

The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Burnout in Secondary School Teachers

Ph.D. Abderrahim BOUNAISSAT¹,

Jamal KSIKSOU², Mimoun SAIDI³, Farah EL HOUARI⁴, Khalid TISSIR⁵, Brahim NEHASS⁶,

Naoual EL YOUBI⁷, Rabab TLEMSANI⁸, Ghizlane MERZAQ⁹, Benaissa ZARHBOUCH¹⁰

Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences Dhar El Mehraz,

Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University,

Fez, Morocco

Science Step Journal / SSJ

2024/Volume 2 - Issue 6

doi: <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.27569334>

To cite this article: Bounaissat, A., Ksiksou, J., Saidi, M., Houari, F., Tissir, K., Nehass, B., El Youbi, N., Tlemsani, R., Merzaq, G & Zarhbouch, B. (2024). The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Burnout in Secondary School Teachers. Science Step Journal II (6), 55-65. ISSN: 3009-500X.

Abstract

This research focuses on burnout among teachers, viewing it as a psychosomatic disorder caused by work-related stress. The main variable is emotional intelligence, while the dependent variable is burnout. The study was conducted in Morocco, involving 331 high school teachers. The specific problem addressed is the severe consequences of burnout, which impact the individual, their family, workplace, and community. It is important to focus on this issue due to its significant effects on teacher well-being and educational outcomes. A quantitative method was employed, using scales for emotional intelligence and burnout for assessment. The study contributes to our understanding of the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout, revealing a negative correlation across all dimensions, although no significant differences were found based on age, gender, specialty, or seniority.

Keywords: Burnout, Teachers, Stress, Emotional Intelligence.

¹ abderrahim.bounaissat@usmba.ac.ma

rahimbenaissat@gmail.com

² jamal.ksiksou@usmba.ac.ma

³ mimoun.saidi@usmba.ac.ma

⁴ farahelhouari3@gmail.com

⁵ khalid.tissir@usmba.ac.ma

⁶ brahim.nehass@usmba.ac.ma

⁷ naoual.el_youbi@hotmail.com

⁸ rababtlemsani@gmail.com

⁹ ghizlanemerzaq@gmail.com

¹⁰ bzarhbouch@qu.edu.qa

Introduction

The teaching profession is considered one of the most exhausting professions. It is psychologically, physically, and mentally demanding. This is due to the direct and continuous contact it requires with many students. The age gap between the students and the teacher is sometimes significant, and it increases as more years of work pass. Additionally, other factors such as the length of course materials and the multitude of involved parties play a significant role. A group of scientific research has confirmed that the teaching profession is one of the professions most vulnerable to burnout, which negatively affects all components of the educational process, particularly the teacher (Hansez & Bertrand, 2005).

The difficulty in identifying the early symptoms of burnout is one of the reasons behind its exacerbation as a disorder. This leads to the emergence of more advanced and severe symptoms on both the physical and psychological levels. The disorder can also progress to morph into depression, leading to an increased desire to abuse drugs and alcohol. Moreover, it can even lead to suicide. All of this has a direct impact on quality and productivity at work (Cau-Bareille, 2014, p. 149).

Freudenberger first coined the concept of burnout in 1969. Christina Maslach studied it in 1980 in relation to social, health, and other work-related aspects and defined it as follows: Burnout is a syndrome of emotional depletion, depersonalization, and low personal achievement. At the same time, these symptoms often appear in people who are engaged in employment (Bounaissat, Abderrahim; Alaoui, Moulay Ismail; Zarhbouch, Benaissa, 2020). After its discovery, burnout became the subject of numerous studies and scientific research, with thousands of research conducted between the years 1974-1983 and 1500 studies between 1990 and 2003. Moreover, this number has doubled in the last ten years (Cherkaoui, Montargot, & Yanat, 2020). The World Health Organization, during its meeting on May 25, 2019, assigned it the following code (QD85). It is now included in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11).

Stress is considered a triggering factor for burnout (Baumann, François, 2015), as much as it is for depression and other disorders (Amzat, I.; Kaur, A.; Al-Ani, W.; Poh Mun, S.; Salihi Ahmadu, T., 2020). In another definition, Maslach considered burnout as the long-term response to emotional stress and pressure related to interpersonal relationships at work. Maslach defined burnout in three dimensions: exhaustion, indifference, and detached relationships, as well as decreased activity levels and poor motivation (Daud, et al., 2022).

On the other hand, Bradberry and Greaves (2006) defined emotional intelligence as four basic skills: 1- Self-awareness, 2- Self-management, 3- Social awareness, and 4- Relationship management. Emotional intelligence also refers to the ability to deal intelligently with one's own feelings and the feelings of others, allowing for the proper development of competencies that, in

turn, lead to better life quality (Singh & Kumar, 2016) and reduce inappropriate emotional reactions that underlie poor and negative decision-making (Retuerta, Sylviane, 2016). Moreover, Thévenet (1999) has shown that the emotional component is essential in the workplace, as it significantly impacts effectiveness. Van Hoorebeke (2008) showed that the emotional aspect is closely related to achieving pleasure and job satisfaction.

Research in biological psychology has found a close link between emotions and burnout (Amzat, I.; Kaur, A.; Al-Ani, W.; Poh Mun, S.; Salihu Ahmadu, T., 2020). Statistical studies have confirmed that 30 to 40% of teachers experience burnout at some point (Elmossati, Ahami, Oudda, & Elkettani, 2016). Additionally, the Gold and Roth study classified the teaching profession as particularly dangerous in terms of exposure to stress and burnout, especially considering the current decline in the value of the teaching profession and wage disparities (Hansez & Bertrand, 2020). Research has also shown that, regardless of academic level, teachers become less concerned with student discipline over time, as if their tolerance level increases with age. They reflect significant mental pressure and an increased sense of fatigue, often experiencing a deep feeling of lack of recognition regarding their abilities and the role they play in enhancing education (Cau-Bareille, 2014). Ending a career in teaching is often a reaction to burnout issues, the desire to withdraw, work pressure, and discrepancies between professional and personal life (Hansez & Bertrand, 2005).

Diyabi's (2012) study showed that, of a sample of 1,047 primary teachers of both sexes, 74% exhibited a high rate of burnout in general. The study conducted by Al-Moussati and others on 121 male and female professors found that 64% of professors suffer from burnout, with 47% exhibiting a moderate level of burnout and 17% showing a low level. The study also found a negative correlation between the dimension of achievement and seniority at work (Elmossati, Ahami, Oudda, & Elkettani, 2016). Studies have confirmed that considering the emotional aspects and psychological needs of learners creates reassurance and motivates them to acquire new knowledge and information (Zarhbouch, 2018). Invoking emotional factors such as pleasure and desire for learning, the learner's self-esteem, and other factors significantly contribute to the transformation of the learner from a "consumer" of knowledge to a producer of it (Zarhbouch, Benaissa; Bouanani, Mostafa, 2018).

Thus, we conclude that emotional intelligence enables an intelligent handling of one's personal feelings and the feelings of others. Hence the importance of developing competencies that allow us to live our lives better (Singh & Kumar, 2016) and reducing moments of inappropriate emotions that drive negative decisions (Retuerta, Sylviane, 2016). Moreover, numerous studies have confirmed that emotional intelligence can indeed act as a protective factor against stress and burnout (Daud, et al., 2022).

Other scientific studies have confirmed the close link between emotional and physical health. Positive emotions positively influence the immune system, and vice versa (Retuerta, Sylviane, 2016). Emotional intelligence skills allow for better management of emotional and stressful situations, which in turn relieves anxiety and pressure in the human experience (Kiouach & Zarhbouch, 2021). This means a balance in the secretion and regulation of anxiety-related hormones, such as adrenaline and cortisol, which are responsible for disturbing a range of vital bodily functions, especially immunity. Therefore, proper management of feelings and emotions has a significant impact on maintaining physical health, as well as on the prevention and treatment of burnout (Singh & Kumar, 2016).

Problematic Question

Given the significant impact of burnout on teachers and the potential role of emotional intelligence in mitigating its effects, how does emotional intelligence correlate with burnout levels among high school teachers in Morocco?

This question aims to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout, which is crucial for developing effective interventions for educators.

Methodology

This qualitative descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted in six Moroccan cities, between January 2020 and March 2020. Our sample consisted of 331 secondary school teachers of both genders, from different disciplines and working in public schools, using a simple random sample. The following table provides descriptive information on the study sample.

Table 1: The research community

VARIABLES	GENDER	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
GENDER	Male	174	61.02%
	Female	157	35.65%
DISCIPLINE	Literature	102	61.02%
	Sciences	118	35.65%
	Sports	11	32.32%
AGE	20-30	42	12.69%
	31-40	122	36.86%
	41-45	32	9.67%
	45+	135	40.78%
WORK SENIORITY	Less than 5	31	9.37%
	6 to 10	69	20.84%
	11 to 15	74	22.36%
	16 to 20	43	12.99%
	More than 20 yrs	114	34.47%

To meet the study's aim two types of validated instruments were used. The Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (BarOn EQ-i) to measure emotional intelligence and the Maslach and Jackson Burnout Scale (MBI-HSS) for the Human Professions (Education) to measure burnout. The Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory was translated and adapted to the Moroccan environment, at the Cognitive Sciences Laboratory of the Faculty of Literature and Human Sciences Dhar Al-Mahraz, University of Sidi Mohamed bin Abdullah (Zarhbouch, Benaissa; El Ghoudani, Karima, 2021). We adopted the scale used by (Tashtoush, Jarwan, Mhidat, and Beni Atta, 2013), after adapting it to Moroccan society, by presenting it to the experts.

The burnout scale used contains 22 items, over 3 domains. The emotional exhaustion dimension (9 items), the depersonalization (cynicism) dimension (5 items), and the passive personal achievement dimension (8 items). The scale enables a distinctive diagnosis for each dimension of burnout and enables measuring the total degree of burnout (Nasraoui and Ben Zeroual, 2017). For all dimensions to have the same direction and the first- and second dimensions' paragraphs are negative, and the third dimension's paragraphs are positive. We inverted the scores of the examined subjects over the third dimension. Hence, high degrees of the scale mean a high level of burnout, and low degrees mean the opposite (Maslach, Christina; Jackson, Susan E, 1986).

The scale is answered following the Likert method, with seven choices, and scores from: (0: never), to (6: every day) (Maslach, Christina; Jackson, Susan E, 1986).

If the average obtained is less than 50, the level of burnout of the research participant is considered weak. If the rate exceeds 100, the rate of burnout of the research participant is considered high.

As for the emotional intelligence scale, in its final version, it contains 35 items (Lamouine, Zarhbouch, & Ouadi, 2019) with 5 dimensions; The internal dimension within the person himself, which asks about one's ability to recognize and understand one's own feelings (10 items). The interpersonal dimension, asks about the ability to empathize and create social relationships (10 items). The dimension of stress management contains questions about the ability to withstand stress and control emotions (8 items). "Finally, the ability to adapt dimension (7 items), which contains questions about the person's ability to solve problems and change his/her personal ideas. The answer to this scale is also conducted according to the Likert method. From (0=rarely applies to me), to (5=mostly applies to me). The higher the value, the higher the emotional intelligence of the participant. If the average score on the test is less than 58, the level of emotional intelligence is considered weak. If it exceeds 116, the emotional intelligence level of the research participant is considered high.

The two scales were distributed to the sample members to measure the degree of the two variables for everyone separately. The respondent also fills in the first page designated for

demographic data: such as age, gender, seniority in work, and the discipline of specialization. It should be noted that both the scales were distributed at the same time. After collecting the research data, 29 incomplete forms were deleted. We also processed the 331 completed forms, using the SPSS 23 statistical package for human sciences. We calculated the arithmetic as well as the hypothetical mean and the standard deviation to identify both the levels of burnout and emotional intelligence within the study sample. After we reached a statistically significant negative correlation P-value (0.01) between all dimensions of emotional intelligence and the total degree of burnout, we calculated the regression coefficient to determine which of the four dimensions has a greater impact on the dependent variable.

Results:

The results demonstrated a high level of emotional intelligence within the study's sample. Most of the participants had either a medium (72.5%) or a high level of emotional intelligence (27.5%).

Table 2: Results of a One-Sample Test to Determine the Level of Emotional Intelligence

Scale	Hypothetical mean	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Value-t	P-value	Significance
Emotional Intelligence	105	132.32	13.506	36	0.000**	Significant

*Statistical significance of P-value (0.01)***

As per the degree of burnout among the sample members, calculations of the hypothetical and the arithmetic average on the burnout scale showed a (T) value (-16.52). This value is statistically significant at the level (0.01). When comparing the two means, we found that the differences were in favor of the hypothetical mean of the scale. This indicates that the sample members have a low level of burnout.

Table 3: Arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the burnout variable

Scale	Hypothetical mean	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Value-t	P-value	Significance
Burnout	66	45.46	22.622	-16.52	0.000**	Significant

*Statistically significant at level (0.01)***

In regards to the correlation between emotional intelligence and burnout among the sample members, the third hypothesis states: There is a statistically significant correlation between emotional intelligence and burnout among the study sample members.

To verify the validity of this hypothesis, the Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to determine the significance of the correlation between emotional intelligence and burnout among the sample members. Table 4 is an illustration of the latter.

Table 4: Correlational relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout

Dimension	Exhaustion	Depersonalization	Achievement	Burnout
Intrapersonal	-0.221**	-0.276**	-0.279**	-0.323**
Interpersonal	-0.073	-0.157**	-0.254**	-0.186**
Stress management	-0.413**	-0.412**	-0.223**	-0.459**
Ability to adapt	-0.212**	-0.228**	-0.395**	-0.344**
Emotional Intelligence	-0.374**	-0.429**	-0.417**	-0.512**

*Statistically significant at level (0.01)***

As per the table above.

- There is a statistically significant P-value (0.01) negative correlation between all EI dimensions and the total degree of burnout, where the correlation coefficient values respectively equaled (0.323, -0.186, -0.459, -0.344).

- There is a statistically significant P-value (0.01) negative correlation between all dimensions of burnout and the total degree of emotional intelligence, where the values of the correlation coefficient came to (-0.374, -0.429, -0.417).

- There is a statistically significant P-value (0.01) negative correlation between the total degree of emotional intelligence and the total degree of burnout, where the value of the correlation coefficient is (-0.512).

- All previous results indicate that the lower the level of emotional intelligence among the sample members, the higher the level of burnout, and vice versa.

Since we found a statistically significant negative correlation between the variables and all their dimensions, therefore we calculated the regression coefficient to determine which of the four dimensions has a greater impact on the dependent variable.

Calculations of the regression coefficient demonstrated that the stress management dimension is the variable that has the greatest impact on the variance as per the burnout variable. As The P-value of adaptability, Interpersonal, and intrapersonal respectively came to (0.009, 0.23,

and 0.27) the other dimensions of EI appear to have no significant impact on the regression coefficient. The value of the one-way analysis of variance (P) for the regression model, as a whole, was (32.13), which is a statistically significant value at the level (0.01). Consequently, the results of the analysis confirm that stress management is the EI dimension that has the most fundamental impact on burnout, as it explains about 26% of the discrepancy that occurs in burnout. The latter is a statistically significant value at the level (0.01).

Discussion

As per the results, it appears that the higher the level of EI of the high school teachers, the lower their level of burnout. Moreover, the EI stress management dimension is the one that most predicts/ explains most accurately, why burnout occurs, since the latter, primarily results from the accumulation of pressure, and the inability to manage it and overcome it. In life in general, and the workplace in particular.

The same results were reached by the (Kermiche, A.malek Farid, 2017) study, which was conducted on (64 sports teachers), working at the intermediate level. The study found that there is a significant correlation between EI dimensions and the performance of sports teachers.

The same is true for (Singh & Kumar, 2016) study. On a sample of 300 professors (150 males and 150 females), EI levels and job satisfaction among the sample members were found to be high and statistically significant. Data analysis concluded that emotional management and emotional maturity most accurately predicted the degree of job satisfaction. The study also found that all EI dimensions could indeed predict job satisfaction.

Hence, the importance of the study's results. On one hand, these results provide a summary of all previous data. On the other hand, they provide a refined perspective about the dimension at which intervention is most needed and most efficient regarding dealing with burnout syndrome on a preventive level.

Furthermore, we realize that both the preventative and the treatment-based approaches to burnout should neither rely nor focus on socio-economic factors, such as age, gender, seniority, and others, especially since these variables are uncontrollable and mostly difficult to intervene at and change. We can neither change sex, increase or decrease age, nor can we wait for years of experience and cannot even change the person's specialty. However, on the other hand, we can focus on empowering people in general, and teachers and educators in particular, with specialized and accurate training aimed primarily at developing their emotional intelligence skills, and their ability to manage stressful situations.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The field research we conducted was enriching in terms of the results it provided. This importance stems not only from the valuable information derived from the dimensions of the two measurement scales but also from the significant amount of data obtained and the abundance of theoretical and field studies addressing this crucial topic.

Through this field study, we found that the sample members scored high on the Emotional Intelligence (EI) scale. This can be explained by several factors, including the nature of the teaching profession. Direct and continuous contact with students often enables teachers to develop their emotional intelligence through experience in problem-solving and understanding their own emotions as well as those of their students. Numerous studies have reached similar conclusions, such as those by Singh & Kumar (2016) and Badawi Mahmoud (2020), which were conducted on samples of teachers and educators.

Next, we examined the second main variable: burnout. After measuring the degree of burnout among the sample members and comparing the arithmetic mean to the hypothetical average, we found that the sample members exhibited a low level of burnout. This result aligns with our findings regarding EI, which was high among the sample members. Additionally, several studies have confirmed the inverse relationship between these two variables, including the studies by Diyabi (2012) and Al-Moussati et al. (2016), both of which focused on teacher samples.

Based on the findings of this study, we can conclude the following three key points:

- The teaching profession creates situations of anxiety and pressure that can lead to burnout.
- Regardless of age or gender, developing high emotional intelligence skills allows educators to manage stress and overcome anxiety. This development can help prevent reaching advanced or severe levels of burnout.
- Work seniority and the nature of the specialty subject play a significant role in reducing stress and overcoming burnout.

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of emotional intelligence in mitigating burnout among teachers. Further research is encouraged to explore related variables and the long-term effects of emotional intelligence training on teachers' well-being and professional performance.

Bibliographie

- Amzat, I; Kaur, A; Al-Ani, W; Poh Mun, S; Salihu Ahmadu, T. (2020). Teacher burnout and coping strategies to remain in a teaching job in Malaysia: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *European Journal of Educational Research*, 10(3), 1075- 1088.
- Baumann, François. (2015). *L'Après Burn-out*. Paris: Josette Lyon.
- Bounaissat, Abderrahim; Alaoui, moulay Ismail ; Zarhbouch, Benaissa;. (2020). L'importance de l'intelligence émotionnelle dans la prévention du burnout chez les enseignants du secondaire qualifiés. *Journal of Children and Educational Studies*, 7(1), 174.
- Bradberry, T., & Greaves, T. (2006). *The Emotional Intelligence quick book: Everything you need to know to put your EQ to work*. Simon and Schuster.
- Cau-Bareille, D. (2014). Les difficultés des enseignants en fin de carrière:des révélateurs des formes de pénibilité du travail. *management et avenir*, 7(73), 149- 170.
- Cherkaoui, W., Montargot, N., & Yanat, Z. (2020). Changement organisationnel et déterminants du stress : Etude exploratoire du stress perçu par les infirmiers de l'hôpital DS au Maroc. *Question(s) de Management*, 1(0), 44- 51.
- Daud, N., Abdul Rahim, A., Mat Pa, M., Ahmad, A., Yusof, N., Mat Hassan, N., & Idris, N. (2022). Emotional Intelligence Among Medical Students and Its Relationship with Burnout. *Education in Medicine Journal*.
- Diyabi, B. (2012, Desember). Level of psychological burnout among primary teachers in Ouargla school. *Sciences Sociales et Humaines*(9).
- Diyabi, Boubakr. (2012). Le niveau d'épuisement psychologique chez les enseignants du primaire. Une étude de terrain exploratoire. (9), 85-99.
- Elmossati, M. S., Ahami, A., Oudda, H., & Elkettani, Y. (2016). Évaluation de l'épuisement professionnel chez les enseignants universitaires au Maroc. *International Journal of Innovation and Applied Studies*, 16(4), 914- 921.
- Hansez, I., & Bertrand, F. (2005). Fin de carrière des enseignants : vers une explication du stress et des retraites prématurées. *Le travail humain*, 68(3).
- Hansez, I., & Bertrand, F. (2020). FIN DE CARRIÈRE DES ENSEIGNANTS : VERS UNE EXPLICATION DU STRESS ET DES RETRAITES PRÉMATURÉES. *Le travail humain*, 68(3), 193- 223.
- Kermiche, A. malek Farid. (2017). The relationship of emotional intelligence to the performance of teachers of physical education and sports. *Magazine Sports Creativity*(21), pp. 20- 37.
- Kiouach, A., & Zarhbouch, B. (2021). l'émotion et intelligence émotionnelle. Du concept et du prototypage à la mesure et à l'application. *IJHER*, 3(5), 295-305.
- Lamouine, M., Zarhbouch, B., & Ouadi, K. (2019). Emotional intelligence and cognitive flexibility. *International Conference on Human and Social Sciences contemporary issues*, 1(3).

- Maslach, Christina; Jackson, Susan E. (1986). Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual. 2nd edition. (131).
- Retuerta, Sylviane. (2016). *Mieux vivre avec ses émotions*. Le Mans, France: Dupli-Print.
- Singh, B., & Kumar, A. (2016). Effect of Emotional Intelligence and Gender on Job Satisfaction of Primary School Teachers. *European Journal of Educational Research. European Journal of Educational Research, 5(1)*, 1-9.
- Thévenet, M. (1999). Le travail. Que d'émotions. *Revue Française de Gestion, 41- 53*.
- Van Hoorebeke, D. (2008). La Gestion Des Emotions Au Travail: Une revue vers une nouvelle conception du management. *Cairn.info, 4(289)*, 81- 103.
- Zarhbouch, B. (2018). Le mauvais apprenant: Une approche psychologique cognitive pour réfléchir au processus de faire une erreur. *Recherche cognitive, 17-55*.
- Zarhbouch, Benaïssa; Bouanani, Mostafa. (2018). Introduction au cognitif, aux langages et aux apprentissages. *Recherche cognitive, 9(16)*.
- Zarhbouch, Benaïssa; El Ghoudani, Karima. (2021). *Escalas de evaluación psicológica: Adaptación cultural y validación psicométrica aplicada al ámbito educativo*. Fes: laboratorio de ciencias cognitivas (9).

