

## Burnout among Resource Room Teachers in Northern Jordan

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Received date: Nov. 9, 2002

Accepted Date: Jan. 6, 2005

**Abstract:** The study aimed at investigating the levels of burnout among resource room teachers in northern Jordan. A sample of 54 resource room teachers (34 females and 20 males) completed a burnout questionnaire. The statistical analysis revealed a moderate level of burnout among those teachers in northern Jordan; it also revealed that there were significant differences in favor of males vs. females, age of  $\leq 34$  years old vs. the age of  $34 \geq$  years old. Results are interpreted and implications for resource room teachers are suggested, such as training institutions must be considered to expand their curricula to include specific training in social skills intervention. (**keywords:** Burnout, Resource Room, Teacher)

Burnout is a major problem in education; teaching in particular has been identified as a stressful situation. Recently, Farber (1991) cited in (Schaufeli, and Daamen, 1994) concluded from a review of U.S literature that between 5% and 20% of all teachers in the U.S are burned out at any given time. Educators have become aware of the prevalence of teacher burnout that has received increasing attention over the past several decades, but effective strategies to counteract this phenomenon have not yet been well established. There is a growing public concern, especially among educators, to develop measures for minimizing the prevalence of this unfavorable phenomenon.

Teacher burnout may be caused by various factors, including excessive work, lack of administrative and parental support, inadequate salaries, disciplinary problems, lack of students, interest, overcrowded classrooms, and public criticism of teachers and their work (Farber, 1984; Russell, Altmaier, and van Velzen, 1987). In other studies (Brissie, Hoover Dempsey, and Bassler, 1988; Cunningham; 1983, Friedman, 1995), it has been found out that burnout among teachers is often caused by high levels of prolonged stress related to inordinate time demands, large class size, lack of recourses, role ambiguity, lack of support, involvement in decision making, and student behavioral problems.

Freudenberger (1980) defined burnout as a state of physical and emotional depletion that results from work environment. According to Maslach and Jackson (1986), burnout is comprised of three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, lack of personal accomplishment and feelings of depersonalization.

Although different definitions of burnout exist, this long- term stress reaction is most commonly described

### الاحترق النفسي لدى معلمي ومعلمات غرف المصادر في شمال الأردن

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ملخص: هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى بحث ظاهرة الاحتراق النفسي لدى معلمي ومعلمات غرف المصادر في شمال الأردن. وتكونت عينة الدراسة من (54) معلماً ومعلمة (34 معلمة، و20 معلماً) ممن قاموا بتعبئة استبانة الاحتراق النفسي. وقد كشفت النتائج بأن معلمي ومعلمات غرف المصادر في شمال الأردن يعانون من مستويات متوسطة من الاحتراق النفسي، كما أظهرت الدراسة وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية تعزى للجنس والعمر. وفي ضوء نتائج الدراسة قدم الباحث عدداً من التوصيات للمعلمي ومعلمات غرف المصادر. مثل تدريب معلمي غرفة المصادر على مهارات التدخل الاجتماعي، وعلى المهارات التدريسية، أيضاً لتجسير الفجوة بينهم وبين معلمي المباحث المدرسية. (الكلمات المفتاحية: الاحتراق النفسي، غرفة المصادر، معلم).

as: a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people in some capacity. Emotional exhaustion refers to feelings of being emotionally overextended and depleted of one's emotional resources. Depersonalization refers to a negative callous or excessively detached response to other people, who usually, are, the recipients of one's service or care. Reduced personal accomplishment refers to a decline in one's feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work (Maslach, 1993, p. 20-21).

In the Netherlands, 60% of the teachers who had to quit their jobs and receive disability pensions suffer from stress – related disorders (Schaufeli, and Daamen, 1994). Numerous studies have reported high levels of stress and burnout among school teachers (Cherniss, 1980; Jackson et al, 1986; Farber, 1984; Ross et al., 1989; Borg Riding and Falzon, 1991; Kruger et al., 1991).

Consequences of burnout include significant decrease in the quality of teaching, long absenteeism, early leaving of the profession, diminished job satisfaction, reduced teacher –pupil rapport, decreased teacher effectiveness in meeting educational goals, and reduced pupil motivation (Abel and Sewell, 1999).

Several studies have recently addressed various issues related to teachers and children with special needs in Jordan. For example, Dababseh (1993) found moderate levels of burnout among teachers of children with special needs. In another study, morale of special education teachers was most satisfied with relations to community, rapport with students, and satisfaction with teaching and least satisfied with work load and financial incentives (Al-Khateeb, Hadidi, and Elayyan, 1996).

Meeting the developmental and educational needs of exceptional children in Jordan has received

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increasing attention over the past several years because of the law for the welfare of exceptional persons that was passed in 1993, and shifted the responsibility of educational programs for persons with disabilities from the Ministry of Social Affairs to the Ministry of Education. As a consequence, the Ministry of Education established an especial department with the primary purpose of promoting mainstreaming of children with special needs into regular schools (Hadidi, 1998). To achieve this, more than 100 resource rooms and special classes have been established lately to meet the needs for exceptional students at the regular classrooms. Most resource room teachers are either university or college graduates, but a relatively small percentage of special education teachers has had formal training in special education (Hadidi, 1998). Most special education teachers have had no pre-service training but rather received in-service training (Queen Alia Fund, 1984). Based on the fact that there is limited research on resource room teachers in Jordan, the purpose of the present study was to determine both the levels of burnout among resource room teachers in northern Jordan and significant differences, if any, in burnout dimensions among resource teachers due to sex, age, marital status, and teaching experience.

**Subjects and procedures:** The subjects of this study were 54 resource room teachers in Northern Jordan who participated in this study during the first semester of the academic year 2002/2003. The questionnaire was initially administered in Arabic to 76 resource room teachers, who constituted the population of the study, at their first meeting held by the Governorate of Education for training purposes. The total number of the completed questionnaire was 54. Thirty-four (34%) of the sample were women and 20 (37%) were men; 46 (85%) were married and 8 (15%) were single. Ages of the respondents ranged from 24 to 50 years old, while years of experience ranged from 3 to 15 years, which represented 71% of the study population that received the questionnaire (see Table one).

**Data Analysis:** The questionnaire data were analyzed with SPSS-X (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) computer programme. I used the means, percentages and standard deviations as the main statistical tools to analyze the various items of the questionnaires which could be quantified.

Table (3) shows the levels of burnout among resource room teachers on the three subscales in the frequency and intensity dimension.

(A.) Frequency dimension: the data show that a moderate level of burnout was experienced by resource room teachers on the three subscales of burnout.

**Table (1):** Distribution of the Sample of the Study According to the Variables of the Study

Variable	level	Frequency	Percent
sex	male	20	37.04%
	female	34	62.96%
	Total	54	100.00%
age	less than or equal 34 years old	22	40.74%
	more than 34 years old	32	59.26%
	Total	54	100.00%
experience	less than or equal 5 years	18	33.33%
	more than 5 years	36	66.67%
	Total	54	100.00%
marital status	single	8	14.81%
	married	46	85.19%
	Total	54	100.00%

**Instrument:** The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) as developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981) was administered. The MBI consists of 22 items covering three subscales: depersonalization (5 items), personal accomplishment (8 items), and emotional exhaustion (9 items). Each item is rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale on the frequency of occurrence and a 7-point scale on the intensity of occurrence only because of the very high correlation between frequency and intensity ratings (Constable and Russell, 1986; Maslach and Jackson, 1981). Maslach and Jackson (1981) reported reliability coefficients ranging from 0.71 to 0.90 for the three subscales. They also demonstrated validity of the MBI in several ways (Haddad, 1998).

For the purpose of this study, the MBI was translated into Arabic and some words were modified to make the items relevant to resource room teachers (see appendix 1). Reliability coefficients for the frequency of Arabic version (Cronbach's alpha) were 0.83 for emotional exhaustion, 0.72 for depersonalization, and 0.86 for personal accomplishment, while the reliability coefficients for the strength of Arabic version (Cronbach's alpha) were 0.86 for emotional exhaustion, 0.60 for depersonalization, and 0.84 for personal accomplishment (see Table 2).

**Table (2):** MBI Reliability Coefficients (Arabic Version)

subscales	Frequency dimension	Intensity dimension	number of items
Emotional exhaustion	0.83	0.86	9
Depersonalization	0.72	0.60	5
Personal accomplishment	0.86	0.84	8
Burnout Scale	0.83	0.75	22

**Results:** The first research question is concerned with the determination of the levels of burnout among resource room teachers in northern Jordan. In order to answer this question, means and standard deviations for each dimension (frequency and intensity) were calculated, and the results were as shown in table (3).

**Table (3): Means and Standard Deviations for the Levels of Burnout among Resource Room Teachers**

Subscales	statistic	Frequency dimension				Intensity dimension			
		Low	Moderate	High	Total	Low	Moderate	high	Total
Emotional exhaustion	Mean	13.50	19.66	27.02	20.29	15.35	23.29	31.79	23.62
	Std. Deviation	2.64	1.43	2.79	5.88	2.40	1.84	3.12	7.12
	N	16	20	18	54	17	19	18	54
	% of Total N	29.63	37.04	33.33	100.00	31.48	35.19	33.33	100.00
	Minimum	9.02	18.00	23.00	9.02	12.00	21.00	27.00	12.00
	Maximum	17.00	22.00	33.00	33.00	20.00	26.47	37.00	37.00
depersonalization	Mean	11.04	18.23	27.20	18.82	13.12	19.57	27.95	20.33
	Std. Deviation	1.80	2.53	3.44	7.17	3.14	1.16	4.72	6.87
	N	18	18	18	54	17	19	18	54
	% of Total N	33.33	33.33	33.33	100.00	31.48	35.19	33.33	100.00
	Minimum	7.00	14.54	23.00	7.00	7.00	18.00	23.00	7.00
	Maximum	14.00	22.00	35.00	35.00	17.00	22.00	36.00	36.00
personal accomplishment	Mean	13.10	22.48	32.74	23.50	15.54	24.21	36.03	24.98
	Std. Deviation	2.75	3.76	3.51	8.74	3.41	2.24	5.66	8.95
	N	16	18	20	54	17	21	16	54
	% of Total N	29.63	33.33	37.04	100.00	31.48	38.89	29.63	100.00
	Minimum	8.00	18.00	28.00	8.00	10.21	21.00	28.38	10.21
	Maximum	17.00	27.00	38.00	38.00	20.21	27.00	45.00	45.00
Burnout	Mean	40.73	64.67	83.47	62.61	48.83	69.38	88.61	68.94
	Std. Deviation	6.89	8.30	5.23	18.72	6.51	6.94	10.08	18.18
	N	18	19	17	54	18	18	18	54
	% of Total N	33.33	35.19	31.48	100.00	33.33	33.33	33.33	100.00
	Minimum	27.00	51.00	77.00	27.00	33.21	59.00	79.29	33.21
	Maximum	50.89	76.00	95.00	95.00	58.21	79.00	110.00	110.00

(B.) Intensity dimension: the data show that a moderate level of burnout was experienced by resource room teachers on the three burnout subscales.

The second research question is concerned with the possible differences in the three subscales of burnout among the resource room teachers in northern Jordan

due to sex, age, teaching experience, and marital status. In order to address this question, the researcher calculated the means and standard deviations of each variable and the three subscales of burnout on the frequency dimension. The results were shown in table (4).

**Table (4): Means and Standard Deviations for the Study Variables in the Frequency Dimension**

subscales	Variable	Descriptive Statistics			
		level	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
frequency of emotional exhaustion	sex	male	21.62	5.19	20
		female	19.5	6.19	34
	age	less than or equal 34 years old	21.38	5.14	22
		more than 34 years old	19.54	6.31	32
	teaching experience	less than or equal 5 years	18.83	6	18
		more than 5 years	21.01	5.77	36
	marital status	single	19.88	5.06	8
		married	20.36	6.06	46
Frequency of depersonalization	sex	male	21.58	7.07	20
		female	17.2	6.81	34
	age	less than or equal 34 years old	20.57	7.1	22
		more than 34 years old	17.62	7.08	32
	teaching experience	less than or equal 5 years	16.45	7.3	18
		more than 5 years	20.01	6.9	36
	marital status	single	21	8	8
		married	18.44	7.04	46
Frequency of personal accomplishment	sex	male	24.94	8.94	20
		female	22.65	8.64	34
	age	less than or equal 34 years old	24.49	8.3	22
		more than 34 years old	22.82	9.09	32
	teaching experience	less than or equal 5 years	21.38	8.97	18
		more than 5 years	24.56	8.55	36
	marital status	single	22.82	7.26	8
		married	23.62	9.03	46
Frequency of burnout	sex	male	22.71	7.07	20
		female	19.78	7.21	34
	age	less than or equal 34 years old	22.15	6.85	22
		more than 34 years old	19.99	7.49	32
	teaching experience	less than or equal 5 years	18.89	7.42	18
		more than 5 years	21.86	7.07	36
	marital status	single	21.23	6.77	8
		married	20.81	7.38	46

Table (4) shows that there are differences in the means due to all study variables: sex, age, teaching experience, and marital status on the three subscales of

the frequency dimension. In order to test for the level of significance, Four-Way ANOVA was conducted and the results were the shown in Table (5).

**Table (5): Results of Four-Way Analysis of Variances**

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
frequency of emotional exhaustion	sex	<b>193.248</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>193.25</b>	<b>6.19</b>	<b>0.016*</b>
	age	115.855	1	115.86	3.71	0.06
	Teaching experience	107.864	1	107.86	3.45	0.069
	Marital status	84.448	1	84.45	2.7	0.107
	error	1530.538	49	31.24		
	total	1834.264	53			
frequency of depersonalization	sex	<b>436.926</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>436.93</b>	<b>10.86</b>	<b>0.002*</b>
	<b>age</b>	<b>319.846</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>319.85</b>	<b>7.95</b>	<b>0.007*</b>
	Teaching experience	227.072	1	227.07	5.64	0.021
	Marital status	43.062	1	43.06	1.07	0.306
	error	1972.252	49	40.25		
	total	2725.543	53			
frequency of personal accomplishment	sex	245.389	1	245.39	3.32	0.075
	age	114.404	1	114.4	1.55	0.22
	Teaching experience	203.464	1	203.46	2.75	0.104
	Marital status	131.295	1	131.3	1.78	0.189
	error	3624.19	49	73.96		
	total	4045.669	53			
frequency of burnout	sex	875.563	1	875.563	6.02	0.001
	age	550.105	1	550.105	3.782	0.064
	Teaching experience	538.4	1	538.4	3.702	0.068
	Marital status	258.805	1	258.805	1.779	0.783
	error	7126.98	49	145.4485714		
	total	8605.476	53			

Table (5) shows the following results:

- 1- There is a statistically significant difference in the frequency of the emotional exhaustion subscale that can be attributed to sex in favor of males.
- 2- There is a statistically significant difference in the frequency of the depersonalization subscale that can be attributed to sex in favor of males.

- 3- There is a statistically significant difference in the frequency of the depersonalization subscale that can be attributed to the age of  $\leq 34$  years old.
- 4- There is a statistically significant difference in the frequency of burnout which can be attributed to sex in favor of males.

**Table (6): Means and Standard Deviations of the Three Subscales of Burnout in the Intensity Dimension**

subscales	Variable	Descriptive Statistics			
		level	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
intensity of emotional exhaustion	sex	male	24.79	7.51	20
		female	22.94	6.9	34
	age	less than or equal 34 years old	24.97	6.75	22
		more than 34 years old	22.7	7.32	32
	teaching experience	less than or equal 5 years	24.38	6.88	18
		More than 5 years	23.25	7.3	36
	marital status	single	22.38	7.21	8
		married	23.84	7.16	46
intensity of depersonalization	sex	male	20.91	6.65	20
		female	19.99	7.07	34
	age	less than or equal 34 years old	20.67	6.75	22
		more than 34 years old	20.1	7.05	32
	teaching experience	less than or equal 5 years	20.63	7.22	18
		More than 5 years	20.18	6.79	36
	marital status	single	19.54	7.43	8
		married	20.47	6.85	46
intensity of personal accomplishment	sex	male	25.43	9.37	20
		female	24.72	8.83	34
	age	less than or equal 34 years old	26.1	9.35	22
		more than 34 years old	24.22	8.74	32
	teaching experience	less than or equal 5 years	22.6	7.43	18
		More than 5 years	26.18	9.49	36
	marital status	single	23.83	4.07	8
		married	25.18	9.57	46
Intensity of burnout	sex	male	23.71	7.84	20
		female	22.55	7.60	34
	age	less than or equal 34 years old	23.91	7.62	22
		more than 34 years old	22.34	7.70	32
	teaching experience	less than or equal 5 years	22.54	7.18	18
		More than 5 years	23.2	7.86	36
	marital status	single	21.92	6.24	8
		married	23.16	7.86	46

Table (6) shows that there is an observed difference in the level of burnout due to all the study variables: sex, age, teaching experience, and marital status on the three subscales of burnout in the intensity

dimension. In order to test the levels of significant differences, the Four-Way Analysis of Variances was conducted and the results were shown in Table (7).

**Table (7):** Results of Four-Way Analysis of Variances

Dependent Variable	Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
intensity of emotional exhaustion	sex	167.422	1	167.42	3.37	0.072
	age	127.329	1	127.33	2.56	0.116
	teaching experience	0.582	1	0.58	0.01	0.914
	marital status	80.163	1	80.16	1.61	0.21
	error	2433.741	49	49.67		
	total	2684.869	53			
intensity of depersonalization	sex	38.319	1	38.32	0.77	0.386
	age	12.757	1	12.76	0.25	0.616
	teaching experience	0	1	0	0	0.998
	marital status	25.179	1	25.18	0.5	0.482
	error	2453.719	49	50.08		
	total	2502.076	53			
intensity of personal accomplishment	sex	100.714	1	100.71	1.26	0.267
	age	91.13	1	91.13	1.14	0.291
	teaching experience	224.651	1	224.65	2.81	0.1
	marital status	94.651	1	94.65	1.19	0.282
	error	3913.11	49	79.86		
	total	4248.364	53			
Intensity of burnout	sex	306.455	1	306.455	1.706	0.785
	age	231.216	1	231.216	1.287	0.893
	Teaching experience	225.233	1	225.233	1.254	0.914
	Marital status	199.993	1	199.993	1.114	0.985
	error	8800.57	49	179.6034694		
	total	9435.309	53			

Table (7) shows that there are no statistically significant differences on the three subscales of burnout in the intensity dimension that can be attributed to any of the variables of the study.

**Discussion:** The purpose of this study was to determine the level of burnout among resource room teachers in northern Jordan and to examine the effects of several variables upon their burnout level. Results of the study indicated that a moderate level of burnout was experienced by resource room teachers in northern Jordan on the three subscales of burnout in the frequency and intensity dimensions. Also, the results revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the frequency of the emotional exhaustion and depersonalized subscales that could be attributed to sex in favor of males; there was a statistically significant difference in the frequency of the depersonalization subscale that could be attributed to the age of  $\leq 34$  years old; however, they showed that there were no statistically significant differences on the three subscales of burnout in the intensity dimension that could be attributed to any of the variables of the study.

These results are consistent with previous research conducted in Jordan (Dababseh, 1993; Al-Khateeb et al., 1991) who reported that there were moderate levels

of burnout among teachers of children with special needs. This result might indicate that moderate levels of burnout probably emerged as dominant among resource room teachers in northern Jordan because the physical working conditions for resource room teachers in Jordan are particularly difficult. Teaching loads are heavy; wages are relatively low; educational facilities are often shabby, and lack resources and role ambiguity.

Regarding the sociodemographic variables, results showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the frequency of the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization subscales that could be attributed to sex in favor of males. Perhaps this result can be attributed to the fact that males in the Arabian culture are usually more exposed to the issues of special needs students through means of educational programmes, attending workshops, and most important the cultural opportunities that are given to the Jordanian males. This result is quite in line with the findings of Dababseh (1993).

Also, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference in the frequency of the depersonalization subscale that could be attributed to the age of  $\leq 34$  years old. This difference may reflect the influence of the years of experience, several educational and communication programs that are

available for resource room teachers at this age and older.

Moreover, there is no significant difference in burnout level in respect to marital status and teaching the experience among resource room teachers. These findings contradict other burnout studies (Ross et al., 1989; Kruger et al., 1991) who found out that few years of experience reported more burnout; but support Russel et al., (1987) who suggested that married workers experienced less burnout. This result must be further investigated.

The findings of this study have important implications for resource room teachers in Jordan. Intervention programs in cooperation with the school health personnel can help to develop, implement, and evaluate early detection and prevention of burnout through in-service training regarding teacher stress and burnout (Belcastro & Gold, 1983).

An important area for future research concerns designing and evaluating the effects of social support intervention programs in preventing teacher burnout.

Another implication is that if resource room teachers are to be the persons designated to provide social skills interventions, training institutions must be considered to expand their curricula to include specific training in social skills interventions.

Finally, resource room teachers must be trained to improve their teaching skills in order to bridge the gap between themselves and school teachers to offer them assistance whenever it is needed.

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## Appendix 1

## فقرات مقياس ماسلاش للإحترق النفسي

الرقم	العبارة	التكرار						الشدة											
		يحدث يوميا			يحدث قليلا في السنة			بدرجة قوية جدا			بدرجة ضعيفة جدا								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	اشعر بأنني مستنزف انفعالياً من جراء ممارسة مهنة الإشراف.																		
2.	اشعر أن طاقتي مستنفذة مع نهاية يوم العمل.																		
3.	اشعر بالإرهاق عندما استيقظ من نومي واعرف أن علي مواجهة عمل جديد.																		
4.	أستطيع أن افهم بسهولة مشاعر المعلمين نحو الأشياء.																		
5.	اشعر أنني أتعامل مع بعض المعلمين وكأنهم أشياء لا بشر.																		
6.	حقاً أن التعامل مع الناس طول يوم العمل يسبب لي الإجهاد والتعب.																		
7.	أتعامل بفعالية عالية مع مشاكل المعلمين.																		
8.	اشعر بالإحترق النفسي من ممارستي لهذه المهنة.																		
9.	اشعر أنني أؤثر إيجابيا في حياة كثير من الناس من خلال ممارستي لهذه المهنة.																		
10.	أصبحت أكثر قساوة مع الناس بعد التحاقني بهذه المهنة.																		
11.	أحس بالانزعاج والقلق لأن هذه المهنة تزيد من قساوة عواطفني.																		
12.	اشعر بالحيوية والنشاط																		
13.	اشعر بالإحباط من ممارستي لمهنة الإشراف																		
14.	اشعر بأنني اعلم في هذه المهنة بإجتهاد كبير																		
15.	حقيقة لا اهتم أو اكثرث بما يحدث مع المعلمين من المشاكل.																		
16.	أن العمل بشكل مباشر مع الناس يوقع بي ضغوطاً شديدة.																		
17.	أستطيع بكل سهولة أن اخلق جواً نفسياً مريحاً مع المعلمين.																		
18.	اشعر بالسعادة والراحة بعد العمل مع المعلمين.																		
19.	لقد أنجزت أشياء كثيرة ذات قيمة وأهمية في هذه المهنة.																		
20.	اشعر وكأنني على حافة الهاوية من ممارستي لهذه المهنة.																		
21.	أتعامل بكل هدوء مع المشاكل الانفعالية أثناء ممارستي لهذه المهنة.																		
22.	اشعر بأن المعلمين يلومونني عن بعض المشاكل التي تواجههم.																		