

**Alona Liashevych**

Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University

## **PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL BURNOUT OF A TEACHER OF A HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS**

### **Summary**

Psycho-emotional burnout is perhaps one of the most common syndromes, which develops against the background of continuous exposure to stressful situations and leads to intellectual, mental and physical fatigue and exhaustion. The educational work of a teacher of a higher educational institution leads to the syndrome of "professional burnout" in most people of this profession. The aim of the work was to determine the psycho-emotional state of teachers of higher educational institutions. The study involved 59 teachers of different ages and work experience. It was found that the vast majority of teachers in institutions of higher education have a high level of both emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishments and an average level of depersonalization.

**Key words:** stress, teacher, educator, burnout, emotional exhaustion.

### **Introduction**

A person in modern society is often exposed to chronic social stress, which can be caused by various stressors of social origin. A person's experience of chronic social stress can change both human consciousness and disrupt the functioning of various body systems.

Stress these days is one of the most common types of affect. It is a state of excessively strong and prolonged psychological stress that occurs in a person when their nervous system is affected by emotional overload. Stress disrupts human activity and the normal course of their behavior. Stress, especially if it is frequent and prolonged, has a negative impact not only on

the psychological state, but also on physical health. They are the main "risk factors" that course or aggravate such diseases as cardiovascular and gastrointestinal [5].

According to Hans Selye, stress is a nonspecific (i.e. the same to different influences) response of a body to any demand imposed on it, which helps it to adapt to these difficulties and cope with them. Any suddenness that disrupts the normal flow of life can cause stress. At the same time, as Hans Selye points out, it does not matter whether the situation we encounter is pleasant or unpleasant. It is the intensity of the need for change or adaptation that matters [1, 12].

Social stress is one of the most common factors in the development of various mental and nervous disorders, including adaptation disorders such as anxiety, depressive-like disorders, and so on [10].

The "burnout" syndrome is a stress reaction that occurs as a result of long-term occupational stress of medium intensity. Given the definition of the stress process by Hans Selye (i.e. stages of anxiety, resistance and exhaustion) "professional burnout" can be considered to be the third stage, which is characterized by a stable and uncontrolled level of excitation. Teachers work in a rather restless, emotionally tense environment, which requires constant attention and control over the interaction in the system "teacher-student". Under such conditions, stress is caused by many stressors, which constantly accumulate in various spheres of life. Signs of stress in the work of a teacher are diverse and numerous: high emotional stress, increased anxiety, irritability, exhaustion – and these are only a small part of the factors that lead to emotional exhaustion of the representatives of this complex and extremely important profession today. A significant stressor is the psychological and physical overload of teachers, which causes the so-called syndrome of "burnout" – exhaustion of moral and physical strength, which inevitably affects the effectiveness of professional activities, general health, mental well-being and relationships in the family and everyday life.

The problem of professional burnout is reflected in the works of such foreign scientists as K. Maslach, S. Jackson, B. Perlman, X. Freidenberger, E. Hartmann and others. In domestic science, the issues of professional burnout were raised by V. Boyko, N. Vodopianova, L. Karamushka, N. Lazarev, O. Romanovska, T. Formaniuk and others. Researchers V. Boyko, N. Vodopianova, T. Ronhynska, A. Serebriakova, O. Starchenkova and others were engaged in research and development of diagnostic methods for the "professional burnout" syndrome [2].

American researchers K. Maslach and S. Jackson described burnout as a syndrome of physical emotional exhaustion, which occurs against the background of stress. Because of this state negative self-esteem, negative attitude to work, loss of understanding and compassion for colleagues begin to develop [6]. Scientists consider the syndrome of "burnout" as a three-component system, which consists of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduction of personal aspirations, which is the result of a discrepancy between a person and their work [11]. The main component of this mechanism is emotional exhaustion, which is caused by oversaturation with negative emotional experiences. The second component – depersonalization – is a deformation of the relationship, which is manifested in negativism, impersonal, cynical attitude towards the persons of provided services, and their positive attitude towards themselves. The third component – the reduction of personal accomplishments – negative assessment of their own work, themselves as specialists. The authors see the most reliable sign of burnout in the combination of emotional exhaustion with depersonalization, while the relationship between the reduction of personal accomplishments and the other two components of burnout is not necessarily considered to be a direct causal. Thus, the dynamics of the burnout, according to K. Maslach, unfolds in the following direction: idealism and excessive demands – emotional and mental exhaustion – dehumanization as a way to counteract it – a syndrome of aversion (against themselves – against others – against everything) and, as a consequence – collapse: dismissal, disease [4].

Emotional burnout syndrome is a disease that, unfortunately, is not always noticed. Given that the main providers of the educational goal are teachers of higher educational institutions, it is necessary to pay great attention to their psychological health. The stressful nature of the professional activity of teachers has a negative impact on their mental states, which causes a number of negative socio-psychological consequences in the professional sphere. These include: decreased job satisfaction, deteriorating socio-psychological climate in the team, burnout [13].

Teachers belong to a professional group that is particularly open to maladaptive tendencies. This is facilitated by high levels of stress, the complexity of intellectual work, increased load on the visual system, psycho-emotional and muscular tension. M. Berebin believes that socially maladaptive factors for this profession are low social security and prestige of the profession, suppression of active social needs, multifunctional socially responsible activities in conditions of information overload, the need for professional interpersonal interaction in situations with a high degree of conflict. Among the many features and difficulties

of educational work, its high psychological tension is especially distinguished. Moreover, the need for emotion and involvement is recognized as one of the professionally important qualities of a teacher [9].

The profession of the teacher is one of those where the syndrome of "professional burnout" is the most common, because the professional activity of the teacher is recognized as one of the most emotionally stressful. This is due to the large number of unpredictable and uncontrolled communicative situations, unregulated work, high degree of personal responsibility of a teacher, the inability to obtain unambiguous evidence of the effectiveness of their activities, and so on. Emotional burnout of teachers has become a problematic phenomenon of modern higher educational institutions. Therefore, it is very important to study the peculiarities of the syndrome of "professional burnout", its development and course in educational work [7, 8]. The study of emotional burnout of teachers is a very relevant and acute problem of our time. This is determined by the need of science and practice to know the individual factors and features of the traumatic effect of emotional burnout on the mental health of the teacher [3].

### **Purpose, scope and research method**

The purpose of the study: theoretical substantiation of the concept of "burnout", experimental study of the signs of this syndrome in teachers of higher educational institutions and arrangement of recommendations for the prevention of "burnout".

Subject of the research: psychological features of "professional burnout" of teachers.

Research methods: theoretical (method of scientific analysis, synthesis, abstraction, induction, classification and systematization, which were used to generalize theoretical approaches to determine the nature and characteristics of the impact of "burnout" syndrome on the personality of a teacher) and empirical methods (questionnaire, pedagogical experiment, quantitative and qualitative analysis of the results). In the course of the research the following practical method was used: diagnostics of professional burnout by K. Maslach and S. Jackson.

### **Results and discussion**



I feel emotionally drained	1	4	4	19	14	13	4
At the end of the day, I feel like a "squeezed lemon"	0	3	5	21	17	10	3
I feel tired when I wake up in the morning and have to go to work	3	9	9	21	8	6	3
I feel energetic and emotionally uplifted	0	6	2	19	22	8	2
I feel depressed and apathetic	2	14	12	13	11	4	3
I have more and more frustrations in life	4	15	6	21	7	3	3
I feel indifferent and lose interest in many things that have made me happy before	6	15	9	17	6	4	2
I want to be alone and relax from everything and everyone	1	14	6	15	11	7	5
I feel on the edge/am pushing my limits	3	12	12	18	7	3	4

*Source: Own survey on the basis of conducted research.*

Having analysed the results of the "Depersonalization" block of the questionnaires it was found that the average statistics of this condition of all teachers are at the average level (Table 2). Depersonalization is manifested in the distortion of relationships with other people. There can be increase in dependence on others, or increase in negativity, cynicism of attitudes and feelings. Depersonalization involves a cynical, indifferent, inhumane attitude towards the people they work with. Contacts with colleagues become formal, impersonal; the negative attitudes may initially be latent and manifest themselves in restrained irritation, which eventually breaks out and leads to conflicts.

**Table 2. The results of the "Depersonalization" block of the questionnaire by the "Professional burnout" method in the system "man-man" of teachers of Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University (Ukraine), (n = 59)**

Statement	Number of teachers who chose the answer options						
	never	very rarely	rarely	sometimes	often	very often	always
I communicate with my students quite formally, without unnecessary emotions, and try to minimize communication with them	15	16	14	7	2	3	2
Lately, I have become more callous (insensitive) towards those I work with	13	19	12	8	4	1	2
As a rule, people around me demand a lot from me and manipulate me. They are more tiresome than happy	5	19	9	13	7	3	3

Sometimes I really don't care what happens to some of my students and colleagues	16	19	7	11	2	1	3
Sometimes students and colleagues shift the burden of their problems and responsibilities onto me	5	9	9	18	12	4	2

*Source: Own survey on the basis of conducted research.*

The results of the "Reduction of personal accomplishments" block show that this condition is on average at a high level for all teachers (Table 3). Reduction of personal accomplishments can be manifested either in the tendency to negatively evaluate themselves, their professional accomplishments and successes, negativism about accomplishments and opportunities, or limiting their capabilities, responsibilities towards others.

**Table 3. The results of the "Reduction of personal accomplishments" block of the questionnaire by the "Professional burnout" method in the system "man-man" of teachers of Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University (Ukraine), (n = 59)**

Statement	Number of teachers who chose the answer options						
	never	very rarely	rarely	sometimes	often	very often	always
I understand well what my students and colleagues feel, and I use it in the interests of the cause	7	6	4	15	20	3	4
I know how to find the right solution in conflict situations	0	0	0	10	27	18	4
I can positively influence on the productivity of my students and colleagues	0	0	2	12	27	15	3
I have many plans for the future and I believe in their fulfilment	0	1	2	13	16	11	16
I can easily create an atmosphere of friendliness and cooperation when communicating with my students and colleagues	0	1	0	10	23	15	10
I communicate easily with people regardless of their status and character	1	0	2	6	24	17	9
I have time to do a lot of what was planned	0	0	7	17	20	9	6
I can still achieve a lot in my life	0	4	2	8	19	12	14

*Source: Own survey on the basis of conducted research.*

The results of the survey showed that if the respondent has a high level of emotional exhaustion, then both depersonalization and reduction of personal accomplishments are high. If the respondent has an average level of emotional exhaustion, then depersonalization and reduction of personal accomplishments may be of a medium or high level. If the respondent has

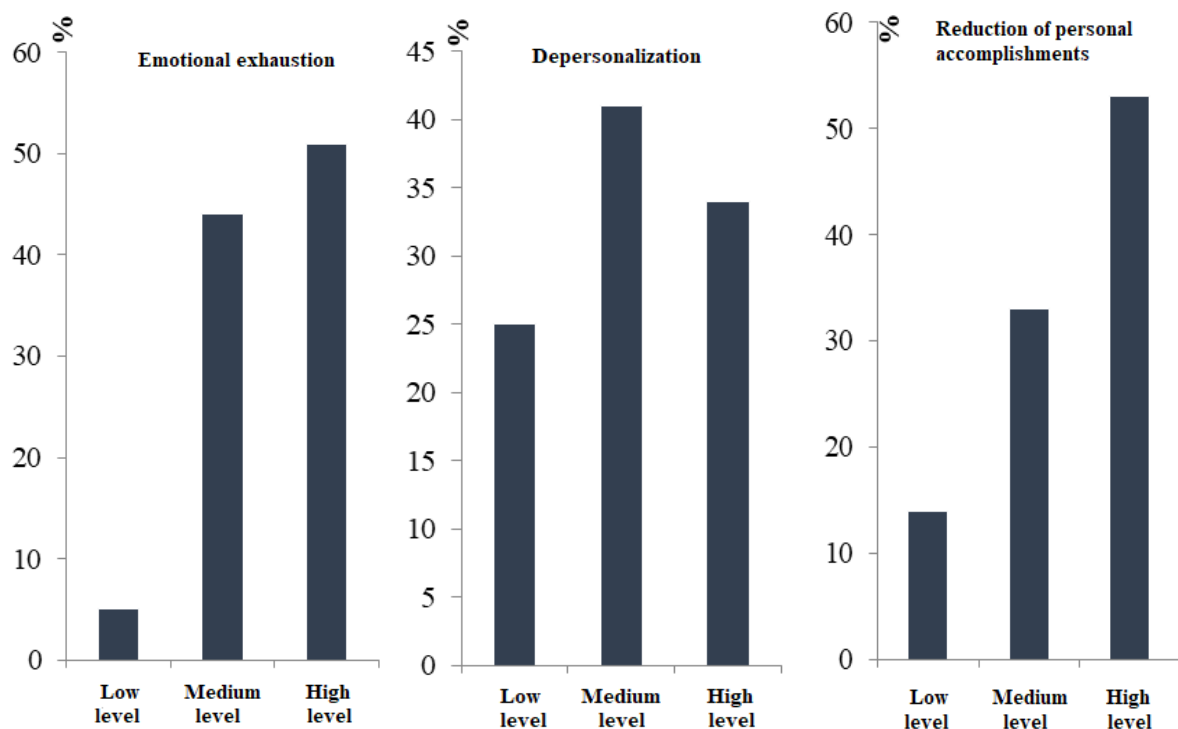
a low level of emotional exhaustion, then both depersonalization and reduction of personal accomplishments are low or medium (Table 4).

**Table 4.** The results of the questionnaire by the "Professional burnout" method in the system "man-man" of teachers of Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University (Ukraine), (n = 59)

Subscale	Low level	Medium level	High level
	Number of people		
Emotional exhaustion	3	26	30
Depersonalization	15	24	20
Reduction of personal accomplishments	8	20	31

*Source: Own survey on the basis of conducted research.*

It was found that the most pronounced sign for the respondents is "emotional exhaustion". The following results were found in teachers: 51 % have a high level, 44 % – medium and 5 % – low (Figure 2). Emotional exhaustion is a major component of burnout and manifests itself in a decrease in emotional background, indifference or emotional overload. The teacher feels the devastation and fatigue caused by his own work.



**Figure 2.** Components of "emotional burnout" of teachers of Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University (Ukraine), (n = 59)



*Source: Own survey on the basis of conducted research*

According to the results of the survey, such a feature as "reduction of personal accomplishments" in the studied teachers is also at a high level, in particular a low level – in 14 % of teachers, medium – in 33 % and high – in 53 % (Figure 2). People who have this predominant trait may experience a decrease in the sense of competence in their work, dissatisfaction with themselves, a decrease in the value of their own activities, feelings of guilt for their own negative attitudes or feelings, negative perceptions of themselves in professional activities, decreased professional and personal self-esteem, feeling of own inability, indifference to work. It is possible that the level of motivation to work will reduce, which is manifested in a decrease in enthusiasm and initiative.

Less pronounced feature in the respondents is "depersonalization", in particular, a low level was found in 25 % of respondents, medium – in 41 % and high – in 34 % (Figure 2). Depersonalization is manifested in the tendency to negatively evaluate their professional accomplishments, underestimation of themselves and their own successes, negative attitude to work and possible prospects, formalities of contacts with colleagues at work and so on.

Regarding the pedagogical experience, the most "dangerous" in the teaching activities is the period of 11-15 years, when the symptoms of burnout are observed most often.

### **Summary**

In this study, emotional burnout is seen as a syndrome of constant fatigue, emotional exhaustion, which only intensifies over time. It has been proven that emotional burnout is easily confused with depression, because a person in both states is equally passive and powerless. Emotional burnout and depression are very similar and are often seen as related problems. But numerous studies show that there is a difference between them. The survey revealed such features of emotional burnout as emotional exhaustion, which is manifested by emotional devastation and fatigue, not excluded are manifestations of depersonalization, characterized by depersonalization of relationships with people. The results of the survey show that a significant number of teachers are characterized by inadequate emotional response, reduced interaction with colleagues, termination of professional responsibilities, the desire to be alone, expanding the sphere of saving emotions. A pronounced feature for the respondents is the reduction of personal accomplishments. Their attitude is manifested in the tendency to negatively assess themselves, their professional achievements and successes, negativism about professional

dignity and opportunities, or in the leveling of personal dignity, limiting their capabilities, responsibilities to others. Thus, in the professional activity of teachers there is a high level of emotional burnout.

Emotional burnout syndrome occurs against the background of physical and mental exhaustion of a teacher. Therefore, preventive measures aimed at improving health will help prevent this disease. One of the most effective means of preventing the development of emotional burnout is self-regulation, because without the active and conscious involvement of the individual it is impossible to successfully overcome this problem. Teachers with a high level of "emotional burnout" need psychotherapeutic measures to overcome and prevent emotional burnout from a psychologist, because it is necessary to improve their professional activities.

Prospects for further research are related to the development of guidelines for preventive and corrective work aimed at reducing psycho-emotional stress and increasing the motivation level of professional activity of teachers of higher educational institutions, taking into account their temperament and age.

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