Burnout and Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

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ABSTRACT

This study used a correlational research design to establish how burnout is associated with teachers' job satisfaction. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The sample for the study consisted of 752 teachers drawn from the population of the study using a multi-stage random sampling procedure. An instrument consisting of burnout Assessment Scale (BAS) and Teacher Job Satisfaction Scale (TJSSS) was used for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and regression analysis. One of findings of the study revealed a moderate negative relationship between burnout and job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others, that principals and teachers should take proactive measures to manage burnout effectively.

Keywords: Burnout, teacher education, professional development, stress, job satisfaction.

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INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a vital role as foundational pillars within the education system, and their well-being and job satisfaction are instrumental in shaping the overall quality of education. However, teachers' mental well-being and job satisfaction have come under intense pressure. Nwosu et al (2024) noted that teaching is one of the professions that is prone to stress affecting teachers' mental health. Previously, researchers have found that in Nigeria, as many as 72.2% of teachers are reportedly stressed, 29.3% are depressed, and 29.5% have been reported to have generalized anxiety disorder (Asa & Lasebikan, 2016). Consequently, this in a way, exacerbates teachers' inefficiency and the rate at which they quit their jobs.

Recognizing the importance of teachers' performance, it becomes essential to examine the factors that influence their job satisfaction. Defined as the positive emotional state resulting from an individual's evaluation of their workplace experiences (Caridad & Valerio, 2023), job satisfaction among teachers not only contributes to their personal fulfillment but also has far-reaching effects on the educational environment and student success. It is regarded as the relationship between what one wants from one's job and what one perceives the job to be offering or entailing (Egemen, 2024). It reflects a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from an appraisal of one's job or job experiences and is a reflection of the teachers' feelings about the school from their differing viewpoints. Numerous studies, including the one by Sang et al., (2019), highlight key factors that impact teachers' satisfaction, such as leadership quality, work engagement, relationships with colleagues, and compensation.

Teachers frequently express greater levels of satisfaction when given the opportunity to create their own curricula and use innovative methods of teaching. Teachers can develop a sense of ownership over their work, which boosts engagement and motivation. However, teachers' job satisfaction can also be influenced by other factors, such as perceived leadership, salary, satisfaction with the actual job performed, satisfaction with promotions and turnover, or the relationship with colleagues (Kurniawaty et al., 2019). According to Dziuba et al. (2020) it is necessary to determine which factors have the greatest impact on teachers' job satisfaction and their work engagement.

In Nigeria today, public secondary schools are faced with a lot of challenges which have a significant impact on the quality of education delivered to the students. Among these challenges is the issue of teacher dissatisfaction. Teacher dissatisfaction can manifest in various forms, including frequent teacher departures, reduced instructional quality, and a negative classroom atmosphere, all of which detrimentally affect the learning environment (Mpate & Sango 2024). One of the principal consequences of teacher dissatisfaction in Nigerian public secondary schools is the high attrition rate among educators. When teachers feel undervalued, unsupported, or inadequately compensated, they are more likely to seek employment in other sectors or schools. A study by Rabiu et al., (2024) identifies that low salaries and poor working conditions significantly contribute to employees' decisions to leave their positions, resulting in a shortage of qualified teachers in public secondary schools. This change disrupts continuity in education, as new teachers often require time to acclimate, hindering students' academic progress. Moreso, Assaf & Antoun (2024) revealed that teachers with low job satisfaction experience negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, and insecurity, which significantly predicts teachers leaving the profession. It's possible that this circumstance could lead to major issues at the school, and perhaps could be the reason researchers such as Kurniawaty et al., (2019); Mpate & Sango, (2024), have worked diligently to ascertain important factors that promote positive job satisfaction of teachers in schools. Consequently, job satisfaction of teachers could be influenced by some psychological factors which include burnout.

Burnout is a psychological factor that could influence a teachers' job satisfaction. It may be seen as the prolonged and excessive stress that affects the physical, emotional and cognitive disposition of a worker (Jones-Erue & Ekeh, 2020). In this sense, burnout, is described as a state of physical and mental fatigue or exhaustion resulting from exposure to chronic job demands which negatively affects health, well-being, and job satisfaction of teachers. The latter being a key element for employee retention and organizational performance. It is aggravated stress that tends to affect the occupational well-being and job performance of a teacher. Emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and work inefficiency are three dimensions that define burnout syndrome among teachers (Martínez-Ramón et al, 2021).

Treated as a disease, the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2018) has specifically defined burnout as a conceptualised syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is rather prevalent among individuals who work in public service (teaching) industries that have high levels of job demands and are associated with ongoing, chronic stress (Bianchi et al., 2014). It is interestingly to note that professional sectors such as teaching that require high emotional and social involvement are the most affected by the changes occurring in society requiring greater responsibility in their professional work (Diez et al., 2016). For this reason, one of the sectors most affected by the burnout phenomenon is education (López, Extremera & Estado, 2017) which professionals are subjected to constant changes in the curriculum, overwork, loss of professional recognition, scarce autonomy to develop their functions, among other factors (Rodríguez-García et al., 2017).

The signs of teachers' burnout include, illness, impatience, absenteeism, lack of commitment, disturbed interpersonal relationships, mood swings, arguments and poor job performance (Antoniadou et al., 2024). Frequently, the challenges of the profession can significantly impact effective teachers into social and emotional deficits and eventually lead to burnout. Buttressing this point, Jacobson (2016) noted that isolation, a lack of respect from superiors, lack of autonomy,

increased workload, and student discipline/classroom management problems can contribute to feelings of burnout. Similarly, Fernet et al., (2012) averred that students' misbehavior, a lack of autonomy, the feeling of isolation, and additional trials such as the stress of trying to balance home and work create a heavy burden on educators that can lead to teacher burnout. Nam (2015) noted that burnout may set in when a teacher plans an epic lesson and it is greeted by a class of apathetic students.

The consequences of teacher burnout extend far beyond the individual, with severe implications for the entire educational ecosystem. It not only adversely affects teachers' well-being but also has tangible negative impacts on student achievement, school climate, and teacher retention rates (Droogenbroeck, et al., 2014). Burnout can lead to abandonment, previously passed through disinterest and a decrease in the teacher's commitment to his or her task (Eskic et al., 2019). When teachers experience burnout, their effectiveness in fulfilling their responsibilities diminishes, which directly affects students, who are at the frontline of this dynamic, receiving less engaged and motivated instruction. Moreover, burnout often leaves teachers exhausted and dissatisfied, leading many to prematurely exit the profession, leaving behind initial hopes and aspirations in exchange for disillusionment and emotional fatigue. This trend of attrition results in a cycle where teachers arrive unprepared and more focused on surviving each day rather than ensuring the quality of education, thereby hindering overall student development (Ingersoll, 2012; Vandenberghe & Huberman, 2011). Furthermore, considering the distinctive challenges faced by male and female teachers both within and outside the classroom, the debate around their comparative performance remains ongoing. Male teachers, often balancing family responsibilities alongside their careers, may be hindered by significant home obligations that could impair their effectiveness at work. Conversely, some studies, such as those by Alwaely & Jarrah (2020), suggest that female teachers are more profoundly affected by burnout, as additional pressures related to household and family duties can negatively influence their job satisfaction and performance. However, other researchers such as Shamsafrouz & Haghverdi (2015) have found that there is no marked difference in burnout levels between male and female teachers. Recognizing these diverse yet critical issues emphasize the importance of understanding and addressing the various factors that contribute to burnout, to enhance teachers' well-being, improve retention rates, and elevate the overall quality of education in public secondary schools. Therefore, this research aims to explore the relationship between burnout and teachers' job satisfaction in the context of public secondary schools in Anambra State, with the ultimate goal of identifying effective pathways to foster healthier, more fulfilling teaching environments.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between burnout and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra state?
2. What is the relationship between burnout and job satisfaction of male and female teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra state?

Hypotheses

The following two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between burnout and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra state.
2. There is no significant relationship between burnout and job satisfaction of male and female teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra state.

METHODS

Correlation survey research design was utilized for this study. According to Nworgu (2015), a correlational design is a research design that seeks to establish relationship between two or more variables as well as indicates the direction and magnitude of the relationship between the variables.

The population for this study comprises of 7,515 (1,172 males, 6,343 females secondary school teachers) in the 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The choice of secondary school teachers was based on the fact that they experience similar job demand, stressors and challenges that can contributes to burnout. Using a multi-stage random sampling method, 752 secondary school teachers (118 males, 634 females) were selected. First, three of six education zones were chosen by simple random sampling via balloting. Next, 10 schools per zone were selected similarly, totaling 30 schools. Finally, proportionate sampling was used to select 118 male and 634 female teachers, reflecting the higher proportion of female teachers. Two sets of questionnaires were used to collect data for the study. An instrument consisting of burnout Assessment Scale (BAS) and Teacher Job Satisfaction Scale (TJSSS) was used for data collection. The Burnout Assessment Scale (BAS) is a 23-items from Schaufeli, De Witte & Desart (2019). It was adopted for use in the present study. The BAS is divided into four domains viz: Exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive impairment and emotional impairment. It was developed in such a manner that the respondents responded by choosing one of four response categories viz: Never (N) =1, Rarely (R) =2, Sometimes (ST) =3, Often (O) =4 and Always (A) =5. The norm for judging the respective response for the burnout assessment instrument was given as follows: No-low risk of burnout = Average score of 1.00 - 2.53, Moderate risk of burnout = Average score of 2.54 - 2.95, High risk of burnout = Average score of 2.96 - 5.00, respectively.

Also, the Teacher Job Satisfaction Scale (TJSS) was adopted from International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), 2015). The instrument has 7 items used to measure the job satisfaction of the respondents. The TJSS was structured on a four-point scale of 'Very Often =4', 'Often =3', 'Sometimes =2', and 'Never/Almost Never =1'. The internal consistency of the items has been ascertained in about 39 countries with coefficient values ranging from α =.85 to α = .95. The instrument is appropriate for this study given that it is a context-specific job satisfaction instrument. In scoring the scale, Very Satisfied = 10.1 – 10.2, Satisfied = 6.5 – 6.8, Less Satisfied = 0.1 – 4.5.
Burnout Assessment Scale (BAS) and Teacher Job Satisfaction Scale (TJSS) were validated for face and content worthiness by 3 experts in Education. The reliability of the instruments was ascertained through pilot testing by administering the BAS and TJSS to similar group of 40 teachers randomly selected in public secondary schools in Enugu State. The Cronbach alpha statistics was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. The alpha coefficients gotten for both BAS and TJSS was, 0.80 and 0.81 respectively.
The instruments were administered by the researcher with the assistance of 5 research assistants who are co-postgraduate students. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for research questions while t-test for the hypotheses.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Table 1

Pearson correlation matrix between variables

Variable	1. Burnout	2. Resilience	3. Teachers Job Satisfaction
1. Burnout	1	-.497**	-.471**
2. Resilience	-.497**	1	.485**
3. Teachers Job Satisfaction	-.471**	.485**	1

Table 1 reveals that a moderate negative relationship exists between burnout and teachers job satisfaction in public secondary school in Anambra state (N= 752, r=-.471). This implies a corresponding decrease in the burnout and teachers job satisfaction scores in Anambra state.

Table 2

Pearson correlation matrix between variables

	Variable	Burnout	Resilience	Teachers Job Satisfaction
Male	Burnout	1	-.527**	-.471**
	Resilience	-.527**	1	.426**
	Teachers Job Satisfaction	-.471**	.426**	1
Female	Burnout	1	-.487**	-.470**
	Resilience	-.487**	1	.492**
	Teachers Job Satisfaction	-.470**	.492**	1

Table 2 presents the Pearson correlation matrix on the relationship between burnout and job satisfaction of male and female teachers in public secondary school in Anambra state. A negative moderate relationship existed between burnout and job satisfaction of male teachers in public secondary school in Anambra state (r=-0.47). similarly, a negative moderate relationship exists between burnout and job satisfaction of female teachers in public secondary school in Anambra state (r=-0.47).

Table 3

Regression analysis on the relationship between burnout and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools

Model		B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	*p*-value	Decision
1	(Constant)	11.86	1.80		6.59	.000	
	Burnout	-0.10	0.01	-.305	-8.68	.000	Significant
	Resilience	0.18	0.01	.334	9.52	.000	Significant

Dependent Variable: Teachers Job Satisfaction

N=752, R= 553, R^2 = .308, adjusted R^2 = .304

The result in Table 3 shows a regression analysis performed to determine the relationship between burnout and teachers job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The overall model was significant, F (2, 749) = 164.74, p < .05, explaining 30% of the variance in job satisfaction (R^2 = .30). The result implies a significant relationship between burnout and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra state.

Table 4

Regression analysis on the relationship between burnout and job satisfaction of male and female teachers in public secondary schools

	Model		B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	*t*	*p*-value	Decision
Male	1	(Constant)	15.52	5.29		2.93	.004	
		Burnout	-0.11	0.03	-.341	-3.45	.001	Significant
		Resilience	0.14	0.06	.25	2.50	.014	Not significant

Dependent Variable: Teachers Job Satisfaction

N=107, R= 515, R^2 = .266, adjusted R^2 = .252

	Model		B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	*t*	*p*-value	Decision
Female	1	(Constant)	11.56	1.94		5.92	.000	
		Burnout	-0.10	0.01	-.302	-7.88	.000	Significant
		Resilience	0.19	0.02	.345	9.01	.000	Significant

Dependent Variable: Teachers Job Satisfaction
N=618, R= 558, R^2 = .312, adjusted R^2 = .310

The result in Table 4 shows a regression analysis performed to determine the relationship between burnout and job satisfaction of male and female teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra state. The overall model was significant for male teachers, F (2, 104) = 18.820, $p < .05$, explaining 26% of the variance in job satisfaction (R^2 = .266). The result implies a significant relationship between burnout and male teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra state. In the same vein, the overall model was significant for female teachers, F (2, 615) = 129.291, $p < .05$, explaining 31% of the variance in job satisfaction (R^2 = .312). The result implies a significant relationship between burnout and female teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra state.

DISCUSSION

The findings revealed a moderate negative correlation between burnout and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra State, suggesting that increased burnout is associated with decreased job satisfaction. This aligns with existing research by Ofei-Dodoo et al., (2018), as well as Romero-Carazas et al. (2024), which also reported significant negative relationships between these variables. While the relationship is not perfectly linear, it indicates that teachers experiencing higher levels of burnout characterized by emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment tend to feel less fulfilled and motivated in their roles. In contrast, Antoniadou et al., (2024) found a high correlation between burnout and job satisfaction with the general health of people working in the catering industry. Their study also suggested that job satisfaction is influenced by age, with older workers reporting higher levels of satisfaction compared to their younger counterparts. Burnout undermines key factors contributing to job satisfaction, such as purpose, positive relationships, and competence, subsequently affecting the overall quality of education through decreased productivity, higher absenteeism, and increased turnover.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrated that this negative relationship is consistent across both male and female teachers, implying that systemic issues within the educational environment contribute equally to burnout and dissatisfaction regardless of gender. However, according to Katsogiannis et al., (2024), revealed that gender had a discernible impact on depersonalization, with women scoring higher than men. Addressing these systemic challenges such as excessive work demands and lack of organisational support is crucial for improving teacher well-being and ensuring a stable, motivated teaching workforce. Implementing targeted interventions like stress management programs and workload regulation could foster a more supportive work environment, ultimately enhancing job satisfaction and the effectiveness of the educational system across all teachers in Anambra State.

Conclusion

Our study revealed the association between burnout and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings of this study it revealed a moderate negative relationship between burnout and job satisfaction. The findings suggest that higher levels of burnout manifesting through emotional exhaustion and diminished personal accomplishment are associated with reduced job satisfaction, which can negatively influence the quality of education delivered. The consistency of this relationship across gender groups highlights the systemic nature of the issues, implicating organizational and environmental factors that transcend individual differences. To reduce burnout and boost job satisfaction, it is essential to address underlying systemic challenges by implementing supportive measures such as stress management programs and workload regulation. Such interventions could foster a healthier, more motivated teaching workforce, ultimately contributing to improved educational outcomes and the overall stability of the educational sector in Anambra State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. School principals are encouraged to organize continuous professional development sessions that focus on stress management, resilience building, and coping strategies. By creating a supportive work environment and providing resources that help teachers manage stress, principals can significantly contribute to elevating teachers' job satisfaction, ultimately advancing the school's educational goals.
2. Teachers must proactively enhance resilience and manage burnout by practicing self-care, seeking support, engaging in training, peer support groups, collaborating with colleagues, and self-care practices can enhance their well-being, which is vital for effective teaching and improved job satisfaction.
3. Government authorities are urged to consider these findings when designing policies and training programs. Organizing workshops and seminars that focus on mental health, resilience, and stress management could prove invaluable in sustaining a motivated and satisfied teaching force. Such initiatives could also include establishing interventions aimed at reducing burnout in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

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