Influence of Workload on Teacher Burnout in Public Secondary Schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Ideally, teachers should work in stress-free environments to effectively fulfill their teaching roles. However, they often face various challenges while carrying out their responsibilities. This study examined the influences of workload on teacher burnout in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and was founded on the Multidimensional Theory of Burnout and Golembiewski and Munzenrider's models of burnout. It targeted 154 principals and 2383 teachers from 154 schools, in addition to 25 Teachers Service Commission (TSC) officers and 7 Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) from Tharaka Nithi County. Out of these, 343 teachers and 46 principals from 46 schools, in addition to all the 25 TSC and 7 QASO officers, were sampled using two-stage cluster random sampling, purposive sampling, and simple random techniques. Data was collected using questionnaires from teachers, interview schedules from TSC and QASO officers, and data collection forms. The reliability of the questionnaires was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which yielded values of 0.82 and 0.87 for workload and teacher burnout, indicating good reliability at 0.7. Quantitative data from questionnaires was analyzed descriptively by using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, as well as inferentially by using Pearson correlation. For qualitative data from open-ended questions in the questionnaires, interviews, and secondary data transcripts, content analysis was employed. The findings revealed a positive and significant correlation between teacher burnout in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya (the dependent variable) and workload ($r = 0.275$, $P<0.05$). Based on the findings, it was concluded that workload contributed to teacher burnout. The study recommended a need to employ more teachers and fairly distribute them in Tharaka Nithi County so as to lessen workload challenges among teachers. The study's primary beneficiaries are teachers, principals, TSC officers, and QASO officers.

Keywords: Secondary Schools, Teacher Burnout, Tharaka Nithi County, Workload

I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a very important role in the implementation of the school curriculum. They ensure learning is taking place in the classroom. A classroom, just like any workplace, is not immune to work-related stress. This can affect teacher performance, leading to low productivity and absenteeism, hence leading to burnout. Diaz (2018) defines burnout as extreme work-related stress categorized by emotional, psychological, and physical exhaustion. In a survey by the American Federation of Teachers (2017), 61 percent of teachers indicated that their jobs were always or often stressful, while 58 percent of them cited poor mental health as a result of that stress.

Burnout is the state of chronic stress among teachers that leads to physical and emotional exhaustion, detachment, feelings of ineffectiveness, and a lack of accomplishment (McCormack & Cotter, 2013). Teacher burnout is a global epidemic. In the United States of America, Shen et al. (2015) discovered in their study that burnout played different roles in the transmission from teacher to student. Teachers' status of burnout was found to be an important environmental factor associated with student motivation. McLaughlin (2018) cited that more than 40 percent of teachers in the US left the profession within five years, according to the National Education Association, leaving shortages across the country. The study gave reasons why teachers leave: lack of administrative support, low salaries, accountability pressures, working conditions, and lack of advancement.

Herman et al. (2020), in their study in Missouri, discovered that different aspects of school climate are related to the three burnout dimensions, namely: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and feelings of low personal accomplishment. Further, the inverse relationship between school climate and burnout was mediated by teacher satisfaction levels for both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization dimensions. This study conceptualizes that teachers are faced with numerous challenges, such as a heavy workload (Hardwick-Franco, 2019), which leads to burnout.

In Australia, teachers in non-urban locations were faced with less workload due to smaller class sizes compared to those in urban areas and were less prone to suffer burnout (Hardwick-Franco, 2019). Due to resource constraints in Kenya and heavy workloads, teachers are often overburdened (Ndung'u, 2017). This emanated from the fact that teachers have to do so much with so little. This current study was focused on Tharaka County in Kenya. Teachers in Tharaka Nithi County were faced with heavy workloads and poor learning facilities. This challenged their classroom management practices and often left them overwhelmed (Gacheri, 2017). As a result, teachers were unable to effectively meet curriculum obligations.

Though there was an abundance of studies that focused on teacher burnout globally (McLaughlin, 2018; Hardwick-Franco, 2019; Shen et al., 2015; Jensen et al., 2019; Hardwick-Franco, 2019; Ng'ang'a, 2017; Kiptum, 2018; Muguongo, 2015, etc.), those that focused on Tharaka Nithi on the subject were scanty or largely unavailable in the public sphere. This study thus set out to examine the influence of workload on teacher burnout in public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

1.1 Research Hypotheses

H_{O1}: There is no statistically significant relationship between workload and teacher burnout in public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers are required to remain in school and offer their services, irrespective of the conditions of the school. They are often required to offer their services in environments often replete with huge student populations and large class sizes (Sichambo, 2012). This placed extra demands on them. In this, some of the most important school contextual predictors were heavy workloads (Hardwick-Franco, 2019) due to teaching many lessons as well as large class sizes, which could lead to burnout.

School administrators also demanded from teachers the high academic performance of their students. This was often a tall order in the context of other challenges facing teachers (Jensen, Solheim, & Idsoe, 2019). Teachers are often obligated to work long hours to meet these demands. Geographical location was also cited as an important factor in placing extra demands on teachers (Muguongo, 2015). If teachers live far from the school in poor conditions, getting to school could be a daunting task (Shen et al., 2015). This task placed on teachers could lead to increased burnout.

Dismal school facilities also place heavy tolls on teachers (Waithanji, 2014). This meant teachers had to handle students in cramped classrooms and laboratories, among others. Teachers were also obligated to ensure discipline among students (Maithya, 2009). Some of the students were unable to meet learning obligations, which led to a demand for extra effort from teachers to help them catch up.

In this study, the dependent variable was burnout, which, according to Maslach (1982), is a sequential process that emanates from the emotional demands related to dealing with clients. In this study, burnout was measured by detachment from work, being emotionally drained, feelings of fatigue, treating students as impersonal 'objects', feeling of 'burned out' from work (Golembiewski & Munzenrider, 1988), being easily irritable or disobedient to authority, and feeling of being used up.

Pucella (2011) studied "The Impact of National Board Certification on Burnout Levels in Educators." This study sought to find out the burnout levels among teachers who had achieved certification by "the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)." The findings showed that teachers' workload due to certification processes as well as demands to fulfill teaching obligations contributed to increases in burnout. Though not focused on Kenya, the former study related to this study, which set out to find out the level to which certification demands contributed to burnout among teachers. Pucella's study was also not based on all the variables under investigation in this study, which meant that it did not holistically relate to this study.

Molero et al. (2019) studied "The influence of emotional intelligence and burnout syndrome on teachers' well-being." The study was based on a systematic review of existing literature. Data was collected from the Web of Science (WOS) database. In this regard, 36 scientific articles published between 2005 and 2017 were included in the study. The

findings showed that education professionals were under constant stress due to a large number of social interactions, the need for new skills, which necessitated constant learning, and the workload. The combined effect of these factors led to burnout syndrome (BS) among teachers. The former study differed from this current study in design and focus. It did not expressly relate to this current study, which was based on primary data sources. This was particularly so since the study by Molero and others was based on secondary data sourced.

Kilonzo (2018) studied "Job burnout and performance of teachers in secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya." Data was obtained from 359 secondary school teachers sampled using the stratified random sampling technique from a target population of 5579. Based on the descriptive survey design, the findings showed "a positive and significant relationship between the performance of teachers and job burnout." The high levels of burnout in the study area were attributable to physical and emotional exhaustion due to a heavy workload. This agreed with the study by Grayson and Alvarez (2008), which focused on Ohio and linked emotional exhaustion with burnout. However, these studies did not include all the variables under investigation in this study. This created an apparent empirical literature gap that was hard to bridge without studies such as this current one.

Waithanji (2014), in "Impact of teacher burnout in secondary schools in Mathira East District, Kenya," adopted the descriptive survey design. The study focused on 16 public secondary schools, from which 201 teachers categorized into bachelor, masters, and doctorate holders were sampled. The study revealed that the capacity of teachers to handle high workloads was influenced by their academic qualifications. High indiscipline levels and immense workloads also aggravated burnout among teachers. These findings showed a trend observed elsewhere. For example, the study in the Midwest Metropolitan Area of the USA by Shen et al. (2015) also linked indiscipline with burnout among teachers. The study by Waithanji related to this current study, which was also based on a descriptive study design. However, the study did not attempt to link role expectations regarding students' academic performance, school facilities, and student discipline in the context of workloads and teacher burnout as envisaged by this study.

In line with the study by Waithanji (2014), another study in Kenya by Sichambo (2012) discovered that apart from normal classroom teaching, teachers had many remedial lessons to attend to larger classes, to handle a lot of paperwork, and some had to stay in their work stations in order to complete various tasks. All these factors were found to contribute to teacher burnout, hence impacting badly on their performance. The study showed that workload and burnout were major issues in Kenya. The former study is, however, out-dated. It did not show the prevailing situation in Tharaka Nithi County.

2.7 Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study was founded on Golembiewski and Munzenrider's (1988) model of burnout. Golembiewski and Munzenrider proposed an alternative model of the burnout process (Golembiewski & Munzenrider, 1981, 1984, 1988). The two proposed a strongly modified sequence of the burnout processes, although they agreed with the three-dimensional nature of burnout that was put forth by Maslach (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). According to Golembiewski and Munzenrider, depersonalization comes first. This then leads to a reduction in personal accomplishment, which goes on to bring about emotional exhaustion. The reason for depersonalization coming up first is that it is largely a professional detachment that emanates from dealing with others in an objective way (Lee & Ashforth, 1993).

In the context of this study, it was argued that detachment took place when teachers were faced with heavy workloads, making them feel their best efforts to deal with work demands were futile. This went on to cause depersonalization, which made it hard for the teachers to relate well with the students, hence undermining their performance (Lee & Ashforth, 1993). After intense depersonalization, the sense of accomplishment waned and stress increased. This went on to surpass one's ability to cope. Eventually, emotional exhaustion and burnout, as envisaged by this current study, set in.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study used a descriptive research design. This design was preferred because it enables the researcher to collect immense volumes of data from the study population within a short period of time while ensuring the anonymity of the study respondents. In evaluating the influence of workload on teacher burnout in Tharaka Nithi County, this was deemed an appropriate design.

3.2 Location of the Study

The study was carried out in public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County. The county is located in the former eastern province of Kenya. The area is characterized by a lack of resources, understaffed schools, and heavy workloads, among other challenges (Muguongo, 2015; Gacheri, 2017). These factors led to high levels of burnout complaints among teachers in Tharaka Nithi County (Gacheri, 2017). Furthermore, there is scanty literature on the influence of teachers in Tharaka Nithi County.

3.3 Target Population

A target population is "a group of individual objects or items from which samples for measurement are taken" (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). This study targeted 154 public schools in Tharaka Nithi County with 154 principals and 2383 teachers (Tharaka Nithi County Government, 2022). The study also targeted 25 TSC officials and 7 Quality Assurance and Standards Officials (QASOs) from the county. These were targeted because they are directly responsible for issues affecting teachers. The target population is as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Target Population

Category	**Population**
Principals	154
Teachers	2383
TSC Officials	25
QASOs	7

3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The unit of observation in this study was individual schools, while the unit of analysis in this study was principals, teachers, TSC officials, and QASOs. Two-stage cluster random sampling was used to sample the schools to include in this study. In this light, each sub-county (Tharaka North, Tharaka South, Meru South, and Maara) formed a cluster. As such, 30% of the schools in each cluster were randomly sampled. This made a total of 46 schools out of the total population of 154 schools. All the principals from the schools sampled were purposefully included in the study. From the 46 schools, simple random techniques were used to obtain a sample of 343 teachers to take part in the study. This was done for the purpose of ensuring that everybody targeted has equal chances of being selected. All 25 TSC officials and 7 QASOs targeted were included in the study.

The sample size was obtained using the formula developed by Taro Yamane (Yamane, 1967). The formula is:
n=N/1+N*(e) 2

Where:
n=the sample size;
N= the population size and;
e=the acceptable sampling error (assumed at 0.05).

The total for each stratum was collated, $\sum (n_{1+} n_{2+} n_{3+} n_4)$, to make a total sample size (n) for the study as follows:
n≃46+343+25+7=421

The sample size was shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Sample Size

Category	**Population (N)**	**Sample (n)**	**Calculation**
Principals	154	46	n_1=N*30%
Teachers	2383	343	n_2=N/1+N*(e)^2
TSC Officials	25	25	n_3=N
QASOs Officials	7	7	n_4=N

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

The study used questionnaires for teachers, interview schedules for Principals, TSC and QASO Officials, and Data collection form, for secondary data.

3.6 Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out in Tharaka Nithi County to ascertain the accuracy, clarity, and suitability of the research instruments. In this regard, a pilot study targeting 34 teachers (343 teachers*10%) and five principals (46 principals*10%) in the county was carried out. This was based on the premise of Kothari (2004), who suggested 10 to 30% of the study sample as enough for pilot studies. The pilot study sampled 10% of teachers, 10% of principals, and 10% of TSC and QASO officers. Those who took part in the pilot study were not included in the final study.

3.7 Validity of the Instruments

First and foremost, the face validity of the questionnaire was assessed by examining the ease with which the respondents answered the questions presented to them. In this regard, the researcher observed the respondents as they participated in the pilot study and also asked them if they encountered difficulties in responding to any question. Any ambiguous questions were promptly corrected.

To measure content validity, the questionnaire was presented to the university supervisors and other research experts in the university. Their expert opinion was sought, and their review comments were used to improve the questionnaire. To measure construct validity, the questions were also evaluated against the desired outcome to see how valid they were for the study. The questions were also formulated based on the research questions and the literature gaps that arose.

3.8 Reliability of the Instruments

Instrument reliability is “the capacity of a research tool to dependably measure features of concern over time” (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). Since the questionnaires contained psychometric scale tests, the Cronbach Alpha (α), a scale test for related statements in questionnaires, was used to test the reliability of the questionnaires. This is a reliability coefficient ranging from 0 to 1, whose cut-off point is 0.7 (which signifies acceptability). It was used to test the internal consistency of research items. The study was cross-sectional since the data was collected at one point in time. This meant that the reliability of the research instruments was assumed at the time of data collection. In this study, Cronbach Alpha values of 0.82 and 0.87 were obtained for workload and teacher burnout, respectively, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Reliability Testing

Variable	No. of Item	Cronbach Alpha (α)
Workload	8	0.82
Teacher Burnout	8	0.87

Concurrently, the interview schedules were piloted among the principals, TSC, and OASO officers during the trial study to find out the level to which the responses obtained yielded consistent findings. In this regard, the responses were assessed to find out if they established clear patterns.

3.9 Data Analysis

For qualitative data from open-ended questions, interviews, and secondary data transcripts, content analysis was employed (White, 2004). In this regard, the findings obtained were described in prose, and the meanings arising were highlighted. Data from questionnaires was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24.0. The data was analyzed descriptively by using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The findings obtained were presented using charts and tables and inferentially by using Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis. To ensure that there is a linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables. All the tests were done at a 5% level of significance. The study adopted the following regression model to examine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables at a 5% level of significance.

V. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Demographics of the Participants

The researcher issued the questionnaires and interviewed various respondents. Out of the 343 students targeted by the study, 303 (88.3%) responded, while 24 out of 46 principals (52.2%) were interviewed. Lastly, 14 out of 25 TSC officials (56%) and 6 out of 7 QASOs (85.7%) were interviewed. The overall response rate was 88.3%, which was considered enough. The low response rate was caused by busy schedules among some of the respondents, which made it untenable for them to participate in the study within the stipulated time. However, the response rate was considered sufficient for data analysis since, as advanced by Clear 2020, response rates of more than 50% should be the goal of researchers. Table 4 presents the response rate.

Table 4

Response Rate

Category	Targeted	Responded	Response Rate
Teachers	343	303	88.3
Principals	46	24	52.2
TSC Officials	25	14	56.0
QASOs	7	6	85.7

The study also examined the demographic characteristics of the respondents. This was pivotal in gaining a comprehensive knowledge of the respondents that may have influenced the study's findings. The respondents were required to indicate their gender. This was aimed at establishing the gender differences among the study respondents.

Figure 1 displays the findings of an examination of the respondents' distribution by gender and type of school. Figure 2's findings demonstrate that all schools, whether boarding, day, or mixed-boarding schools, equitably contributed respondents to the survey. As a result, respondents from each category of schools in Tharaka Nithi County were fairly evenly represented. However, according to the type of school, the majority of respondents (10.9%) in day schools were female, while the percentage of men was 7.9%, indicating that female teachers preferred to work in day schools to be close to their homes while they raised their families. Male participation in mixed-day and boarding employment was 19.5%, indicating that most men preferred to take the risk of working far from their homes and families. The study found no statistically significant differences between male and female teachers in one gender-specific boarding school. On a sex comparison, the study revealed that respondents' gender distribution was, overall, fairly balanced.

Gender equality is a very essential attribute, according to Bhengu and Bussin (2012), as it demonstrates the differences in job satisfaction between male and female teachers. According to Bishay (2011), it promotes collaboration, fosters a sense of unity, and shows people cooperating to achieve a common objective. Every male and female contributes in some way to the fulfillment of the overall goals. Figure 2 shows the distribution of responses by gender and type of school.

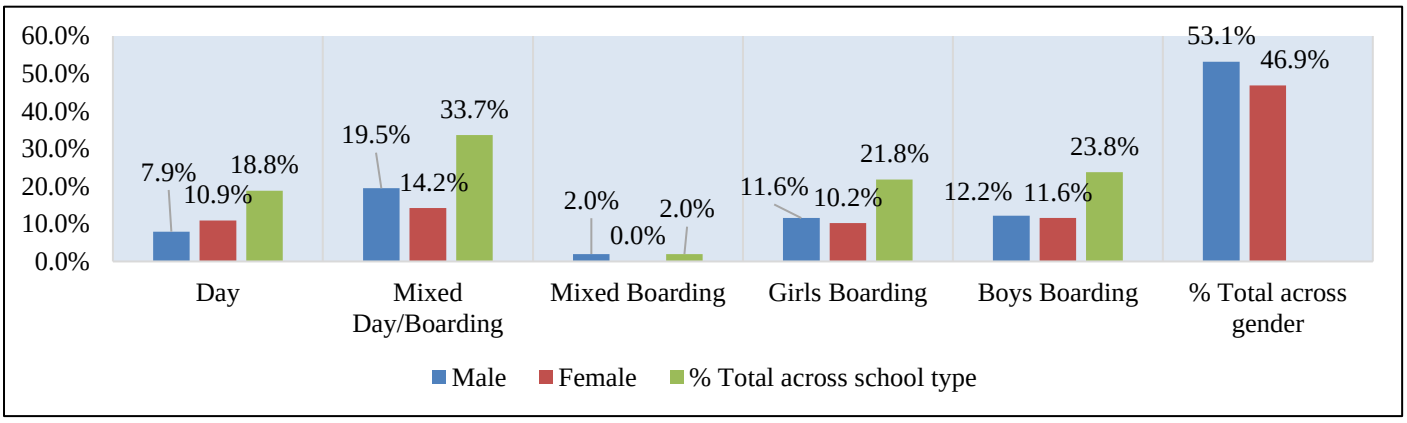


Figure 1

Gender and School Type

The study sought to establish the duration of working as a teacher to gain insight into the level of reliance on their responses. The results showed that the teachers had sufficient experience to provide trustworthy information regarding the impact of school working conditions on teachers in Tharaka Nithi. The results also demonstrated that both sexes were fairly represented among newly hired (less than two years old) teachers. However, there was a significant gender gap among teachers who had taught for between two and five years, with more men (22.1%) than women (12.9%). The fact that more female teachers (8.9%) than male teachers (4.3%) were evident in the category of 11 to 20 years indicated that female teachers often worked in the field longer. Therefore, teachers who truly continued in the profession for a long time found contentment, self-satisfaction, and fulfillment. Previous studies had found a significant relationship between work experience and teachers' job satisfaction in their line of employment. The management working relationships were what determined the teaching profession and job happiness, indicating that abilities can be learned through experience in various work stations (Babbie, 2013). The findings are presented in Figure 2.

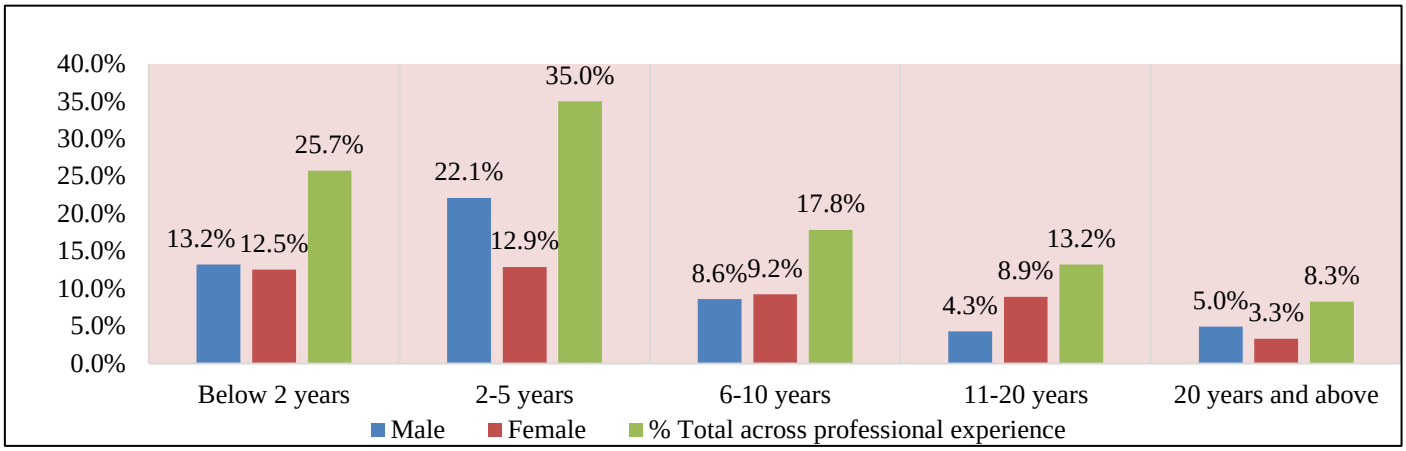


Figure 2
Gender and Professional Experience

The study then determined the teachers' academic backgrounds. According to the findings, the majority of teachers (81.5%) had bachelor's degrees, followed by diplomas (9.6%), master's degrees (4.6%), and PhDs (1.3%), which were the highest academic degrees obtained by 3.0% and 1.3% of the teachers, respectively. The results also indicated that, at the bachelor's degree level, there were significantly more male (44.2%) than female (37.3%) teachers. There were no gender differences that were particularly noticeable at the other levels of qualifications. According to the TSC regulations for deployment of staffing teachers around the nation, teachers in Tharaka Nithi were qualified to perform and deliver their duties. Secondary teachers must possess at least a diploma in their academic field, according to the TSC. However, the fact that teachers were pursuing higher degrees demonstrated that they were driven to find employment happiness. The findings are presented in Figure 3.

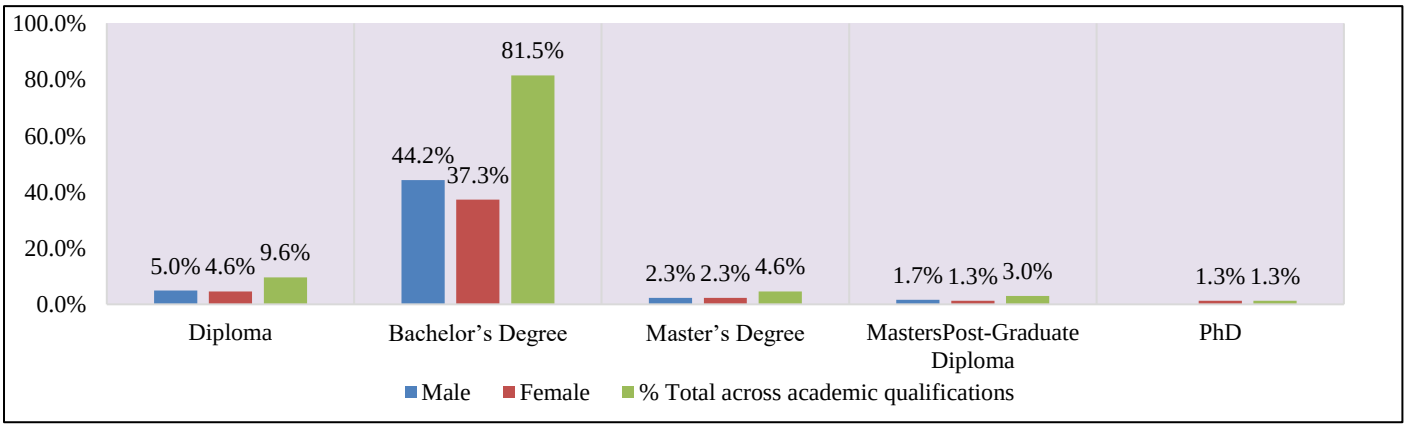


Figure 3
Gender and Academic Qualification

4.2 Workload and Teacher Burnout

The first objective of the study was to determine the effect of workload on teacher burnout in public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. First, a cross-tabulation across gender, school types, and workloads was done. In a mixed-gender day school, the majority of male teachers (28.9%) and 14.5% of female teachers indicated that workload had a low impact on burnout. In contrast, 15.4% and 14.6% of male and female teachers, respectively, indicated workload had a moderate impact on burnout. Finally, 16.5% and 13.4% of male and female teachers, respectively, indicated workload had a high impact on burnout.

In girls boarding school, the majority of male teachers (15.5%) and 14.4 of female teachers indicated that workload had a high impact on burnout. In contrast, 9.8 % and 7.3 % of male and female teachers, respectively, indicated workload had a moderate impact on burnout. Finally, 9.6 % and 9.6 % of male and female teachers, respectively, indicated that workload had a low impact on burnout.

In boys boarding school, the majority of male teachers (15.5%) and the majority (11.3%) of female teachers indicated that the workload had a high impact on burnout. In contrast, 14.6 % and 9.8 % of male and female teachers, respectively, indicated that workload had a moderate impact on burnout. Finally, (4.8%) and (14.5%) of male and female teachers, respectively, indicated that workload had a low impact on burnout. The findings suggested that there were no significant differences between male and female teachers on the effect of workload. However, the teachers' job workload increased across the gender divide when working in boarding schools. The findings are presented in Figure 4.

	High		Moderate		Low	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Day	5.2%	6.2%	13.8%	11.4%	2.4%	15.7%
Mixed Day/Boarding	16.5%	13.4%	15.4%	14.6%	28.9%	14.5%
Mixed Boarding	2.1%		3.3%			
Girls Boarding	15.5%	14.4%	9.8%	7.3%	9.6%	9.6%
Boys Boarding	15.5%	11.3%	14.6%	9.8%	4.8%	14.5%

Figure 4
Gender, School Types and Work Loads

The respondents were asked to respond to eight selected statements aimed at establishing the effect of workload on teacher burnout. The levels of agreement with the statements were rated on a scale of 1–5, where "1-to a very low extent; 2-to a low extent; 3-to a moderate extent; 4-to a high extent; and 5-to a very high extent." The summary of the descriptive statistics derived from the collected data is summarized in the following sections:

Table 5 shows teachers' responses to items on the burnout scale in the form of mean and standard deviations. Of the sampled teachers, the majority moderately agreed (M = 3) with the statement that workload due to certification processes contributed to teacher burnout. These findings agreed with the study by Pucella (2011), which showed that teachers' workload due to certification processes as well as demands to fulfill teaching obligations contributed to increases in burnout. It was thus pertinent to ensure that certification processes are given enough time to reduce the burden they place on teachers.

Table 5
Workload Due to Certification Processes Contributes to Teacher Burnout

Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Workload due to certification processes contributes to teacher burnout	1	5	3	1.12

N=303

The teachers, however, agreed to a high extent that demands to fulfill teaching obligations (M = 4) contributed to teacher burnout. These findings, as presented in Table 6, aligned with the study by Pucella (2011), which showed that

teachers' workload due to certification processes as well as demands to fulfill teaching obligations contributed to increases in burnout. This revealed that demands by MOE officials for teachers' compliance drained teachers' energies.

Table 6

Demands to Fulfill Teaching Obligations Contributes to Teacher Burnout

Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Demands to fulfill teaching obligations contributes to teacher burnout	1	5	4	1.12

N=303

When asked whether working for long periods to complete various tasks contributed to teacher burnout, they agreed to a high extent (M = 4). These findings were presented in Table 7. Sichambo (2012) found that, to enhance the academic performance of students, teachers were faced with demands for remedial lessons, a lot of paperwork, large classes, and working for long periods to complete various tasks. It was thus evident that such demands contributed to teacher burnout, as was the case with this current study.

Table 7

Working for Long Periods to Complete Various Tasks and Teacher Burnout

Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Working for long periods to complete various tasks contributes to teacher burnout	1	5	4	1.11

N=303

As shown in Table 8, the teacher went on to moderately agree that a lack of capacity to handle immense tasks increases teacher burnout (M = 3). These findings were in line with a related study in Kenya by Sichambo (2012) that established that teachers often worked for long periods to complete various tasks. This led to burnout, as envisaged by this current study. This calls for interventions aimed at lessening teacher loads.

Table 8

Lack of Capacity to Handle Immense Tasks Increases Teacher Burnout

Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Lack of capacity to handle immense tasks increases teacher burnout	1	5	3	1.21

N=303

The teachers, as shown in Table 9, also agreed to a high extent that demand for new skills with curriculum changes contributes to teacher burnout (M = 4). This agreed with the study by Gacheri (2017), which underlined the effect of curriculum obligations on teachers. In this regard, it was important to ensure that teachers were empowered to deal with immense curricular demands.

Table 9

Demand for New Skills with Curriculum Changes and Teacher Burnout

Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Demand for new skills with curriculum changes contributes to teacher burnout	1	5	4	1.28

N=303

To a moderate extent, they agreed that constant stress due to many social interactions contributed to teacher burnout (M = 3). These findings were presented in Table 10. This corroborated the findings by Molero et al. (2019), who found that education professionals were under constant stress due to a large number of social interactions, which contributed to teacher burnout.

Table 10

Constant Stress Due to Many Social Interactions Contributes to Teacher Burnout

Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Constant stress due to many social interactions contributes to teacher burnout	1	5	3	1.23

N=303

The teachers also agreed to a high extent that physical exhaustion due to a heavy workload contributed to teacher burnout (M = 4), as shown in Table 11. These findings agreed with a study by Jensen et al. (2019), which found that immense pressure on teachers contributed to exhaustion and led to severe levels of burnout among teachers. It was thus deduced that the higher the level of physical exhaustion, the higher the level of burnout.

Table 11

Physical Exhaustion Due to a Heavy Workload and Teacher Burnout

Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Physical exhaustion due to a heavy workload contributes to teacher burnout	1	5	4	1.23

N=303

The teachers went on to agree that, to a high extent, emotional exhaustion due to a heavy workload also contributed to teacher burnout (M = 4), as presented in Table 12. This aligned with the study by Jensen et al. (2019), which revealed that physical exhaustion affected teachers' burnout. These findings showed that workload-related challenges, as shown in the preceding discourse, contributed to teacher burnout in the study area.

Table 12

Emotional Exhaustion Due to a Heavy Workload Contributes to Teacher Burnout

Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Emotional exhaustion due to a heavy workload contributes to teacher burnout	1	5	4	1.20

N=303

The principals, TSC officials, and QASOs revealed that teachers in Tharaka Nithi displayed evidence of burnout. They said that a high workload played a major role in aggravating their working conditions, as noted in the study by Hardwick-Franco (2019). One of the respondents affirmed this by saying:

> *Too much work denies a teacher time to attend to other chores. This caused stress due to overworking. As a result, teachers often experienced burnout due to heavy workloads.* (Respondent V, Tharaka Nithi County, May 2022).

Burnout was also aggravated by low staffing. This meant that teachers had to attend many classes and handle many students due to the low number of teachers in the schools, which led to burnout. This was in agreement with the study by Muguongo (2015), which found that in Maara Sub-County of Tharaka Nithi, lack of resources and understaffed schools contributed to teacher burnout. This was affirmed by one of the respondents:

> *In schools where there is a teacher shortage, burnout can easily take place. However, this was made bearable by the Board of Governors (BOG), which employed teachers to fill the staffing gap* (Respondent III, Tharaka Nithi County, May 2022).

Another challenge related to workload was identified as pressure. When teachers had much work to do, they ended up working under pressure. Time for preparation was reduced, which eventually led to burnout. These findings further aligned with the Muguongo (2015) study, which was also undertaken in Tharaka Nithi County. These findings were indicative of the fact that workload continued to contribute to teacher burnout in the study area.

Pearson correlation, as shown in Table 13, shows that there was a positive and significant correlation between teacher burnout in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya (the dependent variable) and workload ($r = 0.275$, $P<0.05$). These findings agreed with Hardwick-Franco (2019), who found that an advanced workload due to teaching many lessons and large class sizes led to burnout.

Table 13

Pearson Correction between Workload and Teacher Burnout

		Teacher Burnout Scale Scores
Teacher Workload Scale Scores	Pearson Correlation	.275**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	303.000
	R^2	0.08

. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

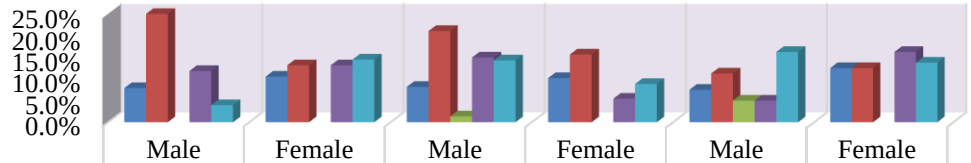
4.3 Teacher Burnout (Dependent Variable)

The respondents were asked to rate the effect of teacher burnout. First, a cross-tabulation across gender, school types, and teacher burnout levels was undertaken. In day school, male teachers (7.9%) and female teachers (10.5%) rated school types as having a high impact on teacher burnout. In contrast, 7.5 % and 12.5 % of male and female teachers, respectively, rated school types as having a low impact on teacher burnout. Finally, 8.2 % and 10.2 % of male and female teachers, respectively, found school types to have a moderate impact on teacher burnout. This showed the type of school had effects on burnout levels among teachers. This was envisaged by Louw et al. (2011), who used the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) and found that burnout varied according to different demands in different types of schools.

In mixed day/boarding school, male teachers (25.0%) and female teachers (13.2%) rated school types as having a high impact on teacher burnout. In contrast, 11.3 % and 12.5 % of male and female teachers, respectively, rated school types as having a low impact on teacher burnout. Finally, 21.1 % and 15.6 % of male and female teachers, respectively, rated school types as having a moderate impact on teacher burnout. These findings showed that school types had an impact on burnout levels among teachers, largely due to divergent teaching demands. (Ndung'u, 2017).

In girls boarding school, male teachers (11.8%) and female teachers (13.2%) rated school types as having a high impact on teacher burnout. In contrast, 5.0 % and 16.3 % of male and female teachers, respectively, rated school types as having a low impact on teacher burnout. Finally, 15.0 % and 5.4 % of male and female teachers, respectively, indicated that moderate resources had a moderate impact on teacher burnout. These findings agreed with the study by Muguongo (2015), which revealed that various schools had different resource endowments that affected burnout differently.

In boys boarding school, male teachers (3.9%) and 14.5 % of female teachers indicated that fewer resources had a high impact on teacher burnout. In contrast, 16.3% and 13.8 % of male and female teachers, respectively, indicated that more resources had a low impact on teacher burnout. Finally, 14.3 % and 8.8 % of male and female teachers, respectively, rated school types as having a moderate impact on teacher burnout. The findings showed significant differences between male and female teachers on the effect of school types on teacher burnout. The findings are presented in Figure 5. The findings portrayed burnout to be higher in mixed-day/ boarding school as well as boys' boarding school. This was due to challenges related to high disciplinary demands in schools of different genders, with boys' schools being more demanding (Bishay, 2011).



	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	HIGH		MODERATE		LOW	
Day	7.9%	10.5%	8.2%	10.2%	7.5%	12.5%
Mixed Day/Boarding	25.0%	13.2%	21.1%	15.6%	11.3%	12.5%
Mixed Boarding			1.4%		5.0%	
Girls Boarding	11.8%	13.2%	15.0%	5.4%	5.0%	16.3%
Boys Boarding	3.9%	14.5%	14.3%	8.8%	16.3%	13.8%

Figure 5

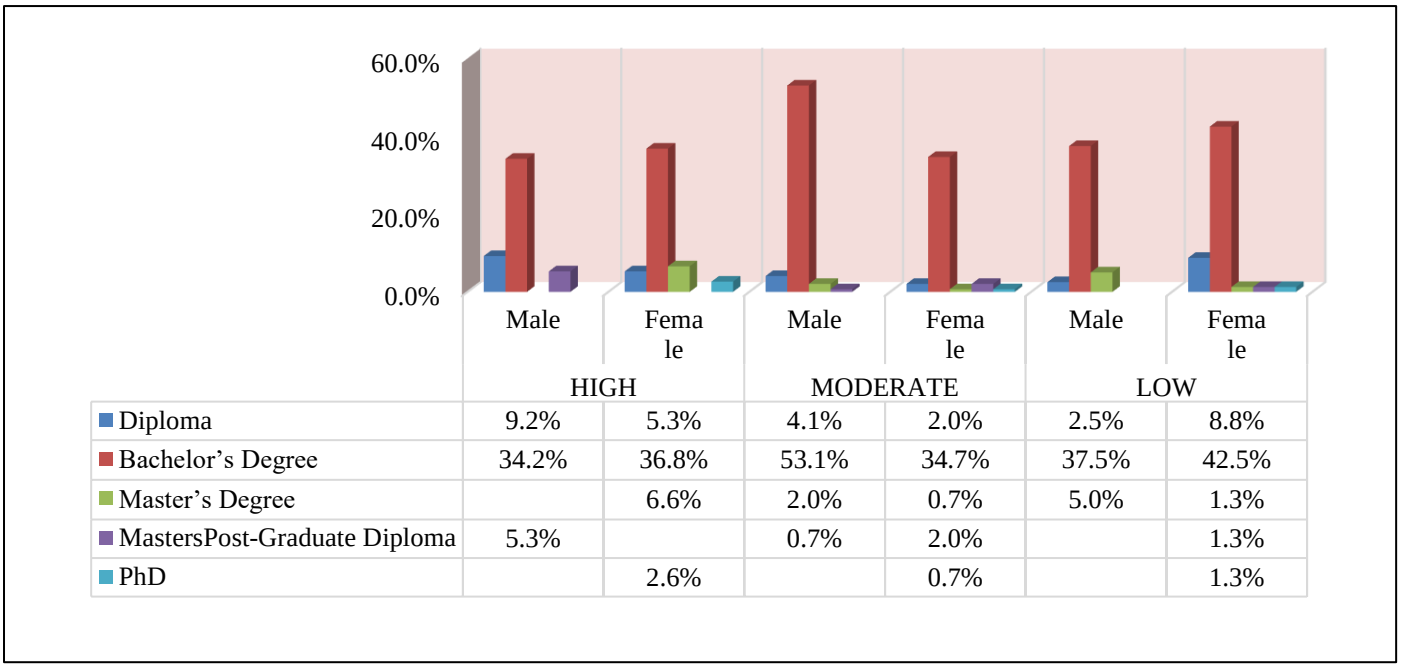
Gender, School Types and Teacher Burnout Levels

Secondly, a cross-tabulation across gender, academic qualifications, and teacher burnout levels was carried out. The results show that only 9.2% of male teachers and 5.3% of female teachers have related diploma qualifications, with a high impact on teacher burnout. In contrast, 2.5% and 8.8% of male and female teachers, respectively, had related diploma qualifications with a low impact on teacher burnout. Finally, 4.1% and 2.0% of male and female teachers, respectively, related diploma qualification with a moderate impact on teacher burnout. There are some differences regarding the effect of academic qualifications on burnout levels, which agrees with the study by Ndung'u (2017).

About 34.2% of male teachers and 36.8% of female teachers have a bachelor's degree qualification, which has a high impact on teacher burnout. In contrast, 37.5% and 42.5% of male and female teachers, respectively, related bachelor's degree qualifications with a low impact on teacher burnout. Finally, 53.1% and 34.7% of male and female teachers, respectively, related bachelor's degree qualification with a moderate impact on teacher burnout. This further

supported the study by Babbie (2013), in which advanced, divergent experiences due to training affected resilience to burnout differently.

Furthermore, 5.3% of male teachers and 6.6% of female teachers related to master's degree qualification, with a high impact on teacher burnout. In contrast, 5.0% and 1.3% of male and female teachers, respectively, related Master's degree qualifications with a low impact on teacher burnout. Finally, 0.7% and 2.0% of male and female teachers, respectively, related to master's degree qualification, with a moderate impact on teacher burnout. And for the PhD, only female teachers rated it as having an effect on teacher burnout. The findings are presented in Figure 6. This was explained by the fact that training affected the ability to deal with workload challenges (Ndung'u, 2017).



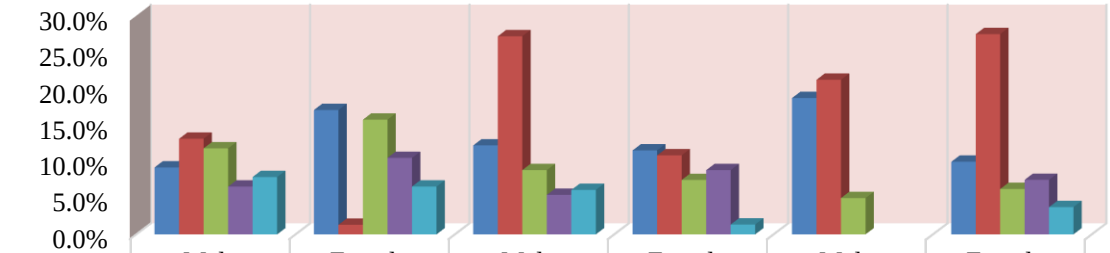
	HIGH		MODERATE		LOW	
Diploma	9.2%	5.3%	4.1%	2.0%	2.5%	8.8%
Bachelor's Degree	34.2%	36.8%	53.1%	34.7%	37.5%	42.5%
Master's Degree		6.6%	2.0%	0.7%	5.0%	1.3%
MastersPost-Graduate Diploma	5.3%		0.7%	2.0%		1.3%
PhD		2.6%		0.7%		1.3%

Figure 6
Gender, Academic Qualifications and Teacher Burnout Levels

In addition, a cross-tabulation across gender, professional experience, and teacher burnout levels was also conducted. The result showed that only 9.2% of male teachers and 17.1% of female teachers rated professional experience of under 2 years as having a high impact on teacher burnout. In contrast, 18.8% and 10.0% of male and female teachers, respectively, rated professional experience of below 2 years as having a low impact on teacher burnout. Finally, 12.2% and 11.6% of male and female teachers, respectively, rated professional experience of below 2 years as having a moderate impact on teacher burnout. As pointed out by Babbie (2013), learning at the workplace affected the level to which an individual was affected by burnout, hence these differences.

About 13.2% of male teachers and 1.3% of female teachers rated professional experience of 2–5 years as having a high impact on teacher burnout. In contrast, 21.3% and 27.5% of male and female teachers, respectively, rated professional experience of 2–5 years as having a low impact on teacher burnout. Finally, 27.2% and 10.9% of male and female teachers, respectively, rated professional experience of 2–5 years as having a moderate impact on teacher burnout. These differences were a pointer to the fact that experience affects the level of burnout in a population (Babbie, 2013).

About 11.8% of male teachers and 15.8% of female teachers rated professional experience of 6–10 years as having a high impact on teacher burnout. In contrast, 5.0% and 6.3% of male and female teachers, respectively, rated professional experience of 6–10 years as having a low impact on teacher burnout. Finally, 8.8% and 7.5% of male and female teachers, respectively, rated professional experience of 6–10 years as having a moderate impact on teacher burnout. And for 11–20 and above, the rating indicated significant differences between males and females, as shown in Figure 7. These findings showed that work experience affected burnout levels, as advanced by Babbie (2013).



	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	HIGH		MODERATE		LOW	
Below 2 years	9.2%	17.1%	12.2%	11.6%	18.8%	10.0%
2-5 years	13.2%	1.3%	27.2%	10.9%	21.3%	27.5%
6-10 years	11.8%	15.8%	8.8%	7.5%	5.0%	6.3%
11-20 years	6.6%	10.5%	5.4%	8.8%		7.5%
20 years and above	7.9%	6.6%	6.1%	1.4%		3.8%

Figure 7
Gender, Professional Experience and Teacher Burnout Levels

When presented with selected Likert-scale statements, the teachers agreed to a moderate extent that burnout (M=3) led to high levels of drunkenness among teachers, as shown in Table 14. These findings agreed with a report by Tharaka Nithi County (2022), which showed that some of the teachers had high levels of alcohol abuse, which resulted in other vices such as the display of unbecoming behavior and complaints from parents. It was evident that challenges in the school environment affected teacher burnout considerably.

Table 14
Burnout Leads To High Levels of Drunkenness among Teachers

Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Burnout leads to high levels of drunkenness among teachers	1	5	3	1.4

N=303

The teachers also agreed that, to a moderate extent (M = 3), burnout led to high levels of drug abuse among teachers, as shown in Table 15. These findings are related to a study by Farrell et al. (2019), which showed substance abuse was linked to increases in burnout levels among teachers. Substance use was thus a key indicator of burnout among teachers in Tharaka Nithi County.

Table 15
Burnout Leads To High Levels of Drug Abuse among Teachers

Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Burnout leads to high levels of drug abuse among teachers	1	5	3	1.3

N=303

The respondents also agreed that burnout also led to high levels of absenteeism (M = 3), as shown in Table 16. As posited by Diaz (2018), a classroom, just like any workplace, is not immune to work-related stress. This affected teacher performance, leading to low productivity and absenteeism, hence leading to burnout. This current study showed a direct link between absenteeism and burnout in the study area, as opposed to the study by Diaz, which showed an inverse relationship.

Table 16

There Are High Levels of Absenteeism among Teachers Due To Burnout

Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
There are high levels of absenteeism among teachers due to burnout	1	5	3	1.3

N=303

By agreeing to a moderate extent (M = 3), the teachers also opined that burnout led to disobedience to authority. These findings are depicted in Table 17. These findings affirmed the premise by Maslach (1982) as revealed by Golembiewski and Munzenrider (1988), which showed that feeling 'burned out' from work led to being easily irritable or disobedient to authority and a feeling of being used up. Teachers who had burnout were thus likely to be disobedient to authorities.

Table 17

There Are Instances of Disobedience to Authority among Teachers Due to Burnout

Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
There are instances of disobedience to authority among teachers due to burnout	1	5	3	1.2

N=303

The respondents further agreed to a moderate extent, (M=3) burnout led to high levels of lateness among teachers as shown in Table 18. These findings corroborated the premise of the Golembiewski and Munzenrider's (1988) Model of Burnout which showed, burnout was indicated by absenteeism among other vices.

Table 18

There Are High Levels of Lateness among Teachers Due to Burnout

Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
There are high levels of lateness among teachers due to burnout	1	5	3	1.3

N=303

The respondents, as shown in Table 19, further agreed to a great extent, (M=4) burnout led to failures to meet target among teachers. This was further in agreement with the Golembiewski and Munzenrider's (1988) Model of Burnout which showed, burnout contributed to failure to meet deadlines. This affected work processes as well as the overall performance of the teacher.

Table 19

Burnout Leads to Failure to Meet Targets among Teachers

Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Burnout leads to failure to meet targets among teachers	1	5	4	1.2

N=303

Furthermore, the teachers agreed to a great extent, (M=4) burnout affected teachers' performance in class as shown in Table 20. These findings were in line with the Golembiewski and Munzenrider's (1988) Model of Burnout which advances, burnout to be linked to performance. It is thus pertinent to lessen burnout among teachers so as to enhance their performances in school duties.

Table 20

Burnout Affects Teachers' Performance in Class

Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Burnout affects teachers' performance in class	1	5	4	1.1

N=303

Lastly, the teachers agreed to a great extent, (M=4) burnout led to poor class management among teachers as shown in Table 21. This buttressed the findings by Gacheri (2017) which revealed, burnout resulted, in teachers being overwhelmed which went on, to challenge classroom management practices.

Table 21

Burnout Leads to Poor Class Management among Teachers

Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Burnout leads to poor class management among teachers	1	5	4	1.2

N=303

These findings agreed with a study by Farrell et al. (2019), which showed drug abuse was often linked with teacher burnout. They also agreed with Golembiewski and Munzenrider (1988), who pointed out that burnout made teachers easily irritable or disobedient to authority and felt like being used up. However, they agreed to a high extent that burnout (M = 4) led to failure to meet targets among teachers, which agreed with the study by Pucella (2011), who noted that burnout affected teachers' ability to meet demanding obligations. They also agreed that, to a high extent, burnout affected teachers' performance in class (M = 4), leading to poor class management among teachers (M = 4). These findings corroborated the findings by Kilonzo (2018), who reported "a positive and significant relationship between the performance of teachers and job burnout." The findings showed that, although the various indicators of burnout among teachers were either moderately or highly rated, Teacher burnout was thus a challenge among teachers in the study area.

The outcomes of the study revealed that, while teachers consumed alcohol, they were unsure if it was related to burnout. According to Maingi et al. (2018), many Kenyan teachers are progressively consuming alcohol. Teachers' absenteeism was also linked to drunkenness, according to the study. Teachers who abuse alcohol do not go to school regularly. According to the respondents, the repercussions of drunkenness, such as hangovers, lead to absence and insufficient teacher concentration on school obligations.

The study went on to examine the level of teacher burnout in the study area in line with the Maslach Burnout Inventory. The findings were presented in Table 22.

Table 22

Teacher Burnout Based on the Maslach Burnout Inventory

Statement	**Min**	**Max**	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**
1 I feel emotionally drained by my work	1	5	2	1.18
2 I feel used up at the end of the day	1	5	3	1.29
3 I feel fatigued when I have to get up in the morning to face another day on the job	1	5	2	1.22
4 I can easily understand how my students feel about things	1	5	4	1.22
5 I feel I treat some students as impersonal 'objects'	1	5	2	1.18
6 Working with people all day is a strain for me	0	5	2	1.14
7 I deal very effectively with the problems of my students	1	5	4	1.23
8 I feel 'burned out' from my work	0	5	2	1.19
9 I feel I'm a positive influence on other people's lives through my work	1	5	4	1.23
10 I have become more callous toward people since I took this job	1	5	2	1.25
11 I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally	1	5	2	1.32
12 I feel frustrated by my job	1	5	2	1.13
13 I feel I'm working too hard in my job	1	5	3	1.42
14 I don't care what happens to some students	0	5	2	1.10
15 I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my students	1	5	4	1.38
16 I feel exhilarated after working with my students	1	5	3	1.31
17 I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job	1	5	4	1.29
18 I feel like I'm at the end of my rope	1	5	2	1.10
19 In my work I deal with emotional problems calmly	1	5	4	1.27
20 I feel some students blame me for some of their problems	1	5	2	1.05
21* In my work, people bother me with personal problems that I don't want to be bothered with	1	5	2	1.19
22* I try to keep away from the personal problems of my students	1	5	2	1.45
Mean			3	

N=303

The respondents disagreed to a low extent (M = 2). They feel emotionally drained by their work. This agreed with Maslach (1982), as cited in Golembiewski & Munzenrider (1988), who linked burnout with being emotionally drained. They also agreed to a moderate extent; (M = 3) they felt used up at the end of the day. They also disagreed to a low extent (M = 2). They felt fatigued when they got up in the morning to face another day on the job.

However, they agreed to a high extent (M = 4), and they easily understood how their students felt about things. The teachers disagreed to a low extent; (M = 2), they treated some students as impersonal 'objects' and working with people all day put a strain on them (M = 2). They went on to agree that, to a large extent (M=4), they handled student problems effectively. However, they disagreed to a low extent; they felt 'burned out' from their work, and they had become more callous toward people since they took up the job (M = 2). They agreed to a high extent (M = 4); they easily created a relaxed atmosphere with their students, and they felt a positive influence on other people's lives through their work (M = 4). Furthermore, they disagreed to a low extent; (M = 2), they worried their job hardened them emotionally. They went on to agree that, to a moderate extent (M = 3), they felt they were working too hard in their job and that they felt exhilarated after working with their students (M = 3). However, they disagreed to a little extent (M = 2): they do not really care what happened to some students; they felt like they were at the end of the rope; they felt some students blamed them for some of their problems; that in their work people bothered them with personal problems; that they didn't want to be bothered with; and that they tried to keep away from the personal problems of their students. Finally, they agreed to a high extent (M = 4) that they had accomplished many worthwhile things in their job and that, in their work, they dealt with emotional problems calmly. The respondents agreed to a moderate extent. These findings agreed with Louw et al. (2011), who used the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) scale in the Khurdha District of India and found a significant positive correlation between teaching demands and burnout.

The outcomes of the study revealed that while instructors consumed alcohol, they were unsure if it was related to burnout. Teachers' absenteeism was also linked to drunkenness, according to the study. This agreed with a report from Tharaka Nithi County (2022), which showed burnout was linked to teacher burnout. Teachers who abused alcohol did not go to school regularly. According to the respondents, the repercussions of drunkenness, such as hangovers, led to absence and insufficient teacher concentration on school obligations.

The findings from principals, TSC officials, and QASOs revealed that there were high levels of burnout among teachers in the study area. Such burnout led to teachers having feelings of despair in some instances. Although the government put in place measures aimed at improving the conditions of teachers, the efforts did not bear much fruit. The study established that, generally, burnout affected teachers in different ways.

The findings showed that some teachers felt drained by work, which was identified by Maslach (1982). Burnout was also evident in teachers, with some resulting in drug and substance use. Family relations were also strained due to hard-working conditions, which led to emotional exhaustion, a condition noted in the study by Herman et al. (2020). The findings portrayed that teachers felt drained by work. To support this, one of the respondents said:

> *There were high levels of burnout among teachers with some often asking for transfers due to deplorable working conditions. However, parents often eased the situation, by employing some teachers through the BOG. Nevertheless, burnout remained a major challenge among teachers in the study area* (Respondent B, Tharaka Nithi County, May 2022).

Burnout was also evident in teachers with some resulting to drug and substance use. Family relations were also strained due to hard-working conditions that led to emotional exhaustion. One of the respondents supported this position by saying:

> *Tough working conditions among teachers made them stressed and tired. Some walked for long distances to schools and by so doing they got tired. Once there, they had to be content with heavy workloads and poor learning facilities. Consequently, most of them ended up fatigued* (Respondent K, Tharaka Nithi County, May 2022).

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the comprehensive findings of this study, it is unequivocally concluded that workload constitutes a pivotal school contextual factor that significantly contributes to teacher burnout. This conclusion is underscored by the compelling evidence that emerged from the research, shedding light on the profound impact of excessive work demands on educators' well-being.

Teachers hold a paramount role in shaping the future generations, and their effectiveness in fulfilling this role hinges on their overall well-being. Alarmingly, over half of the study participants reported experiencing high levels of stress, with some indicating severe stress. This elevated stress was intricately linked to the increased workload, culminating in the manifestation of burnout among these dedicated professionals.

The findings align harmoniously with established psychological theories of burnout, including the Multidimensional Theory of Burnout and Golembiewski and Munzenrider's (1988) Model of Burnout. This convergence between theory and empirical data substantiates the validity of the study's conceptual framework and builds upon earlier research in the field. In light of these distressing revelations, it is imperative to recognize the urgent need for multifaceted interventions aimed at mitigating the burden experienced by teachers. Such interventions should encompass strategies to enhance teachers' workload management skills and bolster their capacity for effective emotion regulation. The well-being of educators is not only a moral imperative but also a crucial factor in maintaining the quality of education and ensuring the holistic development of students.

5.2 Recommendations

The researcher strongly advocated for the Teacher's Service Commission to take immediate action by increasing the recruitment of additional teachers. This proactive approach is essential in addressing the pressing issue of excessive workload faced by educators. By expanding the teaching workforce, not only can the workload challenges be alleviated, but it will also lead to improved educational outcomes and a more conducive learning environment for both students and teachers.

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