

QATAR UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

PRIMARY TEACHERS' BURNOUT IN QATAR INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

BY

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## ABSTRACT

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Title: Primary Teachers' Burnout in Qatar Independent Schools

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The present research aims at investigating the burnout levels among primary teachers in independent (government) schools in Qatar. It also intends to investigate if there are significant differences in the level of burnout attributed to some demographic characteristics. The third version of the most commonly used burnout scale; Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI-ES), was utilized in order to measure participants' burnout level. A total of 1657 participants responded and completed the questionnaire in a voluntary base. The results showed that participants have high level of burnout within the EE domain and low levels of burnout within the other two domains; DP and PA. The MANOVA analysis revealed significant differences between primary teachers' burnout level and gender, nationality and years of teaching experience in one or more dimensions. However, no significant differences were found between burnout level and teachers' educational level in any of burnout dimensions.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is specially dedicated to greatest parents who believed in my ability and encouraged me to overcome all obstacles in process of learning.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

The teacher is the cornerstone in achieving the educational goals for any nation (Oruc, 2011). Extensive studies have documented that teachers play a critical role in improving education quality and learning outcomes (UIS, 2016). In addition, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in The International Project of Teachers Matter concluded that “teacher quality is the single most important school variable influencing student achievement” (OECD, 2005, p. 2). Furthermore, studies have noted a positive impact of teachers’ well-being on students’ outcomes and achievement (Bricheno, Brown & Lubansky, 2009; Briner & Dewberry, 2007).

Many factors are combined to determine teacher quality. However, studies showed that well-being is an important factor in employees’ performance. Most current teachers’ well-being studies have examined teachers’ well-being in terms of stress, burnout and job dissatisfaction (Klusmann, Kunter, Trautwein, Ludtke & Baumert, 2008; Maslah, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001; Yerdelen, Sungur & Klassen, 2016). Consequently, investigating teachers’ burnout levels and remediation is evolving as one of the most critical areas of global educational research.

For the first time, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) has released a report estimating the number of teachers needed in order to achieve the fourth goal of sustainable development- education for all (UIS, 2016). The UIS report estimates there would be substantial teacher shortages at the primary and secondary levels around the world, which could risk efforts to provide good quality primary education. By 2030, a

total of 24.4 million teachers will be needed for universal primary education: twenty-one million of them will take the place of the teachers who are expected to leave the profession while 3.4 million are additional teachers who are needed to increase access to school (UIS, 2016). These expected teacher shortages are due to many factors. Teachers' shortages have not only caused a recruitment problem in schools but also may worsen the quality of instruction in the classroom due to high level of teachers' turnover (Chang, 2009). One of the factors that impact the teacher workforce internationally is the burned-out teacher.

Besides the negative impact of burnout on teachers and the education system, several studies have demonstrated that the healthy teacher has a positive impact on students' outcomes. If the teacher feels exhausted and takes sick leaves, the rate of absenteeism among teachers is likely to increase. Supplying teachers to cover the classes of the absent teacher could have adverse effects on students' outcomes (Bajorek, Gulliford & Taskila, 2014). Briner and Dewberry (2007) examined staff well-being and school success and found teachers' well-being score affects students' scores in all subjects.

Qatar is one of the countries that placed an unprecedented amount of emphasis on improving the quality of teachers and education. In 2002, Qatar's leadership announced a comprehensive education reform – Education for New Era (EFNE) resulting in significant changes within the educational sphere. The leaders of Qatar selected the Research and Development Corporation (RAND) to examine the complete education system and to offer alternatives for creating a “world-class system that would meet country's changing needs” (Brewer et al., 2007, p. xvii). RAND suggested the

implementation of a new system that incorporates international standards that would compete with the best in the world. The new system was given the name of —the Independent School Model. The Independent School is a “government-funded school that is granted autonomy to carry out its educational mission and objectives while being held accountable to terms agreed to in an operating contract” (UNESCO-IBE, 2011, p. 4).

Similar to other Arab countries, Qatar’s government education system consists of four school levels: the pre-school, primary, preparatory and secondary levels. Children ages 3-5 attend the preschool level. The admission age for the primary level is 6 years and lasts for 6 years from grade one to six. The preparatory stage lasts for three years from grade seven to nine while the secondary stage from grade ten to twelve. The total number of teachers within all levels is 13728 teachers according to the last available report by the Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics (MDPS, 2015). Nearly half of these teachers are primary level teachers (47.8%) (MDPS, 2015). In addition, primary schools consist of three types of government schools: model boys schools, girls schools and boys schools. In the model boys schools, all students are boys from grade 1 to 4, but all staff and teachers are females. However, boys schools are for boys only from grade 5 and 6 with male staff and teachers, whereas girls’ schools are for girls only from grade 1 to 6 with female staff and teachers.

Primary education in Qatar is a female-dominated profession in which female teachers who teach boys and girls from grade 1 to 6 whether in boys or girls schools. However, the Ministry of Education recently established boys schools for upper primary grades only (5 and 6) with male staff and teachers. Therefore, there is unequal gender

distribution in this study's targeted population since female teachers in all primary government schools are 6316 teachers (96.3%) and males are 243 (3.7%) (MDPS, 2015). Regarding teachers' nationality, there is a pronounced dependence on Arab expatriate teachers in government schools in Qatar, due to the shortages of both male and female Qatari teachers (Ridge, Shami, Kippels, & Farah, 2014). Female and male Qatari teachers among all government school levels make up 29.4%, whereas, 70.6% are expatriate teachers (MDPS, 2015).

After more than a decade of implementing the Independent School system in Qatar, the Comprehensive Educational Assessment (CEA) 2010-2011 results revealed low levels of students' achievement in all areas of the curriculum. The students' academic performance report, demonstrated only 1.96% of students were able to achieve the standards leaving 98.04% of students who could not meet the standards (MOE, 2011). Moreover, the National Development Strategy (NDS) mentioned that one of "the key challenges facing Qatar's education system is the underachievement of Qatari students in math, science and English language at all levels" (Al-Emadi et al., 2015, p. 16).

With that extensive effort by Qatar's leaders including the founding of independent schools, establishing the curriculum standards and providing very high quality school buildings and facilities, the role of administrators and teachers is critical to the successful implementation of education reform (Al-Emadi et al., 2014). In 2011, the NDS raised concerns that teachers in Qatar were over exhausted because of the educational reform. Also, Al-Thani & Nasser (2012) reported teachers in Independent Schools are "overstrained by the curriculum and teacher standards and are under pressure

to meet academic goals” (p.164). Romanowski, Cherif, Al Ammari and Al Attiyah (2013) discovered that a major challenge that the teachers faced is the increased workload that accompanied the reform.

An essential aspect of Qatar’s reform is to improve the quality of teachers (Al-Thani & Nasser, 2012). Excessive efforts are made to improve and support teachers’ professional growth and development in Qatar (UNESCO-IBE, 2011). Nevertheless, studies have shown that well-being is a major factor in employees’ quality but few studies have examined teachers’ well-being or teachers’ burnout in Qatar, particularly after the educational reform in 2001.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

Hence, the aim of this study is to explore the burnout levels of primary school teachers in Qatar. The findings of this study address the following questions:

1. How do primary school teachers in Qatar’s independent schools compare on levels and types of psychological burnout they have experienced?
2. How does the level of psychological burnout vary according to gender, nationality, level of education and years of teaching experience?

## **1.3 Significance of the Study**

This study provides valuable information and in-depth understanding of primary teachers' workplace conditions and perceptions of their jobs. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Qatar could find this study a useful reference to enrich future educational planning and professional development. Therefore, the outcomes of this study will provide sources for future initiatives to improve teachers' performance that would directly affect students' achievements and school competency. Moreover, this

study contributes to international literature on teachers' burnout with empirical data from Qatar.

#### **1.4 Operational Definitions**

**Burnout:** It is a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishments that develops on jobs where individuals work with people (Maslach, Leiter & Schaufeli, 2008)

**Independent School:** "It is a government-funded school that is granted autonomy to carry out its educational mission and objectives while being held accountable to terms agreed to in an operating contract" (UNESCO-IBE, 2011, p. 4).

**Primary school teachers:** Teachers who are officially recruited and employed by the Ministry of Education in the primary Independent schools in Qatar.

#### **1.5 Organization of the Thesis**

The thesis starts with the introduction discussing the background of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study and the definition of terms. The second chapter provides a literature review that addresses the history of the theoretical background of the research on burnout, the risks and factors that contribute to burnout, and a review of burnout research. The third chapter presents participants' information, data collection method, data analysis, procedures, and the ethical consideration implemented within the study. Results of the two research questions are reported in chapter four. Finally, chapter five discusses the obtained results and their relation to the literature in addition to recommendations for stakeholders, school administrators and teachers.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses the international importance of the topic and outlines the definition of burnout by introducing the background and history of the research on burnout. Second, the literature review discusses symptoms and factors that contribute to burnout. The third section analyzes burnout research in the Middle East and Qatar, and the last section addresses burnout in primary education and variables contributing to burnout in primary school settings.

### **2.1 Theoretical Background of Burnout and Definition**

Although the challenges individuals face in the workplace have been long recognized as an important phenomenon in employees' lives, the initial research on "burnout" were published in 1974 by the clinical psychologist, Herbert Freudenberger (Aronsson et al., 2017; Maslach, Leiter & Schaufeli, 2008). During that time, a social psychologist, Christina Maslach (1976 as cited in Maslach, Leiter & Schaufeli, 2008), conducted research on how healthcare and human service workers managed the emotional stress at their workplace. Through observation of the interviews, Maslach recognized that the interviewee workers used the concept of "burnout" frequently when they described their psychological problems. Since, Maslach shifted focus to describe the burnout phenomenon in 1976 (Maslach, Leiter & Schaufeli, 2008).

Since these initial studies, burnout research has been expanded significantly within many careers and different countries worldwide. Although many scholars have proposed several definitions, there is no consensus on a standard definition of burnout. Freudenberger (1974 as cited in Ozan, 2009, p. 692) defined burnout as "The exhaustion of inner resources as a result of failure, tiredness, energy and loss of power or unmet

wishes”. Pines and Aronson (1981 as cited in Koustelios & Tsigilis, 2005, p. 190) state that burnout is “a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by long term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding.” After a close inspection of the accumulated evidence, Maslach et al., (2008) found that an individual negative psychological experience that is related to discomfort, dysfunction or negative consequences is the common description among all burnout definitions.

Some researchers’ definitions focused on one dimension, while the others concentrated on multiple core dimensions of burnout. From the extensive exploratory qualitative research including interviews, surveys and field observations of employees of different occupations, Maslach et al., (2008) found three common and frequently described dimensions of burnout. The first dimension is deemed central to burnout and has received the most agreement among researchers, is the exhaustion dimension, also described as the wearing out or fatigue. The second dimension is the change or shift in responses to others or clients such as depersonalization or inappropriate attitude towards others. The third dimension is the negative attitude towards oneself and one’s achievement also described as depression or low self-esteem (Maslach et al., 2008).

Empirical and theoretical research conducted on the three most critical dimensions of burnout, Maslach et al., (2001) established the most predominant multidimensional burnout theory. Thus, Maslach (1981) developed the most widely three-dimensional acknowledged definition of burnout. Accordingly, burnout is a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishments that develops on jobs where individuals work with people (Maslach et al., 2008). There is recognition that burnout is a continued negative emotional experience



and it is the final phase of a progressive buildup of stress that is different from the temporary feeling of tiredness that disappears after time (Ozan, 2009).

The three dimensions have been confirmed to be markers for the burnout syndrome: Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DP), and reduced Personal Accomplishment (PA) (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1997). EE is viewed as the core domain of burnout and described as the feeling of wearing out, losing of energy, constantly overwhelmed, stressed and exhausted. DP is the interpersonal distancing dimension in which the service providers detached themselves from the clients and show the negative attitude or response towards them. The detached response toward the recipients of one's service, care, or instruction is what the DP dimension measures. Reduced PA dimension is the negative self-evaluation towards oneself and one's achievements at work, which indicates a low level of one's self-esteem. The feelings of success and productive achievement in one's work are what the PA dimension measures (Maslach et al., 2008).

From the earliest phase of burnout research, several models emerged regarding the developmental path of burnout over time. One model is that enthusiastic and dedicated workers are the ones who experience burnout (Maslach et al., 2008). The idea here is that the dedicated workers work with great effort in agreement with their principles and ideals, which lead them to reach a stage of exhaustion and then cynicism when they cannot achieve what they aspire to and what satisfies their ideals. A second model is that burnout is the final stage or the result of stressful job experiences extended over a period of time. Therefore, burnout may usually happen later in a worker's career, rather than earlier (Maslach et al., 2008). With the progression of time, other

developmental models were proposed. For example, one model suggests that the depersonalization is the first burnout dimension to occur. Followed by reduced personal accomplishments, and then emotional exhaustion. An alternative model suggests that the burnout dimensions occur at the same time but independently. Another model suggests that the occurrence of one dimension is leading to the development of the second one. According to this model, the emotional exhaustion is the first stage of burnout that leads to the development of the depersonalization dimension and then to the reduced personal accomplishments dimension. Throughout the literature, the sequential link from emotional exhaustion to the depersonalization has been recognized. However, the subsequent link to the third dimension, PA, is varied and unclear (Maslach et al., 2001).

## **2.2 Factors that Contribute to Burnout**

The nature of the teachers' work environment leads to different complex factors that contribute to observed stress and burnout among teachers (Arvidsson, Hakansson, Karlson, Bjork & Persson, 2016). However, many researchers usually propose individual, contextual, or organizational factors as an explanation for teacher burnout (Chang, 2009). The previous studies' findings of the individual factors, such as demographic variables (e.g. age, gender, years of teaching experience, teaching qualification, etc.) are not very consistent across the literature as predictors of teachers' burnout (Chang, 2009). However, organizational factors, such as lack of autonomy, lack of administrative support, workplace environment, time pressure showed more consistent results in increasing teachers' burnout (Chang, 2009; Scheuch, Haufe & Seibt, 2015). Also, contextual variables, such as working hours, excessively large class sizes (Scheuch et al., 2015), students' misbehavior, discipline problems and crowded classrooms showed more

consistent results in developing teachers' burnout and weakening the idealism of teachers' function (Chang, 2009). Additionally, many work stressors such as demands on teachers, control over teachers' work, support for teachers, organizational change and role conflicts or ambiguity were related to burnout (Maslach et al., 1981).

Furthermore, several correlational studies have identified links between different variables for teacher burnout. For example, previous research has demonstrated negative correlations between: (1) Burnout and job satisfaction levels (Al-Khuzrugi, 2002; Tashtoush, Jarwan, Muhaidat & Bni-Atta, 2013; Williams, 2014), (2) Burnout and school climate (Al-jubailly, 2013), and (3) burnout and emotional intelligence, satisfaction with life and teachers' personality traits (Colomeischi, 2014). However, a positive correlation was found between beginner teachers' burnout levels and adamant intentions to leave the profession (Goddard & Goddard, 2006).

### **2.3 Risks and Consequences of Burnout**

Many researchers have reported the status of teachers' burnout and its implications. Although burnout is a psychological state, it also coincides with physical symptoms as well (Colomeischi, 2014). Burnout syndrome found to be significantly associated with poor physical and psychological health, coronary heart disease (Toker, Melamed, Berliner, Zeltser, & Shapira, 2012), high blood pressure (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000), musculoskeletal pain, sleep problems (Arvidsson et al., 2016), backache, headache, and insomnia are some of the physical health problems (Aldhafri, 2016). Depression, tension, and frustration are some of the psychological health problems found to be associated with the burnout syndrome (El-Omari & Freihat, 2011). Moreover, burnout consequences "extend well beyond the mental, emotional and physical health of

the sufferer" (Goddard & Goddard, 2006, p. 62). Burnout is known to impede the efficiency of employer organizations, turnover intention and actual turnover of suffering staff and clients' behavior (Bakker, Schaufeli, Sixma, Bosveld & Van Dierendonck 2000, as cited in Goddard & Goddard, 2006). Furthermore, research over the past three decades has revealed that burnout can lead to deterioration in work or services provided by the workers (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Burnout is a crucial factor in substantial employee turnover, absenteeism, and low morale (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

#### **2.4 Studies on Teachers' Burnout**

Extensive studies have been conducted outside Middle East to explore the prevalence of burnout in teaching profession and other professions. For instance, Maslach and Jackson (1981) conducted the initial study that developed the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) as a burnout measurement tool. Additionally, the study carried out in the United States assessed the burnout experiences among 1,025 human service workers such as nurses, teachers, social workers and probation officers. The researchers found there was relationship between specific demographic variables and the individual's burnout experience. Concerning gender, females scored higher than males in the EE burnout dimension while males scored higher than females in both the DP and PA dimensions. Differences concerning age showed that burnout is expected to occur for younger workers within the first few years of their career. Results regarding the level of education showed that higher level of education is associated with a higher level of burnout within the EE dimension. However, higher level of education found to be associated with low levels of DP burnout. In addition, workers who gained postgraduate degree showed the highest level of burnout within the PA.

Several studies showed varied results regarding burnout levels among teachers. Primary school teachers in North Dakota in the United States (Mowers, 2010) and Turkey (Ozan, 2009) reported moderate levels of emotional burnout. However, primary school teachers reported lower levels of burnout in countries such as, Sweden (Arvidsson et al., 2016), Serbia (Randelović & Stojiljković, 2015), the Republic of Srpska (Paleksic, Ubovic & Popovic, 2015) and Turkey (Yerdelen et al., 2016). Several studies that compared primary and other school levels found that the primary school teachers have reported low or lower burnout level than upper grade teachers (Arvidsson et al., 2016; Randelović & Stojiljković, 2015; Paleksic et al., 2015; Yerdelen et al., 2016).

Gavish and Friedman (2010) conducted a study on 492 novice teachers in their first and second year of teaching. Findings demonstrated novice teachers experienced high levels of burnout within the three dimensions of burnout. Goddard and Goddard (2006) reported similar results in which beginner teachers showed high levels of EE burnout. However, low levels of DP and PA were recognized (Goddard & Goddard, 2006). Other studies also revealed that the younger the teacher the higher the level of burnout in at least one of burnout dimensions (Hammett, 2013; Kabadayi, 2015; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). However, other studies show that the more experienced teachers reported higher emotional burnout levels than the beginner teachers (Kokkinos, 2007; Paleksic et al., 2015).

Many studies in the Arab world explored the burnout levels in different school levels of special and general education teachers. For example, 192 primary school teachers in Algeria reported high levels of burnout within three burnout dimensions (Dbaby, 2012). Preschool teachers and all school level teachers in Jordan reported high

levels of burnout within minimum two burnout dimensions (Al-Frehat & Al-Rabadi, 2010) and (Al-Ayasrah & Abdel Rahman, 2013; El-Omari & Freihat, 2011). Special education teachers in Qatar (Al-Farah, 2001), 657 teachers of different school levels in Oman (Al-Jabri, 2000), 472 secondary school teachers in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (Al-Haramlah, 2007) and 457 different school level teachers in Makkah, Saudi Arabia (Al-Wably, 1995) reported moderate levels of burnout. However, low levels of burnout within all burnout dimensions reported by primary school teachers in Iraq (Al-Jabbari, 2005; Soleman & Edrees, 2007) and Sudan (Gumaiha, 2012).

Internationally, with regards to the effect of demographic variables on teachers' burnout levels, several studies found an effect of gender, level of education or years of experience on teachers' burnout levels and others not. For example, some studies found significant differences of burnout levels in at least one burnout dimension between female and male teachers in which is in favour of females (Al-Jabbari, 2005; Arvidsson et al., 2016; Kabadayi, 2015; Kokkinos, 2007; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). However, other studies found that male teachers suffer from burnout more than females in one or more dimensions of burnout (Al-Ayasrah & Abdel Rahman, 2013; Al-Farah, 2001; Gumaiha, 2012; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). In contrast, several studies found no significant differences between female and male teachers within the three dimensions of burnout (Al-Bakheet & Al-Hsan, 2011; Dbaby, 2012; El-Omari & Freihat, 2011; Ozan, 2009; Paleksic et al., 2015).

Regarding the nationality, very few studies explore the effect of teachers' nationality, whether local or foreigner, on their burnout levels. Al-Farah (2001) in his study on 122 special education teachers in Qatar found that non-Qatari teachers suffered

significantly higher than Qatari teachers. In contrast, Aljaroudi's (2015) study on 330 university teachers in Saudi Arabia found that local teachers (Saudis) scored higher levels of burnout within the EE and DP than foreign teachers (non-Saudis). However, both Saudi teachers and non-Saudis had relatively the same moderate level of PA burnout.

Regarding the teacher's level of education, some studies reveal correlation between higher educational degree and higher levels of Emotional Exhaustion (EE) and reduced personal accomplishments (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) or the three burnout dimensions (Tashtoush et al., 2013). However, several studies showed no significant effect of the educational level on any of the burnout dimensions (Al-Frehat & Al-Rabadi, 2010; Al-Mashikhy, 2013; El-Omari & Freihat, 2011; Gumaiha, 2012).

Although many studies showed no main effect on the teachers' years of teaching experience (Al-Frehat & Al-Rabadi, 2010; Al-Jabbari, 2005; Dbaby, 2012; El-Omari & Freihat, 2011; Gumaiha, 2012; Hammett, 2013; Kabadayi, 2015; Soleman & Edrees, 2007), Al-Mashikhy (2013), Kokkinos (2007), Paleksic et al., (2015) found that the more experienced teacher, the higher the burnout level in at least one of the burnout dimensions. On the other hand, many studies showed that the younger the teacher or the less experienced the teacher is, the higher level of burnout in at least one of burnout dimensions (Al-jubailly, 2013; Gavish & Friedman; 2010; Goddard & Goddard 2006; Hammett, 2013; Kabadayi, 2015; Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

In summary, studies did not identify shared patterns about the effects of demographic variables such as gender, age, nationality, level of education, experience etc. as predictors of teachers' burnout. This demonstrates that societal and social context is an important factor influencing teachers' burnout. Therefore, it is necessary to explore

teachers' burnout levels in Qatar.



## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the participants' information, data collection method, data analysis, procedures, and the ethical consideration implemented within the study.

### **3.1 Participants**

Teachers from government primary schools in Qatar were chosen as participants in this study because of their essential roles in the educational track of students. In addition, the primary school teachers make up nearly half (47.8%) of government school teachers in Qatar (MDPS, 2015), while research on their well-being remains sparse.

The sampling choice of this study was based on a convenience approach. Invitations to join this study were sent to all primary government school teachers in Qatar. According to MDP (2015), primary school teachers in Qatar are 6559 teachers distributed among 103 primary government schools. Out of these, 6316 of teachers are females and 243 are males. From the 103 independent primary schools, there are 53 boys and model boys schools and 50 girls school (MDPS, 2015). A total of 1657 participants responded and completed the questionnaire in a voluntary base. The response rate was roughly 25% with no missing responses in the questionnaires. Demographic variables included gender, nationality, level of education and years of teaching experience.

#### ***3.1.1 Participants' Information***

##### *Gender*

Data collected from the 1657 participants shows that the majority of participants (85.2%) are female teachers while less than quarter are male teachers (14.8%) (see Table 2.1). There is unequal gender distribution among participants in this study, which is due

to the population unequal distribution that consisted of 96.3% primary female teachers and 3.7% primary male teachers in all primary government schools in Qatar (MDPS, 2015).

#### *Nationality*

Data also demonstrated that 30.2% of participants are Qatari teachers while 69.5% are Non-Qataris (see Table 2.1). As mentioned above, Non-Qatari or expatriate teachers make up the majority of teachers' population in Qatar (70.6%) (MDPS, 2015).

Table 2.1  
*Demographical data of participants*

Characteristic	Levels	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	1412	85.2%
	Male	245	14.8%
Nationality	Qatari	505	30.5%
	Non-Qatari	1152	69.5%
Level of education	Bachelor	1425	86%
	Diploma	125	7.5%
	Master or PhD	107	6.5%
Years of Experience	Less than 5 years	370	22.3%
	Between 5-10 years	496	29.9%
	More than 10 years	791	47.7%

#### *Level of educational*

Regarding the participants' educational level, the majority of participants hold bachelor degree (86%) while 14% hold either, a diploma, masters or PhD (see Table 2.1).

### *Teaching experience*

With regards to the teaching experience, nearly half of participants (47.3%) are experienced teachers who have more than 10 years of teaching experience while 30% are having between 5-10 years. The rest of participants (22.6%) are novice teachers (see Table 2.1).

## **3.3 Data Collection Methods**

### ***3.3.1 Choice of Methods***

A quantitative approach was employed in this study. Since the purpose of this study is to explore the burnout levels (feelings and attitudes) of primary school teachers, the most appropriate approach for this study is the quantitative approach using the survey design (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Maslach et al., 1997). The study also investigated if there were differences in the level of burnout attributed to some demographic characteristics included gender, nationality, level of education and years of teaching experience.

A self-reporting questionnaire survey was employed for major data collection method because it is an often-used method in the study of teachers' well-being (Scheuch et al., 2015) and gaining objective data in the form of clinical investigation is time-consuming, costly and impractical.

### ***3.3.2 Instrument***

The Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI-ES) was used as the data collection instrument in this study. The MBI is regarded as the most widely and

extensively used instrument in measuring burnout (Aluja, Blanch & García, 2005; Chang, 2009; De Silv, Hewage & Fonseka, 2013; Kantas & Vassilaki, 1997). The scale developers, Maslach and Jackson (1981), collected data from numerous interviews and questionnaires in their exploratory studies in order to have sources of feelings and attitudes that the burned-out workers have. In addition, developers reviewed many scales that conducted to measure the burnout level (Maslach et al., 1997). Initially, in 1981, the original MBI that is the MBI-HSS was developed in order to measure burnout level of several human services professionals while the second edition of the inventory included the educators' version (MBI-ES) that is specified to measure burnout level in the teaching profession. Both versions, the MBI-HSS and MBI-ES, are basically the same and measure the same three burnout dimensions. However, the modification replaced the word 'recipient' in the MBI-HSS with the word 'students' in the MBI-ES (Maslach et al., 1997). The MBI went through three editions and the third edition of the MBI-ES was utilized to collect data in the current study. The first edition of the MBI consisted of two responses scales, the frequency and intensity of the feeling (Maslach et al., 1997). However, "because of the redundancy between the frequency and intensity ratings, the intensity scale was deleted from subsequent editions" (Maslach et al., 1997, p. 194).

As recommended for cross-cultural studies (Brislin, 1970), back translation procedure was used in order to translate the MBI-ES from English to Arabic (see Appendix C). In addition, by using the appropriate scientific research procedures, the MBI-ES has been proven to be a valid measure in the Arab countries context. The scale has been implemented in Qatari, Omani, Saudi, Iraqi, Algerian and Jordanian schools with a reliability coefficient above 0.70 (Al-Ayasrah & Abdel Rahman, 2013; Aldhafri,

2016; Al-Farah, 2001; Dbaby, 2012; El-Omari & Freihat, 2011; Soleman & Edrees, 2007). As for the reliability of the present study, applying the MBI-ES questionnaire on current study participants (N= 1657) shows satisfactory reliability within all scale domains (see Table 2.2). The internal consistency coefficients are similar to those reported in the initial study by Maslach and Jackson (1981) on several human service workers of .89, .77, and .74; for EE, DP, and PA, respectively.

Table 2.2  
*Internal consistency of the inventory according to Cronbach-alpha*

Dimension	Value of Cronbach-alpha
Emotional Exhaustion	0.899
Depersonalization	0.777
Personal Accomplishment	0.809

A Pearson correlation was computed to assess the relationship between the three dimensions of burnout, EE, DP and PA. There is a positive correlation between the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization ( $r = .720$ ,  $n = 1657$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). However, there is a negative correlation between the emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment ( $r = -.434$ ,  $n = 1657$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and between the depersonalization and personal accomplishment ( $r = -.478$ ,  $n = 1657$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Overall, there is a strong, positive correlation between EE and DP and a strong negative correlation between the EE

and DP and the EE and PA. Increases in emotional exhaustion is correlated with increases in depersonalization. However, increase in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization is correlated with decrease in the personal accomplishment.

The MBI-ES consists of 22 items and divided into three subscales which are the three components of the burnout syndrome (as shown in table 2.3). The nine items in first subscale Emotional Exhaustion (EE) describe feelings of wearing out or loss of energy (sample item: “I feel used up at the end of the workday”). The five items in the Depersonalization subscale describe the negative shift attitude towards students (DP: “I don’t really care what happens to some of my students.”). The eight items of Personal Accomplishment subscale describe the positive response toward oneself and one’s successful personal achievements in work (PA “I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job) (Maslach et al., 2008).

Table 2.3  
*MBI-ES items of the three burnout domains*

Scale Domains	Statements Numbers	Total No. of Statements	Highest Score of Each Domain
Emotional Exhaustion	1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16, 20	9	54
Depersonalization	5, 10, 11, 15, 22	5	30
Personal Accomplishment	4, 7, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19, 21	8	48
Total		22	132

Since the term burnout has been perceived differently among people and in order to minimize the sensitive effect of one's beliefs or prospects of such a concept, the scale manual emphasises that the participants should not be informed that the MBI is a burnout measure. Instead, "the scale should be presented as a survey of job-related attitudes and not be linked to burnout in any way" (Maslach et al., 1997, p. 196).

The questionnaire statements are based on a 7-point frequency rating scale, ranging from "never" (0) to "every day" (6). The frequency of experiencing a specific feeling is the way that respondents will answer each statement. Each subscale is measured according to the guidelines in a scoring key made by the scale developers (see Table 2.4) (Maslach, 1997).

Table 2.4  
*MBI-ES Interpretation of Scores*

Subscale	Low Burnout	Moderate Burnout	High Burnout
Emotional Exhaustion (EE)	0-16	17-26	+27
Depersonalization (DP)	0-6	7-12	+13
Personal Accomplishment (PA)*	+37	31-36	0-30

\*Scale is reversed for Personal Accomplishment. Low Burnout category scores indicate low levels of dissatisfaction with Personal Accomplishment.

Descriptive statistics were implemented to find the burnout level for each domain of the burnout using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS). As mentioned in the MBI manual, the three subscales should be scored separately not into a single total score, thus the three domain scores were calculated for each participant. The result is reported as low, moderate, or high as listed on the scoring key (see Table 2.4) (Maslach et al., 1997).

### ***3.3.3 Procedures***

The research was conducted at the primary government schools in Qatar during the first semester of the 2016-2017 school year. Prior to conducting the study, the researcher sought the Ministry of Education approval and then completed the Institutional Review Board (IRB) certification from Qatar University's Institutional Review Board (QU-IRB) (see Appendix A and B).

An online version of the MBI-ES questionnaire was developed on SurveyMonkey website and utilized for data collection. An email was prepared with all relevant information related to the survey and forwarded to all primary independent schools through the Educational Supervision Office (ESO) inviting them to participate in the study. A total of 1657 participants responded and completed the questionnaire in a voluntary base. The response rate was about 25% with no missing answers in the questionnaires.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, and frequencies were calculated for each domain individually. Data collection in this research also included



five demographic characteristics. The demographic characteristics included gender, nationality, level of education and years of teaching experience. In order to explain any relationships between burnout scores and the demographic variables, quantitative tests such as MANOVA were used.

### **3.5 Ethical Consideration**

Ethical considerations were taken into consideration along the process of this study. The introductory statement in the online survey included the purpose of the study, the confidentiality, the procedure, needed answering time, volunteering statement and the option of withdrawing anytime. Noteworthy, all participants were assured of strict confidentiality, all surveys were anonymous, and no name or identifiable information was collected. Participants were given one reminder after two weeks from the first invitation to fill in the questionnaire and a thank you statement also was sent to all participants for his or her voluntary participation.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of primary school teachers' burnout within the three burnout dimensions. It also reports the different levels of burnout according to gender, nationality, level of education, and years of teaching experience.

### 4.1 Results According to Research Questions

#### 4.1.1 Research Question 1

Table 3.1  
*Means of burnout dimensions compared with MBI-ES*

Domains	MBI Scoring Key		Participants' Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Emotional Exhaustion (EE)	Low	0-16	28.09	13.90
	Moderate	17-26		
	High	+27		
Depersonalization (DP)	Low	0-6	5.86	6.82
	Moderate	7-12		
	High	+13		
Personal Accomplishment (PA)	Low	37+	41.46	6.68
	Moderate	31-36		
	High	0-30		

The findings related to the first question: "How do primary school teachers in Qatar's independent schools compare in levels and types of psychological burnout they have experienced?" are addressed. Table 3.1 below presents descriptive statistics of the participants' scores on the three dimensions of MBI-ES. Participants' mean score in the

EE domain corresponds to the high level of burnout category (M = 28.09, SD = 13.90) while the DP (M = 5.86, SD = 6.82) and PA (M = 41.46, SD = 6.68) domains are within the low levels of burnout.

Table 3.2  
*Participants' percentage burnout level score*

Burnout dimensions	Level of burnout			
	Low	Moderate	high	Total
Emotional Exhaustion	24.4 (404)	23.4 (387)	52.2 (866)	100.00
Depersonalization	65.2 (1080)	18 (298)	16.8 (279)	100.00
Personal Accomplishment	82.7 (1371)	10.1 (167)	7.2 (119)	100.00
Total	2855	852	1264	4971
Chi Square ( $\chi^2$ )	1337.8136			
	p < 0.00001			

In order to determine the prevalence of the psychological burnout levels among participants, Table 3.2 outlines the percentages of participants within each burnout domain. Results indicated that nearly half participants (52.2%) are within the high level of EE burnout while 65.2% of participants are within low level of DP domain. Noteworthy, the majority of participants (82.7%) are within the low level of burnout in the PA domain.

#### **4.1.2 Research Question 2**

Findings related to the second question: “How does the level of psychological

burnout vary according to gender, nationality, level of education and years of teaching experience?” are developed in the following section that reflects these relationships. In order to explore significant differences between burnout scores and the demographic variables, one-way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used with the three burnout dimensions combined as dependent variables, and the demographic variables as independent variables.

### *Burnout and gender*

A one-way (MANOVA) was run to determine the effect of teachers' gender on the burnout level. Three measures of burnout were assessed: Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DP), and Personal Accomplishment (PA). Teachers' gender is divided into two levels: males and females. Female teachers scored higher level of burnout within the three burnout measures; EE, DP, and PA ( $M = 28.73, SD = 13.95$ ;  $M = 5.97, SD = 6.90$  and  $M = 41.42, SD = 6.67$ , respectively) than male teachers ( $M = 24.41, SD = 13.02$ ;  $M = 5.28, SD = 6.32$  and  $M = 41.42, SD = 6.67$ , respectively). The differences between female and male teachers on the combined dependent variables were significant  $F(3, 1653) = 9.32, p < .0005$ . Follow-up univariate ANOVAs showed that the EE burnout levels was significantly different between female and male teachers using a Bonferroni adjusted  $\alpha$  level of .017 [ $F(1, 1655) = 20.329, p < .0005$ ]. However, no significant differences were noted between female and male teachers on the DP burnout levels  $F(1, 1655) = 2.124, p = .145$ , and the PA burnout levels  $F(1, 1655) = .252, p = .615$ . (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3  
*MANOVA analysis of gender and burnout levels*

Burnout domains	Descriptive statistics	Female	Male	df	SEM	F	Sig.
EE	Mean	28.73	24.41	1	1655	20.32	.000
	SD	13.95	13.02				
	N	1412	245				
DP	Mean	5.97	5.28	1	1655	2.124	.145
	SD	6.90	6.32				
	N	1412	245				
PA	Mean	41.42	41.65	1	1655	.252	.615
	SD	6.67	6.72				
	N	1412	245				

#### *Burnout and nationality*

A one-way MANOVA was run to determine the effect of teachers' nationality on burnout level. Three measures of burnout were assessed: EE, DP, and PA. Teachers' nationality is divided into two levels: Qatari and Non-Qatari teachers. Qatari teachers scored higher level of burnout within the three burnout measures: EE, DP, and PA ( $M = 34.88, SD = 13.70$ ;  $M = 8.26, SD = 7.95$  and  $M = 39.66, SD = 7.68$ , respectively) than male teachers ( $M = 25.11, SD = 12.91$ ;  $M = 4.81, SD = 5.96$  and  $M = 42.24, SD = 6.02$ , respectively). The differences between Qatari and Non-Qatari teachers on the three burnout measures was significant,  $F(3, 1653) = 65.70, p < .0005$ . Follow-up univariate ANOVAs showed that the EE ( $F(1, 1655) = 193.40, p < .0005$ ), DP ( $F(1, 1657) = 94.666, p < .0005$ ) and PA ( $F(1, 1657) = 54.25, p < .0005$ ) burnout levels were significantly different between Qatari and Non-Qatari teachers using a Bonferroni

adjusted  $\alpha$  level of .017. (see Table 3.4)

Table 3.4  
*MANOVA analysis of nationality and burnout levels*

Burnout domains	Descriptive statistics	Qatari	Non-Qatari	df	SEM	F	Sig.
EE	Mean	34.88	25.11	1	1655	193.40	.000
	SD	13.70	12.91				
	N	505	1152				
DP	Mean	8.26	4.81	1	1657	94.66	.000
	SD	7.95	5.96				
	N	505	1152				
PA	Mean	39.66	42.24	1	1657	54.25	.000
	SD	7.68	6.02				
	N	505	1152				

#### *Burnout and level of education*

A one-way MANOVA was run to determine the effect of teachers' level of education on burnout levels. Three measures of burnout were assessed: EE, DP, and PA. Teachers' educational level is divided into three levels: bachelor, diploma and Master or PhD holders. Bachelor and diploma qualified teachers scored higher in their EE burnout levels ( $M = 28.09$ ,  $SD = 13.90$ ; and  $M = 28.55$ ,  $SD = 13.84$ , respectively) than master or PhD qualified teachers ( $M = 27.56$ ,  $SD = 14.06$ ). However, master or PhD qualified teachers scored higher burnout levels within the DP ( $M = 6.40$ ,  $SD = 6.90$ ) and PA domains ( $M = 40.43$ ,  $SD = 8.09$ ) than bachelor and diploma holders ( $M = 5.83$ ,  $SD = 6.77$ ; and  $M = 5.77$ ,  $SD = 7.33$ , respectively). The differences between teachers'

educational level on the combined dependent variables was not significant,  $F(6, 3304) = 1.125, p = .345$ . (see Table 3.5)

Table 3.5  
*MANOVA analysis of educational level and burnout levels*

Burnout domains	Descriptive statistics	Bachelor	Diploma	Master or PhD	df	SEM	F	Sig.
EE	Mean	28.09	28.55	27.56	2	1654	.146	.864
	SD	13.90	13.84	14.06				
	N	1425	125	107				
DP	Mean	5.83	5.77	6.40	2	1654	.361	.697
	SD	6.77	7.33	6.90				
	N	1425	125	107				
PA	Mean	41.49	41.95	40.43	2	1654	1.62	.197
	SD	6.56	6.71	8.09				
	N	1425	125	107				

#### *Burnout and teaching experience*

A one-way MANOVA was run to determine the effect of teachers' years of experience on burnout levels. Three measures of burnout were assessed: EE, DP, and PA. Teachers' years of experience are divided into three levels: less than 5 years, between 5 and 10 years, and more than 10 years of teaching experience. Teachers with less than 5 years of experience and teachers with more than 10 years of experience scored higher in their EE burnout levels ( $M = 28, SD = 13.27$ ; and  $M = 28.91, SD = 14.28$ , respectively) than teachers with experience between 5 and 10 years ( $M = 26.85, SD = 13.67$ ). The

differences between teachers' years of experience on the combined dependent variables was significant,  $F(6, 3304) = 2.435, p < .05$ . Follow-up univariate ANOVAs showed that the EE burnout levels ( $F(2, 1654) = 3.354, p < .035$ ), DP burnout levels ( $F(2, 1654) = .431, p = .650$ ) and PA burnout levels ( $F(2, 1654) = .052, p = .950$ ) were not significantly different between teachers' years of experience using a Bonferroni adjusted  $\alpha$  level of .017. (see Table 3.6)

Table 3.6  
*MANOVA analysis of teaching experience and burnout levels*

Burnout domains	Descriptive statistics	Less than 5 years	Between 5-10	More than 10 years	df	SEM	F	Sig.
EE	Mean	28	26.85	28.91	2	1654	3.35	.035
	SD	13.24	13.67	14.28				
	N	370	496	791				
DP	Mean	6.14	5.72	5.82	2	1654	.431	.650
	SD	6.92	6.83	6.77				
	N	370	496	791				
PA	Mean	41.36	41.49	41.48	2	1654	.950	.950
	SD	6.41	6.32	7.02				
	N	370	496	791				

In summary, the MANOVA analysis revealed significant differences between primary teachers' burnout level and gender, nationality and years of teaching experience in one or more dimensions. However, no significant differences were found between burnout level and teachers' educational level in any of burnout dimensions.



## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to examine the burnout levels of a broad cross-sectional sample of primary school teachers from Qatar within the three domains of the burnout syndrome; Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DP), and Personal Accomplishment (PA). In addition, the study compared teachers' burnout levels according to gender, nationality, level of education, and years of teaching experience with each dimension of burnout. Two research questions were formulated in chapter one, a review of the literature was discussed in chapter two, empirical data collection was presented in chapter three and four. Based on the previous chapters, this chapter discusses results from the current study relating to the existing literature. A list of recommendations is provided based on the discussion and conclusion.

### **5.1 How do primary school teachers in Qatar's independent schools compare in levels and types of psychological burnout they have experienced?**

Results of the study indicated high levels of burnout reported by the participants within the Emotional Exhaustion (EE) dimension that is core dimension of burnout. In contrast, participants reported low levels of burnout in the Depersonalization (DP) and Personal Accomplishment (PA) dimensions. Looking more closely to the rate of burnout prevalence, over half of participants (52.2%) reported a high level of emotional overextension and exhaustion. Nevertheless, for the majority of participants, despite their reported emotional exhaustion burnout, they sustained positive attitudes towards students, high levels of self-esteem, satisfaction and pride in their work. In the following, the results will be discussed in relation to existing literature by each dimension of burnout.

### **5.1.1 Emotional Exhaustion (EE) dimension**

The high level of EE burnout found is similar to other studies conducted with primary school teachers such as, Dbaby's (2012) study on primary school teachers in Algeria and different school levels in Jordan (Al-Ayasrah & Abdel Rahman, 2013; Al-Frehat & Al-Rabadi, 2010; El-Omari & Freihat, 2011). The mean score of the EE burnout was found to be higher than those reported on primary school teachers in different countries such as Iraq (Al-Jabbari, 2005), Sudan (Gumaiha, 2012), Sweden (Arvidsson et al., 2016), Serbia (Randelovi & Stojiljković, 2015), North Dakota in the United States (Mowers, 2010), Turkey (Ozan, 2009; Yerdelen et al., 2016), and the Republic of Srpska (Paleksic et al., 2015).

This result is also higher than results from other studies on different school levels in some countries such as, preparatory school level in Sweden (Arvidsson et al., 2016), different school level teachers in Saudi Arabia (Al-Haramlah, 2007; Al-Wably, 1995) and Oman (Al-Jabri, 2000). Results also revealed higher EE burnout levels than special education teachers in some countries such as Qatar (Al-Farah, 2001) and Egypt (Soleman & Edrees, 2007). In addition, results revealed that participants' have higher levels of EE burnout than university teachers in Serbia (Randelovi & Stojiljković, 2015), novice teachers of different school levels in Australia (Goddard & Goddard, 2006).

Many factors could be considered as the reasons of teachers' burnout. One of the major assumed reasons that could cause the high levels of burnout among teachers is low salaries and income (Al-Ayasrah & Abdel Rahman, 2013; Dbaby, 2012). However, that may not be the case in Qatar. According to the last available Annual Report by Evaluation Institute in the Supreme Education Council of Qatar (SEC) (2013-2014), 80%

of teachers in the Qatari government schools are satisfied with the salaries (SEC, 2014).

In addition, pupils' attitudes, behavior and motivation have been found as causes that may lead to teachers' stress and burnout (Burke & Greenglass, 1993; El-Omari & Freihat, 2011). The QNDS (2011) (Qatar National Development Strategy 2011–2016) states that there is a high rate of unmotivated students and an urgent need to motivate children in Qatar (Nasser & McInerney, 2014). The unmotivated students in classes usually inattentive to the teacher's instruction or they tend to demonstrate disruptive behavior and do not listen this puts more pressure on the teacher. Also, Al-Mohannadi and Capel (2007) study examining stress among physical education teachers in Qatar revealed that the pupils' problems were as the factor that caused the most stress for physical education teachers.

A factor that may have a significant effect on primary teachers' burnout levels in Qatar is the reforms and changes in the educational system. There is common belief that "organizational change affects teacher well-being through its influence on stress and work satisfaction" (Arvidsson et al., 2016, p. 8). Likewise, it can be argued that the educational reform has increased amount of workload on teachers that has been considered to be major reason of burnout among teachers worldwide. Some studies in Qatar revealed that teachers are overstressed by the curriculum and "teacher professional standards and are under pressure to meet academic goals" (Al-Thani & Nasser, 2012, p.164). However, even in countries that witnessed educational reforms and organizational changes such as, Sweden, there was a 15% rate of burned teachers among a large sample of primary and preparatory teachers (Arvidsson et al., 2016). The alarming number of burned out teachers in the primary schools needs further investigation and research.

There may be other possible explanations of the high rate of burned out teachers such as decreased resources, increasing class sizes, and rigid administrative practices are stressors that may affect teachers well-being.

### **5.1.2 Depersonalization dimension**

The mean scores of the DP reveal low level of burnout that is in line with several studies (Al-Jabbari, 2005; Arvidsson et al., 2016; Gumaiha, 2012; Mowers, 2010; Paleksic et al., 2015; Randelovi & Stojiljković, 2015; Soleman & Edrees, 2007; Yerdelen et al., 2016). In addition, the low PA burnout level found to be lower than those reported by primary school teachers in Algeria (Dbaby, 2012) and Turkey (Ozan, 2009). It also shows lower burnout level than different school levels in Jordan (Al-Ayasrah & Abdel Rahman, 2013; El-Omari & Freihat, 2011), Oman (Al-Jabri, 2000), Saudi Arabia (Al-Wably, 1995), preschool level in Jordan (Al-Frehat & Al-Rabadi, 2010), and secondary school level in Saudi Arabia (Al-Haramlah, 2007).

### **5.1.3 Personal Accomplishment dimensions**

The mean score of the PA was found to be low and inconsistent to those reported on primary school teachers in Iraq (Al-Jabbari, 2005), Sudan (Gumaiha, 2012), Sweden (Arvidsson et al., 2016), Serbia (Randelovi & Stojiljković, 2015), Turkey (Yerdelen et al., 2016) and the Republic of Srpska (Paleksic et al., 2015). It is also similar to those reported by special education teachers in Egypt (Soleman & Edrees, 2007), preparatory teachers in Sweden (Arvidsson et al., 2016) and university teachers in Serbia (Randelovi & Stojiljković, 2015). Additionally, the PA is lower than the level reported by novice teachers of all school levels in Australia (Goddard & Goddard, 2006). However, the participants of this study showed lower PA burnout level than those reported by primary

school teachers in Algeria (Dbaby, 2012) and Turkey (Ozan, 2009), special education teachers in Qatar (Al-Farah, 2001), different school levels in Jordan (Al-Ayasrah & Abdel Rahman, 2013; Al-Frehat & Al-Rabadi, 2010; El-Omari & Freihat, 2011), Oman (Al-Jabri, 2000) and Saudi Arabia (Al-Wably, 1995). It is also lower than those reported by secondary school level teachers in Saudi Arabia (Al-Haramlah, 2007).

#### **5.1.4 The interrelation between dimensions**

Although participants in this study showed high levels of EE burnout, there is notable low level of burnout in the other two dimensions, DP and PA. Interestingly, across a wide range of organizational and occupational examinations of burnout syndrome, it can be argued that the EE burnout is strongly correlated to the DP or cynicism dimension of the burnout syndrome (Maslach et al., 2008). However, the results of this study revealed that participants had high levels of burnout in the EE but low levels in the DP dimension. This case of “incompatibility” (Maslach et al., 2008, p. 99) between EE and DP found in other studies (Goddard & Goddard, 2006) could be interpreted in a few ways.

First, an accumulated empirical evidence "suggests that burnout is a process that gradually develops across time" (Leiter, 1993; Maslach & Leiter, 1996; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998 as cited in Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000, p. 21), in which the EE is recognized as the first stage of the burnout process while the DP or the negative attitudes towards students is the second stage (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000). The DP attitude has been considered as a defensive coping mechanism in which the sufferers try to protect themselves from the emotional drain through building a psychological distance between them and the people who were sources of emotional strain (Maslach et al., 2008).

Therefore, results of this study may support the developmental model that suggested that each dimension of burnout leads to the development of the other starting from the EE toward the PA. Besides, a strong predictor of future individual change is anticipated in which the two domains may move towards consistency over time (Maslach, et al., 2008). This means that early notice of burnout might help to prevent the prevalence of the syndrome.

Second, it has been reported that some teachers may have “feelings” of burnout in which they feel emotionally exhausted, drained, or wearing out but they may still feel satisfied, efficacious about teaching tasks, and have a positive attitude towards students (Chang, 2009). Regarding either assumption, an intervention is required to protect teachers from future developments of the syndrome and its consequences, especially that the burnout is ‘visible’ and can be transferred easily from burned-out teachers to their colleagues (Aldhafri, 2016).

## **5.2 How does the level of psychological burnout vary according to gender, nationality, level of education, and years of teaching experience?**

### **5.2.1 Gender:**

Results from this study indicate female teachers tend to experience high levels of EE burnout while male teachers are at a moderate level. However, there is no difference between females and males in the other two dimensions of burnout; both are within the low levels of DP and PA burnout dimensions. The literature varied regarding if gender is more affected by stress and burnout. Some studies revealed that female teachers tend to be affected by emotional exhaustion more than male teachers (Rasku & Kinnunen, 2003; Dick & Wagner, 2001 as cited in Arvidsson et al., 2016). In contrast, other reports that

males, among all types of occupations, show higher work stress and lower levels of satisfaction and well-being than females (Bricheno et al., 2009).

In this study, the significant difference of EE burnout levels between females and males, which is in favor of females, was found to be consistent with the result in the initial study that developed the burnout inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). In addition, several studies have reported similar findings in Western and Arab countries (Al-Jabbari, 2005; Arvidsson et al., 2016; Kabadayi, 2015; Kokkinos, 2007). Contrary, the results reveal that male teachers seem to be more emotionally drained than female teachers (Al-Ayasrah & Abdel Rahman, 2013; Al-Farah, 2001; Gumaiha, 2012). Additionally, other studies found no effect of the gender variable on the burnout level (Al-Bakheet & Al-Hsan, 2011; Dbaby, 2012; El-Omari & Freihat, 2011; Ozan, 2009; Paleksic et al., 2015). Previous literature did not corroborate a pattern of gender and burnout level and there are no previous studies in Qatar that provided reasons for gender differences. Therefore, further qualitative research would need to examine this aspect.

### **5.2.2 Nationality (Qataris vs. non-Qataris):**

Previous studies suggested that nationality might play a role in teachers' burnout level (Al-Farah, 2001; Aljaroudi, 2015). The different social background of teachers is an imperative important factor that influences their attitude and interaction with the schools' environment teaching stressors. As discussed in the context part of chapter 2, non-Qatari teachers in Qatar make up the majority (70.6%) of the teachers' population in Qatar (MDPS, 2015). The rate of Qatari responses to this study is 30.5% and 69.5% for non-Qatari teachers.

Teachers' nationalities in this study showed a significant difference between

Qatari and non-Qatari teachers within the three dimensions of burnout. Qatari teachers scored remarkably higher levels of EE burnout than non-Qatari teachers. Many studies have shown that low salaries lead to elevated burnout levels. However, that was not the case in this study. Some reports revealed that Qatari teachers are the highest paid in the Arab world. Additionally, Qatari teachers have several bonuses and allowance for the years of experience, qualifications and for the gained points from the evaluation at the end of the year yet the burnout level is still high and the schools in Qatar suffer from high rate of shortages of both female and male Qatari teachers (Alkhateeb, 2013; Ridge et al., 2014).

Although non-Qatari teachers reported lower burnout level than Qatari teachers, the reported burnout level is moderate which is troublesome. Although non-Qatari teachers earn higher salaries than what is usually earn in their home countries, they confront several challenges in Qatar (Ridge et al., 2014). Non-Qatari teachers are under the pressure of contract and job insecurity because they can be terminated at the end of every year. In terms of the class level and students' behavior, students generally show more respect to Qatari teachers than non-Qatari ones (AL-Mohannadi & Capel, 2007). Further qualitative research is needed in order to investigate in depth the reasons of reported high levels of burnout.

Studies that compare burnout levels between local and foreigner teachers remain sparse. Comparing results of the current study to accessible literature shows certain consistency as Aljaroudi's (2015) study where the Saudi teachers scored higher levels of burnout than non-Saudis. Al-Farah (2001) found that non-Qatari special education teachers suffered from burnout more than Qatari teachers. On the other hand, Al-



Mohannadi and Capel (2007) found that Qatari and non-Qatari physical education teachers scored relatively the same levels of stress. The difference regarding burnout and nationality give insight that this area should be further researched.

#### **5.2.4 Level of education**

The existing literature does not identify a clear pattern on the effect of education levels on teacher burnout levels. For example, no notable differences were found in the three dimensions' results of the three teacher groups in previous studies (Al-Frehat & Al-Rabadi, 2010; Al-Mashikhy, 2013; El-Omari & Freihat, 2011; Gumaiha, 2012). The current study suggests that there are no significant differences between the three education levels of teachers and their burnout level. This outcome is inconsistent with the results of Maslach and Jackson's study (1981) and Hammett's (2013) who found that the higher the level of education was associated with the higher the level of EE burnout. Also, Maslach and Jackson (1981) and Tashtoush et al., (2013) revealed that the higher teachers' educational level, the higher the EE burnout.

Therefore, this study's results need to be interpreted with caution as bachelor holder participants constituted a larger part of the study's population (86%). Consequently, the disproportion in the participants of the three education levels may have resulted in the absence of an association between teachers' educational level and burnout. Therefore, the ability to differentiate between the three groups are low. Further studies are requested to better understand this aspect.

#### **5.2.5 Teaching experience**

In this study, participants can be divided into three groups according to their teaching experience: 1) less than five years of experience, 2) between five and ten years

and 3) more than ten years of teaching experience. The first group is viewed as novice teachers and the 2nd and 3rd groups are considered experienced teachers. Results show that novice and experienced teachers report high levels of EE burnout. Previous studies do not show a clear pattern regarding this aspect. Substantial amounts of literature espouse the argument that the burnout most of time accrue in the early stage of teachers' job (Al-jubailly, 2013; Gavish & Friedman; 2010; Goddard & Goddard, 2006; Kabadayi, 2015; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Another study contradicts this observation and asserts that the burnout tends to occur later in teachers' work life (Al-Mashikhy, 2013; Kokkinos, 2007; Paleksic et al., 2015). On the other hand, several studies reveal that teachers' years of experience had no effect on teachers' burnout levels (Al-Frehat & Al-Rabadi, 2010; Al-Jabbari, 2005; Dbaby, 2012; El-Omari & Freihat, 2011; Gumaiha, 2012; Hammett, 2013; Kabadayi, 2015; Soleman & Edrees, 2007).

One possible reason could be that the effects of substantial educational reform in Qatar. The experienced teachers who have more than ten years of teaching experience may find it difficult to cope with the organizational changes and reform demands such as digital technological use and its implications on the curriculum and pedagogical practices comparing to their teaching lives before the reform. For novice teachers, they began teaching during the reform in which the job demands are high and they may not be prepared to deal and cope with stress. It has been argued that the experience of beginning teachers must be positive since it adversely influences their level of effectiveness throughout their career and affects their decisions on whether to continue in the teaching profession or not (Chang, 2009).

In summary, there were significant differences between primary teachers' burnout

level and demographic variables such as, gender, nationality and teaching experience. However, no significant differences found between the burnout level and teachers' level of education. The differences in the results of the current study and other studies may be due to many other different individual and organizational factors. Since the current study's sample and analysis are limited to primary school teachers, it is recommended that further research be undertaken qualitatively to provide deep insights and on a broader group of teachers beyond governmental primary schools.

### **Limitations**

This study provides an overall picture of governmental primary school teachers' burnout situation in Qatar. The study has a few limitations. First, due to the limitation of the quantitative research, it is difficult to provide explanations for the reasons for the reported issues. For example, why female teachers have higher EE burnout than male teachers is difficult to explain. Furthermore, Why Qatari teachers have extensive higher EE burnout level than non-Qatari teachers? and Why novice teachers reported high levels of burnout as the experienced teachers? can not be fully explained.

Second, this study was based on teachers' self-reporting and, the situation may appear different from other perspectives such as the school principals' or students'. Therefore, further qualitative studies and studies examining the perspectives of principals or students would be valuable. In addition, Studies to better understand factors that may lead to teachers' burnout and their coping strategies for example for example, in-depth interviews with teachers of both genders, Qatari and Non-Qatari teachers. Moreover, studies to better understand how work environments can help teachers better cope their challenges will also bring further insights to the field.

## **Recommendations**

Emotional exhaustion is the core domain of burnout and it is the first stage of burnout that may extend to the second and, or third stages. Since participants of this study reported high level of emotional exhaustion burnout therefore, an emotional support for teachers is of great importance. One way of the emotional support that could be provided for teachers is paying attention to the psychological aspects alongside the professional development of teachers. Also, increasing teachers' awareness on the process of burning out and provide them personal reflection resources, such as coping strategies have demonstrated to be effective in challenging burnout effects. Moreover, teachers should take responsibility for finding ways in dealing with burnout by learning about and implementing coping strategies. This view is supported by several studies that espouse that coping can serve as a mediator between workload and burnout as teachers who adopt such methods have lower burnout levels. Ensuring teachers' well-being provides needed support which will enhance the education quality in schools. Also, ensuring teachers' well-being at the onset, safeguards education as previous studies indicated the transmissible nature of burnout within schools.

## **Conclusion**

This study that investigated the psychological burnout among primary school teachers in Qatar, which is related to the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment because the mental and emotional well-being of teachers can either reflect positively or negatively on several aspects related to the school environment. For instance, if teachers are emotionally exhausted and feel overworked, their pedagogical practices are likely to suffer. Besides, they may vent out their stress on their students and engage in unnecessary

disciplinary actions that are not related to students' actual behaviors or academic performance. Burnout or overworked teachers may hold unfavorable or negative attitudes towards participating in curriculum changes or adopting new assessment practices. On other hand, if teachers maintain healthy mental and emotional states and strive to effectively identify various job stressors and effectively cope with them, and when school administrators provide them with continuous and comprehensive support from their first year of teaching, they're likely to hold positive attitudes towards the profession, provide a caring and nurturing learning environment for their students, and be active participants in the improvement of curricular, assessment, and pedagogical practices at their schools.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix A: Ministry of Education Approval



التاريخ : 2016/11/15م

**تسهيل مهمة القائم بالبحث الميداني في المدارس**

السيد: مدير قسم التعليم الالكتروني  
المحترم  
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

نود إحاطتكم علماً بأن الباحث/ الباحثون المذكورة أسماؤهم أدناه، بصدد إجراء دراسة ميدانية في مدرستكم وبياناتهم كالتالي:

اسم الباحث: ميمونة محمد أحمد اللوح

- جهة البحث: طالبة ماجستير، برنامج المناهج والتدريس والتقويم- جامعة قطر.
- عنوان البحث: دراسة استطلاعية عن مدى الإرهاق النفسي بين معلمي المرحلة الابتدائية في المدارس المستقلة في قطر.
- هدف البحث: تهدف الدراسة إلى الكشف عن مستوى الإرهاق النفسي لدى المعلمين في المرحلة الابتدائية في المدارس المستقلة في دولة قطر وعن مدى الاختلاف في مستويات الإرهاق النفسي -إن وجدت- باختلاف بعض المتغيرات الديموغرافية مثل (الجنس والجنسية والتخصص والحالة الاجتماعية والمرحلة والمادة التي يتم تدريسها وعدد الطلاب في الفصل وعدد سنوات الخبرة وعدد ساعات التدريس الاسبوعية). كما تهدف الدراسة إلى التوصل لبعض المضامين الإرشادية والاقتراحات التي من شأنها أن تساعد المسؤولين والعاملين في المدارس الابتدائية في التصدي لهذه الظاهرة.
- عينة البحث: معلمو ومعلمات المرحلة الابتدائية في المدارس المستقلة في قطر.

التاريخ: 2016/11/15

عليه، يرجى التكرم بتسهيل مهمة الباحث، علماً بأن البيانات ستكون سرية ولأغراض البحث العلمي..

مع شكرنا لحسن تعاونكم معنا ،،،

د. عزيزة أحمد السعدي

مدير إدارة السياسات والأبحاث التربوية

## Appendix B: Qatar University Institutional Review Board



Qatar University Institutional Review Board  
**QU-IRB**

December 21, 2016

Ms. Maymona Allah  
Graduate Student Project  
College of Education  
Qatar University  
Tel.: 55273906  
Email: [200761645@qu.edu.qa](mailto:200761645@qu.edu.qa)

Dear Ms. Maymona Allah,

Sub.: Research Ethics Review Exemption / Graduate Student Project  
Ref.: Project titled, "An Exploratory Study of Psychological Burnout Among Primary Teachers in Independent Schools in Qatar"

We would like to inform you that your application along with the supporting documents provided for the above proposal, is reviewed and having met all the requirements, has been exempted from the full ethics review.

Please note that any changes/modification or additions to the original submitted protocol should be reported to the committee to seek approval prior to continuation.

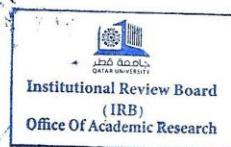
Your Research Ethics Approval No. is: **QU-IRB 705-E/16**

Kindly refer to this number in all your future correspondence pertaining to this project.

Best wishes,

*K. Alali*

Dr. Khalid Al-Ali  
Chairperson, QU-IRB



Qatar University-Institutional Review, Board (QU-IRB), P.O. Box 2713 Doha, Qatar  
Tel +974 4403-5307 (GMT +3hrs) email: [QU-IRB@qu.edu.qa](mailto:QU-IRB@qu.edu.qa)

## Appendix C: The Arabic version of the MBI-ES

### مسح وظائف الخدمات الإنسانية - اتجاهات المعلم

المعلم الفاضل،

نشكر لك مشاركتك القيمة في هذه الدراسة والتي تشكل جزءاً من مشروع بحثي لنيل درجة الماجستير والذي يتركز حول دراسة اتجاهات معلمي المرحلة الابتدائية في المدارس المستقلة في قطر نحو مهنة التدريس. مشاركتكم عنصر أساسي لنجاح هذه الدراسة، علماً أن المشاركة تطوعية والاسم غير مطلوب للحفاظ على خصوصيتكم، كما أن إجاباتكم على الأسئلة الواردة في هذه الاستبانة ستكون سرية تماماً.

إن إكمال الاستبانة يستغرق أقل من (10) دقائق في المتوسط، وسيتم استخدام المعلومات التي تم جمعها لأغراض بحثية فقط. للمشاركة حق الانسحاب من الدراسة في أي وقت أو استثناء أي سؤال.

وقتك وجهدك محل تقدير كبير، إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة تتعلق بالدراسة فلا تتردد في الاتصال بي على عنوان بريدي الإلكتروني:

[200761645@qu.edu.qa](mailto:200761645@qu.edu.qa)

مع جزيل الشكر والتقدير  
ميمونة محمد أحمد/ طالبة ماجستير الآداب في المناهج الدراسية والتدريس والتقييم- جامعة قطر

للبدء بالمشاركة يرجى الضغط على زر: متابعة  
أو زر خروج للخروج

يرجى قراءة العبارة بعناية ومن ثم اختيار درجة تكرار حدوثها معك من خانة (التكرار) بجانب كل عبارة:

#	العبارة	درجة التكرار				
		كل يوم	بضع مرات في الأسبوع	مرة في الأسبوع	بضع مرات في الشهر	مرة واحدة في الشهر أو أقل
1.	أجد صعوبة في ضبط انفعالاتي بسبب ممارستي لمهنة التدريس.					
2.	أشعر بأن طاقتي مستنزفة بعد نهاية اليوم الدراسي.					
3.	أشعر بالإرهاق عندما أستيقظ من نومي وأعرف أن علي مواجهة يوم عمل جديد.					
4.	أستطيع أن أتفهم بسهولة مشاعر طلابي نحو الأشياء.					
5.	أشعر بانني أتعامل مع الطلبة وكأنهم أشياء لا بشخ.					
6.	أتعامل مع الطلبة طوال اليوم الدراسي بسبب لي الإجهاد والتعب.					
7.	أتعامل مع مشكلات طلبي بفعالية عالية.					
8.	أشعر بالضغط النفسي بسبب ممارستي لمهنة التدريس.					
9.	أشعر أنني أؤثر إيجابيا في حياة كثير من الناس من خلال ممارستي لمهنة التدريس.					
10.	أحس أنني أصبحت أكثر قسوة مع الناس بعد التحاقني بمهنة التعليم.					
11.	أحس بالانزعاج والقلق لأن هذه المهنة تزيد من قسوة عواطفني.					
12.	أشعر بالحياة والنشاط خلال ممارستي لمهنة التدريس.					
13.	أشعر بالإحباط لممارستي مهنة التعليم.					
14.	أشعر أنني أعمل في هذه المهنة بإجتهاد كبير.					
15.	حقيقتي لا أهتم ولا أبالي بما يحدث مع طلبتي من مشاكل.					

						16	التعامل مع الطلبة بشكل مباشر يسبب لي ضغوطاً نفسية شديدة.
						17	أستطيع بكل سهولة أن اخلق جواً نفسياً مريحاً مع طلبتي.
						18	أشعر بالسعادة والراحة بعد العمل مع طلبتي.
						19	لقد أنجزت أشياء كثيرة ذا قيمة وأهمية في هذه المهنة.
						20	أشعر وكأنني قد تقدم بي العمر بسبب ممارستي لهذه المهنة.
						21	أتعامل بهدوء مع المشكلات الانفعالية والعاطفية لطلبتي أثناء ممارستي لهذه المهنة.
						22	أشعر بأن الطلبة يلوموني على بعض المشكلات التي تواجههم.

#### معلومات عامة:

##### الجنس

- أنثى
- ذكر

##### الجنسية

- قطر
- السعودية
- الإمارات
- البحرين
- عُمان
- الكويت
- اليمن
- العراق
- سوريا
- لبنان
- فلسطين
- الأردن
- مصر
- السودان
- تونس
- المغرب
- ليبيا
- موريتانيا
- الجزائر

○ أخرى (يرجى التحديد: .....) (.....)

**آخر مهزل علمي حصلت عليه**

- بكالوريوس
- دبلوم عالي
- ماجستير
- دكتوراه

○ أخرى (يرجى التحديد: .....) (.....)

**الحالة الاجتماعية**

- أعزب
- متزوج
- مُنفصل

**عدد أبنائك (إن وُجد):**

- 2-1
- 4-3
- 6-5
- أكثر من 6
- لا يوجد

**عدد سنوات خبرتك التدريسية في المدارس**

- أقل من 3 سنوات
- ما بين 3-5 سنوات
- ما بين 5-10 سنوات
- أكثر من 10 سنوات

**الصفوف التي تقوم بتدريسها حالياً (يمكنك اختيار أكثر من إجابة)**

- أول ابتدائي
- ثاني ابتدائي
- ثالث ابتدائي
- رابع ابتدائي
- خامس ابتدائي
- ساس ابتدائي

**عدد الطلاب في فصولك الدراسية**

- ما بين 10-15 طالب
- ما بين 15-20 طالب
- ما بين 20-25 طالب
- ما بين 25-30 طالب
- أكثر من 30 طالب

**العادة التي تُدرّسها:**

- علوم
- رياضيات
- لغة عربية
- تربية بدنية
- لغة إنجليزية
- فنون بصرية
- تربية إسلامية
- دراسات اجتماعية
- أخرى (تُرجى التحديد: .....

**عدد ساعات حصصك الأسبوعية:**

- أقل من 12 حصة
- 12 حصة
- أكثر من 12 حصة
- أخرى (تُرجى التحديد: .....