

## Teacher Burnout and Teaching Effectiveness in Singapore

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### KEY IMPLICATIONS

1. Policy makers and schools are recommended to place equal emphasis on both job stress and burnout as an antecedent of turnover intention among teachers.
2. Education and grade levels in which teachers are working may influence the extent of burnout prevalence.

### BACKGROUND

Teaching has been known to be a stressful profession with heavy workloads. It has been reported that a majority of teachers experience a great amount of occupational stress and this may lead to turnover intention and decrease in performance. This is likely due to the emotionally-draining nature of teaching profession, hence making teachers more susceptible to burnout. A better understanding of teacher burnout may help us to mitigate the turnover rate of teachers and improve teaching effectiveness.

### FOCUS OF STUDY

Applying the Beyond the Role Stress Model (Fogarty, Singh, Rhoads & Moore, 2000) and the Model for Managing Human Resources (Doherty, 1998), this study assessed the mediating effects of the three

burnout dimensions: emotional exhaustion, reduced personal accomplishment and depersonalization, on the relationship between stress and turnover intention among teachers in Singapore. In addition, this study also examined the differences in burnout syndromes among teachers between primary and secondary schools.

### KEY FINDINGS

Both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were found to partially mediate the impact of stress on turnover intention. The results suggest that stress had both direct and indirect relationships with turnover intentions among teachers in Singapore. In addition, teachers in primary schools reported experiencing higher prevalence of burnout symptoms compared to teachers in secondary schools.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF FINDINGS

#### Implications for Practice

This study may aid school leaders to develop effective education strategies to achieve their primary goals by appreciating various teacher behaviours in schools. The results suggest that burnout has a partial mediating effect on the relationship between stress and turnover intention among teachers in Singapore. Hence,

schools should look into strategies to reduce the causes of stress in work environment. At the same time, schools should pay attention towards reducing the burnout prevalence among teachers to mitigate the effects of stress on turnover intentions.

### Implications for Policy and Research

Better understanding of the mediation effects of burnout in education settings may help schools to reduce negative job outcomes. This study may aid school leaders to develop effective education strategies to achieve their primary goals by appreciating various teacher behaviours in schools. Policy makers and schools may aim to develop intervention programs to help teachers to manage or reduce their stress and burnout. Furthermore, the results of this study suggest that the education and grade levels in which teachers are working may influence the extent of burnout prevalence. Therefore, if an intervention program is to be implemented, more attention should be directed towards teachers in primary schools.

### Proposed Follow-up Activities

It is essential for school management to look into strategies to help teachers to cope with stress and burnout effectively to mitigate the effects on turnover intention among teachers.

## POPULATION

300 full time teachers from 2 primary and 3 secondary schools participated in this study.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

Cross-sectional study with questionnaire administration. All teachers were assessed on the three domains of interest: role stressors, burnout and turnover intention.

## REFERENCES

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This brief was based on the project OER 29/12 PDY: Teacher Burnout and Teaching Effectiveness in Singapore.

## How to cite this publication

Wang, C.K.J., Pyun, D.Y., Koh, K.T., & Kwon, H.H. (2017). *Teacher Burnout and Teaching Effectiveness in Singapore*. (NIE Research Brief Series No. 16-013). Singapore: National Institute of Education.

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