

# Self-efficacy and Social Support Predicting Job Burnout of Teachers

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**Abstract:** The purposes of this research are: 1. to study the level of self-efficacy, social support, and job burnout in Thai teachers; 2. to study the relationship between self-efficacy and job burnout in teachers; 3. to study the relationship between social support and job burnout in teachers; 4. to predict job burnout with self-efficacy and social support. The research sample was 185 Thai teachers, and the research instrument was a questionnaire. Statistics used were frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, Pearson's correlation coefficients, and stepwise multiple regression analysis.

The results revealed that 1. Self-efficacy and social support were at high levels and job burnout was at a low level; 2. There was a negative relationship between self-efficacy and job burnout of teachers ( $r = -.381, p < 0.01$ ); 3. There was a negative relationship between social support and job burnout of teachers ( $r = -.475, p < 0.01$ ); and 4. Self-efficacy and social support accounted for 28.6 percent of variance in job burnout of teachers.

**Keywords:** Self-efficacy, Social Support, Job Burnout

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## Introduction

Education is the most important tool for developing quality of life of people in society, since it is generally accepted that if people in society have enough good quality education, academic institutions would be at the heart of production of a sustainable development economy. Sustainable development production would then produce graduates to be delivered into the system by producing efficient human resources. Or it could be said that the efficiency of human resources definitely depend upon the efficiency of education management. Therefore, teachers become the most important factor in the system (Malakul, 1975). Currently, teaching in Thailand is one of the careers that are being affected by change. While the economy is seen as being in a downturn, living expenses are nevertheless rising. Yet, the salaries of teachers remain low. Because they do not have sufficient income or enough assets, they are typically taking on a lot of debt. As a consequence, they have to earn more money

from other part-time jobs while teaching at the same time for a better life. Working so hard on responsible jobs while having to face personal problems makes teachers feel upset, disappointed, confused or unstable, worried, and stressed. Finally, all these feelings combined can lead to the development of burnout.

Burnout is one problem which can happen to people who work in many service careers, and a teaching career is one of those. Maslach (1986) explained that burnout is a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Pfifferling (1984) has stated that to prevent burnout from happening, people have to perceive their own self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is related to their belief in their capabilities to succeed in specific situations or accomplish tasks. People's belief in their own self-efficacy can play a major role in controlling situations which affects their own lives and how they approach goals, tasks, and challenges (Bandura, 1989). Furthermore, they should have good social support and good friends or people close to them who can be trusted, who can encourage them to keep behaviors which can reduce the likelihood of burnout occurring (Cobb, 1976).

According to all the above information, researchers have found that perceived self-efficacy and social support have a relationship with the prevention of burnout in teachers, who are the key academic human resource important to Thai society. Because, when teachers have perceived self-efficacy and receive social support, their burnout which can occur as a result of their job responsibilities, will be reduced. And these can therefore be used as moderator predictor variables of job burnout. Moreover, the results of this study should be useful for reducing burnout of Thai teachers.

### Research Objectives

1. To study the level of perceived self-efficacy, social support, and job burnout of Thai teachers.
2. To measure the relationship between perceived self-efficacy and job burnout of teachers.
3. To measure the relationship between social support and job burnout of teachers.
4. To predict job burnout of teachers from perceived self-efficacy and social support.

### Literature Review

Teacher efficacy is a teacher's belief or conviction that they can influence how well students learn, even those who may be considered difficult or unmotivated, by believing that they can control their own behaviors (Guskey and Passaro, 1994). The theory of teacher efficacy is from Bandura's concept (1977) about self-efficacy which determines the capability of a teacher in terms of perceived self-efficacy. It is the process of humans learning to build beliefs on working capability in the determined level.

Teacher efficacy includes two types (Tschannen-Moran *et al.*, 1988): General teaching efficacy (GTE) means the teacher believes that motivation and capability of student depend on environment of student which covers any control of teacher will be used in school such as conflicts, violence, problems from home or society including economy, nationality, gender or physical conditions, emotion or need of perception. Teacher will believe in these external environment's power when compare to influence of teacher and school. Personal teaching efficacy means teacher is confident in their own self-efficacy as a teacher to win the factors that are difficult to students while be sure that they have enough experiences to develop strategies of winning the obstacles of student's learning. Researchers have divided an indicator of teacher efficacy into three steps as Kwanjai's concept (Kwanjai, 2007): 1)

Teaching preparation is to make up teaching plan followed by subject's characteristic. And integrate knowledge from several fields to support an appropriate and expeditious learning.

- 1) Teaching operation is to teach students with true learning methods as the settled concept and methodology.
- 2) Teaching assessment is to assess teaching which level of the teaching can be met the determined objectives. Moreover, the assessment is divided into 2 types, first is to assess student's grad record and second is for improving the instruction.

### **Burnout**

Malash (1986) mentioned that psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people. A key aspect of the burnout syndrome is increased feelings of emotional exhaustion; as emotional resources are depleted, workers feel they are no longer able to give of themselves at a psychological level. Another aspect of the burnout syndrome is the development of depersonalization.

Malash (2001) divided emotion measurement into three dimensions as follows:

- 1) Emotional exhaustion is to measure exhaustion that is from work and takes too much time.
- 2) Depersonalization is to lose touch with emotions and not respond to others, not to care or take care of or even give any suggestions to others.
- 3) Reducing personal accomplishment is to assess their own capability and success with low score.

### **Social Support**

Streeter and Franklin (1992) mentioned that social support was a multidimensional construct. It assumes many different forms and can encompass a multitude of relationships, behaviors, and consequences. Moreover, Lin (1986) found that social support had three different levels including 1) the community level through mechanisms of social integration, 2) the social network level through a wide range of social interactions and exchanges, and 3) the level of intimate relationships through which individuals share intimate feelings and seek advice and guidance concerning the personal and private aspects of their lives.

House (1981) categorized the types of social supports into four types.

- 1) Emotional support consists of feelings of trust and love.
- 2) Instrumental support includes resources such as spending time with someone or providing him or her with materials or money.
- 3) Informational support is providing someone with information or advice.
- 4) Appraisal support is providing evaluative feedback to others.

### **Methodology**

This was survey research by distributing questionnaires to teachers in secondary schools.

### **Population and sample**

The research sample was teachers from two secondary schools in Pathum Thani province. The samples were selected by the formula proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) with 95% reliability. A sample of 166 out of 291 teachers was chosen by proportional stratified random sampling. The researcher added an additional 20% for complete number, and therefore the overall sample size was 199 teachers. The 185 questionnaires completed and returned questionnaires were used in the analysis, for a response rate of 92.96%.

### Research tool

In this study, the researchers used questionnaires for collecting the data, which divided into 4 parts; Part 1: 7 items measuring personal data with checklist method. The personal data were gender, age, work experience, education level, income per month, learning area group and position. Part 2: 19 items measuring burnout from concept of Maslach (1986 refer to Parthomsoontornchai, 2008). Part 3: 9 items measuring self-efficacy, Bandura (1989). And part 4: 16 items measuring social support from concept of House (1985 refer to Srisa-ard, 1991). In part 2-4, this scale was 5 point scales (1 = slightly to 5 = extremely).

### Research tool development

Three experts examined the constructed questionnaire in the aspects of language usage and content validity. Scoring 1 meant it was certain that the item was congruent with the definition of each variable, while scoring 0 meant it was uncertain that the item was congruent with the definition of each variable. Scoring -1 meant it was certain that the item was not congruent with the definition of each variable. After that, the Index value of Item Objective Congruence or IOC was calculated and the test with the value of IOC of .50 or more was selected (Rovinelli and Hambleton, 1977). It was found that the questionnaires about job burnout, self-efficacy and social support had passed the evaluation criteria for 19, 8 and 25 items respectively. Then, 30 questionnaires were tested among teachers from secondary schools in Ratchaburi province because they had nearly similar characteristics to the sample group to evaluate discrimination power and reliability of the questionnaires. The value of discrimination power was obtained by t-test evaluation (McIver and Carmines, 1981) and the t value must be more than 1.75 to be accepted. The items that got t value less than 1.75 (Edwards, 1957) were eliminated because they were considered unacceptable. The questionnaires about job burnout, self-efficacy and social support have passed the evaluation criteria for 19, 9 and 16 items respectively. The reliability and the internal consistency were evaluated by using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Content Validity, Discrimination Power, and Reliability**

Questionnaires	Content Validity	Discrimination Power	Reliability Cronbach's alpha
<b>1. Job burnout</b>			
- Emotional exhaustion	7	7	.893
- Depersonalization	6	6	.935
- Reducing personal accomplishment	6	6	.880
<b>Overall</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>.955</b>
<b>2. Self-efficacy</b>			
- Teaching preparation	3	3	.891
- Teaching operation	3	3	.919
- Teaching assessment	3	3	.941
<b>Overall</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>.950</b>
<b>3. Social support</b>			
- Emotional support	6	6	.981
- Appraisal support	3	3	.925
- Informational support	4	4	.969
- Instrumental support	3	3	.958
<b>Overall</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>.988</b>

### Data collection and analysis

The school directors were contacted to ask for permission to distribute questionnaires to the participants who were teachers. The schools assigned 1-2 teachers to help distribute and collect questionnaires. Then, the questionnaires were analyzed by using the computer program to process data. The statistics employed in this research were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, Pearson's correlation coefficient and stepwise multiple regression analysis.

## Results

### 1. Result from analyzing personal data of teachers

The majority of teachers were 118 females (63.80%) and 67 males (36.20%). The average age of participants was 25-35 (45.40%). There were 111 of participants (60.00%) who have work experience with the period from 1-10 years. There were 133 participants (71.90%) who graduated with bachelor degree and there were 117 of them (63.20%) who earned about 15,000-25,000 baht per month. 33 of the participants (17.80%) were from the learning area of Health Education and Physical Education. And 44 participants (23.80%) were assistant teachers (K1 teachers).

### 2. Result from analyzing level of job burnout, self-efficacy and social support

**Table 2. Level of job burnout**

Job burnout	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
Emotional exhaustion	2.000	0.899	Low
Depersonalization	2.009	1.022	Low
Reducing personal accomplishment	1.938	0.761	Low
<b>Overall</b>	<b>1.983</b>	<b>0.818</b>	<b>Low</b>

Table 2 showed the level of overall job burnout was in low level ( $\bar{x} = 1.983$ , S.D. = 0.818). The depersonalization earned the low mean ( $\bar{x} = 2.009$ , S.D. = 1.022), followed by the emotional exhaustion ( $\bar{x} = 2.000$ , S.D. = 0.899) and reducing personal accomplishment earned  $\bar{x} = 1.938$ , S.D. = 0.761.

**Table 3. Level of self-efficacy**

Self-efficacy	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
Teaching preparation	4.216	0.686	Highest
Teaching operation	4.289	0.597	Highest
Teaching assessment	4.392	0.589	Highest
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.299</b>	<b>0.544</b>	<b>Highest</b>

Table 3 showed the level of overall self-efficacy was in highest level ( $\bar{x} = 4.289$ , S.D. = 0.544). The teaching assessment earned the highest mean ( $\bar{x} = 4.392$ , S.D. = 0.589), followed by the teaching operation ( $\bar{x} = 4.289$ , S.D. = 0.597) and the teaching preparation earned lowest mean ( $\bar{x} = 4.216$ , S.D. = 0.686).

**Table 4. Level of social support**

Social support	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
Emotional support	4.245	0.540	Highest
Appraisal support	4.322	0.543	Highest
Informational support	4.346	0.515	Highest

Instrumental support	4.208	0.645	High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.278</b>	<b>0.486</b>	<b>Highest</b>

Table 4 showed the level of overall social support was in highest level ( $\bar{x} = 4.278$ , S.D. = 0.486). The informational support earned the highest mean ( $\bar{x} = 4.392$ , S.D. = 0.589), followed by the appraisal support ( $\bar{x} = 4.322$ , S.D. = 0.542) and the Instrumental support earned lowest mean ( $\bar{x} = 4.208$ , S.D. = 0.645).

### 3. Result from analyzing the relationship between self-efficacy, social support and job burnout

**Table 5. Pearson’s correlation coefficient between self-efficacy and job burnout**

Self-efficacy	Job burnout	
	r	P
Teaching preparation	-.217*	0.039
Teaching operation	-.407**	0.000
Teaching assessment	-.390**	0.000
<b>Overall</b>	<b>-.381**</b>	<b>0.000</b>
**p < .01 ; *p < .05		

The findings from Table 5 showed the self-efficacy had a negative relationship with job burnout of teachers at the statistical significance level at .01. The Pearson’s correlation coefficient was -.381 (14.52%). After considering each aspect, teaching operation and teaching assessment were positively related to job burnout of teachers at the statistically significance level at .01, with Pearson’s correlation coefficients of -.407 and -.390 (16.56% and 15.21%). Teaching preparation was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ), with a Pearson’s correlation coefficient of -.217 (4.71%).

**Table 6. Pearson’s correlation coefficient between Social support and Job burnout**

Social support	Job burnout	
	r	P
Emotional support	-.491**	.000
Appraisal support	-.381**	.000
Informational support	-.399**	.000
Instrumental support	-.341**	.001
<b>Overall</b>	<b>-.475**</b>	<b>.000</b>
**p < .01		

The findings from Table 6 show that social support had a negative relationship with job burnout of teachers at the statistically significant level of .01. The Pearson’s correlation coefficient was -.475 (22.56%). After considering each aspect, all aspects of social support: emotional support, appraisal support, informational support and instrumental support negatively were related to job burnout of teachers at the statistically significance level of .01, with the Pearson’s correlation coefficients of -.491, -.399, .381 and -.341 (24.11, 15.92, 14.52 and 11.63 percent of variance, respectively).

4. Results from analyzing the prediction of job burnout with self-efficacy and social support

Table 7. Stepwise multiple regression–Model summary

Model	Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Add R <sup>2</sup>	S.E. <sub>est</sub>	F	Sig
1	Constant Self-efficacy, Emotional support	.491	.241	.233	.716	28.283**	.000
2	Constant Social support, Emotional support Self-efficacy, Teaching operation	.535	.286	.270	.699	17.607**	.000
**p < .01							

Table 8. Stepwise multiple regression coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Variables	b	S.E. <sub>b</sub>	β	t	p
1	Constant	5.141	.598	-	8.590**	.000
	Self-efficacy, Emotional support	-.744	.140	.491	-5.318**	.000
2	Constant	5.856	.659	-	8.890**	.000
	Social support, Emotional support	-.586	.152	-.387	-3.853**	.000
	Self-efficacy, Teaching operation	-.323	.138	-.236	-2.345**	.021
<sup>a</sup> Dependent Variable: Job burnout						
**p < .01						

The findings from Table 8 show self-efficacy, emotional support (b = -.586, β = -.387) and social support, teaching operation (b = -.323, β = -.138) accounted for 28.6 percent of variance in job burnout of teachers at the statistically significance level of .01.

Discussion

Teacher efficacy had a relationship with burnout, which relates to the concept of self-efficacy. Bandura (1989) and Davis (2013) said that self-efficacy is having the belief in your own ability to accomplish and exercise control over personally meaningful goals and tasks. People who have a stronger level of perceived self-efficacy experience less stress in challenging situations, and situations in turn become less stressful when people believe they can cope, which also relates to the research findings of Watts (2013), Yang (2011) and Kelly (2007). While, the social support also had a relationship with burnout, which relates to the concept of longitudinal studies which said that with appropriate controls for stress levels, find clearer evidence of beneficial effects of supportive behavior should be found in the face of stress. The relevance of the type of support or relationship to the problem or stress may also determine the likelihood of observing a buffering effect (Cohen and Wills, 1985; refer to House *et al.*, 1988) which also relates to the research of Hendrix *et al.*, (1988) and Boren (2014).

Moreover, social support in the emotional support aspect and teacher efficacy in the teaching operation aspect can predict job burnout, which relates to the concept of House (1981), who said that a great deal of the recent literature has suggested that development of social support systems in the job setting should reduce stress and burnout, and which also relates to the research of Prins *et al.*, (2007). They studied about the role of social support in burnout among Dutch medical residents and found that dissatisfaction with emotional support from supervisors had an independent significant effect on depersonalization. Teacher efficacy in the teaching operation aspect influences the thinking process and emotional response of people while behaving, which also influences environment prediction in the future of those people. And the people who had low self-efficacy tended to have negative emotional response to themselves, such as being unhappy, worried, and so stressed and unable to do things with maximum capacity, which can lead people to failure in their lives. Whereas, the people who had high self-efficacy, would have attempts and empathy to accomplish expected goals, and when they met any obstacles they would encourage themselves to spend more attempt (Guskey and Passaro, 1994; Bandura, 1977). This relates to the research of Chwalisz *et al.*, (1992), Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007), and Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2009), which found that teacher burnout has been shown to be moderately related to teacher self-efficacy. A strong relation between teacher self-efficacy and teacher burnout, and both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, were negatively related to teacher self-efficacy.

### Recommendations for Practice and Development

1. School executives should reduce job burnout in the depersonalization aspect, since the average of this aspect is higher than other aspects by suggesting teachers to have a positive attitude toward colleagues, and conducting the activities with teachers to have more interaction with them.
2. School executives should increase social support in the instrumental support aspect, since the average of this aspect is lower than other aspects, by allocating budgets for teachers to purchase adequate, sufficient, and modern teaching instruments.
3. School executives should develop teaching preparation of teacher, because the average of this aspect is lower than other aspects, by training teachers to have the appropriate capacity in term of preparing the teaching.
4. Self-efficacy in the teaching operation aspects had a relationship with job burnout of teachers. The Pearson's correlation coefficient was higher than other aspects, and that variable was also able to predict job burnout of teachers. So, the school executive should support teachers to have more capacity in teaching operations by training and setting up the role model of teachers who can make students study well.
5. Social support in the emotional support aspect had a relationship with job burnout of teachers. This variable was also able to predict job burnout of teachers. Therefore, the school executive should find the way to provide more social support in terms of emotional support for teacher by conducting more activities for making teachers get closer, care more, and support each other.

### Recommendations for further study

1. The experimental research should be involved and applied by conducting the teaching workshops for teachers, which should follow up by comparing the teaching capacity of teachers and job burnout before and after attending the workshop.
2. Teachers should get more social support in the emotional support aspect by being permitted to attend many activities, and compare those activities together for finding which activities that teacher can perceive as providing emotional social support the best.



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