

Research Paper

A Qualitative Study on Burnout & Emotional Labour Among School Teachers

Ms. Kavita Kumari^{1*}, Ms. Shikha Kumari², Dr. Akanksha Mishra³

ABSTRACT

In contemporary education, teachers perform multiple roles, including serving as role models, providing guidance, fostering a love for learning, and promoting democratic values. They must also collaborate with school administration, colleagues, parents, and stakeholders to enhance teaching and learning outcomes. While managing these responsibilities, teachers must regulate their emotions and maintain professionalism, often suppressing personal challenges to meet institutional expectations. However, adhering to these expectations can have adverse psychological effects, particularly in terms of emotional regulation. Burnout and emotional labor are significant impacts frequently observed. This qualitative study examines the challenges teachers face, using data from semi-structured interviews with 10 school teachers. Findings reveal that emotional labor is an integral part of teaching, requiring teachers to manage and regulate emotions appropriately in the workplace. Burnout factors include excessive workload, lack of student motivation, large class sizes, and long working hours. Strategies for mitigating burnout involve practicing self-care, delegating work, organizing tasks efficiently, communicating effectively, and maintaining a positive attitude. This research highlights the emotional complexities of teaching and emphasizes the need for effective strategies to support teacher well-being.

Keywords: Burnout, Emotional Labour, Strategies

Teachers play a significant role in students' success, so it is vital to know which teacher-related factors are the most effective in students' achievements. In addition, it seems that successful teachers share a number of characteristics (Rushton, Morgan, & Richard, 2007). Among different variables, some including burnout and emotional labor need more attention (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006). Otherwise, it can have irrevocable effects on teaching profession (Maslach & Goldberg, 1998). "Burnout leads to physical symptoms, to absenteeism, and to job turnover" (Maslach, 2017). In fact, according to Maslach and Goldberg (1998), teacher's behavior, students' outcome, and as a result, the whole educational system can be affected negatively by burnout.

¹Pre-service Teacher, Amity Institute of Education, Amity University, Noida (Uttar Pradesh)

²Pre-service Teacher, Amity Institute of Education, Amity University, Noida (Uttar Pradesh)

³Assistant Professor, Amity Institute of Education, Amity University, Noida (Uttar Pradesh)

*Corresponding Author

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EMOTIONAL LABOR

Emotional labor (EL) is described as the “management of feelings to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display” (Hochschild, 1983). It involves the effort, planning, and control required to exhibit emotions that meet organizational standards during interpersonal interactions (Morris, 1996). While EL can act as a stressor, it is considered a necessary component for regulating emotions and expressions to achieve organizational objectives (Grandey, 2000). Keller et al. (2014) noted that emotions significantly influence teachers’ behaviors, student outcomes, and the teaching process, with teachers themselves reporting frequent use of emotional labor.

While emotional labor has been extensively studied in service professions, it has received less attention in education, where daily interactions are intensive, unique, and often emotionally demanding (Wróbel, 2013). Teaching involves both cognitive and emotional tasks, such as designing curriculum and managing emotional expressions, whether genuine or situationally appropriate (Park, 2014).

The Components of Emotion Labor

The three primary components of emotional labor are surface acting (SA), deep acting (DA), and naturally felt emotions (NFE). Noor et al. (2001) defines SA as altering outward emotional expressions without attempting to align internal feelings, while DA involves not only changing outward expressions but also striving to feel the displayed emotions. In essence, DA represents an effort to genuinely experience emotions appropriate to a situation (Yilmaz, 2015), whereas SA entails suppressing real emotions and projecting false ones (Maxwell, 2017). NFE refers to expressing emotions authentically based on what one genuinely feels (Park, 2014).

Suppression is another component, described by Edwards (2016) as hiding emotions, and emotional consonance as naturally experiencing the emotions expected for a job. Employees may sometimes need to suppress emotions to maintain effectiveness.

Hochschild (1983) introduced the concepts of SA and DA, while Diefendorff (2005) later added NFE. Surface and deep acting are viewed as responses arising from job expectations (Hochschild, 1983; Grandey, 2000). According to Yilmaz et al. (2015), the key difference between SA, DA, and NFE lies in the degree of internalization, with SA involving minimal internalization, DA moderate, and NFE the highest.

Factors influencing Teachers’ Emotional Labor

i) Personality Characteristics

Research by H. Nejat Basim et al. (2013) involving elementary and middle school teachers found that personality traits significantly influence emotional labor strategies. Neuroticism was a strong predictor of surface acting, while openness to experience predicted deep acting and naturally felt emotions. Similarly, agreeableness was linked to the expression of naturally felt emotions. Teachers with prominent traits like extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism are often better suited to teaching.

ii) Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Hong-biao Yin and John Chi-Kin Lee et al. (2013) found that the four components of emotional intelligence—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management—had strong positive correlations with deep acting and naturally felt emotions. However, surface acting showed weak or no correlation with these EI factors.

iii) Psychological Capital

Ching-Sheue Fu's (2014) study on preschool teachers highlighted the role of psychological capital—comprising self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience—in emotional labor. Among these, increasing self-efficacy helped reduce emotional labor, though it could not directly predict it.

iv) Motivation

Camelia Truta (2014) found that intrinsic motivation was relevant to deep acting but not associated with surface acting. This suggests that motivation plays a role in authentic emotional regulation.

v) Seniority

Studies (Brown et al., 2014; Liu, 2007) revealed a positive correlation between seniority and deep acting. Teachers with longer tenure were more likely to use deep acting. Sun (2013) found that during the first 5 years, surface acting increased but then declined. Deep acting steadily grew, peaking in the 6–10-year group before decreasing, while the expression of naturally felt emotions showed rapid growth after 11 years of experience.

vi) Gender

Yanling Liu (2007) and Xiaoning Chen (2010) reported gender differences in emotional labor. Female teachers were more likely to express naturally felt emotions, while male teachers displayed slightly higher levels of surface acting. However, gender differences in deep acting and overall emotional labor were generally not significant. In special education, studies by Tian et al. (2009) showed that female teachers experienced higher emotional labor loads compared to males.

vii) Marital Status

Xiaoning Chen et al. (2010) found that unmarried teachers exhibited higher levels of surface acting and lower levels of naturally felt emotions compared to their married counterparts, indicating that marital status influences emotional labor strategies.

BURNOUT

Burnout was originally defined by Freudenberg (1974) as “the state of physical and emotional depletion resulting from conditions of work”.

Burnout is included in the 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) as an occupational phenomenon. WHO defines burnout syndrome as “resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed”.

Implications of burnout syndrome are strongly negative both for the personal and professional life of the teacher. Many studies confirm that teachers with high level of burnout syndrome are not able to establish positive relationships with students, to understand students' needs, to stay in contact with trends in their field and to provide pedagogically effective lessons (Greenglass et al., 1996; Yong and Yue, 2007; Shen et al., 2015). It can result in a high rate of absences, dropouts and early retirements of burnout teachers, which increases costs (Brackett et al., 2010).

Component of Burnout

Burnout is a syndrome involving emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach, 1993). Emotional exhaustion refers to a depletion of

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emotional resources, leading to reduced physical and emotional capacity (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). It is the core aspect of burnout, marked by chronic stress and feelings of being mentally and physically drained (Wright, 1998; Donahue et al., 2012).

Depersonalization involves adopting negative or cynical attitudes toward oneself and others, particularly students, often leading to detachment and unfavorable expectations (Maslach et al., 1996, 2001). Reduced personal accomplishment reflects a decline in one's sense of competence and satisfaction with professional achievements (Maslach et al., 1996).

Variables Influencing Teacher Burnout

Research identifies three primary factors influencing teacher burnout: personal, organizational, and classroom variables (Mota, 2021).

- 1. Individual Intrinsic Variables:** Teachers' emotional competencies and coping skills play a crucial role in managing burnout (Fiorilli, 2009; Pinto, 2005). Emotional exhaustion often stems from juggling diverse roles and responsibilities (Arvidsson, 2019).
- 2. School Context Attributes:** Burnout is heavily influenced by school environment factors such as low salaries, excessive workloads, time pressure, precarious contracts, and poor working conditions (Demerouti, 2001; Helou, 2016). Poor interpersonal relationships, lack of organizational support, and low morale further exacerbate stress (Consiglio, 2014; Lawrence, 2019).
- 3. Classroom and Student Characteristics:** Student misbehavior, low motivation, large class sizes, and parental pressures are significant contributors to teacher burnout (Aloe, 2014; Shen, 2015).

Objectives of the study

The research had three major objectives:

1. To understand the teachers' experiences on burnout & emotional labor in school setting?
2. To analyze the various sources of burnout at individual, school & student/classroom levels?
3. To explore the strategies that teachers adopt to reduce burnout & emotional labor in school setting?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative approach to explore teachers' experiences of burnout and emotional labor in school settings. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 private school teachers in Delhi NCR who teach higher and senior secondary students. This method allowed for in-depth exploration of their perceptions, challenges, and coping strategies. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews facilitated probing sensitive issues and capturing nuanced insights into the participants' lived experiences, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the research questions. Convenience sampling was used to select participants, and the interviews were transcribed and analyzed systematically. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006).

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Emotional labor (EL) plays a significant role in teaching, where teachers manage their emotions to meet organizational expectations and maintain a positive learning environment. While emotional labor is essential, it can contribute to burnout over time (Hochschild, 1983; Yin et al., 2019). The study explored the lived experiences of teachers, focusing on their

emotional labor, burnout, and coping strategies through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

A detailed explanation of the themes, their subthemes, and the narratives of the participants, connected with the study objectives, is provided below. Excerpts from the primary data are presented to illustrate the experiences of the interviewees and their relevance to the identified themes.

THEME 1: EMOTIONAL LABOUR

Sub-Theme 1.1: Controlling Emotions

Teachers, as part of their professional roles, often suppress their true feelings, choosing instead to exhibit socially acceptable emotions. This form of emotional regulation ensures a supportive and safe environment for students.

1.1 A. Hiding Anger Teachers frequently suppress frustration or anger arising from students' misbehavior, ensuring they do not harm students emotionally or physically. They prioritize students' sensitivity and focus on guiding them constructively. As Ashok shared, *"Sometimes, being a human, it is everyone's habit to become very angry. I try to hide and I control myself... Instead of showing that anger and beating them or punishing them, I don't do that."*

This behavior aligns with the concept of emotional suppression, where individuals consciously mask their emotions to meet job expectations (Edwards, 2016).

1.1B. Anger Outbursts

Anger in teachers often stems from challenges such as students' misbehavior, violation of rules, or poor academic performance due to controllable factors like laziness or inattentiveness. Additionally, external issues like uncooperative colleagues, lack of parental support, and systemic barriers can exacerbate frustration (Sutton, 2007).

Despite efforts to regulate emotions, extreme indiscipline or provocations can lead to moments of anger outbursts. Teachers believe these rare outbursts are necessary for students to recognize boundaries and not take them for granted. As one teacher reflected, *"I do feel that anger outburst is also necessary for the student to see that side of you. You cannot be taken for granted... where I did really let my anger out, I think that it's justified. I would not feel like I regret it."*

Sub-Theme 1.2: Negotiating Emotions

Negotiating emotions is a crucial aspect of emotional labor, requiring individuals to balance personal feelings with professional expectations (Kaya & Özhan, 2012). Teachers often navigate between their genuine emotions and the emotions they must display in their roles (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). This negotiation helps maintain a positive learning environment while managing internal emotional struggles.

1.2A. Faking Good Mood

Teachers often fake a positive mood to reduce stress and maintain classroom harmony. This "surface acting" involves displaying emotions that are not genuinely felt (Noor et al., 2001). Teachers mask their emotions, especially when dealing with personal challenges, to maintain a positive atmosphere. Geeta shared, *"I had to fake happiness when something happened at home."* Though this strategy helps in the short term, it can contribute to burnout and decreased job satisfaction (Cukur, 2009).

1.2B. Regulating Emotions

Teachers also regulate their emotions to maintain a positive classroom environment. Ashok mentioned, *“If I have negative emotions, I try to control them and focus on enhancing positive energy to connect better with students.”* Teachers may use humor to manage emotions and connect with students. Emotion regulation not only helps teachers but also positively impacts student interactions (Sutton, 2004).

1.2C. Dissonance Between Emotion and Behavior

Teachers often experience emotional dissonance, where their true emotions conflict with the professional behavior they are expected to display. For example, when students fail to submit work, teachers may feel frustrated but act calmly. Lovely shared, *“Sometimes I feel like giving corporal punishment, but I never do. I stick to scolding instead.”* Avoiding corporal punishment aligns with research showing it leads to better emotional and academic outcomes for students (Gershoff, 2013).

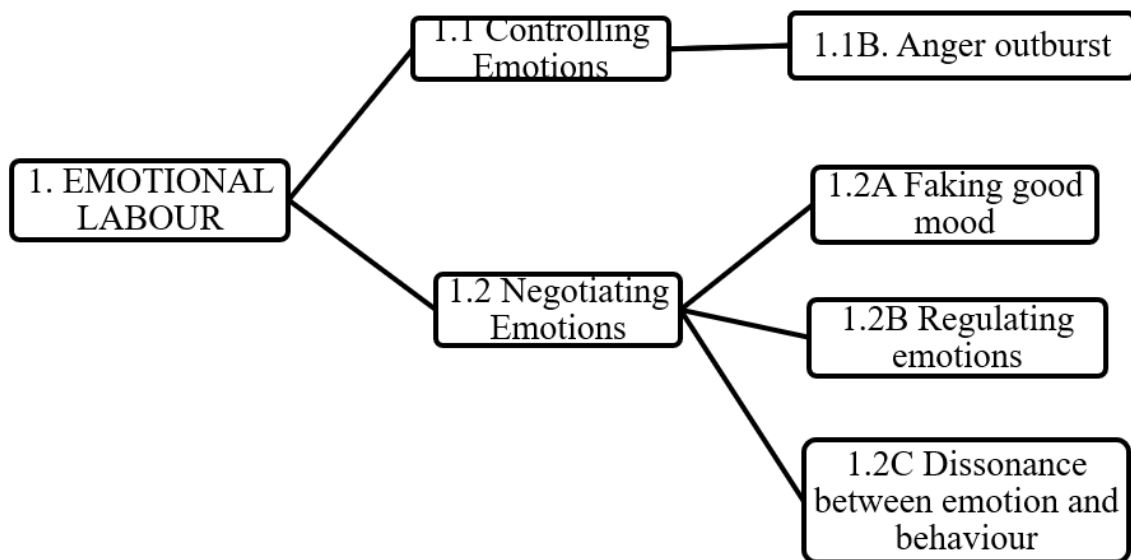


Fig.1 Relationship of Theme 1: Emotional Labour with its subthemes

THEME 2- BURNOUT

Burnout, as defined by Freudenberger (1974), refers to the state of physical and emotional depletion due to work conditions. Teachers experience varying degrees of burnout, influenced by factors such as their relationships with colleagues, students, and family, along with their work experiences and personal circumstances.

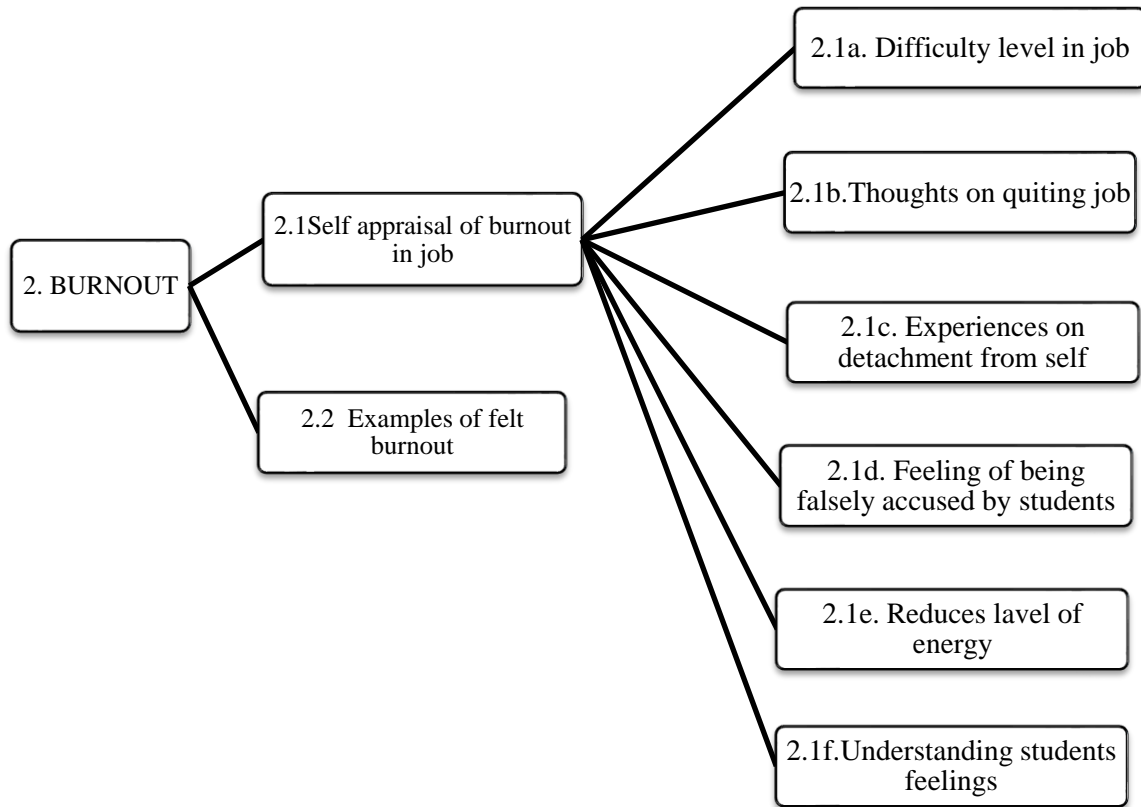


Figure 2- Relationship of Theme 2: Burnout with its subthemes

Sub-Theme 2.1 Self-Appraisal of Burnout

2.1a. Difficulty in Job

Teachers rate the difficulty of their job as moderate (3/5), citing challenges such as traffic delays and the early school hours, which conflict with household responsibilities. Geeta mentioned, "*The timeframe from 7:30 AM to 2:00 PM is challenging because of the additional responsibilities at home.*" A lack of communication with parents further adds to the stress, as teachers are unable to address students' issues effectively (Olcer & Kocer, 2015).

2.1b. Thoughts on Quitting jobs

Teacher turnover, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, remains a critical issue (Matthews et al., 2022). Some teachers, like Indu, express satisfaction with their profession, stating, "*I never wanted to leave my job... I enjoy teaching.*" However, others, like Geeta, considered quitting due to personal struggles, such as managing childcare responsibilities. Additionally, some teachers, like Seethal, had thoughts of quitting early in their careers due to a toxic work environment.

2.1c. Experiences on Detachment from Self

Long working hours and duties imposed by the administration can lead to feelings of detachment from one's true passion. Lovely mentioned, *"The long hours and weekend work can feel detaching,"* while Geeta expressed a desire to focus on her passion for counseling instead of teaching when management imposed restrictions. However, some teachers remain dedicated and committed to their work until retirement, preventing detachment.

2.1d. Feeling of Being Falsely Accused by Students

Teachers sometimes feel falsely accused by students, particularly regarding exam preparation. Students may claim that the teacher failed to discuss questions and answers beforehand, leading to dissatisfaction with their exam performance. Ashok expressed frustration, stating, *"I teach the lesson, but I don't provide direct questions and answers. During exams, students assume their answers are correct, and when I point out mistakes, they accuse me of not discussing anything in class."* Similarly, some teachers acknowledge that not all students may appreciate their methods. Indu shared, *"While most students seem content with my approach, I understand there may be a few who feel dissatisfied or believe my ways don't suit them."*

2.1e. Reduced Energy Levels Among Teachers

Teachers often experience declining energy levels, particularly by the end of the week. The cumulative effect of six working days leaves them feeling exhausted. Lovely shared, *"By Friday, I sometimes feel exhausted, especially if Saturday is also a working day. Monday and Tuesday are fine, but by Friday, I start feeling worn out."* Age and long commutes further contribute to reduced energy. Ebsibha explained, *"Energy isn't always at full capacity. Sometimes it depends on the school's location. Traveling from a faraway place can drain your energy before the day even begins."*

2.1f. Understanding Students' Feelings

Teachers often struggle to fully understand their students' emotions, partly due to other professional commitments. Geeta admitted, *"I could have given better attention. I noticed things that seemed off but delayed addressing them because of workload or procrastination."* Introverted students add another layer of complexity, as they rarely express their concerns openly. Teachers rely on non-verbal cues, as Lovely shared: *"Not always, but sometimes I notice signs, like a student sleeping or a girl crying. Facial expressions often hint at family issues, and I ask them about it."* Despite efforts, some students remain unresponsive, even when treated kindly.

Sub-Theme 2.2 Examples of Burnout Among Teachers

Teachers frequently experience burnout, often triggered by external factors like Delhi's intense summer heat, which affects both students and staff. Schools continuing till late May, with students attending long lectures from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., heighten restlessness. Teachers also face frustration when students fail to complete tasks sincerely, opting instead to copy from peers. Misplacing important items further amplifies stress, as Ashok explained: *"Last week, a CBSE answer sheet was misplaced, and the staff had to search everywhere."* Additional responsibilities, such as covering for absent colleagues or handling extra classes, significantly contribute to exhaustion. Indu recounted: *"Midway through an academic session, I had to take over extra classes when another teacher left. Teaching beyond four periods a day becomes draining. By the sixth period, energy is fully depleted."*

THEME 3: SOURCES OF BURNOUT

Research highlights various factors contributing to teacher burnout, with workplace conditions being more significant than personal attributes like demographics or personality traits (Maslach & Jackson, 1984).

Sub-theme 3.1: Individual Intrinsic Variables

Emotional competencies and coping strategies significantly impact how teachers manage stress (Fiorilli, 2009; Pinto, 2005). Perfectionism, though initially motivating, often leads to psychological strain. *"Sometimes, I expect too much from students, aiming for perfection. I need to remind myself to be more practical, as neither they nor I am perfect"* (Indu).

New teachers often feel unprepared to manage classroom dynamics and emotional challenges. Voss et al. (2017) highlight how insufficient training in classroom management exacerbates stress. This sentiment was echoed by a participant: *"Issues like classroom management and disruptive student behavior are overwhelming for new teachers."*

Sub-theme 3.2: Administrative Challenges

Teachers cited long working hours, ever-changing policies, lack of disciplinary action for student misconduct, and low salaries as significant administrative stressors.

3.2a Multiplicity of Tasks: Teachers are required to take on multiple roles, such as event management, extracurricular activities, and teacher training, often beyond their working hours. *"I manage extracurricular activities, train students for events, and even act as an emcee. Writing scripts and providing practices take up a lot of time outside teaching"* (Geeta).

3.2b Lack of Autonomy: Many teachers feel constrained by hierarchical structures. *"We follow a strict hierarchy, and while suggestions are considered if they bring positive change, many systemic issues remain. Full autonomy isn't feasible in such an environment"* (Geeta). Lack of autonomy leads to dissatisfaction and demotivation, as noted in previous studies (Smith, 2000; Shaw, 2002).

3.2c Salary Dissatisfaction: Teachers expressed frustration over inadequate salaries. *"I'm not at all satisfied with my salary. Despite the promises of the 7th Pay Commission, many schools haven't implemented it"* (Geeta). Salary disparities continue to contribute to teacher burnout, aligning with findings by Byrne (1994).

3.2d Inconsistent Policies: Frequent changes in administrative policies also add to teacher stress. *"School management often revises policies overnight due to external pressures, creating unnecessary confusion"* (Ashok).

3.2e Lack of Disciplinary Action: Teachers reported feeling unsupported when schools fail to address student misconduct. *"When students are indisciplined, some action should be taken. The administration's inaction adds to our stress"* (Lovely).



Figure 3- Relationship of Theme 3: Sources of burnout with its subthemes

Sub-theme 3.3: Students

Teachers’ relationships with students play a critical role in their well-being (Milatz et al., 2015; Spilt et al., 2011). Positive teacher-student relationships characterized by trust, respect, and low interpersonal conflict contribute to job satisfaction (Pianta, 1999; Roorda et al., 2011). Conversely, student-related challenges often exacerbate burnout (Brackenreed, 2011; Forlin, 2001).

3.3a Struggles While Teaching Students: Teachers frequently encounter difficulties in managing noisy, undisciplined, or inattentive students, particularly post-COVID-19. Disruptive behavior and a lack of interest in subjects make engaging students challenging. *"Some students have no interest in the subject but must take it, which makes bringing them on board difficult"* (Indu).

Irregular student attendance and challenges in communicating with parents, especially those who are illiterate, add to teachers' burdens. *"Most parents are unavailable during critical*

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times, and it's difficult to convey messages when they don't answer calls" (Reeta). Classroom misbehavior, large class sizes, and varying student abilities are significant contributors to teacher stress (Aloe, 2014; Pinto, 2005; Shen, 2015).

3.3b Parental Pressure on Teachers: Parents often place undue pressure on teachers regarding their child's academic performance, request fee concessions, or attribute their child's shortcomings to teachers. *"Some parents blame teachers for their child's low marks instead of addressing their weaknesses"* (Indu).

At times, parents become confrontational, as one teacher explained: *"A parent once questioned me about low marks. When I showed the answer sheet, the mother became very angry with her child instead"* (Ebsibha). Studies show that parental pressure and teachers' perceptions of improper parenting practices significantly contribute to burnout (Salmela-Aro, 2011; Stoeber, 2008).

3.3c Teachers' Perception of Improper Parenting: Teachers feel that some parents fail to fulfill their roles at home due to work commitments, leaving the entire responsibility for their child's education on schools. *"Some parents think that paying fees absolves them of any responsibility for their child's education"* (Indu).

In response, schools often counsel parents during parent-teacher meetings. *"Instead of just counseling students, we counsel parents as well, which helps a lot"* (Ashok). While some parents are supportive and cooperative, their lack of engagement remains a significant stressor for teachers (Stoeber, 2008).

3.3d Large Class Sizes: Large class sizes, with 55–60 students, are another critical factor contributing to burnout. Managing such groups is exhausting, as noted by one teacher: *"Class sizes should follow the 40:1 ratio, but now there are often 50–60 students, making management overwhelming"* (Raman).

Studies have shown that teachers in larger classes report higher levels of exhaustion and a diminished sense of accomplishment compared to those in smaller classes (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Saloviita & Pakarinen, 2021). Public discussions often call for smaller class sizes to mitigate teacher stress (Turun Sanomat, 2013).

Sub-theme 3.4: Family & Friends

Support networks and hobbies outside of work are essential for reducing teacher burnout (Fiorilli et al., 2017). Family and friends play a crucial role in maintaining emotional well-being and buffering stress.

3.4a Alienation from Friends

While friendships help teachers cope, many feel alienated, particularly those living away from their native regions. Busy schedules and family responsibilities limit social interactions. *"We just converse over the phone as everyone is preoccupied with work. There's no fixed time for meeting"* (Ashok). Married teachers face additional challenges: *"Once you're married with children, responsibilities increase, leaving less time for friends"* (Geeta).

3.4b Family and Burnout

Family dynamics strongly influence teachers' well-being. Balancing relationships with in-laws and raising children often heightens stress. *"If family life is disturbed, teaching life also gets affected"* (Meena).

Maintaining a work-life balance is challenging, as teachers frequently take work home, both physically and emotionally. One teacher emphasized leaving school matters at work: *"We should not bring school matters into the family"* (David). However, excessive workload often disrupts family harmony, increasing stress levels (McIlveen et al., 2019).

THEME 4: STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING BURNOUT

Teachers employ various strategies at personal, school, and administrative levels to manage stress and reduce burnout. Research supports these strategies, highlighting their importance in alleviating the emotional demands of teaching.

Sub-theme 4.1: Individual Emotional Competencies

Teachers focus on staying organized, maintaining positivity, and separating personal issues from their professional life. According to research, organizational skills can significantly reduce stress by enhancing productivity and providing a sense of control (Herbert, 2022). Anu mentioned, *"I stay organized by writing tasks down and prioritizing them, which helps me manage my workload more effectively."* Maintaining mental calm and optimism, as well as finding fulfillment in student progress, also play key roles in managing stress. Ashok shared, *"I try to stay calm and ensure that personal problems don't affect my teaching."* These emotional competencies are associated with lower burnout rates, as teachers feel more in control of their environment (Doheny, 2008).

Sub-theme 4.2: Tactics Used by Teachers in School

Teachers use tactics like relaxing during breaks, reading, and connecting with colleagues to reduce stress. Research by Avanzi et al. (2018) found that social support from colleagues helps reduce feelings of burnout. Reeta noted, *"I relax by reading the newspaper during my free time."* Delegating tasks and receiving support from colleagues are also key strategies for managing burnout. Raman emphasized, *"Delegating tasks helps prevent chaos and lets me focus on teaching."* These social support systems help teachers cope with their workload and prevent stress from escalating into burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018).

Sub-theme 4.3: Managing Daily Stresses

Teachers engage in activities like napping, reading, or exercising to unwind. Research indicates that engaging in relaxing activities and maintaining a work-life balance can significantly reduce burnout (McIlveen et al., 2019). Spiritual activities, such as prayer, also help reduce burnout. Ebsibha mentioned, *"I believe in God, and prayer helps me find strength to manage daily stresses."* These activities allow teachers to recharge and return to work feeling refreshed. Studies by Zhaleh and Ghonsooly (2017) have shown that spiritual well-being can significantly reduce burnout among teachers.

Sub-theme 4.4: Strategies for Administration

Teachers suggest administrative changes to reduce burnout, such as shorter working hours, fewer teaching periods, and adequate rest. Research supports that reducing workload and providing more rest can alleviate stress (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). Lovely shared, *"If we reduced class timings, it would help both teachers and students."* Teachers also ask for fewer non-teaching duties to focus on their primary responsibilities. Raman added, *"I feel*

the school should reduce non-teaching work and let us focus on teaching." Providing administrative support and reducing role ambiguity can help teachers feel less stressed and more satisfied with their work (Kyriacou, 2001).

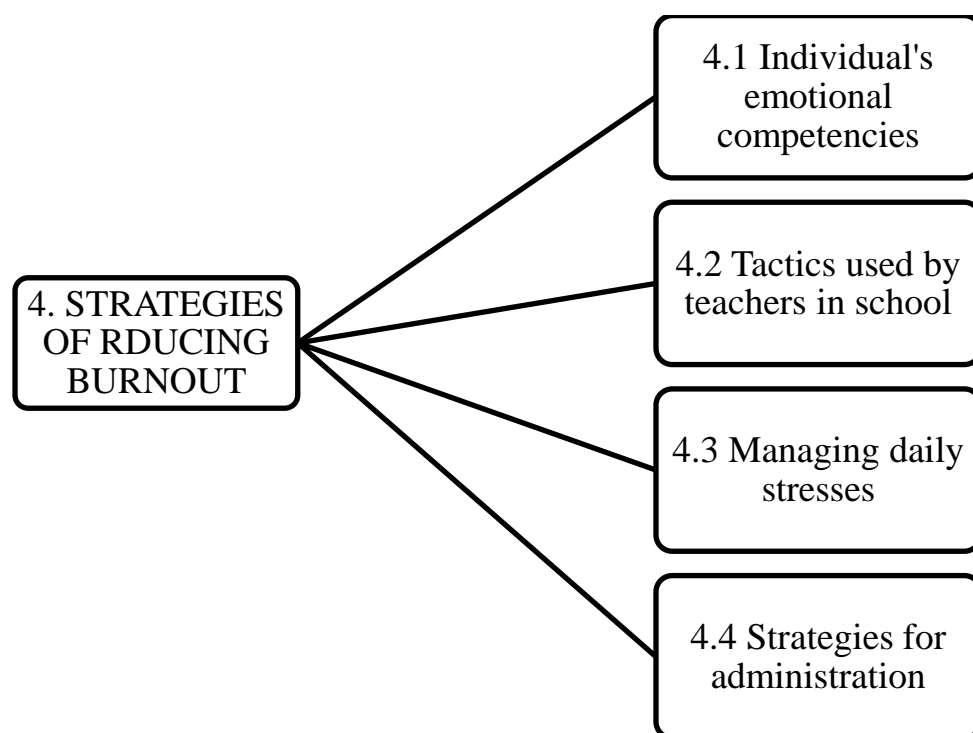


Figure 4- Relationship of Theme 4: Strategies to reduce burnout with its subthemes

In line with broader research on teacher burnout, the National Education Association (NEA, 2022) recommends raising salaries, hiring more support staff, and reducing administrative tasks to support teachers' well-being. Overall, emotional labor in teaching is inevitable, but teachers' well-being can be improved through personal coping strategies and administrative support.

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the phenomenon of burnout and emotional labor in teaching, highlighting underexplored dimensions such as depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and suppression, and suggesting the need for targeted teacher training and support programs. These findings call for interventions at the individual, student, and administrative levels to mitigate burnout and enhance teacher well-being. However, the study has several limitations, including a small sample size of 10 private school teachers, which limits the generalizability of the results. Additionally, the predominance of female participants and the subjective nature of the qualitative methodology may have introduced biases in data interpretation, further limiting the scope of the study. Future research could address these limitations by including a larger and more diverse sample, incorporating both public and private school teachers, and examining the influence of demographic factors such as gender and experience on burnout and emotional labor.

CONCLUSION

Teachers play a pivotal role in student success, making it crucial to understand the factors related to their effectiveness, including burnout and emotional labor. Research suggests that successful teachers share common traits, and addressing burnout is essential to preventing its

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negative impact on teaching, teacher behavior, student outcomes, and the educational system as a whole. While emotional labor has been extensively studied in service industries, its role in education, marked by intense daily interactions, has received limited attention. This study contributes to the gap in research by exploring teachers' experiences with burnout and emotional labor, using qualitative methods to uncover sources of burnout at the individual, classroom, and student levels. The findings underscore the complex nature of burnout and emotional labor, highlighting the need for effective interventions to support teachers and promote their well-being, ultimately benefiting students and the broader educational system.

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Conflict of Interest

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