

# BURNOUT AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS TEACHING AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF PUNJAB

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## Abstract

The present study aimed to study attitude towards teaching in relation to levels of burnout among secondary school teachers. Teacher attitude Inventory (TAI) by S.P. Ahluwalia and The Maslach Burnout Inventor-Educators Survey (MBI-ED; Maslach et al. 1996) was used as research tools. A sample of 430 secondary school teachers from 32 senior secondary schools of Punjab was selected for study. On the basis of results of significant mean differences in different dimensions of attitude towards teaching across levels of burnout, it can be stated that secondary school teachers having low level of burnout have significantly higher level on attitude towards teaching (more favourable) than their counterparts teachers having high level of burnout.

## Introduction

The teacher is the important element of an educational system because the impact of the teacher on the students and educational programs is known much higher than other elements. If teachers want to be successful in this profession, they have to accept the profession unconditionally, and do it with love and passion (Cetin, 2006). The profession they choose shape individuals' lives (Bozdogan, Aydın, & Yıldırım, 2007). Emotional tendency of an individual in favor of or against any circumstances, events, objects, places or ideas can mean attitudes (Papanastasiou, 2002; Tavsancıl, 2006; Temizkan, 2008). An attitude which is developed towards a profession is the most important indicator of success in that profession (Cakır, 2005; Durmusoglu, Yanık, & Akkoyunlu, 2009). If an individual does not like his or her profession, he or she may not practice it successfully (Terzi & Tezci, 2007). Teaching requires affective competences besides knowledge and skills. Developing a positive attitude towards teaching profession affects all the factors related to the teaching (Can, 2010).

Therefore, determining the attitudes of teacher candidates towards their prospective profession and making their attitudes positive is important (Semerci & Semerci, 2004).

Nowadays, the teaching profession is considered a helping profession with a high risk of burnout (Schaufeli, Leiter, & Maslach, 2008). The principal risk factors for teachers' burnout are due to the reason that they have to cope with student learning difficulties and aggressive behaviours (Pepe & Addimando, 2013), ambiguity and conflict amongst colleagues, problematic relationships with parents (Pepe & Addimando, 2014), time pressures and large classes (Chan, 2003; Genoud, Brodard, & Reicherts, 2009). No less important are the social factors that come to bear on teachers (e.g., continual legislative changes, poor remuneration and little social recognition) (Drago, 2006).

Burnout is not a recognized clinical psychiatric or psychological disorder but there are some similar features between burnout and diagnosable conditions such as depression, anxiety disorders or mood disorders. It is also less severe, more temporary in duration, and clearly caused by situational stressors, rather than a biological mandated chemical imbalance. Its kind of like depression, non-clinical, less intense cousin that comes for a visit and leaves when you reduce the stress in your life. Burnout is known as one of the most important problems of modern times. Freudenberger (1974) defines burnout as ineffectiveness, wearing out, lack of energy and power, and an exhaustion of the inner resources of an individual due to unsatisfied needs. Maslach Burnout Model, is commonly accepted and explains burnout in three ways. According to this model, burnout has three dimensions as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). The measurement device based on this model (Maslach Burnout Inventory) is primarily administered to professionals experiencing face-to-face relationship in areas such as health, education, and social work. Brezniak and Ben-Vair (1989) proposed that burnout may be conceived as a mismatch between an individual's resources, values and expectations and the demands of the environment. The negative psychological experience that involves feelings, attitudes, expectations and motivation is expressed in terms of exhaustion and passive regressive behaviour. Wallace and Brinkerhoff (1991) viewed burnout as individual worker's inability to respond adequately to perceived demands and to their accompanying anticipation of negative consequences for such inadequate responses.

Teacher burnout affects the teacher workforce externally as well as internally (Milner, Woolfolk, 2003). Externally, the harm to the teachers is traceable and measurable through

teacher attrition and teacher shortage (Milner and Woolfolk, 2003; Smith and Ingersoll, 2004). Internally, for some teachers, who remain in the profession, fatigue may lead to ineffectiveness and burnout that inadvertently harms classrooms and the school (Oliver and Venter, 2003). Burnout has a negative effect on caring and trustworthiness of teachers and low burnout teachers are perceived as more credible than high burnout teachers (Zhang and Sapp, 2009).

Various studies have reported that teaching is a stressful occupation (Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1978; De Frank and Stroup, 1989; Borg and Riding, 1991; Boyle, Borg, Falzon and Baglioni, 1995; Griffith, Steptoe and Cropley, 1999; Kyriacou, 2001; Betoret, 2006; Kokkinos, 2007). Every new day comes with new challenges for teachers. Misbehaviours, which includes noisy behaviour, poor attitudes towards school work, impoliteness by the students (Borg, Riding and Falzon, 1991), discipline problems (McCormick, 1997) are one of the major causes of stress. Other serious stressors such as lack of motivation (Burke and Greenglass, 1993), apathy and low achievement (Byrne, 1994), McCormick, 1997) also lead to onset and increase in burnout.

Job burnout seems to be a serious problem nowadays, especially among teachers, who experience role conflicts, work load and emotionally burdening situations. The symptoms, like decreased work efficiency, low level of motivation, negative emotions, physical problems and the tendency to avoid social relationships are influencing high number of employees worldwide. Certain professionals, for example, medical staff and teachers are more affected by burnout. These occupations seem to strain employees both mentally and emotionally. Empirical evidence claims that certain job demands are likely to provoke burnout, while resources at workplace can help employees to avoid the harmful effects of mental and emotional load.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To study attitude towards teaching in relation to levels of burnout among secondary school teachers.

## **HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

1. There will be significant mean difference in different dimensions of attitude towards teaching namely teaching profession, classroom teaching, child centred practices,

educational process, teacher's self concept across levels of burnout among secondary school teachers.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design:

Descriptive method of research was followed in the conduct of study.

### Research Tools:

- 1. Teacher Attitude Inventory (TAI) by S.P. Ahluwalia, 1971:** The teacher attitude inventory consists of 90 items of which 43 are favourable and 47 unfavourable. It measures attitude of teacher towards teaching profession classroom teaching, child centred practices, educational process pupils' understanding and teacher's self concept. The teachers are to respond on the inventory for each item on a 5- point continuum ranging from "strongly disagree (0), disagree (1), uncertain (2), agree (3), and strongly agree (4)". Thus the range of scores in inventory is 0-360, with high score showing favourable attitude towards teaching.
- 2. The Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey (MBI-ED; Maslach et al., 1996)** was administered to evaluate the severity of educator burnout among participants. The 22-item scale assesses the frequency of feelings and attitudes related to burnout on a 7-point Likert scale, resulting in three different dimensions (i.e. emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment). Higher scores indicate more severe levels of burnout in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization for personal accomplishment, high subscale scores indicate high feelings of personal accomplishment. A total MBI score was obtained using a sum of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reversed scored personal accomplishment items.

### Sample of the Study:

A sample of 430 secondary school teachers from 32 senior secondary school of Punjab state (India), giving due representation to gender, location and stream was selected for study.

## Data Analysis:

Data was analyzed using Mean, SD alongwith t-ratio was used for comparing different dimensions of attitude towards teaching across levels of burnout among secondary school teachers.

## RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

The present study was aimed to study attitude towards teaching among secondary school teachers in relation to burnout. Secondary school teachers were classified in high and low level of burnout. For this purpose, upper 16% cases on burnout were treated as high levels of burnout and below 16% cases on burnout were treated as low levels of burnout (N=70). The means and SDs along with t-ratios on different dimensions of attitude towards teaching across high and low levels of burnout was given in the table below:

**Table 1**

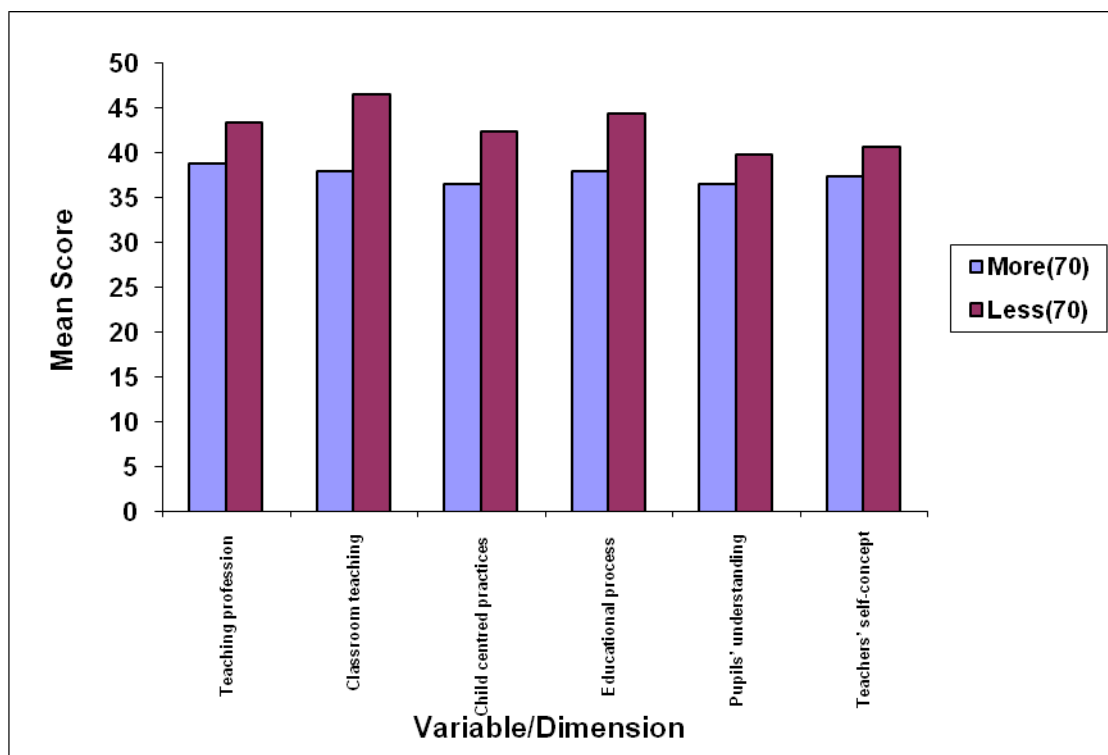
### Comparison of Attitude of Secondary School Teachers Towards Teaching across Levels of Burnout

S. No.	Variable/Dimension	Burnout				t-value
		High (70)		Low (70)		
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1	Teaching profession	38.84	6.81	43.36	7.23	4.30**
2	Classroom teaching	37.98	6.74	46.59	7.44	4.48**
3	Child centred practices	36.53	8.71	42.41	6.93	4.39**
4	Educational process	37.94	8.48	44.36	8.08	3.46**
5	Pupils' understanding	36.56	6.56	39.92	5.62	3.36**
6	Teachers' self-concept	37.39	8.11	40.69	6.33	2.77**
7	Attitude towards teaching (Total)	225.21	32.98	257.33	28.38	6.25**

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level.

The table 1 shows that mean attitude scores of secondary school teachers having high level of burnout came out to be 38.84, 37.96, 36.53, 37.94, 36.56 and 37.29 on its six dimensions, namely, teaching profession, classroom teaching, child centred practices, educational process, pupils' understanding and teachers' self-concept respectively. The

respective mean attitude scores of teachers having low levels of burnout were found to be 43.36, 46.59, 42.41, 44.36, 39.82 and 40.69.



**Figure 1: Comparison of Attitude of Secondary School Teachers Towards Teaching across Levels of Burnout**

The t-values testing the significance of mean difference between high and low levels of burnout among secondary school teachers came out to be 4.30, 4.48, 4.39, 3.46, 3.36 and 2.77 on the six dimensions of teachers attitude. These t-values were significant at 0.01 level. The table also shows that mean scores of attitude towards teaching (total) of secondary school teachers having high burnout turned out to be 225.21 with SD 32.98 where as means scores of attitude towards teaching (total) of secondary school teachers having low level of burnout is 251.33 with SD 28.38. The t-value testing the significance of mean difference between high and low levels of burnout among secondary school teachers came out to 6.25 on the total attitude towards teaching scores which is significant at 0.01 level. Thus, it may be concluded that secondary school teachers having low level of burnout have significantly higher level on attitude towards teaching their counterparts than teachers having high level of burnout.

On the basis of results of significant mean difference in different dimensions of attitude towards teaching across levels of burnout, it can be stated that burnout and attitude towards teaching are negatively related with each other. Low level of burnout is helpful in

development of favourable attitude towards teaching. Hence, the hypothesis, “There will be significant mean difference in different dimensions of attitude towards teaching namely, teaching-profession, classroom teaching, child centred practices, educational process, teachers’ self concept across levels of burnout among secondary school teachers” is accepted.

The role of teacher in today’s school education has come more critical in the wake of ‘Education for All’ to address to learning needs of new-entrants with varying levels of socio-demographic characteristics in school education. Hence the results of the study helpful for the educationists and administrators by pin-pointing towards various factors of attitude towards teaching and burnout in school education. The education administrators should establish a friendly and cooperative atmosphere in schools by providing support system to create better climate conditions which promote networks of social support within a school. Teacher education institutions should play a significant proactive role in reducing burnout by organizing various seminars, orientation programmes and through real life situations as they go to schools for their teaching practice. The teacher education system needs to give practical shape to be critical role of teacher education in the context of providing a good quality school education for all.

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