



Teacher Burnout and Self-Efficacy: A Contemporary Perspective from Secondary Education

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ABSTRACT

Background: Teachers burnout is a growing problem that contributes to a low level of well-being and a lack of conviction in teachers in their potential to help students learn (Saloviita and Pakarinen, 2021). It is necessary to understand the impact of burnout on the self-efficacy of teachers to enhance teaching quality and academic success of students.

Aim of the study: The aim of the study was to examine the impact of teacher burnout on self-efficacy of teacher in secondary level.

Procedure: It was a quantitative study using cross-sectional survey design and the convenience technique was used to sample the 100 secondary level teachers in Rawalpindi. They have been requested to complete 21-item Teacher Burnout Scale (Friedland et al., 1986) and 10-item Teacher Self-efficacy Scale (Schwarzer and Jerusalem, 1995) to be able to share their experience better. The analysis of data was done using SPSS-21.

Results: Pearson correlation was used to analyze the data based on the significant results of the analysis on association between burnout and self-efficacy, further analysis were done to study the effect of burnout on self-efficacy. The regression result showed that burnout is a strong predictor of self-efficacy in secondary level teachers i.e; increased burnout diminished self-efficacy and hampered the teachers in performing their functions.

Conclusion: The article concludes that teacher burnout has an adverse effect on teacher self-efficacy, meaning that the more the teacher is exhausted emotionally and physically, the less confidence he or she has in coping with the classroom requirements. The results of the study show that there is a necessity of institutional support mechanisms to diminish burnout and enhance the feeling of professional competence in teachers.

Introduction

A teacher in secondary schools operates in a very challenging setting as he or she is required to deal with a varied range of students needs, control, lesson planning, and also administration duties

(Kyriacou, 2001). Such unrelenting pressures, combined with huge number of classes, scarcity, and parental and school pressures (Borg & Riding, 1991) make the professional environment emotionally stressful. In the long term, these demands may lead to teacher burnout, which is a significant issue threatening the personal well-being of teachers and their teaching performance. Burnout can be defined as a multidimensional state which is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and diminished personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 2001). Emotional exhaustion is the fundamental factor, which shows the sentiment of exhaustion of emotional resources and lack of capacity to withstand work-related pressure (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Depersonalization is characterized by cynical or indifferent attitude towards students and low sense of accomplishment is an indication of inefficacy.

Burnout is a progressive development in the workplace when professional duties become overwhelming, disillusioning, or not rewarding enough. Its negative outcomes are also well-reported (poor self-rated physical health) (Edú-Valsania et al., 2022), and deteriorated mental health (Schonfeld & Bianchi, 2016), as well as far worse job satisfaction (Klassen et al., 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Teaching is known to be one of the most stressful careers in the world. One of the studies commissioned in the UK revealed that teaching was one of the most stressful out of 26 jobs (Johnson et al., 2005). Twelve percent of teachers in Finland said they experienced burnout, which is much higher than the 8 percent burnout rate among other workers (Tikkanen et al., 2022). Otherwise, the teachers have been reported to experience the greatest rates of burnout among other human-service and white-collar workers (Samadi et al., 2020). Khurshid et al. (2025) observe that burnout among professions like teaching arises where the demands become overwhelming to the extent they exhaust the emotional energy of these individuals, their resilience as well as mental capacity.

Other studies suggest that burnout lowers their enthusiasm, organizational citizenship behavior, turnover intentions, job satisfaction and perceived efficacy (Turek, 2020). It also adversely affects the academic adaptation, socio-emotional performance, as well as the level of performance among the students. Self-efficacy in teachers, the belief of a teacher in his ability to organize, plan, and carry out the activities needed to teach, is a crucial element in the determination of instruction behavioral and resistance (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Self-efficacy has high levels of motivation, innovative teaching practice, and effective classroom management (Hoy & Spero, 2005). The teachers who have high self-efficacy are persistent in situations that are difficult and they create positive classroom atmospheres. On the other hand, low self-efficacy correlates with increased stress, less engagement, and susceptibility to burnout (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010).

Burnout and self-efficacy are interdependent and in a vicious cycle, in that, burnouts diminish the confidence in teaching skills and low self-efficacy increases vulnerability to emotional burnouts. Traditionally the studies of burnout and teacher self-efficacy have developed beyond initial models of occupational stress to educational specific models. The basic research on burnout by Freudenberger (1974) and Maslach and Jackson (1981) had revealed the fundamental construct of burnout. Subsequently, other scholars like Kyriacou (1987), Borg and Riding (1991) and Ingersoll (2001) reported certain school based stressors such as workload, misbehaviour in students, organizational restrictions and lack of support. The latest studies also emphasize that self-efficacy is a predictor of burnout and protective factor since educators who have high self-efficacy are less emotionally drained and their professional functioning is more effective (Guskey, 2002; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2010).

Considering that the tasks at the secondary level are quite challenging, and the demands of the school education and the developmental issues of adolescence are especially high, it is necessary to find out how the burnout and self-efficacy interact. In comparison, high burnout is associated with low classroom management, teacher-student relationships, and instructional quality, whereas high self-efficacy is associated with high resilience, motivation, and effectiveness. Although it has a wide-spread evidence globally, little empirical studies have been conducted in Pakistan especially in secondary schools in Rawalpindi. This loophole explains the significance of studying the role of burnout in the self-efficacy of teachers in local learning settings. This evidence can inform policy makers, administrators, and mental health professionals to develop interventions that can help to make teachers healthier and enhance the quality of education.

Literature Review

Teacher burnout is one of the objectives that have been under analysis several decades in the past, and the studies have always shown that teaching is a profession characterized by stresses and emotional overload. The initial conceptualization of burnout was contributed by Freudenberger (1974) who described burnout as a physical and emotional exhaustion caused by occupational stress over time. Based on this, Maslach and Jackson (1981) found that emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment were the fundamental dimensions of burnout. These two dimensions have since facilitated analysis of burnout in educators as a universalistic way of analyzing burnout as being not an individual psychologically oriented response, but a systemic problem inherent within school setups.

The efforts of researches all over the 1980s and 1990s extended the breadth of burnout to highlight the structural and organizational factors that lead to teacher stress. Research found out that work and administrative pressure, lack of autonomy, and teacher student ratio were all causes of high burnt out levels (Kyriacou, 1987; Borg and Riding, 1991). The international comparisons also helped to bring out the fact that international teacher burnout is not an isolated issue on a single culture, and research studies conducted in the United States, United Kingdom, and Europe have reported the same patterns of emotional burnout and job dissatisfaction in teachers (National Foundation for Educational Research, 1990). More importantly, these results highlight the importance of the fact that burnout is not only the problem of the health of the teachers, but also of classroom operation, the quality of instruction and the overall school climate- i.e. it is a problem not only at a psychological level, but also at an institutional one.

Similar to the studies of burnout, teacher self-efficacy as a construct has developed to become one of the key themes in educational psychology. Self-efficacy as based on the social cognitive theory by Bandura (1977) is how individuals believe that they have the ability to plan and implement actions necessary to achieve the desired results. In the school setting, teacher self-efficacy influences motivation, perseverance, classroom control, and pedagogical choice (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2001). Empirical research regularly demonstrates high self-efficacy teachers have greater confidence to meet the needs of the students, are more resilient, and more inclined to use the effective teaching strategies (Hoy and Spero, 2005; Emmer and Sabaornie, 2015). This literature reveals that self-efficacy is a mental asset that enhances the professional competence of teachers.

The relationship between teacher burnout and self-efficacy has been studied in a considerable amount of literature, and it is found to be a two-way and intricate relationship. Studies have shown that, lack of self-efficacy increases the exposure of teachers to emotional pangs and depersonalization (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). On the other hand, there is a positive relationship between strong self-efficacy and resistance to stress through adaptive coping mechanisms and

increased capacity to manage emotional demands by teachers (Caprara et al., 2006; Moe, 2016). These results indicate that burnout is not only a factor of the working conditions but it also portrays the internal psychological resources of teachers. Nonetheless, researchers suggest that individual coping and self-efficacy might not be sufficient to explain the causes of burnout; therefore, it is suggested to implement balanced interventions that would involve both personal and organization-wide contributors to burnout.

Not only on the part of the individual teacher, there are wider educational implications of the interaction between burnout and self-efficacy. Teachers who are burned out demonstrate lower standards of instruction and less interaction with learners as well as poor relationships with other colleagues, all of which deteriorate the learning environment (Collie et al., 2012; Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). Conversely, educators who develop good self efficacy create good classroom environments, improve the motivation among students, and promote better academic performance (Guskey and Passaro, 1994). This comparison underscores the importance of teacher well-being in determining school performance and achievement among students.

Altogether, the literature reveals that teacher burnout and self-efficacy are two concepts that are closely intertwined and impacted by personal perceptions, organizational setups and the activity of the educational needs in the large. Their association raises profound implications on teacher retention, teaching and learning quality, and student achievement and therefore it is important that educational researchers and policy makers should analyze these constructs in a particular cultural and institutional setting.

Theoretical Framework

The current research is based on the Social Cognitive Theory of Bandura (1986) that explicates that the teacher burnout is a consequence of the unremitting interplay between personal beliefs, the behavioral reactions, and the environment such demands. This theory suggests that self-efficacy, or the teacher's view regarding their ability to plan, organize, and implement teaching activities is at the focal point in influencing the way teachers perceive and react to work stressors. High self-efficacy teachers have a higher likelihood of employing effective coping styles, handling challenges in classrooms and being emotionally balanced which prevent the development of the central elements of burnout like emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and low personal accomplishment. Conversely, educators who have low self-efficacy view everyday challenges as overwhelming, are exposed to increased stress levels, and are more susceptible to burnout symptoms when they are confronted with challenging school environments, heavy workload, or poor administrative support. In such a way, Social Cognitive Theory offers a fruitful way to interpret how individual beliefs of personal competence can be helpful in mitigating the adverse impact of work demands and why the difference in the self-efficacy of the teacher can result in different degrees of burnout in similar teaching conditions.

Objectives of the Study

- To investigate the impact of teacher burnout on teacher self-efficacy in the secondary level.
- To establish the variation in burnout and self-efficacy based on gender.

Hypotheses

- Teacher burnout does have a significant impact on teacher self-efficacy in secondary level.
- Teacher self-efficacy and burnout have no significant gender difference.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design adopted in the study was quantitative research design, descriptive survey design in order to determine the impact of teacher burnout on self-efficacy of secondary school teachers. This design enabled the researcher to obtain numerical data of the target population effectively using standardized questionnaires (Creswell, 2012). The two variables used in the study were teacher burnout (independent variable) and teacher self-efficacy (dependent variable).

Population and Sample

The sample comprised of every teacher in both the public and the private secondary schools in Rawalpindi. A sample of 100 male and female teachers was used in the study both in the private and public schools. The participants were selected through convenience sampling and the questionnaires were handed out by the researcher himself.

Instruments

There were two standardized questionnaires:

Teacher burnout scale (Bryant, Kendall, and Friedland, 1986).

A 21-item scale named Teacher Burnout Scale is a 6-point Likert scale measure that assesses emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment in teachers. It tests the psychological stress and occupational exhaustion in the teaching career. The increased scores indicate the increased cases of burnout. The scale is very popular and has high levels of reliability in educational settings.

Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (Jerusalem and Schwarzer, 1995).

The Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale is a 10-item questionnaire based on four-point Likert scale and assesses the confidence of teachers to cope with the classroom requirements and deal with difficult situations. It addresses perceived competence of teachers in instructional practices, student interaction and classroom management. The more the scores, the greater the self-efficacy beliefs. The scale has been known to be reliable and cross-culturally applicable.

There were, however, three sections in the questionnaire namely, demographic information, burnout scale, and self-efficacy scale.

Reliability of Instruments

Cronbach alpha was used in SPSS to determine the reliability of tools for the study.

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
Teacher's Burnout Scale	.87
Teacher's Self-Efficacy	.60

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation), independent sample t-test, and simple linear regression were applied to test the main and sub-hypotheses.

Results

Frequency and Percentage of Demographic Variables

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Study Variables (N=100)

Gender	f	%
Male	10	10.0
Female	90	90.0
Age		
25-30	58	58.0
30-35	22	22.0
35-40	10	10.0
40-45	6	6.0
45-50	1	1.0
50-above	3	3.0
Experience		
less than 5 years	57	57.0
5-10	23	23.0
10-15	12	12.0
15-20	2	2.0
above 20 years	6	6.0
Academic qualification		
FA/FSC	4	4.0
BA/BSC	34	34.0
MA/MSc	41	41.0
MPhil	21	21.0
Professional qualification		
CT/PTC	8	8.0
B.Ed	34	34.0
M.Ed	33	33.0
any other	25	25.0
Salary		
20-30k	51	51.0
30-40k	18	18.0
40-50k	9	9.0
50-60k	6	6.0
above 60	16	16.0

Regression Analysis

Table 2: Linear Regression analysis showing burnout as predictor of Self-efficacy (N = 100)

Predictor	β	B	SE	t	p	95% LL	95% CI UL
(Constant)	-	44.82	4.87	9.19	.000	35.15	54.50
Teachers' Burnout (TBST)	-0.29	-0.18	0.06	-2.96	.004	-0.30	-0.06

A simple linear regression was resorted to as directed to study whether burnout among the teachers is a predictor of self-efficacy among the teachers. The model was significant at the statistical level showing the teachers burnout to be a significant predictor of self-efficacy.

Independent Sample t-test

Table 3: Mean differences among Teacher Self-Efficacy and Teacher’s Burnout due to Gender differences (N = 100)

Variables	Gender		t(98)	p	95% CI	
	Male (N=10) M(SD)	Female (N=90) M(SD)			LL	UL
Burnout	78.50 (13.26)	79.48 (9.91)	-0.29	.78	-7.77	5.82
Teacher Self-Efficacy	30.10 (5.63)	30.56 (6.55)	-0.21	.83	-4.73	3.82

The independent samples t -test showed that there were no significant gender differences in both variables. In case of teacher burnout, there was no significant difference between males (M = 78.50, SD = 13.26) and females (M = 79.48, SD = 9.91), $t(98) = -0.29, p = .78$. Similarly, male (M = 30.10, SD = 5.63) and female (M = 30.56, SD = 6.55) did not significantly differ in teacher self-efficacy, $t(98) = -0.21, p = .83$.

Discussion

The results of this research point to the presence of a major correlation between teacher burnout and self-efficacy suggesting that educators with a high level of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, or lower personal achievement are less confident in addressing classroom tasks. This is aligned with past studies that have indicated that burnout compromises the professional confidence and resilience of the teachers which may have a negative impact on the quality of instruction and classroom control (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2010; Brouwers and Tomic, 2000). The findings further indicate that gender is not a major factor in influencing the experiences of teachers with regard to burnout or self-efficacy, thus pointing out that male and female teachers experience the same problems when it comes to dealing with stress and having confidence in their professionalized abilities. This observation is in line with studies that have established that job demands, workload and environmental stressors have stronger effects on burnout and self-efficacy as compared to gender differences (Kyriacou, 2001; Borg and Riding, 1991). The work of this research will help in the knowledge of teacher well-being in secondary education in Pakistan by empirically determining the adverse outcome of burnout on self-efficacy. It highlights that school administrators, policymakers, and educators should adopt effective interventions like structured stress management programs, professional development workshops, mentoring programs, and administrative policies that support them. Instructional effectiveness, resilience, and student outcomes can be improved through improving coping skills and confidence of teachers. The study should also focus on other contextual and organizational factors, including the type of school, a classroom size, the experience of a teacher to come up with more specific measures that could facilitate teacher well-being and quality of education.

Conclusion

Summing up, this paper has shown that the phenomenon of teacher burnout has a negative impact on self-efficacy, and gender does not affect these variables significantly. Evidence based support mechanisms that address burnout are important to maintain teacher confidence, resilience, and

overall effectiveness in education as a way of giving practical information on how to improve secondary education in Pakistan.

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