



Burnout in Academia: Understanding Burnout Impact on Female Teachers' Professional Performance in Higher Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT

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The study's main objective was to explore the relationship between the burnout and performance of female teachers in Higher Education Institutions. The study employed a correlational research approach. The population consisted of a total of 197 female teachers from the Public Sector Women Universities in Punjab, Pakistan. A sample of 101 female teachers was selected through a convenient sampling technique. The collected data was analyzed employing inferential statistics, including Pearson correlation and regression analysis. The study revealed a significant correlation between high levels of burnout and various aspects of professional performance effecting their productivity of the teachers in academic settings. The study recommended that there is a need for targeted interventions to include wellness programs and promoting a culture of work-life balance within educational institutions to address burnout and improve the performance of female teachers in higher education institutions.

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1. Introduction

Burnout is a form of chronic stress that results in a lack of personal accomplishment, depersonalization, and emotional tiredness. It is one of the most common negative repercussions of professional stress, and its impact on a person's well-being is exponential (Yusoff & Khan, 2013). According to Wentzel (2010), apprehensive teachers are unable to form suitable relationships with their pupils, resulting in a detrimental effect on student involvement and enjoyment. Moreover, Parveen (2009) emphasizes that job stress not only presents a substantial threat to personal well-being but also places a burden on society and similarly diminishes productivity. Particularly in educational cultures where stress persists, a decrease in employee health and productivity is evident. Furthermore, Suleman, Hussain, Shehzad, Syed, and Raja (2018) provide additional details on how a demanding work environment hinders individuals' ability to successfully cope with stress, resulting in fatigue and subsequent psychological and physical consequences. This cycle sustains a harmful effect on both personal welfare and overall efficiency. Moreover, Parveen (2009) emphasizes that job stress not only presents a substantial threat to personal well-being but also places a burden on society and similarly diminishes productivity. Particularly in educational cultures where stress persists, a decrease in employee health and productivity is evident. Furthermore, Suleman et al. (2018) provide additional details on how a demanding work environment hinders individuals' ability to successfully cope with stress, resulting in fatigue and subsequent psychological and physical consequences. This cycle sustains a harmful effect on both personal welfare and overall efficiency.

The teaching profession is significant because it directly impacts children's growth and plays a critical role in the nation's development (Siddiqui & Soomro, 2019). Therefore, teachers need to maintain both their mental and physical well-being to properly carry out their job tasks,

as their performance is of utmost importance in the field of education (Suleman et al., 2018). However, the use of positive appraisal strategies is advantageous in assisting teachers in reducing both physical and emotional weariness while also promoting a stronger sense of personal accomplishment at the workplace (Selvam & Chamundeswari, 2015). The positive behaviors demonstrated by teachers have a crucial impact on improving performance and fostering motivated, enthusiastic, and self-assured students who are prepared to confront problems (Khurshid, Butt, & Malik, 2011). In contrast, teachers who experience high levels of stress can have a detrimental effect on pupils, their well-being, and the overall academic achievement of an educational institution (Thangjam, Laishram, Syiem, & Akoijam). Furthermore, researchers investigated the adverse effects of teachers' stress on their degrees of perfectionism and weariness. Mohamad Sabri, Dahlan, Thurasamy, and Daud (2021) conducted a study in Iran to establish a connection between perfectionism and its critical role in causing educator exhaustion. Perfectionism is commonly characterized by the desire to achieve high goals and very high-performance standards, along with a tendency to continuously evaluate one's behavior and effectiveness. Teaching's social requirements may necessitate specific personality traits that are essential for successful social interactions. For example, low scores in neuroticism or restated information indicate higher levels of extraversion and agreeableness. Therefore, educators who display low neuroticism or high extraversion and agreeableness are likely to experience reduced levels of burnout. In contrast, instructors who have lower scores in these personality characteristics may experience higher levels of burnout, which could result in stronger associations between these traits and burnout specifically within the teaching profession as opposed to other occupations (Alarcon, Eschleman, & Bowling, 2009).

Furthermore, to tackle these problems, it is crucial to implement efficient stress management techniques and establish support structures in the workplace. This will help create a healthier and more productive environment for both educators and learners. Teachers need to possess the necessary abilities to properly handle and adjust to stressful situations they encounter (Mohamad Sabri et al., 2021). Recent research studies have revealed that the academic sphere has become increasingly demanding for professionals, particularly for instructors in higher education (Foy, Dwyer, Nafarrete, Hammoud, & Rockett, 2019). Multiple research endeavors have indicated that working stress is the primary factor leading to high rates of employee turnover and burnout among researchers in higher education. Recent research indicates that the complex nature of university professors' roles has led to significant changes in their duties. Furthermore, in Pakistan, universities play a critical strategic role. The universities can broaden their educational curricula by including modules that specifically focus on developing skills and strategies for managing interpersonal situations in the workplace. A burned-out employee is more prone to withdraw emotionally from their job responsibilities. Burnout symptoms include emotional depletion and apathy, physical exhaustion, a loss of vitality, psychosomatic sickness, increased alcohol and drug usage, cynicism, inappropriate aggression, melancholy, and a lack of personal accomplishments. Teachers are now being reported to experience burnout symptoms, which are affecting their ability to teach, either directly or indirectly. Motivated by these factors, the researchers sought to explore burnout in secondary school teachers and establish its prevalence among Indian educators. With a rising number of women in the workforce, it is vital to understand how emotions interact with work and family responsibilities to improve their well-being. This study looks at the link between female teachers' burnout levels and professional performance in public sector women's universities.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the relationship between burnout levels and the performance of female teachers in public sector universities.
2. To examine the correlation between various factors causing burnout among the female teachers in public sector universities.

2. Literature Review

Among the many symptoms of burnout, many teachers report extreme irritability, decreased concentration, and anxiety Leah (2024) as their primary indicators. In addition, they could have trouble focusing, which makes it harder for them to prepare and carry out lessons. When interacting with parents or students, some may also come out as cynical or snarky. Although burnout symptoms can differ, there is no easy way to treat the emotional and physical toll that it takes. Furthermore, teachers could benefit from learning stress management techniques to lessen the likelihood of burnout and its symptoms (Zhao & Ding, 2019). According

to Khan (2019), university professors are more likely to experience burnout if they are working in an unsupportive or otherwise unpleasant work environment. They also found that job instability plays a significant role in this problem individuals' performance is negatively impacted by both physical and mental health difficulties. Similarly, Work satisfaction, organizational commitment, and plans to quit job were also negatively impacted by professors' high levels of stress and burnout. In addition, the term burnout is emphasized as a warning that something is about to go out if it does not receive enough resources (Schaufeli, Leiter, & Maslach, 2009).

Moreover, Medvedev and Landhuis (2018), described the phrase "well-being" encompasses not just the physical but also the psychological, social, emotional, and spiritual components of a person's daily existence. In view of to Diener, Sandvik, and Pavot (2009) positive feelings and contentment of a person has a significant impact on their overall wellbeing and professional lives. Likewise, Emotional states that include assessing life's occurrences are known as "well-being" (Sirgy, 2012). In addition, Javadi and Khatib (2013) highlighted that burnout is not limited to a small set of predetermined factors.. Further, there are a lot of causes for the tendency to feel emotionally drained and emotionally distant. Reduced academic performance, poor health, and depression are just a few of the negative outcomes that have been associated with burnout (Sabagh, Hall, & Saroyan, 2018). Consequently, anxiety and depression are both linked to burnout. Furthermore, Koutsimani, Montgomery, and Georganta (2019) did significant research and meta-analysis, demonstrating that burnout and depression, as well as burnout and anxiety, are powerful and different entities that have few characteristics, are interrelated, and can develop concurrently. Thus, burnout is linked to both despair and anxiety. Additionally, Gardazi, Mobeen, and Ali Gardazi (2016) investigated the impact of emotional control in minimizing burnout in female teachers in context of Pakistan . The researchers discovered that having strong emotional management abilities is connected with less burnout and improved work performance. Similarly, Martinez and Davis (2024) investigated ways to avoid burnout in female instructors. Their findings supported the efficacy of professional development programs that focused on stress management and resilience training. These strategies have been found to enhance teacher well-being and performance in the classroom.

3. Material and Methods

The study aimed to investigate various aspects of burnout that female instructors encounter in higher education settings. A correlational research design was employed to achieve the study's objectives. The population represented a total of (197) one hundred and ninety-seven female teachers from the Public Sector Women Universities of Punjab, Pakistan. Researchers selected a representative sample of participants (101) female teachers through convenient sampling techniques from the three public sector universities: The Women University Multan, The Government Sadiq Women University Bahawalpur, and The Government College Women University Faisalabad. A review of related literature helped develop the inventory, which served as the primary data collection instrument to gain insight into the exhaustion experiences of female instructors. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, each containing thirty-two items that assessed burnout among female teachers based on various factors. The first section of the questionnaire focused on the demographics of the participants, while the second section addressed various burnout factors, categorizing them into five dimensions: seven items for emotional fatigue, seven for lack of social support, seven for workload and responsibilities, five for work-life balance, and six for poor workplace communication. There were five potential responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree on a five-point Likert scale for each factor in the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha ensured the questionnaire's reliability, recording an acceptable 0.88. Secondly, another section of the questionnaire, consisting of 18 statements, was designed to assess the professional performance of the teachers. The researchers conducted a pilot study to confirm the reliability of the research instruments. The validity of the research tool was enhanced by incorporating suggestions from educational experts. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for second questionnaire was found to be 0.854, indicating the strong reliability of the instrument. The ethical guidelines were properly adhered to throughout the research process.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

In the current investigation, by using the inferential statics, correlation coefficient, and regression model all of the data gathered from the female instructors was analyzed by using version 25 of the Statistical Software for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

4.1. Pearson Correlation Results

The correlation Table 4.1 indicates the relationships among various factors: Emotional exhaustion correlates positively with Burnout ($r = 0.497, p < 0.01$) and moderately with Workload and responsibilities ($r = 0.273, p < 0.01$). Burnout strongly correlates with Workload and responsibilities ($r = 0.568, p < 0.01$) and Work-life balance ($r = 0.392, p < 0.01$). Workload and responsibilities show a strong correlation with Work-life balance ($r = 0.470, p < 0.01$) and a very strong correlation with the Effects of burnout on teachers' performance ($r = 0.877, p < 0.01$).

Table 1: Correlation Matrix of Burnout and Professional Performance

		Emotional Exhaustion	Lack of Social Support	Workload and responsibilities	Work-life balance	Poor Communication at Workplace	Effects of burnout on teachers' Performance
1. Emotional exhaustion	Pearson Correlation	1	.497**	.273**	.178*	.249**	.244**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.024	.001	.002
	N	101	101	110	101	101	101
2. Lack of Social Support	Pearson Correlation	.497**	1	.568**	.392**	.440**	.414**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101
3. Workload and responsibilities	Pearson Correlation	.273**	.568**	1	.470**	.606**	.877**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101
4. Work-life balance	Pearson Correlation	.178*	.392**	.470*	1	.548**	.658**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.024	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	160	160	160	160	160	160
5. Poor Communication at Workplace	Pearson Correlation	.249**	.440**	.606**	.548**	1	.558**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101
6. Effects of burnout on teachers' performance	Pearson Correlation	.244**	.414**	.877**	.658**	.558**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	101	101	101	101	101	101

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Work-life balance also correlates strongly with the Support system ($r = 0.548, p < 0.01$) and Effects of burnout on teachers' performance ($r = 0.658, p < 0.01$). The findings demonstrate significant positive correlations among emotional exhaustion, burnout, workload, work-life balance, support system, and effects of burnout on teachers' performance ($p < 0.01$), indicating interconnections between these variables. Weaker but still significant positive correlations were also observed at the 0.05 level. In the academic environment, emotional exhaustion is source of burnout among female teachers due to tough duties and assignments, according to one of the findings of this study. Similarly, the study results are consistent with Gul, Zakir, Ali, Karim, and Hussain (2021) in which it was that found that university teachers have a lot of liabilities already and that adding administrative duties, managing research, supervising research scholars, departmental tasks, attending meetings, and teaching classes with students just adds stress to the job. Moreover, according to study results, it was observed that there is strong relationship between the burnout levels and job performance of the teachers. Likewise, the revealed results are in line with the findings of Awang, Mohamed, Ahmad, and Mohd Nasir (2021), in which it was found that burnout and stress is positively linked with the job performance of the teachers. The fact that teachers are not contented with their present work-life balance and it is positively associated with the burnout among teachers is another finding of this study. The study results correspond to, Shah Bukhari, Said, Gul, and Ibna Seraj (2022) in which it was that observed that teachers do not feel contented in their professional life due to lack of balance in their personal and professional life.

Table 2: Regression Analysis

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.720 ^a	.519	.516	2.05439

a. Predictors: (Constant), independent V

The model summary given in Table 2 indicates that the predictor variable (independent V) accounts for the variance in the dependent variable, with an (R-squared = .519). The findings indicate a moderately positive association. (R = 0.720) between the constant and an independent variable, explaining 51.9% of the dependent variable's variance.

Table 3: Regression Coefficients

Coefficients		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-3.418	1.058		-3.231	.002
	independent V	.191	.015	.720	13.058	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Effects of burnout teachers' performance

The regression analysis portrayed in Table 3 shows that both the constant term and the independent variable denoted as "independent V," significantly contribute to explain. The coefficient for the independent variable indicates that for each unit increase in "independent V," there is an expected increase of approximately 0.191 units in the effects of burnout on teachers' performance. The t-value (13.058) and p-value ($p < 0.001$) indicate a statistically significant correlation. The coefficients indicate that the independent variable has a significant positive impact (Beta = 0.720, $p < .001$) on the effects of burnout on teachers' performance. The constant term is also significant ($p = .002$), suggesting a baseline effect on the dependent variable.

5. Conclusions

Two primary goals were being pursued in this study: first, to determine the extent to investigate potential sources of burnout, including factors related to workload, organizational culture, and individual traits. Secondly to examine the relationship between professional performance metrics and burnout trends among the teachers over time. There seems to be a range of opinions on the usefulness of the suggested tools or resources for reducing workload since different people have different reactions to them. On the other hand, perceptions and experiences shape how one recognizes the many tasks that add up to one's burden and obligations. Respondents' various degrees of agreement and varied experiences within the group under consideration reveal that respondents' capacity to detach from work during personal time also differs. The responses show varying degrees of burnout experiences among the teachers which must be addressed by the Higher Education Institutions to create a safe and productive academic environment for teachers to maximize their productivity in the teaching profession.

5.1. Recommendations

It is recommended to;

- Ensure that instructors get stress and coping skills to strengthen their professional resilience.
- Review and adjust female teachers' responsibilities to ensure they are suitable. Consider reducing administrative obligations or providing additional assistance during challenging periods.
- Create an environment of support for female educators to reduce their emotional exhaustion at the workplaces.

5.2. Practical Implications

The followings are practical implications based on the study's findings:

- Administrators must be trained to recognize when teachers are in stress or overwhelmed to offer genuine support. Leaders should be accessible while encouraging instructors to express their concerns without fear.
- Create an opportunity for teachers to remain anonymous in voicing their opinions and concerns. This fosters an appropriate environment for honest feedback, which can then be used to create significant change.
- Encourage policies that help teachers determine a healthy balance between work and personal life. This includes establishing realistic expectations for after-hours work, encouraging leave, and respecting the teachers' personal time.

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