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The impact of personality traits and family support on foreign language teacher burnout

Wpływ cech osobowości i wsparcia rodziny na wypalenie zawodowe nauczycieli języków obcych

Abstract

Research background: Teacher burnout is a serious problem in education, particularly for foreign language teachers who often encounter various challenges. Personality traits can significantly exacerbate or mitigate susceptibility to burnout, while family can act as a buffer, providing emotional support to alleviate the pressures of teaching.

Research aim: To examine the relationship between burnout, related personality traits, and family factors.

Research method: 111 teachers aged 25 to 56+ participated in the study. The instruments used included the International Personality Item Pool NEO-Five Factor Inventory-50 (IP-IP-NEO-FFI-50; Goldberg, 1992) to measure personality traits and the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI; Demerouti, 1999) to assess burnout. Participants with medium to high burnout and one with none were selected for detailed interviews to explore the influence of family factors on stress and functioning.

Obtained results indicate that teachers with strong family support experience lower levels of burnout, while those with high neuroticism and limited family resources are more vul-

nerable to its effects. This study highlights the importance of raising teachers' awareness of the impact of burnout on their personal and professional lives.
Conclusions: The balance between work, family relationships, and interests is essential to prevent burnout and maintain personal well-being and effectiveness.

Teacher burnout has a detrimental effect on the quality of education and the well-being of teachers. Additionally, it plays a pivotal role in the context of responsibilities intrinsic to employment relationships or the family environment. A significant proportion of teachers are unable to cope effectively with the challenges associated with their profession and personal lives, often initially experiencing stress and subsequently facing the risk of professional burnout. So far, studies on teacher burnout have focused on work-related and organisational factors (Szabo and Jagodics, 2019, p.3). Nevertheless, the elimination of all detrimental influences contributing to teacher burnout does not guarantee its prevention, as evidenced by the experience of some individuals (Alarcon, Eschleman and Bowling, 2009, p. 259). This finding underscores the notion that personality traits serve as a significant predictor of job satisfaction or are the rationale behind burnout (Angelini, 2023, pp. 16–28). Therefore, this study aims to explore the relationship between professional burnout and personality traits, particularly focusing on the role of openness to experience[1], conscientiousness and neuroticism[2], as well as factors that contribute to reducing the risk of professional burnout. Moreover, this article provides strategies for combating this increasingly prevalent phenomenon.

1. Personality

Personality is a crucial internal factor influencing workplace behaviour and attitude towards teaching. One of the most widely accepted definitions explains that personality is a distinctive pattern of thinking, feeling, and behaving. This encompasses moods, attitudes, and opinions and is manifested through interactions with others. Personality is a set of behavioural traits,

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[1] Openness to experience, also referred to as intellect (DeYoung, 2015, p.44), is used interchangeably in this article.

[2] Low neuroticism, commonly referred to as emotional stability (McCrae and Costa, 1987, p. 86), is used in this article as the same construct.

both innate and acquired, that distinguish one individual from another (Holzman, 2013, p. 1). The study of personality has its origins in the development of civilisation, giving rise to numerous theories that seek to elucidate the intricate nature of human beings. The prevailing contemporary theory is that of trait theory, which posits that personality is comprised of a set of traits that govern human behaviour, reactions and responses to various situations (Goldberg, 1992, pp. 26-42; Costa Jr. and McCrae, 1998, pp. 103-121). Presently, the most widely utilised empirically validated personality model is the Big Five Model (McCrae and Costa Jr., 1999, pp. 139-153), which comprises five higher-order traits/dimensions: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. The placement of all traits on a continuum with two extreme poles marking their high and low levels is a fundamental principle of the model (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2020, p. 29). It is a well-established psychological concept that personality traits are fixed in nature and thus shape an individual's motivation, style of emotional and interpersonal functioning, as well as attitudes and behaviour (Jones, Tree and Ward, 2019, pp. 23-29). Therefore, it is worth presenting all five traits and their impact on how teachers perceive and cope with the demands of their profession, as well as in their private lives.

The first trait, openness to experience is defined as a person's general attitude to the world around them. Individuals who exhibit high levels of this dimension are often characterised by their creativity, imagination, curiosity about their surroundings, openness to new cultures and a keen interest in the arts. Conversely, individuals exhibiting low levels of openness tend to adopt a more conservative, practical, and down-to-earth disposition, often showing limited interest in artistic activities (McCrae and Costa Jr., 1997, pp. 825–847). This dimension enables educators to discern stressors within the school environment and perceive them as challenges, as they enjoy experimenting with new experiences. Consequently, it has been demonstrated to have an impact on minimising the chances of emotional exhaustion and fostering an increased belief in personal accomplishment (Zellars, Perrewé and Hochwarter, 2000, p. 1580). Teachers who demonstrate high levels of openness are more likely to perceive professional difficulties and work-related overload as opportunities for learning and development rather than as sources of stress. Such a mindset appears to function as a protective factor against burnout, supporting adaptability, creativity and psychological resilience. In contrast, educators with low levels of openness, who tend to exhibit rigid thinking, resistance to change and limited curiosity, may be more susceptible to professional fatigue and decreased engagement (Jędryszek-Geisler and Izdebski, 2018, pp. 111–113).

The subsequent trait, conscientiousness, is marked by self-discipline and consideration. This trait reveals a tendency to be methodical and adhere to established norms. Individuals displaying high levels of conscientiousness are distinguished by their punctuality, ability to act appropriately in various situations, and reluctance to act impulsively. Conversely, those with low conscientiousness often demonstrate a tendency toward failure, characterised by aimlessness, carelessness, and disorganisation (John and Srivastava, 1999, pp. 1–71). A hallmark of individuals with low conscientiousness is impulsivity, evident in actions undertaken without sufficient forethought and consideration for potential consequences. In the teaching profession, conscientiousness reflects a teacher's level of personal organisation, perseverance, and drive in pursuing goals. Research indicates a positive relationship between conscientiousness and teachers' sense of personal achievement (Yilmaz, 2014, pp. 784–790). This connection is likely rooted in qualities commonly found in highly conscientious educators, such as strong self-discipline, consistent task motivation, a high drive for achievement, ambitious goals, and a pronounced sense of duty and competence. Teachers who score high on this trait are more likely to approach their work with dedication, persistence, and genuine engagement, which in turn fosters a greater sense of job satisfaction and accomplishment (Jędryszek-Geisler and Izdebski, 2018, pp. 111–114).

The third trait, extraversion, is related to the intensity of interaction with the surrounding world, especially regarding social interaction. This trait reflects a person's comfort level and assertiveness in various situations. Individuals with high levels of this trait are typically sociable, active, assertive, talkative, and often friendly, characterised by high energy levels. In contrast, introverts are generally passive, quiet, reserved, and withdrawn. Introverts are shown to prefer independent work, frequently remain in the background, and require more time to complete tasks (Dörnyei, 2005, pp.14–30). Within the teaching profession, extraversion represents a personality trait that reflects both the quantity and quality of social interactions, the intensity of activity, responsiveness to external stimuli, and a general tendency to experience positive emotions. It is commonly associated with optimism, a playful attitude and a cheerful disposition. Teachers with high levels of extraversion, characterised by sociability, talkativeness and high energy, tend to be more successful in navigating the interpersonal demands of the classroom environment. Moreover, in combination with openness to experience, extraversion contributes to the development of professional competence, which may enhance the teachers' sense of achievement. Elevated levels of activity, sociability and openness are also likely to support greater engagement in teaching duties and may facilitate the acquisition of new skills

and the mastery of educational practices (Jędryszek-Geisler and Izdebski 2018, pp. 111–114; Kasprzak 2006, pp. 129–136).

The fourth personality trait is agreeableness, which encompasses modesty, compassion, altruism, and honesty. This trait is essential for social harmony and reflects an individual's ability to engage positively with others. Individuals who exhibit high levels of agreeableness are typically known for their friendly nature, willingness to assist others, and tendency to recognise the positive traits in others. They express a strong desire to foster positive relationships while avoiding anger and aggression. These individuals emphasise conflict avoidance, a propensity for compromise, and a willingness to prioritise the needs of others. Conversely, those with low levels of this trait are often perceived as cold, cynical, frequently rude, and unkind and they may appear indifferent to the well-being of others (John and Srivastava, 1999, pp. 1–71). In the context of the teaching profession, agreeableness reflects a generally positive orientation toward others and includes traits such as compassion, empathy and the absence of antagonistic tendencies. Teachers who score high on agreeableness are more likely to engage in altruistic behaviours and demonstrate emotional sensitivity in their interactions with students and colleagues. The empathy and emotional responsiveness of agreeable educators may lower the risk of developing detached attitudes, serving as protective factors that promote supportive and connected relationships within the school environment (Jędryszek-Geisler and Izdebski 2018, pp. 111–114).

The final personality trait, neuroticism affects the ability to cope with stress and is associated with feelings of sadness, mood swings, and emotional instability. Individuals with elevated levels of this trait often encounter mood fluctuations, anxiety, and irritability, frequently perceiving ordinary situations as particularly daunting. They may exhibit prolonged negative reactions, which can hinder their capacity to think clearly and function effectively in daily life. As a result, individuals with high levels of neuroticism are likely to experience extended periods of stress. Conversely, emotionally stable individuals are typically characterised by composure, relaxation, and a less intense emotional response. Remarkably, they do not lose their temper easily and maintain their composure under stress (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2020, pp. 37–47). Among educators, neuroticism is understood as a personality trait reflecting emotional instability and heightened sensitivity to stress. It is strongly linked to maladaptive coping mechanisms and a predisposition to experience negative emotions such as anxiety, irritability and psychological discomfort. Neuroticism has been consistently identified as a significant predictor of emotional exhaustion, a central component of burnout, in the teaching profession. Empirical findings suggest that in

models incorporating openness to experience, neuroticism remains a key factor in explaining elevated levels of exhaustion (Jędryszek-Geisler and Izdebski 2018, pp. 111–113).

2. Professional burnout

Burnout, increasingly common today, affects many areas of life, particularly health and well-being. It is defined as 'a psychological syndrome that occurs as a result of a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors at work' (Maslach and Leiter, 2016, p. 103) or as a combination of chronic exhaustion and a negative and cynical attitude towards work (Demerouti *et al.*, 2021, p. 686). People whose work consists primarily of engaging in helping others, e.g. psychologists, nurses or teachers, are at risk of professional burnout. Professional burnout is related to the belief that the individual is not coping with problems that arise at work. For teachers, this often includes problems with classroom discipline, low student achievement, and comments from students that lessons are boring. In addition, teachers frequently encounter their students' personal problems and unreasonable demands from their superiors. This initially results in a lower sense of well-being and, over time, in various health complaints. Maslach and Jackson (1986, pp. 191–218) developed a model depicting the process of professional burnout and distinguished three phases: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and a lowered sense of professional self-efficacy. In the first phase, the individual feels an excess of responsibilities and a feeling of fatigue, as well as beginning to manifest an aversion to work, high irritability and impulsivity. In this phase, the teacher may feel worn out, lack energy, and have health problems, e.g. headaches, stomach aches or suffer from insomnia. In the second phase, depersonalisation, the teacher may start to behave cynically and stop paying attention to the feelings of others. Moreover, an increasing distance is created between them and the students and often also between other colleagues in school. In the last phase, a lowering of the sense of professional efficacy, the teachers do not believe in their abilities, judge their teaching potential negatively, and feel worthless. If the individuals get help in the first phase, they regain emotional equilibrium and enjoyment of work, whereas the more the burnout process is advanced, the more difficult it is to get adequate help.

In contemporary research, the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) focuses on two key dimensions: exhaustion and disengagement (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001, pp. 499–512)   Disengagement is characterised by mental and emotional detachment from one's work and is typified by indifference, loss of enthusiasm,

and a lack of identification with one's professional role. It is often regarded not only as a core symptom of burnout but also as a potential early warning sign of a deeper breakdown in job-related motivation and meaning   . Together, these dimensions a holistic view of how burnout undermines both energetic and relational aspects of professional functioning.

Teaching is a highly stressful profession. This stress arises from the high demands and expectations placed on teachers, which are further compounded by various factors. Several influences contribute to teacher burnout, and these can be categorised into three groups: individual, sociodemographic, and structural-organisational factors (Tucholska, 2009, pp. 70– 90). The first category involves individual psychological factors, which include personality traits and cognitive-emotional dispositions that influence how teachers perceive and manage stress. Variables such as a strong sense of personal control, adaptive coping strategies, ego strength, and positive attitudes towards work contribute to greater resilience, while the absence of these traits may increase susceptibility to emotional exhaustion and burnout. The second category concerns sociodemographic characteristics, including age, gender, marital status, educational background, the subject taught, and length of professional experience. These variables may shape not only the nature of teachers' work experiences but also their coping capacities and vulnerability to occupational stress over time. The third category of determinants relates to institutional and structural factors that include both the quality of working conditions and the availability of organisational resources. A detrimental work environment, such as excessive responsibility, ineffective leadership, limited interpersonal support, ambiguous or overly rigid institutional regulations, unrealistic performance demands, continuous pressure for availability and insufficient opportunities for rest and recovery, can significantly elevate the stress levels among teachers. Additionally, inadequate material provisions and the absence of motivational mechanisms further exacerbate the risk of burnout. In contrast, access to supportive organisational resources, including collegial support and institutional backing, is considered an essential support mechanism that enhances teachers' psychological stability and overall well-being.

Importantly, although the professional environment exerts considerable influence on teacher well-being, support from family members may serve as an essential external coping resource. For teachers experiencing adverse interpersonal dynamics at work, familial support can offer emotional stability, psychological reassurance, and a counterbalance to stressors encountered in the school setting. Family members often assist teachers, when possible, by adjusting their routines to accommodate the professional commitments of their spouse. Fur-

thermore, they support educators during challenging events in their professional lives. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that the social support provided by family members is frequently influenced by the cultural traditions inherent in the nation (Fiorilli *et al.*, 2019, pp. 781–791). Conversely, the family unit can negatively impact educators when expectations about domestic duties and the time spent together are excessively lofty. This has been identified as a contributing factor to teacher burnout (Zeng, Liu and Peng, 2024).

There are a lot of empirical studies related to teacher burnout, but most of the studies have been devoted to the impact of work-related and organisational factors on it. Some studies present the influence of individual factors like self-efficacy or coping strategies, however, to the knowledge of the researchers, none of the studies have researched burnout among foreign language teachers and if there is a relationship between their personality traits and burnout, as well as the role of family support throughout the burnout process. Therefore, the main aim of this study is to answer these broad research questions:

RQ 1: What are the relationships between personality traits and burnout of foreign language teachers?

RQ 2: How can family support contribute to managing professional burnout?

3. Methods

3.1 Participants

The table below summarises the demographic distribution of the 111 Polish foreign language teachers who participated in the study. It includes details about gender, age, educational institution, employment location, years of experience, languages taught, and professional attitudes. It is worth noting that 44 teachers (40.4%) were over the age of 46, and 50 teachers (45%) indicated that they could imagine pursuing a career outside of teaching.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the participants

Variable		N	%
Gender	Female	97	88.1
	Male	14	11.9
Age	Under 25	15	13.8
	25–35	15	13.8
	36–45	37	32.1
	46–55	27	24.8

Variable			N	%
	56+		17	15.6
School level	Primary		38	33.0
	Secondary		28	25.7
	University		23	21.1
	Language school		22	19.8
Location	City > 50,000		57	50.4
	Town (2,500–50,000)		36	33.0
	Village (<2,500)		18	16.5
Experience	1–5 years		20	18.0
	6–10 years		12	10.8
	11–15 years		11	9.9
	16–20 years		22	19.8
	21+ years		46	41.4
Language taught	English		92	82.9
	German		11	9.9
	Spanish		2	1.8
	Polish as a foreign language		3	2.7
	French		1	0.9
	Italian		1	0.9
	Russian		1	0.9
Professional views	Satisfied with job		86	77.0
	Teaching is a passion		73	66.0
	Could imagine another job		50	45.0
Time for passion	Yes		57	51.4
	No		39	35.1
	Hard to say		15	13.5

3.2 Instruments

The primary instrument was a questionnaire with demographic items and questions related to the teaching profession. Personality traits were assessed using the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP-50; Goldberg *et al.*, 2006), with 10 items measuring each personality trait: extraversion (α = .91), agreeableness (α = .78), conscientiousness (α = .84), emotional stability (α = .91) and intellect (α = .77). The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory Scale (OLBI; Demerouti, 1999) was employed to assess teachers' burnout, focusing on two dimensions: exhaustion (α = .74) and disengagement (α = .85). The third scale used in this research was the short version of the Resilience Scale (Surzykiewicz, Konaszewski and Wagnild, 2019), which evaluates five core characteristics of resilience: purpose, perseverance, self-reliance, equanimity, and existential aloneness, with a Cronbach's alpha of .93. Finally, teachers responded to open-ended questions regarding the ad-

vantages and disadvantages of the teaching profession, describing their feelings about factors that either supported them during challenging work moments or contributed to their burnout.

3.3 Procedure

The data collection procedure was conducted between September and November 2024. Participants completed the questionnaire, rating scales, and open-ended questions via Google Forms. The data were analysed using the Statistica and Jamovi software package. The primary analytical techniques included descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, Spearman's rank correlation, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and multiple linear regression. All procedures were carried out in full compliance with established ethical guidelines for research involving human participants, as outlined by Wilczyńska and Michońska-Stadnik (2010, pp. 175–230).

3.4 Results

3.4.1 Quantitative results

In this section, two components of burnout – disengagement and exhaustion – were analysed in relation to personality traits, job satisfaction, type of institution, and sociodemographic variables. A summary of all variables, along with the results of the Shapiro–Wilk's normality test, is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the main variables with a normality test

Variable	M	SD	Min	Max	W
Extraversion	3.27	.76	1.40	5.0	.99
Agreeableness	3.98	.50	2.50	4.90	.97**
Conscientiousness	3.64	.65	1.70	4.90	.98
Emotional stability	2.94	.82	1.10	4.70	.98
Intellect	3.74	.51	2.40	4.90	.99
Disengagement	2.26	.46	1.25	3.75	.97*
Exhaustion	2.58	.55	1.13	4.00	.99
Resilience	56.85	9.50	14	70	.89***

***$p<.001$ **$p<.01$ *$p<.05$

In the next step, the Pearson and Spearman correlations between personality traits and components of burnout, disengagement and exhaustion were calculated. As illustrated in Table 3, there were weak or non-existent correlations between personality traits and disengagement. However, moderately strong negative correlations were identified between intellect, emotional stability and conscientiousness, and exhaustion.

Table 3. Correlation coefficients between burnout and personality traits (n = 111)

		Disengagement	Exhaustion
Extraversion	Correlation coefficient	−.23	−.22
	p	.014	.021
Agreeableness	Correlation coefficient	−.23	−.15
	p	.015	.119
Conscientiousness	Correlation coefficient	−.17	−.31
	p	.067	.001
Emotional stability	Correlation coefficient	−.13	−.47
	p	.180	< .001
Intellect	Correlation coefficient	−.20	−.33
	p	.040	< .001

Burnout components were subsequently compared across gender, age group, type of workplace, size of the city in which the teacher works, years of teaching experience, and language taught.

Statistical test did not show a significant difference in terms of disengagement between males (n = 14, Mdn = 2.1)and females (n = 97, Mdn = 2.3), U = 530.00, p = .185, r_{rb} = .22. However, exhaustion was significantly higher among women compared to men – t (109) = 2.39, p = .019, d = .68.

The comparison of burnout levels among teachers from different age groups did not yield any significant results, as shown in Table 4, suggesting that age does not differentiate burnout.

Table 4. Analysis of variance with age as an independent factor (n = 111)

Age group	Disengagement				Emotional exhaustion			
	M	SD	F	ω^2	M	SD	F	ω^2
<25	2.1	.4	1.07	.00	2.6	.7	.77	-.01
25-35	2.3	.5			2.6	.5		
36-45	2.3	.5			2.6	.7		
46-55	2.4	.4			2.7	.5		
56+	2.1	.3			2.4	.3		

Place of work emerged as a significant factor for both aspects of burnout, as shown in Table 5. However, after applying corrections in post hoc analyses, the only statistically significant difference was found for disengagement between public elementary schools and language schools (W = -4.54, p = .007), with higher disengagement reported in public elementary schools.

Table 5. Analysis of variance with workplace type as an independent factor (Kruskal-Wallis' test, n = 109)

Workplace	Disengagement			Emotional exhaustion		
	Mdn	χ^2	ε^2	*Mdn*	χ^2	ε^2
Public elementary school	2.4	12.47**	.12	2.8	10.10*	.09
Public high school	2.3			2.6		
University	2.3			2.5		
Language school	2.0			2.2		

*p < .05. **p < .01.

Neither the location of the school nor teaching experience significantly differentiated burnout levels in either component.

Table 6.Analysis of variance with location and years of experience as separate independent factors (n = 111)

Factor	Disengagement				Emotional exhaustion			
	M	*SD*	*F*	ω^2	*M*	*SD*	*F*	ω^2
Location								
Village	2.4	.6	2.12	.02	2.6	.5	1.66	.01
Small city	2.3	.4			2.7	.6		
City	2.2	.4			2.5	.6		
Years of experience								
1-5	2.1	.4	1.15	.01	2.6	.6	.09	-.03
6-10	2.3	.5			2.6	.6		
11-15	2.4	.7			2.6	.8		
16-20	2.4	.5			2.6	.6		
21+	2.2	.4			2.6	.5		

The next step of this research involved the analysis of the relationship between declared job satisfaction and passion for work, and the two components of burn-

out: disengagement and exhaustion. As demonstrated in Table 7, teachers who reported being satisfied with their jobs exhibited significantly lower levels of both disengagement and exhaustion. Teachers who were discontented with their professional situation showeda level of burnout that was more than 50% higher than that of their satisfied counterparts. Analogous outcomes were attained with regard to work passion. Moreover, the consequences of a lack of passion on disengagement proved to be more substantial than those on exhaustion. The findings indicated that passion plays a pivotal role in safeguarding motivation.

Table 7. Analysis of variance with age as an independent factor (n = 111)

Factor	Disengagement				Emotional exhaustion			
	M	*SD*	*F*	ω^2	*M*	*SD*	*F*	ω^2
Satisfaction								
Yes	2.11	.35	39.28	.41	2.40	.46	32.54	0.36
Hard to say	2.66	.34			3.12	.35		
No	3.23	.46			3.45	.31		
Passion								
Yes	2.12	.35	17.77	.23	2.46	.48	6.78	0.09
Hard to say	2.42	.44			2.75	.60		
No	2.86	.61			3.00	.57		

The linear regression models investigated the impact of personality traits, resilience, gender, type of school, satisfaction with work, and passion towards work on disengagement and exhaustion. Personality traits were entered in the first step of the analysis, and the remainingvariables were added in the second step.

In models dedicated to disengagement, as shown in Table 8, it was evident that personality traits alone did not provide a substantial explanation for disengagement until they were complemented by situational and psychological variables. It was evident that high resilience, coupled with engagement in a less stressful environment such as a language school, offered a protective measure against disengagement.

Table 8. Linear regression models for disengagement

	b	β	t	p	F	p	R^2_{adj}
Model 1					6.23	< .001	.22
Constant	4.38		9.94	< .001			
Extraversion	−.01	−.02	−.16	.871			
Agreeableness	−.09	−.10	−1.04	.301			
Conscientiousness	−.03	−.05	−.53	.595			

	b	**β**	**t**	**p**	**F**	**p**	**R²**$_{adj}$
Emotional stability	.02	.04	.37	.711			
Intellect	−.13	−.14	−1.58	.118			
Resilience	−.02	−.43	−4.54	< .001			
Model 2					4.75	< .001	.25
Constant	4.31		9.48				
Extraversion	−.00	−.01	−.07	.946			
Agreeableness	−.07	−.07	−.76	.451			
Conscientiousness	−.08	−.12	−1.28	.203			
Emotional stability	.01	.01	.10	.917			
Intellect	−.07	−.08	−.86	.390			
Resilience	−.02	−.39	−4.00				
Private high school − Primary school	−.16	−.34	−.53	.597			
Public high school − Primary school	−.17	−.37	−1.61	.111			
University − Primary school	−.13	−.28	−1.04	.299			
Language school − Primary school	−.34	−.73	−2.81	.006			
Model 3					6.78	< .001	.42
Constant	3.77		8.97	< .001			
Extraversion	.04		.69	.491			
Agreeableness	.01		.07	.943			
Conscientiousness	−.01		−.15	.878			
Emotional stability	−.04		−.80	.428			
Intellect	−.02		−.29	.775			
Resilience	−.01		−2.87	.005			
Private high school − Primary school	.07		.27	.786			
Public high school − Primary school	−.11		−1.08	.284			
University − Primary school	−.15		−1.36	.178			
Language school − Primary school	−.33		−3.08	.003			
Passion yes − no	−.58		−4.39	< .001			
Passion hard to say − no	−.34		−2.45	.016			
Time for passion yes − no	−.22		−2.86	.005			
Time for passion hard to say − no	−.22		−1.95	.054			

In the models dedicated to exhaustion, as presented in Table 9, personality traits emerged as robust predictors of exhaustion, particularly emotional stability, intellect and conscientiousness. The passion for one's work was found to be a significant factor in the prevention of emotional burnout, potentially constituting the most protective mechanism. The findings indicated that resilience exerted a buffering effect; however, this effect was negated once passion was taken into consideration. This suggests that passion may serve as a pivotal mechanism for internal commitment and psychological resilience. As with disengagement, working in a language school has been shown to reduce burnout.

Table 9. Linear regression models for exhaustion

	b	β	t	p	F	p	R^2_{adj}
Model 1					11.91	< .001	0.37
Constant	5.42		11.54	< .001			
Extraversion	.02	.02	.26	.793			
Agreeableness	.07	.06	.74	.461			
Conscientiousness	−.15	−.18	−2.24	.027			
Emotional stability	−.21	−.31	−3.51	< .001			
Intellect	−.30	−.28	−3.55	< .001			
Resilience	−.02	−.28	−3.22	.002			
Model 2					9.05	< .001	0.42
Constant	5.16		10.88	< .001			
Extraversion	.02	.03	.36	.717			
Agreeableness	.12	.11	1.28	.205			
Conscientiousness	−.22	−.26	−3.17	.002			
Emotional stability	−.24	−.36	−4.12	< .001			
Intellect	−.21	−.20	−2.40	.018			
Resilience	−.01	−.21	−2.42	.017			
Private high school – Primary school	−.46	−.85	−1.52	.133			
Public high school – Primary school	−.12	−.23	−1.11	.268			
University – Primary school	−.23	−.43	−1.84	.069			
Language school – Primary school	−.43	−.79	−3.46	< .001			
Model 3					11.32	< .001	0.57
Constant	4.64		10.74	< .001			
Extraversion	.05	.08	.99	.326			
Agreeableness	.16	.14	1.89	.062			
Conscientiousness	−.15	−.17	−2.39	.019			
Emotional stability	−.26	−.38	−4.93	< .001			
Intellect	−.16	−.15	−2.03	.045			
Resilience	−.01	−.09	−1.21	.229			
Private high school – Primary school	−.22	−.41	−.82	.413			
Public high school – Primary school	−.05	−.09	−.47	.64			
University – Primary school	−.24	−.44	−2.14	.035			
Language school – Primary school	−.39	−.71	−3.57	< .001			
Passion yes – no	−.37	−.68	−2.75	.007			
Passion hard to say – no	−.20	−.36	−1.41	.161			
Time for passion yes – no	−.40	−.73	−5.01	< .001			
Time for passion hard to say – no	−.32	−.59	−2.81	.006			

3.4.2 Qualitative results – interviews with selected foreign language teachers

The qualitative data were collected through open-ended survey questions and semi-structured interviews[3] conducted with teachers who had experienced varying levels of professional burnout. The open-ended questions invited participants to reflect on their professional experiences, including the perceived benefits and drawbacks of their chosen career, as well as their personal and professional achievements. The interviews were designed to enrich the data by exploring the influence of family dynamics and personal attitudes toward teaching in relation to stress levels and occupational functioning.

Responses to the open-ended questions revealed two distinct thematic groups. The first group described the profession of foreign language teaching as intellectually stimulating and rewarding, despite acknowledging its demanding nature. These participants emphasised the intrinsic satisfaction they derived from their work. In contrast, the second group reported a negative emotional climate in their workplaces, which they associated with increased neuroticism and emotional exhaustion. Some participants described their experiences metaphorically, likening their daily routines to "a battle with windmills", and expressed feelings of futility and burnout. Nonetheless, many teachers identified meaningful aspects of their profession, such as the autonomy it affords, opportunities for continued learning, engaging conversations with students, and a strong sense of personal fulfilment.

Four participants were selected for in-depth interviews. The first participant interviewed was an English teacher with 30 years of experience, a high level of intellect, and emotional stability, who described teaching as her passion. She did not report experiencing professional burnout, a self-assessment corroborated by the scale results. Employed at a technical school, she spoke highly of her students and expressed great satisfaction with her interactions with young people, highlighting her sustained commitment to both personal and professional development. She also emphasised her youthful spirit and maintained an optimistic and vibrant outlook. Professional challenges were perceived as obstacles to be overcome rather than deterrents. It was evident that she frequently organised educational excursions across Europe for her students, aiming to underscore the importance of foreign language proficiency in the contemporary world. Although she acknowledged experiencing occasional difficult days, she

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3 All interviews were conducted anonymously to ensure the confidentiality and protection of participants' personal data, as well as to encourage honesty in their responses, in accordance with ethical research guidelines (Wilczyńska and Michońska-Stadnik, 2010, pp. 175–230).

reported being able to rely on the support of family and friends who were familiar with how best to assist her.

The second participant was an English teacher aged between 36 and 45, residing in a city with over 50,000 inhabitants. He had worked in a primary school for over 11 years. While he appreciated the opportunity to interact with motivated students and observe their language development, he reported dissatisfaction with irregular working hours, a high volume of additional responsibilities, and inadequate remuneration. He described how extracurricular activities such as school trips, frequent staff meetings, and after school events negatively impacted his family life. These disruptions strained his relationships at home, and he expressed feelings of insufficient familial support when attempting to reconcile professional duties with domestic responsibilities. Although he was aware of the need to establish boundaries between work and home life, he admitted that doing so was unfeasible in practice.

The third interviewee was a 51-year-old male English teacher residing in a city with more than 50,000 inhabitants but working in a rural village school. He had been in the profession for 18 years, following a prior career as a corporate translator. At the outset of the interview, he discussed the work environment at his school, emphasising a perceived lack of support from the school leadership. He cited unrealistic expectations from the headteacher, including excessive administrative tasks and a heavy burden of extracurricular obligations. He also mentioned incidents of favouritism, wherein some colleagues received preferential treatment, while he faced mistreatment after declining to organise an additional school event. This led to anxiety about potential negative evaluations and job security. Throughout the interview, the participant repeatedly stressed his commitment to fulfilling his duties conscientiously. In addressing questions about coping mechanisms, he underscored the critical role of his family in helping him navigate periods of psychological distress. His wife and children were described as essential sources of emotional and practical support, taking on household responsibilities and engaging him in restorative family activities.

The fourth participant selected for the interview was a female German teacher, aged between 36 and 45, residing in a city with over 50,000 inhabitants. She has been employed at a primary school for over 21 years. Although she made efforts to develop her teaching skills, she expressed uncertainty about whether teaching was truly her passion. She spoke extensively about her evolving attitude toward her profession and the noticeable changes in student behaviour over time. During challenging periods, she relied on her family, who reminded her of how she had previously managed difficult situations and encouraged her by recalling her past accomplishments. However, the workload and fatigue expe-

rienced after each working day limited her time and energy for engaging in activities she found enjoyable. Additionally, she reported falling ill more frequently, which she attributed to working in a primary school environment. While she felt that her family was supportive, she was reluctant to share her work-related struggles with them regularly, leading to what she described as a "vicious circle". The narratives of the interviewed participants corresponded closely with the perspectives expressed by the second thematic group, which portrayed their professional roles as marked by exploitation, emotional strain, and insufficient financial compensation. The summary of the qualitative data is presented in Tables 10 and 11 below.

Table 10. Professional burnout and family support among interviewed foreign language teachers

Partici-pant	Gen-der	Teaching ex-perience	Burnout level	View of profes-sion	Family support role
1	female	30 years	low	passionate, fulfilling	strong, supportive, emotionally stable
2	male	11+ years	medium/high	rewarding but stressful	weak, family life negatively impacted
3	male	18 years	medium	duty-driven, under pressure	very strong, essential for coping
4	female	21+ years	medium	evolving, uncertain	mixed, emotionally supportive but distant

Table 11. Quantitative and qualitative data comparison of the interviewed participants

Participant	Quantitative Data	Qualitative Data	Consistency
1	Exhaustion: 1.125 (lowest) High emotional stability: 3.6 High intellect: 4.5	low burnout, passionate, strong support system	full consistency
2	Exhaustion: 2.25 Stability: 3.8 Intellect: 4.1 Extraversion: 1.9 (very low)	medium/high burnout, family life negatively impacted	partial consistency -symptoms suggest higher burnout than numerical scores
3	Exhaustion: 2.625 Stability: 3.1 Intellect: 3.4	medium burnout, very strong family support	full consistency
4	Exhaustion: 3.5 (highest) Stability: 2.6 (lowest) Intellect: 3.1	medium burnout, supportive but distant family	consistency, interview reflects high fatigue

4. Discussion

The primary aim of the present study was to investigate the relationship between personality traits and professional burnout among foreign language teachers, with particular attention to the contextual influence of the family environment. The study further sought to explore how specific personality dimensions may predispose individuals to heightened vulnerability or resilience in the face of occupational stress. The findings revealed significant associations between three key personality traits: openness to experience/intellect, neuroticism, and conscientiousness, and burnout levels. Notably, openness to experience was negatively correlated with burnout, suggesting that individuals who are imaginative, curious, and open to new experiences may be better equipped to manage the dynamic and often demanding nature of teaching. In contrast, neuroticism showed a significant positive relationship with burnout, indicating that teachers characterised by emotional instability and increased sensitivity to stress are more likely to experience symptoms of professional exhaustion. Conscientiousness was also found to be negatively associated with burnout, with higher levels of this trait, reflecting self-discipline, organisation, and a strong sense of responsibility, linked to greater resistance to burnout. The results are consistent with previous research in the field (Alarcon, Eschleman and Bowling, 2009, pp. 244–263; Hakanen, Bakker and Schaufeli, 2006, pp. 495–513; Jędryszek-Geisler and Izdebski, 2018, pp. 106–117). Interestingly, the traits of extraversion and agreeableness did not show a significant relationship with burnout, suggesting that while they may shape interpersonal interactions, they appear to play a limited role in moderating long-term stress or emotional depletion in the professional context. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature highlighting the importance of personality in understanding teacher well-being, and they underscore the need to consider individual differences in developing strategies for burnout prevention and intervention.

Regression analysis further revealed that personality traits such as emotional stability, conscientiousness, and intellect emerged as significant yet moderate predictors of emotional exhaustion. However, their predictive value diminished in relation to disengagement, suggesting that emotional exhaustion and reduced engagement, while interrelated, represent distinct dimensions of burnout that may require differentiated preventive strategies. Notably, passion for the profession emerged as a critical protective factor. Teachers reporting high levels of passion experienced significantly lower levels of burnout, which is consistent with the findings of Fiorilli *et al.* (2019, pp. 781–791). Intriguingly, psychological resilience ceased to be a significant predictor of burnout once passion was ac-

counted for, implying that subjective perceptions of purpose and involvement may outweigh the influence of personal coping resources. The type of educational institution also played a meaningful role, with primary school teachers exhibiting the highest levels of burnout, whereas the lowest levels were observed among teachers in language schools. These differences are likely attributable to varying organizational demands, parental expectations, curricular pressures, and student autonomy across institutional contexts. Surprisingly, demographic factors such as gender, age, and years of service showed limited explanatory power. While gender initially appeared to influence emotional exhaustion, this effect disappeared after controlling for the type of institution.

Similarly, no significant differences were found based on length of service or school location, challenging the assumption that burnout is inherently age-related. Topal *et al.* (2025, pp. 20–30) also reported that while job satisfaction varied across age groups, burnout levels remained stable. Although younger teachers may have higher energy, they often lack stress management strategies, whereas experienced teachers may show greater resilience but face cumulative fatigue. These opposing factors likely explain the lack of age-related differences in burnout, supporting the view that burnout is shaped by various factors.

The qualitative data obtained through interviews provide compelling insights into the nuanced role of family support in managing professional burnout among foreign language teachers. Across participants, family support emerged as a critical contextual factor that either mitigated or magnified experiences of occupational stress. Teachers who reported consistent, emotionally responsive, and engaged family dynamics tended to exhibit lower levels of burnout, suggesting that such support functions as a stabilizing force that enhances emotional resilience and facilitates psychological recovery from daily work-related challenges. Conversely, participants who described strained, indifferent, or absent familial relationships frequently linked their professional exhaustion to a lack of emotional grounding and insufficient recovery opportunities outside of work. These patterns underscore the buffering potential of family support, particularly when it involves active listening, shared responsibilities, and validation of professional efforts. Similar results were reported by Fiorilli *et al.* (2019, pp. 781–791), who highlighted not only the importance of the work environment, particularly the role of supervisors and fellow teachers, but also the crucial support provided by teachers' families in coping with stressful school-related events. Notably, the protective influence of family support appeared to amplify or attenuate the impact of individual personality traits, indicating that while dispositional factors remain relevant, the presence of a stable and supportive family environment can significantly shape the lived experience of burnout.

5. Recommendations

The well-being of teachers, their resilience to professional burnout, and their long-term retention in the profession are largely dependent on the actions and attitudes of school leaders. The extent to which teachers are supported within their working environment not only impacts their professional satisfaction but also influences their private lives, including the quality of family relationships, psychological health, and overall life satisfaction. Importantly, preventing teacher burnout is not solely an individual matter but a systemic concern, with the family playing a crucial role either as a source of support or as an area where occupational stress may intensify tensions.

Research demonstrates that teachers differ significantly in personality traits, attitudes towards teaching, and family circumstances. The data collected has made it possible to identify certain personality characteristics that appear to protect against professional burnout. Awareness of these traits can support more effective stress management and promote the development of constructive interactions with students and colleagues. For instance, foreign language teachers with higher levels of openness to experience tend to be less susceptible to exhaustion, as they are more likely to perceive challenges as opportunities for growth and are more willing to implement innovative methodologies and teaching tools (Kim and Asbury, 2020, pp. 1062–1083). Their receptiveness to change helps them maintain engagement and avoid professional stagnation, thereby sustaining their vitality within the profession.

At the same time, empirical findings highlight that when teachers invest excessive personal resources into their work, it can lead to spillover effects into their family life, causing conflicts and emotional strain. Prolonged exposure to occupational stress has been shown to result in increased irritability, emotional withdrawal, diminished patience within the home, anxiety and even depression, which in turn undermines the quality of interactions with spouses and children and decreases overall life satisfaction. Therefore, the implementation of institutional strategies, the strengthening of family support mechanisms, and the promotion of individual self-care practices are essential for reducing the risk of burnout and supporting teachers' long-term professional and personal well-being (Ariza-Montes *et al.*, 2016, pp. 818–827; Fiorilli *et al.*, 2019, pp. 781–791).

In light of these findings, the role of school leaders is of critical importance. Several key areas of focus are recommended to foster a supportive and resilient working culture. First, authentic recognition and appreciation of teachers' efforts must go beyond occasional gestures. Systematic and personalised strategies for acknowledging daily contributions and achievements can significantly

enhance teachers' sense of value and professional motivation. Second, fostering strong support networks among teachers reduces feelings of isolation and facilitates the sharing of knowledge and experience. Mentorship programs, professional learning communities, and peer support groups are particularly effective in this regard. Third, providing personalised professional development opportunities tailored to teachers' career stages, interests, and goals enhances their engagement and job satisfaction. Development programs should be differentiated to meet the diverse needs of novice and experienced educators alike. Fourth, streamlining administrative processes within schools can significantly alleviate the bureaucratic burden on teachers. Simplifying reporting requirements and adopting tools for collaborative planning and resource sharing enable teachers to focus more fully on instructional tasks, thereby minimising stress. Finally, promoting a healthy work-life balance must become a structural priority. Implementing policies that protect personal time, supporting wellness initiatives, and offering flexible work arrangements are critical measures to prevent burnout and promote sustainable professional engagement (King, 2024, pp. 1–7; Martin, 2024, pp. 1–5).

In conclusion, the implementation of comprehensive support strategies is essential not only for enhancing teachers' professional effectiveness but also for safeguarding their family relationships, psychological health, and overall well-being. These actions should be prioritised by educational leaders who aspire to cultivate strong, healthy, and resilient school communities.

6. Conclusion

The study examined the relationship between personality traits and burnout, depersonalisation, and exhaustion among foreign language teachers, as well as the family support that helps manage it. The findings confirmed that teachers with higher levels of openness to experience, conscientiousness and emotional stability are less susceptible to burnout. Moreover, educators who sustain the passion for their profession and actively engage in meaningful activities outside of work demonstrate greater resilience, highlighting the critical importance of maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

Notably, the study emphasises the protective role of family support in mitigating the adverse effects of occupational stress. Teachers with strong familial support networks were found to experience lower levels of burnout, while those with limited family resources exhibited greater susceptibility. Family members provide emotional stability, practical assistance, and encouragement,

enabling educators to manage the demands of their profession more effectively. These findings underscore that preventing teacher burnout requires a holistic approach, integrating individual self-care strategies with efforts to strengthen family and social support systems. Raising awareness of the impact of personality traits and family dynamics on teachers' well-being is essential for promoting sustained personal and professional effectiveness in an increasingly challenging educational environment.

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