

# Personality Factors and Burnout of Teachers in Terms of Biological Factors

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**Abstract:** *In comparison to different occupations teaching has been characterised as an extremely stressful profession. Burnout among school teacher is one of the biggest issues which need attention. Most teachers are exposed to prolonged stress which eventually culminates into burnout. As a result previously committed teachers are become detached from their job or continue with the job mechanically. The study is an attempt to empirically investigate the relationship among dimensions of burnout and big five personality factors. Moreover the study examines whether there is difference between big five personality factors and burnout of teachers in terms of biological factors. Females reported higher level of emotional exhaustion than male teachers. Moreover there exists significant difference in distribution of Extraversion, Agreeableness and Openness among school teachers across sex. Female teacher reported more open and extrovert than their male counterparts. No significant difference in burnout and its subscales due to age was found.*

**Keywords:** Big Five Personality Factors, Burnout, School Teachers

## 1. Introduction

Teacher is very important for each who contributes to natural and harmonious development of man's innate power and brings about complete development of individual. However, the entire edifice of education is shaky if the teacher is weak and ineffective. An effective teacher is amongst the foremost factor contributing to educational improvement. After independence millions of rupees have been spent to open new schools, provide them with adequate equipment and facilities, to bring quality improvement in education and to devised better techniques of teacher and means assessing student's achievement but all this is of no use unless schools are facilitated with efficient teacher. Academicians, administrators, parents, community and student's community complain of teacher's lethargy and apathy and indifference as the main cause for deteriorating standards in education. All these negative terms are used to refer to the lack of interest and enthusiasm of teacher in performance of their duty. In comparison to different occupations, teaching has been characterised as an extremely stressful profession and their issues need to be addressed. Burnout among teachers is one of the biggest issues which need attention. Apart from the normal classroom teaching, teachers had a number of remedial lessons to attend to, larger classes to handle, and a lot of paper work (i.e. mid-day-meal) to do. All these factors are contributing in burnout among teachers. The signs of teacher burnout include illness, impatience, absenteeism, a lack of commitment and poor job performance. Most teachers are exposed to prolonged stress which eventually culminates into burnout. As a result previously committed teachers become detached from their job or continue with the job mechanically. Thus it is easy to understand why burnout among teachers continues to be an enduring research issue.

Personality type impacts so much of who an individual is and how he/she relates to various life situations and events. Because of the existing teacher shortage in India,

administrators and policy makers need to understand the factors that contribute to burnout. Stressors that contribute to burnout in teaching include emotional exhaustion, a lack of professional guidance and peer support, student misbehaviour, a lack of autonomy, the feeling of isolation and additional trials such as the stress of trying to balance home and work. Research suggests that some personality types may be more resilient to these stressors than others. This study is a fresh attempt to investigate the school teachers' burnout in relation to their personality type and biological factors.

## 2. Review of Related Literature

The term "burnout" was first used by Freudenberger to explain the phenomena of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion. 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 Bunnk, 1986). Probably the most frequently cited definition of burnout comes from Maslach and Jackson (1986): "burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do 'people work' of some kind." Maslach and Schaufeli (1993) claim that the persons inability to adopt to his or her environment due to chronic stress, which exceeds his or her limits, leads to a burnout. This can be an emotional condition which is caused by a long period of anxiety and similar emotional conditions.

After about 35 years of studies on burnout, the studies focused their attention on two opposite domains: there are researchers who focused their attention on environment correlates that cause an exhaustion of an individual's energies or emotional resources (Pines, 1993; Cordes And Dougherty 1993; Halbeslebel And Bukley, 2004) other researchers, on the contrary focused their studies on the intrinsic characteristics of workers (Piedmont, 1993;

Schaufeli and Enzmann, 1988; Erikson, Norberg and Standberg, 2009; Kizilci, Erdogan and Sozen, 2012).

Research into educators burnout and stress, by Kyriacou and Satcliffe (1977-1979) come to the conclusion that, for environmental factors bring about burnout a) children's restless and mischievous behaviour, b) their reluctance to learn, c) bad working conditions, d) pressure to fulfil school syllabus. Kremer-Mayon and Kurch (1985) who support the view that the school environment does play an important part when it comes to burnout they also refer to the factors of personal qualities, supporting the fact that they help bring burnout to the surface.

Maslach and Jackson (1986) have concluded that role conflict and unfavourable partners can follow emotional burnout and result in depersonalisation.

Friedman (1991) has demonstrated environmental factors could also contribute to teacher burnout. He found that organisational climate lead to teacher burnout. Finally personal factors contribute to burnout. Gender and age were found to be significant predictors of burnout (Huberman, 1993).

In researches and theoretical models related to burnout, there has been much about importance of personality traits in dealing with the personal, organisational, and social problem. The kind of personality types determines the mental abilities output and makes the describing of human behaviour possible in life situations.

Mills and Huebner (1998) have shown that neuroticism and introversion correlated with the three dimensions of burnout in a sample of school psychologists. In addition, emotional exhaustion was associated with conscientiousness and agreeableness; depersonalization was associated with agreeableness; and personal accomplishment with conscientiousness.

Individuals low in extraversion 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. Indeed, there is research suggesting that workers higher in positive affectivity (a component of extraversion) experience less burnout (Iverson, Oleklans, & Erwin, 1998). Wright and Cropanzano (1998) found that employees higher in negative affect (neuroticism) report more feelings of emotional exhaustion, a finding that also holds true in the case of depersonalization (Iverson et al., 1998).

Sadeghi (2015) in his study on 327 teachers found the relationship between realist investigative and conventional personality types with burnout was significant and reversed. He also stated the degree of burnout in male teachers was more than females.

Goswami (2013) in her study reported a significant relationship between burnout areas of emotional exhaustion with age and areas of work. Furthermore she also confirmed depersonalisation of burnout dimension has high significant relationships with area of work.

Gale and Gilvert (2013) stated neuroticism related to emotional exhaustion, agreeableness and conscientiousness to personal accomplishment.

Komol Nagar (2012) found female teachers experience a high degree of burnout while Chenevy, Ewing and Whittington (2012) found no significant relationship between demographic characteristics and burnout or between organisational factors and burnout.

### Objectives

The main objectives of the study were-

- 1) To measure the level of burnout among school teachers.
- 2) To measure the level of burnout of the school teachers in relation to biological factors.

### Significance

- Teacher's personality has an immense impact on the students. Mental health of teachers plays a very important role. This study may help us to find out the causes of burnout and the personality types who are prone to it.
- If some personality traits are found to be contributing factors for burnout in teacher further steps may be taken for not recruiting such teachers or trying to overcome their hurdles through counselling.

### Hypothesis

H01: There is no significant difference in burnout due to age of the teacher.

H02: There is no significant difference in burnout due to sex of the teacher.

H0 3: There is no significant difference in distribution of personality factors across sex of the teacher.

### Operational Definitions

Burnout: "Burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do 'people work' of some kind." Maslach and Jackson, (1986).

The three dimensions entail the following (Maslach, 1982 Maslach and Jackson 1986):

**Emotional exhaustion** is believed to be at the core of burnout. Individuals experiencing emotional exhaustion in their jobs report overwhelming feelings of emotional strain, as well as feelings of being drained and used up, irritability and frustration.

**Depersonalisation** refers to the development of negative, impersonal and cynical attitudes and feelings about recipients in which the employee treats others like objects.

**Reduced personal accomplishment** is the tendency to evaluate oneself negatively, particularly with regard to one's work with clients.

Much of the research on personality has been based on the Big Five Factor Model, which organises personality traits under five broad dimensions. According to the BFFM personality consists out of the following traits (McCrae and Costa, 1987):

- 1) **Neuroticism.** Individual's measuring high on Neuroticism are characterised by a tendency to experience negative emotions such as anxiety, depression

or sadness, hostility and self-consciousness, as well as a tendency to be impulsive.

- 2) **Extraversion.** Those high in extraversion tend to experience positive emotions and to be warm, gregarious, fun-loving and assertive.
- 3) **Openness to experience.** People high in openness to experience are inclined to be curious, imaginative, empathetic, creative original, artistic, psychologically minded, and aesthetically responsive and flexible.
- 4) **Agreeableness.** Agreeableness reflects a proclivity to be good natured, acquiescent, courteous, helpful, flexible, co-operative, tolerant, forgiving, soft hearted and trusting.
- 5) **Conscientiousness.** Those high on conscientiousness have a tendency to be habitually careful, reliable, hardworking, well organised and purposeful.

**Population**

All government and government aided upper primary, high school teachers are the total research population.

**Sampling Technique and sample**

Purposive sampling technique has been used for this study. A total of 146 subjects responded in which 39 subjects had more than 10% incomplete answers on their questionnaire. Therefore those 39 subjects were excluded from the study. 100 subjects have been chosen for the study from 107 subjects who responded all the test items properly.

**Research Instrument**

**Instrument to Measure Burnout**

To measure the burnout level of school teachers a self-developed test has been used by the researcher. The scale contains 34 items that fall on three subscales Emotional Exhaustion (12 items), Depersonalisation (11 items), and reduced personal accomplishment (11 items). Participants rate how frequently they experience these feeling on a 5-point scale, ranging from “never” to “always”. The content validity of the test has ensured by seeking the opinions of three experts in education. The inter-rater reliability test value is 0.841. The reliability of the tool was found .897 by using cronbach’s alpha.

**Instrument to measure Big Five Personality Factors**

The Big Five Personality factors were measured by adopted and modified version of The Big Five Personality Inventory ( BFPI-SAKA) by Dr. Arun Kumar sing and Dr. Ashok Kumar. The original version was in Hindi and it consisted total 180 items. The researcher for this study have translated the items into Bengali and modified it by dropping total number of items into 95 proportionately. All these items were properly edited in the light of suggestions of 3 experts who were university professors of education. After modifying the researcher have ensured the reliability .820 by using cronbach’s alpha. The researcher has secured the content validity by 3 experts checking. The inter rater reliability test value is .850.

**General Information Schedule (GIS)**

Participants were asked to indicate their sex, age, educational qualification, marital status, training status,

period of service, locality o school, type of school etc. for this study.

**Statistical technique used for the study**

By utilising SPSS Mann Whitney U test and Kruskals Wallis test were performed to compare each of the big five personality factors to each of the burnout subscales (EE, D, RPA) in relation to biological factors (age and sex).

**3. Findings**

**Categorisation of Burnout Scores**

Burnout	Low	Medium	High
BU_D	<18	18-26	>26
BU_EE	<21	21-31	>31
BU_RPA	<22	22-29	>29
BU_TOTAL	<64	64-84	>84

Burnout is conceptualised as a continuous variable, ranging from low to moderate to high degrees of feelings experienced. A high degree of burnout is reflected in high scores on Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalisation and Reduced Personal Accomplishment. Of the respondents 54% scored in the medium and 25% scored in high degree of Burnout and only 21% respondents scored in low levels of Burnout. That reveals majority of teachers are in Burnout condition.

**Frequency distribution of participants by Burnout areas and levels**

Burnout	Low%	Medium %	High %
BU_D	11	51	38
BU_EE	18	54	28
BU_RPA	22	57	21
BU_TOTAL	21	54	25

**Descriptive Statistics of Burnout Areas**

	Mean	S.D	Skewness	Kurtosis
BU_D	23.00	5.087	0.545	-0.553
BU_EE	26.04	6.292	0.371	-0.307
BU_RPA	25.50	5.290	-0.018	-0.257
BU_TOTAL	74.54	13.841	0.480	-0.3299

H01: There is no significant difference in burnout due to age of the teacher.

**Descriptive Statistics of Age by Burnout Areas**

BURN OUT	25-35 (YEAR)		35-45 (YEAR)		45-55 (YEAR)	
	MEAN	S.D	MEAN	S.D	MEAN	S.D
BU_EE	26.16	6.52	26	6.27	25.33	5.50
BU_D	22.16	4.77	23.43	5.22	24.67	6.50
BU_RPA	25.35	4.77	25.60	5.53	25.33	8.32
BU_TOTAL	73.68	13.50	75.03	14.02	75.33	19.39

As the distribution is not normal Independent samples Kruskal Wallis Test was performed to determine if a relationship existed between age and the three burnout subscale scores. From result it can be stated that there is no significant difference in total burnout and burnout subscales (BU\_D, BU\_EE, BU\_RPA) across age groups.

**Hypothesis Test Summary**

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of BU_D is the same across categories of AGE.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.383	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of BU_EE is the same across categories of AGE.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.988	Retain the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of BU_RPA is the same across categories of AGE.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.967	Retain the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of TOTAL_BU is the same across categories of AGE.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.912	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no significant difference in burnout due to sex of the teacher.

H<sub>0</sub>3: There is no significant difference in distribution of personality factors across sex of the teacher.

**Descriptive Statistics of Sex by Burnout Areas**

Burnout	Mean		S.D	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
BU_D	23.83	22.55	5.90	4.57
BU_EE	28.37	24.78	6.25	5.90
BU_RPA	25.80	25.34	5.90	4.90
BU_TOTAL	78.00	72.68	15.14	12.82

Independent samples Mann Whitney U Test was performed to determine if a relationship existed between sex and the three burnout subscale scores and the big five personality subscale scores. From rank table it can be stated that there is significant difference in distribution of extroversion and openness across sex. Female are more extrovert and open than male. Furthermore the result revealed a significant difference between males and females in the area of emotional exhaustion (EE). The female teachers are more emotionally exhausted than the male teachers.

**Hypothesis Test Summary**

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of P_N is the same across categories of SEX.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.546	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of P_E is the same across categories of SEX.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.025	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of P_D is the same across categories of SEX.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.006	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of P_A is the same across categories of SEX.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.255	Retain the null hypothesis.
5	The distribution of P_C is the same across categories of SEX.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.072	Retain the null hypothesis.
6	The distribution of BU_D is the same across categories of SEX.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.402	Retain the null hypothesis.
7	The distribution of BU_EE is the same across categories of SEX.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.008	Reject the null hypothesis.
8	The distribution of BU_RPA is the same across categories of SEX.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.615	Retain the null hypothesis.
9	The distribution of TOTAL_BU is the same across categories of SEX.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.137	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

**Rank Table**

	SEX	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
P_E	male	35	41.70	1459.50
	female	65	55.24	3590.50
P_E	male	35	39.81	1393.50
	female	65	56.25	3656.50
BU_EE	male	35	61.04	2136.50
	female	65	44.82	2913.50

#### 4. Conclusion

The biological factors mentioned were analysed using frequency statistics to determine whether each was related to Big Five Personality Factors. Although Mc Creae and Costa (1997) found that a relationship may exist between personality factors and an individuals' cultural and biological basis. The researcher found no significant difference in distribution of personality factors across age but reported significant difference in distribution of Extroversion and Openness across sex. Female teachers were more extroverts and open than the male teachers. Past research has documented that younger teachers are more likely to evidence signs of burnout than older teachers. However Friedman's research found that burnout rises with teachers' age. This research determined that no significant difference exist in burnout and its subscales due to age.

Huberman (1993) and Abbas Sedeghi (2015) in their study reported that the degree of burnout in male teachers was more than female which is inconsistent with the current research because it reported that female teachers are more prone to burnout than male teachers confirming with the research of Komal Nagar's (2012) study on a sample of 255 teachers of Jammu university.



## 5. Limitations of the Study

The sample size of 100 teachers is relatively small and therefore the generalisation of the result would be limited. However due to time limitations it was not possible to adopt random sampling technique for the study. The researcher performed purposive sampling for collection of data.

## 6. Recommendations

It is the desire of this researcher that administrators and policy makers realise the following points to decrease the burnout levels of the school teachers.

- a) With the continual stress on teachers, administrators need to be cognizant of the negative impact of teacher burnout. Education system, ministry of national education need to be vigilant in combating the conditions that lead to teacher burnout.
- b) School system must create a better job environment that not only invite teachers but also retain them. The welfare of teachers must be a primary concern.
- c) School and education system should analyse personality types and factors in an effort to determine practices that would attract and retain teachers. Much time, effort and money should spend on programmes to mentor new teachers. Personality study should certainly be included in new teachers' orientation and mentoring programmes.
- d) Intervention programme should be prepared in co-operation with the school advisors, counsellors and executive administrators to prevent teacher burnout.
- e) Teacher should endeavour to attend stress management interventions not only for themselves but also to have self-confidence contributing to high motivation for others.

## 7. Suggestions for Further Study

In the light of the research and findings drawn from the study, following suggestions are made for further research in the field.

- a) The study was delimited to the teachers of upper primary and high schools only. This study can also be extended on the school teachers of various levels such as pre-primary, college teachers.
- b) The present research was conducted on the samples of only government school teachers. The research can be extended on the private school teachers.
- c) The present research was conducted on a smaller sample of 100 teachers from highly, N. 24 Pargana and Kolkata which is limited in size. Further research can be conducted on larger sample including teachers from other districts of West Bengal.
- d) The similar study can be conducted on different streams of teacher. i.e medical teachers, engineering teachers etc.
- e) Further study can frame a research study to know the impact of teacher burnout on the academic achievement of the student.
- f) Different psycho-social and socio-economic variables can be explored which influence teacher burnout.

There are vast areas in this field which have remained unexplored so far and any attempt to make to develop in them may be both regarding and instructive.

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