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EXPLORING THE LEVEL OF EMOTIONAL BURNOUT AMONG PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent of teachers' emotional burnout prevailing among teachers in three dimensions as Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DP), and inadequate Personal Accomplishment (PA) at school level. Burnout Inventory (BI) was used to assess the emotional state of teachers. Multi stage sampling technique was used to draw the sample of 380 (male= 179 and females= 201) school teachers. The ultimate purpose of the study was met by highlighting some of the unheard and unattended concerns and problems of teachers prevailing within their work environment. Data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics and t-tests. The findings of the study demonstrated the level of teachers' emotional burnout with various intensities with regard to their gender and marital status. It suggested the avenues for future studies to highlight the effect of other variables that put the internal involvement of teachers in doubt.

Keywords

Burnout, Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, Inadequate Personal Accomplishment, Burnout Inventory, Teachers

Introduction

Working with people that involves frequent interactions and keep showing the performance up to the expectations raised by the administration is a routine activity of many of the professionals. Rigid time schedules, long working hours, and constant encounters with the clients faced by the social workers, health care providers, and teachers lead to introduce the occupational stress known as emotional burnout.

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Burnout is a psychological term that is defined in its varied aspects by the pioneer Freudenberger (1974), and later was defined and worked on by Maslach (2003). The term explains a state of physical and emotional draining condition that hinders in performing job activities. It stems from frustration, stress, depression and fatigue of job activities and damages the work performance adversely.

Emotionally quitting or leaving the job is an elaborated type of burnout. Stress, tiredness, fatigue, and exhaustion lead to such a psychological or emotional state that hinders the work efficiency of teachers. They feel overwhelmed under this stress and an observable decrease in their performance occurs. Emotional burnout is measurable in three forms: emotional exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DP), and Inadequate personal accomplishments (PA) (Maslach, 1982; Saiiari, Moslehi, &Valizadeh, 2011).

Components of Emotional Burnout

The stressed and drained condition of teachers that hinders their work is emotional burnout that is further categorized into three following forms.

a) Emotional Exhaustion

It generates in response to the chronic stressors at workplace in form of drained, fatigued, tired, frustrated, depressed, and dissatisfied state (Zhang & Sapp, 2007).

b) Depersonalization

This state involves a cynical, resentful, dehumanized, and impersonal behaviour towards students that a teacher starts taking students as objects or animals instead of human beings (Zhang & Sapp, 2007).

c) Personal Accomplishment

This state describes the personal condition of one who loses confidence in one's abilities and negatively perceives self (Maslach, 2003).

Prevalence of stress in teachers' job is obvious as teachers have already been seen troubled due to the role conflict and diverse nature of the teaching profession. The ease and support that a school environment provides do not facilitate the teachers only, school level characteristics such as supportive leadership, dedicated and collegial staff, school wide behaviour management, and effective academic instruction reciprocate the positive effects to students too (Christle, Jolivette & Nelson, 2005).

Burnout has long been researched with identification of its levels with certain variables as job security, social support, and demographic variables like age and experience etc. however the relationship of factors existing in the school environment with burnout has remained a concern of research for so long (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004).

The study of background variables is sensitive to emotional burnout among teachers because teaching is a stressful job. Research proved that as compared to other professions, even provided with balanced work place environment, teaching is ranked as more emotionally exhaustive job (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998; Innstrand, Langballe, Falkum, & Aasland, 2011).

Dealing with the demands of students is not an easy task. It puts teachers on chance to lower internal involvement on job. It is understood with the evidence of research that the professions in which services are provided to people, involve more chances for workers to suffer from burnout (Barutcu & Serinkan, 2008).

Teachers' Burnout has long been addressed in fragmented ways in research with varied focus at different time periods.

Studying the turnover intention of teachers cannot be studied alone as a separate construct due to the embedded nature of teaching profession with social context of institutions and society. Pomaki, DeLongis, Frey, Short, and Woehrle (2010) identified the role of required social support that helps in optimizing retention of new teachers in profession.

Job stressors gradually transform in emotional burnout and it has been researched on Chinese teachers by concluding the factors that cause job stress for teachers and further add to the chances of leaving the profession. Stress causing factors were identified as behavior of students, work burden, less satisfactory duration of vacations, and low salary in the findings of this study (Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012).

Ali and Baloch (2008) identified the causes of job satisfaction of teachers to understand its bearing on the turnover intention of teachers. These kinds of studies provide practical guidelines that how the intention of physically leaving the job arises in teachers as a result of the given job incentives.

The physical aspect of teachers' burnout has been researched in studies related to teachers' attrition and retention in profession. The need to research on the patterns and effects of teachers' attrition in educational institutions has been well addressed in literature that relates to framing a clear picture of the contemporary practices of teachers' hiring, retaining, attrition, need, availability, and shortage of teachers.

The other form of teachers' burnout i.e. emotional withdrawal is also dealt with several studies. Focus of one study was to understand the emotional state of teachers corresponding to the work satisfaction and motivation in contextual factors at schools (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). The contribution of demographic variables like gender and marital status has been found influential towards the development of burnout. Patrick, Yuen, and Raymond (2005) found the effect of gender on prevalence of burnout; they concluded that unmarried teachers were likely more apt to have varied level of burnout than married ones.

In a study conducted by Ismail, Ahmed, and Nauran (2009), the phenomenon of burnout was studied among school teachers serving at national as well as teaching at abroad schools. They found gender as an influential variable towards the prevalence of burnout with its varied intensities.

In a meta-analytic study, male teachers were found more satisfied with their job as compared to female teachers Aydin, Uysal, & Sarier (2012).

Yusoff and Khan (2013) compiled detailed review addressing the nature of job stress that gradually shapes in emotional burnout and affects the educational system in adverse ways. Several factors were shared in findings from the burnout related work done previously.

Cephe (2010) identified factors that cause burnout in teachers. Fisher (2011) also examined the factors from where job stress and burnout stem in teachers.

Other dimension in which previous work prevails in literature is the systematic study of teachers' burnout while considering the present context under the light of some models. The well-being of the workplace of teachers was studied by exploring the process model of goal orientation, work engagement, burnout, and coping behaviour of teachers (Parker, Martin, Colmar, & Liem, 2012).

According to Hakanen, Bakker, and Schaufeli (2006), a hypothesized model was cross validated dealing with the purpose of taking teachers' burnout and depletion in energy with certain positive coping strategies and motivation in work. The findings of the studies investigating teachers' burnout through models contribute to carefully take varied aspects in one study whereas the utility of results remain contextually bound.

A major work with the construct of teachers' burnout is related to the demographic variables like rural vs. urban, males vs. females, trust among colleagues and years of experience of teachers in job work (Guseva, & Murasovs, 2011; Dombovskis, Aydin, Uysal, & Sarier, 2012; Maele & Houtte, 2012).

The nature of very construct of teachers' burnout as a stress syndrome also calls to study it in ways that provide coping, helping, reducing, remediating, and eradicating it in order to let educational systems function smoothly. Some review studies deal with general 'job burnout', whereas the physically and emotionally quitting from teaching job is also researched on along with suggestions of reducing it (Pietarinen, Pyhalto, Soini, & Salmela-Aro, 2013; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Cunningham, 1983).

The emotional aspect of burnout in teachers has primarily dealt in identifying varied levels of emotional withdrawal in teachers from their routine job activities and duties. Although the findings of such studies point out the chronic stressors of the state of teachers' burnout but pertinent concern lies to identify the levels of emotional burnout in its three forms that are well addressed in literature (Whitehead, Ryba, & O'Driscoll, 2000; Shah, Fakhr, Ahmad, & Zaman, 2010; Gill & Kusum, 2012; Martin, Sass, & Schmitt, 2012; Barutcu & Serinkan, 2013).

Another dimension of the research work related to teachers' state of burnout is to study in the school context that is the workplace of teachers and directly contribute to the state of teachers' satisfaction with job activities. But literature specifically addressing the construct of burnout in teachers and further contribution to study it with school variables seem negligible. Evidence is found in studies that school factors were studied with teacher effectiveness (Subedi, Swan, & Hynes, 2011). It is not the exact study that relates school context with the state of satisfaction of teachers with their job that may further give clue of the burnout state of teachers. But the contextual school or institutional factors have been found in literature that indicate the prevalence of burnout in teachers whether the context of teachers' workplace was taken within classrooms, schools, or at university (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Naseem & Khalid, 2012).

The fact that secondary schools are not free from certain problems that hinders in work efficiency of teachers is not a hidden perspective of research specifically when quality of teaching and learning is questioned (Ahmad, Rehman, Ali, Ali, & Badshah, 2013). This work gives a clue that loopholes exist in prevailing system of education in Pakistan, in secondary school system at particular. By identifying the prevailing problems and antecedents that cause those problems in schools and suggesting ways forward to resolve issues in the form of an analytical study seems trying to cover many aspects altogether. Findings can become practically optimized if implemented step by step considering some mechanism of priority at hand to make the effort more efficient.

The study of Martin, Sass, and Schmitt (2012) showed evidence of research related to teachers' intention to quit teaching with the aim to study the classroom variables added with the focus on teacher efficacy in student engagement, instructional management, and student stressors.

Schwarzer and Hallum(2008) studied the perceived self-efficacy of teachers as predictor of job stress and burnout by conducting cross-sectional survey method. The mediated relationship of low self-efficacy may lead to job stress and later to job burnout.

In a study, the influence of school level factors and teachers has been examined on the development of teacher efficacy and burnout. Efficacy and burnout were found increased over time (Pas, Bradshaw, & Hershfeldt, 2012).

According to the findings of another study self-efficacy was found a good predictor of teachers' burnout (Khezerlou, 2013). The Psychological variable i.e. teacher efficacy has been found related as causing job stress and burnout.

It has long been remained the concern of many researchers and educationists at different levels and at different times in one way or the other to explore the scattered dimensions of the system of education that hinder to achieve the planned outcomes.

Exploration of the burnout levels among teachers will contribute to understand the sensitivity of this phenomenon as well as to understand the problems caused by it.

Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

- 1. explore the extent of teachers' burnout with reference to its three dimensions.
- 2. investigate the mean difference of emotional burnout of teachers on the basis of gender.
- 3. calculate the mean difference of teachers' emotional burnout with respect to the marital status of the teachers.

Research Questions

- 1 What is the level of Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Inadequate Personal Accomplishment among teachers?
- 2 What is the difference in rate of teachers' Emotional Exhaustion with regard to gender?
- What is the difference in rate of teachers' Depersonalization with regard to gender?
- 4 What is the difference in rate of teachers' Personal Accomplishment with regard to gender?
- 5 What is the difference in rate of teachers' Emotional Exhaustion with regard to marital status?
- What is the difference in rate of teachers' Depersonalization with regard to marital status?
- 7 What is the difference in rate of teachers' Personal Accomplishment with regard to marital status?

Methodology

Sample

The sample of the study comprised of 380 school teachers serving at primary, elementary, and secondary school level (male= 179 and

females= 201) randomly selected from public schools of Lahore. All the teachers of selected schools were the subjects of the study.

Scale

Burnout Inventory

A Burnout Inventory was used to identify different levels of emotional burnout among teachers. It comprises a total of 48 questions measuring the three levels of emotional burnout i.e. Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DP), and inadequate Personal Accomplishments (PA).

Eighteen items assess the Emotional Exhaustion (EE) to measure the fatigue and emotional depletion; sixteen items assess the Depersonalization (DP) to measure the extent that teacher becomes cynical towards students and keeps distance from them, and fourteen items assess Personal Accomplishment (PA) to the extent of the effectiveness that a teacher achieves on personal goals. The survey used a 7-point Likert type scale with "frequency" presenters ranging from never (coded as 0) to daily (coded as 6).

Data collection

The data were collected by ensuring it to the teachers that it would be used for the research purpose only and the information provided by them would be kept confidential. The teachers were provided with relaxed environment and flexible time to fill the questionnaires. Teachers were approached with the permission of their school heads.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through SPSS. The results are presented in the following tables

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of the	state of emotional bur	rnout of teachers
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Levels of Emotional Burnout	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional Exhaustion	15.16	9.782
Depersonalization	5.78	6.022
Personal Accomplishment	32.25	13.624

N = 380

Table 1 displayed the distribution of teachers with respect to three levels of emotional burnout state as Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment. The mean score against each level of emotional burnout indicates the prevalence of burnout among teachers. Emotional Exhaustion measured the prevalence of exhaustion, tiredness, fatigue, strain, frustration, and the state of being used up at the end of working day. The mean score of depersonalization indicates the extent to which teachers become cynical, resentful, and impersonal towards their students whereas the mean score of Personal Accomplishment showed the level of fulfilment of job tasks by teachers.

Table 2 Difference in emotional exhaustion of teachers on the basis of gender

Variable	N	Mean	Df	t-value	Sig.
Male	179	13.47	378	3.236	.011
Female	201	16.70			

Table 2 indicated that there was a significant difference in the mean scores of emotional exhaustion of male teachers and female teachers ($M_{male} = 13.47$, $M_{female} = 16.70$). The mean difference of 3.22 in favor of females was reported statistically significant when Independent sample t-test was conducted. It is concluded that female teachers were found with the state of more exhausted, strained, tired, and frustrated as compared to the male teachers.

Variable	N	Mean	Df	t-value	Sig.
Male	179	7.21	378	-4.324	.000
Female	201	4.58			

Table 3 Comparison of depersonalization of teachers by gender

Table 3 indicated that there was a significant difference in the mean scores of depersonalization of male and female teachers (M_{male} = 7.21, M_{female} = 4.58). The mean difference of 2.63 in favor of male teachers was reported statistically significant when Independent sample t-test was conducted. It is concluded that male teachers had a state of more resentful and cynical behavior towards students as compared to female teachers.

Table 4 Comparison of Inadequate Personal Accomplishment of teachers on the basis of gender

Variable	N	Mean	d <i>f</i>	t-value	Sig.
Male	179	27.16	378	7.426	.005
Female	201	36.89			

Table 4 indicated that there was a significant difference in the mean scores of Inadequate Personal Accomplishment of male and female teachers (M_{male} =27.16, M_{female} =36.89). The mean difference of 9.75 in favor of females was reported statistically significant when Independent sample t-test was conducted. It is concluded that female teachers were found with a higher state of lack of accomplishment of their job tasks as compared to male teachers.

Table 5 *Comparison of Emotional Exhaustion of teachers on the basis of marital status*

Variable	N	Mean	df	t-value	Sig.
Unmarried	58	17.79	378	2.211	.015
Married	322	14.71			

Table 5 indicated that there was a significant difference in the mean scores of emotional exhaustion of married and unmarried teachers (Munmarried =17.79, Mmarried =14.71). The mean difference of 3.08 in favor of unmarried teachers was reported statistically

significant when Independent sample t-test was conducted. It is concluded that unmarried teachers feet more exhausted, tired, and dizzy as compared to married ones.

Table 6 Comparison of	Depersonalization	of teachers on th	he basis of marital
	atatus.		

Status					
Variable	N	Mean	d <i>f</i>	t-value	Sig.
Unmarried	58	7.43	378	2.211	.038
Married	322	5.53			

Table 6 indicated that there was a significant difference in the mean scores of depersonalization of married and unmarried teachers (Munmarried =7.43, Mmarried = 5.53). The mean difference of 1.90 in favor of unmarried teachers was reported statistically significant when Independent sample t-test was conducted. It is concluded that unmarried teachers were found with a higher state of being impersonal, cynical and resentful towards their students as compared to married teachers.

Table 7 Comparison of Inadequate Personal Accomplishment of teachers on the

Variable	N	Mean	df	t-value	Sig.
Unmarried	58	33.65	375	.795	.825
Married	319	32.11			

Table 7 indicated that there was no significant difference on the state of personal accomplishment of job tasks with regard to the marital status of teachers (Munmarried =33.65, Mmarried =32.11). The mean difference of 1.54 that caused by some arbitrary factor other than marital status was reported statistically non-significant when Independent sample t-test was conducted. It is concluded that married and unmarried teachers held on differences with regard to the accomplishment of job tasks.

Discussion

The prime purpose of the study was to explore the level of emotional burnout among school teachers. The teachers were found with varied intensities of emotional burnout state in their three forms of Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Inadequate Personal Accomplishment. Like many other service providing professions, teaching field is also faced with the phenomenon of burnout that has lasting impact on the students as well as the other concerned people of the field.

Female teachers were found more emotionally exhausted when compared with male teachers. In our culture female teachers in addition to doing job take care of domestic responsibilities this diverts their thought process their attention is split between responsibilities at workplace and obligations at home. This conflict leads to earlier exhaustion as compared to male.

It implies a social need to recognize working females as equal to males and allow for an alternate arrangement for domestic work. In many attends, males equally share domestic responsibilities with females.

Male teachers were found more detached, cynical and resentful with students as well as better on fulfilment of tasks as compared to female teachers. Men play the bread winning role in the family. Women may augment their efforts but primarily the responsibility to provide for the family remains with men.

This explains the reason that male teachers are more responsible on performance of job tasks and their detachment with student becomes obvious when they expect more from profession while female teachers mostly join school teaching with less monetary concerns and for healthy time spending purpose in our context. It implies to make school teaching equally an attractive job for male and female teachers that discourages dehumanized behaviour with pupils and promote achievement of tasks proficiency.

The other finding of the study indicated unmarried teachers as more frustrated, stressed and dizzy (EE), cynical, impersonal and resentful towards students (DP) as compared with married teachers. The social restriction in certain cases to avoid teaching at secondary grade levels for female/ unmarried teachers in our

context contributes to such levels of burnout. The burnout levels of present study among school teachers on their gender and marital status are complimentary to the nature of variables and to our context. It implies to improve school environment that promote the interest of teachers. The findings of this study are in support of some previously done researches that the gender and marital status of teachers are influential towards some extent of prevalence of emotional burnout among teachers (Guseva, & Murasovs, 2011; Dombovskis, Aydin, Uysal, & Sarier, 2012; Maele & Houtte, 2012).

The way teachers are found with any state of burnout is understood to find their performance with residual energy at workplace instead of having full internal involvement on their work. Many researches have been conducted to assess the emotional state of teachers' burnout that highlighted the gradual development of stressors at workplace into a state of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Yusoff and Khan 2013).

In order to deeply study the outcomes of teachers' emotional burnout, many of the demographic variables have remained a concern of research. Bearing the fact that it is not only the matter of workplace environment that cause emotional burnout among teachers, but many of the personal as well as administrative factors are source of burnout (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998; Innstrand, Langballe, Falkum, & Aasland, 2011).

Measuring the emotional state of teachers is one corner that needs attention of concerned authorities, future researches with other contributing workplace factors will also be beneficial.

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