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RESUMEN

Teacher burnout has evolved from a problem primarily associated with professional fatigue into a major challenge affecting educators' health, career sustainability, and the quality of educational processes. This study aimed to analyze burnout in the teaching profession by examining its relationships with occupational exhaustion, physical and psychological health, and professional performance. A qualitative documentary review of studies published between 2021 and 2026 was conducted, integrating systematic reviews, meta-analyses, longitudinal and cross-sectional studies, bibliometric research, and institutional sources. The findings indicate that persistent occupational stress, excessive workload, employment precarity, administrative demands, and unfavorable organizational conditions increase teachers' vulnerability to burnout. Its consequences extend beyond emotional exhaustion and include impaired physical and psychological health, persistent fatigue, reduced work ability, diminished professional engagement, turnover intentions, and forms of occupational withdrawal such as quiet quitting. Furthermore, its effects may extend to classroom functioning and certain academic, social-behavioral, and executive-function outcomes among students. The evidence indicates that a positive organizational climate, institutional support, employment stability, appropriate workload management, early identification, and access to occupational health resources are fundamental components of prevention. It is concluded that addressing teacher burnout requires moving beyond interventions focused exclusively on individual resilience toward a shared institutional responsibility. Protecting teachers' health is therefore essential to maintaining a stable, engaged, and effective teaching profession capable of sustaining high-quality education.

Keywords:

Teacher burnout, occupational exhaustion, occupational health, teacher performance, prevention.

RESUMEN

El burnout docente ha dejado de ser un problema circunscrito al cansancio profesional para convertirse en un desafío que compromete la salud, la permanencia laboral y la calidad de los procesos educativos. Este estudio tuvo como objetivo analizar el burnout en la profesión docente, considerando sus relaciones con el agotamiento ocupacional, la salud física y psicológica y el desempeño profesional. Se desarrolló una revisión documental cualitativa de investigaciones publicadas entre 2021 y 2026, integrando revisiones sistemáticas, metaanálisis, estudios longitudinales y transversales, investigaciones bibliométricas y fuentes institucionales. Los hallazgos muestran que el estrés laboral persistente, la sobrecarga, la precariedad del empleo, las exigencias administrativas y las condiciones organizacionales desfavorables incrementan la vulnerabilidad al burnout. Sus consecuencias trascienden el agotamiento emocional e incluyen deterioro de la salud física y psicológica, fatiga persistente, menor capacidad laboral, pérdida de compromiso profesional, intención de abandonar la docencia y formas de desvinculación como la renuncia silenciosa. Asimismo, sus efectos pueden alcanzar el funcionamiento del aula y determinados resultados académicos, sociales y ejecutivos de los estudiantes. La evidencia revela que un clima organizacional favorable, el apoyo institucional, la estabilidad laboral, la gestión adecuada de la carga de trabajo, la detección temprana y el acceso a recursos de salud ocupacional constituyen elementos fundamentales para la prevención. Se concluye que enfrentar

el burnout exige superar las intervenciones centradas exclusivamente en la resiliencia individual y asumir una responsabilidad institucional compartida. Proteger la salud docente constituye una condición esencial para preservar una profesión estable, comprometida y capaz de sostener una educación de calidad.

Palabras clave:

Burnout docente, agotamiento ocupacional, salud ocupacional, desempeño docente, prevención.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a profession characterized by sustained interpersonal demands, emotional involvement, cognitive effort, organizational responsibilities, and continuous adaptation to changing educational environments. Although these demands are intrinsic to educational work, their accumulation without sufficient opportunities for recovery or adequate institutional support can compromise teachers' well-being and contribute to occupational burnout. Burnout has consequently become an important concern in educational research because its effects extend beyond temporary tiredness or dissatisfaction with work. It can affect teachers' psychological and physical health, their relationship with professional responsibilities, their capacity to remain effectively engaged in teaching, and, ultimately, the sustainability of their careers. A scoping review by Agyapong et al. (2022) demonstrated that stress, burnout, anxiety, and depression constitute significant concerns among teachers, illustrating the close relationship between occupational demands and mental health outcomes in this professional population.

Burnout should therefore be understood within the broader context of teachers' occupational health rather than exclusively as an individual inability to cope with professional pressure. The conditions under which teachers work expose them to multiple and sometimes simultaneous demands that can progressively exhaust emotional and physical resources. These conditions may include workload, time pressure, administrative responsibilities, challenging interpersonal interactions, insufficient resources, organizational difficulties, and expectations concerning professional performance. The systematic review and meta-analysis conducted by Alsulhe et al. (2021) illustrates the relevance of this problem in physical education teachers by showing that occupational burnout is associated with a range of individual and contextual determinants. Such evidence reinforces the importance of examining burnout as a multidimensional occupational phenomenon whose emergence cannot be attributed to a single personal or workplace factor.

Exhaustion occupies a particularly important place in this discussion because prolonged depletion of physical and psychological resources represents one of the most visible manifestations of deteriorating occupational well-being.

Teachers may continue performing their professional responsibilities while simultaneously experiencing increasing fatigue, emotional depletion, reduced motivation, or difficulties recovering from work-related demands. Among academic teachers, Springer et al. (2023) examined occupational burnout together with chronic fatigue and the moderating role of selected health behaviors, emphasizing the connection between professional strain, exhaustion, and health-related factors. This relationship suggests that the consequences of burnout cannot be adequately understood if physical and psychological manifestations are considered separately. Rather, occupational demands, exhaustion, health behaviors, and well-being form part of an interconnected process through which prolonged professional strain may affect teachers' functioning.

The health implications of teacher burnout are particularly important because occupational well-being determines not only how teachers experience their work but also their capacity to sustain professional activity over time. Burnout may coexist with broader psychological difficulties and can become embedded in patterns of persistent stress and deteriorating well-being. The evidence synthesized by Agyapong et al. (2022) situates burnout alongside anxiety, depression, and stress, thereby demonstrating the need to approach teacher well-being from a comprehensive occupational health perspective. Similarly, the findings reported by Springer et al. (2023) concerning burnout and chronic fatigue among academic teachers highlight the interaction between occupational experiences and health-related outcomes. Taken together, these studies support an understanding of teacher burnout as an issue that crosses the boundaries between education, occupational psychology, and public health.

This perspective is especially relevant because the consequences of burnout are not confined to subjective experiences of exhaustion. They may also become visible in teachers' ability to carry out professional responsibilities. Calin et al. (2022) directly examined the effects of burnout on teachers' professional activity, providing an important connection between occupational exhaustion and the practical functioning of educators. This relationship is central to understanding why burnout matters within educational systems. Teaching requires sustained attention, interpersonal engagement, decision-making, emotional regulation, preparation, communication, and responsiveness to students. When the psychological and physical resources required to maintain these activities are progressively depleted, the consequences may extend from individual well-being to the quality and continuity of professional engagement.

Recent research has further strengthened the relationship between burnout, health, self-efficacy, and teachers' perceived capacity to work. Hlado et al. (2025) examined the roles of burnout, self-rated health, and teacher self-efficacy in fostering perceived work ability, bringing together

several dimensions that are sometimes studied independently. Their approach is particularly relevant because work ability provides a conceptual bridge between occupational health and professional performance. From this perspective, teachers' capacity to perform their work cannot be separated from how they experience their health, the extent of occupational burnout, or their beliefs regarding their professional efficacy. Consequently, the study of burnout requires attention not only to symptoms and determinants but also to the mechanisms through which diminished well-being may influence teachers' capacity to function effectively within educational environments.

The growing attention to teacher burnout also reflects the need to distinguish between responses centered exclusively on individual coping and those directed toward the occupational conditions in which burnout develops. Prevention strategies can include individual resources and health-promoting behaviors, but an exclusive focus on teachers' capacity to adapt risks overlooking the organizational and professional circumstances that generate sustained strain. Contemporary educational discussions increasingly emphasize that burnout prevention requires attention to workload, institutional support, professional recognition, resources, working relationships, and organizational practices alongside strategies that strengthen teachers' individual resources. Cahill (2025), for example, presents burnout in terms of its symptoms, prevalence, and prevention strategies, reflecting the growing practical concern with identifying the phenomenon before its consequences become more severe.

The available evidence therefore suggests that burnout in teaching is best examined as a process connecting occupational demands, exhaustion, health, and professional functioning rather than as an isolated psychological outcome. The systematic evidence concerning prevalence and determinants provided by Alsalhe et al. (2021), the broader association between burnout and psychological difficulties identified by Agyapong et al. (2022), the connection between occupational burnout and chronic fatigue examined by Springer et al. (2023), and the relationship between burnout and professional activity reported by Calin et al. (2022) collectively reveal different components of the same occupational problem. Hlado et al. (2025) further integrates these dimensions by connecting burnout and self-rated health with self-efficacy and perceived work ability. Together, these contributions provide a basis for moving beyond a narrow conceptualization of burnout and toward an integrated examination of its implications for teachers and educational practice.

Such an integrated perspective is necessary because exhaustion, occupational health, and performance should not be treated as independent consequences occurring at separate stages. They can interact dynamically. Persistent occupational demands may intensify exhaustion; exhaustion can coincide with deteriorating physical

or psychological well-being; compromised health can reduce perceived work ability; and difficulties in sustaining professional functioning may themselves generate additional stress and dissatisfaction. This reciprocal relationship makes teacher burnout particularly significant for educational systems, since protecting teachers' health is simultaneously a matter of workforce sustainability and professional effectiveness. Understanding these connections is therefore essential for developing responses that address both the individual manifestations of burnout and the occupational environments in which they emerge.

Accordingly, the objective of this article is to analyze burnout in the teaching profession by examining its relationship with occupational exhaustion, teachers' physical and psychological health, and professional performance, while identifying the individual and occupational factors that contribute to its development and the implications of these relationships for teacher well-being and effective professional practice.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a qualitative documentary review approach to examine burnout in the teaching profession, with particular attention to occupational exhaustion, physical and psychological health, professional performance, and preventive strategies. The analysis was based on scientific literature and complementary institutional sources addressing burnout among teachers and academic professionals in different educational contexts. The methodological approach was designed to integrate findings from studies using different research designs in order to develop a comprehensive interpretation of the phenomenon rather than to estimate a single pooled effect.

The documentary corpus included studies published between 2021 and 2026, together with institutional and professional publications relevant to the contemporary discussion of teacher burnout. The selected literature comprised systematic reviews, meta-analyses, longitudinal and cross-sectional studies, bibliometric research, survey-based investigations, and other empirical studies. Sources addressing primary and secondary school teachers, physical education teachers, early childhood educators, university lecturers, and other academic personnel were considered. This diversity allowed burnout to be examined across different educational levels and professional environments.

Sources were considered relevant when they contributed evidence directly related to at least one of the principal dimensions established for the analysis: occupational stress and exhaustion, physical or psychological health, determinants and risk factors, organizational and employment conditions, professional functioning and work ability, professional disengagement or turnover intentions, effects associated with educational processes, and strategies for prevention. Publications whose content did not contribute

directly to understanding burnout within teaching or academic occupational settings were not incorporated into the interpretative analysis.

The information extracted from the selected publications was organized thematically rather than chronologically. The first analytical category addressed occupational demands, stress, fatigue, and exhaustion as conditions associated with burnout. A second category examined physical and psychological health consequences. A third considered organizational characteristics, employment conditions, institutional climate, and other contextual determinants. The fourth focused on professional functioning, including work ability, self-efficacy, engagement, turnover intentions, and quiet quitting. Finally, the analysis considered preventive responses and the possible implications of teacher burnout for classroom functioning and student outcomes. These categories correspond directly to the relationships subsequently examined in the results and discussion.

A comparative interpretative synthesis was then conducted to identify recurring findings, complementary contributions, differences among educational contexts, and relationships among the principal dimensions of burnout. Particular attention was given to findings supported by systematic reviews, meta-analyses, longitudinal research, and recent empirical studies, while institutional and professional sources were used primarily to complement the discussion of working conditions and practical prevention. Because the included publications differed in populations, instruments, designs, and analytical procedures, no statistical pooling of their results was performed. Instead, the evidence was synthesized qualitatively to establish an integrated account of how occupational demands, exhaustion, health, organizational conditions, and professional performance interact within teacher burnout.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the literature shows that burnout in the teaching profession is a complex occupational phenomenon that develops through the interaction of psychological, organizational, physical, and professional factors. Rather than being limited to feelings of tiredness, teacher burnout involves a progressive deterioration in the resources needed to respond effectively to sustained job demands. Its manifestations may vary according to educational level, professional context, employment conditions, workload, institutional climate, and individual resources. Across the studies examined, burnout emerges as a relevant concern among schoolteachers, physical education teachers, university lecturers, and other academic professionals, indicating that it is not restricted to a particular educational setting. The accumulated research also shows that the problem has received increasing international attention, reflecting concerns about teacher well-being, workforce stability, occupational health, and the

quality of educational processes (Alsalhe et al., 2021; Yao & Abdullah, 2025; Yingying et al., 2025).

One of the main findings concerns the close association between burnout and prolonged occupational stress. Agyapong et al. (2022) found that teachers are exposed to substantial levels of stress and that burnout frequently appears alongside anxiety and depressive symptoms. This relationship is reinforced by evidence identifying job stress as an important predictor of burnout in specific groups of educators. Li et al. (2025), for example, reported a relationship between occupational stress and burnout among primary and secondary school physical education teachers using complementary analytical approaches. Similarly, the systematic review and meta-analysis conducted by Alsalhe et al. (2021) identified multiple determinants of burnout among physical education teachers, suggesting that its occurrence results from a combination of professional demands and individual and contextual characteristics. These findings indicate that prevention should begin before severe burnout develops, particularly by identifying persistent stressors and conditions that repeatedly exceed teachers' available resources.

Fatigue represents another significant component of the problem. Springer et al. (2023) identified an important connection between occupational burnout and chronic fatigue among academic teachers and also examined the moderating role of health behaviors. This finding is relevant because persistent exhaustion may gradually reduce the capacity to recover between periods of professional activity. Marić et al. (2022) further examined whether occupational burnout among teachers varies seasonally, drawing attention to temporal fluctuations in professional strain. Consequently, teacher exhaustion should not be interpreted solely as a stable individual condition. The intensity of professional demands may change during the academic year, and preventive measures should account for periods characterized by increased workload, assessment responsibilities, administrative pressure, or other recurring occupational demands.

The consequences for health constitute one of the strongest findings across the literature. Madigan et al. (2023), in a systematic review specifically focused on teacher burnout and physical health, found associations with somatic complaints and illnesses as well as physiological indicators related to dysregulation and inflammation. Beutel et al. (2023) likewise connected burnout with poorer self-rated general health and life satisfaction among teachers and other academic occupational groups. These findings broaden the significance of burnout beyond emotional discomfort and demonstrate that it is relevant to occupational health more generally. Agyapong et al. (2022) additionally documented its relationship with psychological outcomes, while Ntouka et al. (2026) linked burnout and mental health with employment precarity among primary education teachers. The combined evidence therefore

supports interventions that consider both psychological and physical well-being rather than treating burnout exclusively as an emotional problem.

The organizational environment appears to be particularly important in explaining why some teachers may be more vulnerable or resilient under demanding circumstances. Mijakoski et al. (2022), through a systematic review of longitudinal studies, identified determinants operating across different dimensions of teachers' professional experience. More recent evidence also points toward employment conditions and organizational characteristics. Ntouka et al. (2026) examined employment precarity as an organizational determinant, whereas Oliveira et al. (2026) found that a positive organizational climate can play a buffering role in relation to teachers' burnout. These results are significant because they challenge prevention models that place the principal responsibility on individual teachers. Strategies such as relaxation, time management, physical activity, or personal resilience may be useful, but they are unlikely to compensate fully for persistent structural problems involving excessive demands, insecure employment, inadequate support, or unfavorable organizational environments.

Burnout also has important implications for professional functioning. Calin et al. (2022) showed that it can affect teachers' professional activity, while Hlado et al. (2025) demonstrated that burnout, self-rated health, and teacher self-efficacy are relevant to perceived work ability. These findings suggest that health and performance should not be viewed as unrelated dimensions. A teacher experiencing sustained exhaustion or deteriorating health may encounter greater difficulty maintaining the psychological and professional resources required for effective work. This does not imply that every teacher experiencing burnout will necessarily demonstrate measurable deterioration in performance; rather, the evidence indicates that burnout creates conditions capable of undermining work ability and professional engagement.

The effects may also appear in decisions concerning continued participation in the profession. Räsänen et al. (2022) identified a relationship between experienced burnout risk and persistent turnover intentions, while Dilekçi et al. (2025) found that occupational stress, burnout, and change fatigue were predictors of quiet quitting among teachers. These results highlight a particularly important organizational consequence: teachers do not necessarily respond to occupational strain only by leaving their jobs. Some may remain employed while psychologically reducing their investment in work, limiting effort to required responsibilities, or distancing themselves from additional professional demands. From this perspective, retention statistics alone may underestimate the impact of burnout because remaining in the profession does not necessarily indicate sustained engagement or occupational well-being.

The consequences of teacher burnout can extend beyond teachers themselves. Stephens et al. (2026) examined links between teachers' occupational burnout and students' academic, social-behavioral, and executive function performance from preschool through first grade. This evidence is particularly important because it places teacher well-being within the broader educational environment. Burnout should therefore be considered not only from the perspective of employee health but also in relation to the interactions and educational processes through which teachers influence students. Protecting teacher well-being may consequently have implications for classroom functioning and student development, although these relationships should be interpreted carefully and without assuming that burnout alone determines student outcomes.

The findings support a multilayered approach to prevention. At the organizational level, educational institutions should periodically assess workload, administrative burden, working conditions, employment stability, access to resources, and the quality of relationships between teachers and leadership. The evidence concerning organizational climate suggests that supportive workplaces may help reduce the impact of demanding circumstances (Oliveira et al., 2026). Institutional responses should therefore include accessible channels for professional support, realistic allocation of responsibilities, opportunities for participation in decisions affecting teachers' work, recognition of professional contributions, and early identification of conditions associated with sustained occupational strain. Walker (2025) similarly emphasizes the importance of working conditions and argues against reducing burnout prevention to the responsibility of educators to cope more effectively with unfavorable circumstances.

At the individual and professional-support levels, prevention can include training in recognizing early symptoms, access to psychological and occupational health services, opportunities for recovery, strengthening of professional self-efficacy, and promotion of health-supportive behaviors. Springer et al. (2023) provide evidence relevant to the role of health behaviors, while Hlado et al. (2025) highlight the importance of self-efficacy and perceived health in work ability. Cahill (2025) also identifies practical prevention strategies and emphasizes recognizing signs of burnout. Nevertheless, these measures should complement rather than replace organizational change. Asking teachers to become more resilient without addressing persistent workplace stressors risks treating the consequences while leaving major determinants unchanged.

Preventive policies should also be adapted to the diversity of teaching contexts. The evidence reviewed includes schoolteachers, university lecturers, physical education teachers, and early childhood educators, and the specific pressures experienced by these groups are not necessarily identical (Alsashe et al., 2021; Yingying et al.,

2025). Interventions should therefore be informed by the characteristics of each institution and educational level. Regular assessment of psychosocial risks, confidential mechanisms for reporting occupational difficulties, workload monitoring, mentoring, peer-support structures, flexible recovery opportunities, and leadership practices that encourage professional participation may provide a more comprehensive framework than isolated wellness initiatives.

Overall, the principal finding emerging from the reviewed literature is that teacher burnout lies at the intersection of occupational demands, exhaustion, health, organizational conditions, work ability, and professional engagement. The bibliometric analysis by Yao & Abdullah (2025) confirms the substantial development of this research field over five decades, while recent studies increasingly connect burnout with broader questions concerning employment conditions, health, retention, and educational outcomes. The evidence therefore favors prevention strategies that combine individual support with institutional responsibility. Effective prevention requires reducing avoidable occupational stressors, strengthening supportive organizational environments, identifying exhaustion before it becomes persistent, protecting physical and psychological health, and maintaining the conditions that enable teachers to remain professionally engaged. Such an approach recognizes that preserving teacher well-being is not separate from educational performance but is an important condition for sustaining a healthy and effective teaching profession.

Oliveira et al. (2026) provide important evidence for understanding teacher burnout from an organizational rather than exclusively individual perspective. Following 101 Portuguese elementary teachers across five measurement points, the authors found changes in burnout indicators during the COVID-19 period, including a significant decline in perceived personal accomplishment during the first lockdown. Increased job demands and strained interpersonal relationships emerged as relevant stressors. Particularly significant was the finding that organizational climate moderated the relationship between occupational stress and emotional exhaustion and was positively associated with personal accomplishment. Their contribution therefore supports the view that a favorable organizational environment can function as a protective resource and that interventions should address workplace relationships and contextual conditions alongside individual coping strategies.

Walker (2025) contributes a professional and policy-oriented perspective by emphasizing the working conditions that underlie teacher burnout. Rather than presenting burnout primarily as a problem that educators should resolve through better individual coping, the analysis draws attention to structural pressures within teaching and to the responsibility of educational authorities and policymakers for

improving the environments in which teachers work. This perspective is useful for prevention because it shifts attention toward institutional responses, including manageable professional demands, adequate support, appropriate resources, and working conditions that make sustained teaching possible. Walker's contribution complements empirical research by highlighting the practical and systemic implications of burnout for the teaching workforce.

Räsänen et al. (2022) make a particularly important contribution by connecting burnout with teachers' persistent intentions to leave the profession. In a five-year follow-up of 313 Finnish comprehensive schoolteachers with persistent turnover intentions, the researchers identified four burnout profiles ranging from moderate to high risk. More than half of the participants showed transient or persistent high burnout risk, and exhaustion was the most frequently experienced symptom, although cynicism and perceived inadequacy were also associated with turnover intentions. These findings demonstrate that burnout can have consequences extending beyond well-being to professional retention and suggest that early identification of both burnout symptoms and intentions to leave may be essential for preventing teacher attrition.

Dilekçi et al. (2025) expand the discussion of burnout consequences by examining its relationship with *quiet quitting* among teachers. Their study analyzed occupational stress, burnout, and change fatigue as predictors of teachers' psychological withdrawal from work. This contribution is relevant because it shows that the effects of occupational strain do not necessarily culminate in formal resignation. Teachers may remain employed while reducing their involvement beyond minimum job requirements. The study therefore introduces an important intermediate outcome between continued professional engagement and complete occupational departure and highlights the need for institutions to monitor declining motivation and disengagement before they develop into more serious retention problems.

Li et al. (2025) contribute to understanding the stress–burnout relationship among primary and secondary school physical education teachers. By employing multiverse-style analysis together with a diary method, the study provides evidence concerning the association between occupational stress and burnout through complementary methodological approaches. Its contribution is particularly relevant because it moves beyond treating burnout as an isolated outcome and instead examines its connection with teachers' ongoing experiences of occupational pressure. The findings reinforce the importance of reducing persistent work-related stressors and suggest that prevention strategies should address the everyday professional experiences through which stress accumulates.

Beutel et al. (2023) broaden the implications of burnout by relating it to general health and life satisfaction among teachers and other academic occupational groups. Their

work is especially valuable for an occupational-health approach because it situates burnout within a wider assessment of individuals' perceptions of their health and quality of life. The study supports the argument that burnout should not be examined only in terms of workplace attitudes or professional dissatisfaction; its relevance extends to broader dimensions of personal well-being. This connection strengthens the rationale for incorporating burnout prevention into occupational health programs rather than addressing it solely through professional-development initiatives.

Mijkoski et al. (2022) offer one of the strongest contributions for identifying factors that precede teacher burnout because their systematic review focuses specifically on longitudinal studies. This methodological feature is important, since longitudinal evidence provides a stronger basis for examining how occupational and personal factors relate to changes in burnout over time than cross-sectional associations alone. By synthesizing research on determinants of teacher burnout, the review demonstrates that the phenomenon emerges from multiple interacting influences rather than from a single cause. Its contribution supports comprehensive prevention models that simultaneously consider job demands, workplace resources, interpersonal conditions, and individual characteristics.

Yao & Abdullah (2025) provide a historical and bibliometric perspective on five decades of teacher burnout research from 1970 to 2024. Their analysis maps the development of the field, prominent researchers, collaboration networks, international patterns, and major thematic directions. This contribution is useful because it places contemporary concerns about teacher burnout within a much longer trajectory of scientific investigation and demonstrates that the subject has evolved into a substantial and internationally connected research domain. Their findings also help identify how research priorities have shifted toward broader questions involving educator well-being, professional performance, retention, and educational quality.

Madigan et al. (2023) make a central contribution to the occupational-health dimension through their systematic review of teacher burnout and physical health. The authors synthesized evidence linking burnout with physical health consequences, including somatic complaints and illnesses, as well as biological indicators associated with hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal axis dysregulation and inflammation. Their work is especially important because it challenges interpretations of burnout as merely an emotional or attitudinal condition. Instead, it demonstrates that prolonged occupational burnout may be associated with measurable dimensions of physical ill-health, reinforcing the need to integrate psychological and physical health monitoring in teacher-support programs.

Yingying et al. (2025) contribute a higher-education perspective through a systematic review and meta-analysis examining job stress and burnout among lecturers. The

study recognizes that university educators face a distinctive combination of teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities and quantitatively examines the relationship between occupational stress and burnout. It also considers potential moderators such as cultural background, burnout measurement instruments, and gender composition. This contribution demonstrates that the stress–burnout relationship must be interpreted in relation to specific professional and cultural contexts and provides evidence relevant to occupational-health policies and interventions within universities.

Marić et al. (2022) introduce a temporal dimension by investigating whether occupational burnout among teachers exhibits seasonal variation. This approach is valuable because teachers' workload and professional pressures are not necessarily distributed evenly throughout the academic year. By examining burnout in relation to time, the study encourages consideration of periods in which accumulated demands may place educators at greater risk of exhaustion. Its contribution has practical implications for prevention, since occupational-health measures, workload adjustments, recovery opportunities, and institutional support could be intensified during particularly demanding phases of the school calendar.

Ntouka et al. (2026) contribute to the organizational explanation of burnout by examining employment precarity as a determinant of teacher burnout and mental health among Greek primary education teachers. The study is particularly relevant because it draws attention to employment security as part of the psychosocial environment in which burnout develops while also validating the Maslach Burnout Inventory–Educators Survey in the population studied. Its findings reinforce the idea that teachers' mental health cannot be separated from employment conditions and that organizational policies concerning job stability and professional security should be considered when designing burnout-prevention strategies.

Vyletel et al. (2023) provide evidence from the 2022–2023 Healthy Minds Study faculty/staff survey concerning burnout and mental and emotional health among employees in higher education. Their contribution is particularly useful for contextualizing burnout within the contemporary university workforce and demonstrating that the phenomenon is relevant beyond primary and secondary education. The survey perspective also complements smaller empirical studies by providing information about faculty and staff experiences at a broader level. This evidence supports the inclusion of higher education personnel in institutional mental-health and burnout-prevention strategies rather than assuming that occupational burnout is primarily a problem affecting schoolteachers.

Stephens et al. (2026) extend the significance of teacher burnout beyond the educator by examining its links with student outcomes from preschool through first grade. Their study considers associations between teachers'

occupational burnout and students' academic, social-behavioral, and executive-function performance. This contribution is especially important because it connects occupational health with educational outcomes and suggests that the consequences associated with teacher burnout may become visible within classroom processes and student development. The study therefore provides a strong rationale for treating teacher well-being as part of educational quality: interventions that protect educators from severe occupational burnout may potentially benefit not only teachers themselves but also the students with whom they interact.

Taken together, these contributions show that teacher burnout is a multidimensional occupational phenomenon whose effects extend across personal, organizational, and educational domains. The evidence indicates that sustained professional pressure can progressively compromise teachers' capacity to remain engaged with their work, while unfavorable employment conditions, insufficient institutional support, demanding workloads, and organizational instability can increase vulnerability. At the same time, supportive working environments can operate as protective factors, demonstrating that burnout cannot be adequately addressed through individual coping strategies alone.

The findings also reveal different pathways through which burnout affects professional continuity. It may contribute to intentions to leave teaching, psychological withdrawal, reduced involvement, and difficulties maintaining work ability. These outcomes show that the consequences of burnout are not limited to actual resignation, since educators may remain employed while experiencing substantial deterioration in motivation and professional engagement. The evidence therefore highlights the importance of identifying early signs of exhaustion and disengagement before they develop into more persistent occupational problems.

Another important contribution concerns the relationship between burnout and health. Research associates prolonged burnout with poorer perceptions of general health and life satisfaction, physical complaints, illness, physiological alterations, and mental-health difficulties. This evidence strengthens the interpretation of burnout as an occupational-health issue rather than merely a temporary emotional response to demanding work. It also supports the integration of physical and psychological health measures within institutional prevention and teacher-support programs.

The literature further demonstrates that burnout varies according to professional setting and circumstances. Schoolteachers, physical education teachers, university lecturers, and early childhood educators experience different combinations of demands, while employment security, cultural context, academic responsibilities, and periods of intensified workload can modify exposure to occupational strain. This diversity suggests that preventive interventions should be adapted to particular educational

environments rather than applying a single model to all teachers.

Finally, the consequences extend beyond educators themselves. Teacher burnout is associated with dimensions of classroom functioning and with students' academic, social-behavioral, and executive-function outcomes, connecting occupational well-being directly with broader questions of educational quality. Overall, the contributions support a comprehensive approach in which prevention combines healthier working conditions, organizational support, employment stability, early detection, health protection, and measures that sustain professional engagement.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis confirms that burnout in the teaching profession should be understood as a multidimensional occupational phenomenon resulting from the interaction of sustained job demands, exhaustion, individual resources, health conditions, and characteristics of the work environment. The evidence examined indicates that prolonged occupational stress is closely connected with burnout across different educational settings and that its consequences cannot be reduced to temporary fatigue or dissatisfaction. Burnout can affect psychological well-being, physical health, perceived work ability, professional engagement, and teachers' capacity to sustain their occupational responsibilities over time.

Occupational exhaustion constitutes a central component of this process, but its significance becomes clearer when considered together with health and professional functioning. Persistent fatigue, poorer perceptions of general health, psychological difficulties, and physical-health consequences demonstrate that teacher burnout represents an occupational-health concern with implications that extend beyond the workplace. Consequently, the protection of teachers' health should be considered an integral component of educational workforce policies rather than an issue separated from professional performance.

The reviewed evidence also demonstrates the decisive importance of organizational conditions. Workload, institutional support, interpersonal relationships, employment security, access to professional resources, and organizational climate can contribute either to increasing vulnerability or to protecting teachers against sustained occupational strain. This finding has important implications for prevention because it indicates that interventions focused exclusively on personal resilience, coping, or individual behavioral change are insufficient when the occupational environment continues to generate excessive or persistent demands.

Burnout may additionally compromise the sustainability of the teaching workforce through different forms of professional disengagement. Its association with turnover intentions, reduced work involvement, quiet quitting, and

perceived work ability suggests that the effects of occupational strain can develop before an educator formally leaves the profession. Educational institutions should therefore pay attention not only to teacher attrition but also to less visible indicators such as persistent exhaustion, declining motivation, psychological withdrawal, and difficulties maintaining professional engagement.

Prevention consequently requires coordinated action at individual, professional, and organizational levels. Early identification of occupational strain, access to psychological and occupational-health support, opportunities for recovery, workload monitoring, employment stability, supportive leadership, adequate resources, professional recognition, and participation in institutional decision-making constitute complementary components of a more comprehensive response. Preventive measures should also be adapted to the characteristics of different educational environments because the demands experienced by schoolteachers, university lecturers, physical education teachers, and early childhood educators are not necessarily equivalent.

Finally, addressing teacher burnout has implications beyond the health of educators. The relationship identified between teachers' occupational well-being, professional functioning, retention, classroom processes, and student outcomes places burnout within the broader discussion of educational quality. Protecting teachers from persistent occupational exhaustion should therefore be regarded not merely as an individual welfare measure but as part of the conditions necessary for maintaining a stable, healthy, engaged, and effective teaching profession.

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The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Author Contributions:

Ebrahim Aghaei: Conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, supervision, validation, visualization, original draft writing, and writing, review, and editing.

Ethical statement:

The study was based on the analysis of documentary sources and publicly available data, and therefore did not involve the direct participation of human subjects. No personally identifiable information was handled.