

PROFESSIONAL BURNOUT AND STRESS RESISTANCE AMONG TEACHERS WORKING IN WARTIME EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

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The full-scale war in Ukraine has fundamentally transformed the professional context of teaching, placing educators under conditions of chronic stress, instability, and prolonged exposure to war-related stressors. Teachers are required to ensure continuity of the educational process while simultaneously responding to the psychosocial needs of students affected by trauma, displacement, and uncertainty. In such circumstances, professional activity extends beyond instructional functions and increasingly incorporates emotional containment, crisis response, and elements of trauma-informed psychological support. This expansion of professional roles substantially intensifies emotional load and increases vulnerability to professional burnout, particularly in its central dimension of emotional exhaustion, which reflects the depletion of psychological resources under sustained stress exposure [1].

Professional burnout in the present study is conceptualised as a multi-dimensional construct encompassing emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment [6]. This conceptual framework allows burnout to be analysed as a systemic phenomenon reflecting both the impact of external stressors and the erosion of internal regulatory capacities. The analysis is further embedded within a broader psychosocial framework that includes stress resistance and professional satisfaction. Stress resistance is defined as an individual's capacity to maintain emotional stability, behavioural regulation, and effective coping under conditions of prolonged stress [2]. Professional satisfaction is conceptualised as a resource-related construct reflecting perceived meaning of work, motivational engagement, and subjective professional efficacy [7]. Within wartime conditions, these variables acquire heightened significance, as teachers are often required to sustain professional

functioning in the absence of stable organisational and social support systems [4].

The aim of the study was to examine the level and structural characteristics of professional burnout among primary school teachers working under wartime conditions in Ukraine and to analyse its associations with stress resistance and professional satisfaction as key indicators of psychosocial functioning. The study employed a quantitative cross-sectional design. Data were collected between February and April 2025 using an online survey format, which ensured accessibility and safety for participants under conditions of geographical dispersion, infrastructural instability, and security-related constraints. The sample consisted of 97 primary school teachers aged 25–58 years employed in general secondary education institutions in Ukraine. Participants represented diverse instructional formats, including face-to-face, remote, hybrid, and shelter-based education. A proportion of respondents reported experiences of internal displacement and exposure to war-related stressors, which were considered in the interpretation of findings.

Professional burnout was assessed using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and personal accomplishment were analysed as distinct but interrelated components, with lower scores on the personal accomplishment dimension indicating a higher degree of burnout-related reduction in perceived professional efficacy. Stress resistance was measured using a standardised self-report instrument assessing emotional stability, coping capacity, and behavioural regulation under stress. Professional satisfaction was evaluated using a validated scale capturing both affective and cognitive components of job satisfaction, including perceived meaning of work, engagement, and satisfaction with professional outcomes. Internal consistency of the applied instruments was within acceptable limits (Cronbach's $\alpha > .70$), indicating sufficient reliability for research purposes. All participants provided informed consent, and the study ensured anonymity and voluntary participation in accordance with ethical standards for psychological research.

Descriptive analysis revealed that professional burnout among teachers working in wartime conditions is characterised by a predominance of emotional exhaustion relative to other burnout components. The distribution of burnout indicators suggests that most participants experience moderate levels of emotional exhaustion, while a notable subgroup demonstrates elevated levels, indicating a risk of cumulative resource depletion under prolonged stress exposure. Depersonalisation was less pronounced than emotional exhaustion, suggesting that teachers generally preserved interpersonal engagement despite increased emotional strain [3].

Scores on the personal accomplishment dimension indicated a moderate decline in perceived professional efficacy, reflecting the impact of prolonged instability and reduced controllability of educational outcomes.

Mean score analysis further supported this structural pattern. Emotional exhaustion demonstrated the highest central tendency ($M = 25.84$, $SD = 10.21$), followed by personal accomplishment ($M = 33.67$, $SD = 8.14$), whereas depersonalisation remained lower ($M = 8.12$, $SD = 5.03$). These indicators suggest that burnout in the studied sample is primarily expressed through emotional resource depletion rather than through interpersonal withdrawal.

With regard to personal resources, the level of stress resistance in the sample can be characterised as moderate ($M = 63.45$, $SD = 12.87$), indicating partial preservation of adaptive regulatory capacity despite chronic stress exposure. However, a subgroup of participants demonstrated reduced stress resistance, suggesting vulnerability to sustained psychosocial strain. Professional satisfaction was also found to be at a moderate level ($M = 68.29$, $SD = 15.42$), indicating that although teachers continue to derive meaning from their work, this meaning is increasingly challenged by adverse contextual conditions.

Correlation analysis revealed a consistent and statistically interpretable pattern of relationships between the studied variables. Emotional exhaustion demonstrated a moderate negative association with stress resistance ($r = -0.52$, $p < .001$), indicating that lower regulatory capacity is associated with higher levels of emotional depletion. A similar negative association was observed between emotional exhaustion and professional satisfaction ($r = -0.57$, $p < .001$), suggesting that increased burnout is accompanied by a decline in the perceived meaningfulness and rewarding nature of professional activity. In contrast, stress resistance demonstrated a positive association with professional satisfaction ($r = 0.48$, $p < .001$), supporting its role as a protective psychological resource contributing to sustained professional engagement and emotional stability under conditions of chronic stress.

The obtained findings support a resource-based interpretation of professional burnout in wartime educational contexts. Emotional exhaustion emerges as the central component of burnout, reflecting cumulative depletion of emotional and cognitive resources under prolonged stress exposure. This is consistent with the assumption that in crisis conditions burnout develops as a result of sustained imbalance between external demands and internal resources. The relatively lower levels of depersonalisation indicate that teachers, even under conditions of significant strain, tend to preserve relational engagement as a core element of their professional identity. At the same time, the pattern observed in the personal

accomplishment dimension suggests a gradual erosion of perceived professional efficacy under conditions of uncertainty and constrained educational effectiveness.

The observed relationships between burnout, stress resistance, and professional satisfaction indicate that these variables form an integrated system of psychosocial functioning. Stress resistance functions as a regulatory mechanism that mitigates the impact of chronic stress, while professional satisfaction reflects the preservation of professional meaning and motivational engagement. Emotional exhaustion, in turn, serves as a central indicator of resource depletion within this system. These findings are consistent with contemporary international research on teacher well-being in crisis and conflict-affected contexts, which emphasises the cumulative nature of stress exposure and the critical role of internal psychological resources in sustaining professional functioning [5].

From a practical perspective, the results highlight the necessity of implementing trauma-informed and resource-oriented approaches to teacher support in wartime educational settings. Interventions aimed at strengthening emotional regulation, enhancing adaptive coping strategies, and restoring professional meaning are of particular relevance. Group-based formats, including reflective practices and expressive or art-based interventions, may represent effective directions for both practical implementation and further research.

At the same time, several limitations of the study should be acknowledged. The cross-sectional design does not allow for causal interpretation of the observed relationships. The relatively small sample size and non-random sampling limit the generalisability of the findings. The reliance on self-report measures introduces the possibility of response bias, particularly under conditions of chronic stress. Future research should employ longitudinal designs, larger and more diverse samples, and multimethod approaches to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of teacher functioning in wartime contexts.

In conclusion, professional burnout among primary school teachers working under wartime conditions in Ukraine is a multidimensional and resource-dependent phenomenon associated with reduced stress resistance and decreased professional satisfaction. Emotional exhaustion emerges as the central component reflecting cumulative resource depletion under prolonged stress exposure. Addressing burnout through trauma-informed and resource-oriented strategies is essential for sustaining teacher functioning and ensuring the stability and quality of educational processes in crisis-affected environments.

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