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## Burnout of school teachers

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### Abstract

This study aims to study the burnout of school teachers. The main objectives are to find out the level and significant difference based on Marital Status, Location, and Type of family of School teachers. The hypothesis was that there may be significance of difference in burnout of school teachers based on Level, Marital Status, Location, and Type of family of School teachers. Samples of 750 school teachers were selected for this study in Vellore district. The tool used was Burnout inventory developed and standardized by Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter (1996).

**Keywords:** Burnout, School, Teachers

### Introduction

Research on burnout of teachers has become more prominent than research on any other service occupation. This may be primarily because the teaching profession is increasingly being perceived as highly stressful one and the realities of classroom life have made teaching a stressful occupation. For centuries, teaching has been characterized as a profession that is "emotionally taxing and potentially frustrating" (Lambert, O'Donnell, Kusherman, & McCarthy, 2006, p. 105) <sup>[1]</sup>. The rate at which teachers leave the profession is significantly higher than the departure rate in other professions (Minarik, Thornton, & Perreault, 2003) <sup>[2]</sup>. Studies have shown that teaching is a stressful career and this can lead to teachers suffering from burnout (McCarthy, Lambert, O'Donnell, & Melendres, 2009) <sup>[3]</sup>, resulting in a national epidemic of teacher departures.

Teacher burnout has been described as a loss of perceived idealism and enthusiasm for teaching that eventually leads to poor teaching practices, consequently leading to a lack of student achievement (Wood & McCarthy, 2002) <sup>[4]</sup>. Job burnout is "a consequence of the perceived disparity between the demands of the job and the resources (both material and emotional) that an employee has available to him or her. When demands in the workplace are unusually high, it becomes increasingly impossible to cope with the stress associated with these working conditions." Its roots are found in the daily transactions stemming from the debilitating physical and emotional overload that arises from stress on the job. Job burnout is both an occupational hazard and a phenomenon induced by distress. It is generally characterized by: (1) some degree of physical and emotional exhaustion; (2) socially dysfunctional behavior, particularly a distancing and insulation from individuals with whom one is working; (3) psychological impairment -- especially strong, negative feelings toward the self; and (4) organizational inefficiency through decreased output and poor morale.

Burnout is a syndrome that extends beyond physical fatigue which one experiences from overwork and includes stress, a feeling of emotional and mental wearing out and most importantly the distancing that occurs as a result of emotional demands of work overload. Burnout is described as "a progression of unsuccessful attempts by an individual to cope with a variety of conditions that are perceived to be threatening. Freudenberger (1977) <sup>[5]</sup> describes burnout as physical and emotional exhaustion resulting from excessive demands on energy, strength or resources. Schwarzer & Hallum (2008) <sup>[6]</sup> describes burnout as a long-term chronic state of stress which is the direct result of working with people (It is further described as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment" by researchers Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter (1996).

### Need of the study

Researcher felt the need to understand the specific factors that contributes to burnout among teachers. Thorough examination of the current educational scenario, the investigator felt that a study on occupational stress and involvement of teachers in their profession is much

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warranted to analyses its impact on teacher’s burn out. This study would provide appropriate direction in planning future professional development and induction programs to best meet the needs of all teachers. The researcher hopes to gain a better understanding of the different stressors that affect teachers, in hopes that school and system administrators will take a proactive approach in providing support to teachers.

**Statement of the problem**

The problem was selected as Burnout of school teachers

**Objectives of the study**

This study aims to find the level of Burnout of school teachers. Further its aims to see the significance of difference of Burnout of school teachers based on Level, Marital Status, Location, and Type of family of School teachers.

**Hypothesis of the study**

There may be significance of difference in Burnout of school teachers based on Level, Marital Status, Location, and Type of family of School teachers.

**Sample of the study**

A sample of 750 school teachers was taken from Vellore district in Tamilnadu. Stratified random sampling technique was used

**Tools used for the study**

By this the investigator means the scores obtained from the job-involvement Index standardized by Maslach’s Burnout Inventory (1996). Administered among school teachers. Table 1 depicts the burnout levels which the teacher experiences. The quartiles were computed and based on the same, the burnout scores were categorised into low, moderate and high levels of burnout.

**Table 1:** Levels of Burnout among the Teachers

Burnout	Score	N	Percentage
Low	0-13	211	28.1
Moderate	14-26	344	45.9
High	Above 26	195	26.0

The above table categorises teachers in to low, moderate and high in burnout. It is inferred from the above table that 28.1 percentage of teachers (N=211) experience low burnout. While, majority of teachers 45.9 percent (N=344) undergo moderate burnout and high level of burnout is experienced by 26 percent of teachers (N=195). Therefore it is concluded that the selected sample of teachers evidence average level of burnout in their occupation.

**Table 2 shows the result of ‘t’ test to compare the burnout of married and unmarried teachers.**

**Table 2:** Comparison of the Burn Out Of the Teachers Based On the Marital Status

Group studied	Marital status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	't' value	Sig.
Total sample	Married	582	19.75	9.227	0.382	0.743	0.458 NS
	Unmarried	168	19.16	8.260	0.637		

NS- not significant

Married and unmarried teachers do not differ in their level of burnout. They undergo same burn out. Marital status of teachers bears no significant influence on burnout. Hence the formulated hypothesis stating that “there is no significant

difference in the burnout of primary, secondary and higher secondary teachers based on marital status is accepted”. The result obtained by comparing burnout of teachers working in rural and urban schools is presented in table 3.

**Table 3:** Comparison of the Burnout of the Teachers Based On the Location

Group studied	Location	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	't' value	Sig.
Total sample	Rural	371	19.35	8.097	.420	.798	.425 NS
	Urban	379	19.88	9.839	.505		
Primary	Rural	121	19.31	8.269	.752	.958	.339 NS
	Urban	129	20.32	8.281	.729		
High school	Rural	128	18.66	8.288	.733	.583	.560 NS
	Urban	122	18.05	8.378	.759		
Higher secondary	Rural	122	20.11	7.712	.698	.824	.411 NS
	Urban	128	21.17	12.125	1.072		

NS- not significant

The comparison of the burnout of the teachers based on the location is shown in the above table. With regards to the rural and urban locations, no significant difference is observed in the burnout among teachers. The formulated null hypothesis stating that “there is no significant difference in

the burnout of primary, secondary and higher secondary teachers based on locale of school is accepted”. The result of ‘t’ test carried out to compare the burnout of teachers from nuclear family and joint family is shown in table 4.

**Table 4:** Comparison of the Burnout of the Teachers Based On the Family Type

Group studied	Family type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	't' value	Sig.
Total sample	Nuclear	441	19.65	9.602	0.457	0.110	0.913 NS
	Joint	309	19.57	8.125	0.462		

NS- not significant

compares the burnout of the teachers based on the family type. With regards to the nuclear and joint family set up, no significant difference is observed in the burnout of the teachers. Teachers from joint family and teachers from nuclear family undergo same level of burnout. The hypothesis 30 stating that “there is no significant difference in the burnout of primary, secondary and a higher secondary teacher based on type of family is accepted”.

#### **Finding of the study**

- The sample of teachers selected for the current study show moderate level of burnout.
- Marital status of teachers bears no significant influence on burnout.
- Teachers working in rural schools and teachers working in urban schools do not exhibit differences in their level of burnout. Locale of school has no influence on teacher burnout.
- Teachers from joint family and teachers from nuclear family undergo same level of burnout. There is no significant difference among these two groups of teachers.

#### **Educational Implication**

This helps in developing good rapport with each other resulting in better performance from the focal persons. Organizations should give training to the individuals, which may increase their job knowledge. It should also take care of the career growth of the teacher in terms of job enrichment and promotion.

This study points that higher stress levels and burnout in teachers handling higher secondary students highlighting the need to support teachers through professional development in engaging with the complexities involved in handling higher classes.

The study revealed that less experienced teachers are more prone to stress as compared to more experienced teachers. It is recommended that there be an effective orientation for new teachers where an open and realistic description of the typical problems and frustrations to be encountered in the teaching profession should be given. This will help them to formulate acceptable and effective solutions in good time.

The results revealed significant positive relationship between occupational stress and professional burnout. Thus to prevent professional burnout of the teachers, their occupational stress should be checked from time to time. Also, occupational stress has predicted the professional burnout of the teachers which once again recommend the policy makers, national bodies, school administrators & teachers and researchers to work towards managing the stressors causing prolonged stress among teachers which in turn prevent their burnout.

Handling students with misbehavior seem to pose challenges for teachers. There is a need to provide teachers with behavior management skills through pre-service and in service training and appropriate professional development support to deal with pupil misbehavior.

The fact that male teachers are experiencing higher level of stress than female teachers with their jobs is a matter for concern and merits further investigation

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