



Association between Perceived Work Stress, Emotional Regulation, and Burnout among teachers

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Abstract: The primary objective of this study was to examine the association between perceived stress, burnout, and emotional regulation among private school teachers residing in Karachi. The study hypothesizes that: (i) There will be a relationship between perceived stress, burnout, and emotional regulation (ii) Perceived stress will have an impact on burnout among teachers. The participants in this research were 255 teachers from private schools in Karachi, Pakistan. In this study following measures were used: (i) Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI; Kristensen et al., 2005), (ii) Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1994), and (iii) Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ by Gross and John; 2003). The findings of the first hypothesis suggested a strong positive correlation between perceived stress and burnout ($r=.429$; $n=255$; $sig=.000$) however, a weak correlation was found between perceived stress and emotional regulation ($r=.069$; $n=255$; $sig=.069$). The findings of the second hypothesis suggested perceived stress impacts burnout significantly according to the regression model. ($p=.000$). The outcomes of this study can contribute to the development of policies within schools aimed at reducing stress levels in this demanding profession. Training programs can be provided to teachers to help them regulate their stress and burnout levels, while mandatory counseling sessions can be arranged by schools to prevent emotional build-up in light of this research.

Key Words: Perceived stress, Emotional regulation, Burnout, Teachers

1. Introduction

Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978) first used the term "teacher stress" to describe the "negative emotions (such as anger or depression) experienced by a teacher frequently followed by potentially harmful molecular and metabolic alterations in the body. Due to the aspects of the teacher's employment that are "mediated by the perception that" expectations placed on pose a threat to self-esteem or well-being, and as a result of coping methods used to lessen the perceived threat. Teachers who suffer extraordinary levels of work-related stress have been linked to higher absenteeism, staff turnover, a host of unfavourable health consequences, and higher level of burnout, anxiety, and depression. All of these may adversely impact teachers' private lives, professional performance, and efficiency, which may unintentionally have an effect on children (Ratanasiripong et. al., 2021).

Emotional regulation refers to any activity that aims to regulate emotions with an agenda of revealing pathways of various emotions and managing those (Gross, 2015). Zheng and Guo's (2018) meta-analytic study revealed a negative correlation between teachers' social-emotional intelligence and job burnout. Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009) suggests that teacher social-emotional regulation could be a significant, underlying personal element influencing teacher burnout.

It has been demonstrated in research by Martínez-Monteagudo et al., (2019) that teachers with high emotional quotients are better equipped to adjust to various personal life circumstances, whether social or professional. However, inadequate emotional intelligence is associated with psychopathological effects such stress, discomfort,

and burnout (Tamarit, 2021). In order to improve teachers' cognitive, emotional, and social skills, it is crucial to take all reasonable steps to support them in learning to control their emotions, particularly during the teacher training stage Martínez-Monteaudo., et. al. (2018). Hence, taking the lead from previous research it is important to study the long-term effect on Perceived work stress, burn out and emotional regulation in teachers as a result of changing demands post COVID.

Teachers face significant stress due to various challenges in their work environment. The nature of education, which involves building relationships, often leads to stressors such as problematic interactions with students and parents. Issues like classroom violence and unrealistic workplace expectations add to this burden. Moreover, constant exposure to students with severe problems can lead to compassion fatigue and burnout. Unsupportive administrators and parents contribute to a culture that drives teachers away from the profession. Additionally, state and federal policies limit educators' access to mental health support for work-related stressors. This research outlines the breadth and depth of mental health risks faced by those in the education field due to job-related stressors. (Farmer, D. 2020).

It can be concluded that controlling teachers' emotions is important because it can lower the levels of negative emotions and increase the levels of positive ones. As a result, teachers who experience positive emotions during instruction are better able to employ a variety of teaching strategies, are more adaptable and creative in responding to different classroom situations, and have positive effects on students' performance. On the other hand, negative emotions negatively impact the way complex tasks are presented since they are linked to a shallow and insufficient processing of information (McKasy, 2020).

The aim of this research study was to investigate the impact of Job stress and emotional regulation on burnout in teachers of Pakistan. Job stress is a rising issue amongst teachers post COVID as teachers had to adjust to the rapid changing demands of the world during and after the pandemic. As the job of a teacher is heavily based on human interaction it is crucial for teachers to understand and regulate their emotions to ensure a healthy conducive environment for learning hence, emotional regulation amongst teachers. Both the factors heavily impact burnout levels in teachers. The present research aimed at investigating the relationship that exists between perceived stress, burnout and emotional regulation amongst teachers. Additionally, aims to understand the predictive role of perceived stress on burnout and emotional regulation. As well as investigating the mediating effect of perceived stress on emotional regulation and employee burnout.

1.2 Rationale of the Study

This study primarily focuses on private school teachers' perceived work stress, emotional regulation, and burnout because, in contrast to other professions in the service sector, teachers work with individuals from a different generation who have different perspectives, explanations for things, and expectations about how they will be catered to and answered. Not only did traditional classrooms give way to online ones during the latter two years of the pandemic, but parent, student, and organizational needs also changed. It was expected of them to support the students on Google Classroom, Teams, and WhatsApp during the course of the day.

When using media like audio, video, and eBooks in their classes, they also have to make sure that the lessons were interesting. Hybrid modules, online lesson preparation, attendance systems, and email interaction with parents persisted after the pandemic. In addition, students' exposure in the modern day has a significant impact on their interactions with teachers and their expectations of them. Since more kids have access to the internet, educators must be better prepared to answer queries from students in the classroom and during their instruction.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Job burnout model

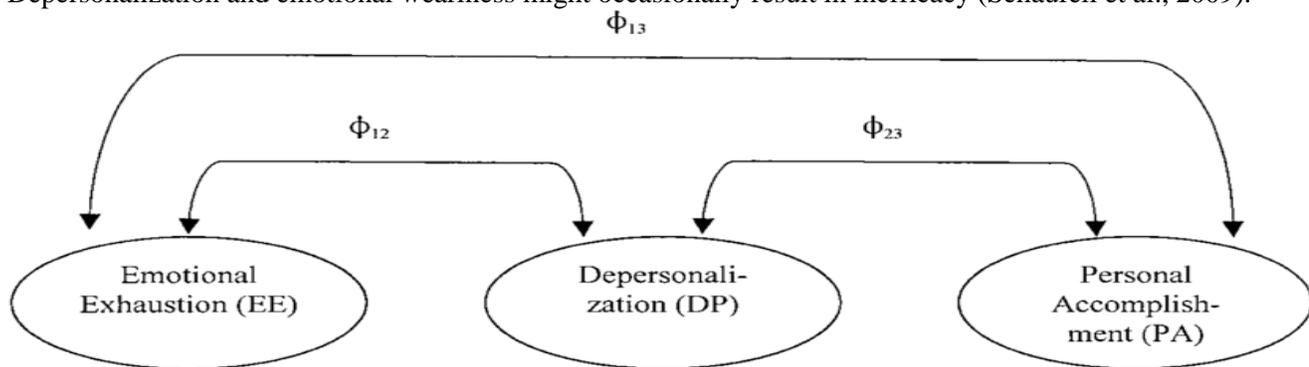
According to the Job burnout model (Maslach, 2001) job burnout is a psychological reaction to a prolonged exposure to a stressful work situation. It consists of three dimensions i.e. exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy. Exhaustion is the state where a worker feels emotionally and physically drained. It is indicated by the lack of energy at work and to deal with work situations. It is caused by overwork and personal conflicts at the workplace. Cynicism means that an employee feels detached to various domains of work which leads to declined performance and doing the bare minimum required to sustain at work.

Emotional exhaustion may result from an employer's excessive demands (Leiter & Maslach, 2016). Leiter and Maslach (2003) defined as the point at which a person experiences both bodily and emotional exhaustion. Notably, burnout and weariness are not the same thing. Burnout can occur when a person's professional role conflicts with

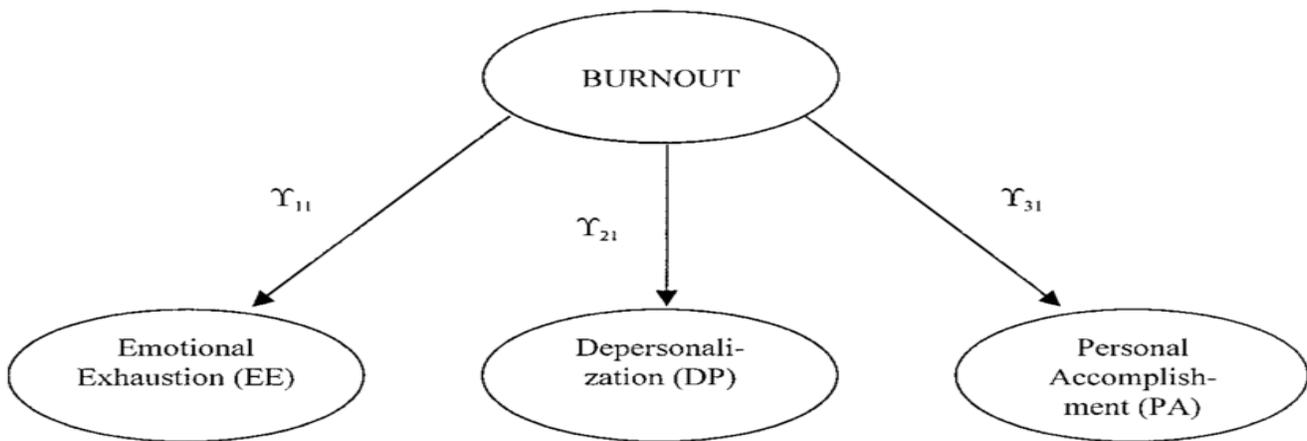
their feelings, as in the case of human services workers who are required to exhibit emotions that are at odds with their sentiments. Emotional weariness is the best studied of the three burnout signs because people feel it more frequently than the other two (Maslach & Leiter, 2008).

According to Thomas et al. (2014), the second sign of burnout is depersonalization or cynicism, which is the reaction of removing oneself from one's job and coworkers in order to avoid more emotional exhaustion and self-doubt. Scholars suggest that depersonalization and emotional tiredness are related (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Higher levels of emotional weariness are associated with higher levels of depersonalization in routine professional tasks. When people have a bad attitude, they are more likely to choose to be indifferent rather than dissatisfied. Depersonalization of the workplace is bad for people's overall wellbeing and their ability to carry out their job obligations efficiently (Jiménez-Ortiz et al., 2019).

Lack of personal accomplishment, or inefficacy, is the third sign of burnout. Feelings of inadequacy arise when work satisfaction drops, which makes one feel less successful and more pressured by work expectations (Manafi & Subramaniam, 2015). A person is more inclined to be insecure when others start to doubt themselves. Previous studies suggest that there is a complicated link between inefficacy and the other burnout symptoms. Depersonalization and emotional weariness might occasionally result in inefficacy (Schaufeli et al., 2009).



A. First-Order Three-Factor Model



B. Higher-Order Factor Model

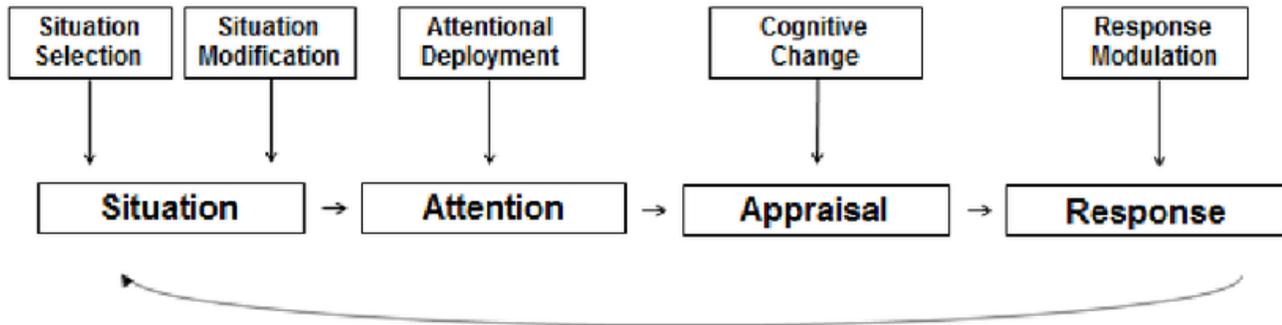
Figure 1: Job burnout model

2.2 Emotional regulation model

Emotional regulation model (Gross, 2002) comprised five strategies for emotional regulation which are the discretion of an individual to use whenever an emotion is experienced. These five strategies are situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive changes, and response modification (Gross, 2002). This model was further divided into antecedent-focused regulation which is used before any emotion is experienced

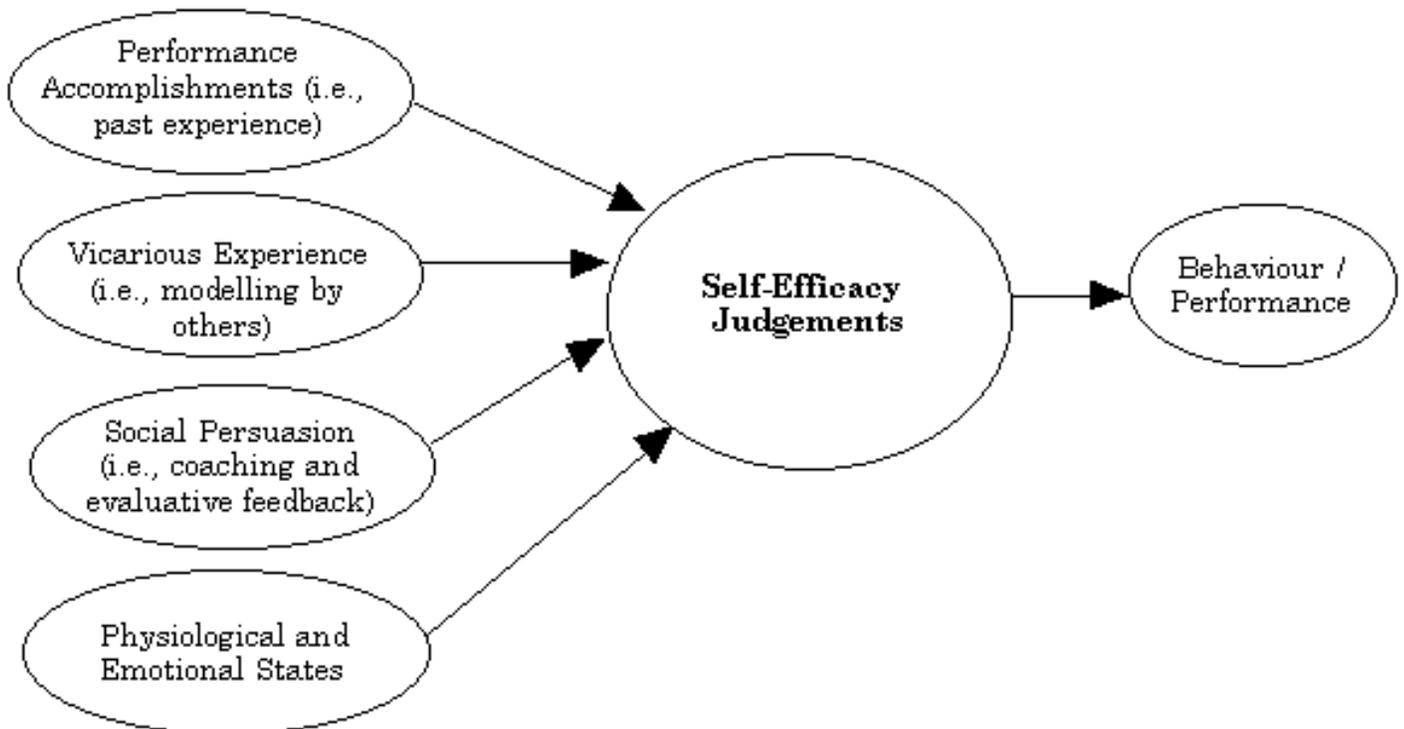
fully or when the emotion is being experienced, moreover, response-focused regulation is used when emotion is fully developed (Gross, 1998).

Emotion Regulation



2.3 Self-Efficacy Model

According to the self-efficacy model (Bandura, 2006) self-efficacy allows people to manage their own behavior and govern it rather than being passive subjects of mysterious inner or conservative forces. Through their behaviors, they can actively change themselves and exert control over things like occurrences and phenomena. Research shows low-efficacy teachers really avoid academic obstacles to handle them, high-efficacy teachers are eager to work hard to explore solutions to their individual problems. Additionally, low-efficacy instructors must use a lot of effort to manage emotional stress and prevent withdrawal, which heightens emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. (Han and Wang 2021).



Sources of Self-efficacy Information

regulation ($r = .009$; $n = 255$; $sig = .009$) (table 2)

According to hypothesis 2, the regression model for perceived stress and burnout indicated significant results. This indicates that statistical significance of regression model was applied. Here, $p = .000$ for perceived stress and burnout. The value is less than 0.05 hence, it indicates that the model applied is significant enough to predict the outcome of the variables under discussion (table 3). This p-value suggests that the model statistically explains a sizable amount of the variance in burnout ratings, and it is far lower than the traditional significance level of 0.05. This result is reinforced even further by the substantial F-statistic (57.122). It implies that burnout and perceived stress are strongly and statistically significantly correlated. Put another way, instructors who report feeling more stressed out are more prone to burn out, as determined by the Copenhagen Burnout Scale.

Table 1: Demographic information of the participants (N=255)

Demographic Variable		F	%
Gender	Female	27	10.6%
	Male	201	78.8%
	Prefer not to say		10.6%
Education Level	B. Com	7	2.7%
	Bachelors	44	17.3%
	Masters	122	47.8%
	MPHIL	82	32.2%
Experience in Teaching	1-5 years	121	48.2%
	5-10 years	44	17.3%
	11-15 years	38	14.9%
	16-20 years	29	11.4%
	20-25 years	15	5.9%
	25-30 years	6	2.4%

Table 2: A Correlation between Perceived stress, Emotional regulation, and Burnout amongst teachers working in Karachi.

		Perceived Stress Scale	Emotional Regulation	Copenhagen Burnout Inventory
Perceived Stress Scale	Pearson Correlation	1	-.114	-.429**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.069	.000
	N		255	255
Emotional Regulation	Pearson Correlation		1	.041
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.513
	N			255
Burnout	Pearson Correlation	-.429**	.041	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	.513	
	N	255	255	

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

Table 3: A regression analysis between Perceived stress and Burnout amongst teachers working in Karachi

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	878.295	1	878.295	57.122	.000
Residual	3890.745	253	15.376		

Total	4768.337	254
a. Dependent Variable: Total Copenhagen Burnout Inventory		
b. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Stress Scale		

3. Discussion

The primary objective of this study is to examine the association between perceived stress, burnout, and emotional regulation among private school teachers residing in Karachi. The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between perceived stress, burnout and emotional regulation amongst private school teachers residing in Karachi. Additionally, aims to understand the predictive role of perceived stress on burnout and emotional regulation. The study hypothesized (i) there would be a relationship between perceived stress, burnout, and emotional regulation. (ii) perceived stress would have an impact on burnout amongst teachers.

The hypothesis of the study stated that there would be a relationship between perceived stress, burnout, and emotional regulation amongst teachers in Karachi. This hypothesis was accepted as the result indicated a moderate negative correlation ($r = -.429$) at significance level ($p < 0.05$), table 2) between perceived stress and burnout. However, it is noteworthy that there was no significant relationship between perceived stress and emotional regulation. The findings of this research were validated by previous researches; one such research conducted (Teles, et al., 2020) and it found that perceived stress was correlated with burnout. This research was unable to find any correlation between perceived stress and emotional regulation which was contrary to previous researches as previous researches indicate a significant relationship between perceived stress and emotional regulation (Jeon, L., & Ardeleanu, K. 2020).

Similarly, Vargas Rubilar, N., & Oros, L. B. (2021). Conducted a study to explain the degree of perceived stress and its potential impact on psychophysical symptoms, as well as to identify the work scenarios that education professionals viewed as threats when using the non-face-to-face teaching mode. Similarly, it looked into how the degree of perceived stress and related symptoms can affect how burnout manifests itself. 9,058 educators from Argentina took part. Over 60% of instructors stated that their stress levels were high to moderate. The main sources of stress were work overload, insufficient working conditions, and uncertainty regarding the pandemic's effects. Teachers who experienced more stress and more psychophysical signs of discomfort also had greater levels of professional burnout.

Rauterkus, et. al., (2024) examined 265 German teachers working in a primary school setting. They concluded that the level of stress perceived was predicted by emotional regulation done by the individuals.

Additionally, McEown, K., McEown, et. al., (2024) found that Japanese students who were emotionally intelligent and had the skills to regulate their emotions they were did not experience high levels of stress and burnout.

The second hypothesis of the study predicts the impact of perceived stress on burnout amongst teachers. This hypothesis was proven to be true as the result of regression analysis was significant indicating that perceived stress predicts burnout amongst teachers. The result of this research is found to be valid in previous researches on different sample population as no research was conducted predicting the impact of perceived stress on burnout among teachers (Table 3). Research conducted on students' midwives showed that stress predicted emotional burnout. (Eaves, J. L., & Payne, N. 2019). Similarly, another research was conducted by Xu, Z., & Yang, F. (2021) and it was found that job stress predicts burnout.

Aharandu, et. al., (2023) looked at the relationship between secondary school teachers' inclination toward burnout in Rivers State and occupational stress. From a population of 7,707 public secondary school teachers in Rivers State, a multi-stage selection technique was used to choose a sample size of 1,470 instructors. The study's conclusions showed, among other things, that occupational stress among secondary school teachers in Rivers State secondary schools is a strong predictor of their tendency to burn out.

The study by Brady, L. L., McDaniel, S. C., & Choi, Y. J. (2023) looked at how workplace stress affected teachers' experiences of burnout and how different burnout outcomes could be linked to different psychological resources, such as a person's work-related sense of coherence (Work-SoC). Data gathered from 231 primary and secondary school teachers in the United States via an online survey was used to do a descriptive, cross-sectional analysis. Perceived quantity and perceived quality of job stress are two types of work stress that are significant predictors of burnout, according to correlational and regression analysis results. Moreover, Work-SoC plays a significant role in protecting teachers from experiencing burnout as evidenced by its contribution to variability in teacher burnout even after taking perceived work and personal stress into consideration.

4. Conclusion

The research study aimed at finding a correlation between perceived stress, employee burnout and emotional regulation. This study was able to accept the hypothesis which indicated a negative moderate correlation between perceived stress and employee burnout. It is important to note that this research study was only able to investigate impact of perceived stress on employee burnout however, there are a lot more factors that impact any employee at work hence, further research should investigate other factors.

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