



## EXPLORING ANGER MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN ADDRESSING TEACHER BURNOUT

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### Abstract:

Teacher burnout is frequently accompanied by unmanaged anger that disrupts instructional quality and professional stability. This study aims to analyze the forms of teacher anger, identify anger management strategies applied in classroom settings, and examine their impact on burnout and teaching quality. Using a qualitative case-based approach, data were collected from teachers through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, and were examined using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that anger, manifested in verbal reactions, nonverbal expressions, and internal emotional suppression, is linked to emotional exhaustion. Teachers applied physiological regulation, cognitive reframing, spiritual-reflective practices, and controlled behavioral responses as management strategies. These strategies were associated with reduced emotional exhaustion, improved teacher–student relationships, more conducive classroom climates, and strengthened professional conduct. This study contributes by positioning anger as a specific operational dimension within burnout discourse. The findings imply that structured emotional regulation training should be integrated into teacher professional development programs.

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## INTRODUCTION

Teacher burnout has become a critical social issue because teachers play a central role in shaping future generations and maintaining the quality of education systems. When teachers experience prolonged emotional exhaustion, the impact extends beyond individual well-being to students, schools, and society at large (Khrapov & Baeva, 2022; Oliveira, Roberto, Veiga-Simão, & Marques-Pinto, 2022; Sperati et al., 2024). High levels of stress among teachers have been reported in various educational contexts, indicating that burnout is not an isolated phenomenon but a widespread concern. Emotional strain often reduces instructional quality, weakens teacher–student relationships, and increases turnover intentions. Consequently, addressing burnout is not only a matter of occupational health but also of educational sustainability (Kassandrinou, Lainidi, Mouratidis, & Montgomery, 2023; J. Bin Li, Yang, Zhang, Leung, & Li, 2021; Sperati et al., 2024). Given teachers' strategic role in social development, identifying effective approaches to mitigate burnout is essential to ensure stable learning environments and long-term societal progress.

In practice, teachers face complex demands that intensify psychological pressure. They are expected to meet curriculum targets, manage diverse classroom behaviors, complete administrative tasks, and adapt to ongoing policy changes. These cumulative

demands frequently trigger emotional reactions, particularly anger, frustration, and irritability (Bolat, 2023; M. Hasanah, Arafat, Barni, Raya, & Aprilianto, 2024). Field observations indicate that unmanaged anger can manifest in harsh communication, reduced patience, and strained collegial interactions. Such conditions create a cycle in which emotional exhaustion fuels negative behavior, which in turn deepens burnout symptoms. Many teachers report lacking structured strategies to regulate intense emotions, often suppressing anger or expressing it impulsively (Matadi, 2023; Su, Chen, Li, Shi, & Fang, 2021). This phenomenon illustrates a practical problem in educational settings: burnout is closely intertwined with insufficient emotional regulation skills, particularly anger management, which remains under-addressed in professional development programs.

Previous studies have explored burnout and emotional regulation from various perspectives. For example, research by Li et al. (2022) and Cano et al. (2020) demonstrated that adaptive emotion regulation strategies contribute positively to teacher well-being and classroom engagement. Sidik et al. (2024), Zainal et al. (2022), and Faidul et al. (2024) highlighted that unresolved school conflicts intensify stress and may lead to burnout. Sholeh et al. (2024) emphasized the psychological toll of prolonged occupational stress among educators, while Xueyun et al. (2025), Hemanthakumara (2024) examined the relationship between emotional labor and job satisfaction. Although these studies provide valuable insights into stress and emotion regulation, they tend to treat anger as part of general emotional processes rather than as a distinct focus. Consequently, limited attention has been given to anger management strategies as a specific intervention framework, revealing a significant research gap that warrants systematic investigation.

The novelty of this study lies in positioning anger management strategies as a central and targeted approach to addressing teacher burnout. Unlike previous research, which predominantly examined structural factors or general coping mechanisms, this study focuses on anger as a pivotal emotional trigger that influences teacher behavior and classroom climate (Addy, Agbozo, Runge-Ranzinger, & Gryns, 2021; Wu, Chen, & Yang, 2024). Anger is often the most visible and immediate emotional response to stressors in educational settings, directly affecting communication patterns and decision-making. By integrating emotion regulation theory with practical anger management techniques, this research advances the state of the art in educational psychology (Ayalew, Woldemariam, & Alemu, 2022; Sun, Ng, Chau, & Chen, 2023). It moves beyond descriptive analyses of burnout toward actionable strategies that can be embedded in teacher training and professional development initiatives.

Based on the background above, the primary research problem guiding this study is: how can anger management strategies be effectively utilized to address teacher burnout? This question emerges from the recognition that burnout is not solely caused by workload but also by difficulties in managing intense emotional responses to occupational stressors. Understanding the mechanisms through which anger management can alleviate emotional exhaustion is essential to designing interventions that are both practical and sustainable. Therefore, this study seeks to explore specific anger management strategies applicable within educational contexts and to examine their potential role in reducing burnout symptoms among teachers.

This research argues that well-structured anger management strategies can serve as preventive and restorative mechanisms to mitigate teacher burnout. By enhancing

self-awareness, cognitive reframing, emotional expression, and empathy, anger management may strengthen teachers' psychological resilience. The originality of this study lies in offering a conceptual and practical framework that explicitly links anger regulation to burnout reduction within educational settings. The anticipated contribution includes enriching theoretical discussions on burnout by emphasizing emotional specificity and providing evidence-based recommendations for teacher development programs. Ultimately, this study aspires to support healthier school environments and promote sustainable teacher professionalism in the face of contemporary educational challenges.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore in depth how anger management strategies are applied to address teacher burnout. The case study design was selected because it allows for a comprehensive understanding of complex psychosocial phenomena within their real-life context (Strömblad, Winslott Hiselius, Smidfelt Rosqvist, & Svensson, 2022). Burnout and anger regulation are subjective experiences shaped by personal meaning, school culture, and interpersonal dynamics; therefore, they cannot be adequately explained through numerical measurement alone. By focusing on a single institutional setting, this study sought to capture the emotional processes, coping strategies, and contextual factors that influence teachers' experiences. The qualitative case study approach thus enabled the researcher to interpret participants' perspectives holistically and to generate context-sensitive findings relevant to educational practice.

The research was conducted in a public senior high school located in an urban area characterized by high academic demands and administrative workloads. The location was selected based on three considerations. First, preliminary observations indicated that teachers at this school faced substantial performance pressure, including meeting curriculum targets, supervising extracurricular activities, and reporting obligations. Second, the school had a diverse teaching staff in terms of age, tenure, and educational backgrounds, allowing for variation in experiences with burnout and anger management. Third, the institution granted formal access for interviews, classroom observations, and document review, ensuring data completeness. This setting was considered appropriate for representing a context in which emotional strain among teachers is likely to emerge and in which anger management strategies are meaningfully enacted.

The informants were selected using purposive sampling, focusing on teachers who demonstrated indications of emotional exhaustion and were willing to share their experiences. The selection aimed to ensure rich and relevant data aligned with the research objectives. The profile of informants is summarized in the table below.

**Table 1. Data Informants**

Informant Code	Position	Educational Background	Years of Service	Reason for Selection
T1	Subject Teacher	Bachelor's Degree in Education	12 years	Experienced a high workload and reported emotional exhaustion
T2	Subject Teacher	Master's Degree in Education	8 years	Actively involved in administrative duties and mentoring

T3	Homeroom Teacher	Bachelor's Degree in Education	15 years	Frequently handles student behavioral issues
T4	Subject Teacher	Bachelor's Degree in Science	6 years	Reported difficulty managing classroom-related anger
T5	Guidance Counselor	Master's Degree in Counseling	10 years	Provides insight into emotional regulation practices in school

These informants were chosen because they represented varied professional roles and experiences, enabling a multidimensional understanding of anger management in relation to burnout. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation review (Cole, 2024; Kekeya, 2023). In-depth interviews were conducted using semi-structured guidelines to explore teachers' experiences of burnout, emotional triggers, and strategies used to manage anger. Participant observation was conducted in classrooms and during staff meetings to capture natural interactions, emotional expressions, and behavioral responses to stressors. The documentation analysis included reviewing school policies, workload distribution records, and relevant reflective notes to contextualize the findings. The combination of these techniques enabled methodological triangulation and enriched the depth and credibility of the data.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of data condensation, reduction, display, and verification (Fadli, 2021; Lee, Liu, Ma, & Pan, 2024). Data condensation involved selecting and simplifying raw data obtained from field notes and interview transcripts. Data reduction involved categorizing information relevant to themes such as forms of anger expression, coping strategies, and perceived impact on burnout. Data were displayed in the form of thematic matrices and narrative descriptions to facilitate interpretation. Verification was conducted continuously by comparing emerging patterns with field data and conducting member checking with participants. To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking. These procedures strengthened the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the findings, ensuring that the conclusions accurately reflected participants' lived experiences.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

This section presents the research findings derived from interviews, observations, and field documentation. The results highlight three main aspects: the forms of teacher anger that emerge in burnout situations, the anger management strategies used in classroom contexts, and the impact of these strategies on teacher well-being and instructional quality. Each finding is described systematically to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

#### Forms of Teacher Anger that Emerge in Burnout Situations

The operational definition of teachers' anger in burnout situations in this study refers to emotional expressions arising from prolonged work pressure and psychological exhaustion in school contexts. Based on field findings, anger manifests in three main forms: verbal, nonverbal, and internal. Verbal anger includes raising one's voice, using sharp words, or expressing irritation directly to students. Non-verbal anger appears through tense facial expressions, sharp stares, firm gestures such as tapping the desk, or

rigid body posture. Internal anger refers to suppressed emotions, such as choosing silence, withdrawing from interaction, or holding resentment without openly expressing it. These three categories were identified as concrete indicators of how burnout influences teachers' emotional responses in daily professional interactions at school.

Interview data revealed that verbal anger frequently emerges as a spontaneous reaction to classroom pressure. A subject teacher stated, "When students keep talking while I am explaining, I sometimes raise my voice without realizing it." Another teacher expressed, "I once shouted at a class because I felt extremely tired and overwhelmed that day." These statements indicate that emotional exhaustion reduces teachers' ability to regulate immediate reactions. The researcher interprets these findings as evidence that accumulated stress narrows emotional tolerance, making teachers more prone to reactive expressions. Verbal anger appears not as intentional aggression, but as an overflow of unmanaged fatigue and frustration that has built up over time.

In contrast, other informants demonstrated internal forms of anger that were less visible but equally significant. A homeroom teacher explained, "I rarely express anger openly, but inside I feel very annoyed and choose to stay silent." Similarly, another teacher noted, "I prefer to hold my feelings because I am afraid of hurting students, but afterward I feel physically drained." These responses tend to suppress emotional tension rather than release it. The researcher interprets this pattern as a coping attempt to avoid open conflict; however, suppression does not resolve the emotional burden. Instead, it contributes to prolonged psychological strain, reinforcing burnout symptoms such as fatigue, dizziness, and emotional withdrawal from professional engagement.

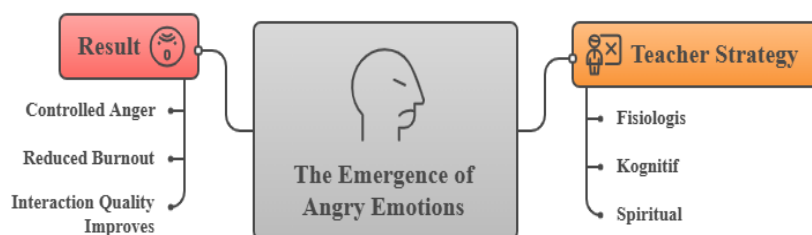
Classroom observations further identified non-verbal manifestations of anger. Several teachers were observed exhibiting rigid facial expressions, direct eye contact, and abrupt gestures, such as loudly tapping the desk to regain students' attention. In some situations, teachers paused instruction and remained silent while maintaining a stern posture. The researcher interprets these behaviors as controlled yet emotionally charged responses intended to preserve authority without verbal confrontation. Restating the findings, teacher anger during burnout situations appears in three interconnected forms: verbal outbursts, non-verbal tension signals, and internalized emotional suppression. All three forms reflect underlying emotional exhaustion and illustrate how burnout shapes teachers' behavioral and emotional regulation patterns in classroom settings.

Overall, the data demonstrate a consistent pattern in which burnout influences both the intensity and expression of anger among teachers. Teachers who experience acute stress during active classroom disruptions tend to display verbal anger, while those who prioritize authority and professionalism often resort to nonverbal signals. Meanwhile, teachers who fear escalating conflict are more likely to internalize their emotions. Although these forms differ in expression, they share a common root in emotional exhaustion. The pattern suggests that anger is not merely an isolated reaction but part of a broader burnout process. Without constructive management strategies, these emotional expressions risk becoming habitual responses that negatively affect classroom climate, interpersonal relationships, and teachers' long-term psychological well-being.

### **Anger Management Strategies Applied by Teachers**

In this study, anger management strategies are operationally defined as conscious actions teachers take to regulate, delay, or transform angry emotions in response to

stressful classroom situations. Field findings indicate that these strategies appear in three main forms: physiological regulation (such as deep breathing, pausing, and counting), cognitive regulation (positive self-talk and reframing thoughts), and spiritual-reflective regulation (brief prayer, self-introspection, and recalling personal values). In addition, controlled non-verbal expression emerged as a complementary strategy, in which teachers intentionally softened their tone, relaxed facial tension, or adjusted their body posture before responding. This operational definition emphasizes observable behaviors rather than abstract emotional states, enabling the researcher to identify concrete practices teachers apply in real teaching contexts when anger begins to surface.



**Figure 1. Managing Teacher Anger**

Table 1 shows that classroom observations revealed that, when faced with disruptive behavior, several teachers intentionally paused speaking for a few seconds, inhaled deeply, and then resumed instruction in a more stable tone. Some teachers closed their eyes briefly before responding to students, while others calmly placed their hands on the desk as a grounding gesture. The researcher interprets these behaviors as deliberate emotional interruption techniques that function as a preventive barrier against impulsive reactions. Rather than suppressing anger entirely, teachers appeared to redirect emotional energy into more constructive responses. This indicates that anger management in practice is not passive avoidance but an active self-regulation process embedded in daily instructional routines.

Restating the findings, teachers manage anger through observable stages: recognizing emotional tension, pausing before reacting, applying calming techniques, and responding with controlled communication. Physiological strategies help stabilize bodily reactions; cognitive strategies reshape perceptions of students' behavior; spiritual-reflective strategies reinforce patience and personal values; and controlled nonverbal strategies prevent escalation. Together, these approaches help reduce the intensity of anger before it escalates into harmful verbal or behavioral expressions. The data clearly show that anger management strategies are practical tools enacted directly within classroom situations rather than abstract coping concepts.

Overall, a consistent pattern emerges in which teachers combine short-term and long-term regulation techniques. Physiological strategies are typically used as immediate responses during acute classroom tension. Cognitive and spiritual-reflective strategies appear to strengthen deeper emotional resilience and perspective-taking. Controlled non-verbal behavior acts as a bridge between internal regulation and external communication. These strategies are often integrated rather than applied separately, forming a layered system of emotional control. The pattern suggests that teachers naturally develop adaptive regulatory mechanisms aligned with their personal beliefs, professional roles, and school culture, demonstrating that anger management operates as a dynamic, context-sensitive process for mitigating burnout.

## The Impact of Anger Management Strategies on Burnout and Teaching Quality

In this study, the impact of anger management strategies is operationally defined as observable improvements in teachers' emotional well-being, interpersonal interactions, instructional effectiveness, and professional conduct following consistent application of anger regulation techniques. These impacts are identified through visible behavioral changes in classroom settings, such as increased patience, controlled responses to disruption, warmer communication patterns, and sustained instructional focus. The emphasis of this operational definition lies in measurable manifestations in daily teaching practice rather than abstract psychological claims. Thus, the impact is understood as a multidimensional outcome that affects teachers' internal emotional stability, classroom social relationships, and the overall quality of learning implementation.

**Table 2. Observed Impacts of Anger Management Strategies**

Main Impact	Description of Visible Behavior	Indicator
Reducing Emotional Exhaustion	Teachers are more patient, do not tire easily, and can control themselves when dealing with noisy students	Emotional stability and psychological resilience
Improving Teacher-Student Relations	Teachers are more open, communication with students is warmer, and students appear more comfortable	Positive interpersonal relationships
Improving the Quality of Learning	The classroom atmosphere becomes more conducive, teachers are more focused on explaining, and students are more cooperative	Effectiveness of teaching-learning interactions
Professionalism Enhancement	Teachers demonstrate self-control, avoid reactive responses, and display wise and measured attitudes	Professional ethics in teaching

The data from Table 2 presented that anger management strategies contribute to significant and observable changes in teaching practice. Teachers who apply these strategies show greater emotional endurance and reduced signs of fatigue during challenging classroom situations. Restating these findings, emotional control appears to function as a stabilizing factor that prevents burnout from escalating into negative behavior. Observations reveal that calmer teachers interact with students in a more respectful, constructive manner, thereby strengthening mutual trust. At the same time, improved emotional balance enables teachers to maintain instructional focus and classroom order. The enhancement of professionalism is reflected in thoughtful responses, ethical conduct, and consistent authority without aggression.

Overall, the pattern of findings demonstrates a progressive and interconnected impact. Reducing emotional exhaustion forms the foundational layer, allowing teachers to conserve psychological energy. This emotional stability supports healthier teacher-student relationships, which, in turn, fosters a more conducive classroom climate. A positive classroom environment subsequently enhances instructional quality and student cooperation. Professionalism emerges as the overarching outcome that integrates emotional control, relational competence, and instructional effectiveness. Therefore, anger management strategies operate as a chain mechanism that strengthens teachers personally, socially, and professionally, reinforcing both well-being and the overall quality of education.

## Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that teacher anger in burnout situations manifests in verbal, non-verbal, and internal forms, all rooted in emotional exhaustion. This aligns

with prior literature suggesting that burnout reduces emotional regulation capacity and increases reactive behavior in professional settings. However, while many previous studies conceptualize burnout primarily through dimensions such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, this study highlights anger as a concrete and observable emotional expression embedded within those dimensions. Identifying internal anger as suppressed emotional tension adds nuance to discussions that often focus more on overt reactions (Chen et al., 2020; Leksy et al., 2023; Wei & Huang, 2024). Thus, the findings extend current understanding by demonstrating that burnout-related anger is not only expressed outwardly but may also operate silently, intensifying psychological strain.

The emergence of verbal and non-verbal anger as immediate responses to classroom stress supports emotion regulation theories that argue stress narrows cognitive control and increases impulsive reactions. Nevertheless, this study differs from some earlier research that frames teachers' emotional responses mainly as emotional labor performed to meet institutional expectations (R. Hasanah, Munawwaroh, Qushwa, & Agus R, 2024; Putri et al., 2024; Qushwa, 2024). Instead, the present findings emphasize spontaneous emotional overflow caused by accumulated fatigue rather than deliberate emotional performance. The discovery that internal anger can exacerbate burnout also challenges the assumption that suppressing emotions is always a professional strategy (Onia, 2024; Qushwa, 2024; Sidqi et al., 2025). In this context, emotional suppression appears to provide short-term conflict avoidance but contributes to long-term psychological depletion, thereby reinforcing the burnout cycle.

Regarding anger management strategies, the findings correspond with theoretical models of self-regulation that distinguish physiological, cognitive, and reflective mechanisms. The observed sequence, recognizing emotional tension, pausing, applying calming techniques, and responding constructively, mirrors stage-based emotion regulation frameworks (Benishek, Kachalia, Daugherty Biddison, & Wu, 2020; Mummery, 2021). However, this study contributes by contextualizing these mechanisms specifically within classroom dynamics. Rather than treating anger management as a clinical intervention, the findings show it as an embedded, situational practice enacted in real time during teaching (Cruz-Soto, Baeza-Torres, Castañeda Pelaez, Rojas Jaimes, & Palacios-Delgado, 2025; Pourteimour, Parizad, Ebrahimian, Askari-Majdabadi, & Fakhr-Movahedi, 2025). The integration of spiritual-reflective strategies also expands conventional regulatory models by acknowledging culturally grounded coping approaches that strengthen patience and moral awareness in educational contexts.

The identified impacts reduced emotional exhaustion, improved teacher–student relationships, enhanced instructional quality, and strengthened professionalism, consistent with the literature linking emotional competence to workplace performance. Yet, this study advances the discussion by demonstrating a progressive chain mechanism: emotional stabilization enables relational improvement, which, in turn, fosters instructional effectiveness (Ayyala, 2024; Pamidimukkala et al., 2025; Romeo, 2025). This layered pattern underscores that anger management does not function in isolation but interacts dynamically with pedagogical processes. From a theoretical perspective, these findings suggest that burnout mitigation models should explicitly incorporate emotion-specific regulation strategies, particularly anger control, as mediating variables between stress and professional outcomes (Ravaldi et al., 2022; He et al., 2023).

Practically, the results imply that teacher development programs should move beyond pedagogical training and incorporate structured anger management modules, including breathing techniques, cognitive reframing exercises, and reflective practices. Schools may also consider creating supportive environments where emotional awareness is normalized rather than stigmatized. Theoretically, the study contributes by positioning anger as a central emotional construct within burnout discourse and by offering a more behaviorally grounded framework for understanding teacher resilience. Overall, the findings reinforce the argument that effective anger management is both a protective psychological resource and a professional competence that sustains teacher well-being and enhances the quality of education.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the most significant finding lies in identifying anger as a central emotional expression embedded within teacher burnout and in demonstrating that structured anger management strategies can effectively mitigate its impact. Teacher anger manifests in verbal, nonverbal, and internal forms, all rooted in emotional exhaustion from prolonged professional pressure. The essential lesson drawn from this research is that burnout is not solely a matter of workload but is closely related to how teachers regulate intense emotional responses. When teachers apply physiological, cognitive, spiritually reflective, and controlled nonverbal strategies, they are better able to stabilize emotions, preserve psychological energy, and maintain professionalism. Anger management thus emerges not merely as a coping tool but as a preventive and restorative mechanism that protects teachers' well-being and sustains instructional quality. The hikmah of this study underscores the importance of emotional awareness as a foundational competency in modern educational practice.

From an academic perspective, this study contributes by positioning anger as a specific and measurable construct within burnout discourse, offering a more behaviorally grounded framework for understanding teacher resilience. It enriches educational psychology by integrating emotion regulation theory with classroom-based practice, thereby bridging conceptual and practical dimensions. However, this research is limited by its single-site case study design and relatively small number of informants, which may restrict generalizability across broader educational contexts. Cultural and institutional factors unique to the research setting may also influence the findings. Future research is recommended to employ multi-site studies, mixed-method designs, or longitudinal approaches to examine the long-term effectiveness of anger management interventions. Further exploration of institutional support systems and policy-level strategies would also deepen understanding of sustainable burnout prevention in diverse educational environments.

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