

Demographic variables and Job Burnout among Primary School Teachers in Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State, Nigeria

Ahmad Usman Gatawa

*Department of Educational Foundations
Sokoto State University, Sokoto
gatawaahmad@gmail.com*

Abstract

The study, adopted descriptive survey research design, to investigate demographic variables and job burnout among primary school teachers in Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State. The population was 528 secondary school teachers. The sample of the study was 217 teachers (145 males, and 72 females). The instrument for data collection was Richmond et al. (2009) Teacher Burnout Measure (TBM). ANOVA and t-test for independent samples were used in analysing the data. The study established the fact that majority of the participants have job burnout feelings. The study found no significant difference in job burnout feelings among the primary school teachers based on their respective groupings of years of teaching experience. It was also found that there was no significant difference in job burnout feelings among the teachers in rural and urban primary schools. It was recommended that job burnout management unit should be established to train teachers on proper management of job burnout feelings irrespective of their years in teaching, and that the Primary Education Board should ensure that teachers in all locations are regularly trained on job burnout management skills.

Keywords: *teaching, experience, prevalence, burnout, teachers*

Introduction

Although a wonderful profession, teaching seems to be a challenging job in many parts of the world. Teachers face a number of problems that in turn threaten the dynamic technological and social transformation of nations into a more functional one. In Nigeria, teachers, being the prominent persons that transform citizens into active members of the nation, face a lot of challenges in their job performance. These challenges are either public, the teachers, or the system as a whole. The problems manifest in understaffed schools which culminate in too much workloads, dealing with hard-to-manage classes because of the size of the classes, which in most of the cases is not in conformity with ideal ratio of teacher-students. In many primary schools, teachers are managing a class of too many pupils. By implication, whether newly recruited or experienced, a teacher is bound to spend all the working hours of the day, except during short break, dealing with too many pupils. This is the situation in both rural and urban primary schools. This eventually affects teachers' job performance and eventually leads to a burned out situation.

Amin et al. (2013) explained that teachers were the backbone of educational system at all levels. The success and failure of educational activities highly depend on their performance. Their performance is directly linked to process and product of education. Therefore, the performance of teachers is important for the improvement of education. Teachers show satisfactory performance in their job even if they are given additional assignments in school. It is believed that they possess dedication and commitment; that even if their work condition does not seem right, they still have the inner drive to go on working. Teachers consider their work as a mission, that even if they are sometimes choked with various activities in school, they go on working with gratefulness in the heart.

In recent times, teaching has become a more challenging profession: more paperwork, more bureaucracy, and more unruly classes. Teachers have many things in mind; their attention is divided by many tasks, and they also consider many things such as teaching students who lack motivation, maintaining discipline in the classroom, confronting general time pressures and workload demands, being exposed to a large amount of change, being evaluated by others, having challenging relationships with colleagues, administration, and management, and being exposed to generally poor working condition prospects, unsatisfactory working conditions, the ambiguity of the teacher's role, poor relationships with colleagues, pupils, and administrators, and job insecurity (Jomuad et al., 2021). These may serve as sources of job burnout.

Jomuad et al. (2021) explained that teaching profession involves being subjected to various job demands that often underpin a perception of a heavy workload. Other examples of job demands are multiple meetings that interfere with preparation time, administrative paperwork generated by the management, and being subjected to constant reforms and changes that demand re-organization of work and work tasks. They further explained that teaching work is a rewarding yet demanding career. With extended hours and a heavy workload, it is easy to fall prey to teacher burnout. Without proper assistance, teachers are in danger of being overworked and not taking care of their own mental and physical health needs.

According to the American Federation of Teachers' Educator Quality of Work Life Survey (2017), 61 percent of teachers indicated that their jobs were always or often stressful. Just as alarming, if not more so, 58 percent of respondents cited poor mental health as a result of that stress. Sneha and Maheswari (2020) discussed that teachers have to teach students belonging to different sections of the society of which some are tribal, who do not possess much knowledge. To get them ready for the examination is a very stressful task, which later turns into job burnout. Studies found that most of the teachers face symptoms of burnout like frequent headaches or muscle pain, change in appetite or sleeping habits, sense of failure and loss of motivation, feeling trapped, defeated, and negative outlook for any situation, low satisfaction or accomplishment, loneliness, refusing to perform assigned tasks, frustration, skipping work and being late to work. Due to lengthy hours of teaching and preparation, teachers are prone to burnout. A teacher who is given an increased workload is likely to experience burnout. There are times when a

teacher's extra workload brings him or her honour and prestige. However, studies show that increased workload leads to burnout and stress.

Freudenberg coined the term "burnout" in 1974 after seeing signs of exhaustion in his workers. He found that the cause of this phenomenon is his own physical and emotional fatigue. Shaharruddin and Krishnan (2021) explained that burnout is a syndrome of exhaustion, cynicism and reduced professional efficiency closely linked to the work environment. It occurs as a reaction to stressors in the work environment. It has various negative effects on work performance and personal well-being. Also Goswami (2013) explained that burnout is defined as a negative psychological experience that is a reaction to job-related stress. It pertains to feelings experienced by people whose jobs require repeated exposure to emotionally charged social situations.

Job burnout is a situation when one is emotionally exhausted, physically and mentally drained due to prolonged stress. Prolonged and continuous stress can cause loss of interest and motivation in a job. Job burnout can reduce the overall performance and productivity; this can also cause feeling of helplessness, hopelessness, cynicism, and resentment.

Burnout affects every aspect of an individual's life including home, work, and social life (Sneha & Maheswari, 2020). Job burnout is a metaphor that describes a particular syndrome which is assumed to be linked to the emotional strain of working frequently and intensively with other people. Shaharruddin and Krishnan (2021) posit that individuals are not the cause of burnout; rather, the social environment in which they work is. People's interactions with one another and how they perform their responsibilities are shaped by their workplaces. In particular, human-service professionals such as teachers, nurses, physicians, and social workers are vulnerable to burnout (Wulolign et al., 2020).

Mota et al. (2021) posit that burnout is conceived as a subjective experience stemming from self-interpretation and self-evaluation of the context in which individuals are integrated. The sense of stress and burnout is determined by an individual's evaluation of the circumstances and challenges presented to them and the cognitive resources they possess. They further pointed out that organization is the most relevant dimension contributing to teachers' burnout because the classroom appears to be the most challenging context for teachers to manage.

Preechawong et al. (2022) explained that teacher burnout is one of the factors that affect the teaching profession. The turnover rate, especially in early-career teachers, is higher than in other stages. Teachers who perceived their ability to deal with the various problems of students and other types of problems effectively are low burnout. Baral et al. (2015) pointed on low salary and overloaded work as being among the most prevalent factors responsible for job burnout among primary school teachers.

Mousavy et al. (2012) explained that burnout was a serious psychological syndrome that can affect not only an individual's well-being, but also the functioning of whole

organisations, such as schools. It is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and decreased personal accomplishment. The level of burnout among teachers in the field of education has a negative impact on students' success. Goswami (2013) explained that job burnout among teachers leads to decrease in job satisfaction and that age and area of workplace affect job burnout, but sex was not found to be a factor of job burnout among teachers. The negative consequences of job burnout are too costly for organizations. Therefore, devising proper plans to decrease its consequences would be of help.

Safari (2020) discussed that burnout is a psychological stress syndrome which comes in when a person with high emotional engagement worked continuously for a long time. Teachers' job burnout also happens when there is inequality between excessive demands and resources available. Teachers who have job burnout often cannot succeed and mostly suffer failures. Teachers are multi-tasked in the present day school system. Job insecurity, low salary package, lot of deadlines to meet and a lot of responsibilities to shoulder besides teaching, are some of the sources of work place stress among school teachers in public schools.

No single behaviour or attitude is predictive of teacher job burnout or fatigue. As stated earlier, there must be a number of symptoms that occur over a long period of time to assume that a teacher is experiencing burnout. The first symptoms to look for are either a negative change in communication style or physiological symptoms. There may be many causes of teacher burnout; the two primary causes are continued job stress over long periods of time and communication overloads. These two factors when combined with other variables such as personal, financial, physical, or emotional problems can cause a good and effective teacher to become a poor and ineffective teacher. Again, job stress over long period of time can contribute to burnout; as can, communication overloads over long period of time. Both combine to form a deadly effect of causing a good, caring, dedicated teacher to gradually but slowly turn into a poor, ineffective, non-caring teacher.

The outcomes of job burnout are devastating. The teacher may feel useless in his or her job. The teacher may negatively impact student's behaviour, performance, communication, and affect. The teacher may lose the esteem and respect of his or her colleagues and administrators. And lastly, the teacher may lose esteem and respect for himself or herself (Richmond et al., 2009). Xhelilaj et al. (2021) explained that teachers make a great contribution to the academic formation, social and emotional development of children. However, teaching ranks among the most stressful professions. High levels of teacher stress and burnout cause serious damage to both students' academic achievement and development, as well as damage to relationships between teachers, students and parents. Bottiani et al. (2019) posit that job burnout is pervasive among public school teachers and amplified in urban schools, where job demands are often high and resources low. Relatively little is known about factors contributing to job burnout among urban school teachers specifically, or how these aspects of teacher occupational wellbeing relate to their use of effective classroom practices. Rather than utilizing

objective measures, extant research has relied heavily on teacher report of antecedents and consequences, in addition to self-reporting job burnout, which has also rarely been examined.

Some studies sought to establish the disparities in job burnout feelings among teachers based on their respective categories of teaching experience and whether teachers in urban schools where more facilities are found are more vulnerable to job burnout feelings compared to teachers in rural locations. For example, Preechawong et al. (2022) investigated the influence of years of teaching experience on teacher burnout, job satisfaction, life satisfaction and intention to quit the profession. The study found statistically significant differences between some groups of teaching experience in three variables: midcareer teachers revealed significantly higher levels of teacher burnout than late-career teachers; late career teachers showed a significantly higher level of life satisfaction than early and mid-career teachers; early career teachers reported a significantly higher level of intention to quit profession than mid and late career teachers. In the study of Al-Shoqran et al. (2021), which investigated the level of job burnout among the faculty members of the private Jordanian universities and the effect of gender and experience variables on it, it was found that there was no statistically significant differences in the level of job burnout of the total degree attributed to gender. Moreover, the results showed that there were apparent differences in the arithmetic averages on the total score for the level of job burnout with different levels of working experience in favour of those with less than five years of experience. In another study by Mousavy et al. (2012) who researched on burnout among low and high experienced teachers, they found no significant difference in depersonalization and personal accomplishment (components of job burnout) scores between low and high experienced teachers. In another aspect, result of the study also discovered a significant difference in emotional exhaustion (component of job burnout) scores between low and high experienced teachers. The study appealed on the need for further research to explore the roots and the causes of job burnout among teachers.

Xhelilaj et al. (2021) researched on teacher's burnout, occupational stress, coping, gender and age. The results indicated that female primary school teachers experience lack of support from the administrators more than men. Men experienced depersonalization more than women. Older teachers reported a higher level of burnout and occupational stress than other groups, but they indicated higher personal accomplishment. It was also found that younger teachers seem to be the most vulnerable to stress. However, older teachers are the ones who show higher levels of burnout (Carlotto, 2012 as cited in Teles et al., 2020).

With regard to the issue of job burnout feelings among teachers in rural and urban locations, a number of studies have mixed conclusion in that respect. For instance, Dagar and Mathur (2016) investigated on burnout among school teachers of Haryana in India. The findings revealed that male and female school teachers differ significantly in their burnout level while no significant difference was found in the burnout level of teachers

teaching in rural and urban areas. Also Siri (2015) investigated on levels of burnout in teachers and socio-demographic factors; it was revealed that the strength of symptoms increases with length of work experience; teachers with lower qualification were more burnout than their colleagues with higher qualification. The study also found that urban teachers' burnout level is a bit higher than that of teachers in rural areas. Marital status has little effect on the level of burnout. In the study of Baral et al. (2015), who conducted a critical analysis on responsible potential sources and symptoms of burnout among secondary school teachers, it was found that private primary school teachers are experiencing more job burnout than government secondary school teachers and that place of posting of an individual is also one of the sources among government school teachers.

There were many studies done on teachers' job burnout and its prevalence among teachers in different countries of the world like India, but this author is not aware that prevalence of job burnout among teachers in public primary schools of Sokoto state has ever been done. It is in line with the above background that the present study seeks to investigate teaching experience and the prevalence of job burnout feelings among primary school teachers in Wamako Local Government Area of Sokoto state, Nigeria.

Research objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- a. To examine the difference in job burnout feelings among primary school teachers based on their years of teaching experience in Wamako Local Government Area of Sokoto state.
- b. To examine the difference in job burnout feelings among rural and urban primary school teachers in Wamako Local Government Area of Sokoto state.

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant difference in job burnout feelings among primary school teachers based on their years of teaching experience in Wamako Local Government Area of Sokoto state.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in job burnout feelings among rural and urban primary school teachers in Wamako Local Government Area of Sokoto state.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 528 primary school teachers with various teaching experience. The sample of the study was 217 teachers (145 males, and 72 females). Permission for the conduct of the study was granted by Wamako Local Government Education Authority. The sample selection was guided by the Research Advisor (2006). The instrument used for data collection was Teacher Burnout Measure (TBM) adopted from Richmond et al. (2009). It was a negative 20 item questionnaire designed in 5 points Likert scale format; starting from *strongly agree* 1, to *strongly disagree* 5. With regard to scoring, any respondent whose assessment

falls between 20-35 means weak feelings for burnout; 36-55 indicates strong feelings for burnout; 56-70 shows substantial burnout feelings; and 71-80 indicates a respondent was burned out.

The validity of TBM was established using face and content validity to ensure consistency and cultural validity. Two experts in Educational Psychology and two experts in English established the face validity. The reliability of the instrument was established using Chronbach alpha, and 0.76 was obtained as the reliability coefficient. The data of the study was analysed using Analysis of Variance and t-test for independent samples.

Presentation of results

The following descriptive statistics represent the composition of the participants of the study.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Male	145	67
Female	72	33
Total	217	100%

Table 1 depicted that 145 male primary school teachers participated in the study which meant 67%; the female teachers were 72 in number which covered 33% of the participants. It showed that more number of male teachers participated in the study

Ho1: There is no significant difference in job burnout feelings among primary school teachers based on their years of teaching experience in Wamako Local Government Area of Sokoto state.

Table 2: ANOVA statistics on difference in job burnout feelings among primary school teachers based on years of teaching experience in Wamako Local Government, Sokoto state

Teaching Experience	Mean scores	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	P-value	Decision
1 - 10	69.11	2525.289	3	841.763	1.703	.168	Not Sig.
11 - 20	65.39	80061.657	266	494.208			
21 – 30	72.08		268				
31, above	76.82						
	Total	82586.946					

Table 2 shows that the mean scores calculated for the four groupings of the primary school teachers based on their respective years of teaching experience were 69.11, 65.39, 72.08, and 76.82. The F-calculated was 1.703, and the p-value obtained was 0.168 which is greater than the alpha 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no

significant difference in job burnout feelings among primary school teachers based on their respective years of teaching experience was retained. The reason is because based on the analysis above, there is no significant difference among the four groups of primary school teachers.

Ho2. There is no significant difference in job burnout feelings among rural and urban primary school teachers in Wamako Local Government Area of Sokoto state.

Table 3: t-test statistics on difference in job burnout feelings among rural and urban primary school teachers in Wamako Local Government Area of Sokoto state

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	Df	t-value	p-value	Decision
Rural	84	69.63	13.22	215	-0.178	0.859	Not Sig.
Urban	133	70.27	26.72				

Table 3 shows that the mean scores calculated for rural and urban primary school teachers were 69.63 and 70.27. The standard deviations were 13.22 and 26.72 and the degree of freedom was 215. The t-value obtained was -0.178., while the p-value obtained was 0.859 which was greater than the alpha of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in job burnout feelings among rural and urban primary school teachers is also retained. Reason is because based on the data analysis, there is no difference in feelings for job burnout among the teachers in rural and urban primary school.

Summary of the findings

The following were the findings of the study:

- i. There is no significant difference in job burnout feelings among primary school teachers based on their years of teaching experience in Wamako Local Government Area of Sokoto state.
- ii. There is no significant difference in job burnout feelings among teachers in rural and urban primary schools in Wamako Local Government Area of Sokoto state.

Discussion of the findings

Findings from hypothesis one indicated that there is no significant difference in job burnout feelings among primary school teachers based on their years of teaching experience. The finding is in line with that of Mousavy et al. (2012) who found no significant difference in depersonalization and personal accomplishment (components of job burnout) scores between low and high experienced teachers. But the finding disagrees with that of Preechawong et al. (2022) who found statistically significant differences between groups of teaching experience in three variables: midcareer teachers revealed significantly higher levels of teacher burnout than late-career teachers. The result also contradicted the finding of Al-Shoqran et al. (2021) who reported differences in the arithmetic averages on the total score for the level of job burnout with different levels of

working experience in favour of those with less than five years of experience. The result is still in contrast with another finding by Mousavy et al. (2012) which established significant difference in emotional exhaustion (component of job burnout) scores between low and high experienced teachers. Lastly, the result also contradicted that of Siri (2015), who found that symptoms of job burnout increases with qualification and length of teaching experiences. Differences in job burnout feelings was not found based on teachers' years of teaching experience possibly because older teachers who served longer in the profession influence the attitude to work of the teachers that are new in the profession.

In hypothesis two, it was stated that there is no significant difference in job burnout feelings among rural and urban primary school teachers. Similarly, the result of the study showed no significant difference in job burnout feelings among the teachers in rural and urban primary schools. The finding is in line with that of Dagar and Mathur (2016) who found no significant difference in the burnout level of teachers teaching in rural and urban areas. But the result is not in agreement with that of Siri (2015), who found that urban teachers' burnout level was a bit higher than that of teachers in rural areas. In addition, the result did not tally with that of Baral et al. (2015) who discovered that place of posting of an individual is also one of the sources of job burnout among government school teachers. No difference was found in job burnout feelings among rural and urban primary school teachers possibly because they have common attitude to work and that school location/environment is not a factor in curbing job burnout feeling. Thus, they experienced job burnout feelings alike.

Conclusion

It was the conclusion of this study that primary school teachers experienced job burnout. It was also the conclusion of this study that job burnout feeling commonly manifests irrespective of years of teaching experience among the primary school teachers in rural and urban schools of Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto state.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that:

- i. Stakeholders in the management of primary school teachers should always recognise the fact that teachers' are multitasked. Hence, job burnout management unit should be established in teachers' service board to train teachers, irrespective of years spent in teaching, on proper management of job burnout feelings for the success of primary education.
- ii. It is worth noting that both rural and urban primary school teachers experienced job burnout feelings. It is therefore imperative for Primary Education Board to ensure that teachers in all locations are regularly trained on job burnout management skills.

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