

A Study On Professional Burnout Among Special Education Teachers

Renu Uppal^{1*}, Dr. Sweta Bhargava²

^{1*}Research Scholar, Department of Education, Apex University, Jaipur

²Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Apex University, Jaipur

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to find out the professional burnout among special education teachers on the basis of locale and type of school. The research was purely descriptive in nature. The sample of the investigation was 100 Special teachers have been selected through various districts of Haryana. The findings of the study revealed that significant difference was found in professional burnout among urban and rural special education teachers and significant difference was found in professional burnout among government and private special education teachers.

Keywords: professional burnout, special education teachers.

Introduction

One of the basic components for achieving education goals is the teacher through his very important and strategic role. The quality of education is largely determined by teacher performance. One factor that often causes a decrease in teacher performance is burnout due to prolonged work stress. Burnout is defined as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment.

Burnout is a matter of occupational health and work productivity with an increasing prevalence in various occupations, including the human service professions.

Teacher burnout is a genuine issue in today's world. Many factors can lead to burnout, and many teachers are not equipped to manage the daily stressors that come with the job. Young teachers enter the classroom excited and ready to take on all challenges that come their way. Little do they know of the stressors that may await them? Special education teachers work with students with special needs who often require additional support that general education teachers are not prepared or trained to confront.

Special education teachers have a distinctly different role than general education teachers. General education teachers are responsible for providing high-quality instruction of the core curriculum, consistent routines, and a safe environment for all learners. There are limits to the amount and type of individualized instruction they can provide. The general education teacher's primary responsibility is to facilitate the development of academic skills for the majority of students, those who function close to grade level, as efficiently as possible. Special education teachers provide interventions and support for those students who do not fit in with the majority of students and qualify for special education services after referral and evaluation are completed to determine meeting special education criteria. According to Santoro (2018), teacher burnout may not be an individual issue, but more of a systems problem. An assumption regarding burnout among teachers is that there is a problem with the teacher (individual), and it is their wrongdoing that causes the burnout. When in reality, there are so many layers of teaching, rules, regulations, politics, federal/state policies that script what teachers can and cannot do that it makes teachers feel unsupported and like they cannot always do what is best for kids. The most committed teachers are at risk of burnout.

Special school teachers are vulnerable to burnout because of the different role than general education teachers. The complex roles fulfilled by special education teachers, including utilizing professionally recognized best practices for instruction, management, and assessment, knowing each individual student's strengths and challenges, advocating for students, and collaborating with families and other education professionals involved with students' instructional teams.

The special education teachers are chronically faced with the arduous task of maintaining students' discipline amid fears of physical and verbal abuse. Special education teachers are well known for their high-quality workloads.

Review of related literature

- **Verana (2023)** studied on Burnout among Special Education Teachers and the Role of Individual, Interpersonal, and Organizational Risk and Protective Factors. This study aimed to examine whether burnout risk among special education teachers has increased since the pandemic and whether burnout risk is related to individual, interpersonal, and organizational variables, including factors related to the pandemic. For this purpose, a cross-sectional study was conducted among a sample of special education teachers in Switzerland (n = 358) using the Maslach Burnout Inventory. Results indicate that for emotional exhaustion, individual teaching satisfaction and health problems are most important, whereas for depersonalization individual teaching satisfaction, good relationships with parents and

working in an inclusive setting decrease burnout risk. An inclusive setting increases the risk, regarding lack of personal accomplishment, while all other effects are non-significant. Implications for practice are discussed.

- **Brunsting, N.C. (2022)** studied on Burnout of Special Educators Serving Students With Emotional-Behavioral Disorders: A Longitudinal Study. The objective of this study was to examine changes in burnout across three time points in one school year, in a sample (N = 230) of special educators serving students with emotional-behavioral disorders, in 15 school districts selected through stratified random sampling at the national level. Emotional exhaustion decreased at each time point in the school year and personal accomplishment increased from fall to spring. Latent growth curve modeling did not produce latent trajectories of burnout among teachers; however, cross-lagged panel structure equation modeling revealed that emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment had both direct and indirect effects on depersonalization. Differences in burnout were significant by race/ethnicity but not by gender. Participants reported higher emotional exhaustion, lower depersonalization, and higher personal accomplishment than a national sample. We provide implications for researchers and practitioners.

Justification of the Study

Special education teachers work with students who have a wide variety of intellectual, emotional, physical, and learning disabilities. The students may have academic needs in reading, math, or writing. Others need help developing organizational skills. Some special education teachers work with students who have physical disabilities, such as students who use wheelchairs. Others work with students who have sensory impairments, such as blindness and hard of hearing. Special education teachers also may work with those who have autism spectrum disorders and emotional disorders. There is an increasing number of students who have comorbid disabilities, where there are academic concerns in addition to behavior problems as well. In recent years, evidence has been accumulating regarding high levels of comorbidity of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder with several disorders, including mood and anxiety disorders as well as conduct disorders. The special educators have to understand the similarities and differences in human development. They also hold the responsibility of creating an environment flexible enough to accommodate the varied needs of the students in order to impart instructions to cater to their individualized needs through specialized services. For effective performance it is also important to take into account the professional burnout of the special education teachers.

Objective of the Study

- To study the professional burnout among urban and rural special education teachers.
- To study the professional burnout among government and private special education teachers.

Hypothesis of the Study

- There is no significant difference in professional burnout among urban and rural special education teachers.
- There is no significant difference in professional burnout among government and private special education teachers.

Research Method

In the present study descriptive survey method has been used.

Sample of the Study

The present study was conducted on Special Teachers working in the field of Disability in Haryana. A total of 100 Special teachers (only Intellectual Disability) have been selected from various districts of Haryana.

Tools used for the Study

In the present study Teacher's Burnout Scale prepared by Madhu Gupta and Surekha Rani has been used to find academic achievement of students in mathematics subject.

Statistical techniques:

In the present study Mean, SD and t-test has been used for data analysis.

Analysis of Data

H₀₁ - There is no significant difference in professional burnout among urban and rural special education teachers.

Table: 1 Professional burnout among urban and rural special education teachers

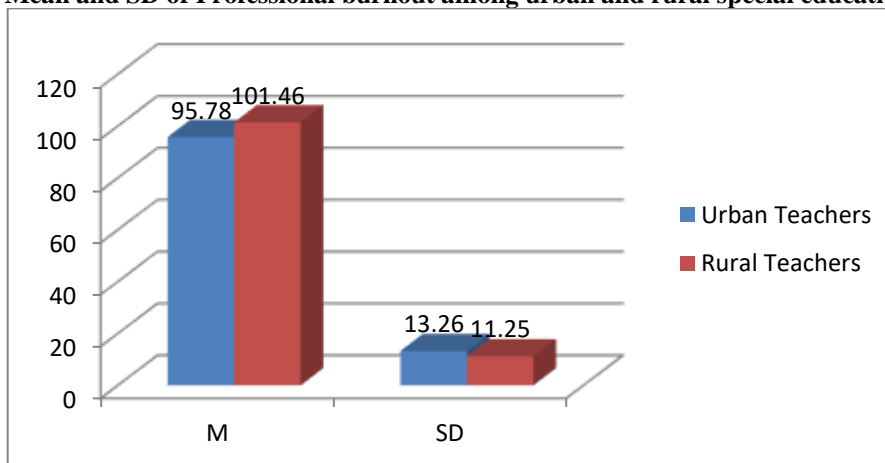
Groups	N	M	SD	t-value	Result
Urban Teachers	50	95.78	13.26	2.31	Rejected
Rural Teachers	50	101.46	11.25		

$df = N1+N2-2 (50+50-2=98)$

Table value at 0.05 Significance level is 1.98

The table 1 revealed that the mean score and SD of urban teachers are 95.78 and 13.26 respectively and mean score and SD of rural teachers is 101.46 and 11.25 respectively. The t-value comes out to be 2.31. The tabulated values of “t” for 98 degree of freedom at 0.05 significance level is 1.98. The calculated value of “t” is higher than tabulated value. Hence, the H_01 is rejected. It is also clear from the table that, the mean score of rural teachers (101.43) is higher than the urban teachers (95.78). That means rural teachers have more professional burnout rather than urban teachers.

Graph: 1 Mean and SD of Professional burnout among urban and rural special education teachers



H₀₂ - There is no significant difference in professional burnout among government and private special education teachers.

Table: 2 Professional burnout among government and private special education teachers

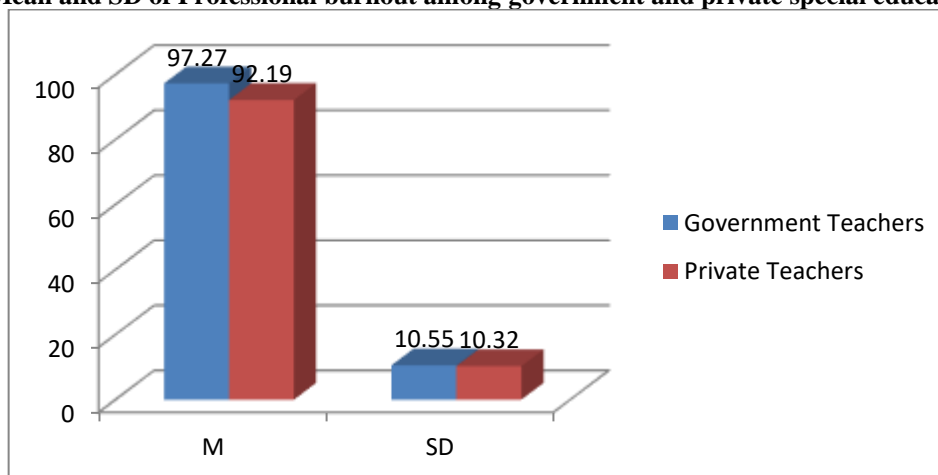
Groups	N	M	SD	CR	Result
Government Teachers	50	97.27	10.55	2.43	Rejected
Private Teachers	50	92.19	10.32		

$df = N1+N2-2 (50+50-2=98)$

Table value at 0.05 Significance level is 1.98

The table 2 revealed that the mean score and SD of government teachers are 97.27 and 10.55 respectively and mean score and SD of private teachers is 92.19 and 10.32 respectively. The t-value comes out to be 2.43. The tabulated values of “t” for 98 degree of freedom at 0.05 significance level is 1.98. The calculated value of “t” is higher than tabulated value. Hence, the H_02 is rejected. It is also clear from the table that, the mean score of government teachers (97.27) is higher than the private teachers (92.19). That means government teachers have more professional burnout rather than private teachers.

Graph: 2 Mean and SD of Professional burnout among government and private special education teachers



Findings

- There is found significant difference in professional burnout among urban and rural special education teachers.
- There is found significant difference in professional burnout among government and private special education teachers.

Conclusion

In the conclusion of the present study, it was found that teachers in rural areas and government school teachers have to face more problems of burnout. In rural areas, teachers generally remain more troubled due to lack of facilities and non-availability of necessary resources. When we talk about government school teachers, it is seen that teachers in government schools have a lot of extra work, and the administration also does not provide necessary assistance on time.

Educational Implications

- Any educational research is worthwhile if it results into fruitful educational implications. As far as the present research is concerned, it can be said that fruitful information has been obtained on the burnout of special teachers.
- The study of job burnout, its causes and corrective measures have too much significance in the field of education.
- Sometimes, teachers do not realize that stress and burnout is an issue among educators. They are not aware of what and how teachers are feeling about success in the classroom. The present study will be helpful in such situations.
- When the teachers are aware of the symptoms and the causes of the burnout, then by paying attention to what is leading to stress, and doing something to combat it when perceptible, they can lead to less burnout.
- Teachers can try to avoid getting indulged in organizational politics.
- Teachers can be able to grow professionally and constantly keep themselves updated.

Suggestions

Future research should more focus on financial and structural factors when analyzing teacher burnout, as these may explain the differences in levels of burnout found between the literature review and this study. Preventing burnout require concerted action at all levels of the system, whichever reform is implemented, it must be conducted in order to improve the benefits of both children and adults with disabilities and preserve the health at work of those who support them. The administrative should have a decisive role to play in preventing burnout by allocating sufficient financial resources to preserve the health of special education teachers by providing them adequate working conditions.

References

1. Billingsley, B. (2004). Special education teacher retention and attrition: A critical analysis of the research literature. *The Journal of Special Education*, 38(1), 39-55.
2. Brunsting, N.C. (2022). Burnout of Special Educators Serving Students With Emotional-Behavioral Disorders: A Longitudinal Study. *Remedial and Special Education* 43(3):074193252110305
3. De Stasio, S., Fiorilli, C., & Benevene, P. (2017). Burnout in special needs teachers at kindergarten and primary school: Investigating the role of personal resources and work well-being. *Psychology in the Schools*, 54(5), 472-486.
4. Donne, V., & Lin, F. (2013). Special education teacher induction: The Wiki way. *The Clearing House*, 86, 43-47.
5. Malik, H. (2017). Effect of five big personality traits on job burnout among special education employees. *Journal of Business and Social Review in Emerging Economies*, 3(1), 51-60.
6. Verana (2023). Burnout among Special Education Teachers and the Role of Individual, Interpersonal, and Organizational Risk and Protective Factors. *OBM Integrative and Complementary Medicine* 8(3) DOI:10.21926/obm.icm.2303033
7. Zabel, R. H., & Zabel, M. K. (2001). Revisiting burnout among special education teachers: Do age, experience, and preparation still matter? *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 24, 128-139.