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The Multiple Impacts of Teacher Misbehaviour

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The Multiple Impacts of Teacher Misbehaviour

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of the research was to investigate the impacts of serious teacher misbehaviour in schools from the perspective of headteachers, a largely un-researched area.

Design/methodology/approach: Data were collected via the documentary analysis of misconduct cases from the Teaching Agency and semi-structured interviews with five headteachers who had managed serious cases.

Findings: The research suggests four primary impacts of serious teacher misbehaviour, affecting other teachers, students, the reputation of the school and headteachers themselves. The article concludes by suggesting a fifth impact affecting public trust in the teaching profession.

Practical implications: Although rare, serious teacher misbehaviour can be highly damaging. Furthermore, the findings suggest that it is almost impossible to predict and so this article suggests a 'map' of the impacts helping headteachers to manage and contain it when/if the worst does happen.

Originality/Value: Empirical studies of the impacts of serious organisational behaviour are scarce; empirical studies of serious organisational behaviour in schools are non-existent and so this article addresses that gap.

Introduction

In April 2012, after over a decade of operation, the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE), the independent regulator of the teaching profession, was abolished. Seen as too soft by some elements of the press (Daily Mail, 2011; Paton, 2011a) and irrelevant by teaching union leaders (Shepherd, 2010), the GTCE was replaced by The Teaching Agency (now rebranded as The National College for Teaching and Leadership). One of the key differences between the two organisations was the regulation of teacher misbehaviour. While the GTCE regulated allegations of teacher misconduct and incompetence, The Teaching Agency (now called the National College for Teaching and Leadership) provided regulation only of 'serious' teacher misconduct, those behaviours that significantly breach professional standards and public trust. Here, then, in the accounts of misconduct hearings published by The Teaching Agency and freely available on the internet, is a glimpse of the often subterranean world of teacher misbehaviour, a snapshot of teachers who engage in inappropriate relationships with students, download pornography on school computers and forge doctors' notes, and it is these cases that are the focus of this research.

This article presents findings from a study of five headteachers who were responsible for managing cases of serious teacher misbehaviour (TMB) that ultimately ended at a disciplinary hearing at the Teaching Agency. There have been few empirical studies of the management of organisational misbehaviour and none have focused on teachers and schools and so this research addresses that gap. What is apparent is that serious teacher misbehaviour has multiple impacts, affecting pupils, staff, the school's reputation in the wider community and the head teachers themselves as they navigate the complexities of the disciplinary process. It is argued that while some suggest that organisational misbehaviour can be predicted and largely prevented, serious misbehaviour is conducted covertly, in between the cracks of organisational policies and systems and outside of the school and routine working hours. As such, serious teacher misbehaviour is almost impossible to predict. However, this does not mean that the headteachers should be only reactive in the face of TMB; instead, this article presents a map of the multiple impacts of serious teacher misbehaviour so that, in the

event of such a crisis, headteachers have a framework within which to contain and manage the phenomenon.

Teacher misbehaviour

Previous studies of teacher misbehaviour have focused almost exclusively on the classroom as the site of deviancy. Kearney et al. (1991) defined TMB as ‘those teacher behaviors that interfere with instruction and thus, learning’ (p310) and investigated the phenomenon by asking students to identify those actions of their teachers that detrimentally affected their learning: firstly there was *incompetence*, poor teaching practices; secondly was *offensiveness* that concerned being rude or sarcastic; finally was *indolence* that involved lateness to class or tardiness of returning work. The centrality of pedagogy to conceptions of TMB has continued in subsequent studies: a lack of teacher credibility (Banfield et al., 2006) and clarity (Toale, 2001), student attributions of teacher misbehaviour (Kelsey, et al., 2004) and teacher non-immediacy (Thweatt and Croskey, 1996), all of which result in the demotivation of learners (Zhang, 2007). Such behaviours form one half of Lewis and Riley’s (2009) dichotomy of TMB between pedagogical misbehaviour and those behaviours defined by legality that concern ‘physical and sexual misconduct, abuse and harassment, and theft or related financial law-breaking’ (p399).

But teachers are not just classroom practitioners; they are also employees that operate within the full range of interdependencies, activities, procedures and regulations that exist within an institution. While they may spend a large proportion of their time within the classroom, they also work within staffrooms, offices and playgrounds and so to see teacher misbehaviour as either pedagogical or illegal is limiting and exists within the wider organisational literature that defines misbehaviour as essentially deviant. Here is the ‘dark side’ of organisational behaviour (Griffin and O’Leary-Kelly, 2004) where we find ‘antisocial behaviour’ (Giacalone and Greenberg, 1997), ‘workplace deviance’ (Bennett and Robinson, 2003), ‘dysfunctional workplace behaviour’ (Van Fleet and Griffin, 2006) and ‘workplace aggression’ (Neuman and Baron, 1997). From this perspective, organisational misbehaviour is seen as purely deviant, a harmful set of behaviours that can impede effectiveness and the potential for organisational improvement. Given that the vast majority of studies of workplace deviance have been conducted in private sector settings, there is also the undeniable concern with the impact of misbehaviour upon profit that is found in many such studies. However, while many researchers within the deviance paradigm discuss the impact upon profit-making, other studies position workplace deviance as a means of resistance. Here, deviance can be seen as a response to the exercise of power within organisations – while for some authors acts such as absenteeism, sabotage and excessive breaks may be interpreted as forms of deviance antithetical to profit-making, for others (e.g. Prasad and Prasad, 1998; Jermier et al., 1994, Noon and Blyton, 1997) these acts are forms of routine resistance, the inevitable result of the exploitation of labour.

However these studies treat organisational misbehaviour, whether as deviant or resistance, they all position such behaviours in opposition to the ‘functional’ behaviours of organisational citizenship (e.g. Organ, 1997) which underplays the pervasiveness, embeddedness and everyday nature of misbehaviour: employees phone in sick when they are well (Deery, Iverson and Walsh, 2006); they steal stationery (Greenberg and Barling, 1996); they use the internet for non-work purposes (Kim and Byrne, 2011); they tell inappropriate jokes (Romero and Cruthirds, 2006). Furthermore, such a depiction of teacher misbehaviour as evident only in the classroom focuses solely on the impact upon pupils and neglects the wider impacts. As such, a framework is needed that represents the intrinsic nature of

organisational misbehaviour (OMB) that positions it as an inevitable part of the fabric of work but also places it within a wider context. Moving from a perception of OMB as purely deviant, Vardi and Wiener (1996, p151) offer an alternative definition – OMB is

Any intentional action by member/s or organisation/s which violates (a) shared organizational norms and expectations, and/or (b) core societal values, mores and standards of proper conduct.

Such a perception of OMB has important implications for an understanding of teacher misbehaviour. From this perspective teacher misbehaviour can be considered without recourse to deviance and without a limited pedagogical focus. Key to this definition is the emphasis upon actions rather than intentions and also foregrounds the importance of norms and expectation which are not necessarily bound up in formal regulations. Moreover, this definition broadens the scope of OMB to include societal values and standards. Yet, again, while this definition allows a much more nuanced understanding of teacher misbehaviour, it has its limitations when applied to teachers. Firstly, as well as being employees, teachers are public servants, enjoying a trusted status that is enshrined within the professional code of conduct and are therefore held to a dual accountability: to their school as their employer and arbiter of terms of employment; next to the public who entrust their children to them; finally there is accountability to their profession. Secondly, teachers are not only accountable for their behaviours within their school but without, for their actions within their private lives. Here, then, teachers are separated from most employees within the public sector who are not subject to professional codes and enjoy a separation between their work and private behaviours.

Rather than seeing TMB as a purely individual phenomenon, the model that frames this research (2013a) considers TMB within the wider context and begins with the potential influencing factors that shape our understanding of the phenomenon. Firstly is public trust, a key component in the functionalist perspective of professionalism (Kennedy, 2007) that situates accountability within social norms and values (key elements of Vardi and Wiener's (1996) definition of organisational misbehaviour). Beyond a purely functionalist perspective, from a pragmatic perspective public trust is essential to the effectiveness of teaching, especially as contemporary schools prioritise parental involvement. Of course, parental involvement can be experienced as positive and empowering (Posey-Maddox et al., 2014) or as critical and surveillant (Hassrick and Schneider, 2009) and so maintaining high public trust creates the potential for the former. Yet it is also public trust that holds teachers accountable both inside and outside of school. This links to the second influencing factor, legality.

As a 'notifiable occupation', the police are obliged to inform the professional body whenever a teacher is charged with any offence, from the minor to the serious. In his analysis of 300 cases of teacher misbehaviour, Page (2012) found that 23% of the cases referred to the GTCE were from the police and concerned offences committed by teachers outside of school with drug-related incidents the most common. As such, this factor – being accountable for behaviour inside and outside of work – clearly marks teachers apart from generic employees.

Third are the professional standards, the code that delineates what is expected of teachers both pedagogically and behaviourally. The professionalism of teachers has always been a highly contested concept (see for example Sachs, 2001; Evans, 2011; Page, 2013b) and the professional standards have been re-written on a regular basis by successive governments.

Where once they were created and policed by the GCTE, an independent body, now the standards are policed by the National College for Teaching and Leadership overseen by the Department for Education.

Fourth are issues of performativity, ‘a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change’ (Ball, 2003) that is embedded within the mechanisms of Ofsted, league tables, benchmarking and performance management. With an ever increasing emphasis within schools on publicly visible performance, teachers feel increasingly pressurised to exceed targets (Lenneblad and Dance, 2014) and so sometimes resort to misbehaviours such as assessment fiddling to boost school performance (Paton, 2011b). From a decontextualized perspective on OMB, such actions are purely deviant and individualistic. However, with headteachers keen to climb league tables, actions such as assessment fiddling to boost grades can be seen as a ‘the professional foul’ or ‘sleight of hand’ (Goldberg, 2010). As such, the influence of performativity may well be organisationally initiated while not officially sanctioned.

Finally is organisational context, a prime antecedent of misbehaviour (Litzky et al., 2006). In some cases the organisational factors may concern the active management practices of senior leaders with distrust, poor communication practices and unfair treatment all providing an impetus to misbehave. However, passive organisational factors can also have an impact; for example, schools that do not vigorously police safeguarding practices may create a climate where some teachers may test teacher-pupil boundaries. But the passive aspects of norm-creation are also at play with different school cultures leading colleagues to sometimes turn a blind eye to behaviours that may cause concern in other schools.

The five influencing factors are then considered within two dimensions of TMB: whether the acts were internal or external to the employing school and whether they concern competence or conduct. While the GTCE once policed both competence and conduct, the NCTL now only manage cases of serious misconduct (Page, 2013b) with competence (and more minor cases of misconduct) now entirely an internal matter for schools. These two dimensions are then translated into six forms of teacher misbehaviour: *intrapersonal* such as inebriation or solo sexual activity; *interpersonal* which includes aggression towards colleagues or inappropriate interaction with pupils; *political* such as deception and falsifying and withholding information; *production* including pedagogical misbehaviour and procedural breaches; *property* misbehaviour such as the misuse of IT equipment and theft; finally, the misbehaviour which is primarily external is *criminal*, the type that involves the police.

From this basis, there are two aims of this article: firstly, it explores a previously un-researched area by examining serious teacher misbehaviour from the perspective of headteachers and highlights the severity of the damage it can wreak on a school at both a personal and organisational level. Secondly, while Page’s (2013) model of teacher misbehaviour provides a conceptual map of the phenomenon, this article provides a map of the actual impact of TMB. As a relatively rare occurrence, headteachers are often unprepared when it does happen and so this article provides a framework to aid senior school leaders in the containment and management of serious teacher misbehaviour. As such, it attempts to move beyond the formal procedures delineated by Human Resources policies and examines the impacts from the very practical such as the covering classes to the more indefinite such as damage to school reputation.

Methodology

The documents concerning teacher misbehaviour published by The Teaching Agency usually include the name of the teacher involved and the former employing school so it was relatively easy to identify suitable cases. However, there were a number of complications. Firstly, many of the cases concerned incidents that had occurred several years before the date of the disciplinary hearing and so, with issues of recall error (Eisenhower et al., 1991) and head teachers moving schools, these were eliminated – only cases that occurred within the past three years were included in the sample. Secondly, researching misbehaviour in organisations is not an easy task, especially when the organisations in question are schools. Cases of teacher misbehaviour often attract attention from the national and local press and so many headteachers declined to be involved in the research: of the potential twenty eight cases, only five headteachers agreed to be involved. Thirdly, there is the issue of anonymity. Even though the names of the teachers and schools involved were published on The Teaching Agency website for three months, those involved are probably keen to move on and so pseudonyms are used throughout this article.

This research adopted a multiple case study approach (Stake, 2004) based upon semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. In the letter inviting heads to participate, they were offered either face to face or telephone interviews. Given the sensitive nature of the research, it was felt that this would allow respondents to select the interview context they felt most comfortable. Three selected a telephone interview while two preferred face to face. Before each interview, the Teaching Agency documents concerning each case were analysed in reference to the model of teacher misbehaviour discussed above to inform the interviews. The interview design was semi-structured in terms of generic foci such as management strategies and the impact of the cases but, as each case was highly idiosyncratic, a proportion of the questions concerned the individual cases themselves. The interviews lasted a minimum of 60 minutes, with the longest standing at 90 minutes, and were transcribed in full. The data analysis was conducted according to grounded theory principles and employed an axial coding framework (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) that drew on both the interview data and the documents produced by the Teaching Agency presenting the details of each case. The second stage of analysis involved the interrogation of the data according to the model of teacher misbehaviour discussed in the previous section and which forms the basis of the discussion section of this article.

The cases of serious teacher misbehaviour

Before examining the impacts of serious teacher misbehaviour from the perspective of the headteachers, there follows an overview of each of the five cases. Each one arises from the documentary analysis of the findings from the Teaching Agency's disciplinary hearing which includes evidence from witnesses, documentary accounts and sometimes submissions from the teachers themselves, whether in person or, more usually, in the form of written statements.

Patricia Keith

Patricia Keith was a hard working primary school teacher who was 'satisfactory' according to Sue, headteacher at the school for the past eight years. She got on well with the pupils, parents and other staff but did not always take advice on board. In her third year at the school, she returned from maternity leave and appeared to Sue to have become a different person: she was frequently aggressive in her communication with Sue and the other teachers, shouting during staff meetings and at teaching assistants. In addition, she began to discipline pupils

inappropriately. Finally, Mrs Keith refused to follow direct management instructions regarding the room in which she taught.

Steve Richards

Peter had been headteacher at his secondary school for eight years when Steve Richards, a very effective teacher in Peter's words, was accused of engaging in an inappropriate relationship with a year 13 pupil who had just left school (but was still technically on the student roll). The relationship involved texting, emailing and meeting in a pub on her last day. Given Mr Richards' previous good record, Peter decided to issue a first written warning and remove his responsibility post. He also adopted an informal coaching role, acting more like an uncle to the young teacher who, it was thought, had acted foolishly. However, two years later, just after Mr Richards had moved to another school, it emerged that Mr Richards had engaged in another inappropriate relationship with another pupil; this time, however, it had progressed from emails and texting to kissing on school premises.

Susan Miller

Susan Miller had been a teacher at her primary school for over 20 years and according to Tim, the headteacher, she was 'just about satisfactory as a teacher' but struggled with the requirements of her management duties. Tim received a call from the ICT Audit Department of the local authority stating that a school laptop had been used to access indecent material. Further investigation of the laptop itself revealed that it had been used to download pornographic images of children and acts of bestiality. Mrs Miller, the teacher who had possession of the school laptop, was immediately suspended and subject to police investigation. During the inquiry Mrs Miller, who lived with just her daughter, consistently denied that she had accessed the material and claimed it was a male she had known since she was at school who occasionally stayed with her and slept on her couch. She argued that it must have been him that accessed the images. However, she could not provide his contact details to the police or to the Teaching Agency.

Anna Wilson

Anna Wilson was a 'very good' teacher at the grammar school where she had taught for seven years. The headteacher, Colin, had received an anonymous phone call stating that a female teacher was having an affair with a male sixth form (post-compulsory years, ages 16-18) pupil. In discussing the matter with a colleague, Ms Wilson's name was suggested as a potential suspect. Tim questioned her about it but she denied it. However, shortly afterwards, a social worker contacted the school after one of their clients, the girlfriend of the pupil implicated, claimed her boyfriend told her he had had sex with Ms Wilson. Colin immediately began the child protection process and Ms Wilson was arrested. Although she initially denied the charges, she did finally admit to police that the pupil had visited her home on two occasions and that on the second they had sexual intercourse; after this, there was an exchange of emails. As a result she received a police caution.

Madeleine Pierce

Helen had been headteacher at her secondary school for five years. The teacher accused of misbehaviour, Madeleine Pierce was a hardworking teacher and a good tutor. Although she could 'get flustered', she was very experienced and at the top of her pay scale. However, Helen received a letter from the exam board for the course Mrs Pierce taught stating that they suspected cheating based on their analysis of the coursework: virtually all of the class had made the same very distinct typographical errors on their work which were identical to the errors made on the teachers' copy produced by Mrs Pierce. Further investigation revealed that

they had all been printed from Mrs Pierce's PC with just a few seconds between each one and in alphabetical order. After being confronted by Helen and denying the charges, she returned to her office and deleted a large number of documents from her PC. She then began a period of sick leave the day afterwards and never returned to work, missing the disciplinary panel that dismissed her.

The multiple impacts of teacher misbehaviour

That teacher misbehaviour has an impact is indisputable. Those pedagogical misbehaviours that are presented in much of the literature (Banfield et al., 2006; Toale, 2001; Kelsey, et al., 2004) impact upon the learning of pupils – educational development is diminished because of poor pedagogical practices. Yet the findings from this research suggest that the wider impacts of teacher misbehaviour must also be considered – classroom misbehaviours may negatively impact upon pupils but the consequences spread and threaten to damage the effectiveness and improvement gains that the heads in this research had achieved, some moving from special measures to outstanding in Ofsted's (the schools inspectorate in England) gradings. With almost no notice being given for inspections from September 2012, the disruptive and damaging impact of teacher misbehaviour was never far from the minds of headteachers. Yet to manage TMB, headteachers had to be aware of it and what is apparent from the cases considered here is that TMB is rarely public; usually, while being performed, it is covert, duplicitous and secretive:

Peter: Individuals who are going to behave in this way are going to be very good at disguising it, the level of subterfuge that people will go to whilst they are behaving in an inappropriate way. You'd have no idea that anything inappropriate was going on, no one else had any idea, people who were working around him had no idea.

Mrs Pierce circumvented the normal quality procedures concerning coursework by waiting for her head of department (who normally checked coursework) to be out of school before she took the work to the exams officer herself for sending to the awarding body; the relationships between Ms Wilson and Mr Richards and their pupils began with text messages and emails from private accounts rather than their school assigned email addresses; Mrs Miller only accessed pornography of the school lap top while at home rather than on school premises. Only Mrs Keith's misbehaviour was public and involved immediate and perceptible impact. But regardless of whether the misbehaviours were covert or overt, what was common were the multiple impacts upon pupils, colleagues, the school and the headteachers.

The impact upon teachers

The first impact was upon the colleagues of the misbehaving teachers yet there was a difference between sectors – in secondary schools there was less impact upon other teachers except the immediate colleagues of the misbehaving teacher. The secondary heads interviewed were generally unaware of extensive impact yet the interactional distance between secondary heads and staff was greater than their primary counterparts which may explain this. In addition, with a larger staff, secondary heads were more able to cover classes when the misbehaving teachers were suspended. In the primary schools, with a smaller and more tightly connected staff, the impact appeared greater.

Sue: It affected everybody, absolutely everybody from the school secretary to the teaching assistants, colleagues, the deputy, me.

In this case, Mrs Keith's aggressive outbursts occurred in a range of contexts: in meetings with Sue and the deputy head; in all-staff meetings; in corridors; in the classrooms. As such, all members of the school were aware of the behaviours. The issue of greater staff awareness in primary schools was also apparent in the case of Mrs Miller who had downloaded extreme pornography on the school's laptop. When it was first discovered, IT security staff from the local authority suddenly appeared in the (only) staffroom and removed Mrs Miller's laptop in full view of her colleagues:

Tim: The guys from the audit [department] weren't particularly subtle – there was a great big guy, six foot three, walks in, unplugs someone's laptop and walks out.

Yet the misbehaviour of colleagues and its impact also affected their perception of the head teacher. In Tim's school he suspected that some staff – who were very close to Mrs Miller – thought that her suspension was due to her competence as a teacher and a manager, the influencing factors of performativity and organisational context in Page's (2012 and 2013) model of TMB:

You've got some staff who are very very loyal to her and worked with her for 15-20 years and as rumours got out, I think they were almost pointing a finger at me saying 'you've fixed her, you didn't think she was a very good teacher anyway, you're pinning something on her'.

In the case of Mr Richards who had twice engaged in inappropriate relationships with students of varying degrees of seriousness, Peter suspected that some staff questioned his judgement in the first incident, a formal warning rather than dismissal:

I think some colleagues felt that he got off lightly and that the matter was not dealt with properly first time. I have a degree of sympathy with that viewpoint but as I said earlier I still think I acted appropriately.

These issues perhaps stemmed from the confidentiality of managing such cases. In the case of Mrs Keith, the one teacher whose misbehaviour was public, all of the staff in the school knew what was happening and, according to Sue, wished that the disciplinary measures could be more severe to remove their colleague. In all of the other cases, however, the headteachers had to maintain confidentiality and not reveal the reason for the sudden absences. As such, it was perhaps unsurprising that the grapevine (Waddington and Michelson, 2007) was active. Yet just as the secrecy negatively affected the morale of the teachers, it was affected even more when news of the misbehaviour became public. Several of the heads discussed how teachers felt let down by the actions of their former colleagues, not just personally but professionally as well. Teaching is, after a 'moral endeavour' (Norberg, 2006), a 'producer of morals that create social cohesion' (Jauhiainen and Alho-Malmelin, 2004). As such, with the majority of teachers imbuing their practice with a sense of values and ethics, TMB was seen to fracture this sense of solidarity of moral purpose

Yet one of the cases suggests a more complex relationship between colleagues and teacher misbehaviour. In the aftermath of Ms Wilson's relationship with a sixth form pupil, when the details had emerged, some staff suggested that they had suspected such a relationship all along:

Colin: One or two staff after the whole thing said ‘well we knew something was going on’. [I felt] a sense of let-down hearing that, that they had not come forward when you go year in year out going through child protection training, saying your responsibility is simply to say if something has happened or you’ve heard something then you’ve done your bit and me or the child protection officer in the school. So I felt a bit of a let down from a couple of members of staff who had not just simply said well they heard this or did you know this was happening.

Furthermore, Colin also suggested that some members of staff felt that the pupil – who was not popular amongst teachers – was responsible for initiating and pursuing the inappropriate relationship. Such a view, of course, is at odds with the moral framework of teaching yet was perhaps mediated by the personal relationships that develop at work.

The impact upon pupils

The second impact of teacher misbehaviour was on pupils and was manifested at two levels. Firstly there were those pupils who were the targets of misbehaviour: the two cases of inappropriate relationships and Mrs Keith, accused of pedagogical misbehaviour. In the former cases, only one of the pupils involved was felt to have been ‘damaged’ by the head. The first of Mr Richards’ inappropriate relationships was not of a sexual nature. There had been contact by email and text message and a meeting in a pub on the night of what was thought to be her last day, but it was judged to be social. The second case that had resulted in physical contact was considered far more serious:

Peter: In terms of the second incident there is no doubt that there was damage to the female sixth former whom he at first helped professionally, then befriended, then took things even further down the line of misconduct. There is no doubt about damage to the individual young person... there was the emotional stress, distress that came about.

In the case of Ms Wilson who had a sexual relationship with a sixth form pupil, it appeared that no one considered the boy (who was 18) to be a victim, even the boy’s mother:

What the police found very difficult was the boy was over 18... The mother was completely unsupportive of the fact the law had been broken, she didn’t want anything to be done at all which was a very odd standpoint – she didn’t want to talk to the police, she didn’t want her son to talk to the police.

However, there may have been additional, more subtle impacts upon both students whose relationship with a teacher was known by their other teachers and, as is likely, other pupils. This was perhaps more of an issue in the case of the male sixth former who, as discussed above, was unpopular with teachers before the incident and had been blamed for the relationship with Ms Wilson. While Colin had not detected any inappropriate treatment of the boy from Ms Wilson’s colleagues, he could not be sure. Of course, what was impossible to assess in this study was the long-term emotional impact upon both pupils.

In both cases, happily, the impact on the pupils’ education was lessened through the supportive measures put in place by the heads and both completed their A levels and progressed to university. The outcome for the pupil in Mrs Keith’s case was also positive in

the end. Mrs Keith was accused of failing to adequately manage one of her pupils who had ‘a full statement of educational needs’. While in Mrs Keith’s class ‘he had taken to sitting in the corner pounding his head into the desk because all she did was yell at him when he couldn’t do his work’. Once Mrs Keith had been removed, Sue ensured the damage was overcome and he ‘thrived’. For the pupils involved in Mrs Pierce’s forging of ICT coursework, the outcome was less positive. As a result of the fraud, the exam board refused to award qualifications to the pupils and also refused to allow them to re-take the modules concerned. However, the ICT course was not a GCSE and so the reaction of the pupils (and perhaps more importantly their parents) was not as severe as Helen was expecting:

There wasn’t a great deal of concern, they were more concerned with their core subjects and the GCSEs... I had some difficult conversations with a couple of parents but ultimately the certificate in ICT wasn’t a major concern for them..

However, the impact was not just on the pupils immediately involved in the cases. Suspended teachers meant that classes needed to be covered which meant extra expense and damage to pupils’ learning:

Tim: It was really hard because we had two reception classes, [Mrs Miller] had one of them so then she had to go off suddenly so the impact on the staffing and the children... the fact these were the newest children in the school who need nurturing and support more than any other... that was a massive impact.

The impact upon the school

The next level of impact was on the school in terms of its reputation and relationship with the community. In a competitive environment (Adnett and Davies, 2005; Bradley and Taylor, 2010), schools have to constantly be aware of their reputation and ‘brand’ which is perhaps as important as pass rates in determining parental choice; here, then, is the performative element of Page’s (2012) TMB model. Teacher misbehaviour has the potential to severely tarnish the good name of a school that headteachers and their staff work hard to build. Three of the cases of TMB attracted press attention; in the case of Mrs Miller and Ms Wilson, it was both at national and local level whereas the case of Mr Richards was only in the local press. Although the stories were reported to be either factually incorrect or vague, the heads feared for their impact upon the good name of their schools:

Peter: There’s the damage to the reputation of the school. It can shake confidence in the system and processes the school has. Particularly among families that do not know the school well. If families have had children here for several years... then they know this has got to be some sort of aberration that is mainly due to the individual and the skill of the individual in hiding whatever he is doing but it does damage the school within the wider community.

However, what was evident was that the fears for the school’s reputation appeared unfounded. In the cases of TMB that were reported in the press, few parents complained or even contacted the schools involved.

Tim: I was expecting to come back and have a posse of parents on the playground saying ‘why didn’t you warn us about this’, like a lynch mob almost – sort of understandable if your four year old child with someone who’s been accused

of [downloading child pornography]. Literally nothing on the first day back of term.

Colin: I don't think it had any effect in all honesty on the local parental views of the school. They could see we had a problem which we had then dealt with under the procedures that we have. We had done all we possibly could in terms of protection, CRB checks, processes were rigorous and robust and it was one very isolated incident.

The timing of the stories had been fortuitous however: in Tim and Peter's schools, the stories were published in the summer holidays which minimised the levels of daily parental interaction and parent-teacher interaction. In Colin's case, the story emerged in the local paper on a Saturday, its lowest circulation level.

In the other two cases, there was more direct impact upon the school's reputation: the parents of Mrs Pierce had to be informed that their children would not be receiving their ICT qualification which led to some 'difficult conversations' for Helen. Mrs Keith's case did, Sue felt, damage the school's reputation as the parents of one of Mrs Keith's pupils had a number of disagreements with her and had to request that their child was moved to a different class. In addition, at a parent's evening, Sue also overheard Mrs Keith making disparaging comments to parents about Sue's leadership.

The impact upon the headteachers

The final impact of TMB was on the headteachers themselves. What was immediately evident in the accounts was the sense of shock at the misbehaviours of their teachers. While much of the generic organisational literature presents misbehaviour as largely preventable (Trevino and Brown, 2005; Tomlinson and Greenberg, 2005), the heads in this study suggested that there had been no prior incidents or behaviours to suggest what was coming. There were also no serious competence issues involved prior to the misbehaviours, with three teachers being good or better and two satisfactory. But more than shock was the sense of betrayal:

Peter: Inevitably when you first hear of something as damaging as this there is that initial sinking feeling. I just couldn't believe it, I was astounded, shocked and also felt a degree of personal betrayal as well as professional betrayal on behalf of the individual concerned.

One common impact of TMB was the time consumed by endless meeting with all of the agencies involved, the (often duplicate) reports that had to be completed and processes that had to be seen through to the letter. The cases took up to two years from the point of discovery to the disciplinary panel at the Teaching Agency but, more than just time, for four of the heads, the process was stressful on top of the routine stress of being a headteacher (Phillips and Sen, 2011; Thompson, 2008).

Sue: It was actually one of the worst experiences of my life and to some extent it still rumbles on and it still haunts me... I was at virtually the point of a nervous breakdown. It came to the point where I said to the deputy head 'well it's going to be her or me'.

Key to coping with the process and the time demands were the governing body which was reported as supportive by all of the heads. The chair of governors in particular was highlighted as a listening ear and a source of impartial advice during the self-questioning that heads often engaged in. But other sources of support were also evident in the accounts: HR departments in the Local Authority were, if not supportive, at least available to provide guidance on the intricacies of the disciplinary processes. Furthermore, the role of union support was also significant – some of the heads contacted their own union representatives during the process. However, the misbehaving teachers’ union representatives were also largely supportive of the headteacher, especially where the evidence against their advisee was incontrovertible.

Discussion

This article provides a framework for the management of serious teacher misbehaviour, a map of the multiple impacts that can aid senior school leaders in minimising the damage upon pupils, staff, the school and the headteachers themselves. While HR departments may be able to provide advice concerning disciplinary and safeguarding processes, this research highlights the impacts that fall outside of the formal procedures, the wider impacts that concern the pragmatic such as covering classes to the less defined such as organisational reputation. As such, this section will focus on four key themes: the extent to which TMB can be prevented; the problem of mitigation; two additional impacts; finally, ‘preventative leadership’.

Preventing TMB

It is clear that teacher misbehaviour has multiple impacts, affecting pupils, teachers, the school and heads themselves. As such, the heads involved reviewed their procedures and policies in an attempt to identify how it could have happened but also to prevent further occurrences. However, the extent to which teacher misbehaviour can be predicted or prevented is questionable, despite what is claimed in some non-empirical studies of OMB (Trevino and Brown, 2005; Tomlinson and Greenberg, 2005). All of the teachers involved had previously been solid members of staff, some at an outstanding level of performance, hard work, and dedication. With some of the teachers involved displaying high levels of organisational citizenship – the state many theorists argue is the means to prevent OMB – there was little indication of what was to come. Tim, for example, had introduced strict ICT safety guidelines when he joined the school and all staff had signed a statement agreeing to abide by the policy. Despite this, Mrs Miller downloaded child and animal pornography on a school laptop when she was at home. At Helen’s school there had been a rigorous quality assurance process in the administration of coursework whereby all work had to be checked by the head of department. Yet Mrs Pierce merely waited for the Head of Department to be away from school before taking it to the exams officer for sending. The point is that no matter how rigorous systems are, individuals that are motivated to misbehave will find a way around them, exploiting loopholes to ‘make-out’ in Goffman’s (1971) terms. What is also clear is that to understand TMB purely in terms of organisational deviance (Bennett and Robinson, 2003; Van Fleet and Griffin, 2006) is limiting and the cases here demonstrate the need for a more nuanced approach that embraces deviance but also recognises the elements of resistance in the case of Mrs Keith and even the element of principled action evident in the case of Mrs Pierce.

Mitigation

Yet the motivation to misbehave presents another complicating factor for headteachers. In all of the cases considered here, the documents released by the Teaching Agency refer to

mitigating factors, presented by the accused teachers as the antecedents of their misbehaviour yet often with little detail. Ms Wilson for example, suggested that engaging in a sexual relationship with a sixth form student was a result of her fears for her job as the school were undertaking a restructure; Mrs Keith suggested her aggressive confrontation with her colleagues were a result of her difficult private life; Mrs Pierce had been suffering health problems and was taking medication; Mr Richards was affected by the separation from his partner and child; Mrs Miller offered unspecified mitigation which the panel did not give weight to. The influence of factors external to the school therefore provides a further complication in the extent to which teacher misbehaviour can be predicted or prevented. As such, if preventing the antecedents of TMB within school was difficult, preventing external factors was impossible. People suffer tragedies and experience distress in their lives and teachers are no different. The extent to which such misbehaviour can be explained by external factors is, of course, debatable and something which the heads themselves tried to avoid analysing. Instead, the heads were above all pragmatic – misbehaviour had occurred and it was their responsibility to manage it, balancing the needs of pupils, colleagues, the school and the accused teacher, negotiating the complexities of the case with equal regard to all. But the management of TMB was not just a matter of duty of care. The heads involved had worked extremely hard in the preceding years to make improvements in their schools, sometimes moving from special measures to good to outstanding. The strategies of improvement had largely been controllable; teacher misbehaviour was anything but and threatened to derail the improvements that had been wrought. The map of impacts presented by this article may therefore allow headteachers to regain control over the process and minimise the damage that can occur.

Additional impacts

Yet while this article has discussed the multiple impacts of teacher misbehaviour, there are areas of omission and two final impacts to consider. Firstly there is the impact upon the misbehaving teacher themselves. While few would attempt to defend such serious misconduct, the impact of being disciplined, internally by former colleagues and externally by the Teaching Agency, is likely to be considerable. The full impact is a further, ethically tricky, area of investigation. Yet there is a wider impact that must be considered. Cases of serious misconduct are posted on the Teaching Agency's website for three months with the names of the accused teachers and (usually) their previous school. Such publication is simultaneously offered as proof to the public of robustness in tackling teacher misbehaviour and a warning to other teachers of the penalties for transgression (Page, 2013b), a contemporary 'spectre of the scaffold' in Foucault's terms (1991). As potentially sensational stories, the media regularly covers such cases, especially those at the most serious end of the misbehaviour continuum. The final impact, therefore, is on the teaching profession itself.

Previously teacher misconduct (and incompetence) was publically disciplined by the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE), the independent professional body for teachers. As independent from government, the GTCE was supposed to bolster public trust in teachers via self-regulation; both the government and certain sections of the media argued strenuously that in this regard, the GTCE had failed. This was perhaps a prime reason for its abolition and replacement by the Teaching Agency's disciplinary system where disciplinary decisions are made by a representative of the Secretary of State for Education rather than an independent panel. To an extent, then, this suggests to the public that teachers can't be trusted, not even to regulate themselves, a situation analogous to journalism recently in the UK (Leveson, 2012). Therefore, while the publication of disciplinary hearings is intended to demonstrate the robustness of the government, it may simultaneously erode the extent to which teachers are

trusted by the public. While public trust of teachers currently appears high (Ipsos Mori, 2011), it cannot be taken for granted, especially when stories of teacher misbehaviour are routinely sensationalised.

Preventative leadership

As was clear from the cases discussed here, the management of the relationship between headteacher and parents is key. Heads must proactively ensure that the specific trust of the local community is maximised so that, if incidents of teacher misbehaviour do occur, the impact upon the school's reputation is minimised. In the cases discussed here, there were few incidents of parental unrest when teacher misbehaviour came to light and apparently no fears of the effects of bad apples (Dunlop and Lee, 2004; Wellen and Neale, 2006). Instead, heads were largely confronted by silence and even empathy from parents. This is likely a result of the trust that the heads had cultivated in their leadership practices, routinely making public the accomplishments and successes of the school, publicising not just academic success but the wider activities and ethos of their institutions. As a result, when incidents of serious teacher misbehaviour occur, there is enough 'trust-capital' to absorb the potentially detrimental impacts. As such, here is perhaps the key to managing the multiple impacts of TMB. If misbehaviour itself cannot be prevented, it is essential that headteachers engage in building positive collaborations with parents and other stakeholders, a process that goes beyond marketing and focuses on relationships and visible leadership beyond the school gates. While Barnes et al. (2005) highlight the fact that parental trust in leadership is directly related to the extent of parental involvement, it is crucial that such involvement is based upon authenticity of leadership which is not only key to internal trust relations (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 1998), it is also key to external trust relations as well. While parents have to trust the teachers within the schools, they also need to trust the headteacher to manage effectively and fairly, not just routinely but when serious incidents occur.

Conclusion

With multiple impacts upon pupils, teachers, the school and heads themselves, teacher misbehaviour, although rare, is an issue for all heads to be aware of. While much of the literature presents organisational misbehaviour as predictable and preventable, the most serious forms (such as those discussed in this article) are unpredictable and largely unpreventable, occurring in secret and evading the official policies, systems and scrutiny of the school. When TMB does occur, it has the potential to derail the improvement strategies that heads enact, damaging the effectiveness of the organisation. As a result, headteachers must ensure that their schools are as 'secure' as possible in terms of preventative action. In addition, should serious misbehaviour occur, this article provides a framework to contextualise the procedures that are determined by Human Resources policies. Thus, while serious TMB may be highly disruptive, this map of the multiple impacts may allow headteachers to plan for its management from the outset, to take back control in contexts that often leave them powerless. This article has also highlighted the potential wider damage to the teaching profession that may occur – publication of disciplinary hearings may be intended to prove the robustness of teacher regulation but the side-effect is that the popular press have a source of sensationalised stories of teacher misbehaviour at their fingertips, potentially eroding the public trust that teachers, arguably, enjoy.

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