

# Teacher Burnout at Secondary Level of Education in Haryana

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## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of the present investigation was to assess the level of burnout and to study the influence of personality, educational qualification, length of service and their various interactions on burnout among secondary school teachers. The sample comprised 480 secondary school teachers selected randomly from 24 secondary schools of Haryana. Data were analysed using three way ANOVA (2×2×2 factorial design) and t-test. Results indicated that (i) the secondary school teachers experienced high level of burnout; (ii) there is significant independent effect of variables viz. personality, educational qualification and length of experience on burnout among secondary school teachers; and (iii) there is significant two factor and three factor interactive effect of variables on burnout among secondary school teachers.*

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## Introduction

Job stress is experienced by people working in a number of helping professions (Brookings, Bolton, Brown, & McEvoy, 1985; Maslach & Pines, 1977) including education (Blase, 1986; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978). If an employee is under stress for a long period of time, he or she may finally come to a situation that he or she can no longer cope with it. According to Maslach and colleagues (Maslach, 1978; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach & Pines, 1977), such an employee is unable to maintain the care and commitment that he/she brings initially to the job. This results into the feelings of burnout, a syndrome, which has three components: depersonalisation (a detached, callous attitude toward those with whom one works); emotional exhaustion (feeling emotionally drained, exhausted); and a lack of a sense of personal accomplishment (a pervasive sense

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of not having attained significant accomplishment in one's work) (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Maslach et al. (1996) reported that for many teachers, the filling force behind their choice to remain in teaching is the personal triumph they feel in teaching students. As a result, teachers are highly prone to burnout when their perception of personal triumph is diminished by organisational and social factors. Maslach et al. (1996) notes that the teaching profession is relatively flat with little opening for hierarchical advancement, and regardless of how many hours teachers work; there is very little chance for additional pay. The Demand-Control Model proposed by Karasek and Theorell (1990) identified the ability to make decisions in a challenging work environment as most likely to cause job strain. Hall and Savery (1987) further found that stress at work is due to the result of this lack of decision-making authority. Therefore, it can be predicted that teaching in an environment with heavy workloads and low decision making autonomy leads to burnout (Stoner & Wankel, 1986). It is not necessarily the intensity of stressful events that causes burnout. It is, in part, the result of the constant thrashing of stress on the individual's psyche (Hobfall & Shirom, 1993).

Teaching is a profession where everyday radical changes occur in the educational system. These changes are likely to augment rather than lessen the level of stress in teachers. Even though significant improvements have been made in student achievement, society continues to expect more and more from its teachers. As the gap widens between the public's expectations from education and the teacher's ability to deliver that education, burnout is bound to be prevalent (National School Boards Association, 2002).

In the educational process, a teacher is the medium through which objectives and plans are actualised. In Other countries, teacher burnout is considered one reason for increasing number of competent teachers who are leaving the classroom for alternative careers (Cunningham, 1982; Farber and Miller, 1982). There is considerable evidence indicating that schools make a difference in terms of student achievement, and the significant factor in that difference is attributable to competent teachers. Along with the design and execution of an intelligent curriculum, its effective implementation requires competent teachers who can sense the slightest changes in the class- room and can maneuver the teaching strategies accordingly.

Burnout in teaching profession has frequently been investigated and the phenomenon has been well organised as being problematic for teachers globally (Cherniss, 1995; Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998). Teacher burnout affects individuals, family life, and work environment (students, parents, school). Negative aspects of the job such as disciplinary problems, student apathy, overcrowded classrooms, involuntary transfer, inadequate salaries, demanding or supportive parents and lack of administrative supports are the popular stressors that confront teachers. As a result of these stressful aspects of teaching, burnout among teachers is reflected as physical (e.g. headache, peptic ulcers, hypertension, diabetes), psychological (depression, anger, anxiety), and behavioural (e.g. deterioration in work performance, absenteeism) symptoms. Teachers suffering from burnout usually experience an increasing number of problems including decreased mental and physical well-being and deteriorating relationships with students and colleagues (Schaufeli, 1990b).

Maslach et al. (2001) divided the main factors that cause burnout into two groups. In the first group, conditional factors such as characteristics of the job and occupation and/or features of the organisation take place. The second group included personal characteristics such as demographic, personal and attitude towards job. In this study, emphasis was given to individual factors that lead to burnout but organisational factors were kept out of the scope of the research.

### **Personality Characteristics**

According to Schaufeli and Enzamann (1998), personality characteristics of employees can moderate the effect of stressful situations on burnout, such that certain traits may buffer or enhance negative outcomes. Thus, personality and situational variables interact in complex ways. Some studies have focused on the relationships between personality characteristics and burnout (Grundy, 2000; Huebner & Mills, 1994; Mills & Huebner, 1998; Sandoval, 1993; Zellars et. al, 2000). Most studies have found that neuroticism was positively related to burnout (Deary et al., 1996; Hills & Norvell, 1991; Mills & Huebner, 1998). This kind of research involves the question of whether some personality types experience burnout more than other types especially in teachers because teachers who experience burnout become ineffective and less responsible for student achievement (Haberman, 2004).

### ***Length of Service***

Studies report variable effects of length of service on burnout in different professions. While some studies claim that length of service has no effect on burnout level (Kurçer, 2005; Sahin et al., 2008; Sünter et al., 2006), others suggest that burnout is much more higher in the first years of occupation (Maslach et al., 2001; Özçınar, 2005). Similar results were obtained in studies carried out with instructors (Dworkin, 2001; Lackritz, 2004; Özcan, 2009), public personnel (Günes et al., 2009) and nurses (Basim & Sesen, 2010). It is considered that as individuals' grow in one's profession; they can much more adapt to their jobs and be beneficial to the organisation for prolonged period. Such people also experience less exhaustion.

### ***Educational Qualification***

It is thought that person's occupational expectations, responsibilities and stress will increase as his/her education level increases. The investigator noticed that teachers recruited on a particular post were having higher qualification than prescribed for the post. So the need was felt to examine the variable educational qualification in relation to burnout among teachers.

The study focused on burnout in secondary school teachers as secondary school teachers experience higher level of stress due to demanding situation while dealing with adolescent students. Overcrowded classes, heavy syllabus and inadequate facilities in government schools make teachers' work more complex. They remain constantly in pressure to get satisfactory results from their students which is related to their annual salary increments. Keeping the above background in view the present study was taken up. Only female teachers were included in the sample in view of the reported sex differences in burnout in some studies (Günes et al., 2009; Lackritz, 2004; Öztürk et al., 2008; Sünter et al., 2006; Ünal et al., 2001).

### ***Objectives***

1. To find out the extent to which secondary school teachers experience burnout in their work, and
2. To study the influence of personality, educational level and length of service on burnout among secondary school teachers.

### **Method**

The present study followed descriptive survey method and is an ex-post facto type of research.

### **Tools Used**

The following tools were used in the study.

1. Maslach Burnout Inventory- Educator's Survey (MBI-ES).
2. Introversion-Extroversion Inventory (IEI) by Dr P F Aziz and Dr Rekha Gupta.
3. Personal Information form. It included questions about the participating teachers' name, gender, age, length of service, educational level/Qualifications.

### **Sample and Procedure**

The study was conducted on 480 female teachers teaching class VII- IX who were randomly selected from various secondary schools of state Haryana. For sampling purpose, the state was divided into four zones viz. North, East, South and West. Then using lottery method one district was selected from each zone. A list of secondary schools located in these four districts was obtained from office of the concerned District Education Officer. Out of that list, twenty four schools (six from each district) were randomly selected for collection of data. The investigators personally visited the schools one by one. A list of all regular female teachers teaching class VII-IX was prepared with the help of headmaster/ headmistress of the concerned school. After rapport formation, investigators administered the tools to all those listed teachers present on the day. Initially, 750 secondary teachers of Haryana state were chosen. Out of this, the responses of only 480 teachers could be taken for analysis, as only two levels in case of independent variables (Graduates or post graduates/M.Phil. /Ph.D. in case of educational qualification, service less than and equal to 5 years or service more than 5 years and equal to 10 years in case of length of service), and Introversion or extroversion in case of personality) were taken into consideration. Then, the extrovert and introvert female teachers were divided in to 4 parallel groups-graduate teachers having service of less than and equal to 5 years, graduate teachers having service of more than 5 and equal to 10 years, post graduate teachers having service of less than and equal to 5 years, post graduate teachers having service of more than 5 and

equal to 10 years. From each of these groups 60 teachers from each combination group were selected randomly, that is 60 from each combination group. In this way final sample comprised 480 teachers as given in the following Table 1:

**Table 1**  
**Distribution of Sample (N=480)**

<b>Personality</b>	<b>Educational Qualification</b>	<b>Experience</b>	
Extrovert (240)	Graduate (120)	Less than and equal to 5 (60)	More than 5 and equal to 10 (60)
	Postgraduate/ M.Phil./Ph.D (120)	Less than and equal to 5 (60)	More than 5 and equal to 10 (60)
Introvert (240)	Graduate (120)	Less than and equal to 5 (60)	More than 5 and equal to 10 (60)
	Postgraduate (120)	Less than and equal to 5 (60)	More than 5 and equal to 10 (60)

The collected data was analysed keeping in view the objectives of the study. Descriptive statistics were generated on the demographic data and each item on the survey instrument. A univariate analysis of variance (three-way anova) was performed to determine if differences exist between the scores of participants in the study with respect to selected demographic characteristics. The individual teacher characteristics such as educational level, length of service and personality were the independent variables. The three burnout scales of Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalisation and Personal Accomplishment were the dependent variables.

**Analysis and Interpretation**

***Level of Burnout among Secondary School Teachers***

Table 2 contains the mean scores on three subscales of burnout. Results show that the teachers experience high degrees of emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation and moderate degree of personal accomplishment.

**Table 2**  
**Mean scores on Burnout Dimensions**

Burnout Dimensions	Mean Score	Level of Burnout
Emotional Exhaustion	28.49	High
Depersonalization	16.84	High
Personal Accomplishment	33.42	Moderate

**Note:** Emotional Exhaustion: 0-16= Low, 17-26=Moderate, >27= High; Depersonalization: 0-8=Low, 9-13=Moderate, >14=High, Personal Accomplishment: >37=Low, 31-36=Moderate, <30=High.

***Influence of Personality, Educational Qualification, Length of Service and their various Interactions on burnout among Teachers***

The summary of ANOVA (2×2×2) is given in Table 3. It can be seen that the effect of personality educational qualification and length of service were significant. Some of the interaction effects were also significant.

**Table 3**  
**Summary of 2×2×2 Factorial Design ANOVA of Burn Out (N=480)**

Source of Variance	df	f values		
		EE	DP	PA
A	1	158.60*	27.46*	67.99*
B	1	13.85*	134.27*	40.07*
C	1	96.91*	104.24*	31.54*
A*B	1	1.377 (NS)	11.86*	0.92 (NS)
A*C	1	19.68*	0.073 (NS)	10.32* (NS)
B*C	1	2.27 (NS)	16.83*	0.43 (NS)
A*B*C	1	0.19 (NS)	1.82 (NS)	4.67*

\* Significant at .01 level, \*\* significant at .05 level, NS-not significant even at .05 level of significance.

A-Personality, B-Educational Qualification, C-Length of Service, EE-Emotional Exhaustion, DP-Depersonalization, PA-Personal Accomplishment

***Teachers' burnout by Personality***

Table 4 shows higher mean scores of introvert teachers on emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment. This indicates that introvert teachers are more emotionally

exhausted than extrovert teachers; introvert teachers experience comparatively more depersonalisation and they experience lower personal accomplishment as compared to their counterparts.

**Table 4**  
**Means, SDs and t-value of burnout among teachers by Introversion and Extroversion**

Burnout	Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Emotional Exhaustion	A1	240	19.79	4.68	2.98*
	A2	240	21.18	5.52	
Depersonalisation	A1	240	10.03	1.88	10.05*
	A2	240	11.64	1.62	
Personal Accomplishment	A1	240	32.71	2.80	5.56*
	A2	240	34.11	2.62	

A1=Extrovert; A2= Introvert; \*significant at .01 level of significance

**Teachers' Burnout by Educational Qualification**

From Table 5 it is clear mean scores of post graduate/M.Phil/ Ph.D. teachers and graduate teachers on emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment differ significantly. Further, since mean scores of post graduate/M.Phil/Ph.D. teachers are higher than that of graduate teachers it could be concluded that post graduate/M.Phil. /Ph.D. teachers experience more emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation and less personal accomplishment as compared to their counterparts.

**Table 5**  
**Means, SDs and t-value of Burnout among Teachers by Educational Qualification**

Burnout	Qualification	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Emotional Exhaustion	B1	240	22.83	4.43	11.16*
	B2	240	18.14	4.77	
Depersonalisation	B1	240	11.20	1.73	4.42*
	B2	240	10.47	2.05	
Personal Accomplishment	B1	240	34.33	2.43	7.58*
	B2	240	32.50	2.84	

B1. = PG/M.Phil./Ph.D; .B2= Graduate; \*significant at .01 level of significance

**Teachers' Burnout by Length of Service**

The mean scores of more experienced teachers and less experienced teachers on emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal



accomplishment differed significantly (Table 6). Further, since mean scores of less experienced teachers are higher than that of more experienced teachers, it may be said that less experienced teachers experience more emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation and less personal accomplishment as compared to their counterparts.

**Table 6**  
**Means, SDs and t-value of Burnout among Teachers by Experience**

Burnout	Experience	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Emotional Exhaustion	C1	240	18.65	5.13	8.32*
	C2	240	22.32	4.51	
Depersonalisation	C1	240	32.79	1.85	7.48*
	C2	240	34.03	1.78	
Personal Accomplishment	C1	240	10.13	2.87	5.68*
	C2	240	11.55	2.60	

C1=.More experienced, C2=.Less experienced; \*significant at .01 level of significance

### **Interaction Effect**

The *F*-value for the double interaction between Personality and Educational Qualification, between Personality and Length of Service, between Personality and Educational Qualification, between Personality and Length of Service were significant on the subscale of depersonalisation, emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment respectively leading to inference that the two variables interact with each other on the respective dimension. To further investigate the interaction between variables, the *t*-ratios were computed. Results showed that graduate extrovert teachers had maximum depersonalisation scores ( $M=11.77$ ) and post graduate/ M.Phil/Ph.D. Introvert teachers had lowest depersonalisation scores ( $M=9.43$ ). Less experienced introvert teachers had maximum emotional exhaustion scores ( $M=23.84$ ) and more experienced introvert teachers had lowest emotional exhaustion scores ( $M=18.52$ ). It was also found that less experienced introvert teachers ( $A_2C_2$ ) experience minimum personal accomplishment ( $M=35.09$ ) and more experienced extrovert teachers ( $A_1C_1$ ) experience maximum personal accomplishment ( $M=32.44$ ).

### **Discussion**

The results reveal that teachers have higher emotional burnout and depersonalisation levels and medium personal accomplishment levels. It can be said that burnout level is high in the sample of

the study. Generally, the more emotionally fatigued teachers become, the more likely their teaching performance is going to suffer (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000). Teachers in this study had medium levels of personal accomplishment. If they had been able to maintain high degree of self-efficacy, the effects of emotional exhaustion would have not been probably been a cause of concern.

From the results it is clearly evident that burnout is more in introverts in comparison to extroverts. This may be due to the reason that introvert individuals appear quiet or reserved, whereas those high in extraversion are cheerful, optimistic and energetic possibly because they are more likely to engage in more activities to overcome stressful conditions. Similar findings have been previously reported by Iverson, Oleklans, & Erwin (1998) who reported that workers higher in positive affectivity (a component of extraversion) experience less burnout. It is found that as level of education increased, emotional burnout and depersonalisation levels were also elevated. However, personal accomplishment levels of post graduates/M.Phil./Ph.Ds teachers were low than of those holding bachelor's degree. It is believed that as level of education increased, individuals' occupational expectations, responsibilities and stress will also increase and in this case coping with stress will become much harder and burnout will occur (Maslach et al., 2001), as has been found in the current study.

The results further revealed that teachers who have less teaching experience reported a higher degree of burnout than their counterparts who have more teaching experience. Probably a new recruit teacher may get involved in a set of role conflicts in the beginning years and have difficulty in adapting to their work and organisation easily and do not know their roles completely, thereby they experience burnout more intensively. As teachers get more experienced, they may develop coping skills that alleviate work stress and the tendency to treat students in an impersonal manner.

Regarding interactional effects, the joint effect of factors viz.,  
i) personality and educational qualification on depersonalisation  
ii) personality and length of service on emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment  
iii) educational qualification and length of service on depersonalisation, and  
iv) personality, educational qualification and length of service on personal accomplishment was significant. This joint effect of various interactions on dependent variables may be significant due to the reason that factors such as personality, educational qualification and length of service

exert significant independent contributing effect in determining the emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment and depersonalisation scores. Another probable reason for significant various interaction effects may be due to the two different ways in which each factor is varying viz. extrovert and introvert teachers i.e. PG/M.Phil./Ph.Ds and graduates teachers, more experienced and less experienced teachers.

### **Educational Implications**

In the study personality, educational qualification and teaching experience were found to be associated with burnout dimensions. So in order to better understand the process of burnout, we should take into account variables like personality, teaching experience and educational qualifications. Practices to prevent burnout should start during the employment process and can be provided through certain procedures such as orientation programmes, providing on-the-job trainings, job enrichment, improving cooperation and coordination, enabling organisational commitment and organisational justice. By increasing teachers' awareness on the process of burning out, and providing them with opportunities for reflection on personal variables such as coping resources, together with discussions of alternative coping strategies, may be of great assistance in reducing the use of maladaptive or dysfunctional coping. The intervention strategies that focus on job engagement, by providing teachers with experiences that foster professional growth, self-efficacy and perceived success in their career, through the enhancement of their organisational life, appears for many burnout researchers (e.g. Maslach, 2003, Kelchtermans & Strittmatter, 1999) as the key to combat work-related stress. Since teacher educators train future teachers, so there is potential to steer the course of education toward a system where the teacher has more autonomy and decision-making responsibilities. In teacher education classes, there is need to instruct the students about the potential for burnout in the profession. They should be provided with the suggestions and strategies for coping with stress.

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