



Burnout among EFL Teachers in Indonesia: Prevalence, Triggers, and Strategies

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Abstract

This study investigates the prevalence, triggers, and coping strategies related to burnout among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Indonesia. Using a mixed-methods design, data were collected through a survey of 50 EFL teachers and follow-up interviews with 10 participants. Findings from the adapted Maslach Burnout Inventory–Educators Survey (MBI-ES) reveal moderate emotional exhaustion (45%), low depersonalization (17%), and lower levels of personal accomplishment (33%). Guided by the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) and Conservation of Resources (COR) frameworks, the study identifies key burnout triggers, including academic pressures (85%), emotional demands (84%), organizational factors (77%), and economic concerns (78%). Despite experiencing emotional strain, teachers generally maintain stable instructional performance, reflected in consistent lesson delivery and classroom management. To cope with burnout, teachers primarily rely on personal well-being routines, social support, and self-management strategies, while institutional support remains limited and inconsistent. Overall, the findings underscore the need for stronger systemic and organizational support to enhance teacher well-being and sustain effective EFL instruction in Indonesia.

Keywords: Burnout; Coping Strategies; EFL Teachers; Indonesia; Institutional Support; Mixed-Method; Teacher Well-Being.

Introduction

Mental health in educational and professional contexts has emerged as a critical concern globally, with increasing evidence of its impact on productivity, well-being, and institutional effectiveness (Halat et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2024). While student mental health, particularly issues related to bullying and academic pressure, has received considerable attention. However, the psychological well-

being of teachers has only recently begun to receive comparable recognition. Yet teachers, as frontline educators, shoulder responsibilities far beyond content delivery. They manage emotional labor, navigate complex classroom dynamics, and engage in continuous interpersonal interactions, all of which impose significant psychological demands (Lephoto, 2021). These accumulated pressures frequently result in stress, emotional exhaustion, and ultimately, burnout. A syndrome that has evolved from being perceived as a personal failing to being recognized as a systemic issue with profound implications for teacher performance, resilience, and retention (Chang, 2022; Singla, 2024).

For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, these challenges are further intensified. In addition to the typical stressors faced by educators, EFL teachers contend with language barriers, cultural mediation, inconsistent institutional support, and the constant demand for communicative proficiency, all of which heighten their susceptibility to burnout (Oh, 2023). In Indonesia, where English is taught as a foreign language rather than a second language, these pressures are compounded by context-specific challenges that create a uniquely demanding work environment. The Indonesian education system, the fourth largest in the world, employs over 3 million teachers serving approximately 57 million students across 17,508 islands spanning 35 provinces (Shaturaev, 2021).

Despite this massive scale, systemic issues persist: education experts report that less than half of Indonesian teachers possess even the minimum qualifications to teach properly, and teacher absenteeism hovers around 20 percent (Shaturaev, 2021). EFL teachers in this context face additional burdens including large class sizes often exceeding 40 students, highly diverse student proficiency levels within a single classroom, limited access to teaching resources, and insufficient professional development opportunities. Moreover, approximately 40% of education budgets are lost to corruption before reaching classrooms, further constraining the resources available to support teachers (Shaturaev, 2021). These conditions place Indonesian EFL teachers at particularly high risk of burnout, yet empirical research on this phenomenon remains scarce.

This gap is particularly concerning given that most existing studies on teacher burnout have been conducted in Western educational settings (Kyriacou, 2001; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017), where contextual factors; such as class size, teacher autonomy, institutional infrastructure, and cultural attitudes toward education differ significantly from those in Southeast Asian countries like Indonesia. Consequently, the specific triggers, manifestations, and coping mechanisms associated with burnout among Indonesian EFL teachers remain largely unexplored. Understanding burnout within this specific context is not only academically necessary but also practically urgent, as teacher well-being directly affects instructional quality, student outcomes, and the sustainability of the teaching profession itself.

Given these gaps, this study investigates burnout among Indonesian EFL teachers by examining its prevalence, the factors that trigger burnout, and the

coping or preventive strategies teachers employ. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of burnout among Indonesian EFL teachers and to offer practical insights for educators, institutions, and policymakers.

Literature Review

The concept of "burnout" was first introduced by Freudenberger (1974), who described it as exhaustion resulting from prolonged stress. Building on this foundation, Maslach and Jackson (1981) developed a more comprehensive conceptualization through three distinct dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. The World Health Organization (2019) similarly defines burnout as a condition resulting from long-term, ineffectively managed stress. More recently, Demerouti (2024) emphasized that burnout stems from a mismatch between job demands and available resources, manifesting as emotional exhaustion, professional indifference, and perceived work inadequacy.

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding burnout development. This model posits that burnout results from an imbalance between job demands (physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects requiring sustained effort) and job resources (aspects that help achieve work goals, reduce demands, or stimulate personal growth). When demands consistently exceed available resources, employees experience strain that can lead to burnout. Conversely, adequate resources can buffer the negative effects of high demands and foster work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Complementing this perspective, the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) suggests that individuals strive to obtain, retain, and protect valued resources. Burnout occurs when there is a net loss of resources or when investment of resources fails to yield expected returns. This is particularly relevant in teaching contexts where emotional, cognitive, and time resources are continuously invested in student learning outcomes.

These burnout characteristics are commonly found among teachers, who often face demanding workloads with limited support. In addition to their primary instructional responsibilities, many teachers are expected to handle administrative tasks and provide ongoing emotional guidance to students, factors that can lead to persistent fatigue (Oh, 2023). The post-pandemic period has further intensified these challenges, with teachers navigating hybrid learning models, increased digital workloads, and heightened student mental health concerns, which have emerged as significant stressors in contemporary education research (Vermila & Kurniawati, 2025; Tierney et al., 2024). The teaching profession inherently involves high emotional labor, making educators particularly susceptible to burnout when adequate resources and support systems are lacking.

For EFL teachers, these pressures are magnified. They must cope with

language and culture-related challenges, inconsistent institutional support, and constant communication demands, all of which heighten their vulnerability to burnout. In Asian contexts specifically, research has documented unique stressors including large class sizes, examination-oriented curricula, limited professional autonomy, and cultural expectations regarding teacher roles (Wang et al., 2024; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Studies from Southeast Asian countries reveal additional challenges such as inadequate teacher training programs and insufficient technological infrastructure in education, which constrain teacher professional development and classroom innovation (Sengsoulintha, 2025; Mitchell et al., 2025). These factors collectively underscore the need for greater attention to teachers' mental health and well-being. However, existing discussions tend to concentrate on symptoms of burnout without adequately addressing EFL-specific stressors or the strategies teachers use to cope with or prevent burnout.

Chang (2022) argues that burnout should be understood as a systemic issue shaped by both individual factors (e.g., coping style, motivation, self-efficacy) and institutional conditions (e.g., workload, leadership, recognition, and collegial support). This holistic perspective is essential for examining burnout in EFL settings, where emotional, pedagogical, cultural, and institutional demands intersect. Applying the JD-R framework to EFL teaching contexts, job demands include managing diverse proficiency levels, preparing culturally appropriate materials, assessing language skills across multiple domains, and navigating target language anxiety.

Simultaneously, critical job resources encompass professional development opportunities, collaborative teaching networks, technological support, and administrative recognition of language teaching complexities (Li, 2025). The COR theory lens further illuminates how EFL teachers may experience resource loss spirals when continuous investment in lesson preparation, emotional support for anxious learners, and professional upskilling fails to generate adequate returns in terms of student achievement, institutional recognition, or personal satisfaction.

Previous research has identified several coping and preventive strategies that teachers employ to manage burnout. At the individual level, emotional regulation techniques, including cognitive reappraisal, mindfulness practices, and reflective journaling, have shown promise in reducing emotional exhaustion (Karamooz & Narafshan, 2024; Wang et al., 2024). Self-awareness development through regular self-assessment and boundary-setting helps teachers recognize early warning signs and prevent escalation (Navidinia & Chokani, 2023). Peer collaboration and collegial support networks provide emotional validation and practical problem-solving resources that help buffer against teacher burnout and sustain professional well-being (Vangrieken et al., 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

Recent studies have also highlighted the role of psychological detachment and work-life boundary management as essential coping mechanisms in the post-pandemic era, facilitating recovery from work stress and buffering against burnout (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015; Sokal et al., 2020).

Beyond individual coping strategies, institutional factors play a crucial role in both triggering and mitigating burnout. Research consistently demonstrates that supportive leadership, characterized by transparent communication, participatory decision-making, and recognition of teacher contributions, significantly reduces burnout risk (Wang et al., 2015; Hornstra et al., 2021). Professional development that is context-relevant and driven by teachers' own needs enhances teachers' sense of competence, autonomy, and professional agency (Vangrieken et al., 2017). Manageable workload distribution, including sufficient non-teaching time for preparation and recovery, has been identified as a critical factor in reducing teachers' emotional exhaustion and preventing burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

In EFL contexts specifically, institutional support manifests through the provision of quality teaching resources and working environments that foster a positive school climate, which are associated with lower levels of teacher burnout (Li, 2025; Chen et al., 2025). Furthermore, psychological resources strengthened within supportive institutional contexts, such as resilience and self-efficacy, have been linked to reductions in burnout among EFL teachers (Li, 2023). However, such support remains inconsistent across educational institutions, particularly in resource-constrained settings.

Despite the growing body of literature on teacher burnout globally, research specifically addressing EFL teachers in non-Western contexts, particularly Indonesia, remains scarce. Existing studies from other Asian and Middle Eastern EFL contexts have highlighted the influence of job demands, institutional climate, and professional competencies on teacher burnout (Li, 2025; Rezai, 2024). However, comparable evidence from the Indonesian EFL context is still underrepresented. Indonesia's distinctive educational landscape, characterized by its archipelagic geography, linguistic diversity, decentralized education system, and specific cultural values, necessitates context-specific investigation.

The unique contextual factors of Indonesian educational settings, including large class sizes, diverse student proficiency levels, limited resources, and specific cultural and institutional dynamics, warrant focused investigation. Moreover, the post-pandemic transition has introduced new challenges for Indonesian EFL teachers, including inconsistent technology access across regions, increased expectations for digital literacy, and shifting student engagement patterns (Aulia et al., 2022). This study aims to address this gap by examining the prevalence, triggers, and coping strategies related to burnout among Indonesian EFL teachers through the following research questions:

- (1) What is the prevalence of burnout among Indonesian EFL teachers?
- (2) What factors trigger burnout in the Indonesian EFL context?
- (3) What coping and preventive strategies do teachers use to reduce burnout?

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory and the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory as complementary analytical frameworks for examining burnout among Indonesian EFL teachers. These perspectives are used to explain how occupational demands, institutional conditions, and personal resources interact to shape teachers' experiences of burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Hobfoll, 1989).

Within the JD-R framework, burnout is understood as a consequence of an imbalance between job demands and available resources. In the context of EFL teaching, demands such as workload, emotional labor, and administrative responsibilities may contribute to burnout when not adequately supported by institutional resources, including autonomy, collegial support, and professional development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

The COR theory further conceptualizes burnout as a process of resource depletion, whereby sustained loss of emotional, cognitive, and professional resources leads to exhaustion. This perspective is particularly relevant for EFL teachers who navigate additional linguistic and emotional demands in their instructional practices (Hobfoll, 1989). Together, the JD-R and COR frameworks guide the interpretation of the quantitative and qualitative findings by situating teacher burnout as both a structural and psychological phenomenon influenced by contextual and individual factors.

Method

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods design using an explanatory sequential approach, in which the quantitative phase was conducted first, and the qualitative phase followed to clarify and deepen the initial results (Creswell, 2014). The quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed with SPSS using descriptive statistics to examine the prevalence, causes, effects, and coping or preventive strategies related to burnout among Indonesian EFL teachers. To complement these findings, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain a more detailed understanding of teachers' experiences, particularly their strategies for coping with and preventing burnout. The interview data were analyzed using Braun & Clarke (2006) six-phase thematic analysis. Participants for both phases were recruited through convenience sampling via a publicly distributed Google Form.

Participants

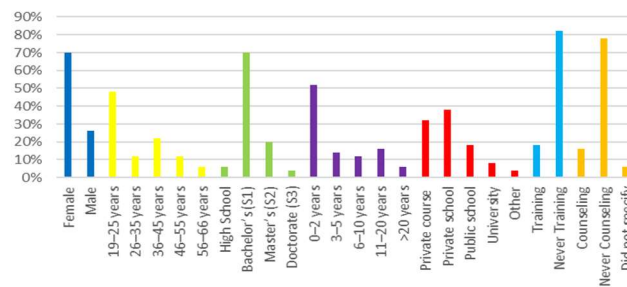


Figure 1. Demographic Profile of Participants

The study involved 50 EFL teachers from primary, secondary, and higher education institutions across Indonesia. Most participants were female (68%), and the largest age group was 19–25 years (44%). The majority held a Bachelor's degree, with fewer holding Master's or Doctoral degrees. Teaching experience ranged from less than 2 years to over 20 years. Most teachers worked in private institutions, while others were employed in public schools or alternative educational settings. The sample also included teachers with and without prior training or counseling experience. At the end of the questionnaire, participants were asked to indicate their willingness to take part in a follow-up interview. From those who volunteered, 10 participants were selected to represent variations in teaching level, years of experience, and self-reported burnout levels, allowing the qualitative data to elaborate on the quantitative findings.

Research Instruments

Data were collected using a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was based on the Maslach Burnout Inventory–Educators Survey (MBI-ES) (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) and supplemented with context-specific items relevant to Indonesian EFL teaching. The MBI-ES items were translated into Indonesian and reviewed by experts in English language education to ensure clarity and contextual appropriateness for Indonesian EFL teachers. It consisted of six parts: demographic information, burnout dimensions (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment), causes and effects of burnout, coping and preventive strategies, and open-ended questions. Most items used a 5-point Likert scale.

Before the main data collection, the questionnaire was piloted with a small group of EFL teachers to ensure item clarity and comprehensibility, and minor wording revisions were made accordingly. Meanwhile, the semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants to obtain deeper insights into their experiences. The interviews explored sources of stress, emotional and behavioral impacts, coping practices, and perceived institutional support. Each session lasted 20–40 minutes, was conducted online, recorded with consent, and transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis & Collection Technique

Data were gathered through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms to EFL teachers across Indonesia. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before respondents completed the survey. All questionnaire items and interview questions were presented in Indonesian to ensure participants' full understanding and accurate expression of their experiences. A total of 50 teachers participated, and 10 were later invited for semi-structured interviews to provide deeper insight into their experiences. All procedures followed the ethical guidelines of Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta, and confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing all participant information.

The quantitative data were processed using SPSS. Responses to the MBI-ES and the additional burnout-related items, which included aspects of workload, administrative duties, student behavior, and institutional support, were rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and mean scores) were generated to identify levels of burnout and the factors associated with them. The results were then organized and visualized in Microsoft Excel to help clarify the patterns in the data.

For the qualitative component, interview transcripts were analyzed using Braun & Clarke (2006) thematic analysis. Coding was inductive to identify recurring ideas related to burnout triggers, emotional and behavioral effects, coping approaches, and the role of institutional support. To enhance analytical rigor, initial coding was conducted by the researcher and subsequently reviewed through peer debriefing to discuss and refine coding decisions. Individual responses (R1–R10) were then grouped into broader themes, and word-based visualizations were used to highlight the prominence of particular patterns within the data. Themes were reviewed iteratively by comparing them against the original transcripts to ensure internal coherence and accurate representation of participants' experiences.

Results

1. Prevalence of Burnout Among Indonesian EFL Teachers

To provide a comprehensive understanding of burnout among Indonesian EFL teachers, the findings are presented in two complementary parts. The first examines burnout through the established dimensions of the Maslach Burnout Inventory–Educators Survey (MBI-ES), highlighting levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The second expands beyond the MBI-ES framework by identifying contextual and institutional factors that shape teachers' emotional and professional experiences in ways not fully captured by the core burnout dimensions.

Burnout Levels Based on MBI-ES Dimensions

Figure 2 presents findings related to the distribution of burnout across the three MBI-ES dimensions. First is Emotional Exhaustion, which emerged as the most dominant dimension, with 45% of teachers reporting frequent end-of-day

fatigue and emotional depletion. Although this level falls within the moderate range, it indicates that emotional strain is a significant concern for Indonesian EFL teachers.

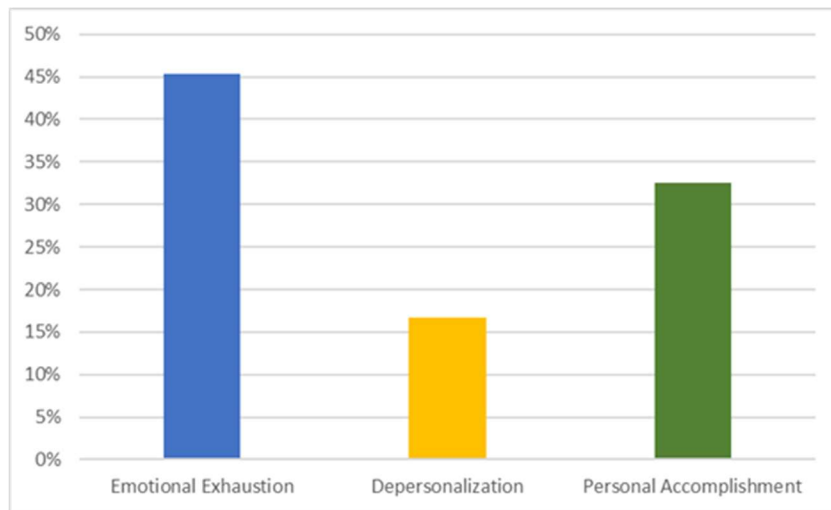


Figure 2. Burnout Levels Based on MBI-ES Dimensions

Second, findings related to depersonalization appeared low (17%), suggesting that teachers generally maintain care, connection, and commitment toward their students despite emotional fatigue. Third is Personal Accomplishment, which also remained relatively high, with only 33% reporting difficulty in feeling satisfied with their work. These results indicate that although teachers experience emotional strain, they continue to uphold a sense of professional efficacy.

To complement the percentage-based distribution shown in Figure 2, Table 1 presents the mean scores and standard deviations of the three MBI-ES dimensions, providing a concise numerical summary of burnout levels among Indonesian EFL teachers.

MBI-ES Dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Emotional Exhaustion	2.62	0.923	Moderate
Depersonalization	1.67	0.899	Low
Personal Accomplishment	2.30	0.953	Low

Table 1. Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of MBI-ES Dimensions (N = 50)

Note. Scores were measured using a five-point Likert scale. Higher scores indicate higher levels of burnout.

Contextual and Institutional Indicators of Burnout (Non-MBI-ES Dimensions)

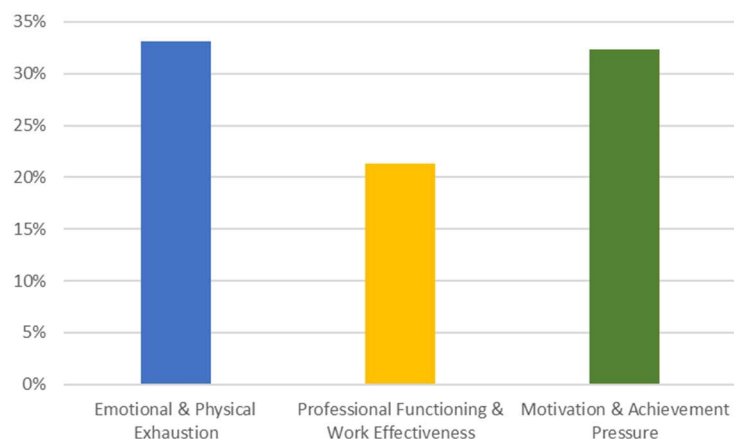


Figure 3. Contextual and Institutional Indicators of Burnout Beyond the MBI-ES Framework

Unlike the MBI-ES dimensions, which capture individual psychological responses to burnout, the following indicators reflect contextual and institutional conditions that shape teachers' work experiences but are not directly measured by the MBI-ES framework. Accordingly, the survey identified several context-specific manifestations of burnout, as illustrated in Figure 3. Emotional and physical exhaustion emerged at a moderate level (33%), suggesting that daily teaching routines, emotional labor, and physical workload collectively take a noticeable toll on teachers. In contrast, indicators related to professional functioning and work effectiveness were relatively low (21%), suggesting that most teachers can still carry out their instructional duties and maintain motivation despite the pressures they face. Taken together, these findings indicate that teachers' emotional exhaustion is shaped more by contextual and institutional demands than by any decline in their professional competence.

2. Factors Triggering Burnout among Indonesian EFL teachers

Figure 4 illustrates the main factors contributing to burnout. Academic and school-related pressures were the most frequently reported (85%), driven by high-stakes exam preparation, varied student proficiency levels, and challenging classroom behavior. Psychological and emotional demands were closely followed (84%), with emotional labor, feelings of being undervalued, and limited recognition contributing to cumulative stress.

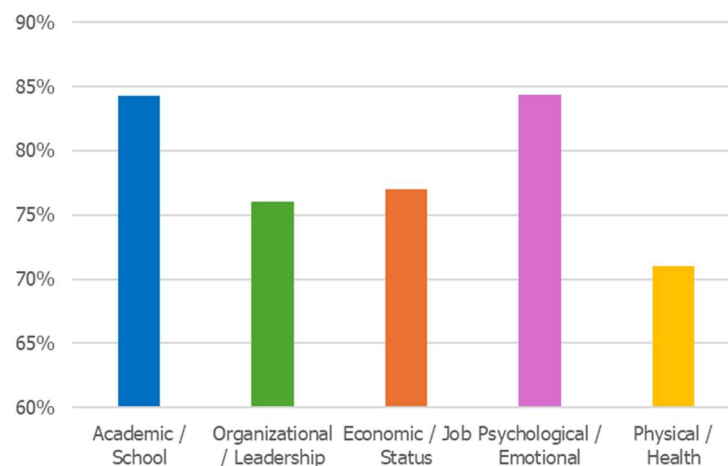


Figure 4. Factors Triggering Burnout among Indonesian EFL Teachers

Organizational and leadership factors (77%) revealed gaps in professional development opportunities and in leadership clarity. Economic and job-status factors were moderately influential (78%), with remarkably low salary, although contractual instability appeared less critical. Physical and health-related triggers (71%), including long commuting distances and insufficient rest, reflected early-to-intermediate stages of burnout development. Overall, the findings emphasize that burnout among Indonesian EFL teachers arises from a combination of academic, emotional, and institutional stressors.

3. Coping Strategies and Preventive Mechanisms

This section covers the last research question about how Indonesian EFL teachers cope with and prevent work-related stress. These strategies matter because they influence teachers' day-to-day well-being as well as their long-term ability to remain in the profession. The analysis brings together survey data and interview insights to show how teachers manage emotional pressures, handle demanding workloads, and adapt in the face of limited institutional support.

Statistical Patterns of Teacher Coping Behaviors

Figure 5 illustrates the frequency with which various coping strategies are used and teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness. Personal well-being routines (62%), such as taking time to rest, relax, or engage in self-care, were the strategies teachers relied on the most, and these were generally viewed as moderately effective (58%). Social and interpersonal support (60%) also played an important role, with many teachers drawing strength from colleagues, family members, and friends to help sustain their emotional resilience.

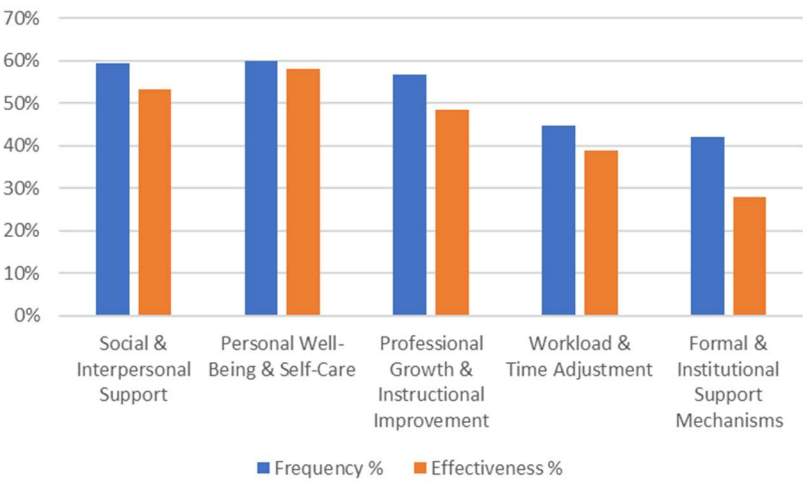


Figure 5. Coping and Preventive Strategies used by Indonesian EFL Teachers

Professional development strategies were used only occasionally (58%) and were not considered highly effective by many teachers (48%). Workload-related adjustments were even less common (45%) and were viewed as offering limited relief (38%). Formal institutional support was the least accessed overall (40%) and also rated the least helpful (30%), suggesting that teachers have very few structural resources to help them manage burnout.

Interview findings (Table 2) indicate that teachers predominantly relied on individual coping practices centered on physical recovery and emotional regulation. Rest and adequate sleep were frequently emphasized as essential for restoring energy and maintaining well-being (R1, R2, R4, R6, R9, R10). In addition, leisure and relaxation activities such as engaging in hobbies, walking, and taking short breaks were reported as effective strategies for reducing emotional strain (R2, R3, R4, R7, R9). Some teachers also adopted self-regulation strategies by prioritizing tasks and reducing workload pressure, including the use of digital tools such as AI to support teaching activities (R8). Social support from family members and colleagues further functioned as an important buffering resource in coping with work-related stress.

Theme	Sub-theme	Description	Respondents
Physical Recovery	Rest and sleep	Prioritizing sleep and rest to regain energy	R1, R2, R4, R6, R9, R10
Leisure & Relaxation	Enjoyable activities	Engaging in hobbies, walking, leisure time	R2, R3, R4, R7, R9
Self-regulation	Workload management	Reducing pressure by prioritizing tasks	R8

Practical Support	Technology-assisted coping	Using AI to manage teaching tasks	R8
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Table 2 . Coping Strategy employed by Indonesian EFL teachers

Preventive strategies reported by teachers (Table 3) clustered into two main categories: psychological/emotional and structural/professional approaches. Psychological and emotional strategies emphasized institutional recognition, adequate rest periods, and supportive communication as key factors in sustaining teachers' well-being (R1, R2). Teachers also highlighted the importance of professional support through training, workshops, mentoring, and continuous development opportunities to enhance coping capacity (R4, R7, R8). At the structural level, participants consistently emphasized the need for reduced administrative burdens, fair scheduling, access to mental health services, and more equitable workload distribution as long-term preventive measures to address burnout (R6, R9, R10).

Theme	Sub-theme	Description	Respondents
Psychological / Emotional	Recognition and rest	Institutional appreciation and rest days	R1, R2
Professional Support	Training and guidance	Workshops, seminars, mentoring	R4, R7, R8
Structural / Systemic	Workload and policy support	Reduced admin work, fair scheduling, counseling	R6, R9, R10

Table 3. Preventive Strategy employed by Indonesian EFL teachers

The interviews identified a range of preventive strategies adopted by teachers to manage work-related stress, which can be broadly categorized into psychological/emotional and structural/professional approaches. Across these strategies, teachers consistently emphasized the importance of adequate rest and institutional recognition in sustaining their well-being. As one participant explained:

“I usually choose to take a break. I clear my schedule and give myself time to rest by doing activities that do not require heavy thinking.” (R1)

Recognition and appreciation from institutions also played a crucial role:

“Schools should provide genuine breaks, where teachers are not contacted during weekends, so they can fully rest. In addition, regular rewards or appreciation activities, such as occasional outings with fellow teachers, could help create a more relaxed and supportive environment.” (R2)

Several teachers stressed the need for formal mechanisms to reduce stress:

“I hope there will be formal programs in the future so teachers receive more attention, especially those experiencing psychological pressure, such as burnout. Institutional support, such as reducing teaching hours or workload, could help prevent excessive stress.” (R3)

Excessive workload and limited professional support emerged as additional concerns:

“After attending classes all day and continuing to teach, my energy is completely drained. When I am exhausted, I no longer have the energy to prepare interactive materials, and my teaching becomes more monotonous.” (R4)

Constructive, supportive communication from institutions was also found to be beneficial:

“When I face difficulties, the institution usually helps to calm me down. Support in the form of mental reinforcement and reassurance is what I find most helpful.” (R5)

Improved scheduling and greater attention to work–life balance were mentioned frequently:

“Adequate rest is my key. Sleep, really quality sleep, really helps restore my energy.” (R6)

Teachers also noted the value of professional development opportunities and access to counselling (R7, R8).

At a systemic level, participants expressed the need for reduced administrative burdens, fairer allocation of teaching hours, and accessible mental health services.

“In my opinion, institutions and the government need to give teachers breathing room. For example, by reducing excessive administrative burdens, not assigning disproportionate teaching hours, and providing consultation services or mental support for teachers.” (R9)

One teacher further highlighted the importance of structural improvements:

“What I actually need is a salary increase and additional teaching staff so the workload can be lighter.” (R10)

Collectively, these findings indicate that preventing burnout among Indonesian EFL teachers requires a comprehensive approach that integrates psychological support with meaningful structural improvements to working conditions.

Institutional Support Availability

Institutional support for Indonesian EFL teachers was found to be minimal. Nine out of ten interview participants reported that their institutions provided no formal assistance related to burnout or teacher well-being. Only one respondent mentioned receiving non-mental-health-related support, such as free meals on Saturdays. This finding indicates that institutional responses to burnout remain largely absent, leaving coping efforts predominantly at the individual level.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that Indonesian EFL teachers experience burnout primarily in the form of emotional exhaustion, while depersonalization remains low and personal accomplishment relatively intact. This pattern reflects the classic MBI-ES profile, in which teachers feel emotionally depleted yet continue to care for students and find meaning in their professional roles (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). In relation to the first research question, this suggests that burnout among Indonesian EFL teachers manifests more as emotional strain than as detachment or reduced professional efficacy.

The moderate level of emotional exhaustion aligns with prior studies showing that teaching in linguistically and culturally complex environments heightens emotional demands (Dewaele et al., 2018; Gkonou & Mercer, 2017). In Indonesia, these demands are amplified by large class sizes, differentiated student abilities, and persistent exam-oriented expectations, explaining why teachers report fatigue without necessarily disengaging from their students. This finding is particularly noteworthy given the relatively young age of the sample, with 44% of participants aged 19–25. Early-career teachers may enter the profession with strong idealism and motivation, which helps preserve their sense of accomplishment, yet they may lack sufficient experience and institutional power to manage sustained emotional demands effectively (Van Den Borre, et al).

The consistently low level of depersonalization, despite moderate emotional exhaustion, represents an important and somewhat unexpected finding. In this study, teachers continue to demonstrate strong relational engagement with students. This may be influenced by Indonesia’s collectivist cultural orientation, where teaching is commonly framed as a moral responsibility and social contribution rather than merely a professional role. Such cultural values may discourage emotional distancing and instead promote perseverance and empathy, even under stressful conditions. While this relational commitment protects against depersonalization, it may also conceal deeper emotional fatigue and delay

recognition of burnout at the institutional level.

The study also supports the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) and Conservation of Resources (COR) models, which argue that burnout develops when job demands exceed available resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Hobfoll, 1989). The Indonesian EFL context exemplifies this imbalance. Teachers face high pedagogical and emotional demands, yet institutional resources, such as recognition, leadership clarity, professional development, and mental health support, remain scarce. This mismatch helps explain why emotional exhaustion is present even though teachers' sense of professional accomplishment remains relatively strong. Teachers appear motivated and committed, but their emotional resources are being gradually depleted, placing them at risk of progressing to more severe burnout if structural support is not improved.

The identified burnout triggers further demonstrate how interconnected academic, psychological, and institutional pressures shape teachers' experiences, addressing the second research question. Academic factors, such as managing mixed-ability students and exam pressure, were the most prominent. These findings extend earlier research (Kyriacou, 2001; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017) by showing that such pressures may be particularly intense for EFL teachers, who must simultaneously balance linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical challenges. Emotional demands, stemming from student behavior, limited appreciation, and high expectations from multiple stakeholders, further contribute to cumulative strain. This supports Chang's (2022) argument that burnout is not an individual deficiency, but an outcome of emotional management demands embedded in the profession.

Although teachers experience considerable stress, the low levels of depersonalization and relatively stable sense of personal accomplishment indicate strong internal motivation and professional commitment. This finding aligns with Shen's (2022) observation that EFL teachers often sustain relational and instructional engagement even when emotionally strained. However, this resilience may function as a double-edged sword: while it helps maintain teaching quality, it may also normalize emotional exhaustion and reduce the urgency of institutional responses to teacher well-being.

The coping strategies identified in this study further illuminate how teachers navigate these challenges. Most teachers rely on personal well-being routines, rest, hobbies, and small restorative activities. These strategies are consistent with previous findings emphasizing emotional regulation and personal coping resources (Li et al., 2024; Zhang & Fathi, 2024). Social support from colleagues, family, and peers also plays a significant role, reflecting Indonesia's collectivist culture, in which interpersonal relationships serve as important emotional buffers. Notably, female teachers, who constitute the majority of the sample, may rely heavily on emotional and social coping strategies, which could partially explain both the moderate exhaustion levels and the sustained relational engagement observed in this study.

An additional consideration is the gender imbalance in the sample, with female teachers comprising the majority of participants. This imbalance may therefore partially shape the burnout pattern observed in this study, particularly the coexistence of emotional exhaustion and low depersonalization. At the same time, the gender composition of the sample should be considered when interpreting the findings, as burnout experiences may differ across gendered professional roles.

However, the limited reliance on institutional support and the near absence of formal mental health provisions suggests a critical systemic gap. Only one teacher reported receiving institutional support, and even this support was not related to mental health. This finding reinforces the arguments of Maslach and Leiter (2016) and Chang (2020, 2022) that burnout becomes exacerbated when institutions frame it as an individual rather than an organizational issue. Teachers in this study explicitly called for systemic changes, including reduced administrative burdens, clearer leadership communication, more equitable workload distribution, and access to professional development and counseling services. These recommendations align with international studies that emphasize that sustainable burnout reduction requires institution-level interventions (Liu et al., 2025; Meredith et al., 2023).

Importantly, institutional support is not experienced equally, as organizational structures and expectations vary across educational settings. This suggests that the effectiveness of systemic interventions may depend on the specific institutional context in which teachers work. These concerns may manifest differently across institutional contexts. Public institutions may offer greater job security but impose heavier administrative and curricular demands, while private institutions may emphasize performance accountability with fewer structural supports. Although this study did not aim to compare these settings directly, the findings suggest that burnout interventions should be context-sensitive rather than uniform across institutions.

The findings contribute to burnout literature by reinforcing the relevance of the JD-R, COR, and MBI-ES frameworks in a non-Western EFL context (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Hobfoll, 1989). Specifically, this study illustrates that emotional exhaustion can develop without corresponding depersonalization when cultural, relational, and motivational resources remain strong. This challenges linear interpretations of burnout progression and highlights the role of cultural context in shaping burnout trajectories.

Overall, this study provides empirical evidence that burnout among Indonesian EFL teachers emerges from the interaction of emotional demands, pedagogical complexity, cultural expectations, and institutional limitations. While teachers demonstrate strong personal and social resilience, these coping mechanisms alone are insufficient to counter sustained structural pressures. Without targeted institutional reforms, moderate emotional exhaustion may escalate into more severe burnout, with potential consequences for teacher

retention, instructional quality, and student learning outcomes. The findings underscore the urgent need for a systemic, resource-based approach to promoting teacher well-being in Indonesian EFL classrooms.

Implications

The findings of this study offer several important implications for theory, practice, and policy. From a theoretical perspective, the results extend the application of the Job Demands–Resources and Conservation of Resources frameworks to EFL teaching in a non-Western context, highlighting how institutional conditions and personal resources jointly shape burnout experiences. This underscores the importance of contextualizing burnout theories when examining teachers' well-being beyond Western educational settings.

Practically, the findings suggest that reducing excessive workloads, strengthening collegial support, and providing context-relevant professional development may help mitigate burnout among EFL teachers. Supportive leadership and institutional practices that enhance teachers' autonomy, competence, and emotional resources are particularly crucial in sustaining teacher well-being, especially in the post-pandemic educational environment.

At the policy level, the study highlights the need for systemic efforts to improve working conditions for EFL teachers. Educational policies that prioritize manageable workload distribution, institutional support, and teacher mental health initiatives may contribute to more sustainable teaching practices and improved instructional quality.

Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study employed convenience sampling, which may limit the generalizability of the findings beyond the participants involved. Second, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to draw causal inferences between burnout and its associated factors. Third, the reliance on self-reported data may be subject to response bias. Future research is encouraged to employ longitudinal designs, probabilistic sampling approaches, and multiple data sources to further validate and extend the present findings.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that emotional exhaustion is the most salient dimension of burnout among Indonesian EFL teachers, while depersonalization remains relatively low and a sense of personal accomplishment is largely maintained. Despite experiencing emotional strain, teachers continue to demonstrate professional commitment. Burnout is primarily influenced by pedagogical demands, emotional labor, diverse student needs, and limited institutional support, reflecting an imbalance between job demands and available resources.

From a practical perspective, the findings indicate that teachers mainly rely on personal well-being practices and social support as immediate coping strategies,

whereas sustainable burnout prevention requires stronger institutional involvement. School administrators are encouraged to reduce administrative workloads and foster supportive communication, while policymakers should strengthen professional development and ensure access to mental health support. This study contributes to burnout research in EFL contexts by providing empirical evidence from Indonesia and highlighting the importance of systemic efforts to safeguard teacher well-being and maintain the quality of English language education.

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