




 Research Article

# Burnout and Sources of Stress among Primary and Secondary Teachers in the Republic of North Macedonia

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## Abstract

The study focuses on professional burnout and its sources of workplace stress among teachers. Burnout, as a complex psychological phenomenon, is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced professional efficiency. Teachers play a crucial role in the development of our future generations and their well-being is central to their ability to effectively fulfil this role. The general aim of the research is to measure burnout levels and sources of stress among primary and secondary teachers who are working in public schools in the Republic of North Macedonia, by examining the degree of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment. The research sample is randomly chosen and consists of 320 teachers. To collect data, a personal information form and Maslach Burnout Inventory were used to measure burnout levels of teachers. The obtained results found that primary and secondary teachers in public school in Republic of North Macedonia experienced a high level of emotional exhaustion and an average level of depersonalization and personal accomplishment dimension. Emotional exhaustion represents a critical warning sign of burnout, signaling the need for individual and organizational interventions to restore balance and resilience. The research detects nine significant factors that cause stress and professional burnout among teachers. The present study has contributed to the field by providing new insights into the stress and burnout experienced by primary and secondary teachers and should encourage education policies makers, national and local education authorities in developing a healthy, safe and productive environment for the growth and development of all involved in. Instead of looking at teacher burnout as an individual problem, leaders in education must shift their focus to assess the problem as a systemic, institutional, or policy-based issue.

**Keywords:** Burnout, Stress, Teachers

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Professional burnout is a psychological syndrome that occurs as a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors in the workplace. The concept has been widely studied in various fields, especially in psychology, organizational behavior and health sciences (Maslach et al., 2001). Burnout is defined as a deep and permanent exhaustion with many emotional, physical, cognitive and social symptoms, resulting from long-term occupational stress, particularly in occupations with incessant human interactions and high responsibility for others (Brouwers, & Tomic, 2000; Johnson et al., 2005). It is seen as a professional phenomenon that affects all aspects of personality - physiological, emotional, behavioral, health. Today, this phenomenon poses a serious threat to the health and well-being of employees worldwide, especially in professions where emotional labor is as significant as that of teachers. Teachers who are emotionally exhausted are less likely to contribute positively to institutions and students, resulting in lower productivity and increased errors. Over time, this disrupts the overall organizational culture and reduces the competitiveness of companies. Professional burnout is influenced by several factors, both at the individual and at the organizational level. High workload, unclear job expectations, lack of autonomy, and insufficient

management support are common organizational contributors. At the individual level, perfectionism, inability to set boundaries and strong identification with the professional role increase susceptibility. In addition, burnout is often exacerbated by external stressors such as societal and family pressures, economic instability, and the rapid pace of technological advancement, which requires constant updating of skills and multitasking. (Maslach et al., 2001). According to Maslach's theory, the characteristics of burnout syndrome include emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 1996).

### **Emotional Exhaustion**

Emotional exhaustion is a state of feeling emotionally exhausted because of accumulated stress from personal or work life, or a combination of both. Emotional exhaustion is considered a core component of burnout, which represents the depletion of emotional and psychological resources necessary to meet the demands of one's professional role. (Martinez et al., 2020). It manifests as feeling tired, physically and mentally, and feeling overwhelmed by the pressures and challenges of work. Those who experience emotional burnout report feeling exhausted, unable to regain their energy after rest, and increasingly distant from their work. People who experience emotional exhaustion often feel like they have no power or control over what happens in life. (Szigeti, 2017). They may feel "stuck" or "trapped" in a situation. The consequences of emotional exhaustion extend beyond the individual, affecting organizational outcomes such as productivity, absenteeism. When employees are emotionally exhausted, their cognitive functions—such as attention, memory, and decision-making—become impaired, reducing work efficiency and increasing the likelihood of errors (Martinez et al., 2020). Moreover, emotional exhaustion can lead to disengagement, with employees withdrawing from their roles and responsibilities to protect themselves from further burnout. This disengagement not only reduces job satisfaction, but also undermines team dynamics, as exhausted employees are less likely to contribute positively to collaborative efforts. Hence, emotional exhaustion represents a critical warning sign of burnout, signaling the need for individual and organizational interventions to restore balance and resilience. (Maslach et al., 2001). Prolonged teacher stress negatively correlates with job satisfaction and positively correlates with intending to leave the teaching profession. It may also result in withdrawal behavior, including physically or psychologically leaving the work setting (Watts & Short, 1990)

### **Depersonalization**

Depersonalization, another dimension of burnout, refers to the development of negative, cynical attitudes toward one's work and toward the people one interacts with in a professional context. It is characterized by psychological distancing from work, where individuals begin to see their tasks and colleagues as impersonal or mechanical. This detachment manifests as a coping mechanism in response to overwhelming work stress, where employees withdraw emotionally to protect themselves from further emotional strain. This phenomenon is particularly prevalent in caring professions, where constant exposure to the emotional needs of others can lead to emotional exhaustion and, consequently, depersonalization (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1979). Depersonalization has implications for both workplace relationships and job performance. When employees become emotionally detached from their work, they may show a lack of caring, which can damage the quality of their interactions with customers and colleagues. (Martinez et al., 2020). Depersonalization can contribute to ethical disengagement, where individuals become desensitized to the moral and ethical aspects of their work, leading to unethical behavior or poor decision-making. In organizational settings, this cynicism can spread, creating a toxic work environment that affects team cohesion and overall morale. Addressing depersonalization requires strategies that foster emotional resilience, such as peer support, stress management training, and creating a more supportive organizational culture.

### **Personal Accomplishment**

Reducing personal accomplishment refers to a person's declining perception of their own competence and effectiveness in their professional role. Employees who experience this aspect of burnout

often feel that their efforts are inadequate, unrecognized, or unable to produce meaningful results. This sense of inadequacy can lead to feelings of frustration, failure, and lack of motivation to continue pursuing professional goals. Over time, the cumulative effect of perceived failures and lack of recognition can reduce an individual's self-efficacy, eroding their belief in their ability to successfully meet challenges. In fields where personal achievement and impact are significant sources of professional satisfaction—such as education, social work, and health care loss of a sense of accomplishment can be particularly detrimental to long-term career satisfaction and mental well-being. (Martinez et al, 2020). Individuals who no longer feel effective in their roles are likely to experience a decline in engagement and commitment, leading to a reduced willingness to take on new challenges or responsibilities. This withdrawal from proactive work behavior can hinder career advancement and reduce opportunities for professional growth. In addition, a persistent belief that one's work has no value or meaning can lead to disengagement from the organizational mission, exacerbating the overall sense of disillusionment. To address this dimension of burnout, interventions should focus on fostering a culture of recognition and support, providing clear feedback, and ensuring that employees have opportunities to experience success and growth in their roles. Encouraging continuous development and recognizing individual contributions can help restore a sense of efficacy and personal achievement. (Maslach, 1986).

### 1.1. Teacher Stress and Burnout - Literature Review

Published studies have identified three different burnout profiles among teachers with the prevalence ranging from 25.12% to 48.37% (Maslach, 1986; Martínez, 2020).

These are, one group of teachers with predominantly low levels of emotional exhaustion and high levels of personal accomplishment, the second group teachers with high levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and third group teachers with low levels of depersonalization and personal accomplishment. These groups show the combination of the three interrelated components of burnout reported by Maslach et al (Shukla & Trivedi, 2008; Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

The lowest, highest and median burnout prevalences from 2020 to 2022 (after the pandemic and lockdown) were, respectively, 3.1% 70.9% and 27.6% (Pohl et al., 2021). Similarly, the lowest, highest and median burnout prevalences up until 2019 were, respectively, 2.81%, 63.43% and 25.09% (Shukla & Trivedi, 2008).

The findings that are focused on comparing levels of burnout of primary and secondary school teachers are of great interest. The secondary school teachers reported higher levels of burnout as compared to primary school teachers. Other studies confirmed that teachers who teach older children have lower levels of teaching performance (Antoniou et al., 2006). In addition, teachers of younger students experience the lowest levels of burnout, while this is not the same for their colleagues who teach older students (Kantas, 1996). Across school levels, some research indicates that primary school teachers experience greater stress and burnout than high school teachers (Chan et al., 2010; Timms et al., 2006) while research from the OECD (2020a) indicates opposing trends across different countries suggesting no significant overall differences across educational levels. Rajendran et al. (2020) found no differences in levels of emotional exhaustion and burnout across primary and secondary teachers, while De Nobile and McCormick (2010) did not delineate between primary and secondary teachers but found classroom teachers to have greater stress than any other educator type.

The literature emphasizes six aspects of a working environment that can contribute to work related stress: work demands, control or (the degree of autonomy in task execution), support, interpersonal relationships at work, role within the organization, and the management of organizational change (Pimenta et al., 2023; White, 2020). Previous analyses related to stress indicate that they are of a multifactorial nature and depend on the individual, interpersonal and organizational factors. How certain stimuli will largely affect someone depends on the level of cognitive processing, which is related to personal goals, beliefs, attitudes, etc. Van Droogenbroeck et al. (2014) argue that workload needs to be distinguished between teaching related and non-teaching related tasks. Findings from their study confirmed that teaching-related workload combined with interpersonal relationships between the teacher and their students, had one of the strongest effects on the experience of emotional exhaustion.

Teachers who possess greater emotion regulation capabilities are predicted to experience less stress and burnout (Gross, 2002; Montgomery & Rupp, 2005). Interpersonally, teachers with sound emotion regulation ability are likely to recognize emotions in their students, predict the associated cognitions and behavior, and choose an appropriate response that meets the needs of their students (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Sutton et al., 2009). At an intrapersonal level, the ability to recognize emotions such as anger or frustration within themselves, and choose whether to express this, is also beneficial in maintaining good student–teacher relationships and promoting teachers’ sense of self-efficacy (i.e., situational-specific self-confidence), buffering them against stress (Sutton et al., 2009). While good emotion regulation is likely to buffer against stress, ineffective emotion regulation strategies, such as suppressing or avoiding/faking emotions, have been associated with emotional exhaustion among teachers (Chang, 2013).

## 2. METHODS

### 2.1. Research Objectives and Tasks

The general aim of the research is to measure burnout levels and sources of stress among teachers who are working in public primary and secondary schools in the Republic of North Macedonia. The realization of this aim is done through the realization of the following tasks:

- Examining the degree of emotional exhaustion among primary and secondary teachers.
- Examining the degree of depersonalization among primary and secondary teachers.
- Examining the degree of personal accomplishment among primary and secondary teachers.
- Examining the sources influencing professional burnout and stress among primary and secondary teachers.

### 2.2. Research Sample

Participants were provided with a random sampling method and consists of 320 teachers, 207 primary teachers and 113 secondary teachers from different schools in the Republic of North Macedonia.

### 2.3. Research Techniques and Instruments

There are several burnout assessment scales available in the literature. However, collective emphasis on revision of scales according to current literature and cultural contrasts is essential. In our research, we used an adaptation of the Maslach Burnout Inventory - Educators Survey (MBI-ES) on Macedonian language. Educators Survey (MBI-ES) is a version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory measuring professional burnout among educators (teachers, staff, and volunteers). It contains 22 items examining emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “never” to “every day.” The MBI-ES has three scales, namely, Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion is assessed by summing responses to items numbers 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16, and 20. Depersonalization is assessed by summing survey responses to items numbers 5, 10, 11, 15, and 22, and personal accomplishment is assessed by summing survey responses to item numbers 4, 7, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19, and 21. For each of the three dimensions, emotional exhaustion score  $\geq 27$  is high, 17–26 is normal, and 0–16 is low. Similarly, for depersonalization score, 13 and over is high, 7–12 is normal, and 0–6 is low. For personal accomplishment, 0–31 is high, 32–38 is normal, and 39 and over is low.

### 2.4. Data Processing

The data was processed quantitatively using the EXCEL and STATISTICS computer programs. They were grouped according to the number of matchings in certain categories and then placed into tables. In the statistical processing of the data, standard procedures were applied such as: calculation of frequencies, percentages, arithmetic mean and ranks. The Chi square test  $[(\chi)^2]$  was used for certain questions from the questionnaire. The critical values of Chi square test depend on the degrees of freedom (df) and the level of significance or risk which is usually 5% or 1%. (P0.05, P0.01). To determine the degree of

connection between the variables Contingency coefficient (C) was used. The value of the Contingency coefficient is in the interval  $0 \leq C \leq 1$  and if it is closer to 1, then the relationship between the observed features is stronger.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers play a crucial role in the development of our future generations and their well-being is central to their ability to effectively fulfil this role. The general aim of the research is to measure burnout levels and sources of stress among primary and secondary teachers who are working in public schools in the Republic of North Macedonia, by examining the degree of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment.

The constant technical-technological and social development imposes the need to modernize the educational process and adapt it and follow the continuous development trends, which will enable the improvement of the quality in education. In that sense, teaching staff are at the center of modern efforts to improve the quality and increase the efficiency of pedagogical work. The motive to actualize the problem of professional burnout of teachers is for several reasons:

The rapid and radical changes that are reflected in all domains of our social action and survival. This period, which is called the period of transition, in the Republic of North Macedonia is characterized as a time of comprehensive and violent changes, which do not pass a single aspect of development in both private and public institutions, including schools.

The challenges imposed by the environment, new values and beliefs and their rapid changes, as well as the necessity to modernize the educational process, which should be qualitatively improved through the implementation of quality projects.

The need for innovations that are implemented until now, and which in many ways differ from traditional teaching, bringing innovations both in the content and in the way the employees work, and until now no one checks or measures their actual application and the effect of the applied.

The resistance to the new and the unknown, which is still present in consciousness in most people. Published studies have identified three different burnout profiles among teachers, one group of teachers with predominantly low levels of emotional exhaustion and high levels of personal accomplishment, the second group teachers with high levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and third group teachers with low levels of depersonalization and personal accomplishment. The obtained results in this study found that primary and secondary teachers in public school in Republic of North Macedonia experienced a high level of emotional exhaustion and an average level of depersonalization and personal accomplishment dimension.

In our research, we used an adaptation of the Maslach Burnout Inventory - Educators Survey (MBI-ES) on Macedonian language. The questionnaire was filled out by a total of 320 teachers, 65% primary teachers and 35% secondary teachers. In connection with professional experience of the participants it was established that the most numerous is the group of teachers who have more than 15 years of pedagogical experience – 47.8 %, followed by those with 10 to 15 years of experience (27.8 %), between 5-10 years – 16.6 %, and the least number are teachers with up to 5 years of experience (13,8%).

Table 1 summarizes the burnout levels of teachers in three dimensions. For each of the three dimensions, emotional exhaustion score  $\geq 27$  is high, 17–26 is average and 0–16 is low. For depersonalization score, 13 and over is high, 7–12 is average, and 0–6 is low. For personal accomplishment, 0–31 is high, 32–38 is average, and 39 and over is low.

**Table 1.** Burnout Levels of Teachers

Burnout Dimensions	N	Mean
Emotional exhaustion	320	28.13
Depersonalization	320	7.01
Personal accomplishment	320	35.49

As can be seen from Table 1, it is observed that teachers are experiencing a high level of burnout for emotional exhaustion, and average level of depersonalization and personal accomplishment.

### 3.1 Findings about Burnout Levels of Teachers According to the Sub-scale Emotional exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion is assessed by summing responses to items numbers 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16, and 20. The 9-item Emotional Exhaustion scale measures feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work. The results presented in Table 2 show that teachers face a high level of emotional exhaustion, symptoms of burnout, a chronic state of physical and emotional depletion that may result from excessive work or personal demands, or continuous stress.

**Table 2.** Emotional Exhaustion among Teachers

Items	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. I feel emotionally drained from my work	24	55	23	48	32	86	52
2. I feel used up at the end of the workday	17	44	12	43	25	82	97
3. I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job	65	49	22	43	34	72	35
6. Working with students/people all day is really a strain for me	78	68	25	29	23	45	51
8. I feel burned out from my work	53	54	18	27	34	62	73
13. I feel frustrated by my job	132	68	34	25	17	19	25
14. I feel I'm working too hard on my job	30	33	20	25	40	64	108
16. Working with students, parents, colleagues directly puts too much stress on me	54	59	24	32	23	31	99
20. I feel like I'm at the end of my rope	118	64	27	23	31	29	28
Total Score				28.13			

Most teachers see various contributing factors for emotional exhaustion. Social-emotional needs, classroom management demands, low salary, difficulties with the emotional climate within the school, difficulties regarding the teacher-student interactions, conflicts that arise involving parents and colleagues and the imbalance between these demands and the available resources all play a part in emotional exhaustion. Among the three components of burnout, emotional exhaustion appears to be the most critical. It has often been positioned to emerge first in the development of burnout, thus in turn leading to higher levels of depersonalization and reduced feelings of personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 1996, 2001). Further substantiating the central role of emotional exhaustion among the three components of burnout, emotional exhaustion has been found to present the most consistent relations with outcomes out of all burnout components (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Demerouti, et al, 2001; Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007). In particular, emotional exhaustion appears to be the burnout component that best predicts (in terms of explaining the most variance) decreases in work performance.

### 3.2 Findings about burnout levels of teachers according to the sub-scale Depersonalization

The 5-item Depersonalization scale measures an unfeeling and impersonal response toward recipients. Depersonalization is associated with distortion in relationships with other people, opposition to those who contact them (parents, colleagues and relatives). Depersonalization is assessed by summing survey responses to items numbers 5, 10, 11, 15, and 22.

**Table 3.** Depersonalization among Teachers

Items	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I feel I treat some recipients as if they were impersonal objects.	194	34	18	15	12	26	21
10. I've become more callous toward people since I took this job.	200	28	15	19	17	21	20
11. I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally	176	41	25	24	15	16	23
15. I don't really care what happens to some recipients/students	208	33	18	14	12	12	23
22. I feel recipients /students/parents blame me for some of their problems.	150	70	18	16	27	25	14
Total Score					7.01		

The study result present in Table 3 indicate that most of teachers have average representation of depersonalization. Addressing depersonalization requires strategies that foster emotional resilience, such as peer and college support, stress management training, and creating a more supportive organizational culture.

Getting support from colleagues and subscales of burnout were considered together and teachers who got support from colleagues had significantly lower average scores in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization than teachers who got no support from colleagues (Koruklu et al., 2012).

### 3.3 Findings about burnout levels of teachers according to the sub-scale Personal Accomplishment

The 8-item Personal Accomplishment scale measures feelings of competence and successful achievement in one’s work. For personal accomplishment, 0–31 is high, 32–38 is average, and 39 and over is low and lower scores correspond to greater experienced burnout. Personal accomplishment is assessed by summing survey responses to item numbers 4, 7, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19, and 21.

**Table 4.** Personal Accomplishment among Teachers

Items	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
4. I can easily understand how my recipients feel about things.	14	22	9	20	24	64	170	
7. I deal very effectively with the problems of my recipients.	18	22	11	13	17	52	189	
9. I feel I’m positively influencing other people’s lives through my work.	8	15	12	8	24	59	198	
12. I feel very energetic.	28	37	38	44	30	62	86	
17. I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my recipients.	17	26	13	19	24	62	164	
18. I feel exhilarated after working closely with my recipients.	15	25	18	21	33	51	158	
19. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.	27	74	17	22	44	56	80	
21. In my work, I deal with emotional problems very calmly.	12	34	21	23	36	65	127	
Total Score					35.49			

The study results present in Table 4 indicate that most teachers have average representation of personal accomplishment. Reducing personal accomplishment refers to a person’s declining perception of their own competence and effectiveness in their professional role. This indicates a close correlation between personal achievement and self-efficacy. A teacher’s sense of efficacy is important because teachers need to feel competent and confident in their ability to teach and reach all students. The relationship between self-efficacy and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment among teachers are significant and positively associated with the extent of teachers academic accomplishment (Nwankwo at el., 2013).

### 3.4 Causes Affecting Burnout and Stress Among Teachers

One of the tasks of this study is to examine the attitudes of teachers regarding the causes/factors that affecting burnout and stress in their workplace.

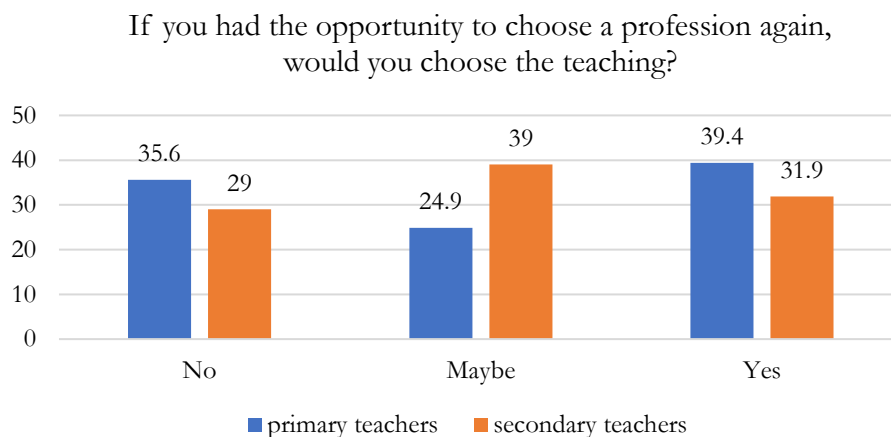
**Table 5.** Causes Affecting Burnout and Stress among Teachers

Causes Affecting Burnout and Stress	Arithmetic Mean	Rank
The feeling of being unappreciated	6.15	1
Strong partisanship influences and pressures	6.06	2
Challenging student behavior	6.02	3
Lack of material and technical resources	6.00	4
The lack of support from management and colleagues	5.98	5
Difficult parents	5.95	6
Long hours of work	5.86	7
Lack of power/autonomy	5.72	8
Standardized testing and external evaluation	5.08	9

Data results presented in Table 5 show 9 common causes of professional burnout and stress, based on the calculated frequency and arithmetic mean, the rank was determined starting from the first ranked

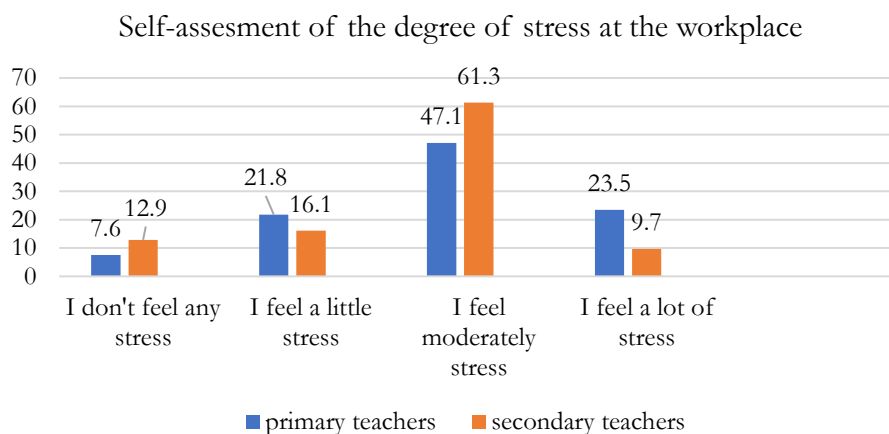
cause with the greatest impact to the ninth with the least impact. The top 3 highest ranked reasons are feeling of being unappreciated strong partisanship influences and pressures, challenging student behavior and handling students with “difficult” behavior.

In many European countries, including the Republic of North Macedonia, the teaching profession is becoming unattractive due to the modern lifestyle of young people and low social status. The views of the teachers are that this profession is on the list of the most unattractive among young people and students because teachers have low incomes, there is a high degree of partisanship, but also a lot of pressure from parents for grades.



**Figure 1.** Teachers’ Views on Choosing the Teaching Profession

In this study, approximately one third of the teachers would choose the teaching profession again, but the majority are uncertain or would not choose the teaching profession. The calculated  $\chi^2=2.75$  (df=2, P0.05=5.99, P0.01=9.21, C=0.09) shows that there are no statistically significant differences in the opinions of primary and secondary school teachers.



**Figure 2.** Teachers’ Self-Assessment of the Degree of Stress at the Workplace

The teachers also made a self-assessment of the level of stress at the workplace and based on the obtained results, most of them experience moderate stress, and the lowest percentage of teachers don’t feel stress at all at the workplace.

The calculated  $\chi^2 = 4.98$  (df=3, P0.05=7.82, P0.01=11.34, C=0.12) shows that the differences in the opinions of teachers from primary and secondary schools are statistically not significant, both groups of teachers made a similar self-assessment regarding the level of stress at the workplace. If we do a comparative



analysis of the scores obtained according to Maslach Burnout Inventory, we note that emotional exhaustion is at high levels, and an average level are depersonalization and personal accomplishment. Similar results were found in research from the OECD (2020a) indicates opposing trends across different countries suggesting no significant overall differences across educational levels. Rajendran et al. (2020) found no differences in levels of emotional exhaustion and burnout across primary and secondary teachers.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS

As a result of the study, it was found that primary and secondary teachers in public school in Republic of North Macedonia experienced a high level of emotional exhaustion and an average level of depersonalization and personal accomplishment dimension. Emotional exhaustion represents a critical warning sign of burnout, signalling the need for individual and organizational interventions to restore balance and resilience.

The first step in preventing stress and burnout is its recognition. The implementation of coping mechanisms and preventive strategies is essential for dealing with and mitigating burnout among educational staff. To overcome the syndrome of professional burnout, we need to take a two-way approach - to initiate change at the individual level and to change the organization. Institutional support, including staff development and counselling services, is vital to safeguarding the wellbeing of teaching staff and mitigating the risk of burnout. These support mechanisms provide teachers with the necessary resources, skills, and emotional support to cope with the challenges inherent in their profession. Institutional support not only addresses immediate concerns, but also fosters a culture of continued growth and psychological safety, which are essential for maintaining long-term job satisfaction and professional effectiveness. Staff development programs are a component of institutional support that can significantly reduce burnout among educational staff. These services provide a confidential space for teachers to discuss work-related stress, personal challenges and mental health concerns with trained professionals. Counselling can help teachers develop coping strategies, manage stress, and address issues such as anxiety, depression, or work-life imbalance, which are common precursors to burnout.

Solving teacher burnout cannot be reduced to calls for teacher resilience or encouraging self-care. Such responses seem to suggest teachers experiencing burnout lack the grit to persevere. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth for the vast majority of teachers.

Stripping teachers of their autonomy, as well as imposing standardization and high-stakes exams, can eat away at the rewards and gratification of teaching. Education leaders must examine such trends and find ways to fortify the rewards of teaching if they hope to prevent teacher burnout.

Instead of looking at teacher burnout as an individual problem, leaders in education must shift their focus to assess the problem as a systemic, institutional, or policy-based issue.

Though teachers from high-poverty schools disproportionately make up burned-out teachers, educators from high-performing schools can also feel demoralized. They report serious frustration and confusion dealing with administrative work that often gobbles up unreasonable amounts of time that could be better spent.

Giving teachers more autonomy can improve job satisfaction and retention. Involving teachers in activities that honor their independence and bolster their sense of feeling respected can significantly affect their morale and motivate them to stay.

The research detects nine significant factors that cause stress and professional burnout, of which the first three highest ranked are feeling of being unappreciated strong partisanship influences and pressures and handling students with "difficult" behaviour. Preventive strategies are equally important in creating a sustainable work environment that minimizes the risk factors associated with burnout. These strategies often involve organizational changes, such as reducing workloads, improving school climate, and providing adequate opportunities for professional development. Engaging in ongoing professional development and continuous learning is an important strategy for preventing burnout. Professional development gives teachers the opportunity to improve their skills, stay up to date on best practices, and stay intellectually engaged in their work. This constant growth can prevent feelings of stagnation and frustration. The leadership style of school principals and other management is another organizational factor that affects the

well-being of educational staff. Transformational leadership, which means inspiring and motivating teachers, fostering professional development, and fostering innovation, is associated with lower levels of burnout.

The present study has contributed to the field by providing new insights into the stress and burnout experienced by primary and secondary teachers and should encourage education policies makers, national and local education authorities in developing a healthy, safe and productive environment for the growth and development of all involved in. According to data results, the recommendations of the study refer to beginning to create awareness for teachers who are facing burnout, in-service training, employment of psychologists in primary and secondary schools, planning and providing psychological support to teachers.

Schools would benefit from addressing the psychosocial risks assessment and help in designing efficient and practical measures to stress management. Also, a supportive leadership team can be a key protective factor for teachers as are teaching communities of support. Such factors would be of value to include in future research.

The study also has its limitations, in terms of the size of the research sample and the generalizing of the results. Future research is needed to replicate the findings with a larger research sample. This study used cross-sectional data from one country, and the results should not be generalized and replicated in other countries, in other contexts. Future research should also consider assessing other intrapersonal factors such as teachers' personality traits. The results should contribute to developing programs focused on building resilience, promoting the importance of mental health and creating a supportive school environment. Additionally, health promotion, wellbeing and prevention of work stress should be integrated and be part of teachers' educational curriculum.

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