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The burnout experience among teachers: A profile analysis

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Abstract

The burnout syndrome is a public health problem and is considered a subjective experience, which depends on the interpretation and evaluation individuals make of their work. In the educational context, the causes and consequences of burnout in teachers are multiple. The aim of this study is to explore the profiles of teachers with burnout and teachers without burnout in terms of (i) cognitive appraisal, (ii) perceived organizational justice, (iii) perception of administrative tasks, (iv) perception of students' misbehavior, and (v) perceived impact of parents' role on teachers' well-being. A total of 1878 Portuguese teachers from primary to secondary education, 81% women and 19% men, aged between 23 and 66 years ($M = 48$; $SD = 7.67$) participated in this study. The results indicate statistically significant differences between teachers with and without burnout, although the two groups show an identical response pattern (i.e., parallel). The results also suggest that administrative tasks, distributive justice of rewards, students' misbehavior, and parents, negatively impact the teachers' well-being, regardless of whether they are burned out or not. The threat and challenge perceptions are the variables with the most accentuated average differences between teachers of the two groups.

KEYWORDS
burnout, education system, Portuguese teachers, profile analysis, school

1 | INTRODUCTION

Burnout is a highly relevant public health concern to the education system. In the school context, the consequences of burnout are multiple and extend to teachers, students, and the school community. Burned-out teachers are at greater risk of having additional health problems, such as psychosomatic complaints (e.g., sleep disturbances) and other psychological disorders, such as anxiety or depression (e.g., Bakusic et al., 2017; Diestel & Schmidt, 2010). The degradation of burned-out teachers' physical and mental health negatively contaminates the quality of classroom instruction and teaching-learning processes (e.g., Herman et al., 2018; Klusmann et al., 2008). On the other hand, an organization (i.e., a school) with exhausted teachers is more likely to experience problems, such as staff turnover or absenteeism (e.g., Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Burnout also compromises the quality of the interactions and relationships between colleagues (i.e., teachers) and managers (e.g., Klusmann et al., 2008). Furthermore, its consequences can extend beyond the school, affecting the relationships within the school community (e.g., Pyhältö et al., 2011).

Data from the most recent Eurydice Report (European Commission, 2021) place Portugal at the top of the European countries when considering teacher stress levels. This means that many Portuguese teachers are at risk of experiencing burnout. The definition of burnout most commonly referred to in the literature was proposed by Maslach and Jackson (1986) and describes burnout as a prolonged response to emotional and interpersonal stressors at work, defined from the dimensions of emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced personal achievements (Maslach et al., 2001). However, emotional exhaustion has been identified as the central aspect of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Some authors argue that burnout is better defined in the exhaustion dimensions, as the remaining two variables (i.e., cynicism and reduced personal achievements) seem to have different theoretical implications (e.g., Moore, 2000). According to Shirom and Melamed (2006), burnout is then defined based on three dimensions of exhaustion: (i) physical fatigue, which is characterized by the perception of physical fatigue and translates into a decrease in physical energy; (ii) cognitive fatigue, characterized by the perception of cognitive wear and which translates into a reduced ability to concentrate; and (iii) emotional exhaustion, which is characterized by the perception of emotional fatigue in the relationships with others (i.e., colleagues, managers, and customers) and is reflected in the decrease in cordiality and empathy, with the needs of others. Therefore, burnout is seen as a process where there is a continuous depletion of energy resources, resulting from prolonged exposure of individuals to work stress (Shirom, 2003; Shirom & Melamed, 2006).

1.1 | Teachers burnout

Over the last few decades, numerous studies have identified several factors contributing to teacher burnout development and prevalence. The range of factors includes personal (e.g., socio-demographic characteristics, personality, values), organizational (e.g., workload, lack of social support), and classroom (e.g., students' misbehavior) variables (e.g., Aronsson et al., 2017; Mota et al., 2021a; Richards et al., 2018). Bullying and harassment directed at teachers is an issue that is beginning to be identified (Billett et al., 2020). In Portugal, workload, perception of inadequate disciplinary policies, bureaucracy, number of students per class, and students' misbehavior and motivation have been identified as the variables that most contribute to the malaise of teachers (cf. Mota et al., 2021a). Recently, Mota et al. (2021b) verified that the perception of organizational injustice also contributes to the exhaustion of Portuguese teachers.

1.1.1 | Perceived organizational justice

Perceived organizational justice refers to how decisions are made to distribute results and how fairness is perceived (Demo, 2010). Through organizational justice, employees assess whether they are treated fairly. This perception consequently influences the attitudes and behaviors of the individuals in the organization (e.g., commitment, trust,

performance). Rego ([2001](#)) developed a five-dimensional model to contextualize the concept of perceived organizational justice, specifically in teaching. Interactional justice, the process by which individuals assess the perceived quality of relationships and interactions with managers, is characterized by: (i) interpersonal justice, defined as the perception that individuals have about how they are treated by their managers, and by (ii) informational justice, characterized by how individuals perceive access to information about decisions that affect them. Procedural justice (iii) is the dimension from which individuals assess the fairness of the processes, that is, the steps considered in the distribution of resources and rewards (e.g., disciplinary processes, performance appraisal systems, recruitment processes, and selection). Finally, distributive justice refers to the perception of justice relating to the contents, the resources, and rewards attributed (e.g., salaries, promotions, disciplinary sanctions). It is composed of (iv) distributive justice of rewards, focuses on the content of what is achieved or obtained, and it is defined by the perception of justice in the attribution of rewards, and (v) distributive justice of tasks, characterized by the perception of justice in the distribution of functions (Rego et al., [2009](#)).

Previous studies have shown that perceptions of organizational injustice are associated with higher levels of employee burnout (e.g., Capone et al., [2019](#)). However, studies investigating the association between perceived organizational justice and burnout in teachers are still scarce in the school context. Over the last few decades, numerous studies have explored the array of factors associated with teacher burnout (e.g., Aronsson et al., [2017](#); Maslach & Leiter, [2016](#); Richards et al., [2018](#)). However, few studies analyze how individuals assess and react to stressful situations (Reisa et al., [2018](#)), which, if prolonged, can progress to burnout.

1.1.2 | Cognitive appraisal

Cognitive appraisal is a dynamic process from which potentially stressful events or situations are assessed for meaning and importance for individual well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, [1984](#)). How individuals assess stressful events affects their physical and mental health and determines how stressful that event will be (Carpenter, [2016](#)). Understanding why some individuals react negatively and others positively to the same event or situation is possible via the cognitive appraisal process (Gomes, [2014](#)).

The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, [1984](#)) has come to be considered the most comprehensive model to explain the cognitive appraisal process. According to this model, the cognitive appraisal is characterized by primary and secondary assessment forms. In primary cognitive appraisal, individuals assess a potentially stressful event or situation in terms of its importance and significance to their well-being (i.e., irrelevant, benign, or stressful). The individual's relationship with the context can then be perceived as harmful, threatening, or challenging and generate feelings of sadness and anger, anxiety and fear, or agitation and confidence. In secondary cognitive appraisal, individuals assess their resources to deal with that event or situation (including physical, psychological, social, or material resources).

Some studies have confirmed the role of cognitive appraisal in the burnout experience over the last few years. For example, Paškvan et al. ([2016](#)) demonstrated that the relationship between work intensification and emotional exhaustion is mediated by cognitive appraisal. More recently, Simães et al. ([2021](#)) confirmed that cognitive appraisal partially mediates the relationship between family-work conflicts and teacher burnout. However, little attention has been paid to the role of cognitive appraisal in burnout. The available studies tend to explore the mediating role of this process between some variables (e.g., stress, family-work conflicts) and burnout (e.g., Gomes et al., [2013](#)), limiting the understanding of the contribution of cognitive appraisal in the burnout experience.

1.1.3 | Perception of administrative tasks

Administrative tasks characterize an organizational structure composed of certain rules and procedures, which can be coercive because are associated with an excess of rules and practices considered redundant and which delay the

functioning of the entire school system (Tsang et al., 2022). A study carried out with Flemish teachers showed that nonteaching-related workload (e.g., paperwork) was related to the emotional exhaustion of burnout. In the Portuguese context, administrative tasks seem to be the antecedent variable with more weight in the perception of stress and burnout in teachers (Mota et al., 2021a).

In addition to the burden that administrative tasks have on teachers' well-being, this variable also seems to have an indirect impact on students' behavior. The findings are from a study by Alzyoud et al. (2016), which found that teachers who reported student violence are the cause of that misconduct, as they exhibit certain behaviors and actions as a result of being exhausted and overwhelmed with administrative tasks. Sadik and Yalcin (2018), however, draw attention to the need to distinguish between student misbehavior and bullying (characterized by a specific set of behaviors that prevent the individuals' internal discipline)

1.1.4 | Perception of students' misbehavior

In the classroom context, student misbehavior has been considered one of the greatest predictors of teacher burnout (e.g., Vidić et al., 2021; Yurt, 2022). In a study with Australian high school teachers, McCormick and Barnett (2011) found that the most salient stressor for burnout was teachers' perception of students' disruptive behaviors. In another study of French-Canadian public elementary and high school teachers, Fernet et al. (2012) found that teachers' perceptions of student disruptive behavior negatively predicted changes in teachers' emotional exhaustion. But student misbehavior is a complex variable that includes a wide range of behaviors. Sadik and Yalcin (2018) distinguish between (1) misbehavior that influences the teaching/learning process, such as not bringing didactic material to class, not carrying out assigned tasks, or disrespecting the teacher, and (2) misbehavior that negatively influences relationships in the classroom, such as speaking loudly, being rude, or interrupting colleagues. To some extent, student misbehavior is considered a normative feature of the childhood and adolescence periods, a consequence of the physical and emotional changes at that stage of development. Even so, teachers seem to attribute part of students' misbehavior to parental educational practices, which suggests that students' parents also have an important weight in teachers' perception of malaise (Mota et al., 2021b).

1.1.5 | Perceived impact of parents

Parents are one of the most relevant educational agents in the school context, and with whom teachers have direct and indirect contact (e.g., through students). Nevertheless, in the past decade, several researchers have warned of the little attention paid to the role of parents in teacher burnout (e.g., Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009). The results available in the literature show that the role of parents can encompass a diverse set of variables. For example, Pyhältö et al. (2011) identified the lack of parenting skills and the demands of parents as the main reasons for exhaustion and stress in Finnish teachers. In turn, Richards et al. (2018) found that parental apathy and lack of interest contribute to the strain on American teachers. Mota et al. (2021b) carried out semistructured interviews with Portuguese teachers and found that teachers feel that parents interfere in their pedagogical teaching practices. Those teachers also feel pressured by the power that parents have over them and in the school context.

1.2 | The present study

Although much is already known about the possible consequences of burnout, it is still unclear how specific variables (such as administrative tasks, students' misbehavior and parents) characterize the experience of burnout in teachers. In this study, burnout is considered a subjective experience that depends on individuals' interpretation

and assessment of their professional context. Thus, the study explores the interindividual differences between Portuguese teachers in the burnout experience. Specifically, it is intended to understand whether teachers with burnout (presence of burnout) and teachers without burnout (absence of burnout) have different profiles in terms of (i) cognitive appraisal, (ii) perceived organizational justice, (iii) perception of administrative tasks, (iv) perception of students' misbehavior, and (v) perception of the impact of parents. This study uses a person-centered approach, through profile analysis, to identify qualitative differences between groups of individuals (Leiter & Maslach, 2016; Meyer et al., 2013). Although some international studies explore the experience of burnout in teachers based on profile analysis (e.g., Herman et al., 2018; Leiter & Maslach, 2016; Psyhältö et al., 2019; Salmela-Aro et al., 2019), our study represents the first profile analysis carried out on burnout in Portuguese teachers. Moreover, the variables explored may contribute to deepening the research on protective and risk factors associated with burnout in teaching practice.

2 | METHOD

2.1 | Participants

Participants were 1878 Portuguese teachers from primary to secondary education, aged between 23 and 66 years ($M = 48$; $SD = 7.67$). The main socio-professional characteristics of participants who were not, and participants who were in a burnout situation, are presented in Table 1.

2.2 | Measures

2.2.1 | Teachers burnout

The Portuguese version of *Shirom-Melamed Burnout Measure* (Shirom & Melamed, 2006), translated, adapted, and validated by Gomes (2012), was used to assess burnout in teachers, based on three dimensions: (i) physical fatigue (six items) (e.g., "When I wake up, I don't have the energy to go to work"); (ii) cognitive fatigue (three items) (e.g., "I feel I can't think clearly"); and (iii) emotional exhaustion (five items) (e.g., "I feel incapable of being sensitive to the needs of others [e.g., students, coworkers, etc.]"). Participants responded to the 14 items of the scale using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = "never or almost never" and 7 = "always or almost always"). Higher values mean a higher perception of physical, emotional, and cognitive exhaustion (Cronbach's $\alpha = .955$). In this study, burnout was assessed as a one-dimensional dichotomous construct, so the value of the total burnout score was considered (cf. Brenninkmeijer & VanYperen, 2003). To distinguish individuals experiencing burnout from those who were not, the response value 5 was used as a cutoff point, as suggested by the scale's authors.

2.2.2 | Cognitive apraisal

The *Cognitive Appraisal Scale*, developed, adapted, and validated by Gomes and Teixeira (2016), was used to measure, from five dimensions, the primary and secondary cognitive appraisals teachers make of their professional activity. The primary cognitive appraisal comprises three dimensions: (i) importance (3 items) (e.g., "My job/professional activity is not at all important/very important to me"); (ii) threat perception (three items) (e.g., "My job/professional activity is not at all disturbing/very disturbing for me"); and (iii) challenge perception (three items) (e.g., "My work/professional activity is not very stimulating/very stimulating for me"). Secondary cognitive appraisal is composed of two dimensions: (iv) coping potential (three items) (e.g., "How prepared do you feel about dealing with and solving the demands of your

TABLE 1 Socio-professional characteristics of the sample.

| | Burnout | | Total |
| | Absence (*n* = 938) | Presence (*n* = 940) | |
Characteristics	*n* (%)	*n* (%)	*n* (%)
Sex			
Feminine	726 (77.4%)	795 (84.6%)	1521 (81%)
Masculine	212 (22.6%)	145 (15.4%)	357 (19%)
Qualifications			
Graduation	704 (75.1%)	748 (79.6%)	1452 (77.3%)
Master	215 (22.9%)	181 (19.3%)	396 (21.1%)
PhD	19 (2.0%)	11 (1.2%)	30 (1.6%)
Years of experience			
3 years or less	18 (1.9%)	6 (0.6%)	24 (1.3%)
4–9 years	66 (7%)	34 (3.6%)	100 (5.3%)
10–20 years	276 (29.4%)	246 (26.2%)	522 (27.8%)
More than 20 years	578 (61.6%)	654 (69.6%)	1232 (65.6%)
Type of school			
Public	903 (96.3%)	918 (50.4%)	1821 (97%)
Private	35 (3.7%)	22 (38.6%)	57 (3%)

work?"); and (v) control perception (three items) (e.g., "To what extent do you feel you have control over what should be done in your work?"). Participants responded to the 15 items using a 7-point Likert scale (e.g., 0 = "not at all important to me" and 6 = "very important to me"). For this study, items 1–3 and 7–15 were reversed so that higher values indicate a more negative cognitive appraisal in the different dimensions of the scale (Cronbach's α = .905). It is also important to mention that only the subjects who attributed a response value equal to or greater than two, in the three items of the importance subscale, were included in the final sample of this study. This procedure meets the recommendations of the authors of the scale, since only individuals who assess their professional activity as important will be able to mobilize strategies to deal with the profession's demands.

2.2.3 | Perceived organizational justice

Based on five dimensions, the *Organizational Justice Perception Scale*, developed, validated, and adapted by Rego (2001), assesses teachers' perception of organizational justice in their professional context. Specifically: (i) interpersonal fairness (three items) (e.g., "My managers deal with me honestly and ethically"); (ii) informational justice (three items) (e.g., "Before deciding on matters that concern me, my managers try to hear my views"); (iii) procedural fairness (three items) (e.g., "The criteria used for promotions are fair"); (iv) distributive fairness of rewards (five items) (e.g., "Considering the stress and pressures of my professional activity, the rewards I receive are fair"); and (v) distributive justice of tasks (three items) (e.g., "The teaching service that has been distributed to me is fair"). Participants responded to the 17 items on the scale using a 6-point Likert-type scale (1 = "completely false" and 6 = "completely true"). For this study, items 1–16 were inverted. Hence higher values mean a greater perception of organizational injustice in the different dimensions of the scale (Cronbach's α = .955).

The variables "administrative tasks," "students' misbehavior," and "parents" were accessed using two questions per each variable. These questions were based on the results of a previous qualitative study on Portuguese teacher burnout (Mota et al., 2021b).

2.2.4 | Perception of administrative tasks

The impact of administrative tasks on teachers was assessed through two questions: (i) "Administrative tasks interfere with my motivation to teach"; and (ii) "Responding to administrative tasks does not interfere with my well-being." Participants answered the questions using a 6-point Likert scale (1 = "completely disagree" and 6 = "completely agree"). Higher values mean the perception of a more negative impact of administrative tasks on teachers' well-being (Cronbach's α = .505).

2.2.5 | Perception of students' misbehavior

The impact of students' misbehavior on teachers was assessed through two questions: (i) "Students' misbehavior in the classroom is a great source of weariness for me"; and (ii) "Students' misbehavior in the classroom interferes with my motivation to teach." Participants answered the questions using a 6-point Likert scale (1 = "completely disagree" and 6 = "completely agree"). Higher values indicate the perception of a more negative impact of students' misbehavior on teachers' well-being (Cronbach's α = .878).

2.2.6 | Perceived impact of parents

To assess the impact of parents on teachers, participants answered two questions: (i) "Parents have too much power in the school"; and (ii) "Parents make too many demands on teachers." Participants answered the questions using a 6-point Likert scale (1 = "completely disagree" and 6 = "completely agree"). Higher values mean the perception of a more negative impact of parents on teachers' well-being (Cronbach's α = .777).

2.3 | Procedure

The measures mentioned above were made available online, between September 2017 and February 2018, through the "Google Forms" platform. Appropriate ethical precautions were taken to prevent the recollection of potentially identifying information from the participants, and in an effort to protect the participants' personal information. An email was sent to all Portuguese schools registered in the Ministry of Education to recruit teachers for the study. The study's objectives and data confidentiality were clearly stated in the email and the consent form, and it was stated that their participation was voluntary. Participants were asked to refer to the current academic year. This study was previously authorized by the Ethics Submission for Social and Human Sciences of the University of Minho (SECSH 020/2017).

3 | RESULTS

A profile analysis was conducted to explore teachers' responses with and without burnout, according to the assumptions suggested by Johnson and Wichern (2007). The study included 13 latent variables: primary cognitive appraisal (importance, threat perception, and challenge perception), secondary cognitive appraisal (coping potential

and control perception), perception of organizational justice (interpersonal justice, informational justice, procedural justice, distributive justice of rewards and Distributive justice of tasks), administrative tasks, students' misbehavior, and parents. All items used a similar response scale (six or seven points). Higher values in the different subscales correspond to more negative perceptions.

Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations of the two groups of teachers. The results indicate that teachers experiencing burnout have higher mean values in all analyzed variables.

The parallelism test (Figure 1) indicates that the profiles are parallel, $F (12, 22512) = 47.17$, $p < .001$. However, the profiles are not coincident, $F (1, 1876) = 684.36$, $p < .001$. The test of equality of means indicates differences between the two groups, $F (12, 22512) = 2876.89$, $p < .001$.

Mean tests demonstrate significant differences between teachers with burnout and teachers without burnout in all analyzed variables (i.e., cognitive appraisal dimensions, organizational justice, administrative tasks, students' misbehavior, and parents).

Concerning cognitive appraisal, teachers without burnout perceive their profession as more important than teachers with burnout, $t (1878) = 35.31$, $p < .001$. In turn, teachers with burnout rate their profession as significantly more disturbing and negative, $t (1878) = 79.55$, $p < .001$, while teachers without burnout perceive their work as significantly more stimulating and exciting, $t (1878) = 65.52$, $p < .001$. Teachers without burnout feel that they have significantly more personal resources to deal with the demands of their professional activity, $t (1878) = 79.49$, $p < .001$, and more decision-making power over their work, $t (1878) = 73.25$, $p < .001$.

TABLE 2   Descriptive analysis of the profile analysis ($n = 1878$).

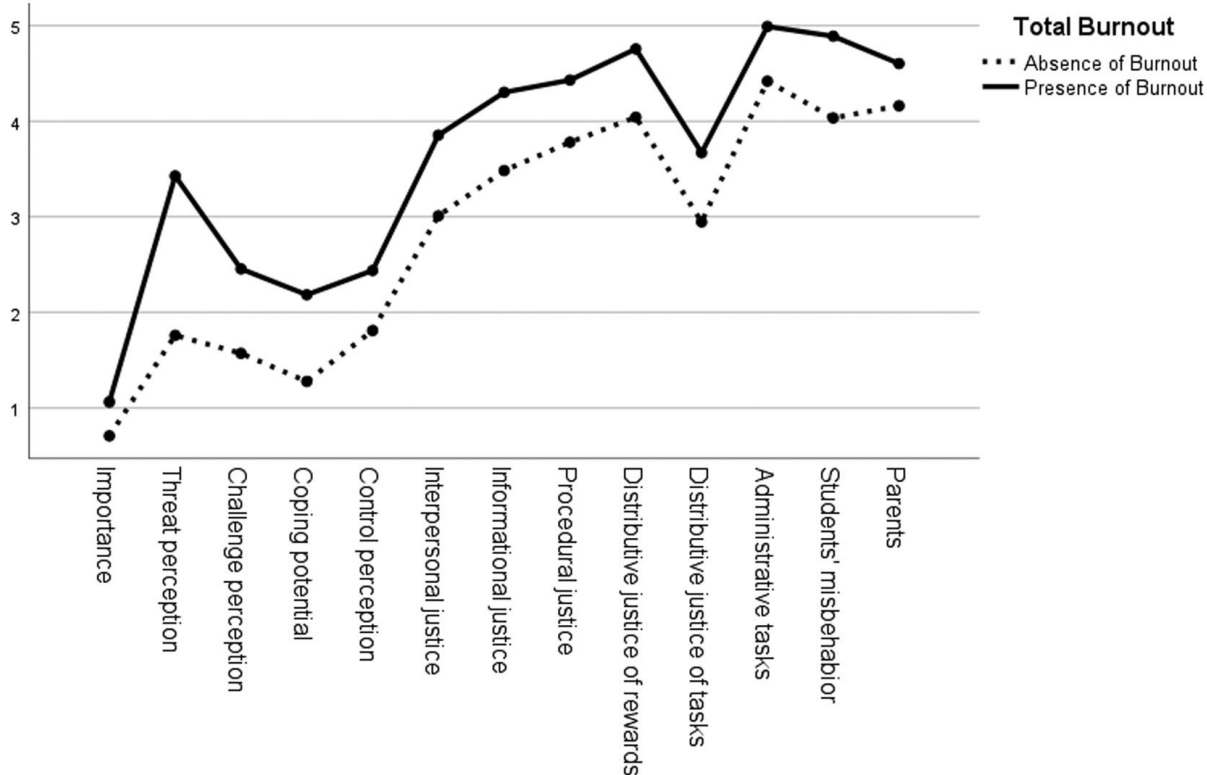| | Burnout | | | |
| | Absence ($n = 938$) | | Presence ($n = 940$) | |
Latent variables	M	SD	M	SD
Primary cognitive appraisal				
Importance	0.71	0.78	1.06	1.05
Threat perception	1.76	1.32	3.43	1.33
Challenge perception	1.57	1.09	2.45	1.20
Secondary cognitive appraisal				
Coping potential	1.28	0.72	2.18	0.95
Control perception	1.81	0.94	2.44	1.09
Organizational justice				
Interpersonal justice	3.01	1.27	3.86	1.29
Informational justice	3.48	1.34	4.30	1.29
Procedural justice	3.78	1.15	4.43	1.11
Distributive justice of rewards	4.04	1.25	4.76	1.04
Distributive justice of tasks	2.95	0.98	3.67	1.04
Administrative tasks	4.42	1.24	4.99	1.12
Students' misbehavior	4.04	1.49	4.89	1.29
Parents	4.16	1.24	4.60	1.17

Abbreviations: M, mean; SD, standard deviation.

FIGURE 1 Profiles of teachers with and without burnout.

Regarding the dimensions of the perception of organizational justice, the results also indicate significant differences between teachers with and without burnout. More specifically, teachers with burnout perceive greater interpersonal, t (1878) = 92,615, $p < .001$, informational, t (1878) = 100,216, $p < .001$, and procedural injustices, t (1878) = 120,281, $p < .001$. These teachers also perceive greater distributive justice of rewards, t (1878) = 127,206, $p < .001$, and distributive justice of tasks, t (1878) = 111,137, $p < .001$. Finally, teachers with burnout perceive a significantly stronger negative impact of administrative tasks, t (1878) = 129,649, $p < .001$, students' misbehavior, t (1878) = −107,601, $p < .001$, and role of parents, t (1878) = 117,197, $p < .001$.

The profile analysis also showed group differences in the amount of response to each variable and that differences in some variables are smaller. The variables where the difference in mean responses between the two groups is smaller are the coping potential ($M = 2.44$ for teachers with burnout and $M = 1.81$ for teachers without burnout), followed by the importance of parents ($M = 4.60$ for professors with burnout and $M = 6.16$ for professors without burnout). These are the variables whose negative impact on teachers' well-being is more similar between the two groups.

4 | DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to analyze whether teachers experiencing burnout and teachers not experiencing burnout have different profiles in terms of (i) cognitive appraisal, (ii) perceived organizational justice, (iii) perception of bureaucratic tasks, (iv) perception of students' misbehavior, and (v) perception of the effect of parents. The results showed that the two groups have identical response patterns. When the mean of a variable is higher in a group, it tends to be higher in the other; when it tends to be lower in one group, it also tends to be lower in the other.

4.1 | Variables with a particularly negative impact on teachers

The results of our study indicate that there is a set of variables that have a particularly negative effect on teachers' well-being, regardless of whether they are or not with burnout: administrative tasks, distributive justice of rewards, students' misbehavior, and parents. Teachers in Portugal often complain about administrative tasks (e.g., Gomes & Teixeira, 2016; Mota et al., 2021b). This phenomenon is also observed in teachers worldwide (e.g., Rajendran et al., 2020). Our results indicate that teachers who are not in burnout also feel the excessive weight of administrative tasks. This suggests the need to lessen the bureaucratic burden of increasingly complex school processes. It is vital that the education system in general, and schools in particular, allow teachers to focus on tasks directly related to instruction and teaching in the classroom. Administrative duties and processes distract teachers from their larger mission and should also be minimized. However, bureaucracy not always need be negative and coercive. Some authors even suggest that teacher burnout can be alleviated by enabling school bureaucracy. This implies that school leaders allows teachers to share power and authority, and exercise professional judgment in teaching (Tsang et al., 2022).

Both groups of teachers show high scores of perceived unfairness in awarding rewards (i.e., distributive justice of rewards). This issue has received little attention from researchers in Portugal. In a recent qualitative study carried out with Portuguese teachers, reports of dissatisfaction with higher hierarchical decisions emerged, including the reference to retaliations (Mota et al., 2021b). According to Rego (2002), workers who perceive decisions as unfair tend to develop negative attitudes and behaviors toward the organization. These behaviors can manifest through professional dissatisfaction, but they can also be reflected in a more accentuated way in low performance or absenteeism, affecting both burned-out and nonburned-out teachers.

Students' misbehavior has also been identified as one of the leading causes of burnout in teachers in Portugal (cf. Mota et al., 2021a) and other countries (e.g., McCormick & Barnett, 2011). According to a recent report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), among the 37 member countries that are part of that intergovernmental organization, Portugal is the country where teachers perceive to have more problems regarding students' misbehavior in their classroom (OECD, 2014). Lopes and Oliveira (2022) found that student-related factors (e.g., low performance) are better predictors of students' misbehavior than teacher-related factors (e.g., years of experience). Interestingly, the most recent results of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA, 2018) show that Portugal's scores are above average in reading, mathematics, and science (OECD, 2019). This may mean that the effect of students' misbehavior on teachers' burnout depends on how teachers interpret and perceive certain behaviors in the classroom and not just on objective student performance. The results of a recent study with Italian teachers corroborates this hypothesis. Fiorilli et al. (2017) found that burned-out Italian teachers tend to feel more intense negative emotions during conflicts with misbehaving students. Teachers who are particularly affected by the negative impact of indiscipline in their classrooms would benefit from adequate training to learn effective classroom management strategies. However, school are characterized by an inflexible structure (e.g., number of students per classroom), which does not always allow for an effective response to the behavioral and learning needs of all students (Oakes et al., 2013). To respond to this multiplicity of student characteristics, it may be useful for Portuguese schools to develop and implement three-tiered models of prevention within the general school structure. In a study carried out in two American high schools, Oakes et al. (2013) found that most teachers with high fidelity in the implementation of the three-tiered models of prevention plan experienced lower levels of burnout, when compared to the average levels for the country.

The results of our study also indicate that teachers' perception of parental power at school, and the demands parents make of teachers, have a negative impact on teachers' well-being. For the teachers in this study, parents are one of the primary stress causes. Although the role of parents seems quite relevant in the Portuguese context, studies on its effect on burnout in teachers are almost nonexistent (Mota et al., 2021b). Also, at the international level, few studies have drawn attention to parents' negative impact on teachers' well-being. More recently, some researchers have brought the issues of bullying and harassment into the equation teacher burnout and parents.

For example, in a study with Australian teachers, 80% of teachers reported being victims of bullying or harassment by parents or students in the past 12 months. The most common behaviors of parents were verbal aggression and threats (Billett et al., 2020). In Portugal, there are still no studies that explore the impact of bullying and parental harassment on teachers and how these behaviors contribute to burnout in teachers. The lack of research in this area is surprising, given the reports presented by the Portuguese media on parental physical and psychological violence against teachers over the past few years (Capucho, 2018; Matos, 2019). Consequently, it is only possible to raise clues or hypotheses on this issue.

One of the most plausible hypotheses regarding the increase in parental pressure on teachers concerns the emergence of cyberbullying (i.e., bullying carried out through digital platforms). The proliferation of groups of parents, organized on digital platforms (e.g., "Whatsapp"), publicized (often in an aggressive way) situations that until a few years ago were limited to the classrooms (Küçüksüleymanoğlu, 2019; Macaulay et al., 2020). Kopecký and Szotkowski (2017), in a study of 5136 Czech primary and secondary school teachers, found that a fifth of teachers had been the target of cyberbullying, perpetrated mostly by students and parents. As early as 2011, a study by the University of Plymouth (Phippen, 2011) had shown that 35% of teachers had been targets of cyberbullying by "hate groups" through platforms such as "Facebook," "RateMyTeacher" and "YouTube." Seventy-two percent of offenders were students, and 26% were parents of students.

Although other studies have identified bullying and teacher harassment as a consistent predictor of dropping out of the profession (e.g., Curran et al., 2019), in Portugal, only a small number of teachers drop out of the teaching profession (1.9% in 2015) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2017, as cited in Lopes & Oliveira, 2020). The results of our study suggest that teachers, even those with burnout, rate their profession as vital to them. Furthermore, previous studies with Portuguese teachers concluded that even reporting high levels of stress and burnout, teachers are generally satisfied with the profession (Ferreira & Martinez, 2012). The attribution of importance to the job may be related to the career choice made by the teachers, specifically with their intrinsic motivation (e.g., personal fulfillment, growth, mission). According to Herzberg (1966), a pioneering author in the study of motivation and job satisfaction, intrinsic factors are associated with job satisfaction, but their absence does not lead to job dissatisfaction. Therefore, satisfaction with the teaching profession seems more related to satisfying higher needs, such as establishing positive social relationships in the workplace, than to more material needs, such as salary (Lopes & Oliveira, 2020). Although dissatisfaction with salary has been identified in the international literature as a predictor of professional dissatisfaction and burnout in teachers (Kroupis et al., 2017), recent data from the OECD (OECD, 2018) show that Portugal ranks second among countries where the teaching class receives higher salaries, and where Portuguese teachers earn more than professionals from other areas, with equivalent higher education. On the other hand, Portuguese teachers do not feel valued by society (Liebowitz et al., 2018).

4.2 | Variables with more pronounced differences between teachers

Threat perception and challenge perception were the variables with the larger mean differences between teachers with burnout and those without burnout. For teachers with burnout, the degree to which an event or situation is considered disruptive or harmful (i.e., threat perception) is the most prominent dimension of cognitive appraisal. In another study in Portugal, Gomes et al. (2013) found that threat perception positively related to teachers' burnout. According to the transactional perspective of Lazarus and Folkman (1984), individuals assess whether the lack of resources to deal with certain situations represents a threat. When a lack of resources is considered a threat, individuals tend to adopt ineffective management strategies and focus on finding resources to deal with the threat rather than its source. Therefore, threat perception is related to adopting inappropriate management strategies and the lack of control over tasks. According to Maslach and Leiter (1999), teachers are vulnerable to burnout because they are regularly involved in situations of high emotional complexity. In our study, it is in the threat perception

variable that the groups stand out the most, suggesting that burned-out teachers, in particular, need the support to attribute new (i.e., positive) meanings to the events and situations of their daily lives.

Interestingly, in our study, nonburned-out teachers tend to experience more threats related to the profession than positive feelings of stimulation and challenge (i.e., perceived challenge). Salmela-Aro et al. (2019) also found a profile of teachers at risk of emotional exhaustion despite being committed to the profession. These results suggest the need to develop interventions to successfully help teachers use effective management strategies to face daily professional challenges. According to Maslach et al. (2001), burnout develops gradually and in the individual's work environment. The results of our study reinforce the idea that burnout is an evolutionary process that can be detected at an early stage and targeted with timely intervention. It might be useful to develop support structures (e.g., promoting organizational identification) in Portuguese schools that can provide cognitive-emotional support to teachers and promptly identify alarm signals given by teachers. Previous studies have already shown that organizational identification is negatively related to teacher burnout, since, by strengthening the sense of belonging, teachers tend to perceive their colleagues more positively, which in turn leads them to work in a more collaborative and supportive way (Avanzi et al., 2018).

4.3 | Limitations

There are at least three possible limitations to the results of this study. To the best of our knowledge, this study represents the first profile analysis on burnout in Portuguese teachers, making it difficult to scope our research. More studies of this nature must be carried out in the future to understand deeper the interindividual differences between Portuguese teachers in the burnout experience. Furthermore, the results obtained should be interpreted with caution, as they were collected online, from selfreport instruments, and are sensitive to various biases (e.g., social desirability, order of the items). Finally, the nature of the statistical analyses may also limit the results obtained in this study. Although the profile analysis made it possible to differentiate the two groups of teachers, this statistical technique can force the combination of several different groups and, thus, cause the loss of essential distinctions. It may be relevant, in future studies, to start from the difference between these two groups of teachers to apply more elaborated statistical techniques.

5 | CONCLUSION

The characteristics of the current educational context suggest that Portuguese schools are perceived by teachers as a risky environment for their mental health (European Commission, 2021). The results of our study show that half (50%) of the participants are in burnout. This is alarming and underlines the urgency of developing intervention, preventive, and remedial measures in Portuguese schools. Investing in teachers' mental health and improving their working conditions seems imperative.

The parallelism found between teachers with and without burnout in many variables, suggests that it is possible to identify those that most contribute to negative professional experiences in the school context. It is now known that the burnout experience can present itself in different ways and vary with time (Leiter & Maslach, 2016). Therefore, future studies must seek to understand the stability of the burnout experience over time (e.g., through longitudinal studies). Our results also indicate that investing in strategies to reduce the negative effect of some school variables (e.g., bureaucracy, students' misbehavior) can benefit teachers' mental health with burnout and those who do not perceive high levels of stress and chronic malaise.

Future studies may use similar profile analysis techniques (e.g., latent profile analysis) to explore the existence of different profiles among teachers with and without burnout. This will allow us to identify boundaries in the burnout experience and distinguish patterns of professional life experience. On the other hand, it is necessary to study emerging

issues, particularly the role of social media in teacher-parent-student relationships. The pressure that social networks place on these relationships may, in the short term, be a factor in teachers' weariness, equally or more significant than students' misbehavior in the classroom. Research in this area will have to evolve at least as fast as the phenomenon in question, which is of significant importance for the health of teachers and the education system.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in repositorium sdum at https://repositorium.sdum.uminho.pt/bitstream/1822/79614/1/Ana%20Isabel%20de%20Bastos%20Mota.pdf.

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