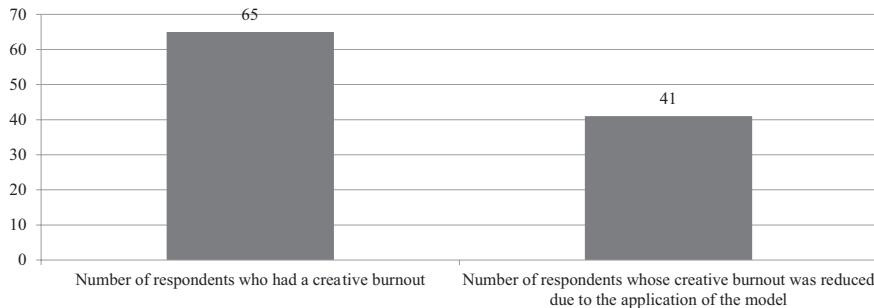


Figure 4. The decomposition of the first level of the context diagram of the functional model idef0 of reducing creative burnout (source: created by authors)

Information about the progress of the process A1–A4 represents the received data and information about how the stage A1–A4 was implemented.

So, the decomposition proposed by us was applied to the existing group of respondents, in which, according to estimates, creative burnout was found (Figure 4).

The application methodology provided for the use of this model in departments and institutions and it was indicated that for two months they followed the steps depicted in the model. The authors explained all the features step by step. That is, the application methodology consisted in a step-by-step explanation and compilation of the list of stages that are depicted on the model. Due to the simplicity provided by the graphical model, the test mode was convenient and simple for the respondents.

This model is theoretical and is only a simplified algorithm of actions for persons who are entrusted with the task of reducing creative burnout among teachers. The advantage of this model is that it is flexible and can change according to circumstances, while the basis of the model remains unchanged.

It was determined that more than half of the group in which creative burnout was revealed for the results of the assessment did not have it anymore, observing 2 months of the proposed reduction model. This indicates the practical value of these results and allows its further use in the practice of educational institutions.

## **Discussion**

The results of our research can be structured into several parts. The first part comprised forming a group of respondents in the field of activity that is the subject of our research. The next part of our study was the use of existing methods for determining burnout in educators with the aim of practical application of the proposed model. There is a significant body of work on how to define creative and other types of burnout (Abbas & Raja, 2015; Yavas et al., 2018), but note that it is clear that creative burnout is a highly individual problem that can have so many signs and elements to consider. Therefore, we consider it incorrect to assess the state of burnout only by one method or test. Therefore, we applied several time-tested and practice-tested methods in order to cover the maximum allowable

number of questions and better reveal the issue of the presence of creative burnout among employees.

Creative burnout has become especially relevant during the global pandemic. Given this, the problem of overcoming this phenomenon has become more important. Henrique Pereira et al. (2021) studied the phenomenon of creative burnout among teachers in Brazil. According to these scientists, an important factor in overcoming creative burnout with the help of the internal forces of a person. But it is worth noting that their research only records the fact that the use of self-regulation techniques is dependent on the level of creative burnout. Our research offers systematized techniques for overcoming creative burnout that can be used in practice.

And the final part of our study was the formation and application of a model for reducing creative burnout for the group of respondents in which, according to estimates, it was established. It should be noted here that Rego et al. (2012) have already tried to present a model that will help predict or help in some way the creativity of workers. But we focused on another problem, namely burnout, and proposed several steps to solve it by applying a methodology that, in our opinion, will demonstrate and visualize this better.

Research has its limitations. Creative burnout and ways to reduce it were studied at the level of educational institutions in Ukraine. Thus, to date, the effectiveness of these techniques can be said only in the context of workers in the educational sphere. Future research plans include the study and practical application of these techniques to workers in other professions.

## Conclusions

As a result of the study, we analyzed the scientific and practical literature and compiled the only universal method for assessing the presence of creative burnout. Therefore, it was decided to apply several time-tested methods, which together will give an idea of whether creative burnout is in our chosen group of respondents, which includes employees of educational institutions of 10 universities in Ukraine.

As a result, we came to the conclusion about the application of the IDEF0 modeling methodology, which has proven itself well in the functionality of displaying improvement paths for certain objects or subjects. The reflected results have found their practical application for the group of respondents, in which, according to the assessment, the state of creative burnout was revealed. After applying this model, more than half of the respondents noted a decrease in the manifestations of creative burnout. Thus, we can talk about the practical value of the proposed model.

In the study, limitations, and they are associated, first of all, with the fact that these methods were used on representatives of the education sector, so we can talk about their effectiveness only for teachers. A separate issue is the geographic location of the respondents. Today, in a pandemic, it is extremely difficult to attract workers from other countries, but in the future, when the pandemic is overcome, this must be done.

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