

BURNOUT SYNDROME AS A CORRELATE OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONG TEACHERS IN INTERNATIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract: -

Teacher job satisfaction may be determined by various work-related and psychological factors, which could also influence teachers' performance in their work. The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between job burnout syndrome and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in international secondary schools in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The study was founded on Adams Equity theory and Bandura's self-efficacy theory. A convergent parallel mixed methods research design was used. Nairobi City County was purposively selected as the study area due to its highest concentration of international secondary schools in Kenya. The target population comprised of all 2078 school teachers, 54 principals and 54 deputy principals working in all 54 international secondary schools in Nairobi City County. A sample of 372 participants comprising of teachers, principals and deputy principals was selected using Yamane formula, factoring in a 10 percent addition to address possible attrition. Quantitative data was collected using closed ended questions adapted from Oldenburg Burnout Inventory, and Job Satisfaction Survey scale. Qualitative data was collected using the tools' open-ended questions and key informants' interview guide. The quantitative data were analysed in descriptive statistics and inferential tests using Pearson's Product Moment correlation. Qualitative data was analyzed in thematic form. The findings indicated that participants with low burnout had the highest job satisfaction mean score $M=68.75$, $SD=9.45$). The findings also revealed a significant negative relationship between teachers' burnout and job satisfaction ($r(366)=-0.18$, $P<0.05$). It was recommended that school managers ought to improve the terms of service and prioritize on teachers' social support systems, with the aim of improving their general wellbeing. Schools' management should focus on addressing challenges associated with teacher burnout syndrome, including students' behaviour problems, class sizes, and work environment factors leading to teachers' emotional exhaustion.

Keywords: - Burnout Syndrome, Disengagement from Work, Teacher Job Satisfaction, Teacher Productivity, Teacher Turnover

1. INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction entails the feelings and attitudes that individuals have regarding their work. Essentially, having favorable and positive attitudes towards one's job are signs of job satisfaction (Mugo and Guyo, 2018). Studies conducted recently in different countries have considerably portrayed teaching as stressful occupation. In particular, teacher stress related to job demands is usually perceived as unpleasant emotions that instructors experience in various aspects related to their work (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2018). According to the cognitive activation theory of stress and related theorizing by biomedical mainstems, health stems from how well a person is able to acclimatize with environmental physical and psychosocial challenges (Arvidsson et al., 2019).

Satisfied teachers are considered to have greater performance, loyalty, and commitment to their work. There are many factors that can enhance teachers' job satisfaction, influence their organizational commitment and retention. Most of the existing educational research has explored on factors such as motivation, social interactions, teacher's perception on student discipline, and teacher cooperation as well as professional development channels and collaborative structures among others. While all these are important measurable traits towards understanding the issues affecting teacher's contentment at the workplace, research has shown that teachers' job satisfaction may be impacted by chronic psychological factors related to job demands and one's work environment, such as burnout syndrome (Skaalvik, et al., 2010).

Indeed, teaching is a highly demanding job, and many teachers work in extremely strenuous situations that can lead to high levels of emotional exhaustion. Vousiopoulos et al. (2019) in Greece avers that increased job burnout can negatively impact on teachers' job satisfaction. Generally, job burnout may also cause emotional exhaustion and result in job dissatisfaction (Kabir et al., 2016). The components of interest in teacher's job burnout include exhaustion or emotional strain and disengagement, which have been associated with negative effects in teachers' professional lives (Smetackova et al., 2019). Despite the level of persuasion on the effect of job burnout on teachers' fulfillment, little seems to have been done to evaluate how such a factor may affect teachers' job satisfaction in international schools in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Research indicates that in the last two decades, about 30% of teachers globally have in varying degrees experienced burnout, resulting in negative health consequences, economic status and commitment levels, ultimately impinging on job satisfaction in the profession (Molero-Jurado et al., 2019).

Studies have shown that job satisfaction is positively associated with enhanced work environments, more efficient performance, work-related characteristics such as administration control through supervision and teaching competence (Pepe et al., 2017). Several factors may positively influence teacher's motivation and enhanced retention. Some of these elements include positive relationships working environment, teamwork, attractive remuneration, professional development prospects, promotion, and organizational culture, as well as equity in all its forms among others. Essentially, teachers' retention is vital for averting schooling disruption should teachers choose to leave the profession before the end of the academic year because of lack of job satisfaction (Emmanuel, 2018).

Kenya has two main types of Secondary schools, that is, public, and private schools. High staff turnover has been reported in international schools in Kenya with low level of job satisfaction among the teachers being associated with the high turnover rate. Teachers have identified job burnout syndrome as one of the reasons for work dissatisfaction (Mutwiri, 2015).

The study therefore aimed at establishing the relationship between teachers' burnout syndrome and job satisfaction in international secondary schools in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

2. Materials and Methods

The study aimed at investigating the relationship between teachers' burnout syndrome and job satisfaction in international secondary schools in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The study adopted a convergent parallel mixed methods research design. The target population comprised of 2078 teachers, 54 principals, and 54 deputy principals from all the 54 international secondary schools in Nairobi City county. A sample of 372 teachers, principals and deputy principals was selected using Yamane (1967) formula.

Systematic random sampling was utilized to obtain the required sample of schools. Simple random sampling was employed to select a proportionate number of teachers from each of the sampled international secondary schools, while purposive sampling was used to select key informants from principals and deputy principals. Data collection instruments were Oldenburg Burnout Inventory by Demerouti and Nachreiner (1998), Job Satisfaction Survey scale (Spector, 1997), and self-designed informants' interview guide.

3. Results and Discussions

Questionnaires were distributed to 372 participants. Following the exercise, 368 completed questionnaires were retrieved, representing 98.92% response rate. This implies that the return rate obtained through research instruments was sufficient for generalization of results to the target population, given that Fincham (2008) recommends a response rate of 80 percent or higher. With regard to gender distribution, the results indicated that more than half (58.2%) of the participants were female, while 14.8% were male. The reliability for research instruments was determined through Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Reliability of Job Satisfaction Survey was 0.70 following the piloting exercise, same as the alpha value obtained originally by the authors, while Oldenburg Burnout Inventory had originally generated a value of 0.81.

The study sought to investigate if there was association between teacher burnout syndrome and job satisfaction.

Description of Teachers’ Burnout Syndrome and Job Satisfaction

The participants’ burnout scores were obtained and analyzed in order to establish the lowest and highest values, mean score, standard deviation and skewness. The results were presented as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Descriptive Analysis of Teachers’ Burnout Scores

	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	SD	SK
Burnout Score	368	32.00	30.00	62.00	37.7092	4.08	1.38
Valid N (listwise)	368						

Note: N=368; Min = Minimum; SD = Standard Deviation; SK = Skewness

From Table 1, the results indicate that the range for teachers’ burnout score was 32. The maximum score obtained was 62 while the minimum was 30. The results further indicated that the mean score was 37.71, with a standard deviation of 4.08. The results had a positive skewness of 1.38, implying that the participants rated themselves low on the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory.

The results were subjected to further analysis in order to group the participants in different categories of burnout, representing groups with low, moderate or high levels of burnout. The cut off score for the category with low levels of burnout ranged from 16 to 32, moderate level from 33 to 49, while high levels were ranged from 50 to 64. It was found that a significant majority (94.57%) of the participants had moderate job burnout level, while 4.35% were reported as having a low level of job-related burnout. Only a paltry 1.09% of the participants were rated as having high levels of burnout.

The participants’ job satisfaction scores were also obtained and analyzed so as to establish the highest and lowest values, mean score, standard deviation and skewness of sample distribution. The results were presented as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Descriptive Analysis of Teachers’ Job Satisfaction Scores

	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	SD	SK
Job Satisfaction Score	368	60.00	41.00	101.00	64.93	9.56108	-.02
Total	368						

Note: N = 368; Min = Minimum; Max = Maximum; SD = Standard Deviation; SK = Skewness

The results in Table 2 indicate that teachers’ job satisfaction scores had a range of 60, with a minimum observation of 41 and a maximum observation of 101. The results further indicate that teachers’ job satisfaction scores had a mean of 64.93, and a standard deviation of 9.56, with a coefficient of negative skewness at -0.02. The negative skewness value recorded indicates that most of the scores were above the mean score, implying that the participants rated themselves highly on the Job Satisfaction Survey scale.

Teachers’ job satisfaction scores were further analyzed, taking into consideration different levels of satisfaction, with cut off scores being 18 to 36 for low category, 37 to 72 for moderate category, and 73 to 108 for high category. The results indicated that majority (79.62%) of the participants reported moderate levels of job satisfaction, compared to 20.38% who reported high job satisfaction level. It was however observed that teachers taking part in the study did not report low levels of job satisfaction.

Further analysis was carried out on participants burnout and job satisfaction scores in order to rate the levels of job satisfaction based on different levels of burnout. The results were presented as shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Participants’ Level of Burnout and Job Satisfaction Scores

Level of Burnout		N	Mean	SD
Low	Job Satisfaction Score	16	68.75	9.46
	Valid N (listwise)	16		
Moderate	Job Satisfaction Score	348	64.74	9.55
	Valid N (listwise)	348		
High	Job Satisfaction Score	4	65.75	10.34
	Valid N (listwise)	4		

Note: N = 368; SD = Standard Deviation

From Table 3, the results indicate that participants with low burnout had the highest job satisfaction mean score (M= 68.75, SD= 9.46). Interestingly, the results also indicate that participants categorized as having moderate burnout level had the lowest job satisfaction mean score (M= 64.74, SD= 9.55), while those categorized as having high levels of burnout were found to have a job satisfaction mean score of 65.75, SD= 10.34).

Hypothesis Testing

The following null hypothesis was proposed for the purpose of testing the relationship between teacher burnout and job satisfaction:

H₀₁: There is no relationship between teacher burnout and Job satisfaction. Data on teachers’ burnout and job satisfaction scores were then subjected to bivariate correlation through Pearson’s r statistical analysis. The results were presented as shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Pearson r for Teachers’ Job Burnout vs Job Satisfaction

		Burnout Score	Job Satisfaction Score
Burnout Score	Pearson Correlation	1	-.175**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	368	368
Job Satisfaction Score	Pearson Correlation	-.175**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	368	368

Note: N=368 **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 4 indicate that there was a significant negative relationship between teachers’ burnout and job satisfaction scores ($r(366) = -0.18, P < 0.05$). The results thus indicate that participants with high burnout scores were associated with low job satisfaction scores and vice versa. This implies that high levels of job burnout resulted in low levels of job satisfaction, and that high levels of job satisfaction resulted in low levels of teachers’ burnout syndrome.

The results implied that high level of teachers’ burnout impacted negatively on job satisfaction, and that on the flipside, high level of teachers’ job satisfaction lowered the levels of burnout. These results were consistent with Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010), as demonstrated in literature review that teacher burnout can be used to predict teachers’ job satisfaction. The findings indicated that less satisfied teachers were likely to experience emotional exhaustion and job burnout. This implies that factors associated with low job satisfaction such as poor remuneration, overcrowded classess, and unsurpitive school administration may be significant factors in assessing the relationship between teachers’ burnout and job satisfaction.

From the descriptive findings it was established that teachers with moderate levels of burnout syndrome had the lowest mean score of job satisfaction. This finding was found to be interesting given that in overall, the results indicated that increased burnout syndrome levels decreased teachers’ job satisfaction levels and vice versa. Thus, this aspect of the descriptive findings contradicted the findings from inferential analysis. This was also in contradiction to the findings by Herman et al. (2018) that high levels of burnout were expressly associated with low levels of job satisfaction.

However, the current study’s findings supported Smetackova et al. (2019) in a study carried out in Czech Republic, which found that teachers’ burnout syndrome decreased in teachers who felt satisfied with their jobs and that teachers’ job satisfaction increased in teachers with lower job burnout syndrome and positive coping as well as those who avoided negative coping.

The results suggest that sustained levels of teacher burnout and the resultant effects of physical and emotional exhaustion can make teachers feel ineffective, lacking in accomplishment and even feel detached from their jobs. Such teachers are likely to feel less motivated, fatigued, irritable, and less accomplished, which may affect their productivity and professional lives if school administrators fail to proactively identify and institute workable measures for preventing teacher burnout syndrome

The findings are also consistent with Keller et al. (2014), in a study focusing on German school system, which established that lack of teachers’ job satisfaction increased emotional labour and subsequently burnout syndrome, and Kilonzo et al. (2018). in a Kenyan based study.

The population characteristics between the current study and Kilonzo et al (2018) bore a number of similarities. Although the study was done in a location where socio-cultural factors of different population could not be established, it was evident that teachers experiencing high levels of burnout were also found to have negative attitudes about their job, resulting in regular absenteeism, emotional exhaustion and sickness.

The study’s quantitative findings were also supported by qualitative findings from informants’ thematic analysis of interview transcripts. In response to the approaches used for gauging job satisfaction in their schools, many administrators associated turnover rate, missing work and turnover intention to low levels of job satisfaction.

It emerged that teachers’ turnover rate and absenteeism were major concerns for most of the school leaders. Nearly half (48.15%) of school administrators rated the level of teachers’ turnover as moderate, 29.63% as high while 22.22% rated it as low. Given the demanding nature of a teachers’ job, the findings indicate that teachers who feel overworked, unequally compensated, unfulfilled or subjected to unhealthy workplace settings are likely to feel dissatisfied with their jobs, resulting in low productivity, lack of job commitment and ultimately high turnover rate.

In response to whether burnout was a major issue among the teachers, a significant majority (70.37%) of school administrators agreed that they indeed found burnout syndrome to be a major issue among teachers in their schools. Only 29.63% of the leaders did not feel that burnout was a major issue in their schools. These findings agree to some extent with the study’s quantitative findings, in which nearly 95% of teachers were found to have moderate levels of burnout.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study’s objective was to investigate if there was an association between teachers’ burnout syndrome and job satisfaction. The study findings have established that teachers’ job satisfaction is associated with burnout levels, in the sense that teachers with high job satisfaction tend to experience low burnout syndrome and vice versa. The findings point

to the fact that teaching is a strenuous practice that can result in high burnout and negative affectivity. It was established that there was evidence of relationship between the presumed relationship between job burnout syndrome and teachers' job satisfaction. A significant and negative relationship was established between burnout and teachers' job satisfaction. The study recommends that there is need for school managers to improve the terms of service and prioritize on teachers' social support systems, with the aim of improving their general wellbeing. More specifically, schools' management should focus on addressing challenges associated with teacher burnout syndrome, including students' behaviour problems, class sizes, and work environment characteristics leading to emotional exhaustion.

Future studies may be considered for other factors that were not part of the study, that may also affect teacher productivity, such as organizational support, and work environment. To establish whether the findings of the present study are representative, other studies may be considered, preferably focusing on samples drawn from public secondary schools in Nairobi City County.

5. References

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