



## BURNOUT AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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**ABSTRACT** Teachers' experience emotional exhaustion and develop a cynical attitude toward teaching and students (depersonalization). Feelings of exhaustion and ineffectiveness continue as mental and physical resources are depleted in the pursuit of unreachable and sometimes unrealistic goals (Maslach, Schaeferli & Leiter 2001). The teacher then experiences a reduction in accomplishments, leaving him or her with a loss of self-esteem and dissatisfaction with these job accomplishments. This chain of event ultimately interferes with the burnout in teacher's ability to continue to meet teaching demands. Thus, the three dimensions of the burnout syndrome: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment, begins. Consequences of teacher burnout can lead to feelings of hopelessness, absenteeism, increased turnover, and decreased job performance. The results of current study indicated that male primary school teachers score higher mean scores than female teachers in depersonalization than female teachers had of personal accomplishment. No significant difference between private and government primary school teachers with reference to job burnout were found. However private school teachers feel more emotional exhaustion as compared to their counterparts in government schools.

**KEYWORDS :** Burnout, Primary Teacher

### INTRODUCTION

Teaching in today's society is very demanding and stressful. Work-related stress can result in teacher burnout. This, in turn, may affect the health and happiness of the teachers. When individuals feel an inability to control or reduce stress to a manageable level, they may become emotionally drained. Burnout takes place gradually, over a period of time if workplace demands supersede an individual's resources to adequately deal with them, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishments may occur (Maslach & Jackson, 1993). If an individual continue to experience work-related stress, eventually the ability to cope with that stress is depleted, resulting in burnout. In examining the syndrome of burnout, it is imperative to take into account the concept of stress. Although stress and burnout are analogous, they are not the same. It is important to note that stress may lead to burnout, but burnout may not be the result of stress alone; however, burnout is the result of unmediated stress, a stressful situation when an individual believes there is no "out," no buffers, no support system, no adequate rewards.

Consequences of teacher burnout can lead to feelings of hopelessness, absenteeism, increased turnover, and decreased job performance (Terry, 1997). A teacher's commitment to remain in teaching is subjective to the collective effects of burnout over a period of time. Since literature confirms the negative effect burnout has on teaching, it is, therefore, imperative that researchers examine interventions that might prevent burnout.

### Concept of Job Burnout

Although stress and burnout have similar attributes, they are not to be substituted for each other, because stress may lead to burnout; however, burnout does not lead to stress (Selye, 1976). Stress alone does not cause burnout; unmitigated stress causes burnout.

Farber (1991) limited burnout to a work-related syndrome that most often occurred as a result of working directly with people in need of assistance. Friedman (1995), on the other hand, defined burnout as a response of a person's perception of a significant difference between effort (amount of work exerted) and reward (amount of recognition or success realized).

It is believed that emotional exhaustion is the beginning of this downward spiral. As a result of emotional exhaustion, individuals begin to experience an immense sense of depersonalization in terms of their work and people with whom they work. This downward spiral continues until an individual believes that he has lost his ability to effect change and make a difference in his profession. Individuals do not have to experience all three components of burnout to be considered burned out. Currently, Maslach's theory of burnout and the Job Demands-Resources (JDR) model are the most widely accepted theories. According to Jackson et al. (1986), the term burnout refers to a "state of emotional exhaustion caused by excessive psychological and emotional demands made on people helping people".

### Dimensions of Burnout

- Emotional Exhaustion: Maslach (1993) defined emotional exhaustion as feelings of being emotionally overextended and depleted of one's emotional resources: when an individual feels exhausted, drained, and worn out, both emotionally and physically (Jackson et al. 1986).
- Depersonalization: The second dimension of burnout, depersonalization, refers to "treating people like objects and is often reflected in the use of objects label rather than personal names when referring to clients" (Jackson et al., 1986). According to Maslach (1993), depersonalization occurs when an individual begins to have a negative, callous, or excessively detached response to other people who are usually the recipients of one's service or care. Extreme levels of detachment can lead to inability to work effectively.
- Reduced personal accomplishment: The third dimension of the burnout concept is reduced personal accomplishment. Reduced personal accomplishment refers to a decline in one's feeling of competence and successful achievement in one's work (Maslach, 1993). It is also the tendency to evaluate oneself negatively with regards to one's successes at the work place (Jackson et al., 1986). High levels of burnout may cause individuals to feel useless and ineffective. According to Jackson et al., these individuals have a hard time beginning new projects because they perceive that others view their work as being of little value. Therefore, they feel that putting forth any effort is pointless. Individuals experiencing reduced personal accomplishments believe they do not make a difference, so they stop trying. Emotional exhaustion is considered the most prominent reaction to burnout. Individuals begin to experience an overwhelming sense of depersonalization and distancing regarding their work and the people with whom they work (Friedman, 1995).

### Operational Definition

**Burnout.** Job burnout refers to a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people in some capacity (Maslach, 1993).

### RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

One phenomenon that needed to be examined is what factors allow for some teachers to continue in the profession under stressful working conditions while others leave the profession, especially teaching at the primary school level. Research studies on teacher stress have consistently reported that teaching is a stressful occupation. One of the reasons that teachers leave the profession is their experience with negative stress. Many educators who have experienced stress have experienced teacher burnout. As a result job burnout among primary school teachers in government and private schools: A comparative study was taken up by the investigator.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To study the difference between the following with reference to

- job burnout among school teachers.
- a. Gender (Male and Female)
- b. Management of school (Government and Private)

**Hypotheses of the study**

1. There is no significant difference among male and female primary school teachers with reference to job burnout.
2. There is no significant difference between private and government primary school teachers in job burnout.

**Research Method**

Descriptive Survey method was employed to carry out this piece of research work.

**Sample**

The teachers working in government and private primary schools in Amritsar constituted the sample for the present study.

**Selection of Schools**

Government primary schools and private primary schools were chosen for the study, using stratified random sampling technique. Whereas teachers working in government primary schools and teachers working in private primary schools were selected randomly. Thus, the total sample size of the teachers was 150.

**Tool used**

- Maslach Burnout Inventory constructed by Maslach and Jackson. (1986)

**Description of the Tool Used**

**Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)**

Job burnout was measured by the Job Burnout Questionnaire, developed and standardized by Maslach and Jackson (1981). It consists of 22 statements that assess the three facets of professional burnout, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment. The emotional exhaustion was regarded as the basic individual stress component of the syndrome (Maslach et al., 2001). The respondents identify as to how often they feel professional burnout on a "six-point Likert-type rating scale" ranging from "never" (0) to "every day" (6). This scale has been employed in a considerable number of Greek and international studies that have investigated the professional burnout of a substantial number of occupations, such as civil servants, doctors, and teachers in special and mainstream schools. Cronbach alpha internal reliability estimates of 0.90 for emotional exhaustion, 0.76 for depersonalization, and 0.76 for personal accomplishment are reported in manual.

**Statistical Technique used:**

In this study, various statistical techniques viz., Mean, standard deviation, 't' value, were calculated as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Mean scores, S.D. and t-value of male and female teachers working in primary school on various components of job burnout**

Components of Burnout	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	't' Value	P Value
Emotional exhaustion	Male	75	18.61	11.26	.176	.860
	Female	75	18.41	13.20		
Depersonalization	Male	75	11.72	6.87	2.545*	.011
	Female	75	10.02	7.02		
Personal accomplishment	Male	75	35.14	9.58	2.599*	.010
	Female	75	32.63	10.40		

df=148; \*Significant at 0.05 level

As shown in table 1, male and female teachers' scores are significantly different in depersonalization (t=2.545; p=.011) and personal accomplishment (t= 2.599; p=.010) components. In both components (depersonalization and personal accomplishment) male teachers have higher mean scores than female teachers.

In emotional exhaustion there is no significant difference between male and female teachers' mean scores. In this context, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between male and female primary school teachers with reference to job burnout in depersonalization and personal accomplishment is partially rejected. The results of current study indicated that male primary school teachers score higher mean scores than female teachers in

depersonalization than female teachers had of personal accomplishment. In Lau, Yuen and Chan's (2005) study gender differences were found in all three burnout syndromes.

**Table 2 showing Mean scores, S.D and t-value of teachers working in private and government primary school on various components of job burnout**

Components of Burnout	Type of School	N	Mean	S.D	't' value	P Value
Emotional exhaustion	Government	75	17.37	11.777	2.308*	.021
	Private	75	20.13	12.895		
Depersonalization	Government	75	10.28	6.427	1.948	.052
	Private	75	11.61	7.681		
Personal accomplishment	Government	75	33.39	9.161	1.053	.293
	Private	75	34.43	11.292		

df=148; \*Significant at 0.05 level

Results of table 2 shows that only emotional exhaustion (t=2.308; p=.021) is significantly different between government and private school teachers. In this component private teachers have higher mean score than government teachers.

Rest of components have no significant difference between government and private teachers. In this context, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between private and government primary school teachers with reference to job burnout, in emotional exhaustion is rejected. Singla (2006) found that doctors and teachers are highly stressed as compared to the employees from other professions. Both the teachers and doctors face a significant amount of work load. It also revealed that females are most stressed as compared to males. Only emotional exhaustion is significantly different between government and private school teachers. In this component private teachers have higher mean score than government teachers. Kumar (2013) found out a significant difference between private and government school teachers on burnout. This means that the teachers who are teaching in either private school or government school have no difference in their mean burnout scores; it means that they have almost equal amount of burnout in their life.

Govt. sector primary teachers were more satisfied from the regression analysis showed that job satisfaction facets which contributed to primary teachers' burnout varied as a function of their workplace. In particular, satisfaction from the nature of the job and working conditions negatively contributed to the prediction of Govt. sector primary teachers' emotional exhaustion levels. On the other hand, increased levels of satisfaction from the nature of the job and immediate supervisor were associated with reduced private sector primary teachers' emotional exhaustion levels.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Following are some major findings of the present study:

- Male and female teachers' scores are significantly different in depersonalization (t=2.545; p=.011) and personal accomplishment (t= 2.599; p=.010) components. In both components (depersonalization and personal accomplishment) male teachers have higher mean scores than female teachers.
- In emotional exhaustion there is no significant difference between male and female teachers' mean scores. In this context, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between male and female primary school teachers with reference to job burnout in depersonalization and personal accomplishment is rejected.
- Only emotional exhaustion (t=2.308; p=.021) is significantly different between government and private school teachers. In this component private teachers have higher mean score than government teachers.
- Rest of components have no significant difference between government and private teachers. In this context, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between private and government primary school teachers with reference to job burnout, in emotional exhaustion is rejected.

**Delimitations of the Study**

- The study was delimited to 150 teachers from Amritsar city only.
- The study was further delimited to government primary schools and private primary schools of Amritsar only.

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