

## **Relationship between Workload and Burnout in Pakistani College Teachers**

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Burnout is a state of vital exhaustion lasted as a disorder and affects many including teachers. The rapidly increasing workload is among the key factors responsible for burnout in teachers. This study was aimed to explore the relationship of the workload with burnout among the college teachers of Pakistan. All the working teachers in public colleges of Pakistan were the population of this study while 200 teachers were conveniently selected as the population of the study. We used the Maslach Burnout Inventory to identify burnout in teachers and developed a simple questionnaire to measure workload in teachers with items measured on a 7-point Likert scale. The design of the quantitative phase of the study was correlational and results revealed a positive relationship of the workload with a burnout in teachers. Semi-structured interviews were used as a qualitative tool for data triangulation the results of qualitative data analysis supported the results of descriptive statistics. The writers suggest that certain workload standards should be established for teachers so that they do not reach the threshold of burnout and maintain optimal proficiency.

**Keywords:** *emotional exhaustion, reduced personal accomplishment, burnout, college teachers and teachers' workload*

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### **Introduction**

All countries in the world, including Pakistan, thrive on education and the effectiveness of its teachers. With increasing physical and mental load teachers suffer from burnout a state of vital exhaustion listed as a disorder (Code: Z73.0) in ICD-10 or (Code: QD85) in ICD-11 (WHO, 1990, 2018). Although not recognized as a disorder by the DSM-5 (APA, 2013), it is among one of the factors which affect teacher performance and burdens their coping with the demands and challenges of the teaching profession (Negano, 2007).

Maslach (2003) pioneer in the area of burnout, lists three dimensions of this syndrome, i.e. emotional exhaustion, reduced personal accomplishment and depersonalization. Emotional exhaustion is the feeling of being strained, tired and lack

of emotional energy, while reduced personal accomplishment is a sense of inadequacy and ineffectiveness and depersonalization, involves detached response and callous attitude.

Burnout is related to emotional instability which is the result of the existence of unsatisfactory job resources in relation to extensive job demands (Khan, Yusoff & Khan, 2014). When teachers constantly feel that all their efforts to make the teaching profession meaningful are not becoming fruitful, they gradually become prey to being burnt out (Brock & Grady, 2000). This develops an imbalance of the demands of the teaching profession with the inner resources of teachers to cope with these demands (Troman & Woods, 2001). Most teachers start teaching with enthusiasm and dedication but fall prey to being burnt out with the passage of time. Every year a

great number of teachers are unable to continue teaching as a profession (Herman & Marlow, 2005).

Burnout can be harmful to teachers both mentally and physically for it can force the teachers to quit the teaching profession altogether (Maslach & Leiter 2003). Teachers with burnout are prone to become less tolerant, least productive, more pathetic and may reduce the morale of the newly inducted teachers and students. They may lose enthusiasm, energy for life and self-confidence. Mental and physical illness may result if burnout exists for a long period (Larson, 2011). Existence of inadequate resources reduces teaching commitment may cause teachers' burnout (Utami & Nahartyo, 2012).

The workload of teachers includes all kinds of tasks and activities were measuring this workload can be challenging. Because the workload could include tasks both inside and outside teaching institutions and the nature of teaching demands can vary during the whole academic year. In addition, most teachers are required to be involved in co-curricular activities along with other regular teaching activities. Increased administrative responsibilities related with students and class preparation, changing class composition, change in class size, are the factors which contribute to the workload of teachers. In addition, teachers are required to work with different kinds of people and acknowledge and accept the individual differences especially students (McCarthy et. al. 2009). Dealing with student differences may require teachers to use different teaching methodologies and different assessment techniques and methods. This can become overwhelming and stressful and can overload work and teacher burnout (Asghar, 2006). Lastly, teachers, when engaged in these tasks, use long hours they consume their personal

time, dis-balancing their family and work lives.

Operationally, Ingersoll and Smith (2003) list teachers' burnout to involve work pressure, lower parental appreciation and administrative support, overcrowded classrooms, negative attitude of the students, inadequate salaries, heavy workload and criticism from the public on teachers and their teaching performance (see also Leithwood, 2006).

Pakistan a developing country lacks proper educational facilities along with the dire shortage of qualified teachers due to which teachers have to perform multiple duties along with their regular teaching work. The high rate of population growth also burdens per teacher workload. Overcrowded classes, low salaries, newer applications of technology in education and changing teaching scenario is causing burnout which is becoming an impetus for several issues in the teaching profession.

### **Aim of the Study**

The aim of this study was to explore a simple relationship between workload and burnout among teachers' of public colleges of Pakistan.

### **Method and Procedure**

According to the demand of the objective of the study sequential mixed method was used and both quantitative and qualitative designs were included in this study. Quantitative survey method and qualitative semi-structured interviews were used for data collection. Simple correlation (Pearson  $r$ ) to establish the strength of the relationship between workload and burnout. A deductive approach was used for qualitative analysis of interviews and purpose was a triangulation of data.

### **Participants of the Study**

This study used 100 male and 100 female college teachers who were conveniently selected for this study. The teachers ranged in age from 20 to 60 ( $M =$

40,  $SD = 3.619$ ) years. All teachers had completed their master’s degrees (100%) some had done MPhil (30 %) and lesser PhD (2 %).

**Tools of Research**

1- Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was developed by Christina Maslach to measure professional burnout (Negano, 2007). Researchers of the present study adapted MBI for measuring burnout in teachers. This inventory is one of the most valid (A) GFI=

**Table.1**

*Summary of BurnoutInventory*

| <b>Dimension of Burnout</b>     | <b>Statements</b> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Emotional exhaustion            | 1-8               |
| Depersonalization               | 9-16              |
| Reduced personal accomplishment | 17-24             |

2- Workload Questionnaire to measure teachers’ workload, researchers developed a questionnaire where each item was measured on a 7-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was comprised of 18 statements in which teacher were asked about the academic (lesson planning, teaching, conduction of monthly and weekly class test, paper marking, result preparation)

**Table 2**

*Teachers’ workload*

| <b>Teachers’ workload</b> | <b>Statements</b> |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| academic workload         | 1-9               |
| Co-curricular workload    | 9-18              |

The tool was pilot tested and its internal consistency was found  $\alpha=.89$ . The composite score on the Workload Questionnaire ranged from 18-126, with higher scores representing greater workload.

3- Semi-structured interview schedule

**Table.3**

*Correlation statistics for the Relationship between teachers’ workload and burnout*

| <b>Variable</b>  | <b>N</b> | <b>R</b> | <b>Sig.</b> |
|------------------|----------|----------|-------------|
| Workload Burnout | 200      | .263     | 0.00        |

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

.95,  $r=, 0.26$ ), reliable ( $\alpha=.92$ ) and commonly used instruments for the measurement of burnout (Azeem & Nazir, 2008). The inventory comprises of 24 statements related with three dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion ( $\alpha=.82$ ), reduced personal accomplishment ( $\alpha =.79$ ) and depersonalization ( $\alpha =.92$ ). The measurement of the different dimensions of burnout can be explained with the help of the following table

and non-academic duties (managerial, social work, character building, duties related to co-curricular activities, security-related duties and community duties like anti-dengue education) which they have to perform in their educational institutions throughout a year. The statements from the measurement of teachers’ workload can be explained with the help of table 2.

comprising seven major questions were also administered to five male and five female teachers to triangulate the findings of the quantitative phase of the study.

**Results and Findings of the Study**

The results of the quantitative analysis indicated that there was a significant ( $p< .01$ ) positive correlation ( $r = .263$ ) between workload and burnout in teachers.



Table 3 shows the results of Pearson correlation show that there is significant { $r(200) = .263$ } between teachers' workload and burnout. This analysis indicates that there is a positive relationship between the workload of teachers and burnout that means that an increase in the teachers' workload increases burnout in teachers. At the same issue, eight teachers expressed a positive relationship between workload and teachers'

**Table.4**

*Correlation statistics for the Relationship between teachers' academic workload and burnout*

| Variable                  | N   | R    | Sig. |
|---------------------------|-----|------|------|
| Academic workload Burnout | 200 | .252 | 0.00 |

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

Table 4 shows the results of Pearson correlation show that there is significant relationship { $r(200) = .252$ } between teachers' academic workload and burnout. This analysis indicates that there is a positive relationship between the academic workload of teachers and their burnout that means that an increase in teachers' academic workload increases burnout in teachers. At the same issue, four teachers expressed a positive relationship between workload and teachers' burnout while six teachers were of the view that academic workload is not solely responsible for teachers' burnout.

**Table. 5**

*Correlation statistics for the Relationship between teachers' co-curricular workload and burnout*

| Variable                       | N   | R    | Sig. |
|--------------------------------|-----|------|------|
| Co-curricular workload Burnout | 200 | .213 | 0.00 |

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

Table 5 shows the results of Pearson correlation show that there is significant relationship { $r(200) = .213$ } between teachers' co-curricular workload and burnout. This analysis indicates that there is a positive relationship between the co-curricular workload of the teachers and

burnout during the interview while two teachers were of the view that workload is not solely responsible for teachers' burnout. The results of the quantitative analysis indicated that there was a significant ( $p < .01$ ) positive correlation ( $r = .252$ ) between academic workload and burnout in teachers.

The results of data analysis also indicate that teachers have to perform both teaching and non-teaching activities in their educational institutes. Increasing emphasis on the importance of co-curricular activities and character-building programs has increased the managerial duties of the teachers which add the workload of the teachers. The results of the quantitative analysis indicated that there was a significant ( $p < .01$ ) positive correlation ( $r = .213$ ) between workload and burnout in teachers.

burnout that means that an increase in teachers' co-curricular workload increases burnout in teachers. In answer to this question in interview five teachers expressed a positive relationship between workload and teachers' burnout while five teachers were of the view that engagement in co-

curricular activities has a refreshing effect on teachers. The analysis of the relationship between emotional exhaustion and workload revealed that there was a significant ( $p < .01$ )

positive correlation ( $r = .243$ ) between workload and emotional exhaustion in teachers.

**Table.6**

*Correlation statistics for the Relationship between teachers' workload and emotional exhaustion among teachers*

| Variable                      | N   | R    | Sig. |
|-------------------------------|-----|------|------|
| Workload Emotional exhaustion | 200 | .243 | 0.00 |

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

Table 6 displayed significant relationship  $\{r(200) = .243\}$  between teachers' workload and emotional exhaustion in teachers. It means that an increase in teachers' workload increases emotional exhaustion among teachers. Whereas while responding to qualitative aspect teachers were convinced

that workload leads towards emotional exhaustion. The analysis of the relationship between teachers workload and depersonalization component of burnout indicated significant ( $p < .01$ ) positive correlation ( $r = .221$ ) as explained below.

**Table.7**

*Relationship between teachers' workload and depersonalization component of burnout*

| Variable                       | N   | R    | Sig. |
|--------------------------------|-----|------|------|
| Workload and depersonalization | 240 | .221 | 0.00 |

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

Above table 7 highlights Pearson correlation is significant  $\{r(200) = .221\}$  between teachers' workload and depersonalization. It indicates that there is a positive relationship between the workload of teachers and depersonalization. Seven teachers were of the view that depersonalization and workload are closely related whereas three

of them were of the view that there are some other psychological reasons for depersonalization among teachers and these need to be explored. The association between reduced personal accomplishment and teachers workload was explored using Pearson Correlation coefficient. The results are described below.

**Table.8**

*Relationship between teachers' workload and reduced personal accomplishment among teachers*

| Variable                                     | N   | R    | Sig. |
|--|-----|------|------|
| Workload and Reduced personal accomplishment | 200 | .278 | 0.00 |

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

Workload and reduced personal accomplishment are significantly related  $\{r(200) = .263\}$ . It indicates that there is a positive relationship between workload and reduced personal accomplishment among teachers that means that an increase in the

teachers' workload increases reduced personal accomplishments teachers. At the same issue, all teacher expressed a positive relationship between workload and reduced personal accomplishment among teachers.

## Discussion

On the basis of the findings of the data analysis we can say that workload may cause teachers burnout as is indicated by other investigators (Brouwers, Tomic & Boluijt, 2011; Chen, 2007; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Leithwood, 2006; McKinley, 2016; Utami & Nahartyo, 2012; Wilson, 2014). The results of the data analysis indicate that teachers' workload is more associated with emotional exhaustion as compared to the other two dimensions (depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment) of teachers' burnout. The overall qualitative analysis supported the results of quantitative analysis. Creating a balance between the assignments may help to reduce the chances of burnout. The workload at first lead to emotional exhaustion a major contributor towards burnout.

## Limitations

Due to the limited resources of time and money, this study was limited to the 200 conveniently selected teachers in Pakistan, therefore generalization of result demand more data from college teachers. The in-depth qualitative study may be more helpful in this regard.

## Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the present study, the researchers suggest establishing clear parameters in Pakistan to assign workload to the teachers as their absence creates imbalance and problem in the education sector. Certain standards must be established for the specification of maximum and minimum workload (both academic and non-academic) of teachers by the authorities so that the teachers may be assigned the satisfactory level of workload the heavy workload is one of the major causes of teachers' burnout that is an impetus for the serious of the teaching profession. According to Ngeno (2007) the causative factors of burnout should be

addressed to reduce it, therefore, the workload of the teachers should be assigned at a satisfactory level as heavy workload may lead towards the development of burnout. The management of educational institutions should also strive to provide a satisfactory working environment so that the potentials of the teachers may be fully used and burnout among teachers may be prevented. Different dimensions of burnout may be focused during the training of teachers. Curriculum developers may consider the importance of workload and provide practising activities to pre-service and in-service trainee teachers.

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