



## Teacher Burnout and Self Esteem in Tangerang's Junior High School Teachers

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to test the theoretical model of social support, job satisfaction and interpersonal communication's influence to burnout, with self-esteem as the mediator in junior high school teachers in South Tangerang. The total respondents were 287 teachers in South Tangerang area. The study is using purposive sample, with non-probability sampling. Data analysis is using structural equation model (SEM) Lisrel (Linear Structural Relationship) program 8.72. The hypothesis concludes "theoretical model of social support, job satisfaction and interpersonal communication's influence to burnout with self-esteem as mediator, fit with empirical data. Practical suggestion is, teachers should obtain social support, job satisfaction and interpersonal communication to avoid the burnout.

**Keywords:** Teacher Burnout, Social Support, Job Satisfaction, Interpersonal Communication and Self-esteem

**JEL Classifications:** A21, I21, I25

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Law No. 14/2005 about Teachers and Lecturers, article 35 paragraph (2) states that the workload of a teacher is at least 24 h and maximum 40 h face-to-face session in a week. The rule then reaffirmed through Government Regulation No. 74/2008 about Teachers, article 52 paragraph (1) that the workload of a teacher includes main activities; such as (a) preparing learning plan, (b) implement learning plan, (c) assess learning outcomes, (d) guide and train students, and (e) implement additional tasks attached to the main activities in accordance with the teacher's workload.

Apparently, teacher is a profession with heavy responsibilities. Teachers also interact with large numbers of students, parents, fellow teachers, and principals whom each have different problems and demands. The responsibility as an educator requires teachers to understand the values and norms in the community. With a good understanding of the values and norms, teachers can become

role models and students and community will identify with them. Next, teachers are responsible to assist students to learn something new, to develop and train competence to optimally enhances it. As a mentor, teachers are in charge of formulating objectives and methods in the learning process according to students' capacity and need. The burden of aforementioned problems and its pressure can be a stressor for teachers. According to a study, the stress experienced by individuals or teachers whose work is in direct contact with another humans as their recipients of service, is termed burnout (Maslach et al., 1996). Symptoms of burnout appear in the form of frustration, apathy towards the job; leashed by the job, cynical attitude towards students, dissatisfied with own self and frequently skip work for various reasons.

We can look at the data as a result of research from World Bank and Harvard University in 2004 that shows teachers' attendance level in eight developing countries, including Bangladesh, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Peru, Papua New Guinea, Zambia and Uganda. In average, the absence rate of elementary school teachers in rural

areas at these countries is at 19%. In Indonesia, in 2008 the absence rate of elementary school teachers reached 14%. This absence rate of teachers in Indonesia is considerably high and needs to be lowered because of its negative impacts on the various education costs' burden, the decline of school discipline and the disruption of student's learning process and learning performance.

Burnout and stress are two concepts with different meanings. Stress occurs when there is an imbalance between demands from its environment and available resources of an individual. On the other hand, burnout occurs from ongoing adaptation process to the disruption arising from long-term imbalance (Brill, In: Cooper and Robertson, 1996). In addition, the effects from stress and burnout are also different. Burnout not only will bring negative effects such as decreased desire for self-achievement but also negative behavior. On the other hand, stress is not only has negative effect but also positive effect. The positive effect of stress is eustress where the stress experienced by an individual is modified into a positive impulse to bring a change into better direction. Distress and burnout are intertwined; distress can lead individuals to burnout. Farber, (1991) reported that work related stress is a significant predictor for teacher's burnout.

Research on teachers in Indonesia shows the result that 30.27% experienced a serious work related stress (high and very high), 48.11% experienced moderate work related stress and 21.62% of teachers experienced less serious stress (Arismunandar, 1997). Various evidences from researches show that the occurrence of burnout is caused by various workloads combined with lack of personal control, inadequate rewards, lack of justice, and conflicting values. The main aspect of burnout is the increased feeling of emotional fatigue. This can happen to teachers as professionals with high-risk of chronic work related stress and feelings of failure due to excessive demand with inadequate rewards (Maslach and Jackson, 1981; Maslach, 1999; Napitupulu, 2002).

Incidences of burnout among teachers bring out myriad of problems for teaching profession. In addition, teachers with burnout are proven to bring negative impact on themselves and their student's achievement. Finally, a teacher with burnout pays no attention to the quality of its students' education.

More often than not, the pressure to improve students' achievement is the responsibility of the teacher. This pressure adds to existing stress and tension of the profession (Maslach et al., 1996). As a symptom of teachers with increased burnout, the students will also experience emotional fatigue. Burnout teachers are more likely to criticize students. Teachers with high burnout rates are less effective in teaching because this can be detrimental to students (Maslach and Leiter, 1996).

In this study, other variables are also used such as social support, job satisfaction, interpersonal communication and self-esteem. Later, we will discuss predictor variables that affect burnout, one by one. One of them is social support needed by teachers in school. The sources for social support are from superiors, co-workers, spouses and friends as well as other forms of social support

such as the willingness to listen, provide attention and direct or tangible assistance such as suggestion or advice. Without social support, a teacher will experience prolonged work related stress that eventually resulted in burnout. Social support makes the individual confident that they are loved and appreciated, therefore reduces burnout symptoms experienced. On the other hand, the lack of social support can create tension and increase the chance of burnout on individuals.

Burnout can directly or indirectly affect the quality of work life in school. According to the researchers, school administrators should be careful about teachers' condition because it is not only related to teacher's burnout and job satisfaction, but also related to how to improve the quality of work life in school. Other consequences of burnout may come in the form of reduced work satisfaction. It means that an individual psychological symptom such as burnout can have negative effect that it decreases that individual's level of job satisfaction therefore increased their level of absence and increased their negligence in work (Sitohang, 2004). There will also a strong tendency to quit the job.

Another factor that could minimize the tendency for burnout is interpersonal communication skill. Teacher's successful attempt on interpersonal communication depends on many aspects, including affection, confidence, self-control, the use of good language and open-mindedness. Similarly, social support, job satisfaction and interpersonal communication require high level of self-esteem to have positive consequences, while low level of self-esteem has the opposite effect. Every teacher with self-esteem believes they are important, despite being in a school and their profession as an educator. They want to be treated as a person with high dignity and have their good personality appreciated. Based on the results of various researches mentioned above, the author is interested to create a more diverse model of theoretical research as one of novelties in research on teacher burnout, and various variable functions such as social support, job satisfaction, interpersonal communication and self-esteem as the novelty will be discussed more in detail on next chapters. Similarly, the use of structural equation model (SEM) is a novelty in this study. In addition, the authors are interested to discuss and study about the occurrence of burnout on junior high school teachers in South Tangerang.

First of all, junior high school teachers are selected as subject of the study because teachers at this level are the ones having most burdens before national exam (UN). The National Exam is a phantom for both teachers and schools. This is because when many students fail the exam, the teacher will be reprimanded by the principal. For the school, the National Exam is a phantom because when a lot of students fail to graduate, then the school's name will be smeared and it will be summoned to Diknas to be held accountable. All of these caused the tiredness on teachers, both physically exhausted and emotional fatigue which are the symptoms of psychological syndrome from burnout.

Therefore, on the basis of above-mentioned considerations and problems, this research is an extension and elaboration of a number of pre-existing researches. This study also conducts tests by using other variables in the hope that it will provide additional empirical

evidence from previous studies on the process of teacher burnout. Thus the above phenomenon can be used as one of the criteria to assess a novelty of a study. Various predictor variables will also be a novelty with a more detailed discussion in the next chapters.

## 2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

Burnout is a psychological tension syndrome when an individual in condition with high emotional engagement demand for long and continuous periods. Teachers' burnout takes place when there is imbalance between resources available and excessive demands. The burnout teachers are overwhelmed by a strong feeling that they cannot achieve the success and always struggling with past failures.

The author chooses to take teachers' profession as research sample because it has tasks with aspects that potentially cause stress, for example disciplinary enforcement, students' apathy, conflicts of interest with parents, and lack of support from the school. The consequences of prolonged and continuous stress may result in burnout appearing in the form of physical symptoms such as emotional difficulties, headaches or increased absenteeism among teachers (Deeter and Ramsey, 1997).

Another finding shows a sample of 63 people with 41 male and 22 female. Work stress measurement done using Burnout Inventory from Maslach with reliability 0,982. The study result proves that there is significant correlation between social support and work stress level. Social support from co-workers also has potential to cause burnout.

The surprising facts of various research results, that the occurrence of burnout are among people who are passionate, energetic, ambitious, and have a strong principle to avoid failure and a worker figure. (Shirom, 1989, Rosse et al., 1991) that burnout is associated with theoretically and empirically structured attributes of self-esteem.

To summarize, the author present theoretical model of the relationship among variables. The relationship between variables tested in the study can be illustrated by a model as follows:

## 3. RESEARCH METHODS

The populations of the study are junior high school teachers located in Tangerang area, in a number of 500 people. The total number of samples is 287 respondents. The study used a purposive sample that is, individuals are selected based on consideration can provide data or information to achieve research objectives. The reason for this sampling method is consideration that not every junior high school teachers are willing to be examined. Data processing uses Lisrel program version 8.7 with SEM.

Data collection uses five instruments in the form of Likert scale with various answer choices consisting of social support scale, job satisfaction scale, interpersonal communication scale, self-esteem scale, and teacher burnout scale. Study instrument using Likert scale with five alternative answers is very appropriate, appropriate, quite appropriate, less appropriate, and not appropriate. As for the teacher burnout scale consists of seven alternative answers.

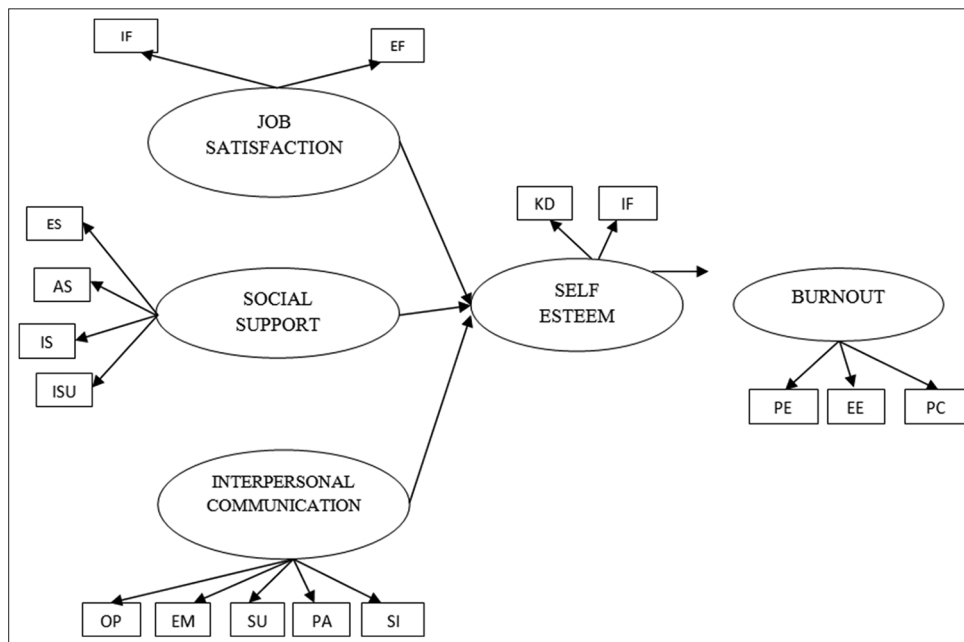
## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on these results, the discussion to clarify and support the study conclusions are described as follows.

### 4.1. Effect of Social Support on Burnout through Self-Esteem

Burnout is a syndrome that contains physical, emotional, mental fatigue symptoms with feelings of low self-esteem resulting from prolonged stress, therefore a reaction is needed to encounter it otherwise physical and psychological disorders will appear. In

Figure 1: Theoretical model



Source: Author's analysis

dealing with pressing problems, individuals need social support. In giving social support, coworkers have the potential to cause burnout (Caputo, 1991; Cherniss, 1980; Maslach, 1982).

According to Caplan, social support that could help the individual in coping with stress, can be (1) aids that could drive psychological ability and overcome emotional disturbance, (2) individual helps to perform the tasks of said individuals who are experiencing stress, (3) other individuals provide material assistance such as money, equipment, skills, and cognitive direction to develop the ability to cope with stress. This explanation reinforces the results of this study that the effect of social support on burnout with self-esteem as mediator is positive and significant. Social support received by teachers from school principals, peers/colleagues and family could help to assist teachers in dealing with stressful situations and reduce the adverse effects of events. Good social support can provide a sense of comfort to the teacher, the feeling of help to alleviate the tasks of his job, give advice, and feel appreciated for the results of his efforts, thus generating energy for the teachers to deal with events at school environment.

#### **4.2. Effect of job satisfaction on burnout through self-esteem**

A person who experiences burnout often reports reduced job satisfaction, physical complaints, especially fatigue, and cognitive performance impairment (Maslach et al, 2001; Schaufeli and Enzmann, 1998; Schmidt et al., 2007; Taris, 2006). Similarly, teachers with burnout will feel dissatisfied at work and experience various physical complaints that will ultimately hinder their teaching. This explanation reinforces the results of the study that effect of job satisfaction on burnout with self-esteem is positive and significant. The findings also support the results of Taris, (2006) which suggest that the higher the intrinsic factor the lower the burnout will be. Similarly, extrinsic factors of job satisfaction, excessive workload, number of individuals to teach (overcrowded class), responsibility, work routines, and administrative work that goes beyond individual capacity and capability. These are factors for burnout incidence. The presence of various demands of tasks and responsibilities requires high concentration, and if the teacher is not capable to handle it well, they will cause burnout which later creates a feeling of dissatisfaction at work and on their work.

If teachers feel important, valuable and influential then they will experience job satisfaction as a teacher because they are successful in their work and the results are optimal. Satisfaction or dissatisfaction achieved at job is one of the consequences. Achieving job satisfaction puts a person into a balanced state or a state of actual ideal self-gap absence (Higgins, 1987).

A person with a high self-esteem will see himself as valuable, capable and acceptable. People with low self-esteem do not feel good about themselves (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2003). If teachers feel important, valuable and influential then they will experience job satisfaction as a teacher because they are successful in their work and the results are optimal thus reducing the occurrence of burnout.

#### **4.3. Effect of Interpersonal Communication on Burnout through Self-Esteem**

In the end teachers has tough task so every year plenty of teachers feel unable to continue their work. The results of a large number of studies on this subject show that some teachers experience exhaustion or fatigue during their careers (Burke and Greenglass, 1996; Friedman, 1996). Burke et al. (1996) said that in the United States burnout teachers have been the topic of national concern (affirmed in 1991 American literature survey by Farber, 1991) concluding that about 5% to 20% of all teachers in the United States will experience burnout at a certain moment in their career. Teachers who fail to cope with stress tend to psychologically avoid or withdraw from their work. The problem with this is if later the body cannot rebuild its ability to cope with stress. According to Leatz and Stolar (1993) if stressful conditions take place over long periods of time with sufficiently high intensity, characterized by physical fatigue, emotional fatigue, and mental fatigue, as the result the teacher will experience burnout symptoms.

As a learner, teachers continuously learn in order to refresh their competence and improve their professional quality. Good interpersonal communication between teachers and superiors, teachers with teachers, and teachers with students, will enable the teaching and learning process to run smoothly and effectively. So, a good interpersonal communication and self-esteem will both reduce the occurrence of burnout in teachers.

#### **4.4. Effect of Self-Esteem on Burnout**

Self-esteem is an evaluation made by individuals and the habit of judging themselves, especially the attitude of accepting, rejecting, and indication of the magnitude of individual confidence in their ability, significance, success, and reward. The results obtained support the theory of Maslach et al. (1981) a person will experience burnout if their self-efficacy is low, their energy lowers, their self-esteem is low, their involvement in work is low and there is emergence of physical and psychological symptoms. If someone has high self-esteem, high work involvement and never experienced physical and psychological symptoms then the person can avoid burnout.

Regarding the aspects of self-esteem, according to Branden (1995) self-esteem has two aspects of self-efficacy (self-efficacy) and the sense of worth (self-respect) that are interconnected.

However, it will be entirely different for teachers with low self-esteem characterized by dissatisfaction with the job, fear of failure, anxious, not confident, resigned, feel less valuable, less useful, not loved, these will create pressure on the teacher. According to Higgins (1987) the pressures will lead to guilt and if it is being questioned for too often, will drain the energy within the individual and resulted in physical, mental and emotional fatigue that can be indicated as burnout. Based on various opinions mentioned above, we could say that teachers with high indication of burnout and low self-esteem may result in symptoms as above.

### **5. CONCLUSION**

- a. Based on the results of data analysis to test the theoretical model that describes the effect of social support, job

satisfaction, interpersonal communication on burnout and self-esteem as mediator, also to test the structural relationship between variables involved in the study, the research findings concluded as follows:

- b. Theoretical model hypothesis is accepted. Thus the influence of social support, job satisfaction and interpersonal communication on burnout with self-esteem as mediator is fit with empirical data.
- c. Social support has significant negative effect on burnout through self-esteem as mediator.
- d. Job satisfaction has significant negative effect on burnout through self-esteem as mediator.
- e. Interpersonal communication has significant negative effect on burnout through self-esteem as mediator.
- f. Self-esteem has a direct, significant, negative effect on burnout.

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