



THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN PREVENTING PROFESSIONAL BURNOUT AMONG TEACHERS

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Abstract

Teaching is considered one of the most emotionally demanding professions in modern society. Teachers constantly interact with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators, which often leads to emotional stress and psychological exhaustion. This article examines the relationship between emotional intelligence and professional burnout among teachers. Emotional intelligence is described as the ability to understand, manage, and regulate emotions effectively, while professional burnout refers to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced professional achievement caused by long-term stress. The article discusses the importance of emotional intelligence in pedagogical activity, the major causes and consequences of burnout, and practical strategies for preventing emotional exhaustion among teachers. The study highlights that teachers with high emotional intelligence demonstrate stronger stress resistance, better communication skills, higher professional motivation, and greater psychological well-being. The article concludes that developing emotional intelligence is an important way to improve teachers' professional effectiveness and maintain healthy educational environments.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, professional burnout, teachers, stress, empathy, psychological health, education.

INTRODUCTION

In modern educational systems, teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' intellectual and social development. However, teaching is also associated with high emotional demands, stress, and psychological pressure. Teachers are expected not only to deliver knowledge but also to motivate students, solve conflicts, maintain classroom discipline, and communicate effectively with parents and school administration [4].



Due to these responsibilities, many teachers experience emotional exhaustion and professional burnout. Professional burnout is a psychological syndrome caused by chronic occupational stress. According to Maslach, burnout consists of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment [1]. Burnout negatively affects teachers' motivation, teaching quality, communication, and psychological health.

Emotional intelligence has emerged as an important factor in educational psychology. Mayer and Salovey define emotional intelligence as the ability to understand, regulate, and use emotions effectively [2]. Goleman emphasizes that emotional intelligence contributes significantly to professional success and interpersonal relationships [3].

Teachers with high emotional intelligence are generally more capable of coping with stress, maintaining positive classroom environments, and preventing emotional exhaustion [6]. Therefore, studying the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout is highly important for improving educational quality.

Teaching is widely recognized as one of the most stressful and emotionally demanding professions. Every day, teachers face different psychological and emotional challenges while communicating with students, parents, colleagues, and school administration. They are expected to maintain discipline, motivate students, solve classroom conflicts, and create a healthy learning environment. Such responsibilities require not only professional knowledge and pedagogical skills but also emotional stability and psychological resilience.

In recent years, researchers have paid increasing attention to emotional intelligence because it is closely connected with teachers' professional effectiveness and psychological health. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize, understand, regulate, and manage emotions effectively. According to Mayer and Salovey, emotional intelligence allows individuals to process emotional information and respond appropriately in different situations [2]. Daniel Goleman later emphasized that emotional intelligence is one of the key factors of professional success and interpersonal communication [3].

For teachers, emotional intelligence is especially important because educational activity is based on continuous emotional interaction. Teachers who possess strong emotional intelligence are generally more patient, empathetic, and emotionally



balanced [5]. They are better able to cope with stressful situations, communicate positively with students, and maintain professional motivation even under pressure.

At the same time, many teachers experience professional burnout due to long-term stress and emotional overload. Burnout is a psychological syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced professional accomplishment [1]. Teachers suffering from burnout often feel emotionally drained, lose interest in teaching, and become less motivated in their professional activities.

The problem of burnout has become more serious in modern educational systems because teachers face increasing workloads, administrative duties, technological adaptation, and social expectations. The COVID-19 pandemic also intensified emotional stress among teachers because of distance learning challenges and the rapid transition to digital education [11].

Emotional intelligence plays a significant role in preventing professional burnout. Teachers with high emotional intelligence can regulate emotions effectively, maintain emotional balance, and adapt to stressful situations more successfully. They are more likely to create positive classroom environments and establish healthy relationships with students.

Emotional Intelligence in Teaching Activity

Emotional intelligence includes several important components that influence teachers' professional activity and psychological well-being.

1	Self-awareness	Teachers who understand their emotions are better able to manage stress and maintain emotional balance.
2	Self-regulation	Emotionally intelligent teachers can control emotional reactions and respond constructively in stressful situations.
3	Empathy	Empathy helps teachers understand students' emotional needs and establish positive relationships.



4	Social Skills	Strong communication and interpersonal skills improve classroom management and reduce conflicts.
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Table1 :Important components of emotional intelligence

Self-awareness

Self-awareness is the ability to recognize and understand personal emotions. Teachers who are aware of their emotional states can identify stress factors and respond to challenges more effectively. Such teachers are less likely to react impulsively during classroom conflicts.

Self-regulation

Self-regulation refers to controlling emotions and maintaining emotional balance in stressful situations. Emotionally intelligent teachers remain calm and constructive even when facing classroom difficulties or communication problems.

Empathy

Empathy is one of the most important qualities for teachers. It allows educators to understand students’ feelings, emotional needs, and psychological conditions. Empathetic teachers can establish trust and create supportive classroom environments.

Motivation

Internal motivation helps teachers remain committed to their profession despite emotional difficulties and occupational stress. Motivated teachers demonstrate greater resilience and professional dedication.

Social Skills

Strong communication and interpersonal skills improve collaboration with students, parents, and colleagues. Teachers with developed social skills can manage classroom communication more effectively and reduce conflicts.

The development of emotional intelligence contributes significantly to teachers’ psychological stability and professional effectiveness [7].

Professional burnout is one of the most common psychological problems among teachers [13]. Continuous emotional labor, heavy workload, and high professional responsibility often lead to emotional exhaustion and chronic stress.



Teachers experiencing burnout may lose enthusiasm for their profession and become emotionally detached from students and colleagues. Burnout negatively influences both teachers' psychological health and the quality of education [8].

Professional burnout among teachers manifests in several psychological and emotional forms. Teachers experiencing burnout often suffer from emotional exhaustion and psychological fatigue caused by continuous occupational stress and emotional overload. In many cases, burnout also leads to reduced professional motivation, emotional detachment, and depersonalization, which negatively affect teachers' relationships with students and colleagues. Furthermore, teachers who experience burnout frequently become dissatisfied with their professional activity and lose enthusiasm for teaching. As a result, burnout significantly decreases teaching effectiveness, emotional involvement, and overall educational quality[9]

Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Burnout

The analysis revealed a negative correlation between emotional intelligence and burnout. Teachers with higher emotional intelligence experience lower levels of emotional exhaustion and stress.

Emotionally intelligent teachers are more capable of:

- a) coping with workplace stress;
- b) managing classroom conflicts;
- c) maintaining professional motivation;
- d) adapting to educational challenges.

The findings also suggest that emotional intelligence functions as a psychological protective factor against burnout [10].

Numerous studies confirm that emotional intelligence and professional burnout are negatively related. Teachers with high emotional intelligence usually experience lower levels of emotional exhaustion and stress.

Emotionally intelligent teachers are better able to:

- 1) control negative emotions;
- 2) cope with workplace pressure;
- 3) manage classroom conflicts;
- 4) maintain positive communication;
- 5) preserve professional motivation.



Teachers with low emotional intelligence often experience difficulties managing emotions and adapting to stressful situations [14]. As a result, they become more vulnerable to psychological fatigue and burnout.

Emotional intelligence acts as a psychological protective factor because it helps teachers remain emotionally balanced and professionally satisfied. Empathy and communication skills improve relationships with students, while emotional regulation helps teachers avoid chronic stress.

Social support is also important in reducing burnout. Positive relationships with colleagues and school administration create a healthier psychological environment for teachers. Educational institutions should provide emotional support, counseling services, and stress management programs to improve teachers' psychological well-being [15].

Practical Recommendations

To reduce professional burnout among teachers, the following strategies are recommended:

- organizing emotional intelligence training;
- implementing stress management programs;
- strengthening psychological counseling services;
- improving work-life balance;
- reducing excessive workload;
- promoting positive organizational culture.

Developing teachers' emotional intelligence can significantly improve both teacher well-being and educational quality [12].

Conclusion

This study demonstrated that emotional intelligence is an important factor in preventing professional burnout among teachers. Emotional intelligence helps teachers regulate emotions, manage stress, maintain motivation, and establish positive interpersonal relationships.

Professional burnout remains one of the major psychological problems in educational systems [1]. Emotional exhaustion, stress, and reduced professional satisfaction negatively affect teaching quality and teachers' mental health.



The findings confirmed that teachers with high emotional intelligence are more resistant to burnout and better able to cope with occupational challenges [6]. Therefore, educational institutions should prioritize emotional intelligence development and psychological support for teachers.

Future research should focus on empirical investigations of emotional intelligence training programs and their effectiveness in reducing teacher burnout.

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