



Relationship between Job Burnout and Psychological Well-being among Physical Education Teachers: The Mediating Role of Organization-Based Self-Esteem

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Article Info

Article type:
Research Article

Article history:

Received 03 October 2025
 Received in revised form 12 December 2025
 Accepted 21 December 2026
 Available online 21 March 2026

Keywords:

Job Burnout, Psychological Well-being, Organization-Based Self-Esteem, Physical Education Teachers.

ABSTRACT

Objective: Job burnout and psychological health are significant concerns in the teaching profession. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between job burnout and the psychological health of physical education teachers, considering the mediating role of organization-based self-esteem.

Methods: This descriptive-correlational study was conducted on all physical education teachers in Yazd. A sample of 195 participants was selected through available sampling. Data were collected using the Maslach Burnout Inventory, Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWB), and Pierce's Organization-Based Self-Esteem Scale. Structural equation modeling was employed for data analysis in AMOS software.

Results: The model demonstrated good fit with the data (CFI=0.94, RMSEA=0.06). Job burnout showed a significant direct negative effect on psychological well-being ($\beta=-0.44$, $P<0.01$). Organization-based self-esteem demonstrated a significant positive effect on psychological well-being ($\beta=0.36$, $P<0.01$). The indirect effect of job burnout on psychological well-being through organization-based self-esteem was also significant ($\beta=-0.16$, $P<0.05$), confirming the mediating role. The model explained 61% of the variance in psychological well-being scores.

Conclusion: The findings indicate that organization-based self-esteem serves as a partial mediator in the relationship between job burnout and psychological well-being among physical education teachers. This suggests that interventions targeting both the reduction of job burnout and the enhancement of organization-based self-esteem may be particularly effective in promoting psychological well-being in this population. School administrators should consider implementing organizational support programs and positive feedback mechanisms to strengthen teachers' sense of value within the educational system.

Cite this article: Tolabi-mazraeno, A. Relationship between Job Burnout and Psychological Well-being among Physical Education Teachers: The Mediating Role of Organization-Based Self-Esteem. *Functional Research in Sport Psychology*, 2026;3(1):60-70. [10.22091/frs.2025.14065.1116](https://doi.org/10.22091/frs.2025.14065.1116)



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Publisher: University of Qom.

DOI: [10.22091/frs.2025.14065.1116](https://doi.org/10.22091/frs.2025.14065.1116)

Introduction

The teaching profession represents a high-stress occupation characterized by significant emotional and psychological demands that frequently precipitate job burnout (1). Within this demanding professional landscape, physical education instructors confront distinctive occupational stressors, including the physiological demands of instruction, heightened safety concerns in activity-based environments, and the persistent curricular marginalization of physical education within academic institutions (2). These compounded professional pressures potentially elevate physical educators' vulnerability to developing burnout syndrome - a multidimensional psychological condition manifesting through emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment (1). The ramifications of teacher burnout transcend individual psychological distress, substantially compromising educational quality and institutional effectiveness. Substantial research indicates that educators experiencing burnout demonstrate impaired instructional efficacy, reduced professional performance, and increased attrition rates (3). More critically, teacher burnout correlates strongly with adverse student outcomes, including compromised academic achievement and impaired socioemotional development (3,4). These empirical findings emphasize the necessity of addressing burnout not merely as an individual mental health concern, but as a fundamental systemic challenge threatening educational integrity (1).

Although the detrimental consequences of burnout are extensively documented, the psychological mechanisms mediating its effects remain inadequately elucidated. Grounded in Conservation of Resources theory (5), which posits that psychological stress emerges when valued personal resources are threatened or diminished, organization-based self-esteem represents a potentially crucial psychological resource vulnerable to erosion through chronic burnout experiences. This construct, defined as "the degree to which an individual believes him/herself to be capable, significant, and worthy as an organizational member" (6), may function as a critical mediator in the burnout-wellbeing relationship. The Job Demands-Resources theoretical framework (7) further substantiates this proposition, suggesting that personal resources fundamentally mediate the relationship between occupational demands and employee psychological wellbeing.

Emerging empirical evidence supports this theoretical conceptualization. Contemporary investigations have demonstrated that organizational factors significantly influence professional identity formation and instructional effectiveness (8), while organizational devaluation mediates the association between occupational stress and professional self-concept (9). Nevertheless, limited scholarly attention has examined these dynamic relationships specifically among physical education teachers, who navigate distinctive organizational challenges and professional

socialization processes (3). This investigation consequently aims to examine the complex relationship between job burnout and psychological wellbeing among physical education teachers, with particular emphasis on the potential mediating function of organization-based self-esteem. To address this aim, the following research questions were formulated: What is the direct relationship between job burnout and psychological well-being among physical education teachers? What is the direct relationship between job burnout and organization-based self-esteem among physical education teachers? What is the direct relationship between organization-based self-esteem and psychological well-being among physical education teachers? Does organization-based self-esteem mediate the relationship between job burnout and psychological well-being among physical education teachers? Through rigorous examination of these relationships within the unique professional context of physical education, this research endeavors to advance a more sophisticated understanding of the psychological processes underlying educator wellbeing and to inform evidence-based interventions supporting both teaching professionals and the educational systems they sustain.

Materials and Methods

The present study is applied in objective and employs a descriptive-correlational design, analyzed through structural equation modeling (SEM). The statistical population consisted of all physical education teachers in Yazd. Given the finite nature of the population and the constraints of time and accessibility, an available (convenience) sampling method was utilized. A sample size of 195 participants was determined based on the recommendation by Kline (2015), who suggests a minimum of 10 participants per estimated parameter for SEM. With 21 parameters to be estimated in the proposed model, the target sample size was established at 210. The final sample of 195 participants meets this criterion and is considered adequate for the analysis. It should be noted that the use of available sampling limits the generalizability of the findings.

The following instruments were used in the present study:

A **demographic information questionnaire** was used to assess characteristics such as age, marital status, education level, coaching experience, and championship history.

The **Athlete Burnout Questionnaire (ABQ)**, consisting of 15 items, was used to measure three subscales. This questionnaire was originally developed and validated in English by Raedeke and Smith (2001) in the United States with a sample of 208 college athletes (133 females and 75 males). They reported correlation and effect size coefficients for emotional/physical exhaustion ($r = .92$, $r^2 = .084$), reduced sense of accomplishment ($r = 0.86$, $r^2 = 0.73$), and sport devaluation ($r = 0.92$, $r^2 = .84$). In Iran, the questionnaire was validated (13). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha for the questionnaire was 0.93.

The **Organization-Based Self-Esteem Scale (OBSE)** by Pierce et al., containing 10 items, was employed to measure three subscales: the individual's belief in their capabilities within the organization, their feeling of being valuable to the organization, and their sense of influence within the organization. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale in the current study was 0.91.

The **Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (RPWB)** was used to assess psychological well-being. Ryff originally developed this scale in 1980. The original version had 120 items, but subsequent studies introduced shorter forms with 84, 54, and 18 items. The 18-item form was used in this research. The psychological well-being scale consists of six subscales. In the 18-item form, each factor is measured by 3 items on a 6-point Likert scale (14). Scores range from 1 to 6 for each item, with higher scores indicating better psychological well-being. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale in the present study was 0.89.

Procedure: Following approval from the ethics board of Farhangian University, data collection was initiated. A comprehensive information sheet detailing the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and data confidentiality measures was provided to all potential participants. Written informed consent was secured from each individual before their involvement in the research. To facilitate participation and enhance the response rate, the survey questionnaires—comprising the demographic sheet, ABQ, OBSE, and RSPWB—were administered using a mixed-mode approach, distributed both in hardcopy format and via a secure online platform. Throughout the data collection phase, the principal researcher remained accessible to address any questions or concerns raised by the participants, ensuring clarity and voluntary engagement.

Data Analysis: For data analysis, descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to describe the data. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to assess the normality of the distribution. Inferential statistical methods, including Pearson's correlation coefficient and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), were conducted using SPSS and AMOS software.

Results

Preliminary analyses were conducted to examine the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among the study variables. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations of Study Variables (N=195)

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
Job Burnout	3.15	0.72	1		
Organization-Based Self-Esteem (OBSE)	3.82	0.65	-0.48*	1	
Psychological Well-Being (PWB)	4.05	0.58	-0.52*	0.59*	1

*Note: All correlations are significant at $P < 0.01$.

As shown in Table 1, job burnout was negatively and significantly correlated with both organization-based self-esteem ($r = -0.48$, $P < 0.01$) and psychological well-being ($r = -0.52$, $P < 0.01$). Furthermore, a strong positive correlation was found between organization-based self-esteem and psychological well-being ($r = 0.59$, $P < 0.01$). These preliminary results supported the

initial premises for conducting the mediation analysis.

The descriptive statistics of demographic variables among physical education teachers (N=195) showed in table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of demographic variables among physical education teachers

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Kurtosis
Age (years)	38.4	8.2	25	58	0.34	-0.52
Teaching Experience (years)	12.6	7.8	3	35	0.89	0.76
Weekly Teaching Hours	24.3	6.1	12	40	0.56	-0.23

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of demographic variables for the sample of physical education teachers (N=195). The results indicate that the average age of participants was 38.4 years ($SD = 8.2$), with teaching experience averaging 12.6 years ($SD = 7.8$). The mean weekly teaching load was 24.3 hours ($SD = 6.1$). Before testing the structural model, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to assess the

validity of the measurement model. The model comprised three latent constructs (Job Burnout, OBSE, PWB) with their respective indicators. The results indicated an acceptable fit of the measurement model to the data:

- $\chi^2/df = 2.41$ (Good, as < 3)
- CFI (Comparative Fit Index) = 0.93
- TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index) = 0.91

Discussion

This study examined the relationship between job burnout, organization-based self-esteem (OBSE), and psychological well-being among physical education teachers, with a specific focus on testing OBSE as a mediator. The findings provide several key insights. First, job burnout demonstrated a significant negative direct effect on psychological well-being. Second, burnout also had a significant negative direct effect on OBSE. Third, OBSE exhibited a significant positive direct effect on psychological well-being. Finally, and most critically, OBSE partially mediated the relationship between job burnout and psychological well-being. This pattern of results supports our hypothesized model and offers a more nuanced understanding of the psychological processes affecting educators in this specialized field.

The significant negative direct effect of job burnout on psychological well-being ($\beta = -0.44$) is consistent with extensive literature documenting the deleterious impact of chronic occupational stress on mental health. This finding aligns directly with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (13), which posits that persistent job demands (e.g., emotional exhaustion, depersonalization) deplete an individual's energy and lead to impaired health and well-being. For physical education teachers, this relationship may be particularly potent due to the unique "marginality" of their subject within many school systems, which can compound standard teaching stressors with

feelings of professional devaluation (23). Our result corroborates previous research, such as that by Madigan and Kim (2021), confirming that burnout is a robust predictor of diminished well-being across educational contexts. The strong negative effect of burnout on organization-based self-esteem ($\beta = -0.47$) is a crucial finding that extends the application of Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (26) to this specific population. COR theory argues that individuals strive to obtain and protect valued resources. Job burnout, characterized by the depletion of emotional and cognitive resources, appears to threaten and erode the key personal resource of OBSE—the belief that one is a capable and valuable organizational member. When teachers experience chronic exhaustion and cynicism, their perception of their own worth and efficacy within the school system is fundamentally undermined. This aligns with recent work by Kurt et al. (2022), who found organizational devaluation to be a critical mechanism linking work stress to compromised self-concept.

The significant positive relationship between OBSE and psychological well-being ($\beta = 0.36$) further supports the JD-R model's emphasis on personal resources as key drivers of positive outcomes. OBSE, as a positive self-evaluation rooted in the organizational role, acts as a reservoir of positive affect and resilience. This finding resonates with the eudaimonic perspective of well-being embodied by Ryff's model (14), which emphasizes self-acceptance, purpose, and personal growth. A strong sense of

organizational value directly fuels these dimensions of positive psychological functioning.

The core contribution of this study lies in the confirmation of OBSE as a significant partial mediator. The indirect effect ($\beta = -0.17$) reveals a specific psychological pathway: job burnout erodes a teacher's sense of organizational worth (OBSE), which in turn diminishes their overall psychological well-being. This mediation finding powerfully integrates COR and JD-R theories. It demonstrates that the resource loss spiral described by COR theory (burnout \rightarrow lost OBSE) directly impacts the health impairment process outlined in the JD-R model (lost OBSE \rightarrow reduced well-being). This study thus bridges a gap in the literature by empirically testing and validating this theoretical integration within the understudied population of physical education teachers. While previous research has linked organizational factors to teacher outcomes (e.g., Parker et al., 2022), few studies have positioned OBSE as the central mediating mechanism between burnout and a multi-dimensional measure of well-being in this specific group. The finding of partial rather than full mediation is equally important. It indicates that while OBSE is a critical mechanism, other factors also explain the direct impact of burnout on well-being. These may include unmeasured variables such as personal coping strategies, social support outside of work, individual personality traits (e.g., neuroticism), or the direct physiological and affective

consequences of chronic exhaustion that impair well-being irrespective of self-perception. This highlights the complexity of teacher well-being and suggests that interventions must be multi-faceted.

Conclusion

This study makes a distinct contribution to the literature by elucidating the mediating role of organization-based self-esteem in the well-established relationship between job burnout and psychological well-being among physical education teachers. By integrating principles from Conservation of Resources theory and the Job Demands-Resources model, the findings provide a theoretical explanation for *how* burnout leads to diminished well-being: through the erosion of a key personal resource—the teacher's sense of value and competence within their organization.

The implications are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this research reinforces the necessity of including self-concept variables, particularly those tied to the organizational context, in comprehensive models of occupational stress. Practically, the results suggest that interventions aimed at promoting teacher well-being should be dual-pronged. School administrators must implement systemic strategies to reduce the job demands that lead to burnout (e.g., manageable workloads, supportive leadership). Concurrently, they should proactively cultivate organizational resources by creating structures that enhance OBSE, such as meaningful recognition

programs, opportunities for professional voice and input, and clear pathways for career growth that affirm the value of physical education within the academic mission. This study is limited by its cross-sectional design, reliance on self-report measures, and the use of a convenience sample, which caution against causal inferences and limit generalizability. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to trace the temporal dynamics of these relationships, utilize multi-method assessments (e.g., incorporating administrator ratings), and develop and evaluate targeted intervention programs designed to bolster organization-based self-esteem as a buffer against burnout.

Author Contributions

ATM, is a formal declaration that she is the sole contributor to the academic paper, taking credit and responsibility for the entire research project and manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

Data available on request from the author.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank all participants of the present study.

Ethical considerations

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Farhangian University. The author avoided data fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, and misconduct.

Funding

This study received no funding from public, commercial, or nonprofit organizations.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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