

## FACTORS AFFECTING THE INTENTION TO QUIT FROM THE TEACHING PROFESSION AMONG VOCATIONAL TEACHERS

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This paper aimed to explore the variables that influenced the intention to quit the teaching profession among vocational teachers. Moreover, the researchers examined the differences in the perception of the levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction among vocational teachers in Thailand. The target population comprised vocational teachers from public colleges in Thailand with a total number of 29,915. The stratified random sampling technique was used for selecting the samples. The data collection involved self-report surveys from 510 vocational teachers from 55 vocational colleges in Thailand's metropolitan, north, northeast, east, and south. Correlation and regression analyses were used to examine the possible relationships among the variables and identify the significant variables. The findings reported that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were moderate while personal accomplishment was at a high level. Job satisfaction was the strongest predictor of the intention to quit. In addition, three components of burnout influenced the intention to quit among the vocational teachers: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. For the implication, this study recommended a practical application in the dimension of policy improvement concerning teachers' welfare. It emphasized the need to develop programmes supporting teachers' mental health to reduce burnout and increase job satisfaction.

**Keywords:** burnout; intention to quit; job satisfaction; life satisfaction; vocational teacher

### Introduction

The problem of teacher turnover is a global problem. The teacher's career requires a lot of effort and patience to work. In addition, teachers face various issues, such as changing education policies, student misbehaviour, administrators who may not understand and do not fully support teachers in their work, lack of support from colleagues, the expectation of parents, and workload. As a result, teachers may not want to remain in their careers, leading to teacher shortages. The objective of this study was to explore factors affecting the intention to quit the teaching profession of teachers. The benefit of this research is that it can extend the presentation of policies in helping and supporting teachers.

According to studies from many countries, it was found that teachers intend to quit the teaching profession. Dupriez et al. (2016) found that the turnover rate of teachers was very high during the first year of their career, and this was tied to the teachers' qualifications and the characteristics of the schools. The USA research involving careers, technical education, and health science teachers revealed significant negative associations between job satisfaction (intrinsic and extrinsic) and turnover intention (Park and Johnson, 2019). The findings for the situation in Australia by Bowles and Arnup (2016) highlighted that increasing teachers' job satisfaction could decrease their intention to quit the teaching profession. Furthermore, Høigaard et al. (2012) revealed that job burnout positively correlated with the intent to leave work among Norwegian teachers.

In Thailand, teacher shortages continue to occur as in other countries (McCarthy et al., 2010; Bowles and Arnup, 2016). The previous studies found many reasons for the intention to quit the teaching profession. For example, Schwab et al. (1986) indicated that burnout could cause the sense to leave teaching, absenteeism, lessened effort, and lower quality of personal life. Emotional exhaustion (a subscale of burnout) and job satisfaction could predict the intention to quit the profession for both principals and teachers in Norway (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2011a; Skaalvik, 2020). Life satisfaction was also associated with the turnover intention in Taiwanese kindergarten teachers (Yang et al., 2018). However, Thailand had a different context from other countries; for example, the education system, the structure of welfare, and the livelihood of the teachers.

### Thailand's Vocational and Education Training Context

The education system of Thailand operates under the Ministry of Education. Education begins from pre-school, then continues through elementary school, secondary school, and senior high school. Formal

education is divided into basic education of twelve years and further higher education. Basic education consists of elementary education for six years and secondary education for six years (separated as lower secondary for three years and upper secondary for three years). Vocational education in Thailand is offered in three levels: (1) upper secondary (vocational certificate), (2) post-secondary (diploma or vocational associate degree), and (3) university level (bachelor's degree). As of 2020, the Office of the Vocational Education Commission (OVEC) takes care of 416 public vocational colleges around the country, divided into 19 sections such as technical colleges, commercial colleges, art and craft colleges, polytechnic colleges, industrial and community education colleges, and so on (Office of the Vocational Education Commission, 2020). The national development plan focuses on ten major industries in various districts. Skilled and knowledgeable workers are in great demand. Therefore, vocational education is a focus because it is crucial in producing a skilled workforce to enter the labour market directly.

Teachers are therefore highly interested in teaching well to produce a quality workforce. However, they have to handle other tasks and teachings, such as human resource development, academic support, college supplies, or other functions to support the organization. Even though vocational teachers play an important role, their jobs are perceived as less prestigious than teachers working in higher education (Australian Government, n.d.). These factors may cause teachers to become dissatisfied with their work or life, leading to teacher burnout and the intention to quit their careers. However, a shortage of personnel and a lack of structure in personnel management in vocational education are still challenging issues that have not yet been solved (Tarat and Sindecharak, 2020). Accordingly, a significant point of the research is to determine how job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and burnout affect the intention to quit the profession. Furthermore, there is no specific sample of vocational teachers directly identified when considering these various factors. Therefore, there are also recommendations from the research studies of Bowles and Arnup (2016) and Høigaard et al. (2012) to extend the probability-based sample by adding data from the literature on teacher attrition.

## **Literature Review**

### **Teacher Burnout**

Burnout has been realized to contribute to teachers' and students' behaviour and experience. Teacher burnout is influenced by various factors ranging from the social environment to others in the school setting and the specific nature of the work itself (Vandenberghe and Huberman, 1999). The experience of burnout has been conceptualized by three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion is defined as a sense of being emotionally overwhelmed, fatigued, and suffering the depletion of one's emotional resources. Depersonalization is defined as a negative or detached response to other people. Reduced personal accomplishment is classified as a negative towards oneself and one's personal accomplishment and can also be described as withdrawal and reduced capability (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). Burnout was caused by various factors such as psychological capital and occupational stress (Zhang et al., 2019), family support, peer support, and complex relations (Fiorilli et al., 2019). Previous studies that have investigated teacher burnout showed effects in many dimensions. Shen et al. (2015) surveyed 1,302 high school students and their 33 physical education teachers in the USA found that teachers' burnout was negatively correlated with students' autonomous motivation. This result was similar to Zhang and Sapp (2008), who found that teacher burnout harmfully influenced students' state of motivation and effective learning. However, Fiorilli et al. (2016) analysed the multidimensional construct of teacher burnout and mediated the relationship between emotional competence and social support among 149 Italian teachers. They found that emotional exhaustion was strongly associated with teachers' emotional intensity, confirming this burnout subscale's core importance. Moreover, Rajendran et al. (2020) examined teacher burnout and turnover intention in primary and secondary Australian teachers. The results showed that job demands (workload and student misbehaviour) and the personal demands of the work-family conflict were indirectly related to intent to leave the teaching profession, mediated through emotional exhaustion. Burnout affected teachers and principals, as shown by the study of Federici and Skaalvik (2012). They indicated that burnout was positively associated with the intention to quit the teaching profession.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is defined as 'the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job value' (Evans, 1998). In the education context, teacher job satisfaction is closely related to teacher retention (Collie et al., 2012; Shah and Jumani, 2015; Kelly et al., 2019) and contributes to the well-being of teachers (Ilgan et al., 2015). A previous study examined the mediating effect of teacher empowerment on the relationship between the teachers' perception of their

school's support and teachers' job satisfaction (Bogler and Nir, 2012). Furthermore, Caprara et al. (2006) investigated Italian teachers and found that teachers' self-efficacy affected their job satisfaction and students' achievement. Akomolafe and Ogunmakin (2014) reported that emotional intelligence was more significant than self-efficacy, while job satisfaction was not predicted by occupational stress among secondary teachers. In the USA, Ford et al. (2018) study about the supportive evaluation experience (teacher perceptions of the climate and student relations, teachers' shared responsibility and decision-making, and teachers' self-efficacy) had a significant relationship with satisfaction. The result was similar to the research of Collie et al. (2012), who surveyed 664 elementary and secondary school teachers in Canada and found that stress related to the workload and teaching efficacy was directly related to job satisfaction.

### Life Satisfaction

Erdogan et al. (2012) reported that life satisfaction was related to job performance, organization commitment, turnover intention, and turnover. Educational research has found that life satisfaction predicted the intention to quit the teaching profession (Rode et al., 2007). In the education field, life satisfaction was investigated both in students (Guess and McCane-Bowling, 2016) and teachers (Hamama et al., 2013; Chen, 2016). Life satisfaction was investigated among 125 teachers from special education schools. Organizational support was revealed to moderate the link between stress and any negative effect and the associations among stress, positive effects, and life satisfaction (Hamama et al., 2013). However, when Chen (2016) surveyed 488 Taiwanese high school teachers and college professors, the results indicated that life satisfaction was indirectly predicted by leisure participation through the mediator of job stress. However, only one previous study, by Yang et al. (2018), examined life satisfaction as a component of subjective well-being. The result showed that life satisfaction predicted the turnover intention in 272 Taiwanese kindergarten teachers.

### Intention to Quit from the Teaching Profession

The intention to quit the teaching profession has been studied with various variables in previous research. Bowles and Arnup (2016) reported that Australia faced the situation of up to 50% of teachers quitting teaching within the first five years. According to their survey of 160 Australian primary and secondary teachers, the results indicated that 31.9% of participants intended to leave the profession. Resilience was one factor that predicted the intention to quit the profession. Additionally, in the USA, McCarthy et al. (2010) found that one-third of the respondents indicated that they had considered leaving the teaching profession in the past year, and approximately 46% had realized this aim in the past five years. Conley and You (2016) surveyed 2,060 secondary school special education teachers. They reported that administrative support and team efficacy were the critical predictors of the intention to leave the profession. In Belgium, Struyven and Vanthournout (2014) investigated why newly qualified teachers failed to enter the teaching profession or quit after a short period. The findings showed that a lack of future prospects was the predominant reason for attrition, while other reasons such as job satisfaction, school policies, workload, and relationships with parents were predicted in various aspects. For example, in Namibia, Janik and Rothmann (2015) examined 502 secondary school teachers. They found that poor work-role fit and low psychological meaningfulness had a direct effect on teachers' intention to leave, while job enrichment and work-role fit predicted the intention to leave directly through psychological meaningfulness.

**Table 1. Studies related to teacher burnout, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and intention to quit**

Study	Participants	Cohort	Data Collection/ Analysis	Teacher Burnout	Job Satisfaction	Life Satisfaction	Intention to Quit
Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011a)	231	Elementary/ middle school	SEM		✓		✓
Collie et al. (2012)	664	Elementary/ secondary school	SEM		✓		✓
Federici and Skaalvik (2012)	1,818	Principals	SEM	✓	✓		✓
Struyven and Vanthournout (2014)	235	Kindergarten/ elementary and secondary school	PCA/EFA/ hierarchical regression		✓		✓
Lee (2017)	613	High school	SEM	✓			✓

Study	Participants	Cohort	Data Collection/ Analysis	Teacher Burnout	Job Satisfaction	Life Satisfaction	Intention to Quit
Kelly et al. (2019)	2,144	Elementary and secondary school	AIC		✓		✓
Rajendran et al. (2020)	1,255	Elementary and secondary school	SEM	✓			✓
Yang et al. (2018)	272	Kindergarten	SEM			✓	✓
Present study	510	Vocational	Multiple regression	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note. SEM: Structural Equation Model; EFA: Exploratory Factor Analysis; PCA: Principal Component Analysis; AIC: Akaike Information Criterion

### The Present Study

The recent studies from 2011 to 2020 found that most of these variables (teacher burnout, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and intention to quit) only focused on kindergarten, elementary, secondary, and high school teachers, including principals (Table 1). In addition, although numerous research studies examined the factors influencing the intention to quit the teaching profession, no study had investigated all of these variables together, and none had focused explicitly on vocational teachers. Based on the above gaps, the following research question was raised in the study:

1) How is the intention to quit the teaching profession for vocational teachers influenced by the following variables: exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction?

### Methods

#### *Participants and Procedures*

The principal investigator received permission from the university according to the ethics requirements in which the author was enrolled as a PhD candidate. The target population comprised vocational teachers from public colleges in Thailand with a total number of 29,915. Stratified random sampling was used. At the first stage, the areas for the vocational colleges were divided into five regions; metropolitan, north, northeast, east, and south. Then, random sampling was used to select colleges in each area, resulting in 55 colleges. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a minimum sample of 377 is required from a given population of more than 20,000. However, after asking for permission from the administrators of all 55 colleges, the researchers distributed the self-report survey, used to collect data, to 1,000 vocational teachers to get reliable information. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and was encouraged to keep their answers confidential. Completion of the survey indicated consent, and the completion time ranged from 15 to 20 minutes. The researchers got the questionnaires from participants by mail. The total number of returned surveys was 510, amounting to 51%. The demographic profile of respondents shows in Table 2.

**Table 2. Demographic profile of respondents**

Characteristics	<i>N</i>	Percentage
<b>Area</b>		
Metropolitan	159	31.18
Northeast	110	21.57
North	89	17.45
South	82	16.08
East	70	13.73
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	254	49.80
Female	256	50.20
<b>Age (years)</b>		
<30	140	27.45
31-40	135	26.47

Characteristics	N	Percentage
41-50	121	23.73
>50	114	22.35
<b>Teaching experience (years)</b>		
1-3	131	25.69
4-23	265	51.96
24-40	114	22.35
<b>Teacher's position</b>		
Government officer	196	38.43
Temporary officer	314	61.57

### *Instruments*

The questionnaire consisted of five parts, which were: 1) teachers' characteristics including college, province, gender, years of teaching experience, age, and position; 2) burnout inventory in teachers; 3) job satisfaction; 4) life satisfaction, and 5) intention to quit from the profession. First, the survey was translated from English into Thai and validated by three language experts. Then, the survey was sent to three experts to verify the content validity and the index of consistency (IOC). The pilot study of this survey was conducted with a group of vocational teachers (N=30), and the overall reliability was equal to 0.85.

The Maslach Burnout Inventory, Educator Edition, adopted from Maslach et al. (1996) had three subscales: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. These variables consisted of 22 items. A response for emotional exhaustion of 27 or above indicates a high level, while 17 – 26 is moderate, and 0 -16 is low. There were five items for depersonalization. A response for depersonalization of 13 and above indicates a high level, 7-12 is moderate, and 0-6 is low. There were eight items of personal accomplishment. The response values for personal accomplishment are reversed. A score between 0-31 is low, 32-38 is moderate, and 39 or above is high. The items of all questions about teacher burnout used a seven-point Likert scale (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, and 6 = Every day). Job satisfaction was adopted from Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011b). Life satisfaction was adapted from Margolis et al. (2018). There were three items with a five-point Likert scale (5 = Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Unsure, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly disagree). Motivation to leave the teaching profession was adopted from Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011b). There were three items with a five-point Likert scale (5 = Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Unsure, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly disagree). The reliability coefficients for each of the variables of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and intention to quit were 0.93, 0.88, 0.84, 0.81, 0.84, and 0.89, respectively. Based on the fact that a coefficient value of more than 0.70 can be acceptable (Hair et al., 2010), it could be concluded that the instrument used to measure the six variables were reliable because the values generally exhibited a lower limit for Cronbach's alpha.

### *Data Analysis*

All the statistical procedures were conducted to analyse the quantitative data using SPSS version 21. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Kurtz and Mayo, 1978) was used to test possible relationships between multiple variables. The stepwise estimation technique used regression analysis to analyse the relationships between a single dependent variable and independent variables (Hair et al., 2010, p.151). Statistical significance was defined as  $p < 0.05$ .

### **Results**

Table 3 shows that the level of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization is moderate. The total score of emotional exhaustion was 18.17 while for depersonalization it was 7.26 (mean = 2.05, SD = 1.50/ mean = 1.18, SD = 1.50). Meanwhile, personal accomplishment is high; the total score was 39.54 (mean = 4.94, SD = 1.00). The highest mean score of emotional exhaustion was for the item: "I feel used up at the end of the work" (mean = 2.68, SD = 1.98). For depersonalization, it showed that the highest score item was: "I feel students blame me for their problems" (mean = 1.5, SD = 1.97), followed by the item: "I've become more callous towards people since I took this job" (mean = 2.42, SD = 2.03). For personal accomplishment, it was reported that the item: "I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job" showed the highest score (mean = 5.30, SD = 1.18). Job satisfaction was in the range of Agree to Strongly agree (mean = 4.50, SD = 0.50). Life satisfaction was in the range of Agree to Strongly agree (mean = 4.24, SD = 0.61), and intention to quit the profession ranged between Disagree to Unsure (mean 2.28, SD = 1.14).

**Table 3. The mean and standard deviation of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and intention to quit the profession**

Variables	Statement	Mean	SD	Level
Emotional Exhaustion	I feel emotionally drained from my work.	2.53	1.79	Moderate
	I feel used up at the end of the workday.	2.68	1.98	
	I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.	2.09	1.84	
	Working with people all day is really a strain for me.	1.66	1.90	
	I feel burned out from my work.	1.82	1.88	
	I feel frustrated by my job.	2.06	1.79	
	I feel I'm working too hard on my job.	2.24	1.91	
	Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.	2.01	1.90	
	I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.	1.07	1.91	
	Total	18.17		
Depersonalization	I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal objects.	1.35	1.77	Moderate
	I've become more callous toward people since I took this job.	2.42	2.03	
	I worry that this teaching job is hardening me emotionally.	1.10	1.76	
	I don't really care what happens to some students.	0.91	1.65	
	I feel students blame me for some of their problems.	1.49	1.96	
	Total	7.26		
Personal accomplishment	I can easily understand how my students feel about things.	4.97	1.39	High
	I deal very effectively with the problems of my students.	4.93	1.46	
	I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work.	3.95	2.01	
	I feel very energetic.	5.17	1.30	
	I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my students.	5.07	1.42	
	I feel exhilarated after working closely with my students.	5.23	1.27	
	I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.	5.30	1.18	
	In my work, I deal with emotional problems very calmly.	4.92	1.56	
	Total	39.54		
Job satisfaction	I enjoy working as a teacher.	4.63	0.57	Agree to Strongly agree
	I look forward to going to college every day.	4.33	0.75	
	Working as a teacher is extremely rewarding.	4.75	0.47	
	When I get up in the morning, I look forward to going to work.	4.30	0.70	
	Total	4.50		
Life satisfaction	I like how my life is going.	4.22	0.71	Agree to Strongly agree
	I am content with my life.	4.28	0.68	
	I am satisfied with where I am in life right now.	4.23	0.70	
	Total	4.24		
Intention to quit the profession	I wish I had a different job to being a teacher.	2.63	1.32	Disagree to Unsure
	If I could choose over again, I would not be a	2.12	1.20	

Variables	Statement	Mean	SD	Level
	teacher.			
	I often think of leaving the teaching profession	2.11	1.26	
	Total	2.28		

Note: The Maslach Burnout Inventory, Educator Edition, adopted from Maslach et al. (1996), Job satisfaction was adopted from Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011b), Life satisfaction was adapted from Margolis et al. (2018), motivation to leave the teaching profession was adopted from Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011b).

Tables 4 and 5 present a summary of the correlation and regression analysis of the variables related to the intention to quit. As can be seen in Table 4 in relation to the associations of the variables, zero-order correlation was calculated. The results indicated that the intention to quit the teaching profession was positively related to emotional exhaustion ( $r = 0.38$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and depersonalization ( $r = 0.45$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). On the other hand, the intention to quit was negatively related to personal accomplishment ( $r = -0.28$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), job satisfaction ( $r = -0.30$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), and life satisfaction ( $r = -0.17$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ).

**Table 4. Correlation between the variables**

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Emotional exhaustion	2.06	1.50	1	-.09*	.62**	-.35**	-.28**	.38**
2. Personal accomplishment	4.94	1.01		1	-.22**	.24**	.21**	-.28**
3. Depersonalization	1.18	1.51			1	-.20**	-.15**	.45**
4. Job satisfaction	4.50	0.50				1	.47**	-.30**
5. Life satisfaction	4.24	0.61					1	-.17**
6. Intention to quit	2.29	1.14						1

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

Regression analysis using the stepwise technique was conducted to examine the extent to which emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, depersonalization, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction were related to the intention to quit the teaching profession. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 5. These results highlighted the significance of emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, depersonalization, and job satisfaction. These variables predicted the intention to quit the profession. Job satisfaction was the strongest predictor for the intention to quit the profession ( $\beta = -0.362$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Furthermore, depersonalization, personal accomplishment, and emotional exhaustion supported the intention to quit the profession ( $\beta = 0.232$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), ( $\beta = -0.183$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), and ( $\beta = 0.096$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), respectively. The Variance Inflation Factor was found to be in the accepted range ( $VIF < 10$ ), supporting the absence of multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2010).

**Table 5. Multiple regression analysis**

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Beta	Parameter Estimates		VIF
					t	p	
		0.52	0.27				
Intention to quit	Emotional exhaustion			0.10	2.45	0.01*	1.81
	Personal accomplishment			-0.18	-4.00	0.00**	1.11
	Depersonalization			0.23	6.14	0.00**	1.71
	Job satisfaction			-0.36	-3.53	0.00**	1.19
	Life satisfaction			0.03	0.31	0.76	1.33

\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ .

## Discussion

The authors showed that emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, depersonalization, and job satisfaction predicted the intention to quit the teaching profession, as shown in Table 5. Job satisfaction was the strongest predictor for the intention to quit the profession. Teachers who are satisfied with their work tend to be more active, motivated, and have job commitment. This implies that teachers who perceive a high job satisfaction and low burnout might remain dedicated to their careers. These results underscored previous studies in which job satisfaction was the strongest predictor of the intention to leave the teaching profession (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2011b; Kelly et al., 2019). This study did not investigate factors affecting job satisfaction, as was the case for Ramya and Subramanian (2018) examining college lecturers. Many factors affected job satisfaction: salary, working environment, working time, colleagues' support, training and development, career promotion, recognition, and workload. However, the results did suggest that the overall job satisfaction of vocational teachers in Thailand was at quite a high level. Participants felt that working as a teacher is rewarding and enjoyable. Teachers who have a positive attitude towards their careers would experience a positive effect on their teaching and their students.

In addition, the results showed that teacher burnout also influenced the intention to quit. The findings are consistent with several previous studies (Leung and Wincy, 2006; Tsouloupas et al., 2010; Lee, 2017; Rajendran et al., 2020). This survey of vocational teachers showed that the issue of burnout in teachers is a problem that can be found in many areas, not only in kindergarten teachers, elementary teachers, and secondary teachers but also in school leaders. The results revealed that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were at moderate levels in Thai vocational teachers. That may be because this particular circumstance occurs only intermittently according to the situations they have to deal with, as Sastre-Morcillo et al. (2018) observed that the work situation and level of burnout were related. Sometimes, when teachers feel overwhelmed by other people's demands, such as administrators, colleagues, parents, or students, it could lead to feelings of emotional exhaustion. However, the report showed three subscales of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, which affected quitting the profession altogether. This corresponds to Tsouloupas et al. (2010), who investigated 610 elementary, middle, and high school teachers and revealed that emotional exhaustion predicted teacher turnover. The findings are also consistent with Rajendran et al. (2020), who surveyed Australian primary and secondary teachers and reported that the turnover intention was positively related to emotional exhaustion.

Furthermore, Lee (2017) studied 613 high school physical education teachers across the USA and indicated that the intention to leave was positively related to the three subscales of burnout. This result was consistent with Leung and Wincy (2006), who also reported that the three subscales of burnout were correlated with the intention to quit the profession. Burnout was not studied only in teachers but also in principals. The findings in the present study were congruent with the research of Federici and Skaalvik (2012), who examined 1,818 Norwegian principals and found that burnout was positively associated with the intention to quit while job satisfaction was negatively related.

Life satisfaction did not have a statistically significant effect on the intention to quit the teaching profession. This result was inconsistent with Yang et al. (2018), who found that subjective well-being (including life satisfaction) influenced the turnover intention. However, the present study results were obtained from vocational teachers in the Thai context; thus, the investigation of this hypothesis also underscored the answers of previous studies, which held that job satisfaction and burnout predicted the intention to quit the profession while excluding the life satisfaction dimension.

## Limitations

This study was conducted in the Thai vocational education sector, where cultural and educational traditions may not be the same as those in other countries. In this regard, this would depend on the readers to generalize or not to their context.

## Conclusion

The findings reported that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were moderate while personal accomplishment was at a high level. Three components of burnout influenced the intention to quit among the vocational teachers. In addition, job satisfaction was the strongest predictor of the intention to quit. These results emphasized that teacher burnout remained a significant contributor to teacher intention to leave the teaching profession, including job satisfaction. As the researchers mentioned about the teacher shortage, these problems are what stakeholders, such as educational administrators, should find a way to look after and support teachers by enhancing the work environment, providing supportive communities, and professional development programmes. In light of these findings, burnout and job satisfaction seemed to be the essential



factors administrators should focus on vocational teachers. This study recommended a practical application in policy improvement concerning teachers' welfare and emphasized developing programmes supporting teachers' mental health to reduce burnout. The application of this study would depend on the context of each country and the analysis of other factors.

For future studies, a researcher should include other data collection methods such as in-depth interviews or observations to better understand teachers' attitudes. In addition, factors from this research can expand survey results from different groups of teachers such as special education, university or other educators.

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