



TEACHER BURNOUT: EXPLORING THE CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS FOR EDUCATOR STRESS

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ABSTRACT *In today's classrooms, the issue of teacher burnout has become an urgent concern due to the detrimental consequences it has on mental health, the academic performance of students, and the overall effectiveness of schools. Some of the various elements that lead to teacher stress are addressed in this study. Some of these issues include an excessive amount of work, insufficient professional autonomy, emotionally exhausting pupils, and a lack of administrative support. By relying on contemporary literature, empirical research, and data based on specific cases, this study investigates the interaction between these factors and how they contribute to feelings of tiredness and disengagement in one's working life. There are a variety of practical and policy-level therapies that are being investigated in an attempt to minimise burnout. Some of these treatments include mentoring programs, workload redistribution, emotional support networks, mindfulness training, and institutional improvements. By conducting an in-depth investigation into the factors that contribute to the problem as well as potential solutions, this research has contributed to a greater understanding of how to support teacher resilience and promote sustainable teaching approaches in a variety of educational settings.*

Keywords: *Teacher burnout, Educator stress, Occupational stress, Emotional exhaustion, Workload pressure, Burnout prevention, Teacher well-being, Stress management in education, School leadership support, Teacher mental health, Coping strategies*

INTRODUCTION

Educators are experiencing higher levels of stress, emotional tiredness, and dissatisfaction with their jobs, which has led to the concept of teacher burnout being a prominent topic of debate in the area of education in recent years. Burnout in the teaching profession is characterised by a number of symptoms, including emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and a lessened sense of personal success. [1] found that burnout often results in decreased effectiveness and ultimately leads to departure from the profession. The combination of excessive expectations, long work hours, and administrative challenges brought on by increased pressures on schools to enhance student performance is said to be the cause of mental health disorders and chronic stress that teachers often endure, as stated by [2]. [3] Several studies have pointed to the primary reasons why teachers get burnt out. These causes include the emotional demands of teaching, an excessive amount of paperwork, a lack of control over their classrooms, kids acting out, and a lack of support from administration.

There are a number of factors that contribute to the problem, including the expanding bureaucracy in education systems, the high-stakes testing that is being administered, and the lack of respect for the job

that teachers do [4]. Teachers, who already suffer from anxiety and tiredness owing to variables like as health concerns, shifting expectations, and remote teaching, have seen a significant increase in the severity of these pressures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic [5].

In order to effectively manage burnout, it is vital to implement a multifaceted approach that incorporates both systemic and individual coping strategies. According [6], successful methods include reducing the weight of non-instructional work, constructing supportive leadership structures within schools, offering counselling and mental health services, and centring professional development on emotional resilience. [7] discovered that early-career teachers who had mentors and strong collegial links reported significantly lower levels of stress and loneliness than those who did not have such relationships. To maintain a high level of educational quality and to keep teachers in their positions, it is necessary for us to be able to identify and manage the issue of teacher burnout. This article will conduct an in-depth investigation of the complex causes of teacher burnout and provide a critical analysis of evidence-based treatments for the condition. The goal of this article is to improve the well-being of educators and preserve the teaching profession.

OBJECTIVES

1. To investigate the main reasons for teacher burnout.
2. To evaluate practical ways to lessen teacher stress.

METHOD

Eight schools in three North Lebanon regions—four public and four private—and a convenience sample of all teachers provided quantitative data. We wondered whether those instructors knew they were burnt out. Purposeful sampling selected participants with specified traits. Snowball sampling identified educators who left the profession within five years, not due to travel, residency, or contract termination. Each of them helped us find other instructors who left due to fatigue. Nine female teachers with two months to five years of experience who had left the profession at least once in the first five years were interviewed face-to-face and given the same questionnaire (Table 1). This inspired academics to conduct multiple-case studies to compare and contrast occurrences from different situations. Combining questionnaire and semi-structured interview data illuminated teacher fatigue more than either technique alone [8]. One included empirical data, while the other provided burnout survivors' testimonies. A convergent parallel design allowed us to learn from present and previous instructors [9][10]. One researcher who experienced burnout and kept a reflective journal is the major data source. Her fieldwork gave her great insight into the study's context, which benefited the research [11]. The topics to research came from her notepad. We translated the teachers' questionnaire to Arabic and back to English to preserve its meaning. We ask about demographics and education in the first 10 questions. See the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI-ES) in the second section. EE, DP, and PA absence are the three burnout syndrome components assessed by it.

Table 1. Questionnaire Respondent Demographics[11].

Category	Details
Gender	17 Males, 75 Females
Age Range	22–64 years
Average Age	48.20 years
Marital Status	Single: 22 Married: 66 Divorced/Widowed: 4
Type of School	Private: 46 Public: 46
Teaching Experience	Range: 1–43 years Average: 20.74 years

We modified the MBI-ES questionnaire from Mindgarden.com to make it simpler for Lebanese teachers to grasp [12]. The Likert scale ranges from 0 (never) to 6 (everyday) for 22 assertions. Nine questions examine educators' emotional fatigue (EE) subscale of burnout, five depersonalisation (DP), and eight lack of positive affect (PA) experiences. The final component of the questionnaire employed a Likert-scale to rate classroom atmosphere, support, workload, and psychological aspects based on the interview questions. We included a subjective question to determine what participants believed was the main cause of teachers' fatigue to make the questionnaire and interviews more uniform. The questionnaire's language and item clarity were revised following the pilot to increase instrument validity. The schools received bilingual copies. [13] Burnout Inventory Manual reported that 68 of 92 instructors from 8 schools completed the questionnaire. To avoid pressuring or influencing teachers, the principal and coordinators were absent. All replies were anonymous and "burnout" was deleted. Semi-structured interviews allowed us to expand on respondents' comments and gain more thorough information [14]. This poll asked teachers on the problems and possibilities of their multiple classroom and non-classroom duties. Participants were questioned about their feelings, thoughts, goals, and prior activities to determine burnout causes and levels. Average ten-page transcripts were made from recorded interviews. Each lasted 60–70 minutes and was in English. We examined the independent quantitative and qualitative findings first. MBI-ES was administered using SPSS and Excel. After aggregating subscale values, the mean was calculated.

According to the instrument's scoring system, the means were divided into three burnout levels, from high to low. Typically, excessive burnout is indicated by low PA subscale scores and high EE and DP subscale scores, whereas medium burnout is indicated by middle-range values. Additionally, the three phases of burnout were utilised to categorise each respondent's scores, and subscale frequencies and percentages were calculated. Questionnaire data helped us understand burnout levels and spot them in interview data. We computed the frequencies and percentages of all respondents' answers for each of the 16 categories after coding the subjective questionnaire item. For evidence, we provided samples. Later

comparisons were made to examine how they contrasted to the interview results. Researchers utilised inductive and deductive reasoning to analyse interview transcripts and compared their results for reliability. After reviewing each interview transcript, we colour-coded symptoms and causes to structure the thoughts into themes that might be identified in other transcripts. After cross-case synthesis, all respondents' principal burnout causes were grouped into five groups: workload, school environment, discipline, emotional concerns, and coordination/mentoring. We verified data consistency and compatibility across all instruments.

RESULT

Levels of burnout

Tables 2 and 3 demonstrate that the nine instructors who left the field during the first five years of experience had significant levels of burnout across all subscales. This is in contrast to the low levels that were demonstrated by the remaining teachers on average. According to the findings of the questionnaire (which are included in the table below), there are five primary variables that may be ascribed to teacher burnout. These factors are student disinterest, poor academic development, parental participation in their children's education, and disciplinary concerns. Three causes that instructors identify as contributing to their high or moderate levels of burnout on the EE and reduced PA subscales include lesson preparation, a large student population, the curriculum, and textbooks. Both of these issues are cited as contributing to the burnout. Our sample of present instructors exhibits evidence of burnout on average, albeit on lower levels across all subscales as compared to the teachers who were questioned (Table 4). When it comes to determining the elements that lead to teacher burnout, the conclusions of the questionnaire are supported by the findings of the interview analysis, which are shown in Table 5.

Table 2. All Respondent MBI–ES Mean Scores[15].

MBI–ES Dimension	Teachers Still Teaching	Teachers Who Left the Profession at Least Once
Mean EE (Emotional Exhaustion)	16.78 (<i>Low</i>)	38.22 (<i>High</i>)
Mean DP (Depersonalization)	2.62 (<i>Low</i>)	10.44 (<i>High</i>)
Mean PA (Personal Accomplishment)	42.18 (<i>High</i>)	29.33 (<i>Low</i>)

Table 3. Different subscale burnout percentages among teachers[16].

Subscale	Group	High Burnout	Moderate Burnout	Low Burnout
EE	Still teaching (N = 86)	17.4% (15 teachers)	19.8% (17 teachers)	62.8% (54 teachers)

	Left profession (N = 9)	88.89% (8 teachers)	11.11% (1 teacher)	0% (0 teachers)
DP	Still teaching (N = 85)	3.5% (3 teachers)	4.7% (4 teachers)	91.8% (78 teachers)
	Left profession (N = 9)	22.22% (2 teachers)	22.22% (2 teachers)	55.56% (5 teachers)
PA	Still teaching (N = 84)	6% (5 teachers)	9.5% (8 teachers)	84.5% (71 teachers)
	Left profession (N = 9)	44.44% (4 teachers)	11.11% (1 teacher)	44.44% (4 teachers)

In accordance with the findings of the interviews, the five primary causes of burnout are as follows: a hard workload (80%), a hostile school atmosphere (70%), a lack of guidance or support (60%), rigorous disciplinary measures (30%), and emotional issues (20%). The disparity between the quantity of work that teachers are expected to accomplish both at home and in the classroom and the amount of money that they are paid is one of the primary factors that contributes to teacher burnout. Six out of eight educators thought that their salary was insufficient in proportion to the demands of the job they did, despite the fact that income is not the leading factor that drives education professionals to leave the industry. In conclusion, the results may be characterised most accurately by three headings.

School-related factors

Most participants feel that administration contacts, power dynamics between parents and kids, school laws and procedures, and educator connections lead to burnout (Tables 6 and 7). A majority of educators feel that evaluation, mentors, and coordinators cause teacher fatigue. Induction cannot occur without coordinators and mentors. Coping with demanding, disruptive, and unsupportive coordinators on academic and classroom management concerns is just as difficult. Some students disregard their professors and misinterpret the obstacles to their success, lowering their competency. "The coordinator can come into my classroom whenever she wants and ends up explaining to the students," one quote adds. This is an insult, and it drove me away.

Table 4. Teacher Reports of Reasons for High or Moderate Burnout on Individual Subscales[17].

Burnout Subscale(s)	Causes of Burnout
EE, DP, or PA	1. Upbringing 2. Discipline 3. Low achievement

	4. Academic role of parents 5. Students' disinterest
EE or Reduced PA	1. Preparations 2. Large number of students 3. Curriculum and textbooks
EE or DP	1. School policies
EE only	1. Teaching hours 2. Salary 3. Physical facilities 4. Discrepancy between reality and expectations
Reduced PA only	1. Technological distractions

Table 5. Interview fatigue and its causes[18].

Interviews

I quit my job for this reason. When I arrived at school, I was assigned a class to teach alone and felt overwhelmed. "How dare you bring up such a delicate subject," the principal yelled. I was fatigued from never being recognised by the administration and had no clue what to cover. Without fail, they demand more... It just took one thank you... The typical teacher works half a day. Instead, you take the kids' troubles, corrections, and preparations home, so I stopped. Since preparing and being creative is tiring, I don't enjoy taking anything home. The class load and exam stress are excessive. Regulated but not followed. Kids appeared unrestrained; they simply spoke what they thought. It affected the school's view of teachers... Most of the time, the government obliges parents. Nitpicking, squabbling, and contentious debate were common among instructors..." I wanted to go since I had many duties. As mathematics or science teachers, we still have to prepare the end-of-year party and teach dances.'

Unfair, too frequent, overly comprehensive, subjective, and judgemental assessments that highlight bad aspects while ignoring good efforts were cited by many instructors as a reason for teacher burnout. But it's also possible to feel lost and confused when there are no assessments. In addition, there are certain coordinators who are never content with the job that instructors do; they want more and have higher standards than what teachers are capable of meeting.

Classroom-related factors

It is the belief of some instructors that problems with student discipline are the root cause of burnout. These issues can include rules that are not clear, rules that are not written down and can be changed, rules that are not effectively enforced or reinforced due to interference from parents or administrators, a large class size, a lack of support for managing students with special needs, and other problems that are conceptually similar.

Personal factors

Teachers who are unprepared for reality often get disillusioned. Few instructors become educators because their college courses were fascinating and unnecessary. Gender, age, marital status, education, years of experience, subject, number of grade levels taught, teaching load, and support may affect teacher burnout. Married teachers, those under 20, and those under 50 had greater rates of depersonalised burnout (Table 8).

Table 6. The Administration's Role in Bringing About Burnout and Why It Occurs[19].

No.	Reason
1	Incompetent, unprofessional, uncaring, or disrespectful principal
2	Coordinators less competent and yet want to tell teachers what to do
3	Administrators that are unresponsive and not flexible
4	Principal negatively and illogically interfering with teachers' lessons and plans
5	Administration that does not treat all the teachers fairly
6	Administration that does not appreciate teachers' efforts, is overly demanding, and picky

Table 7. Explanation of Why Rules and Policies Are a Key Factor in Employee Burnout[20].

No.	Reason
1	Unfair class distribution, teaching a large number of different grade levels
2	Having to attend workshops that have nothing to do with teacher's needs
3	School duty on days off to correct exams and do activities for students
4	Shorter summer vacations than the regular range
5	Biweekly afternoon coordination meetings
6	Extracurricular and playground duties besides regular teaching duties
7	Correcting many exams in a short period of time

8	Unclear and unfixed rules that could be altered at random occasions
9	No sense of control, everything is imposed on teachers and staff
10	Having to follow a standardized teaching method

DISCUSSION

The studies that we looked at did not address burnout levels in relation to the number of grade levels that are taught; however, we did find that the levels of burnout are higher among teachers who prepare for and teach four or more grade levels in comparison to those who teach fewer grade levels. In comparison to teachers of science, art, languages, or social studies, those who teach mathematics exhibit a greater number of indicators of burnout on the EE and DP subscales. This suggests that the kind of subject matter taught has an impact on the degree of burnout experienced by teachers. The inappropriate and unpleasant intrusion from administration, which interrupts the delivery of classes and requires that instructors come up with new ways on the fly, is one example of a recent discovery that pertains to components in the workplace that lead to burnout. Other recent findings apply to aspects that contribute to burnout. It is possible that a variety of reasons contribute to burnout. These factors include coordinators who insist on additional responsibilities rather than supporting and advising instructors, the absence of evaluations for teachers, and assessments that are unfair, subjective, judgemental, frequent, and extensive. One of the factors that led to burnout was the physical tiredness that resulted from non-instructional activities that left little time for relaxing and dealing with disciplinary concerns, especially in classes that were taught by men.

Table 8. Aspects of Burnout / Degrees of Persistence

Category	DP Mean Score
Gender	
Male	4.25
Female	2.49
Age	
Above 50	2.50
Below 50	2.96
Marital Status	
Married	2.98
Unmarried	2.33

Education Level	
High School Degree	2.80
University Degree	3.10
Teaching Grade Levels	
Grades 4–6	3.71
Grades 10–12	2.88
Teaching Subject	
Mathematics	2.45
Languages	2.94
Teaching Hours per Week	
25–30 hours	3.50
16–25 hours	3.05

Teachers burn out due to administrators openly arguing their disciplinary decisions in front of students and a lack of clear, written classroom behaviour norms, according to research. Teachers who thought teaching was a bad job likewise burned out. We obtained findings that matched the literature. Our study indicated that male teachers had higher levels of DP than female teachers, contradicting the findings of [21] and [22], who reported higher burnout in female teachers. Males had a mean DP of 4.25 and females 2.49, consistent with [23]. On the DP subscale, educators under 50 are more burnt out than those over 50. [24] and [25] found that younger teachers burn out more than older ones. In keeping with the finding that teachers with children had higher burnout, married teachers had higher burnout on all subscales than single teachers. In contrast, [26] observed that single instructors burn out more than married ones. This finding supports [27] and opposes the concept that secondary teachers burnout more than elementary teachers. It also reveals that grade 4-6 teachers had higher EE and DP than all other grade levels. Similar to [28] and [29] teachers with fewer than twenty years of expertise had higher burnout rates. This contradicts [30], who reported that burnout syndrome is more common among experienced workers. Teachers burn out owing to a lack of family and friend support, according to [31]. As assistance rises, burnout falls. No matter how much family, community, or coworkers support them, teachers blame daily classroom issues for burnout. This supports earlier studies finding no association between burnout and support from coworkers, supervisors, friends, or spouses [32]. Teachers who joined the sector for reasons other than teaching also reported significant burnout rates. Teachers with high EE, DP, and low PA had a gap between their job expectations and their work, while those with lesser expectations had reduced burnout.

Classroom-related factors

Math teachers and teachers who work more than 25 hours a week had higher EE and DP subscale burnout than their counterparts. Teachers who teach more than three grades also have greater DP. Most high-EE respondents appear to struggle with revising students' work and preparing lessons at home at many grade levels. [33] found that work pressure predicts burnout on all subscales; [34] found that a heavy workload in preparing for and providing feedback on assignments causes burnout; and [35] found that the EE increases with weekly preparation time. Like Zhouchun (2011), our study reveals that teachers' home load reduces their social time, causing burnout.

According to Gavish and Friedman (2010) and Payne McLain (2005), teachers who had a poor rapport with their students and whose students disrespected and challenged their authority felt profound feelings of worthlessness and failure. Teachers who had high EE burnout and low PA subscales believed that their students were rude and to blame for classroom discipline issues. Teacher EE levels were higher than usual when they doubted their disciplining skills. Without support from administrators and coordinators, classroom management, lesson preparation, and subject matter competence may lead to burnout. Not knowing how to use the textbook and perform classroom activities might cause teacher fatigue, according to Zhouchun (2011). Cephe (2010) says supervisors and other support staff are required if they are positive, supportive, and effective in academic and classroom management. Class size, student disengagement, and low accomplishment contributed to teachers' tiredness and burnout. Large classes exhausted teachers and reduced PA. Unmet student growth expectations and a lack of student appreciation, which Gavish and Friedman (2010) identified as a significant predictor of educator burnout (EE), lead to instructor burnout, according to Zhouchun (2011) and [36].

School-related factors

It has been found by [37] that teachers who have problems with the administration are more likely to experience higher levels of burnout on the EE subscale in comparison to teachers who do not have conflicts with the administration. An incompetent principal and unfair favoritism are two examples of the kinds of circumstances that might lead to the exhaustion of working teachers. Schlichte et al. (2005) discovered a trend that was quite similar to this one: administrators who do not respect the work that teachers perform and instead make it more difficult for them to complete their assignments throughout the school day. Following in the footsteps of Cephe (2010), we discovered that the presence of apathetic, disrespectful, and judgemental principals, as well as the dissemination of negative communication by administrators, were factors that led to the burnout of teachers. It was discovered by Payne McLain (2005) that teachers who did not have the perception that they were a member of a team had significantly higher rates of burnout compared to those who did. Additionally, [38] discovered that teachers' perspectives on school alliance building and backstabbing are connected with burnout. The administrative control, the diminishing sense of belongingness, and the unequal incentives are other factors that contribute to burnout. It was also stated by teachers who reported substantial levels of burnout across all dimensions that they felt that the amount of work they put in does not always correspond to the amount of reward they get. Zhouchun (2011) and Cephe (2010) state that the financial hardship and poor pay that teachers experience are contributing factors in the development of burnout among educators.

It was also noted by [39] that a problematic aspect of laws and regulations was the fact that instructors did not have the authority to suggest new ideas or execute changes in the curriculum. This had a role in the development of the DP subscale of burnout. Isolation, toxic relationships with some educators, and idle talk were all factors that led to teacher burnout[40]. [41]found that high levels of burnout on all subscales may also be induced by poor physical circumstances. The use of evaluations that emphasise the negative aspects of performance while downplaying the positive aspects is another factor that contributes to teacher burnout. When coordinators are difficult to please and have unreasonable expectations of teachers, this is a prevalent technique that they engage in. The frustration of teachers was made worse by the fact that they were given poor evaluations.

CONCLUSION

Teacher burnout, a growing education issue, affects teachers' health and teaching quality. Several causes cause teacher stress and burnout. Administrative issues, tight educational standards, heavy workloads, and lack of appreciation. Demographics, emotional weariness, depersonalisation, and less personal success support this view. Teachers who remain and those who leave have different burnout degrees, especially emotional fatigue and depersonalisation. Studies have linked burnout to structural issues such insufficient administrative help, too many work, too little autonomy, and a lack of acknowledgement. Policy-related expenses including unfair class distribution, forced non-teaching, and strict rules exacerbate the problem. Educational institutions must address this issue holistically rather than temporarily. We need mental health services, equal labour division, meaningful professional advancement, participatory decision-making, and supportive leadership. We can help educators remain in the field longer and happier by fostering mutual respect, trust, and professional freedom. To eliminate teacher burnout, community people, administrators, and politicians must collaborate quickly. We must prioritise educator wellbeing to ensure a long-lasting, high-quality, and compassionate educational system for future generations.

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