

ABSTRACT

Background: International literature shows how the profession of teacher should be considered at high-risk of stress and burnout. Indeed, it falls within the set of *help professions* that are *high touch* job (highly emotional), like physicians, nurses, psychologists or security operators. Literature also showed how different factors are involved in the development of the Burnout syndrome, among which this research has given visibility to personality factors. The relationship between personality and burnout is therefore the subject of investigation of this doctoral thesis.

Objectives: Investigate the influence of the five personality traits according to the Big Five model on the onset of high school teachers' burnout syndrome. In particular, verify whether the personality dimensions (Energy, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability and Mental Opening, as enumerated by Caprara and collaborators) were predictors of the size of Burnout (Psychophysical Exhaustion, Relational Deterioration, Professional Dissatisfaction, Disillusionment) in the Santinello review proposed.

Method: In a group of 171 teachers of teachers including 49 males (28.7%) and 122 females (71.3%) from different high schools, we administered the Big Five Questionnaire (BFQ) to detect personality traits and the Link Burnout Questionnaire (LBQ) to investigate the levels of burnout. The scores obtained in the dimensions of BFQ were thus compared with the scores obtained in the scales of the LBQ applying the statistical analysis of linear correlation and linear regression for each trait and size of burnout.

Results: Analysis of the data shows that there are significant and inverse correlations between personality traits and burnout. The analysis also shows how much predictive the traits of Energy and Emotional Stability are for the dimension of Psychophysical Exhaustion, while for the Relational Deterioration only the Emotional Stability trait is predictor. The results also show how for the dimension of Professional Dissatisfaction the Emotional Stability and Openness are the predictors. Finally, for the dimension of Disillusion, Emotional Stability and Agreeableness are predictors. It appears from the data that the personality trait of emotional stability is the common predictor in all dimensions.

Conclusion: The results showed how the individual personality characteristics should be considered fundamental in the study of the burnout phenomenon. This aspect can have applications both in the selection of teachers, for a correct insertion of the resource in clinical terms and in terms of prevention, both as support to the teacher as the Burnout, as presented in the literature, may vary depending on the user, on the relationship with colleagues and more generally on the content and the context of work, it would be appropriate and also needed to support teachers in identifying personal resources, linked to their personality traits with the possible inclusion of school psychologists who are able to help the acquisition of emotional skills in the fulfilment of the teaching profession and in parallel increasing the awareness of having a network of resources that is always available in times of difficulty related to the school context.

Keywords: Burnout, Personality, Teacher, Big Five.