

MANIFESTATION OF EMOTIONAL BURNOUT IN THE PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY
OF TEACHERS

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Abstract: This article explores emotional burnout in educators' professional activity based on an empirical study of preschool and general secondary school teachers. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), developed by K. Maslach and S. Jackson and adapted by N.E. Vodopyanova, was applied. The results revealed differences in psycho-emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment depending on the type of institution. Emotional exhaustion was higher among secondary school teachers, while depersonalization was more pronounced among preschool educators. Both groups showed high levels of reduced personal accomplishment, linked to decreased intrinsic motivation and limited professional growth opportunities. The findings emphasize the need to address socio-psychological factors of burnout and implement preventive measures in educational settings.

Keywords: educator, professional activity, emotional burnout, psycho-emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, reduced professional accomplishment, MBI methodology, socio-psychological factors, professional stress, motivation.

Introduction. The teaching profession involves constant interaction with people, which makes it emotionally complex and demanding. In the educational process, not only academic results but also students' personal development and psychological well-being are essential. Therefore, a teacher's emotional state directly influences the quality of education.

Prolonged professional strain may gradually lead to changes in the teacher's emotional condition, affecting their attitude toward work, initiative, and interaction with students. Signs such as decreased emotional stability, indifference, and inner exhaustion may appear [11]. Emotional burnout is understood as a gradually developing psychological process characterized by the depletion of positive emotions and activation of defense mechanisms under stress [3]. Teaching is one of the most emotionally intensive professions due to continuous communication, responsibility, high expectations, and the need to maintain discipline while meeting educational standards [8]. Chronic stress, workload, and limited resources contribute to mental and physical fatigue, reduced motivation, loss of professional interest, and negative attitudes toward others.

Such manifestations negatively affect both the teacher's well-being and the psychological climate of the educational environment, ultimately influencing students' motivation and academic performance.

Main Part. The term "emotional burnout" was introduced in 1974 by H.J. Freudenberger to describe emotional exhaustion experienced by helping professionals [2]. By the early 1980s, the concept had gained significant attention, and the professional risk group expanded beyond medical workers to include teachers, police officers, lawyers, and managers (R. Schwab, 1982).

Many scholars consider burnout a consequence of prolonged professional stress (Borisova, Velichkovskaya, Vodopyanova, Greenberg, Jackson, Maslach, Orel, Formanyuk, etc.) [10]. According to K. Maslach, specialists engaged in intensive interpersonal interaction are particularly vulnerable due to constant emotional demands and responsibility [5]. In modern psychology, emotional burnout is defined as mental, emotional, and physical exhaustion caused by chronic psycho-emotional stress. It manifests as persistent fatigue, decreased energy, cynicism, reduced professional efficacy, and loss of motivation. Contemporary research interprets burnout not only as a problem of interpersonal relations but also as a professional crisis related to the nature of work itself. B.G. Ananyev viewed burnout as a negative phenomenon typical of “person–person” professions [1]. T.V. Formanyuk associated it with the development of psychological defense mechanisms and accumulation of negative emotional experience [11].

E.P. Ilyin emphasized that long-term stress, insufficient recovery, and weak social support lead to both psychological and psychophysiological consequences, including reduced professional effectiveness [4]. Preventive measures include workload optimization, stress management, and strengthening socio-psychological support.

A.A. Rean highlighted the role of internal factors such as responsibility, self-esteem, perfectionism, and stress resistance in the development of burnout [9]. L.M. Mitina identified high emotional involvement, excessive workload, lack of recognition, and insufficient support as key risk factors.

Thus, emotional burnout is a complex, multifactorial process resulting from the interaction of external (organizational and social) and internal (personal and motivational) factors.

Methodology. N.E. Vodopyanova adapted the “Professional Burnout” questionnaire developed by K. Maslach for Russian-speaking audiences and examined the relationship between professional stress, emotional workload, social support, and psychological resources [6]. She defined emotional burnout as a complex psychological process involving depletion of internal resources, decreased motivation, and weakened professional identity, and emphasized the importance of prevention through psychological support and self-regulation strategies [2].

K. Maslach and S. Jackson proposed a three-component model of burnout in 1981 and developed the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), which remains a widely used diagnostic tool. The model includes three components: psycho-emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. The study involved 60 teachers: 30 preschool teachers and 30 general secondary school teachers. To assess burnout levels, the modified version of the MBI adapted by Vodopyanova was used. The questionnaire measures the frequency of burnout-related experiences across three scales:

- Psycho-emotional exhaustion – feelings of fatigue and energy depletion.
- Depersonalization – emotional distancing and negative attitudes toward others.
- Reduced personal accomplishment – decreased professional confidence and motivation.

The analysis allowed identification of the level and structure of emotional burnout among teachers, confirming the practical and theoretical relevance of the Maslach and Jackson model for pedagogical research.

Results. In order to study the state of emotional burnout in pedagogical activity and identify influencing factors, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), modified by N.E. Vodopyanova, was administered. The results are presented in Figure 1 below.

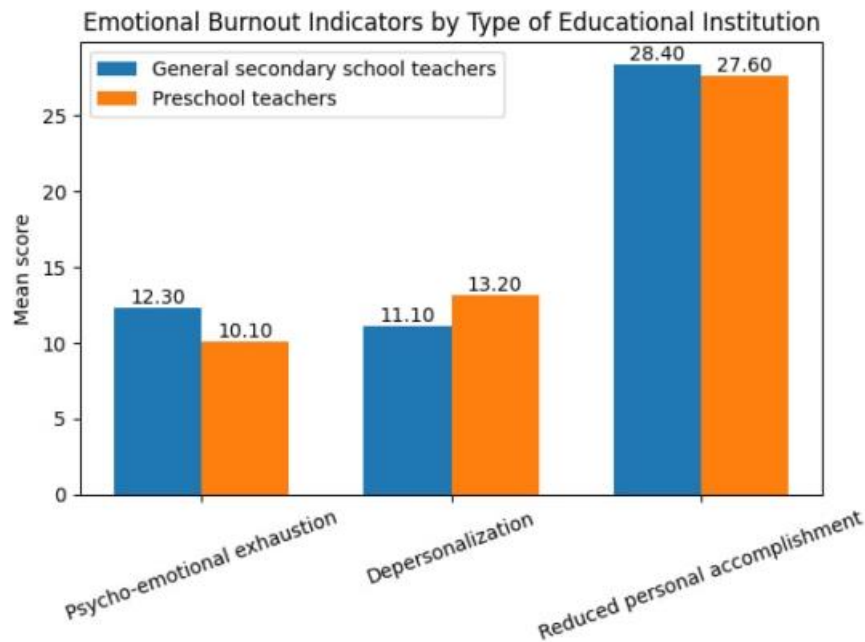


Figure 1. Comparison of sample groups based on the K. Maslach and S. Jackson “Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)” results (n = 60)

Results and Interpretation. According to the results of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) developed by K. Maslach and S. Jackson, the “Psycho-emotional exhaustion” scale showed a slightly higher indicator among general secondary school teachers (12.3%) compared to preschool teachers (10.1%).

On the “Depersonalization” scale, preschool teachers demonstrated a somewhat higher level (13.2%), whereas general secondary school teachers showed a relatively lower indicator (11.1%).

The “Reduced personal accomplishment” scale was found to be at an almost equally high level in both preschool teachers (27.6%) and general secondary school teachers (28.4%).

Interpretation of the Comparative Results. The analysis indicates that psycho-emotional exhaustion is more pronounced among teachers working in general secondary schools than among preschool educators. This may be explained by the higher level of professional responsibility, the complexity of communication related to students’ age characteristics, assessment and examination systems, and increased workload. From a psychological perspective, these conditions may lead to reduced stress tolerance, weakened cognitive activity, and decreased motivation.

Among the socio-psychological factors contributing to this condition are continuous work in a stressful environment, high workload, time pressure, emotionally demanding communication, and imbalance between professional and personal life.

The relatively lower level of depersonalization among general secondary school teachers may be explained by higher levels of personal reflection, self-awareness, and orientation toward professional development. Regular analysis and self-assessment practices, the presence of social recognition, moral encouragement, and active interaction with parents and the educational community also serve as protective socio-psychological factors.

Conversely, the relatively higher level of depersonalization among preschool teachers may be associated with limited psychological resources, insufficient novelty in professional activity, and weaker material and moral incentives. As a result, these educators may experience emotional distancing from their professional role, which negatively affects interpersonal communication and reduces professional motivation.

Socio-psychological factors contributing to this include insufficient professional support systems, limited access to psychological assistance and training programs, task-oriented approaches rather than individualized interaction, and weak internal and external motivational reinforcement.

The nearly identical and high level of reduced personal accomplishment observed in both groups indicates that teachers experience emotional fatigue, decreased intrinsic motivation, and dissatisfaction with their professional activity. This symptom reflects reduced confidence in their professional role, lowered self-esteem, and uncertainty regarding prospects for professional growth. Psychologically, it is associated with decreased self-evaluation, reduced professional efficacy, and diminished positive emotions toward work, negatively affecting enthusiasm, responsibility, and personal satisfaction.

Among the socio-psychological factors are limited opportunities for professional self-development, insufficient or low-quality professional training programs, routine and lack of innovation in work activities, long-term occupational fatigue, and restricted opportunities for career advancement.

Conclusion. Based on the analysis of literature and the findings of scientific research, emotional burnout is one of the most pressing problems in the teaching profession. It is a multifactorial psychological phenomenon formed through the interaction of personal, cognitive, socio-psychological, and organizational factors. The burnout process typically develops gradually and significantly reduces teachers' intrinsic motivation, professional activity, and overall job satisfaction. Overall, the results confirm that emotional burnout among teachers is a complex socio-psychological process. Its prevention requires not only strengthening individual psychological resources but also creating a supportive institutional environment, improving professional incentive systems, and expanding opportunities for teachers' professional development.

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