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## Testing a model for teacher burnout

Jeffrey Dorman  
Australian Catholic University  
Brisbane, Australia

### Abstract

Research was conducted on the predictors of burnout in a sample of teachers in Queensland private schools. A total of 246 teachers responded to scales that assessed burnout, school and classroom environments, work pressure, role overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, teaching efficacy, external locus of control, and self-esteem. The Maslach Burnout Inventory was used to assess three facets of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment. An hypothesized model of burnout was tested in a LISREL analysis with post hoc modifications indicating that role overload, work pressure, classroom environment and self-esteem were predictors of emotional exhaustion. Depersonalisation was significantly related to emotional exhaustion, role conflict, self-esteem and school environment. Teaching efficacy, self-esteem and depersonalisation were predictors of personal accomplishment.

In 1974, Freudenberger introduced the term burnout to describe the inability to function effectively in one's job as a consequence of prolonged and extensive job related stress. Since that time, incidences of, and research into stress and burnout have increased with popular emphasis on employees in the human services sector including social workers, nurses, teachers, lawyers, medical doctors and police officers (Jackson, Schwab, & Schuler, 1986; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). A common characteristic of these occupations is that the nature of the work can be highly emotional. For teachers, the potential for emotional stress is high since they work with classes of up to 35 students for long periods of time. The intensely relational nature of classrooms means that teachers are vulnerable to emotionally draining and discouraging experiences (Maslach & Leiter, 1999). Such experiences can lead to dysfunctional teacher behaviour with obvious implications for the teacher's well-being and student learning.

This article reports the findings of a study of burnout in Queensland private school teachers. Specifically, the study investigated the influence of several hypothesized predictor variables. To provide a contextual basis for the research, background information on theoretical and empirical perspectives relating to this research is provided.

[Link to full text paper pdf \(167KB\)](#)

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