

# Organizational Identity, Locus of Control, and Burnout

Subjects: Education & Educational Research

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Teachers' locus of control, organizational identification, job satisfaction, and exposure to organizational stressors all work together to influence their risk of burnout. Strong organizational identification and job satisfaction can help shield teachers from the negative impacts of external locus of control and high-stress work environments. By fostering supportive environments, fair policies, manageable workloads, and opportunities for input, schools may be able to promote teachers' well-being and prevent burnout.

Keywords: Locus of Control ; Teachers ; Burnout ; Organizational Identity

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## 1. Introduction

Educational practices that support the incessant development and healthy learning environment in which knowledge is collaboratively created and shared locally are referred to as sustainable learning <sup>[1][2]</sup>. It incorporates continuous, responsive, purposeful, and proactive learning where learners efficiently build and reshape their skills and knowledge base as environments change <sup>[3]</sup>. Part of the responsibilities of sustainable learning ecologies is to support the contemporary educational processes <sup>[4]</sup>, where teachers still play pivotal roles in shaping students' interest and success in education <sup>[5]</sup>. Teachers play a crucial role in developing students' scientific attitudes and interests, especially for disadvantaged students <sup>[5][6]</sup>. Their influence extends beyond the classroom, impacting the future of scientific research, innovation, and social progress. However, heavy workloads, resource constraints, and other challenges can negatively impact teachers' well-being and effectiveness in the digital era <sup>[7][8]</sup>. Teacher burnout, a psychological phenomenon affecting educators globally, has major implications for the quality of instruction students receive and can undermine the overall educational experience <sup>[9]</sup>. It is thus critical to examine factors that may contribute to or protect against burnout among teachers.

According to existing literature, one relevant factor is teachers' professional identity and sense of connection to their school community. Teachers with a stronger professional identity and greater identification with their organization tend to have higher job satisfaction, commitment, and performance <sup>[10][11][12]</sup>. However, research on how organizational identity dimensions specifically relate to burnout in teachers is limited.

Another significant factor is the school environment and the perceived support from the administration. A study found that enabling school bureaucracy and psychological empowerment can play a role in mitigating teacher burnout <sup>[9]</sup>. On the other hand, Ford <sup>[13]</sup> discovered that when principals supported teachers' psychological needs at the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and organizational levels, it reduced teacher burnout and intent to leave, while increasing commitment. Gul et al. <sup>[14]</sup> suggested that an uncondusive organizational culture with few growth opportunities increased teacher burnout and quitting.

Additionally, teachers' perceived locus of control, referring to their beliefs about control over life events, may influence their stress appraisals and coping strategies <sup>[14][15]</sup>. An internal locus of control has been associated with lower burnout, while an external locus of control tends to be linked to higher burnout <sup>[16][17]</sup>. Yet, the interrelationships between locus of control, organizational identity, and burnout in teachers remain unclear.

Sustainable teaching and learning for learners is part of the ingredients of quality of education. At the same time, it encapsulates how teachers sustained pedagogical practices with technology to motivate students based on multimodal learning. The actualization of Sustainable Development Goal 4, which concentrated on quality education for all, was severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the post-COVID-19 era, there is an intensified need to think of educational institutions without walls, another contemporary global issue such as teacher burnout affecting educators and its major implications for the quality of instruction students receive which can undermine the overall educational experience <sup>[9]</sup>, and turn attention to the locus of control and organizational identity to decrease burnout and lack of motivation of teachers to overcome learning environment constraints.

## **2. Relation among Organizational Identity, Locus of Control, and Burnout**

### **2.1. Burnout in Teachers**

Burnout is a critical issue impacting teachers worldwide <sup>[18][19]</sup>. However, teachers face particular pressures that may exacerbate their risk of burnout <sup>[20]</sup>. Teachers must keep pace with rapidly advancing subject knowledge, implement hands-on instruction for practices, and ensure student competency in complex analytical skills <sup>[21]</sup>. They also often face large class sizes, insufficient lab facilities and supplies, and high-stakes assessments of student achievement <sup>[22][23][24]</sup>. These challenges can overwhelm teachers, depleting their energy and eroding their sense of efficacy. Indeed, existing research reveals concerning levels of burnout among teachers across many countries. Elementary teachers in Turkey display relatively low levels of emotional exhaustion, a core symptom of burnout <sup>[25]</sup>. According to a study conducted in the West Bengal state of India, teachers' burnout level is lower than their counterparts <sup>[26]</sup>. In China, surveys of teachers indicate that factors like age, gender, marital status, education, experience, and weekly work hours influence emotional exhaustion in teachers. Specifically, teachers aged 30–40, females, those with undergraduate degrees, those with 10–20 years of experience, and those working over 40 h weekly had higher exhaustion levels. Conversely, married/cohabiting teachers experienced less exhaustion than single or divorced/widowed/separated peers <sup>[27]</sup>. Burnout not only damages teachers' well-being, but it can also directly harm the quality of education. Studies link teacher burnout to lower job satisfaction, higher absenteeism, and inferior classroom practices <sup>[28][29]</sup>. Consequently, burnout has downstream impacts on students' motivation and achievement.

Given these high stakes, it is critical to identify protective factors against burnout specifically for teachers. The research on burnout in teachers points to several factors that can protect against burnout. Organizational climate and support seem to be key protective factors. Junça-Silva and Freire <sup>[30]</sup> found that an organizational climate characterized by involvement, control, autonomy, task orientation, and physical comfort reduced burnout in teachers. Professional development and skill-building may also help teachers avoid burnout. Kugiejko <sup>[31]</sup> proposed that developing teachers' professional skills and competence could prevent burnout. Work–life balance also appears to shield teachers from burnout <sup>[30][32]</sup>. In particular, learning strategies for managing student behavior, workload, and work responsibilities may equip teachers with the skills to handle job demands in a sustainable way. Mentorship and collegial support seem to be additional protective factors. Deswal and Savita <sup>[33]</sup> found that lack of support from colleagues contributed to burnout in teachers.

In summary, the research points to several protective factors against burnout in teachers: an autonomy-supportive organizational climate, work–life balance, professional development, and collegial support. By cultivating these protective factors, schools and policymakers may be able to support teachers' well-being and help prevent burnout.

### **2.2. Locus of Control**

Locus of control refers to an individual's beliefs about the degree to which they have control over the outcomes of events in their lives <sup>[34]</sup>. Individuals with an internal locus of control believe that they have the power to influence events, while those with an external locus of control believe that events are largely determined by external factors. For educators, particularly teachers, the locus of control can have a significant influence on their teaching methods, classroom management, and interactions with students <sup>[35]</sup>. Research suggests that teachers with a more internal locus of control tend to have higher levels of self-efficacy and, consequently, more effective teaching practices <sup>[36][37]</sup>. In the realm of education, teachers' belief in their ability to control outcomes can influence how they approach classroom experiments, student inquiries, and the exploration of scientific phenomena. Teachers with an internal locus of control may believe that they have a significant influence over student behavior and learning outcomes. Teachers with a higher internal locus of control tend to employ more proactive classroom management strategies <sup>[38]</sup>. This proactive approach can be particularly essential in classrooms where experiments and hands-on activities require structure and discipline. The locus of control among teachers plays a pivotal role in shaping their teaching methodologies, classroom management strategies, professional development attitudes, and interactions with students. Recognizing and addressing this psychological construct can be instrumental in fostering effective teaching and learning.

### **2.3. Organizational Identity**

Organizational identity refers to how members define and experience the organization they work for <sup>[39]</sup>. It enables employees to feel a sense of belonging and emotional connection to the organization <sup>[40][41]</sup>. A strong organizational identity is associated with higher employee engagement, satisfaction, and performance <sup>[42][43][44]</sup>. Theoretical models describe organizational identity as emerging from the interplay between internal culture, external image, and member identification <sup>[45][46]</sup>. Internal organizational culture shapes identity by providing shared assumptions and values <sup>[42]</sup>. External images and reputations also influence identity by providing a social mirror <sup>[47][48]</sup>. Employees integrate these

factors into a conceptualization of “who we are as an organization” [49]. The benefits of organizational identification are well established. High identification boosts cooperation, retention, and performance [50][51]. It also encourages extra-role behaviors that support organizational effectiveness [52][53]. However, potential downsides like resistance to change warrant consideration [54].

Teachers may experience unique dynamics related to their organizational identification. On one hand, the shared identity of being a “teacher” can create a strong sense of common purpose and subgroup distinctiveness [55]. Teachers often have specialized qualifications, expertise, and values rooted in the scientific method that bond them together [56]. However, identification with the broader school organization is also important to avoid isolation [57]. Teachers should feel their discipline is valued alongside others for a cohesive organizational culture [58][59]. Allowing teachers to participate in rituals and events beyond just the department will strengthen their organizational identity. Finding this balance between subject identity and organizational identity is key for effective schools. Overall, organizational identity represents a key driver of employee attitudes and behaviors. Both research and practice stand to benefit from the ongoing examination of antecedents, processes, and outcomes surrounding organizational identity. Leaders should leverage identity-affirming practices while remaining cognizant of potential identity tensions. A nuanced understanding of identity dynamics will allow organizations to maximize the benefits of member identification and commitment.

## **2.4. Relation among Organizational Identity, Locus of Control, and Burnout**

These papers provide mixed evidence on the relationship between organizational identity, locus of control, and burnout. Two papers found a link between organizational identity and burnout. Lammers et al. [60] found that work group identification was associated with lower depersonalization, while professional identification was associated with increased personal accomplishment. Avanzi et al. [61] found that organizational identification led to less burnout through increased social support and collective efficacy. However, other papers found a more complex relationship. Jain et al. [62] found that locus of control and perceived organizational support moderated the relationship between job burnout and managerial effectiveness. When these moderators were high, the negative relationship between burnout and effectiveness was weaker. Elloy and Patil [63] found that organization-based self-esteem was negatively related to all three burnout dimensions.

Two papers examined how resources can buffer the negative impact of stressors on burnout. Day et al. [64] found that supervisor support and job control buffered the relationship between change stressors and exhaustion/cynicism. Job control also moderated the relationship between change and reduced professional efficacy. Avanzi et al. [61] found that social support and job control were associated with lower emotional exhaustion through lower role stress. Emotional exhaustion then predicted depersonalization, lower professional commitment, and higher turnover intentions. There is a complex interplay between organizational identity, locus of control, and burnout in teachers. Teachers with an external locus of control, meaning they believe life events are outside their control, tend to experience higher burnout [14][16][65]. However, organizational identification, or a teacher's sense of belonging to their school, can mitigate the negative effects of external locus of control. When teachers strongly identify with their school, their external locus of control does not necessarily lead to burnout [66]. Job satisfaction also plays an important role in the relationship between organizational factors and burnout. Teachers who are more satisfied with their jobs tend to have lower burnout, even when facing significant stressors [67][68]. For student teachers in particular, job satisfaction mediates the connection between their professional identity and burnout [69]. Student teachers who are satisfied with their jobs are less likely to become burned out, even if they are still developing their professional identity.

Certain organizational stressors can also directly contribute to burnout in teachers. Lack of recognition and inadequate financial compensation are linked to lower job satisfaction and higher emotional exhaustion [68]. Perceived unfairness in organizational practices and policies leads to higher depersonalization and emotional exhaustion [70]. Heavy workloads, large class sizes, student misbehavior, and lack of input in decision-making are also associated with components of burnout like emotional exhaustion [22][23][24][67].

In summary, teachers' locus of control, organizational identification, job satisfaction, and exposure to organizational stressors all work together to influence their risk of burnout. Strong organizational identification and job satisfaction can help shield teachers from the negative impacts of external locus of control and high-stress work environments. By fostering supportive environments, fair policies, manageable workloads, and opportunities for input, schools may be able to promote teachers' well-being and prevent burnout.

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