

## A STUDY OF BURNOUT AMONG ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN THE SCHOOLS OF GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH

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### ABSTRACT

*In recent years, interest in the effects of burnout and strain in workforce in nearly every kind of human service professions has been increased; it includes teaching profession as well. The working conditions of the school, college or university have been changed to a great extent and are now significantly different from previous generations. The present study examined burnout between English Language teachers of Hindi Medium Schools and English Medium schools of Gautam Buddha Nagar. Data were collected from 240 teachers selected randomly from Hindi and English medium schools from all the four blocks of Gautam Buddha Nagar. Burnout was measured by Maslach Burnout Inventory (1996). Results of burnout through ANOVA revealed that English Language Teachers of Hindi medium school exhibited high emotional exhaustion and depersonalization followed by less personal accomplishment as compared to English Medium school. English Language teachers of English medium schools showed less emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, but higher personal accomplishment than English Language teachers of Hindi medium schools. Further, English Language teachers of Hindi medium schools differed significantly from English medium schools, showing that the former had burnout syndrome (high emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, followed by low personal accomplishment) as compared to the later ones. Results were interpreted in the light of existing theoretical framework and existing Indian organization culture in schools. The implications for the present research for theory and practice were also suggested.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Burnout, Stress, Teachers, English and Hindi Medium Schools, English and Hindi Language Teachers*

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been increased interest in the effects of burnout and strain in workforce in nearly every kind of human service professions, it includes teaching profession as well, where the working conditions of the school, college or university has changed to a great extent and is now significantly different from previous generations. The fit between them and their job has been disrupted (Galloway, Pankhurst and Boswell, 1986; Smith and Bourke, 1992) making them more susceptible to stress. In comparison with other professionals, teachers showed high levels of exhaustion and cynicism, the core dimensions of burnout (Maslach, Jackson and Leiter, 1996; Schaufeli and Enzmann, 1998). In many countries like US, it has been estimated that around 5 per cent to 20 per cent of teachers are burned out at any given time (Farber, 1991). Teachers in Finland have the highest burnout levels compared to workers in all other human services and white collar jobs (Kalimo and Hakanen, 2000). Further, in another study, the mean CES-D (depression scale) score of a

sample of 75 Los Angeles teachers was 15.6, i.e., a value twice the mean score obtained in community surveys (Beer and Beer, 1992) and the score is considered significant because it is associated with increased risk of depression (Schonfeld, 1990).

Teachers increasingly doubt the quality of their own functioning. The skills they have built up across a number of years appear to be declining in importance. Their existing skills are being eroded, with only ambiguity regarding the implications of a concrete change for the actual work situation to replace them. And these changes have clearly affective repercussions.

Studies shows that teachers' high burnout level inevitably affects the learning environment and interferes with the achievement of educational goals insofar as they lead to teachers' detachment, alienation, cynicism, apathy, absenteeism, irritability and ultimately the decision to leave the job (Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986; Jenkins and Calhoun, 1991; Kierstead, 1983; Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1977; Litt and Turk, 1985; Needle, Griffin, Svendsen, and Berey, 1980; Huberman, 1993). Teachers are known to continue work in spite of burnout symptoms (Dworkin, 1985; Hock, 1988) or reduced classroom management skills (Blase, 1984; Smith et al., 1992).

As burned out teachers negatively affect themselves, their students and the educational system (Hughes, 2001), it is necessary to promote the use of instruments to accurately measure teacher burnout at an earlier stage and take the timely preventive measures or strategies to reduce their burnout. Teachers are arguably the most important group of professionals for our nation's future that any opportunity to promote their physical and mental health should be seized.

### **Burnout Syndrome**

Burnout could be seen as a metaphor commonly used to describe a state or process of mental exhaustion, similar to the smothering of a fire or the extinguishing of a candle (Schaufeli and Buunk, 1996). It is defined as the loss of concern for the people with whom one is working including physical exhaustion and characterized by an emotional exhaustion in which the professional no longer has any positive feeling, patience, or respect for his/her work (Maslach and Jackson, 1977). Further, Maslach and Jackson (1982) defined burnout as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion is a depletion of one's emotional resources and the feeling that one has nothing left to give to others at a psychological level. The depersonalization phase of burnout is the development of negative and callous attitudes about the people one works with. The depersonalized perception of others can lead one to judge them as somehow deserving of their troubles. A third aspect of burnout is the perception that one's accomplishments on the job fall short of personal expectations – a perception which involves a negative self-evaluation.

### **Objective**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the core of burnout in teachers of English language in Hindi and English medium schools of public and private in relation to the teachers throughout educational background up to Intermediate/12<sup>th</sup> (Hindi/English). Better understanding of the factors related to the burnout will not only help the English teachers cope with their stress, but also make them more efficient in creating work-life balance in their lives. Based on Jackson, Schwab and Schuler's (1986) work, such feelings culminate in strong negative feelings towards teaching, such as discouragement and frustration from teaching which may result in a desire to relinquish teaching. It seems to be one of the promising areas of research that has potential for providing answers or shedding some light on the enigma.

## Method

**Sample:** The sample of the present study comprised of 240 teachers. On the random basis 50 schools were chosen from the four blocks of Gautam Buddha Nagar, India. The teachers were taken from both public and private schools making each group of 120. Among each group, 60 teachers respectively, of English medium and Hindi medium schools were taken. Overall, burnout was examined in the three groups, i.e. type of schools (public and private), medium of schools (English and Hindi medium); and 30 teachers from each group whose education up to 12<sup>th</sup>/Intermediate (English and Hindi medium) were taken.

## Tool Used in the Study

Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) developed by Maslach, Jackson and Leiter (1996) was used to assess the burnout among teachers. It measures three aspects of burnout syndrome (a separate subscale measures each aspect):

- **Emotional Exhaustion** – A reduction in emotional resources, feeling drained and used up. The emotional exhaustion subscale assesses feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work.
- **Depersonalization** – The increase of negative, cynical and insensitive attitudes towards work, colleagues, clients and/or patients. The depersonalization subscale measures an unfeeling and impersonal response towards recipients of one's service, care, treatment or instruction.
- **Personal Accomplishment** – A feeling of being unable to meet other's needs and to satisfy the essential elements of job performance. The personal accomplishment subscale assesses feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work with people.

A high degree of burnout is reflected in the high scores on the Emotional Exhaustion (EE) and Depersonalization (DP) subscales and in low scores on the Personal Accomplishment (PA) subscale. An average degree of burnout is reflected in average scores on the three subscales. A low degree of burnout is reflected in lower scores on the Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization subscales and in high scores on the Personal Accomplishments subscale. The reliability coefficients for the subscales were as follows: Emotional Exhaustion 0.90; Depersonalization 0.79; Personal Accomplishment 0.71.

## RESULTS

For the burnout dimensions of all the groups mean and mean of means was calculated. Three way analyses of variance on the three dimensions of burnout i.e. emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment were taken out to account for the differences between the groups. Three way and two way interactional analyses were performed, but since they did not come out to be significant hence were not mentioned. Therefore, only significant findings have been discussed in the present study. Statistical analyses were carried out in SPSS version 18.0.

The summary of ANOVA has been reported in Table 2. In the dimension of emotional exhaustion obtained F-values for the main effect of types of school, medium of schools and throughout the medium of education of teachers, were found significant ( $F = 12.48, 17.66$  and  $30.25$ , respectively;  $p < 0.01$ ), which indicate that all the three factors bring differences in emotional exhaustion to a very large extent. Teachers of private schools demonstrated high emotional exhaustion as compared to the teachers of public schools. English language teachers of Hindi medium schools had higher

emotional exhaustion than English medium schools. Further, teachers whose throughout education (up to 12<sup>th</sup>/Intermediate) was in Hindi medium showed higher emotional exhaustion as compared to the throughout education in English medium. In case of depersonalization, F-values computed for the main effects of types of school, medium of education in schools, and teacher's throughout education up to 12<sup>th</sup>/Intermediate were found significant ( $F = 6.12, 11.07$  and  $24.25$ , respectively;  $p < 0.01$ ), which indicated that teachers of private schools demonstrated high depersonalization as compared to the teachers of public schools. English language teachers of Hindi medium schools had more depersonalization than English medium schools. The teacher's whose throughout education up to 12<sup>th</sup>/Intermediate in Hindi medium depicted higher depersonalization as compared to their education in English medium. Further, in the dimension of personal accomplishment obtained F values for the main effects of types of school, grade of teachers, and marital status were found significant ( $F = 9.58, 6.83$  and  $24.44$ , respectively;  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that English Language teachers of public schools had high personal accomplishment than the private school teachers. English Language teachers and teachers whose throughout education (up to 12<sup>th</sup>/Intermediate) was in Hindi medium had higher inclination towards personal accomplishment as compared to their counterpart i.e. the teachers whose throughout education (up to 12<sup>th</sup>/Intermediate) was in English medium.

## DISCUSSIONS

The results of burnouts were analyzed on the basis of its three dimensions i.e. emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment. Findings indicate that teachers of private schools had higher degree of burnout than teachers of public schools. The obtained results could be due to the existing differences between the public and private school systems, service conditions, school culture, etc. The public schools are the Indian government institution where once the recruitment has been made; there is little likelihood of dismissal of teachers; whereas in private schools mostly teachers are hired on yearly contract basis. These schools demand more credentials along with high performance levels from the teachers. The job insecurity and job demands are the potential factors which make the teachers of private schools stressful. Moreover, teachers in private schools, mostly find themselves constant 'chasing their tail' - juggling tasks and following up. So teachers who have to chase their tail, cope with the demands and pressure of changing needs, deal with a fast moving and changing environment, adopt new standards and qualifications, can easily find themselves in stressful situations.

Another problem of role conflict and role ambiguity can also be seen in teachers of private schools. Many teachers reported a sense of role conflict when inappropriate, incompatible and inconsistent demands are placed on them. When teachers cannot reconcile inconsistencies between these sets of expected role behaviors, they experience conflict. First of all, In private schools, they are expected to provide quality education for their students while they do not have at their disposal the best teaching materials. Secondly, they are held responsible for handling the discipline problems in their classes while they are not given the authority to do so. It bears evidence from the studies that role ambiguity has generally been reported as an important determinant of burnout (Bacharach, Bauer and Conley, 1976; Bensky, Shaw, Gouse, Bates, Dixon, and Beane, 1980; Pettegrew and Wolf, 1982; Schwab and Iwanicki, 1982; Tosi and Tosi, 1970). At a multidimensional level, role ambiguity has been shown to influence emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment (Schwab et al., 1982). Further, Jawahar, Thomas and Jennifer (2007) examined the effect of role conflict on burnout and the Conservation of Resources theory. They found that political skill was associated with less depersonalization and feelings of reduced personal accomplishment, and moderated the role conflict and reduced personal

accomplishment relationship. Further, perceived organizational support was associated with less emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and moderated the role conflict and emotional exhaustion relationship.

The findings are in conjunction with few studies in this context. Dorman (2003) examined the predictors of burnout in a sample of teachers in Queensland private schools. Results of his study indicated that role overload in English medium private schools was a strong predictor of work pressure, which in turn predicted emotional exhaustion. Work pressure, classroom environment and self-esteem accounted for 69% of the variance in teachers' emotional exhaustion and over 46 per cent of the variance in depersonalization was attributable to school environment, classroom environment, emotional exhaustion and self-esteem. Ravichandran and Rajendran (2007) found that sex, age, educational levels, years of teaching experience and types of school, play a significant role in the perception of various sources of stress related to the teaching profession. Further, Unterbrink, Hack and Pfeifer (2007) also reported significant differences in burnout for types of school. Scheib (2003) interviewed four K-12 music teachers and found that role conflict, role overload, underutilization of skills and resource inadequacy were significant stressors. In another study, Pavlakis, Raftopoulos and Theodorou (2010) examined burnout in physiotherapist working in public and private sector. They found that total 21.1 per cent of participants met Maslach's criteria for burnout. The point prevalence of burnout was 13.8 per cent of those who worked in the public sector and 25.5 per cent of those in the private sector.

Results of burnout for different mediums of instructions in schools revealed that English Language teachers of Hindi medium schools have burnout in a greater degree than the English medium schools. It can be interpreted from the findings that Hindi medium school teachers faced various hurdles than the teachers of English medium schools. These hurdles, create problem to give the teachers their hundred percent to the students. English language teachers of Hindi medium schools consistently cited hurdles as the major stressor in their jobs, important factors include: mother tongue effect, English treated as a subject, unable to use the latest and effective method English language teaching, except English all the subjects taught to the students were in Hindi. Beside these, there are many other factors responsible for high stress in English language teachers of Hindi medium schools, for e.g., lack of English language lab, more emphasis on the subjects of core sciences, English as a language of social status, attitude towards the English language. Another major stressor for English language teachers of Hindi medium schools can be the expectation of the English teachers to teach English with Hindi as the medium of instruction in the school.

In the case of the educational background of English teachers, results indicated that the teachers' whose qualifications up to (10<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup>) are in Hindi were more prone to burnout as compared to the English Language teachers whose throughout qualification is in English.

It can be concluded that English language teachers of public school, schools having their medium of instructions is English, and, the teachers educational background up to 12<sup>th</sup>/Intermediate is English exhibited less burnout. These teachers had less burnout because of their ability to effectively and efficiently deal with various problems of students, management, the medium of instructions in the school is English, English is considered as a Language rather than a subject. On the whole, these groups of teachers had a strong feeling of being capable of attaining their goals and the attitude towards English language is normal therefore, do not easily get emotionally exhausted and depersonalized.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

The results of the present study are important for the potential they have in terms of teaching English as a

language and policy along with the teaching methodology implications, especially because some measures are easy to implement to change the conditions or behavior at work and to improve the problems identified. The English medium Private schools should also allow the teachers to conduct self initiative activities because these activities will be primarily driven by intrinsic motivation. When teachers are allowed to pick their own teaching pedagogies, should have less pressure and a strong support system, will eventually make them able to bounce back easily from stress. As the educational background of many of the English teachers is Hindi, the organization should organize time to time activities/training sessions which can help those teachers to upgrade their knowledge of teaching English as a language effectively. Apart from these facts, schools should take care of making service conditions of teachers better and stress free of job insecurity in order to instill confidence in them for their maximum output.

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**APPENDICES**

**Table 1: Mean Scores of all Three Dimension of Burnout for Different Groups**

Dimensions	Groups	Public		Mean of Means	Private		Mean of Means	Mean of Means
		English Medium Teachers	Hindi Medium Teachers		English Medium Teachers	Hindi Medium Teachers		
Emotional Exhaustion	English Educational Background	17.83	21.67	19.75	18.73	25.63	22.18	20.97
	Hindi Educational Background	22.57	26.80	24.68	28.03	34.43	31.23	27.96
	Mean Means of	20.20	24.23	22.22	23.38	30.03	26.71	
	Mean Means of	English Medium Teachers: 21.79			Hindi Medium Teachers: 27.13			
Depersonali-zation	English Educational Background	9.53	10.17	9.85	10.60	12.50	11.55	10.70
	Hindi Educational Background	11.57	14.60	13.08	13.10	15.87	14.48	13.78
	Mean Means of	10.55	12.38	11.47	11.85	14.18	13.02	
	Mean Means of	English Medium Teachers: 11.20			Hindi Medium Teachers: 13.28			
Personal Accomplish-ment	English Educational Background	39.30	37.10	38.20	36.87	35.93	36.40	37.30
	Hindi Educational Background	36.13	33.33	34.73	32.70	29.20	30.95	32.84
	Mean Means of	37.72	35.22	36.47	34.78	32.57	33.67	
	Mean Means of	English Medium Teachers: 36.25			Hindi Medium Teachers: 33.89			

**Table 2: Summary of ANOVA of all Dimensions of Burnout**

Dimensions	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F - Value
Emotional Exhaustion	Types of School (A)	1210.5	1	1210.5	12.48**
	Medium of Instruction (B)	1712	1	1712	17.66**
	Educational background of Teachers (C)	2933	1	2933	30.25**
Depersonalization	Types of School (A)	144.15	1	144.15	6.12**
	Medium of Instruction (B)	260.41	1	260.41	11.07**
	Educational background of Teachers (C)	570.41	1	570.41	24.25**
Personal Accomplishment	Types of School (A)	467.6	1	467.6	9.58**
	Medium of Instruction (B)	333.7	1	333.7	6.83**
	Educational background of Teachers (C)	1192.6	1	1192.6	24.44**

p<0.01

