

Determinants of Job Burnout among School Teachers

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Abstract

This study conceptualized and examined the relationship between job burnout and various organizational / personal factors among schoolteachers. Organizational factors assessed included job demands, work overload, lack of autonomy, role conflict and ambiguity. Personal factors included locus of control and work family conflict. A sample of 120 teachers (both male and female) aged ranged from 25 to 45 years from govt and private schools were administered Job Burnout Questionnaire. Results revealed significant positive relationship between organizational factors and job burnout. Moreover, there was negative relationship between teacher's locus of control and job burnout. There were no significant gender differences among teachers regarding different organizational and personal factors except work overload and job burnout. Additionally, there is no significant difference revealed in job burnout between govt and private sectors. The findings highlighted the critical role of organizational demands and personal control in understanding burnout in schoolteachers.

Keywords: Job burnout, Job demands, Work overload, lack of autonomy, work family conflict, locus of control, Organizational factors, personal factors

Introduction

Decades ago, there was less workload in teaching profession, and it was considered a low stress job (Fisher, 1994). However, with the emergence of new trends in teaching, it became a stressful job, and teachers left their job at increasing pace (Winefield, 2003; Hanushek, 2001). This trend draws attention to research in area of job stress and burnout among school teachers as this can affect both physical and mental health of the teachers. The role and

tasks of a teacher is not simple, but of nurturing and rising students' potential, while helping students' growth (Brouwers, 2001). Teachers helped students to develop appropriate social skills that can help them throughout their life. So, what if a person with so much responsibility becomes burnt out? If a teacher became burned out, this would affect many people, the teacher, his family, students and even student family (Hanif, 2011). Therefore, teachers need to be physically and mentally healthy. However there seems to be a conflict in

teachers' capabilities and their expected role. If they continued their work, it might affect their physical and psychological wellbeing as well as their competence (Smith, 1992).

The relationship between job conditions and job burnout is explained through the Job-Demand resource model (JD-R). The phenomenon of job burnout among schoolteachers is a critical area of occupational health psychology, and the present study's was supported by established theoretical models and empirical research (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). The relationship between job conditions and teacher burnout is best explained by the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001). The model hypothesized that burnout is caused by a health impairment process driven by high job demands. Existing literature suggested that organizational factors such as work overload, lack of autonomy, role conflict, and ambiguity are significant stressors that lead to teacher burnout (Hui et al., 2024; Li & Du, 2024). Chen and Liu (2024) found positive relationship between organizational demands and burnout across different educational settings. Beyond organizational pressures, individual characteristics function as personal resources that can cushion the effects of job demands. Individuals with an internal locus of control could feel more in control of their environment, resulting in lower levels of emotional exhaustion (Ghassemabadi & Karami, 2025). Furthermore, work-family conflict had a strong positive relationship with burnout in teachers (Chen & Liu, 2024). Research comparing burnout across the government (public) and private school sectors often finds similar overall levels of burnout, suggesting that the fundamental

drivers surpass institutional structure (Prakasam & Santhosh, 2023). Similarly, while some studies note minor differences in specific burnout dimensions, large-scale reviews often conclude that the principal predictors of burnout were consistent across genders (Kim & Kim, 2024).

The study was intended to work on the determinants' of job burnout among teachers of government sector and Private sector in Pakistan. Burnout is a form of psychological stress which can lead to reduced efficacy characterized by lack of interest, feeling of low performance or lack of energy. (Maslach, 2008). Maslach (1997) found that the job or organizational factors were more associated with job burnout than personal factors. Environmental characteristics could affect teachers negatively and they can be exposed to their burnout. Teachers in Pakistan are working in two sectors, i.e. govt and private sector having different work characteristics. Riaz (2008) suggested that there were different contextual conditions in both sectors, so the level of job burnout varies accordingly.

In Pakistan, teaching is considered as one of the stressful jobs due to varied pay structure, and working conditions (Naheed, 2000). Studies revealed that there was a negative relationship in teacher stress and job performance (Hanif, 2011). Burnout could increase with greater job demands whereas job demands may be psychical, social and organizational (Hakanen, 2006). Workload which is work done in a particular time is also considered a part of job demands and considered to be significant determinants for job burnout (Bakker, 2004; Khan, 2014). Hakanen, (2006) revealed that unpleasant working

conditions and lack of resources have negative effects on teacher performance. Pakistani studies suggested that there were three aspects of job burnout i.e. emotional exhaustion, disengagement and personal accomplishment (Shaheen, 2015).

Role conflict and ambiguity had a profound impact on teachers' performance. If there was conflict between different roles of the teacher and he didn't know what to do in an ambiguous situation, then there were negative effects on the teacher's performance hence leading to burnout (Khan, 2014). Job resources have direct relationship with job's burnout. If there were less job resources available then there could be a negative relationship (Khan, 2014). Some studies suggested that teacher burnout had reciprocal relation with self-efficacy (Einar, 2010).

Maslach and Leiter's (1997) Job Burnout theory conceptualized burnout as a psychological response to different chronic workplace stressors, was the basis for this study. Burnout is the result of chronic workplace stressors that have not been managed or coped successfully. The theory assumed that burnout is caused primarily due to difference between individual and six key areas of work life. The six areas are workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values. In this framework, organizational factors such as work overload, lack of autonomy, and role ambiguity represent environmental conditions that contribute to these mismatches, ultimately increasing burnout risk. Moreover, the study also incorporates elements of Rotter's (1966) Locus of Control Theory which hypothesized that individuals differ in their belief about the

extent to which they can control life events. Teachers with an internal locus of control tend to perceive greater control over their professional challenges, which may buffer them against burnout. Conversely, those with an external locus of control may attribute job stress to uncontrollable external factors, making them more vulnerable to burnout. In the context of Pakistan's educational system, teachers frequently face additional challenges such as large class sizes, insufficient resources, and ambiguous role expectations. These organizational stressors can significantly intensify burnout symptoms. Alongside organizational factors, personal characteristics such as locus of control and work family conflict also play a crucial role. Despite substantial international research, limited empirical evidence exists within the Pakistani context that examines how both organizational and personal determinants contribute to teacher burnout. Understanding these relationships can help educational administrators and policymakers develop targeted interventions to reduce burnout and enhance teacher well-being. Therefore, this study aims to explore how organizational and personal factors predict job burnout among school teachers.

Objectives of the study are stated as follows.

- To find out the various factors which are related to the job burnout among school teachers
- To find out the gender difference in teachers regarding the experience of job burnout.
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- To explore any difference between government school teachers and private school teachers regarding job burnout

Methodology

The study used a correlational research design to examine the relationship between different organizational/personal factors and burnout. This design suited with the objective of the study as it allows the assessment of association between naturally occurring variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Participants in the study were 120 teachers from private and government schools, in which 60 were from private sector and 60 were from government sector, 30 males and 30 females from each sector. The study was conducted in district Swabi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan. Informed consent was obtained from teachers before data collection. Teachers were instructed not to discuss the items with other teachers before submission. A purposive sampling technique was used to collect data to ensure inclusion of both genders and representation from both govt and private schools.

Inclusion Criteria. Teachers with specific eligibility criteria were included in the study.

- Teachers aged between 25 to 45 years, early to mid-career teaching professionals.
- Having more than one year experience to ensure exposure to organizational demands and responsibilities.
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- Fully engaged in classroom teaching
- Teachers who voluntarily consented

Exclusion Criteria. Teachers were excluded from the study based on the following.

- Teachers with less than one year of experience
- Teachers younger than 25 years of age and older than 45 years of age
- Part time or visiting teachers
- Teachers in administrative role
- Teachers who didn't consent

Research Instrument. Job burnout and its determinants were measured through a job burnout questionnaire having 7 sections and 64 questions that measured both organizational factors and personal factors rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The subscale includes job demands, work overload, role conflict, and lack of autonomy. The scale also measures personal dimensions such as locus of control, and work family conflict. The instrument consists of 64 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating greater levels of stress or burnout in each domain. The teacher job burnout scale demonstrated strong psychometric properties in previous educational research. Reported Cronbach's alpha values typically range from .78 to .90 across subscales, indicating acceptable to excellent internal consistency. Reliability coefficients also fell within this range, confirming the scale's suitability for assessing burnout and its related factors among school teachers.

Table 1

Pearson Correlations between Job Burnout, Organizational and personal factors among School Teachers

Variables	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Job Demands	120	23.11	3.93	-						
2. Work overload	120	25.10	3.62	.29*	-					
3. Role conflict	120	26.06	3.00	.21	.40**	-				
4. Lack of Autonomy	120	25.50	3.85	.49**	.30*	.23	-			
5. Locus of control	120	29.80	4.37	.21	.07	-.01	.23	-		
6. Work Family Conflict	120	30.15	4.66	.32*	.21	.19	.34**	.13	-	
7. Burnout	120	44.75	11.77	.31*	.50**	.33**	.42**	-.04	.41**	-

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations and Pearson correlation coefficient. Job Burnout recorded highest standard deviation of ($SD = 11.77$) showing, there was greater variances regarding Job burnout among school teachers. The lowest standard deviation was recorded for Role Conflict ($SD = 3.0$). Job Demands ($M = 23.1$, $SD = 3.9$), Work Overload ($M = 25.1$, $SD = 3.6$), Lack of Autonomy ($M = 25.5$, $SD = 3.8$), Locus of Control ($M = 30.1$, $SD = 4.6$) and Work family Conflict ($M = 30.15$, $SD = 4.6$) had standard deviation with variance +1.

There was statistically significant correlation between job demands, work overload, role conflict, lack of autonomy, work family conflict and Job Burnout. Non-significant Negative correlation was found between Locus of control and Job Burnout, $r = -0.04$, $n = 60$, $p = 0.74$.

Table 2

Independent Sample t-Test Results for Male and Female Teachers on Job Burnout and its Determinants

Variable	Males		Females		<i>t (df)</i>	<i>p</i>	95% <i>CI</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Job Demands	22.93	4.5	23.3	3.34	-0.36 (58)	0.72	-2.42	1.68
Work overload	24.17	3.82	26.03	3.22	-2.05 (58)	0.04	-3.69	-0.04
Role conflict	25.5	3.43	26.63	2.43	-1.48 (58)	0.15	-2.67	0.40
Lack of Autonomy	25.9	4.1	25.1	3.63	0.80 (58)	0.43	-1.20	2.80
Locus of control	30.47	4.79	29.13	3.89	1.18 (58)	0.24	-0.92	3.59
Work Family Conflict	30.13	5.51	30.17	3.73	-0.03 (51)	0.98	-2.47	2.41
Burnout	41.7	12.08	47.8	10.81	-2.06 (58)	0.04	-12.03	-0.17

A t-test analysis was carried out to find gender differences. No significant gender difference was found among teachers in terms of job demands, $t(58) = -0.36$, $p = 0.72$, Role conflict $t(58) = -1.48$, $p = 0.15$, Lack of autonomy $t(58) = 0.80$, $p = 0.43$, Locus of Control $t(58) = 1.18$, $p = 0.24$ and Work family Conflict $t(51) = -0.03$, $p = 0.98$. There was significant gender difference in work overload $t(58) = -2.06$, $p = 0.04$. Male teachers averaged 24.17 (SD = 3.8) less than the female teachers averaged 26.03 (SD = 3.2). There was also significant gender difference in job burnout. The t-test score for Job Burnout was $t(58) = -2.06$, $p = 0.04$. Male teachers averaged 41.03 while female teachers 48.2 with standard deviation 10.9.

Table 3

Mean, Standard Deviation, t and p Value of Government and Private School teachers on a Six Dimensions of Job Burnout.

Variable	Government		Private		t (df)	p	95% CI	
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL
Job Demands	21.80	4.23	24.43	3.17	-2.73 (58)	0.01	-4.56	-0.70
Work overload	25.13	3.69	25.07	3.62	0.07 (58)	0.94	-1.82	1.96
Role conflict	26.20	2.25	25.93	3.64	0.34 (48)	0.73	-1.30	1.84
Lack of Autonomy	24.83	3.90	26.17	3.76	-1.35 (58)	0.18	-3.31	0.65
Locus of control	28.03	3.94	31.57	4.12	-3.39 (58)	0.00	-5.62	-1.45
Work Family Conflict	30.63	5.00	29.67	4.34	0.80 (58)	0.43	-1.45	3.39
Burnout	44.20	13.87	45.30	9.45	-0.36 (51)	0.72	-7.25	5.05

Table 3 shows that there were no significant differences among teachers in government and private sector in terms of job burnout. The teachers in government sector scored lower with Mean = 44.2 and Standard Deviation 13.9. Standard Deviation was comparatively high than teachers in Private Sector, means that teachers vary greatly in term of experience of burnout. On the other hand, teachers in private sector scored with Mean = 45.30, SD= 9.4.

Significant differences were found between government and private sector teachers in terms of Job Demands t (58) = -2.73, p = 0.01. The Teachers in Government sector, experience less Job demands with mean score 21.8 and standard deviation 4.2. The teachers in private sector, however, experience to rater Job Demands with mean

score 24.4 and standard deviation 3.17 (See Details in table 3.4). The was another significant difference between the two sectors in terms of Locus of control t (58) = -3.39 p = 0.00. No statistically significant differences were found among school teachers of government and private sector in term of Work overload t (58) = 0.07, p = 0.94, Role conflict t (58) = 0.4, p = 0.73, Lack of Autonomy t (58) = -1.35, p = 0.18 and work Family Conflict t (58) = 0.80, p = 0.43.

Discussion

The findings of this study support the Job burnout theory (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). The theory hypothesizes that burnout arises from imbalance between job demands and personal resources. This study showed that

the six determinants of the job burnout had positive correlation except Locus of control. There was a positive statistically significant relationship between job demands and job burnout which was in-line with the results obtained in other studies (Li & Du, 2024; Bakker et al, 2004; Demerouti et al, 2001; Hakanen, 2006; Betoret, 2006; Chang, 2009; Borg, 1993). Finding this study showed that Work Overload, Lack of autonomy, work family conflict and role conflict had a positive significant relationship with Job Burnout. The findings were like previous studies (Chen & Liu, 2024; Chen & Chen, 2012; Schaufeli, 2004; Demerouti, 2001). There was a non-significant negative relation between Locus of Control and job burnout. The findings were like existing literature (Kouranian, 2008).

For the second objective of this study, significant gender differences were found regarding job burnout as the male teachers scored lower than female teachers. These findings were like a Meta analysis (Purvanova, 2010). This may be due to work overload/role overload, such as $t(58) = 0.35, p = 0.32$ which also show significant gender differences in teachers. No significant gender difference was found in terms of role conflict, Lack of autonomy, Locus of control, or work family conflict. This study replicates the findings of Kim (2024), who found that while minor differences exist, the principal predictors of job burnout are consistent across the genders.

Regarding the third objective of the study, there were non-significant minor differences between govt and private sector which suggest that determinants that lead to

burnout are relatively universal across different teaching environments. Prakasam & Santhosh (2023) also compared the burnout levels across govt and private schools and found no significant difference. This study had also some limitations, i.e. small sample size, ignoring social variables like marital status etc.

Conclusion

This finding of this study highlighted the significant role of organizational and personal factors in burnout experience among teachers. This study highlighted that job burnout is a highly correlated phenomenon. Results indicated that job demands, work overload, lack of autonomy, and role ambiguity were positively related to job burnout, which suggested that teachers who face excessive pressure and unnecessary expectation could face emotional exhaustion and burnout. Female teachers experienced more burnout than male teachers, due to difference in work overload. The teachers from both the sectors, private and government have no significant differences and they are exposed to same level of burnout. The data collected in current study revealed valuable facts about teachers' job burnout although there is a need for more studies in this area. Both private and government sectors need to focus on favorable working environment for teachers, an environment where teachers are protected from excessive job demands. Work overload is a significant determinant of Job burnout, so employers need to hire more teachers to manage school overload. The teachers must be clear about their roles and government should avoid detailing teachers other than school

duty e.g. performing duties during elections. This may create a role conflict

and may involve teachers in politics. Teachers should be autonomous when performing duties and organizational policies should be devised, so teachers are less likely to be able to burn out. At least, a stress management center is needed in

every tehsil or district level, where trained psychologist could help the burnout affected teachers. This study concluded that burnout among the teachers is not an individual or personal problem, but a systematic issue influenced by workplace. Addressing burnout requires both personal and organizational efforts.

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