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TEACHER BURNOUT AND CONTRIBUTING FACTORS IN PAKISTAN: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP AND TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY

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Abstract
This study explores teacher burnout and the factors that cause it in public schools of Malakand Division, Pakistan, using survey research design. This study explores how teacher self-efficacy and pedagogical leadership help prevent burnout. Using a sample of 300 teachers, the data for the study were obtained by using both the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) and the Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI). It was revealed that teachers generally felt emotionally drained, showing somewhat lower levels of personal accomplishment and very little depersonalization. Teacher self-efficacy turned out to be the most important factor in reducing burnout, showing just how vital it is. Having backed up teachers by principals and an encouraging school atmosphere were found to decrease their chance of burnout. Still, despite these protections, there was a constant worry about stress from workload, meaning structural changes were still important. The authors argue that preventing burnout necessitates a balanced approach that promotes self-esteem, collaborative school administration, and positive school climates. Conventional approaches should address self-efficacy in professional development, build mentors and provide peer support, and prioritize leadership that supports teachers in their teaching tasks.

Keywords: burnout, depression, emotionally drained, pedagogical leadership. self-efficacy,

INTRODUCTION:

The profession of teaching is usually considered as one of the most stressful, with chronic stress and burnout negatively impacting educators' well-being and performance. Burnout is becoming an increasingly important issue in Pakistan's public sector schools, which face limited resources and hefty workloads. Generally, burnout refers to being emotionally exhausted, detached from those around you, and feeling your achievements are not as appreciated as they once were (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Around the world, teacher self-belief, school climate, and leadership influence the risk of teacher burnout (Gul & Ali, 2021b; Gul & Reba, 2022; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Brouwers & Tomic, 2000).

It has been found in Pakistan that teachers struggle with having too many students in a room, not enough educational supplies, and not many options for developing their teaching skills (Rehman & Khan, 2019). Additionally, education leaders help decide whether a school environment increases or decreases teacher burnout (Ahmad & Gul, 2023a). Many teachers in Malakand Division, Pakistan, deal with tough working situations that include high workloads, minimal help from the institution, and very few opportunities to develop professionally.

This may be one reason why teachers experience burnout, a situation with emotional, social, and professional consequences (Gul & Khan, 2020). In addition, if teachers believe they can handle the classroom, interact with students, and teach well, educational standards are more likely to be maintained. Yet, the influence of burnout on the self-confidence of teachers in this area is not looked at closely enough.

Although there is research worldwide about burnout's impact on teachers, we know little about how it occurs in the region of Malakand Division. The present studies do not explain what role support systems, how much work must be done, and how problems handling play in this connection (Ahmad & Gul, 2023b). As a result, there is not enough research to guide efforts towards both teachers' wellness and teaching effectiveness (Ahmad & Gul, 2023a). Because of these reasons, we must examine how pedagogical leadership, teacher self-efficacy, and burnout are linked among teachers in the Malakand Division.

Although many studies have examined teacher burnout in the West, more focus is needed on understanding it in Pakistani schools. If a teacher faces burnout, it is usually caused by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a decrease in personal achievement (Gul & Ahmad, 2022a; Gul & Ahmad, 2022b; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Experts believe that organizational factors, personal beliefs, and high job demands are among the main sources of work stress that cause burnout (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000). In Pakistan, problems such as limited resources, low pay, and a heavy workload have contributed to teacher burnout (Ayub, Gul, Ali, & Rauf, 2021; Bukhari, Gul, Bashir, Zakir, & Javed, 2021; Gul, Talat, Mumtaz, & Shaheen, 2021; Gul, Ayub, Mazhar, Uddin, & Khanum, 202; Rehman & Khan, 2019). According to Khan et al. (2020), who carried out the study, rural teachers must handle extra challenges because they are required to teach multiple grades and there is not as much community support. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic made things worse by giving frontline workers more work to do and less possibility to interact socially, so burnout became more common (Yousaf et al., 2021).

Worldwide, higher levels of teacher self-efficacy have been shown to protect teachers against burnout. High self-assurance among teachers protects them from burnout (Gul, Rabbi, Batool, Tahir, & Asif, 2024a ; Sohail, Gul, & Mushtaq, 2018; Tufail, Gul, & Ali, 2024a; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). In Pakistan, people's belief in their abilities is often lowered because there are fewer learning opportunities and schools maintain strict hierarchies (Naseem & Fatima, 2021). Leadership that boosts instruction and helps teachers has become very important. Leadership in schools that work well leads to lower levels of burnout and a rise in teacher satisfaction (Day et al., 2016). In Pakistan, educational leaders tend to focus on administration instead of helping teachers, which reduces their ability to address teacher burnout (Gul & Dogar, 2021; Gul & Ali, 2021a; Gul & Khan, 2021; Shah & Iqbal, 2019). Such findings point out that separate studies are required to understand the local causes of teacher burnout in Pakistan, which sets the stage for the present study.

Conceptual Framework

According to Bakker and Demerouti (2007), this study showed that burnout happens if the work demands an employee faces are greater than the resources they can access personally or through the organization. Many teachers in Pakistani public schools struggle with big classes, a lack of teaching materials, and demands from administrators. Researchers look into how having strong and inspiring leadership and high levels of self-efficacy may support teachers to overcome burnout. In 2009, Hulpia and colleagues introduced the Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI), which serves to examine pedagogical leadership studies. The scale looks at how instructors believe their leaders collaborate, help improve education, generate new ideas, and create a good work environment. Researchers depend on the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy Woolfolk (2001). It checks teachers' belief in their ability to work with students, control the classroom, and carry out reliable education programs.

The framework points out that study hypotheses suggest teacher burnout will occur less frequently in schools where leadership, teacher confidence, and community culture are strong. The study looks at the many demands facing teachers and explores ways to assist teachers in finding answers for their problems.

Research Design

This research was based on a quantitative descriptive method, which makes it possible to identify trends and relationships in the large amount of data gathered. Facts and outcomes from quantitative methods can be analyzed statistically and extended to wider groups (Creswell, 2014). The method was used to examine how teachers in Pakistani public schools feel about burnout, pedagogical leadership, and self-efficacy.

Population and Sample.

Teachers from public schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan, were participants in this study. We chose this region because its schools include urban and rural centers, and our research would support efforts to help teachers stay longer and thrive.

We decided to use cluster sampling in order to be representative. All teachers working in those groups of schools were chosen, and a sample from each was drawn. This idea helps a lot when compiling a complete list of teachers is not easy (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2017). 300 teachers from primary, middle, and secondary schools took part in the survey. To cover as wide a range of situations as possible, teachers in the study were varied by gender, teaching experience, and school levels. Teachers were selected for the study if they taught full-time in public sector schools and had a teaching experience of at least one year to ensure they knew the school setting well.

Instrumentation

The information was collected using a survey designed in three main areas, where teacher burnout was examined using an adapted Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach et al., 2001). Participants rated their responses using a scale ranging from 1 to 3. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) designed the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), which is popularly used to assess how certain teachers are in helping students, controlling their behavior, and instructing effectively in rescue situations. Hulpia et al. (2009) created the Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI) to allow teachers to report on how leadership is contributed by different members of a school staff. Pilot research was conducted with 30 teachers who were not part of the main sample to evaluate the instrument's clarity and reliability. Cronbach's alpha values for the final scales were between 0.72 and 0.85, showing high internal consistency (George & Mallery, 2003). The data was obtained over a two-month period by administering surveys in person. School principals were contacted in advance to obtain approval, and ethical procedures were scrupulously followed.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed with SPSS software (Version 25). To establish the validity of regression results, the data was summarized using descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies), followed by Pearson's correlation, multiple regression analysis, and assumption testing (normality, linearity, homoscedasticity).

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the main variables: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment, teacher self-efficacy, pedagogical leadership, and school climate.

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Minimum	Maximum
Emotional Exhaustion	3.85	0.78	2.10	4.90
Depersonalization	3.12	0.69	1.80	4.60
Teacher Self-Efficacy	3.70	0.75	2.20	4.80
Pedagogical Leadership	3.55	0.68	2.00	4.70

Table 1 shows that emotional exhaustion was the highest-scoring burnout dimension, indicating a prevalent feeling of fatigue and overload among teachers. Depersonalization also had moderately high scores, suggesting some teachers feel disconnected from their roles and colleagues. Teacher Self-Efficacy, Pedagogical Leadership, and School Climate scored relatively high, suggesting a generally positive perception of these protective factors.

Table 2 shows Pearson's correlation coefficients among the main variables.

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Emotional Exhaustion				
2. Depersonalization	0.64**			
4. Teacher Self-Efficacy	-0.56**	-0.52**	0.60**	
5. Pedagogical Leadership	-0.45**	-0.40**	0.48**	0.58**

Note: $p < 0.01$

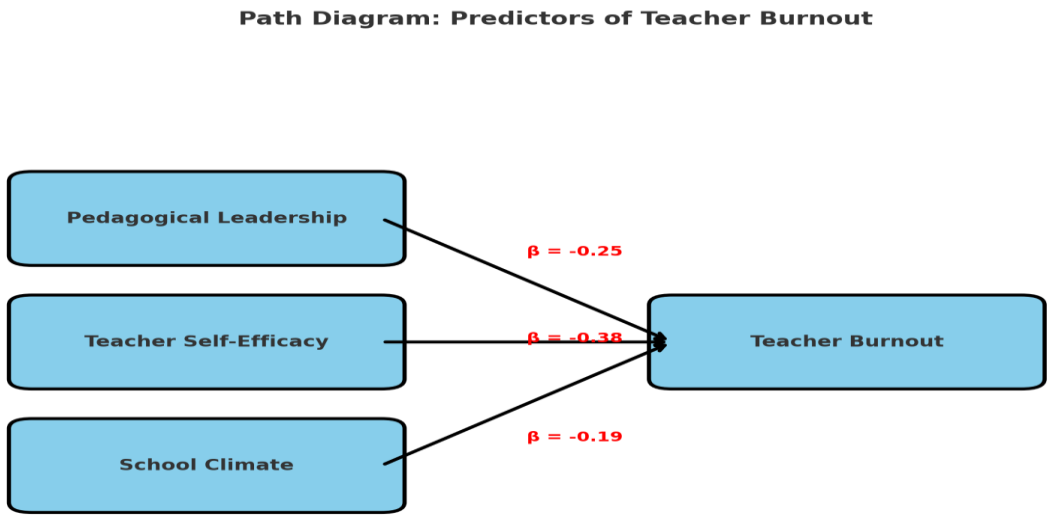
Emotional exhaustion was shown to be strongly positively correlated with depersonalization ($r = 0.64$), indicating that emotionally weary teachers are also likely to feel alienated. Negative correlations between burnout characteristics and protective factors (teacher self-efficacy, leadership) highlight the buffering function of these components. Teacher self-efficacy exhibited the largest negative connection with emotional exhaustion ($r = -0.56$) and depersonalization ($r = -0.52$), indicating its importance in preventing burnout. Pedagogical leadership also found a moderate negative connection with burnout, emphasizing the importance of supporting leadership.

Regression Analysis

A multiple linear regression was conducted to determine the unique contribution of the predictors to burnout (Table 3).

Predictor	Unstandardized β	Standardized β	t	p-value
Teacher Self-Efficacy	-0.42	-0.38	-7.23	< 0.01
Pedagogical Leadership	-0.27	-0.25	-4.65	< 0.05
School Climate	-0.21	-0.19	-3.89	< 0.05
Constant	4.90		9.54	< 0.01
Model R^2	**0.48**			

Teacher self-efficacy was found to be the best predictor of lower burnout ($\beta = -0.38$), explaining a considerable amount of the variance. Pedagogical leadership also made a substantial contribution, demonstrating that changes in these areas can help to prevent burnout. The model accounted for 48% of the variance in burnout, indicating that these protective characteristics have a significant influence.



DISCUSSION

The study's findings highlight the multifaceted and context-specific characteristics of teacher burnout in Pakistani public schools. Consistent with global research (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001), the statistics show significant levels of emotional weariness and mild depersonalization, as well as a low sense of personal accomplishment. These symptoms, widely acknowledged as basic features of burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981), have serious consequences for both teacher well-being and student learning results (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). The study found that teacher self-efficacy was the strongest predictor of reduced burnout, which is consistent with Brouwers and Tomic (2000), who feel self-efficacy is especially significant. Because of insufficient professional development and instructional assistance in Pakistan, teachers' confidence in their teaching skills may deteriorate further, indicating the need for special actions to restore their belief in themselves.

This study found that pedagogical leadership is associated with lower teacher burnout, which supports Leithwood et al.'s (2008) notion that supporting instruction encourages instructors rather than providing more administrative guidance. However, the corporate-style management present in Pakistani schools (Shah & Iqbal, 2019) is unlikely to meet all the needs listed above. Based on current research, mentoring, appreciation, and career development opportunities provided by leaders can prevent burnout and increase teacher satisfaction (Ali, Gul, & Gul, 2025; Bareach & Gul, 2025; Gul, Ilyas, Gul, Riaz, & Khan, 2025Khan, Gul, Riaz, Bibi, & Ahmad, 2025). A positive school climate was also linked to lower burnout, just as Hoy et al. (1991) found that trust, safety, and camaraderie among teachers help avoid burnout. Collaboration is especially crucial for teachers in Pakistan's rural areas, as it helps and decreases the difficulties they have when working alone (Iqbal et al., 2021). They argue that burnout stems from more than just personal issues; it is influenced by workplace regulations and practices (Rehman & Khan, 2019).

Interestingly, despite experiencing a high level of work-related stress, which is a key cause of burnout (Farber, 1991; Gul, Alm, Ayub, Saleem, & Mahmood, 2024; Gul & Tahir, 2023a; Gul & Tahir, 2023b; Rabbi & Gul, 2023; Maslach et al., 2001), instructors reported only moderate burnout. The findings contradict previous research (Maslach & Jackson, 1981), which suggests that emotional intelligence and resilience in teachers (Brackett et al., 2010) or various types of institutional or cultural supports in sampled schools are involved. However, having a lot of work to complete increases the risk of burnout in the future. Emotional connection and positive teacher-student interactions have been demonstrated to reduce the likelihood of teacher burnout. According to Friedman (1991), effective relationships with students keep teachers mentally healthy despite the pressures of teaching. Although some participants experienced depersonalization immediately, these findings are consistent with the continual growth of burnout suggested by Maslach and Leiter (2008). Teachers in this study frequently expressed high motivation and excitement, although Guskey (1988) says that having a meaningful job and clear results keeps teachers enthusiastic.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that teachers' confidence in their own talents was high in a variety of settings, including classroom discipline, encouraging student participation, and using various teaching tactics. This suggests that the findings support Bandura's (1997) theory that feeling you can achieve something motivates you to persevere and solve obstacles, as well as Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's (2001) emphasis on the importance of self-efficacy in effective teaching approaches (Gul, Rabbi, Batool, Tahir, & Asif, 2024b; Gul, Kanwal, & Khan, 2020; Gul & Khilji, 2021; Mehmood, Rao, & Gul, 2024; Tufail, Gul, & Ali, 2024b). However, the perception of not being recognized for their efforts implies Maslach and Leiter (2008) are correct in linking insufficient praise to burnout, regardless of other available resources. Students claim that teachers' excellent classroom organization and control are compatible with Ashton's (1985) research, which found that stronger self-confidence leads to

improved classroom learning. The study found that when teachers are skilled, devoted to helping children, and part of a loving workplace, they are less likely to give up because of the environment in Pakistan's public schools.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The study shows that teacher self-confidence, effective leadership, and the environment at school help keep Pakistani public-school teachers from becoming worn out. According to the JD-R paradigm (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) and research, teachers who have good support from their colleagues and their setting can handle their duties and keep up good well-being. Several industries can benefit from these discoveries. Teacher training should include self-efficacy, classroom management, adaptive teaching, and increasing student participation. It is possible to create programs in schools that link experienced instructors with individuals in the early phases of their careers (Gul & Ali, 2021b; Gul & Reba, 2022). The primary goal of school administrators' leadership development programs should be to promote pedagogical leadership in education.

Policies that encourage teamwork, goal sharing, and clear communication are critical in creating pleasant educational environments (Gul & Ahmad, 2022a; Gul & Ahmad, 2022b). As a result, those working in the field feel more connected to their coworkers, less alone, and more equipped to deal. Ensure that frameworks for teacher well-being are incorporated into educational improvements made by the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with provincial ministries, so that workload, leadership issues, and workplace climate are all appropriately managed. Because this study was conducted in one area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, future research in other provinces could use in-depth interviews to understand and document how teachers feel in the classroom. They can help to find measurements that address the link between a worker's personal life, work environment, and the system they interact with.

To conclude, the study indicates that addressing teacher burnout involves systemic reforms. Teachers' motivation and success can be maintained when schools support their psychological resources, encourage leadership teams, and foster a respectful school climate. Such initiatives are required to assist teachers as well as to promote better and more equitable education in Pakistan.

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