An Integrative Approach to Burnout in Secondary School Teachers: Examining the Role of Student Disruptive Behaviour and Disciplinary Issues

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to examine from an integrative approach to what extent occupational stressors when in combination with other variables that have accredited their explicative value in accounting for teacher distress in other domains (personal, psychosocial and outside the occupational sphere) contribute to predicting and/or explaining the different components of burnout. The sample consists in 1386 secondary education teachers. The statistical results obtained confirm for all dimensions in the syndrome the explanatory role of occupational stressors related with student disruptive behaviours/attitudes and disciplinary issues (conflict management and lack of support/consensus). The remaining variables in the study (Type A pattern, optimism, hardiness, friend and family support, life events) also contribute to accounting for burnout, albeit to a lesser extent than occupational factors. Results not only confirm the suitability of the selected variables but also the necessity to design integration studies in which, besides another type of determinants, to include variables from the occupational domain. In other words, our findings suggest that student disruptive behaviour, the difficulties experienced by teachers in managing conflict and the lack support/consensus as regards disciplinary actions are 'necessary' ingredients if we are to successfully predict burnout in secondary school teachers.
Key Words: burnout, secondary school teachers, student disruptive behaviour, Type-A behaviour pattern, optimism, hardiness, social support.

RESUMEN

Este artículo examina, desde un acercamiento integrador, en qué medida los estresores laborales, cuando se incluyen conjuntamente con otras variables con probada capacidad explicativa del malestar docente pertenecientes a otros ámbitos (personal, psicosocial y extralaboral), contribuyen a predecir y/o explicar las distintas facetas del *burnout*. La muestra está formada por 1386 profesores de Enseñanza Secundaria. Los resultados confirman, para todas las dimensiones del síndrome, el protagonismo explicativo de los estresores laborales relacionados con las conductas y/o actitudes problemáticas de los alumnos y las cuestiones disciplinarias (manejo de conflictos y falta de apoyo/consenso). Las restantes variables incluidas (patrón Tipo A, optimismo, personalidad resistente, apoyo familia y amigos, eventos vitales) también contribuyen a dar cuenta del desgaste laboral, aunque en menor medida que los factores laborales. Los resultados no sólo confirman la

idoneidad de las variables seleccionadas, sino también la necesidad de diseñar estudios integradores en los que, además de otro tipo de determinantes, se incorporen variables del ámbito laboral. Nuestros hallazgos indican que las conductas y/o actitudes problemáticas de los alumnos, las dificultades de los profesores en el manejo del conflicto y la falta de apoyo/consenso en cuestiones disciplinarias, parecen ingredientes "necesarios" si queremos predecir satisfactoriamente el burnout de los docentes de secundaria.

Palabras clave: burnout, profesores de enseñanza secundaria, conductas problemáticas de los alumnos, patrón de conducta Tipo A, optimismo, personalidad resistente, apoyo social.

The burnout syndrome has increasingly become the source of an unusual attention in the last few decades in scientific literature among many other factors due to its growing incidence and prevalence, the high costs it entails and last but not least the need to identify the avenues that any approach to it must follow so as to be effective.

From the always advisable task of conceptually delimitating of the phenomenon under study it is worth pointing out that burnout is far from being a one-dimensional construct, it is an umbrella term for different negative consequences of work (emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and lack of personal accomplishment) that characterises the caring professions (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). A paradigmatic example of this occupational experience (as well as of other professional groups such as health workers) is, as evidenced by the literature (e.g., Vanderberghe & Huberman, 1999), that of those involved in the teaching profession.

As to the *status quo* of research it should be pointed out that although undeniable advances have taken place there remain important 'fissures' that hinder the advance of cumulative knowledge. The establishment of the multicausality of burnout -or, to be more precise, of its manifestations- (e.g., Kokkinos, 2007; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001), the extensive theoretical and empirical *corpus* that provides evidence for the fact that teachers (particularly secondary education teachers) are vulnerable to occupational distress (e.g., Byrne, 1991; Doménech, 2006; Pierce & Molloy, 1990) and the recent -albeit welcome- suggestions that point to the need of transcending fragmentation to seek an integration of the explanatory determinants (e.g., Sharpley, Dua, Reynolds, & Acosta, 1995), are some of the main strengths that have contributed to the vitality and expansion of this field of study. Not everything has been cause for celebration, though. The historical evolution of the issue under study has also encountered some important 'black holes': the lack of knowledge on the specific and particular meaning of the teaching activity in different cultures and/or geographical domains (most studies have been conducted in the Anglo-Saxon world) along with the researcher's tendency to focus on the 'parts' (isolated variables) to the detriment of their integration (the 'whole').

Indeed, historically there have been two main, albeit clearly different, research approaches which shared a common goal: identifying the 'whys' of the occupational distress of secondary school teachers.

The first approach, one with a long tradition in the field (and which has yielded in a wealth of results) examined and/or isolated the main occupational stressors in the field within this professional group. A wide range of determinants which involved the protagonists of the educational task (students, teachers, parents, lawmakers…) seem to be rivalling for a place in the explanation of professional distress. We mention a sample of some arguments which, with greater or lesser fortune, have become widespread in this domain: decreased student motivation, increased classroom conflict, student cultural diversity, changes in teacher-student interaction, displacement of educational responsibility from the parents towards the educational system, legal reforms, raising the age of compulsory schooling and a long list of other reasons. It is important in this regard to mention that in this approach the teacher has in some cases become a 'scapegoat' who was made responsible -at least in part- for the ills of the educational system, a circumstance which along with other demands (being a good teacher, educator and efficient psychologist able to integrate diversity and with ability to handle difficult situations efficiently…) has led to some of them to manifest marked feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and a decreased feeling of competence (in short, 'burns' of different nature). In sum, this approach to the issue has allowed researchers to establish not only a growing occupational distress among teachers but also to pinpoint the main occupational factors that explain this reality. Student disruptive behaviour and/or attitudes (aggressions among students and against their teachers, vandalism, challenging the competence and professionalism of teachers) has consolidated as an occupational distress triggering factor (see, for instance, Hastings & Bham, 2003; Kokkinos, 2007; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978). But this is not all. The difficulty in dealing with potentially conflictive situations (meeting the parents of conflictive students, maintaining discipline within the classroom, solving problems and/or student disruptive behaviour) and a perception of lack of support and/or consensus in disciplinary matters (parents, co-workers, supervisors) has also become one solid predictive argument in secondary school teacher burnout (e.g., Lewis, Romi, Qui, & Katz, 2005).

The other main research approach brings together a wide variety of studies that examine in depth but in isolation all types of explanatory determinants that fall 'outside' the school context. There is empirical work whose *leit motiv* is the characteristics of the 'actor' (in the sense of personality variables), other work has stressed the interaction context (self-others interactions), not to mention authors who have focussed their attention on issues that fall strictly out of the occupational sphere. We will explain these lines of work, albeit briefly.

In the literature, the characteristics of the personal patrimony of the teacher occupy a prominent place in this showcase of burnout-related variables. Thus, while it has been demonstrated that a Type A behaviour pattern is a 'risk factor' for stress and/or burnout in teachers (e.g., Jamal & Baba, 2001; Nagy & Davis, 1985; Travers & Cooper, 1997), other variables taken into account by positive psychology such as hardiness (e.g., Otero López, Castro, & Santiago, 2007; Sharpley *et al.*, 1995) and optimism (Maekinkangas & Kinnunen, 2003; Moreno, Arcenillas, Morante, & Garrosa, 2005) have proved their 'shielding effect' in occupational distress. 'Positive' relations with others (mainly, family and friends) have also confirmed their role in cushioning stress

and teacher burnout (Fang & Yan, 2004; Greenglass, Burke, & Konarski, 1997). Finally, and although they are outshined by other determinants (personal, psychosocial), factors of strictly non-occupational nature must be underscored. Specifically, life events have confirmed their negative influence in occupational distress suffered by secondary education teachers (Bhagat, Allie, & Ford, 1991; Otero-López *et al.*, 2006). In sum, being aware that other determinants have also been analysed in the literature (for instance, self-efficacy, self-esteem, organisational factors) and since it is not possible to include them all, we have reviewed those which, to our belief, exhibit a documented influence on the occupational distress of the teacher.

In short, and having sketched out the two main avenues followed by research, the aim of this study is to bring together both approaches in what is a clearly integrative intent so as to eventually be able to shed light on the explanatory scenarios of each of the dimensions of burnout. In other words, our aim is to clarify up to what extent the different sources of stress (disruptive attitudes and/or behaviour, conflict management, lack of support in disciplinary issues), when in combination with predictors from other domains which have been proven to explain teacher distress (personal, psychosocial and non-occupational variables) contribute to predict and/or explain the different dimensions of burnout. The hypothesis that could be formulated *a priori* is that occupational stressors are, along with the remaining variables, correlates and/or predictors of burnout in secondary education teachers.

METHOD

Participants

A total of 1386 teachers of Enseñanza Secundaria Obligatoria (ESO) were recruited. The sample is representative of the Autonomous Community of Galicia (Spain) and is distributed along typologies of schools (IES and CPI), environment (urban, coastal rural and interior rural) and gender (for further details see Otero López *et al.*, 2006). As to the characteristics of participants, the most relevant ones are the following: 823 are female teachers (59.4%) and 563 male teachers (40.6%), the range of ages is between 26 and 65 years of age (mean: 38.6 years).

Procedure

This work is part of a wide-spectrum research on occupational stress and burnout in compulsory secondary educations. The sampling was made during the second semester of 2005 and the first semester of 2006. Self-reports were circulated in different school guaranteeing the confidentiality of all data (for further details see Otero López *et al.*, 2006).

Instruments

For this study teachers completed a battery of self-reports which evaluated the

following variables: dimensions of burnout, student disruptive behaviour and/or attitudes, conflict management, lack of support in disciplinary matters, Type A behaviour pattern, hardiness, optimism, social support and life events (all the instruments showed an adequate internal consistence -the Cronbach alpha coefficients are shown in Table 1).

The *Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey* (MBI-ES), developed by Maslach & Jackson (1986), was used to evaluate the burnout syndrome. The MBI-ES comprises 22 items dealing with the frequency (Likert-type scale whose range is between 0 'never' and 6 'daily') with which teachers experiment certain feelings, thoughts and attitudes towards their work and their students. This instrument allows us to obtain a score for each dimension of the syndrome: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment.

Teachers also filled in the *Inventario de Estresores Laborales para Profesores de Secundaria* -IELPS- [Inventory of Secondary Teacher Occupational Stressors] (Otero López *et al.*, 2006). An exploratory factorial analysis was conducted (main components, varimax rotation) yielding 10 factors that encompass 66 items and contribute to explaining 51.9% of variance. The three first factors called 'Student disruptive behaviour and disciplinary issues' (31.28% of explained variance, alpha 0.89), 'Perceived Teacher Competence/Assurance' (4.63% explained variance, alpha 0.80) and 'Functional and relational aspects in the school' (3.59% explained variance, alpha 0.78) were the basis for the selection of the items that make up the scales used in this study. Following the principle of parsimony, those items which, in the opinion of both teacher and the research team, successfully represented 'student disruptive attitudes/behaviour', 'conflict management' and 'lack of support/consensus on disciplinary issues' have been selected. All of them were assessed in relation to the degree of tension they generated on the teacher (Likert-type scale: 0 'it causes me no tension' up to 4 'it causes me a lot of tension'). An exploratory factorial analysis confirmed the one dimensional nature of each of the scales; the first *Student disruptive attitudes and/or behaviour* includes the following items: 'Verbal abuse on the part of students', 'The increase in aggression among students', 'Vandalism within the premises of the school', 'The existence of racist attitudes and/or behaviour in the school', 'The students challenging my competence and skills' and 'The students taking a passive role in the classroom'; the second *Conflict management* comprises the following items: 'Having to deal with student disciplinary problems', 'Having to meet the parents of disruptive students', 'Difficulties in maintaining discipline in the classroom', 'The fact that students are constantly "putting you to the test"' and 'Not being able to deal with conflicts with students'; while the items 'Lack of support in disciplinary issues on the part of some families', 'Lack of agreement amongst teachers in disciplinary issues', 'Lack of support on the part of non-academic authorities' and 'No support on the part of the headship of the school' make up the scale of *Lack of support/consensus in disciplinary issues.*

Type A behaviour pattern has been measured following the *Bortner Rating Scale* -BRS- (Bortner, 1969). The BRS consists of 14 bipolar items with continuous scores from 1 to 11, where a global score is obtained.

The self-report used to assess the hardiness pattern was the *Personal Views Survey* (PVS) designed by the "Hardiness Institute" (1985). It comprises 50 items (its

range of answers being 1 'totally disagree' up to 3 'totally agree') which allow us to assess both its dimensions (commitment, challenge and control) and obtaining a total score. In this study, given the amount of selected variables, we have only used total score.

The reviewed version of the *Life Orientation Test* -LOT-R- (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994) was the instrument chosen to measure the optimism variable. The LOT-R consists of 10 items to which a Likert-type answer scale is applied (0 'totally disagree', 3 'totally agree').

Social support was measured using the *Provision of Social Relations* (PSR) scale by Turner, Frankel, & Levin (1983). The PSR consists of 15 items (where answers options range from 0 'totally disagree' up to 5 'totally agree') grouped in two subscales: family support and friend support.

The instrument selected to assess life events has been the *Life Events Inventory* (LEI), designed by Hammen & Mayol (1982). It consists of 55 items, which refer to different types of 'major' events (e.g., death of a close relative, serious physical injury or illness) which bring about important changes in people's lives. Teachers score the number of events and the impact level of 'undesirable' events that occurred the previous year.

Finally, a number of *ad hoc* items have been written in order to obtain socio-demographic information.

Results

Table 1 shows the internal consistency indexes (C*ronbach's alpha*), the descriptive statistics and the Pearson correlation coefficients of the variables included in this study. As to the co-variation between the different dimensions of burnout, results show as expected that emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation are positively associated ($r=$ .49, $p<$ .001), while personal accomplishment is negatively associated with both dimensions ($r=$ -.20 with emotional exhaustion and $r=$ -.23 with depersonalisation, $p<$ .001).

As to the remaining associations it is evidenced that all the variables in the study co-vary with the three components of burnout at statistically significant levels. As regards the direction of the association, different patterns are confirmed as it was expected: social support (family and friends), optimism and hardiness are negatively correlated with exhaustion and depersonalisation and positively correlated with personal accomplishment; life events, student disruptive attitudes/behaviour, conflict management and the lack of support/consensus in disciplinary issues as regards risk factors in occupational distress are positively correlated with exhaustion and depersonalisation, and negatively with personal accomplishment.

As to what variables show higher correlation rates with the different manifestations of burnout two clearly different profiles are observed. Student disruptive attitudes/behaviour, conflict management and the lack of support/consensus on disciplinary issues (the three indicators in the occupational domain taken into account in this study) represent the variables which covary to a greater extent with emotional exhaustion (*r* coefficients between .66 and .59) and depersonalisation (*r* range between .55 and .48); while per-

Table 1. Descriptive analysis and Pearson correlations between burnout and a set of variables from a number of domains.

Variable	*Alpha*	M	SD	EE	D	PA
Emotional exhaustion	.90	25.06	8.64	1		
Depersonalisation	.79	7.13	4.71	.49***	1	
Personal accomplishment	.71	28.72	6.39	-.20***	-.23***	1
Student disruptive attitudes/behaviour	.88	2.93	0.96	.66**	50**	-.29**
Conflict management	.87	2.41	1.22	.59**	48**	-.46**
Lack of support/consensus indisciplinary issues	.92	2.38	1.17	.59**	55***	-.35***
Type A behaviour pattern	.77	91.54	12.81	.31***	27***	.06*
Hardiness	.88	79.65	8.43	-.39***	-.36***	.45***
Optimism	.78	8.26	3.15	-.50***	-.43***	.32***
Family support	.75	20.14	4.39	-.42***	-.45***	.22***
Friend support	.87	25.44	4.92	-.50***	-.47***	.23***
Life events	.74	9.72	5.22	.19***	.17***	-.06*

*p<.05   ***p<.001
Note: EE = Emotional Exhaustion, D= Depersonalisation, PA= Personal Accomplishment.

sonal accomplishment establishes the most important links between conflict management (*r*= -.46) and hardiness (*r*= .45).

Next different stepwise multiple regression analyses have been conducted (see Table 2) using as criterion variables the three dimensions of the syndrome and as predictive variables a number of variables from different domains (occupational, personal, psychosocial and non-occupational domains).

Generally speaking, stressors from the occupational domain (student disruptive attitudes and/or behaviour, conflict management and lack of support/consensus on disciplinary issues) are found to be the main predictors of each of the dimensions of the syndrome. Specifically, it is worth noticing the prominence of "student disruptive attitudes/behaviour" to account for the emotional exhaustion of teachers (44% of explained variance), depersonalisation is explained mainly (30.4%) by the "lack of support/consensus in disciplinary issues' and, finally, the difficulty felt and perceived by the teacher in 'dealing with conflict' is the main predictor for personal accomplishment (explained variance: 21.6%).

In a more detailed examination of the results other interesting findings deserve being discussed. First of all, it should be noticed that regardless of the component of burnout being considered 'all' the sources of occupational stress, besides optimism, have enough predictive capacity to be selected for analysis. Secondly, and as regards the variance explained by the set of variables included in the different equations, emotional exhaustion comes out as the dimension of the syndrome that is best accounted for (56.5% of the variance), being followed by depersonalisation and personal accomplishment (43% and 35.5%, respectively). Thirdly, it should be pointed out that while friend support only contributes to explaining emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation (in both cases second step of the analysis increasing the variance in 6 and 8.2%, respectively), hardiness is only selected (also as a second step) to account for personal accomplishment

Table 2. Stepwise regression analysis taking as dependent variables the
dimensions of burnout and as independent variables a set of variables.

Predictors	R^2	Incr. R^2	F	N.S.
(Criterion: emotional exhaustion)				
1. Student disruptive attitudes/behaviour	.440	.440	960.56	.000
2. Friend support	.500	.060	147.74	.000
3. Conflict management	.535	.035	93.19	.000
4. Type A behaviour pattern	.550	.014	39.14	.000
5. Optimism	.556	.007	17.91	.000
6. Lack of support/consensus in disciplinary issues	.563	.007	17.73	.000
7. Life events	.565	.002	6.35	.012
(Criterion: depersonalisation)				
1. Lack of support/consensus in disciplinary issues	.304	.304	534.34	.000
2. Friend support	.386	.082	163.43	.000
3. Family support	.400	.015	29.80	.000
4. Type A behaviour pattern	.413	.012	25.79	.000
5. Conflict management	.422	.010	20.50	.000
6. Optimism	.427	.005	10.01	.002
7. Student disruptive attitudes/behaviour	.430	.003	6.33	.012
(Criterion: personal accomplishment)				
1. Conflict management	.216	.216	336.72	.000
2. Hardiness	.291	.075	130.33	.000
3. Lack of support/consensus in disciplinary issues	.343	.052	97.46	.000
4. Student disruptive attitudes/behaviour	.350	.006	11.94	.001
5. Optimism	.355	.005	9.77	.002

(7.5%). Lastly, there only remain some differential contributions (although they have
a lesser relevance if we consider the increase in variance percentages) to explaining the
dimensions of the syndrome: pattern A is a predictor of exhaustion and depersonalisation,
life events are only selected for emotional exhaustion, and family support only enters
in the equation of depersonalisation.

In sum, results not only confirm the suitability of the selected variables but also
the need to design integrative studies where, along with other type of determinants,
variables of the occupational domain are brought in.

DISCUSSION

In this study it is confirmed that, in general, the selected variables from the
different domains (occupational, personal, psychosocial and non-occupational) are
correlates and/or valid predictors of the different dimensions of burnout. It is however
necessary to emphasize that from the analyses conducted (correlation and regression)
the occupational stressors (whether 'student disruptive attitude and/or behaviour' or
'the difficulty perceived by the teacher dealing with conflict' or even 'the perception
by the teacher of a lack of support/consensus in disciplinary matters') are the true
protagonists in the explanatory scenario of each of the dimensions of secondary education
burnout. In a more detailed analysis of our findings it should be pointed out that

although all occupational stressors are importantly linked to each other and are selected for accounting for each and every one of the manifestations of the syndrome, regression analyses confirm that there is a clear explanatory 'specificity' between these determinants and each of the 'facets' of the phenomenon under study: while 'disruptive attitudes and/ or behaviour' is the main predictor of emotional exhaustion, the 'lack of support/ consensus in disciplinary issues' is the variable that contributes the most (in terms of variance) to explaining cold and depersonalised feelings while accomplishment appears clearly inhibited (first predictor) by the 'perceived difficulty in conflict management'. On the face of this scenario where the occupational domain seems to outshine the remaining explanatory determinants, we will start by analysing these results in relation to each of the components of burnout.

Thus, the finding that '*student disruptive attitude/behaviour*' is the main explanatory factor of *emotional exhaustion* is in agreement with a wide corpus of previous empirical evidence (e.g., Friedman, 1995; Hastings & Bham, 2003) which has confirmed that it is precisely student behavioural problems, disrespect for the teacher and amongst students that are significant predictors of emotional exhaustion. Some authors (e.g., Burke & Greenglass, 1993) point up that passive attitude of students and the challenging of the figure of the teacher (items included in our scale) are the precipitating factors in teacher emotional exhaustion. Kyriacou (2003) satirizes on these issues when he says that on the face of the lack of student motivation '*teaching in a classroom with this type of students is like trying to run as fast as possible on the sea... teachers are forced to display an extra dose of enthusiasm to bring about a positive and active environment in the classroom... teachers usually attribute to that effort their physical and emotional exhaustion at the end of a school day*' (p. 41). Although the lack of motivation stands as a central explanatory element in teacher emotional exhaustion it is also true that the occurrence of events described as deviant (Mirón & Otero López, 2005) -aggressions among students, to the teacher and vandalism within the school- also contribute to teacher distress; as Farber (1991) puts it '*having to constantly deal with violence or student disruptive behaviour undermines the teacher status to their own eyes*' (p. 53).

As to the facet of *depersonalisation* the fact that '*the lack of support/consensus in disciplinary issues*' is the determinant with greater predictive capacity is again consistent with previous findings. Specifically, the meta-analysis conducted by Lee and Ashforth (1996) concludes that the support provided by the managing team and their peers is significantly associated with depersonalisation; additional evidence is provided by research conducted by Chan and Hui (1995) who find that the strategy of searching for social support is a an important predictor of depersonalisation. It could be tentatively hypothesised that the 'lack of support-depersonalisation' link is probable mediated by a decreased perception of self-efficacy by the burnout teacher, who lacking a network of social support could inhibit their ability to maintain positive, empathic personal relations.

As regards *personal accomplishment*, it is the attitudes and behaviour that we have grouped under the label '*conflict management*' that best predict teacher personal fulfilment. Particularly, it has been repeatedly confirmed in the literature that difficulty in maintaining discipline in the classroom is one of the issues involved in teaching that causes greater burnout (e.g., Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978; Lewis *et al.*, 2005). In an

attempt to interpret our finding it seems reasonable to argue that the tension conflict management generates on the teacher (faced with the attitudes and behaviour of students-parents) may seriously undermine the teacher's personal capacity resulting in some case in the questioning of their pedagogical methods and their social skills.

Another contribution emerging from this study is that apart from the explanatory prominence of occupational variables there are other domains (personal, psychosocial and non-occupational) that 'also' contribute to explaining the burnout syndrome. The finding regarding the predictive ability of social support in exhaustion and depersonalisation confirms what some authors (e.g., Galand, Lecop, & Philippot, 2007; Greenglass *et al.*, 1997) have already suggested as to the 'softening' effect that positive personal relations have on burnout. As far as optimism is concerned, our results confirm the findings of previous research (e.g., Santiago & Otero López, 2005; Moreno *et al.*, 1995) in the sense that 'seeing life positively' has immunizing effect against burnout. Likewise, hardiness represents a protective factor against burnout (notably of personal accomplishment). In this sense, Moreno *et al.* (2005) have found that two dimensions of the construct -commitment and challenge- are the main predictors in teacher personal accomplishment. Lastly, and as regards the personal variables in this study, and coincidently with Nagy & Davis (1995), competitiveness, hostility and temporal urgency (Type A behaviour pattern) also contribute to explaining exhaustion and depersonalisation. Finally, life events are more successful than other determinants in accounting for emotional exhaustion, a finding that is consistent those of other researchers (e.g., Bhagat *et al.*, 1991).

Thus, the results of this study allow us to conclude that, against determinants from other contexts (personal, psychosocial and non-occupational) it is occupational variables (student disruptive attitudes/behaviour, stress suffered by teachers as a result of conflict management and the lack of support/consensus in disciplinary issues) that are the main contributors in accounting for burnout in secondary school teachers. There is also a differential link of occupational determinants with each of the dimensions: while stress arising from 'student disruptive attitudes and behaviour' is the main predictor of teacher emotional exhaustion, 'the lack of support/consensus in disciplinary issues' is the variable that best accounts for cold, depersonalised feelings; the 'perceived difficulty in conflict management' seriously undermines the personal fulfilment of the teacher. Our findings seem to suggest that if we want to predict the different components of burnout using a comprehensive approach (particularly exhaustion and depersonalisation) we must resort to variables from a number of domains being careful not to lose sight of those stressors linked to the occupational environment of secondary school.

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