

Burnout Syndrome And Coping Strategies Among Higher Education Teachers: A Systematic Review

Lucas Alves de Oliveira Lima 1 , Josenice Ribeiro Souza Moraes 2 , Ana Paula da Penha Alves 3 , Adonai William Garanhani Bogado 4 , Keila Lima Sanches 5 , Glaydson Campelo de Almeida Rodrigues 6 , Luísa Emanoela Bandolin Goinski 7 , Dávila Landim Pinheiro 8 , Rayssa Louza Cruz 9 , Luciana Maria Portella Alves 10

1 (Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRRJ), Brazil)

2 (Federal Institute of Maranhão, Brazil)

3 (Federal University of Pernambuco, Brazil)

4 (UNICESUMAR, Brazil)

5 (Federal Institute of Brasília, Brazil)

6 (Federal University of Maranhão, Brazil)

7 (Unicesumar, Brazil)

8 (Estácio Faculty of Medicine in Juazeiro do Norte, Brazil)

9 (Instituto de Ensino e Pesquisa Objetivo - IEPO, Brazil)

10 (Unl nilton lins, Brazil)

Abstract:

The aim of this study was to analyze burnout syndrome and coping strategies among university professors. To this end, a systematic review was carried out under the PRISMA guidelines. The searches were conducted on academic platforms such as Google Scholar, Scielo and Web of Science, with inclusion criteria covering articles published between 2018 and 2023, written in Portuguese, and directly related to the topic. The articles were analyzed in two stages: initial screening and full screening. After analysis, a sample of 7 articles was obtained, where it was possible to see the need to prioritize the well-being and mental health of these educators, both on the part of educational institutions and society in general. Effective coping strategies, such as positive reappraisal and support from leadership, prove to be crucial in mitigating stress and promoting well-being. In addition, the identification of less adaptive strategies, such as avoidance, highlights the importance of targeted interventions to improve coping skills. Contextual factors such as workload, recognition at work and social support have also been shown to influence teachers' mental health, as well as individual factors including marital status and gender. Therefore, this study reinforces the need for a collaborative effort between educational institutions, academic leaders and teachers to promote well-being, prevent burnout and improve the quality of higher education, with a view to ensuring that these educators can continue to play an essential role in shaping future generations and making a significant contribution to society.

Key Word: Burnout syndrome; coping strategies; university lecturer.

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I. Introduction

Burnout syndrome is a psychological phenomenon that affects individuals who face high levels of stress and pressure in the workplace. Characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and decreased personal fulfillment, this condition is often observed in professionals who deal with intense emotional and interpersonal demands, as is the case with education professionals (DIAS; SILVA, 2020).

According to Pêgo and Pêgo (2016), emotional exhaustion, one of the main symptoms of Burnout, is especially relevant for teachers, as the psychological wear and tear resulting from constant contact with students and their emotional needs can lead to feelings of burnout. Teachers can feel emotionally drained and exhausted, hampering their ability to provide an effective, quality teaching environment.

At the higher level of education, such as in universities and colleges, the pressure on teachers can be just as intense, but often takes different forms compared to primary and secondary education. University professors often face pressure to carry out high-quality research, publish in respected scientific journals and maintain high academic standards for their students. In addition, they can be burdened with administrative tasks such as student guidance, departmental committees and evaluating academic research. This can result in a work

overload that contributes to the emotional exhaustion and burnout of university professors (PRADO et al., 2017).

Burnout symptoms can vary in intensity, and often those affected may not immediately realize that they are suffering from the condition. As chronic stress persists and symptoms worsen, the individual's quality of life and performance at work can be seriously compromised. It is important to note that Burnout is not a simple reaction to stress, but rather a state of profound physical and emotional exhaustion that requires medical attention and specific interventions (MASLACH; LETTER, 2016).

In this scenario, coping strategies play a crucial role in the prevention and treatment of Burnout Syndrome. Teachers can benefit from approaches that help manage stress, promote emotional well-being and avoid burnout. Coping strategies are fundamental tools that enable educators to face the challenges of the work environment in a healthier and more effective way (MELO et al., 2016).

Given this context, the aim of this study was to analyze burnout syndrome and coping strategies among university professors. It is hoped that the results of this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors that affect the mental health of these professionals and identify effective approaches to preventing and combating burnout

II. Material And Methods

This study is characterized as a systematic review, which, according to Brizola and Fantin (2017), is a type of research that seeks to gather, evaluate and synthesize the available evidence on a specific topic. Through the use of well-defined and systematic research methods, which involve the search, analysis and synthesis of specific information, this type of investigation generates a summary of evidence. A systematic review is valuable both for consolidating information from various studies carried out independently on a given subject.

In this study, the systematic review focused on Burnout Syndrome and the coping strategies used by higher education teachers. The systematic review was carried out following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines, which are, according to Botelho, Cunha and Macedo (2011), a set of widely recognized recommendations for the preparation and reporting of systematic reviews, with the aim of ensuring transparency, clarity and quality in the conduct of these studies.

Thus, the PRISMA guidelines provided a detailed roadmap for conducting the review, guiding each stage of the process, from the formulation of the research question to the clear presentation of the results and conclusions. This included standardizing the search for articles, the selection of studies, the assessment of methodological quality, data extraction and the analysis of results.

The works were searched on the Google Scholar, Scielo and Web of Science platforms, given the availability of national scientific research and the fact that the full texts are free, which facilitated the review and subsequent systematization of this information. These platforms cover academic journals and articles, guaranteeing access to a variety of reliable sources for the systematic review. This made it possible to gather a representative sample of studies that are relevant to the research topic, contributing to the robustness and quality of the analysis carried out.

The articles were collected by associating keywords and Boolean operators, resulting in the following search sequence: ("burnout" OR "emotional exhaustion") AND ("university professor") AND ("coping strategy" OR "coping"). The search sequence was designed to identify only those articles that mentioned both the phenomenon of burnout and the coping strategies adopted by university professors.

Boolean operators "OR" were used to broaden the search, while "AND" operators were used to refine the search, ensuring that the studies selected were directly related to the topic of interest. This approach enabled the identification of studies that explore the intersection between Burnout and coping in the context of university lecturers, with the aim of providing a comprehensive and informed view of this important aspect of mental health in the academic environment.

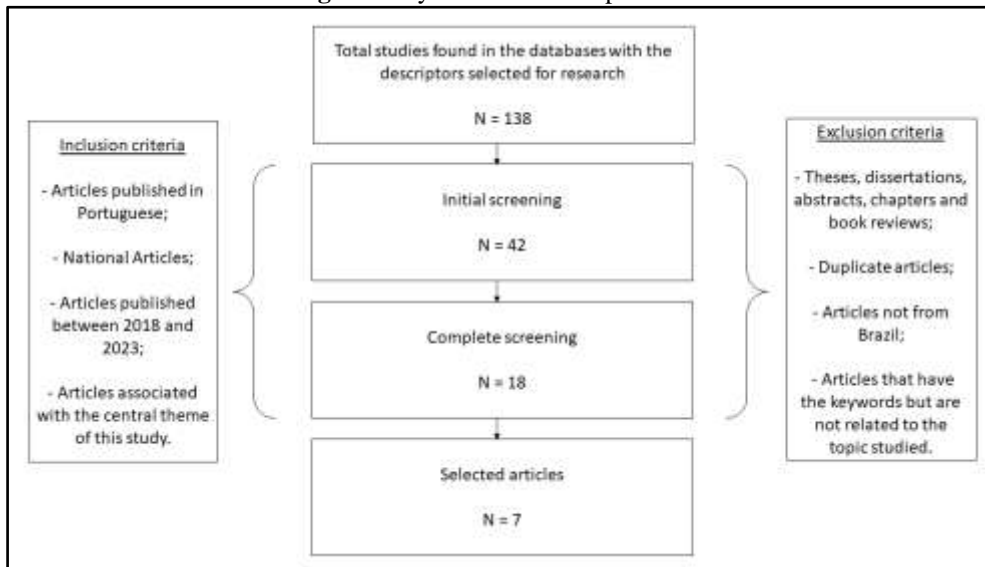
The inclusion criteria covered articles published between 2018 and 2023, written in Portuguese, which directly addressed the relationship between Burnout Syndrome and coping strategies in higher education teachers. On the other hand, the exclusion criteria covered theses and dissertations, conference abstracts, articles in a language other than Portuguese, as well as studies that did not fit directly into the scope of the research.

The selected articles were analyzed in two separate stages to ensure the quality and relevance of the studies included in the systematic review, as suggested by Galvão and Ricarte (2019). In the first stage, in the initial screening, the articles obtained from the searches on the Google Scholar, Scielo and Web of Science platforms were subjected to a preliminary assessment. At this stage, the titles and abstracts of the articles were examined to determine whether they met the inclusion criteria established for the study, i.e. whether they dealt with the relationship between Burnout Syndrome and coping strategies in higher education teachers, whether they were written in Portuguese, and whether they had been published between 2018 and 2023. Articles that did not meet these criteria were excluded at this initial stage.

After the initial screening, the articles that passed the filter were submitted to the second stage, called full screening. In this phase, a more in-depth analysis of the articles was carried out, including a complete reading of the selected texts. During this analysis, the methodology used in each study, the quality of the research and the relevance of the results to the objective of the systematic review were observed. Articles that did not meet the inclusion criteria or had significant methodological limitations were discarded at this stage.

As a result of the systematic review process, a sample of 7 articles was obtained, as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1. Systematic review processes



Source: Research data (2023).

Once the articles had been retrieved, a spreadsheet was created to serve as a central tool for organizing and summarizing the information contained in each study. In this spreadsheet, detailed information was recorded about the authors of each article, including their names, academic affiliations and areas of specialization, in order to contextualize the origin of the research. In addition, the research objectives of each study were highlighted, providing a clear overview of the topics covered and the research questions investigated. The conclusion of each article has also been duly summarized, highlighting the main results and findings obtained, as well as their implications for the relationship between Burnout Syndrome and coping strategies among higher education teachers.

III. Result

After carrying out the systematic review, a sample of seven articles was obtained, as shown in Table 1 below.

Authors	Research objective	Research conclusions
Rassi (2023)	To test a double moderation model - coping and compassion of the leader - on the well-being and performance of university professors in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic.	The results indicate that coping strategies such as positive reappraisal, together with the compassion shown by the leader, have the capacity to mitigate the negative effects resulting from stress, contributing to the stabilization of teachers' levels of well-being. This, in turn, enables these professionals to carry out their daily activities in the workplace more effectively, even in the face of stressful situations.
Nascimento, Garcia and Cornacchione (2022)	To investigate which coping strategies are most frequently used by accounting professors and how they can modulate the stress perceived by these professors.	The results of the research show that two coping strategies, "active coping" and "behavioral divestment", had a negative moderating effect on teachers' stress. In other words, these strategies helped to reduce the perception of stress among teachers. On the other hand, two other strategies, "self-blame" and "denial", increased their sense of stress. In addition, the results revealed that the teachers who proved to be more vulnerable to stress tended to use coping strategies considered to be less adaptive. This suggests that the way teachers deal with stress can significantly influence their perception and experience of it.

Pietrowski, Cardoso and Bernardi (2018)	Investigating the coping strategies used by teachers in the face of burnout syndrome	From these studies, it was observed that teachers predominantly resort to three types of coping strategies: (1) strategies focused on solving the problem, (2) strategies aimed at dealing with emotions and (3) avoidance strategies. Problem-focused coping strategies were considered positive, as they can help prevent and reduce the symptoms of burnout syndrome. Emotion-centered strategies can have both positive and negative results, depending on how they are used. Avoidance strategies were considered negative, as they tend to contribute to the development and persistence of burnout symptoms.
Xavier et al. (2021)	Investigating indications of burnout and the coping strategies of 200 professors at a federal university	The analysis revealed that female professors are more prone to burnout than male professors, but at the same time, female professors and health professors tend to adopt more stress coping strategies than their male colleagues. In addition, professors who teach in postgraduate programs show greater signs of Burnout. Women face more psychological distress and feelings of guilt, and are more likely to use targeted problem-solving strategies and seek social support and religious practices to cope with adversity than men. On the other hand, health professors tend to resort more to strategies related to religious practices than professors in the social sciences and humanities, while they seek more social support than professors in the exact and social/humanities areas.
Penachi and Teixeira (2020)	To analyze the incidence of burnout syndrome among university professors at a federal public institution in the state of Paraná. The study focused on the participants' perception of the symptoms they experienced, as well as the coping strategies they used to deal with the problem.	The article shows that the maturity and skills acquired through experience help to control stress and prevent professional burnout.
Silva (2023)	To understand how working conditions affect the mental health of university teachers, as well as their coping strategies.	The data analyzed shows that job satisfaction for university teachers is linked to factors such as professional recognition, autonomy, solidarity with colleagues and the personal and academic growth of students. On the other hand, suffering at work is associated with elements such as stress, emotional exhaustion and dissatisfaction, which can lead to mental health problems such as anxiety and professional burnout. However, teachers are adopting strategies to deal with these challenges, such as seeking support among colleagues, improving their communication and collaboration skills, and focusing on aspects of the job that provide satisfaction and pleasure. In view of this, it is crucial to promote policies and practices that create a healthy working environment conducive to the mental health of university teachers.
Massa et al. (2016)	To investigate the signs of Burnout Syndrome in higher education teachers, as well as the coping strategies they use to remain in their jobs.	In the study, around 25% of the participants showed symptoms of Burnout Syndrome. Female gender seems to have a protective effect, while the marital status of not being married is significantly associated with Burnout. Dehumanization at work was the main problem, reported by 30.6% of the participants. Mental exhaustion, fatigue and depression are often work-related, negatively affecting teachers' performance and health. The majority of participants adopt activities to reduce daily stress, such as physical activities, cultural activities and social participation, chosen out of personal interest, providing rest and energy for work. These non-work-related activities help to reduce stress and improve teachers' outlook and performance in their professional activities.

Source: Research data (2023)

The set of studies analyzed addresses issues related to well-being and coping with stress and Burnout Syndrome in university professors. Rassi (2023) investigated the role of coping strategies and leader compassion in mitigating the negative effects of stress during the Covid-19 pandemic. The results suggest that effective coping strategies, such as positive reappraisal, combined with the compassion shown by the leader, can stabilize teachers' levels of well-being.

The studies analyzed provide a valuable contribution to understanding the challenges faced by university teachers, especially in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. The well-being of teachers is an issue of great importance, as it impacts not only the quality of teaching, but also the health and job satisfaction of these educators. It is crucial to recognize that the pandemic has brought with it a series of unexpected challenges, which have affected both the working environment and the personal lives of teachers.

Stress and Burnout Syndrome are real concerns, as they can lead to a significant decline in teaching quality and teacher motivation. Thus, Rassi's research (2023) highlights the importance of effective coping strategies. Positive reappraisal, for example, is a strategy that teachers can employ to reinterpret stressful events

in a more positive way. This not only helps to reduce the impact of stress, but also promotes resilience and personal growth.

Furthermore, the compassion shown by the leader plays an equally crucial role, as it creates a supportive environment that encourages teachers to deal with stress in a healthy way. It is also important to consider the context in which university teachers operate. The pandemic has increased the demands on educators, who have had to adapt quickly to online teaching, deal with student concerns and balance personal and professional responsibilities.

In this sense, understanding how the leader's coping strategies and compassion work in this specific context is fundamental to promoting teachers' well-being. The research highlights that, in addition to providing training in effective coping strategies, educational institutions should also invest in empathetic and compassionate leadership. This can create a healthier and more sustainable working environment for university professors, allowing them to continue to offer high-quality education and contribute meaningfully to society.

The research conducted by Nascimento, Garcia and Cornacchione (2022) offers a valuable perspective on the coping strategies used by accounting professors and their relationship with perceived stress. Stress is a significant concern in the academic environment, with potential implications for teachers' well-being and ultimately for the quality of teaching. The finding that "active coping" is associated with a reduction in perceived stress is an important point to highlight. This strategy involves actively seeking solutions to challenges, taking effective action and directly confronting problems.

Teachers who adopt active coping may be better able to manage the demands of the job and find constructive ways of dealing with obstacles, which in turn can contribute to their well-being. However, identifying less adaptive strategies, such as "self-blame" and "denial", is equally crucial. Self-blame can lead to emotional overload, as teachers blame themselves for problems that may be beyond their control. Denial, on the other hand, can hinder the search for solutions and prevent effective coping with stress.

Another notable aspect of the research is the observation that teachers who are more vulnerable to stress tend to adopt less adaptive strategies. This highlights the importance of providing additional support and resources for teachers who are at higher risk of stress. Educational institutions could consider implementing mental health support programs, training in effective coping skills and promoting a culture that values teacher well-being.

In addition, research by Nascimento, Garcia and Cornacchione (2022) emphasizes the need for a holistic approach to stress management in the academic environment. This includes recognizing contextual factors such as workload, pressure to publish research and interaction with students. Addressing these factors in conjunction with teaching adaptive coping strategies can create a healthier and more productive working environment for accounting professors, as well as improving the quality of teaching offered.

Authors such as Pietrowski, Cardoso and Bernardi (2018) offer an insight into the coping strategies adopted by teachers in relation to Burnout Syndrome, a growing problem in the field of education. Burnout Syndrome is a state of physical and emotional exhaustion, often resulting from prolonged stress and wear and tear in the workplace, which can negatively impact both the quality of teaching and the well-being of educators.

The results show that problem-centered strategies are perceived as more beneficial by teachers. These strategies involve actively addressing challenges, identifying solutions and adopting concrete actions to deal with stress and the triggers of Burnout Syndrome. This shows that many teachers are aware of the importance of tackling challenges head on, which can contribute to preventing or reducing Burnout symptoms.

However, the finding that avoidance strategies are considered negative is equally significant. Avoidance, which includes behaviors such as ignoring or denying stress, can be a harmful response as it does not address the underlying problems and can, in the long term, make stress worse. Identifying this tendency among teachers is an important step in promoting well-being, as it allows educational institutions to intervene by offering support and training to help educators develop more effective coping strategies.

It should therefore be noted that Burnout Syndrome is a complex condition that is not exclusively attributable to individual coping strategies. Organizational factors, such as excessive workload, lack of resources and insufficient support, also play a significant role in its development. Therefore, addressing Burnout Syndrome requires a multifaceted approach that takes into account both individual coping strategies and working conditions.

Additionally, the research by Pietrowski, Cardoso and Bernardi (2018) highlights the importance of raising awareness among educational institutions about the need to promote a healthy working environment and support teachers in adopting effective coping strategies. This can include implementing stress management programs, formulating policies to reduce excessive workload and promoting a culture that values the well-being of educators. With joint efforts, it is possible to prevent and mitigate Burnout Syndrome, ensuring that teachers can continue to offer quality education and enjoy a fulfilling career.

In the study by Xavier et al. (2021), which investigated indications of Burnout and coping strategies in university professors, the results pointed to significant differences between gender and area of work. The

observation that female professors are more prone to burnout than male professors can be explained by a number of factors, including the social and cultural expectations associated with the role of women, the overload of responsibilities that often falls on them and specific challenges related to an academic career.

In addition, the variation in coping strategies used by university professors may be influenced by their area of expertise. For example, professors in the humanities may adopt strategies more focused on emotional expression and social support, while professors in the exact sciences may resort to more rational and objective strategies to deal with stress and pressure in the academic environment.

The finding that postgraduate professors exhibited more signs of Burnout is a relevant result, and this may be related to the increased pressure and demands associated with teaching, research and mentoring postgraduate students. The constant need for publications, research projects and the management of research groups can overload these professors, leading to a greater risk of Burnout.

In addition, the studies by Penachi and Teixeira highlighted the importance of resilience as a key factor in managing stress and Burnout Syndrome in university professors. Teachers who develop resilience throughout their careers tend to cope more effectively with the pressures and demands of the academic environment, maintaining lower levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and decreased personal fulfillment.

The research also showed that creating a healthy and supportive work environment is key to preventing burnout. Higher education institutions can play a significant role by offering resources and support programs for teachers, such as training in stress management skills, opportunities for professional development and emotional support. An environment that values autonomy, recognition and collaboration among teachers can contribute to greater well-being at work and, consequently, a reduction in the incidence of Burnout.

The results of Penachi and Teixeira's study highlight the need for institutional policies that promote an equitable distribution of workload, preventing some teachers from being overloaded while others have a more balanced workload. This not only contributes to teachers' mental health, but also to the quality of teaching and research in higher education institutions.

Silva's (2023) studies shed light on a crucial topic which is the mental health of university lecturers and how working conditions play a significant role in this equation. In addition to the factors mentioned, research indicates that excessive workload and a lack of institutional resources can also adversely affect the mental health of university lecturers. Excessive responsibilities and the pressure to produce academic results can lead to increased stress and exhaustion, factors directly associated with the emergence of Burnout and mental health problems.

Silva's analysis also points out that the lack of recognition and appreciation from the institution can be a major discouragement. When teachers don't feel recognized for their contributions, there can be a decrease in motivation and engagement at work, which in turn negatively affects their mental health. It is essential that higher education institutions recognize the hard work and accomplishments of faculty members, providing them with opportunities for professional growth and highlighting their vital role in the institution's mission.

Another important aspect is the need to promote a culture of social support in the academic environment. University professors often face significant challenges, such as professional isolation and the pressure to maintain a balance between teaching, research and personal life. A strong support system, made up of colleagues and institutional leaders, can make a big difference to professors' ability to cope with these adversities. Encouraging open communication and collaboration among faculty, as well as providing resources to manage stress and emotional well-being, is key to promoting mental health.

Silva's research (2023) highlights the importance of creating a healthy and supportive work environment for university teachers. Professional recognition, autonomy, social support and appropriate workload management are essential components for promoting job satisfaction and the mental health of teachers. Higher education institutions have a responsibility to implement policies and practices that address these issues, with a view not only to the well-being of their lecturers, but also to the quality of the teaching and research they offer.

The findings of Massa et al. (2016) are essential for a deeper understanding of the factors that affect the occurrence of Burnout Syndrome in university professors. The study highlighted the influence of marital status and gender on the experience of Burnout. In fact, the research indicated that teachers who are married or with stable partners tend to have lower levels of Burnout compared to their single or divorced colleagues. This can be attributed, in part, to the emotional and practical support that a stable relationship can offer, helping to cushion the impact of professional stress.

The research by Massa et al. (2016) highlighted non-work-related coping strategies as an important factor in the experience of burnout. Teachers who adopt healthy coping strategies, such as practicing physical activities, hobbies, meditation or engaging in social activities outside the work environment, demonstrate a greater ability to deal with stress and avoid professional burnout. These strategies act as an escape valve, allowing teachers to release accumulated stress and maintain a balance between personal and professional life.

It is also relevant to note that the research by Massa et al. (2016) highlights the need for interventions aimed at preventing burnout in university professors, taking into account individual factors such as marital status and gender. This could include social support programs for single teachers, guidance on effective coping strategies and the promotion of a work-life balance culture in higher education institutions.

Overall, these studies highlight the complexity of mental health and well-being issues among university professors, showing the need for effective coping strategies and organizational support to promote a healthy and productive work environment. The findings suggest that positive coping strategies, social support and recognition at work play a key role in reducing stress and Burnout Syndrome. In addition, these studies highlight the importance of considering factors such as gender, professional experience and area of work when developing interventions and policies to improve the mental health of university professors.

IV. Conclusion

Based on this systematic review, it was possible to gain an understanding of burnout syndrome and coping strategies among university professors. Given the unique challenges these educators face, it is clear that promoting well-being and mental health should be a priority for both educational institutions and society in general.

The research highlighted the importance of effective coping strategies, such as positive reappraisal and leadership support, in mitigating stress and promoting teachers' well-being. In addition, the identification of less adaptive strategies, such as avoidance, highlighted the need for targeted interventions to improve coping skills. The studies also emphasized the influence of contextual factors, such as workload, recognition at work and social support, on teachers' mental health. Nevertheless, individual factors such as marital status and gender were found to play a role in the experience of burnout, which highlights the importance of personalized and inclusive interventions.

These studies therefore reinforce the need for a joint effort between educational institutions, academic leaders and teachers themselves to promote well-being, prevent burnout and improve the quality of higher education. Only through these comprehensive measures and continued awareness of mental health issues can we ensure that our educators can continue to play a vital role in shaping future generations and make a meaningful contribution to society.

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