

# BURNOUT IN TEACHING ACTIVITY: EVIDENCE OF A STUDY INVOLVING HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

## *BURNOUT NA ATIVIDADE DOCENTE: EVIDÊNCIAS DE UM ESTUDO ENVOLVENDO INSTITUIÇÕES DE ENSINO SUPERIOR*

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### ABSTRACT

The present research has the objective of investigating a relationship of the social, institutional and emotional aspects with Burnout syndrome incidence in teachers of higher education institutions in the city of Mossoró, RN. We chose a descriptive, quantitative research, and descriptive and inferential statistics, using Pearson's analysis as a statistical technique. A sample was attended by 103 teachers from three higher education institutions in the city of Mossoró. The results showed that among the investigated teachers, 43.7% had high levels of emotional exhaustion, 22.3% manifested levels of depersonalization, and 53.4% pointed of low professional achievement, generally revealing that 41% of respondents are a strong trend towards the development of a syndrome. Regarding correlations, among the analyzed aspects, all evidenced variables that showed a significant correlation. In this way, it can be inferred that the syndrome is multicausal.

**Keywords:** Burnout syndrome; Teaching; Organizations.

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## RESUMO

*A presente pesquisa tem como objetivo investigar a relação dos aspectos pessoais, sociais, institucionais e emocionais com a incidência da síndrome de Burnout em docentes de instituições de ensino superior da cidade de Mossoró, RN. Optou-se pela pesquisa descritiva, de cunho quantitativo, e da estatística descritiva e inferencial, adotando-se como técnica estatística a análise de correlação de Pearson. A amostra contou com a participação de 103 docentes de três instituições de ensino superior da cidade de Mossoró. Os resultados mostraram que dentre os docentes investigados, 43,7% apresentaram altos índices de exaustão emocional, 22,3% manifestaram altos índices de despersonalização e 53,4% apontaram altos índices de baixa realização profissional, revelando, de modo geral, que 41% dos respondentes possuem uma forte tendência para desenvolver a síndrome. Com relação às correlações, dentre os aspectos analisados, todas evidenciaram variáveis que mostraram correlação significativa. Desta forma, pode-se inferir que a síndrome é multicausal.*

**Palavras-chave:** Síndrome de Burnout; Docência; Organizações.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Due to the changes that happened in the modern and globalised world, and which started in the 1990's, work and worker's profiles changed in order to adapt to the technological innovations with the new managerial models of quality that were established. The construction of a new work conception was intensified, which is the result of an increase in pace, task complexity and the responsibilities demanded, thus decreasing the number of jobs and increasing the informal work as a consequence, and bringing more changes in the ways of work and in the health-sickness process factors (ANDRADE; CARDOSO, 2012).

As a consequence, such factors have brought several health problems upon the individuals, such as the Burnout syndrome, which has called the attention of researchers, professionals and the public in general in the last decades all over the world (SCHAUFELI; LEITER; MASLACH, 2009).

According to Maele and Houtte (2015), the investigation on the Burnout phenomenon is rooted in human service professions, like nursing, social service and teaching. Such activities are characterised by high levels of involvement with interpersonal relationships with a heavy load of social responsibility (COTRIN; WAGNER, 2012).

Therefore, teaching, and especially higher teaching, is seen as an activity that is extremely susceptible to acquiring work illnesses. Besides the work pressures per se, other aspects, such as personal, social, professional and emotional, can contribute to the BOS prevalence (CARNEIRO, 2010; CAMPOS, 2008; TIRONI et al., 2010).

This research aims at investigating the relationship between personal, social, institutional and emotional aspects and the Burnout syndrome incidence in teachers of higher education institutions in the city of Mossoró, Brazil. The focus of this study is due to two reasons: first, the negative Burnout effects over teachers may cause problems which involve staff turnover, absenteeism, and decrease in production and in the quality of the services offered, among others (CORDES; DOUGHERTY, 1993); and, second, understanding the topic may lead the organisations to adopt practises which can reduce the syndrome's harmful effects in the work environment.

## 2 THEORETICAL REFERENCE

### 2.1 VIEWS ON BURNOUT

According to Lima da Silva, Dias and Teixeira (2012), the Burnout Syndrome (BOS) is seen as one of today's major psychosocial problems and the result of capitalism, in which the

perspective that comes from production and consumption means are out of control. To them, the current era professional has had less and less leisure and wellness moments outside the work environment with family members and friends due to the pace of work that doesn't match their real limits. As a consequence, stress goes up and the individual reaches a critical level of depletion.

The development of the Burnout term as a psychological phenomenon started in the 1970's in the United States, especially among individuals who had narrow bonds with people (MASLACH, 2003). Droogenbroeck, Spruyt and Vanroelen (2014) describe this phenomenon as a multidimensional construct which is oftentimes seen as the final stage of a chain of reactions linked to chronic occupational stress. Maslach and Goldberg (1998) define it as a type of prolonged reaction linked to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors at the work environment. To these authors, it involves an experience of stress that is the result of social relationships which the individuals are subject to.

Based on studies by Maslach and Jackson (1984), Codo and Vasques-Menezes (2000) see the Burnout syndrome as a multidimensional concept that involves three components: Emotional depletion, Depersonalisation and Lack of personal involvement at work. Emotional depletion refers to the circumstances in which the professionals face limitations in their affective levels when they notice their emotional resources and forces have run out, which is the result of problems experienced in the organisations' daily activities. On the other hand, Depersonalisation is the tendency to awaken negative feelings and behaviours in the recipients of the services offered by professionals, which shows the affective relationships between employee and client are hardened. The lack of personal involvement at work concerns the probability of work performance decline, which affects skills, service and the interaction between users and the organisation.

## **2.2 BURNOUT SYNDROME IN TEACHERS**

Burnout among teachers has been addressed as a serious problem in the teaching institutions worldwide, and understanding the consequences this phenomenon can cause becomes crucial, since it can rebound over motivation, satisfaction, health and longevity in the activities of these professionals (PIETARINEN et al, 2013). In Brazil, despite the theoretical advancements about the relationships between the teachers' work and health, the scientific literature still lacks a lot of information, especially concerning university teachers (ANDRADE; CARDOSO, 2012).

Literature has implied that the Burnout syndrome can lead to a variety of negative impacts, both for the professionals who are attacked by the syndrome and for the organisations which keep them (AWA; PLAUMANN; WALTER, 2010). When it comes to teachers, those who have high levels of burnout syndrome tend to have less friendly relationships with their students, to be less tolerant to interruptions during classes, and are more susceptible to developing health problems and to being less satisfied with their jobs (FERNET et al., 2012; HAKANEN; BAKKER; SCHAUFELI, 2006). Foley and Murphy (2015) highlight that the results of the burnout syndrome affect not only the teachers but also the students and the institution as a whole.

To Reinhold (2002), the Burnout syndrome doesn't happen suddenly; it starts with simple warning signals which, when unnoticed, tend to lead the teachers to an anguish sensation upon knowing they need to go to the institution to work. Overtime, these professionals can be affected by a series of symptoms, such as alienation, dehumanisation, apathy, insomnia, gastritis, menstrual flow alterations, allergies, headaches, palpitations, high blood pressure, and abusive use of medications and alcohol (ANDRADE; CARDOSO, 2012).

Once the discomfort sets in, the teachers can present the following consequences as a result of the Burnout syndrome, according to studies by Esteve (1999, p. 78): a) feelings of

disharmony and dissatisfaction that are the results of teaching problems and which go against the work's ideal picture the education professionals would like to have; b) relocation requests as a way to escape from conflicting situations; c) an expressed desire to quit teaching; d) absence from work as an instrument to cut down the tension accumulated; e) depletion and permanent physical tiredness.

### **2.3 BURNOUT SYNDROME BACKGROUND**

Carneiro (2010) divides these factors into five aspects: personal, social, functional, institutional and emotional. To Koch et al. (2009), the Burnout syndrome in teachers, specifically, is strongly associated to two main factors: organisational and personal. Such authors also emphasise that it is within the personal aspect that the main protections against stress can develop.

The personal aspects involve personality features, such as stress resilience, the level of self-esteem and self-confidence, the expectation level the individuals place on their profession, the individuals' level of control and submission (WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO), 1998). Tironi et al. (2009) add that these personal features, generally speaking, involve age, schooling and marital status.

The social aspects, in turn, concern the lack of social and family support; attention to cultural values and norms, among others (WHO, 1998). Following the same train of thought, Tironi et al. (2009) state that these social characteristics involve all the family and cultural support. As for the institutional factors, WHO (1998) highlights that these factors can also be called organisational and/or functional aspects. In this sense, the organisational factors involve excessive and strict norms, lack of autonomy, frequent norm alterations, suspicion among the team members, a non-efficient communication, lack of recognition, problems related to situations in the physical structure of the work environment, and excess of professional positions assigned to the individual, among others. Tironi et al. (2009) explain that this aspect concerns the organisational characteristics such as physical environment, policies and norms, and organisational communication, among others.

Concerning the emotional aspects, Carneiro (2010) explains they are related to psychological factors. The author states that these aspects can influence work performance, recognition, autonomy, stress feeling, distress and nervousness, and a desire to change professions.

### **3 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES**

For this work there was a choice for the descriptive, quantitative research that used the descriptive and inferential statistics by the generation of variables by BOS constructs. From the constructs generated, there was the Pearson correlation analysis with the objective to reach the research's goal. Choosing teachers who taught classes on Administration, Law and Accounting in three higher education institutions in the city of Mossoró, state of Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil, was the sample selection criterion.

The research's sample was probabilistic and its size was calculated through an equation suggested by Barbetta (2004). In this case, by using the sample's first approximation equation, it would be necessary to apply a minimum of 100 questionnaires. This research was able to reach 103 respondents. Elaborated by Carneiro (2010) and adapted by the authors, the Social Functioning Questionnaire (SFQ) was used with the objective to better meet this research's purpose. The statements aim at identifying dimensions such as personal, social, institutional and emotional aspects of the university teachers. The questionnaire was adapted to the local reality and contains

37 objective and subjective questions, six of which refer to personal aspects, 8 to social aspects, 17 to institutional aspects and 6 concerning emotional character.

In order to enable the correlational analysis, the MBI-ED (Maslach Burnout Inventory “Educators Survey-Es”) questionnaire was adopted. This questionnaire was validated in Brazil by the Centre for Studies and Research on Burnout (NEPASB) from the University of Maringá, Brazil. It aims at evaluating the individuals in their work environment by considering three dimensions: emotional depletion (9 items); depersonalisation (5 items); and low personal work accomplishment (8 items). The answers were portrayed through a Likert-type frequency scale ranging from 0 to 6, where 0 means ‘never’ and 6 means ‘every day’.

Concerning the MBI-ED validation, the tool has the following Cronbach’s alphas among the dimensions: Emotional Depletion (0,88); Low Professional Achievement (0,82); Depersonalisation (0,58).

By definition, high numbers of emotional depletion and depersonalisation and low results of professional achievement show the individual has BOS (CARNEIRO, 2010). Table 1 shows the scores that measure what was established as high, moderate and low level in relation to the three dimensions.

**Table 1** - BOS dimensions and levels.

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>High Level</b>	<b>Moderate Level</b>	<b>Low Level</b>
<b>Emotional Depletion</b>	≥ 27	19 – 26	< 19
<b>Depersonalisation</b>	≥ 10	6 – 9	< 6
<b>Low Professional Achievement</b>	0 – 33	34 – 39	≥ 40

Source: elaborated by the authors (2016).

For data collection, which took place in the second semester of 2015, the questionnaires were applied on-site and the teachers were approached during class breaks or in classes in the institution departments. It became evident that personal identification in the forms (such as name) would not be necessary, thus making the research confidential.

Concerning data processing after all the questionnaires were collected, all the questions were codified and tabulated in the Excel software. Data processing in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences – SPSS software, version 18.0, was the next step. As such, the next section will present all the results obtained and their interpretations.

## 4 RESULTS’ ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Out of the 103 teachers who took part in the research, most of them are males (52,9%). The interviewees’ average age is 35, 49% have children, 78,8% live in the city where they work, and 13,5% work in more than one institution. Most hold a Master’s degree as their highest certification (62,5%) and have been working in the institution for 5 years; 45,2% consider their salary as good, and 33,7% claim the organisation where they work invests little in their quality of life; 55,8% consider the physical area of work good for the development of their activities, and 53,8% describe their relationship with students as good.

About the interference of their workload in their personal life, 63,5% of the respondents believe there is some influence; 51,0% feel their job is recognised; 85,6% state they have work autonomy; 43,3% claim to be casually stressed, distressed and anxious in their work environment, and 39,4% stated they feel dissatisfied with some factors, such as subject overload, lack of recognition and university support, time wasted with bureaucratic activities and lack of a good physical structure. When questioned if they would change profession if they could restart their

career, 16,3% answered affirmatively. The research showed that 8,7% of the interviewees use some kind of continuous-use medication.

#### **4.1 THE BURNOUT SYNDROME INCIDENCE LEVEL**

According to Carneiro (2010), the Burnout syndrome development first goes through the emotional depletion dimension, followed by the depersonalisation dimension and then the low professional achievement. The Burnout syndrome diagnosis is made through high scores in emotional depletion and depersonalisation and low scores in the professional achievement dimension.

Among the teachers investigated, the results showed that 43,7% presented high levels of emotional depletion, 22,3% showed high levels of depersonalisation, and 53,4% showed high levels of low professional achievement. Codo and Vasques-Menezes (2000) stated that high scores in the dimensions can cause a decrease in work performance, affecting the skills, the service and the interaction of the professionals investigated with students and with the organisation.

From analysing the mean of the three dimensions that cause the Burnout syndrome, it can be stated that 41,0% of the interviewees are highly prone to developing the syndrome, and this is a very expressive number, considering the sample size. This number represents a serious problem for the teaching institutions, for it can reflect on the teachers' motivation, satisfaction, health and longevity at work (PIETARINEN et al., 2013). It can also affect not only teachers, but students and the organisation as a whole (FOLEY; MURPHY, 2015).

A study by Carlotto (2011) with 882 teachers from public and private schools in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil, showed less alarming levels. In the study, the results highlight only 5,6% of the teachers with a high level of emotional depletion, 0,7% with depersonalisation, and 28,9% with low professional achievement.

#### **4.2 CORRELATION BETWEEN THE BURNOUT SYNDROME PREDECESSORS AND ITS PREVALENCE**

The following step analysed the correlation between each one of the variables (personal, social, institutional and emotional aspects) and the three Burnout syndrome dimensions collected for this research. For such, the Person coefficient ( $r$ ) was calculated. This analysis only considered the coefficients that reached a reliability index higher than 90%, which is equal to  $p \leq 0,10$ , and higher than 95%, which is equal to  $p \leq 0,05$ .

Table 2, below, presents the following results.

**Table 2** – Correlation between the aspects and their respective variables and the BOS dimensions in teachers.

Aspects	Variables	Emotional Depletion	Low Professional Achievement	Depersonalisation
Personal	Age	-0,202	0,181	-0,266*
	Lives with spouse or children	0,379	0,313	-0,543**
Social	Years of service	0,220*	-0,218*	0,334**
	Income participation	-0,538**	-0,365**	0,269**
	Number of students	-0,237*	0,113	-0,156
Institutional	Number of classes	0,139	-0,160	0,317**
	Works in another institution	-0,524**	0,239*	-0,292**
	Homework hours	0,348**	-0,410**	0,306**
	Institution contributes to the teaching method	0,924	-0,256*	0,163
	Physical environment	0,399**	-0,257*	0,226*
Emotional	Has autonomy	-0,450**	0,338**	-0,059

\*Meaningful correlation with a significance level of 0,01

\*\*Meaningful correlation with a significance level of 0,05

Concerning the “personal” aspects of the teachers analysed, the Pearson coefficients showed that the variable “age” presented a meaningful negative correlation ( $r = -0,266$ ) only for the “depersonalisation” dimension. It can be inferred that the higher the age, the lower depersonalisation would be. According to Carlotto (2011), the younger the person, the deeper the distancing feeling of people with which the teacher has to relate to at work. This way, a teacher who is older can be more prepared and mature to lead a teaching activity that is sensitive to the relationships with students, colleagues and to the organisation in general.

As for the “social” aspects, the variable “lives with spouse and/or children” showed a meaningful negative correlation to the “depersonalisation” dimension ( $r = -0,543$ ). This number shows that the fact the teacher lives with the spouse and/or children would decrease the chances of developing depersonalisation. To Carlotto (2011), family life can generate positive experiences which deal with different people and problems, allowing the individuals more patience and balance to handle adversities. This can explain why these teachers tend to have more friendly relationships in the organisational environment.

The variable “years of service” correlated to all the other BOS dimensions. For the emotional depletion dimension, there is a positive correlation ( $r = 0,220$ ), which means that the more years of service of a profession in the institution, the higher the tendency to develop emotional depletion would be. The depersonalisation dimension also showed a positive correlation ( $r = 0,334$ ), that is, the more years of service a teacher has, the higher the chances to develop depersonalisation. For the low professional achievement dimension, the correlation was negative ( $r = -0,218$ ), which means that the longer the service time, the more unlikely the investigated teachers would be to have a low professional achievement.

These results support the studies by Williams and Dikes (2015), who stated that, as the working hours increase in an organisation, the physical and mental problems follow the individuals in their journeys. This factor contributes to understanding that there is a tendency to high emotional deterioration and high depersonalisation in the teachers concerning the service time fulfilled. However, when a professional feels their work has been standing out over time, which results in their stay in the organisation for years, in times when personnel turnover during the economic crisis that is affecting the country is a more and more present reality, this teacher could feel more fulfilled due to seeing that the institution believes in their work.

The “income participation” variable presented negative correlations to the “emotional depletion” ( $r = -0,538$ ) and “low professional achievement” ( $r = -0,365$ ) dimensions, and a positive correlation to “depersonalisation” ( $r = 0,269$ ). This means that the more the teacher participates in the family income, the lower the chances to develop emotional depletion and low professional achievement would be. However, the chances to develop depersonalisation would increase. It can be assumed that, even if the financial help at home may bring benefits, such as good emotional health and the sensation of being useful and adding values as a member of the family, this willingness will not always come up spontaneously, which can lead to conflicts and stress in the family environment and, in turn, cause problems even in these professionals’ relationships with students and colleagues in the institution where they work.

As for the “institutional” aspects, the “number of students” variable showed a meaningful negative correlation to the “emotional depletion” variable ( $r = -0,237$ ). This means that the higher the number of students, the lower the chances the individual has to develop emotional depletion. This finding goes against the literature on the theme, in which Carlotto (2010) states that, the higher the workload, the number of students and the teaching time, the deeper the emotional depletion feeling.

As a reflection related to the result at hand, it can be assumed that, during practise, the teacher could have developed skills to deal with a high number of students, since this technique to raise the number of students in the classroom has been practised in the last 20 years and the new teachers came into teaching with this new format. Another possibility could be the fact that the good students balance the classroom environment by bringing satisfaction to the teachers.

Based on the “number of classes”, this variable is significantly correlated to the “depersonalisation” dimension, which means that the higher the number of classes, the higher the chances for the teacher to develop depersonalisation. This result supports the researches by Lopes and Pontes (2009), which show these professionals tend to deal with colleagues and students coldly and impersonally.

The variable “works in another institution” also presented relevant numbers with a correlation to the “emotional depletion” ( $r = -0,524$ ), “low professional achievement” ( $r = 0,239$ ) and “depersonalisation” ( $r = -0,292$ ) dimensions. These numbers show that the teacher who works in more than one institution has fewer chances to develop emotional depletion and depersonalisation, and higher chances to have a low professional achievement.

One of the variables which can lead a professional to search for work in another organisation is the institution’s pay when it is not enough for their basic daily needs. The fact of not being materially well recognised can bring a feeling of low professional achievement in this professional. Whether it is due to financial issues or to another reason, and when supplied by another institution the teacher starts working for, this extra pay can alleviate possible emotional deterioration and problems in dealing with students and colleagues this professional may have developed at the work environment. This can explain the results achieved by the correlations among working in another institution with the BOS dimensions presented.

Concerning the variable “homework hours”, it can be stated that this variable presented a correlation to all the BOS dimensions, “emotional depletion”, “low professional achievement” and “depersonalisation” ( $r = 0,348$ ;  $r = 0,225$ ; and  $r = -0,303$ , respectively). This means that the more the individual works at home, the higher the chances to have emotional depletion and depersonalisation, and the lower the chances to have a low professional achievement. These numbers can be explained by the build-up of tiredness and by the working hours in the organisation added up to those worked at home, which triggers higher levels of emotional strain and can also impact on the way these professionals will deal with their family members, students, bosses and colleagues, as well as on their professional achievement.



On “Institution contributes to the teaching method”, this variable presents a significant negative correlation to the “low professional achievement” dimension ( $r = -0,256$ ). This means, in other words, that if the institution contributes to the teaching methods, the chances the teacher has to develop a low professional achievement will be lower.

The last variable that refers to the “institutional” aspect, and which presented any correlation, was “physical environment”, which is related to the “emotional depletion” ( $r = 0,399$ ), “low professional achievement” ( $r = -0,257$ ), and “depersonalisation” ( $r = 0,226$ ) dimensions. These findings allow us to infer that, the more an organisation invests in the physical environment, the higher the chances the teachers will have to develop emotional depletion and depersonalisation, and the lower the chances to develop a low professional achievement. A research carried out by Sá, Martins-Silva and Funchal (2014) with 52 nurses in a public hospital in South-eastern Brazil presented a different result concerning the “emotional depletion” dimension, which showed that, the lower the satisfaction about the physical environment, the more likely these professionals would be to develop Emotional Depletion.

At first, the fact of Emotional Depletion increasing in an appropriate physical environment seems contradictory. However, a deeper analysis allows us to assume this deterioration in the teacher may be due to the fact they feel a lot is expected from them and they have more responsibilities to meet their expectations, and the fact they have all the favourable physical settings at their disposal. That is, there are no obstacles to keep them from giving their best. When a professional has all the material settings at work, the expectation about them grows and, thus, there is a higher demand over them and over themselves. As the emotional depletion increases, so does the tendency of these teachers to deal with users and colleagues in a less friendly way.

Concerning the “emotional” aspects of the teachers researched, the Pearson coefficients measured showed that the “has autonomy” variable is correlated to the “emotional depletion” and “low professional achievement” dimensions ( $r = -0,450$ ,  $r = 0,338$ , respectively). This way, the statistical evidences showed that the autonomous teachers have lower chances to feel emotionally depleted, and higher chances to feel a low professional achievement. The latter aspect differs from the results presented in a research by Lorenz and Guirardello (2014) with 287 nurses in basic public healthcare centres in a Brazilian town, which implied that, the lower the perception on autonomy, the less frequent personal achievement would be.

The results found for this variable can be justified by the following thought: having autonomy denotes having freedom, which increases an individual’s responsibility and capability to take on the results of their acts. In private higher education institutions, for example, this autonomy oftentimes happens relatively, since the teacher is evaluated by the boss and by the student, hereby called “client”. In case the teachers don’t have a positive evaluation, they may lose their jobs. This issue can create pressures in the work environment which will lead these professionals to feel less fulfilled professionally. Dejours (1999) emphasises that it is important to pay attention to every circumstance where the teachers’ job is performed nowadays.

## 5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research aimed at investigating the relationship of personal, social, institutional and emotional aspects with the occurrence of the Burnout syndrome in teachers of higher education institutions in the city of Mossoró, Brazil. Overall, it can be stated that a significant number of teachers investigated are prone to developing the Burnout syndrome. In short, considering each dimension solely, and concerning emotional depletion, some of the variables that presented a

significant correlation to a significance level which is equal to or higher than 90% were “years of service in the institution”, “family income participation”, “number of students”, “works in another institution”, “homework hours”, “physical environment” and “has autonomy”.

As for depersonalisation, the variables which presented a considerable significance level were “years of service in the institution”, “family income participation”, “works in another institution”, “homework hours”, “institution contributes to the teaching methods”, “physical environment” and “has autonomy”.

Concerning the “low professional achievement” dimension, the significant variables were “age”, “lives with spouse and/or children”, “years of service”, “family income participation”, “number of classes”, “works in another institution”, “homework hours” and “physical environment”.

Such results only highlight that the syndrome doesn’t involve only labour factors going through features of the external environment but also characteristics that are intrinsic to the individual. This way, the research brought in the awareness that the burnout syndrome could be multi-casual and relates to variables such as personal, social, institutional and emotional. By being aware of such results, the higher education organisations will be able to proceed actively in certain determinants mentioned as the main responsible aspects for the development of the burnout syndrome.

Although this work brings in some contributions, the present research had some limitations which should be highlighted, such as the fact it was carried out only among teachers from the Administration, Accounting and Law School areas, and didn’t cover other programs in the institution. Moreover, attributes such as the individuals’ personality traits were not addressed and these variables could actively interfere in the Burnout process. However, none of these restrictions mentioned neglect this research’s worth.

Facing the limitations above, here is a suggestion that future works should be carried out. Considering the fact the SPSS software was one of the most appropriate resources to reach this research’s objective, other statistical analyses should be performed with the use of this database, as in the regression analysis. New researches could address other areas and a higher number of teachers in such institutions with the objective to reach a more expressive data result.

Another recommendation is that new studies should be carried out in a way that widens the literature and the understanding on BOS in teachers and in other professional classes. It must also be mentioned that studies comparing the different occupational groups should be performed.

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#### Contribution of authors

Contribution	[Author 1]	[Author 2]	[Author 3]	[Author 4]
1. Definition of research problem	√	√	√	
2. Development of hypotheses or research questions (empirical studies)	√		√	
3. Development of theoretical propositions (theoretical work)	√	√	√	
4. Theoretical foundation / Literature review			√	
5. Definition of methodological procedures	√			
6. Data collection			√	
7. Statistical analysis	√			
8. Analysis and interpretation of data	√			√
9. Critical revision of the manuscript		√		√
10. Manuscript writing	√		√	
11. Choice of journal and submission	√	√	√	