

## *Teachers' Characteristics, Teacher Burnout and Motivation to Leave*

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### **Abstract**

A lack of teachers especially vocational field is one of the most important problem of Thai education. The report from the Office of Vocational Education Commission 2019 revealed that Public vocational institutions lack teachers around 18,846 persons. There are many factors affects to teachers' retention such as welfare, stability, job position and burnout. This research aimed to study the variables correlate motivation to leave of vocational teachers such as teachers' characteristics (age, gender, position) and teacher burnout. Questionnaire used in this study including 3 parts; 22 items of Burnout Inventory in teachers adopted from Maslasch's (1981), 3 items of motivation to leave adopted from Skaalvik (2011) and teacher demographic such as age, gender, position. In this study, data were collected by 424 vocational teachers (from 10 provinces in metropolitan, north, northeast, east and south of Thailand. The results showed that position of teacher and burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment) were correlated with motivation to leave while age and gender were not. Moreover, age of teachers correlated with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization whilst teachers' position correlated only depersonalization. It was recommended that Ministry of Education should consider about policy for teachers in each position which got different welfare and should support early career teachers to retain in their profession.

Keywords: Teachers' Characteristics, Teacher Burnout, Motivation to Leave

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## **Introduction**

Vocational teachers are an important force in Thailand now which are facing a problem of teacher shortage of many rates. From the report of Vocational Education Commission 2019 showed that Public vocational institutions lack teachers around 18,846 persons. This is partly due to the retired teachers and other reasons for the lack of teachers for example teachers mismatched the field of teaching or under qualified, problems with heavy workload make teachers want to quit their profession, lack of support from colleagues and administrators or position and welfare disparities. When we aimed to focus on in-service teachers why they want to leave profession or change their career. Burnout is one important factor that might cause this issue. As Brunsting et.al (2014) said the outcomes of burnout associated with teacher attrition, teacher health issues, and negative student outcomes. Some studies showed that teacher with burnout affects to personal health, education systems and environments. Teachers who feel higher levels of burnout report to be more stressed, less effective in teaching and classroom management, less connected to their students and dissatisfied with their work. (Aloe et al., 2014, Brouwers and Tomic, 2000). In addition, they study about factor that might be cause of burnout which are cortisol levels due to age, gender, and time of awaking, higher morning cortisol levels in students could be significantly predicted from higher burnout levels in classroom teachers as well (Oberle and Reichl, 2016). From the reason of the above, it shows how important to investigate teacher burnout especially in Thailand which face the problem about lack of teachers and burnout might be cause of this issue.

In context of vocational teachers in Thailand who work for government college, they have a hierarchy which separate position of teachers into three types which are government officer, employee of government and temporary officer. The other two types which are employee of government teachers and temporary officer teachers have got difference welfare and support while doing the same duties as government officer teacher. So, this study aimed to investigate the variables correlate motivation to leave profession of vocational teachers such as teachers' characteristics (age, gender, position) and teacher burnout. This research may help the administrators and Ministry of Education to look back and consider about the significant of teachers' development and how to retain teachers by support their emotional issues.

## **Literature Review**

### *Burnout*

Burnout concept was begun in the early 1970's via the ideas of Herbert Freudenberger in New York and Christina Maslach and Ayala Pines in California. Burnout is used to describe a stress-related syndrome. The definition of burnout is defined by Maslach and Jackson (1981) conceptualized burnout as composed of three distinct factors: emotional exhaustion described as loss of energy, depletion, impairment and fatigue, depersonalization is a negative change in attitudes and responses toward others, and lack of feeling of accomplishment dimension lends negative responses to personal

accomplishments typified by depression, low morale, interpersonal withdrawal, reduce performance.

Teacher burnout is the feeling of dissatisfied with responsibilities of teaching. Teacher burnout can lead to uninspired to keep going in profession and emotional drain (Bessman et.al, 2018). Burnout is one of symptom that effect to teacher profession.

### *Motivation to leave profession*

In 2016, the data was collected from 523 Norwegian teachers in senior high school. It reported that two main routes to teachers' motivation to leave the profession were 1) time pressure via emotional stress and exhaustion to motivation to quit and 2) lack of supervisory support and trust, low student motivation and value conflicts via lower self-efficacy and lower engagement to intention to quit (Skaalvik & Skaalvik,2016). For other reasons why teachers left teaching profession, the study reported that 160 Australian primary and secondary teachers with lower job satisfaction demonstrated a strong intention to leave the teaching profession (Arnup and Bowles,2016).

### *Teacher burnout and motivation to leave teaching profession*

For the study about teacher burnout and intention to quit profession, there was report from 112 Australian teachers working in their first or second academic year. There is a correlation between serious intentions to leave the teaching profession and burnout levels reported by teachers who are at the beginning of their teaching careers (Goddard and Goddard, 2006). Moreover, In the study of Leung and Lee (2006) reported that 379 teachers which provided data on the associations among social support, burnout, and intention to quit. Results confirmed by using Structure Equation Model that the three components of burnout demonstrated differently on intention to quit, with emotional exhaustion as the dominant factor, while the other two components exerted no effect. A study in academic comprising of lecturers in Turkey indicated that there are positive and significant relationships between emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and intention to leave, there is no significant relationship between personal accomplishment and intention to leave (Altunoğlu and Sarpkaya,2012).

## **Research question**

1) What are the variables that correlate to motivation to leave of vocational teachers such as teachers' characteristics (age, gender, position) and teacher burnout?

## **Methodology**

The population size of this study were 29,915 teachers in vocational college. The data were collected 424 vocational teachers in Thailand. The participants included both male 204 (48.1%) and female 220 (51.9%) vocational teachers. The ages of the teachers ranged from 23 to 60 years and the mean age of the participants was 38.3 years. 25.9% of the teachers were in the age less than 30 years (n = 110). 38.7% of the teachers were between

31 and 40 years of age (n = 164). 19.8% were between the age range of 41 to 49 years (n = 84) and 15.6% were between the age range of 51 to 60 years (n = 66). The data was collected from teachers in 5 areas; 30.4% from metropolitan area including Bangkok (n = 129), 21.2% from north area (n = 90), 25.2% from northeast area (n = 107), 11.6% from east area (n = 49) and 11.6% from south area (n = 49). There were three positions of teachers shown in this study; 48.3% from government officer (n = 205), 17.7% from employee of government (n = 75), 34% from temporary officer (n = 144).

Questionnaire used in this study including 3 parts; 22 items of Burnout Inventory in teachers adopted from Maslach's (1981) translated into Thai version which divided into 3 constructs which were emotional exhaustion e.g. "I feel emotionally drained from my work.", depersonalization e.g. "I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal objects.", personal accomplishment e.g. "I can easily understand how my students feel about things". All questions had 7 scales (0 = Never 1 = A few times a year or less 2 = Once a month or less 3 = A few times a month 4 = Once a week 5 = A few times a week 6 = Every day). For emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, high mean scores correspond to higher degrees of burnout. In contrast to another subscale, lower mean scores on personal accomplishment correspond to a higher degree of burnout.

*Table 1.* Response Categories for Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment on the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators' Survey

Response Category	Emotional Exhaustion	Depersonalization	Personal Accomplishment
High	27 and over	13 and over	1-31
Moderate	17 - 26	7-12	32-38
Low	0-16	0-6	39 and over

For motivation to leave profession, there were 3 items adopted from Skaalvik (2011) with 5 scales (5 = Strongly agree 4 = Agree 3 = Unsure 2 = Disagree 1 = Strongly disagree) e.g. "I often think of leaving the teacher profession". And the last part were teacher demographic such as age, gender, position. For mean, standard deviation and Cronbach Alpha have shown in table 2.

*Table 2.* Items and reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha)

	Item	Cronbach Alpha
Emotional Exhaustion	9	0.94
Depersonalization	5	0.87
Personal accomplishment	8	0.86
Attention to leave profession	3	0.87

## Results

*Table 3.* Mean score and standard deviation of variables (Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, Personal accomplishment and motivation to leave profession)

		Emotional Exhaustion		Depersonalization		Personal Accomplishment		Motivation to leave profession	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Gender	Male	18.03	0.25	6.63	0.24	38.44	0.47	2.32	1.14
	Female	17.41	0.45	5.21	0.21	39.94	0.47	2.39	1.16
Age	< 30 years	19.79	0.36	6.44	0.24	38.09	0.44	2.41	1.17
	31 - 40 years	18.33	0.39	6.95	0.23	39.79	0.56	2.50	1.17
	41 - 50 years	14.61	0.23	4.54	0.26	38.69	0.45	2.17	1.12
	> 50 years	16.65	0.44	4.07	0.26	40.33	0.37	2.20	1.10
Position	Government officer	17.86	0.44	4.45	0.22	39.85	0.43	2.20	1.08
	Employee of government	18.77	0.20	8.13	0.20	37.52	0.62	2.65	1.23
	Temporary officer	16.90	0.33	6.78	0.29	39.19	0.46	2.44	1.17

Note. The numerical values for the personal accomplishment subscale are reversed. A score of less than 32 on the personal accomplishment sub-scale indicates a high degree of personal accomplishment.

From table 3 shows the differences level of perception about subscales in burnout between gender, age and position. In terms of gender, it shows that emotional exhaustion in male is slightly higher than female (mean = 18.03, SD = 0.25/ mean 17.41, SD = 0.45). Depersonalization in male is higher than female (mean = 6.63, SD = 0.24/ mean = 5.21, SD = 0.21). For reduced personal accomplishment, male is higher than female (mean = 38.44, SD = 0.47/ mean = 39.94, SD = 0.47). It indicates that both male and female got emotional exhaustion in moderate level but depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment in low level. intention to leave profession in female is slightly higher than male (mean = 2.39, SD = 1.16/ mean = 2.32, SD = 1.14). In terms of age, high score of emotional exhaustion is age under 30 years old (mean = 19.79, SD = 0.36) and age of 31-40 years old (mean = 18.33, SD = 0.39). It demonstrates that these 2 ranges of age are in moderate level of emotional exhaustion. It corresponds to depersonalization that both age group of under 30 and 31- 40 years old are in high score (mean = 6.44, SD = 0.24/ mean = 6.95, SD = 0.23) when compare with other two groups of age but it is still in low level. For reduced personal accomplishment, it shows the age under 30 years old is in high level. Besides, age of 31- 40 years old shows the highest score of intention to leave the profession (mean = 2.50, SD = 1.17). In terms of position, the result indicates that employee of government had the highest score in every aspects in burnout (emotional exhaustion mean = 18.77, SD = 0.20/ depersonalization mean = 8.13, SD = 0.20 and reduced personal accomplishment mean = 37.52, SD = 0.52). All aspects are in moderate level of burnout. Moreover, the employee of government shows the highest score in motivation to leave profession as well (mean = 2.65, SD = 1.23).

Table 4. Pearson's correlation coefficients of any variables

	Gender	Age	Position	Emotional Exhaustion	Depersonalization	Personal accomplishment	Motivation to leave profession
Gender	1	-.075	.118*	.022	.093	-.086	.030
Age		1	-.579**	-.105*	-.127**	.061	-.089
Position			1	-.027	.146**	-.040	.103*
Emotional Exhaustion				1	.666**	-.043	.387**
Depersonalization					1	-.140**	.441**
Personal accomplishment						1	-.326**
Motivation to leave profession							1

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).  
 \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From table 4 Correlation coefficient between age and emotional exhaustion shows negative correlations at the significant of 0.01 meanwhile age and depersonalization shows negative correlation at the significant of 0.05. It corresponds to table 3 shows that when age of participants increased, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization got lower scores. In terms of position, it shows positive correlation with depersonalization at the significant level of 0.05 and motivation to leave profession at 0.01. For subscales of burnout in this study show that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization had positive correlation with intention to leave profession at the significant level of 0.05. Besides, personal accomplishment demonstrates negative correlation with intention to leave profession at the significant level of 0.05.

## Conclusions

This research aimed to study the variables that correlate motivation to leave in vocational teachers such as teachers' characteristics and teacher burnout. The results reported that correlation coefficient between age and emotional exhaustion shows negative correlations at the significant of 0.01 meanwhile age and depersonalization shows negative correlation at the significant of 0.05. It means when the age of teachers increased, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization decreased. It assumed that when teachers were in higher age, they had more maturity and can cope their stress or situation that effected to their emotion. This study did not correspond to the result of Bayani et.al. (2013) that teachers had level of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization in differences age and it did not show the same direction. In terms of position, it correlated to depersonalization and motivation to leave profession. It can assume that position of vocational teachers in Thailand effects to their feeling of negative change in attitudes and responses toward others. When we see in table 4, it showed that the position of employee of government had the highest score of depersonalization and motivation to leave profession. It mentioned that the administrators or government should focus on this position which got the differences allowance and support. Followed by position of temporary officer which had the lowest allowance when compare with other two positions. In addition, the results reported that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization had positive correlation with intention to leave profession. Besides, personal accomplishment demonstrates negative correlation with intention to leave profession. It did not correspond to the study of Altunoğlu and Sarpkaya (2012) that there are positive and significant relationships

between emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and intention to leave, there is no significant relationship between personal accomplishment and intention to leave.

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