Exploring the Correlation Between Occupational Well-being and Burnout: An Analysis of Bhutanese Teachers` Data

ABSTRACT

Aims: This study examined the relationship between teachers` occupational well-being and burnout as well as challenges faced by teachers, key drivers of their job satisfaction, factors contributing to their burnout, and suggestion for improving their well-being at school. The well-being of teachers was assessed focusing on affective, behavioral, and health components.

Methodology: A cross-sectional survey study design was used to collect data from the teachers. The target population consists of all primary, middle, and secondary school teachers across the country. To ensure a representative sample, 402 Bhutanese teachers (primary, middle, and secondary school) across the country were selected by employing stratified random sampling method. Different teachers from different grades, schools, and years of experience were selected proportionately. A self-created structured questionnaire was applied to 402 Bhutanese teachers across the country, selected through stratified random sampling method. The instrument demonstrated strong internal consistency reliability, with Cronbach`s alpha coefficient 0.85, 0.78, 0.70, and 0.77 for affective, behavioral, and health well-being, as well as burnout constructs, respectively. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (correlation analysis and two sample independent *t*-test) in RStudio.

Results: Among the dimensions of occupational well-being, affective components like anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion require significant attention, with emotional exhaustion being notably high. Regarding potential stressors, high workload, paperwork, students` behavioral and disciplinary issues, and insufficient resources are the most pressing issues for most of the teachers. The most satisfying aspects of the job for teachers are having supportive colleagues, experiencing positive interactions with students, and receiving competitive salary and benefits.

Conclusion: For policy makers and school administrators, the findings of this study underscore the importance of implementing strategies to mitigate emotional exhaustion, such as providing mental health resources, fostering a supportive work environment, offering professional development opportunities focused on stress management, and improving students` behavioral and disciplinary issues. Addressing the foregoing issues can lead to a decrease in burnout rates, ultimately improving teacher retention and the overall quality of education.

Keywords: Bhutanese teacher, teacher well-being, behavioral well-being, affective well-being, health well-being, burnout, emotional exhaustion

1. INTRODUCTION

Globally, teaching is widely recognized as a highly demanding profession. Teachers have to contend with teaching their assigned subject or subjects, lesson planning, student assessments, maintain classroom behavior, take up administrative roles, keep themselves abreast of recent developments in the field of teaching and policy mandates among others. The daily routines of the teachers put physical, emotional, and psychological strains. As a result, many teachers have experienced serious emotional and mental problems related to stress due to their jobs [1, 2]. Stress is counter-productive to personal well-being and affect one's performance on the job. The state of persistent stress due to one's job can lead to burnout, which is characterized by emotional exhaustion, cynicism (depersonalization), and lower self-efficacy [3], which leads to diminished personal well-being. Despite its importance, teacher well-being is a construct that has only recently gained prominence in academic research.

Well-being is a multifaceted construct encompassing various dimensions, such as physical, emotional, spiritual, economical, and psychological well-being. It can be both domain-specific and general [4], and is often construed as the quality of life and is subjective [5]. An individual's self-appraisal of life domains, such as work, health, and relationships form domain specific well-being, which the overall appraisal of life or the quality of life constitutes the domain general well-being [4]. Well-being predicts employee performance by influencing the psychological capital, an individual's positive psychological state of development [6, 7, 8, 9]. Teacher well-being is related to teaching effectiveness, student outcomes, and school governance [10]. Higher levels of teacher well-being have been found to increase teacher motivation and commitment [11], as well as teacher satisfaction and positive emotions [12]. In contrast, lower levels of teacher well-being is associated with teacher absenteeism [13], teacher stress and burnout [14]. Teacher well-being has many dimensions, such as individual, family, economic, social, and emotional well-being [15].

This research is about teachers' work-related well-being or occupational well-being. Teachers' occupational well-being as "teachers' responses to the cognitive, emotional, health and social conditions pertaining to their work and their profession" [8, p. 19). Teachers do not work in isolation, but rather are a part of a larger system, and the interplay within the larger system influence how they respond to the stimulus. This results in higher or lower levels of teachers' occupational wellbeing, which in turn affect how they play their roles [8].

Teachers' work is increasingly becoming more complex and daunting. Teachers today not only have to contend with transmitting information to the students, but are also expected to ensure that students develop the cognitive, emotional, and attitudinal skills to cope and thrive in 21st Century. In addition, teachers need to continuously learn and respond effectively to the changes occurring in their classrooms, such as coping with student diversity, technological proliferation, and educational reforms [8]. Teachers, however, do more than merely teach in the Bhutanese educational setting. Teachers must bear the responsibilities of committee heads or members, class teachers, house masters, club coordinators, in-charges of different functional units, department heads, monitor students' socially useful and productive work, attend sports, literary, and cultural competitions, organize and supervise cleaning campaigns, and so on, in addition to teaching different levels of classes and sometimes different subjects in the same level of classes. Teachers in Bhutan, therefore, are required to perform both academic and non-academic responsibilities.

The Bhutan Professional Standards for Teachers (BPST) [16], lists seven standards and thirty-seven focus areas. BPST mandates that teachers meet the diverse needs of all the students, create conducive and safe learning environments, possess adequate content and pedagogical knowledge, ensure proper lesson planning and effective teaching, assess student learning and report, grow both personally and professionally, and engage in community development. This indicates that teachers need to be abreast of the developments in teaching and learning including technological knowledge, plan and teach on a daily basis. Although the recommended contact hours of teachers are 18 hours per week, the Education Monitoring Division of the Ministry of Education [17] found that almost 28% of teachers teach for more than 18 hours per week. The report also asserts that teachers in the primary and Extended Classroom teach an average of 19 hours and 22 hours, respectively. Besides teaching hours, teachers have to plan their next lessons, perform student assessment and record, and have time commitments to other administrative duties and co-curricular activities, as a result of which the job becomes highly stressful [8]. Prior research has highlighted that Bhutan`s public education system faces a significant challenge: a high rate of teacher attrition. Many Bhutanese believe that this issue is partly due to low job satisfaction among teachers [18]. The findings of this study indicate that several factors significantly predict job satisfaction among Bhutanese teachers. Specifically, amenities and services, teacher preparation, responsibilities and workloads, challenges and issues, and performance management systems are identified as key predictors. Moreover, research conducted among Bhutanese teachers [19] has highlighted that teacher stress has emerged as a significant concern within the broader spectrum of educational issues. This study identified several primary stressors,

such as excessive teaching workloads, high teacher-student ratios, the necessity to teach multiple grades and subjects outside their expertise, time constraints for lesson planning and assessment, frequent curriculum changes, and escalating non-academic responsibilities. Furthermore, prior research suggests that these factors can significantly influence teachers' psychological state of mind [4]. Consequently, it is important to explore the relationship between teachers' occupational well-being and burnout to address these pressing concerns effectively.

1.1 PRESENT STUDY

Gross National Happiness (GNH) is the developmental philosophy of Bhutan [18] and is used as a policy and project screening tool [20]. Psychological well-being is one of the domains of GNH [21] and it is measured in terms of life satisfaction, positive and negative emotions, and spirituality. While some may argue that life satisfaction entails occupational well-being, teachers' occupational well-being is a multi-dimensional construct and the instrument used to measure occupational well-being by Centre of Bhutan Studies and GNH Research [22] asks a single question to rate their satisfaction with their occupation, on a five-point Likert item. Teachers' perceptions towards occupational well-being are teacher's evaluation of their job and forms attitudes towards their occupation. According to [23], "attitudes are multifaceted involving cognitive, emotions, and behavioral tendencies. A single item is unlikely to capture the full scope of the attitude in question" (p. 537). Therefore, while well-being is emphasized as a goal for policy formulation in Bhutan, research in domain-specific well-being, such as teachers' occupational well-being is a less traversed area.

There is a scarcity of literature on teachers' occupational well-being and its relationship to teacher burnout in Bhutan. Teachers in the remote parts of Bhutan are said to have lower levels of well-being resulting from the enormous amount of work that they do [24] and that 22 out of the 70 participants have thought about quitting the profession. However, this study conducted the survey with only 70 participants which is below the bare minimum required for generalizing the findings. According to [25] a minimum of 100 participants are required to perform statistical computations whose results can be generalized to the larger population. In addition, there is no evidence on the relationship between teachers' occupational well-being and burnout, which informs teachers decisions about quitting the profession [3]. Therefore, this study investigated the relationship between teachers' occupational well-being and burnout. In doing so, teachers' status of well-being in the three constructs was assessed to determine which constructs are of major concern. Additionally, the relationship between the

constructs of teachers' occupational well-being and burnout was also explored. Specifically, this study addressed the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between teachers' occupational well-being and burnout?
2. What is the level of teachers' occupation well-being?
3. From among the three dimensions of occupational well-being, which constructs should the stakeholders be concerned?
4. What proportion of the teachers are experiencing burnout?
5. How are cognitive, subjective, physical and mental, and social well-being related to teacher burnout?

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant as it addresses a gap in research by exploring the relationship between teacher occupational well-being and burnout within Bhutanese educational context. The findings of this research have important implications for both policy and practice. Firstly, although psychological well-being is considered a crucial criterion in policy and project screening in Bhutan, there is a lack of evidences to inform policies on teacher's occupational well-being and teacher burnout. This research aims to provide valuable insights that can inform and shape policies to support teachers more effectively, particularly in addressing the national concern of high teacher attrition rates. The evidence gathered through this study can contribute to the development of strategies aimed at retaining teachers in their profession. Secondly, in terms of practice, the study highlights the link between teachers` occupational well-being and their performance. Teachers who experience higher levels of well-being are likely to perform better in their roles, which in turn positively impacts student outcomes. By understanding and promoting teacher well-being, this research can contribute to improved educational practices and student achievements in Bhutan.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study employed a survey design to collect and analyze data. By utilizing a structured questionnaire, detailed responses were gathered from a diverse group of teachers. The survey included a mix of closed-ended and open-ended questions to capture both quantitative and qualitative data. This approach allowed us to comprehensively understand the participants` perspectives, experiences, and behaviors related to the research topic [26]. Additionally, the decision to use survey research was influenced by the need to collect data from a large number of participants quickly, considering the researcher`s busy schedule and commitments at school.

2.1 Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Method

The target population is all primary, middle, and secondary school teachers across the country. To ensure a representative sample, 402 teachers were selected by employing stratified random sampling method. Different teachers from different grades, schools, and years of experience were selected proportionately. Table 2 depicts the demographic characteristics of teacher participants.

2.3 Instrument

The instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire designed to explore the relationship between teacher occupational well-being and burnout. The questionnaire was developed based on established scales from previous literature [27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32] to ensure validity and reliability. The occupational well-being was captured with three components: affective (item 1 to 5), behavioral (item 6 to 10), and health (11 to 15) (see Table 1). Specifically, item on affective well-being captured teachers` feelings of job anxiety, depression related to work, and emotional exhaustion, items on behavioral well-being captured teachers` confidence in teaching abilities, career aspirations, and perceived competence, and items on health well-being captured teachers` physical symptoms due to stress, sleep difficulties, overall health impact, and perceived work ability. The burnout construct was measured with nine items (item 16 to 24). Each components included a series of Likert-scale items, where respondents indicated their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Additionally, teachers` information on gender, school type (private and public), school level (primary, middle, and high school), number of teaching experience, current teaching level, teaching periods per week, and their qualification were also collected.

Prior to the main data collection, the instrument was content validated by few content experts to assess its clarity and relevance. Based on the feedback received, minor adjustments were made to improve the clarity and readability. The instrument demonstrated strong internal consistency, with Cronbach`s alpha coefficients exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70 [33] for all constructs, indicating reliable measurement of the variables under investigation. Specifically, the Cronbach`s alpha coefficients were 0.85, 0.78, 0.70, and 0.77 for affective well-being, behavioral well-being, health well-being, and burnout constructs, respectively. Descriptions of the items associated with the three components of occupational well-being and burnout constructs are shown in Table 1. Additionally, few “check-all-that-apply” questions

were also asked. They are (1) What aspects of your job do you find most satisfying and why? (2) What aspects of your job do you find most challenging and why? (3) In your opinion, what factors contribute most to burnout among teachers? and (4) What suggestions do you have for improving the well-being of teachers at your school?

Table 1. Descriptions of the indicators

Items	Description
1	I feel anxious about my job as teacher.
2	I often experience feelings of depression related to my work.
3	I frequently feel burned out from my job.
4	I often feel emotionally drained at the end of the workday.
5	I often feel used up at the end of the workday.
6	I feel confident in my ability to effectively teach my students.
7	I have high aspirations for my career as a teacher.
8	I believe I am competent in meeting the demands of my teaching role.
9	I continuously seek opportunities to improve my teaching skills.
10	I set high standards for myself as a teacher.
11	I experienced physical symptoms (e.g., headaches, stomach problems) due to stress from teaching.
12	I have difficulty sleeping because of work-related stress.
13	My job affects my overall health negatively.
14	I feel physically capable of meeting the physical demands of my job as a teacher.
15	I believe I have good work ability and can perform my job effectively.
16	I feel frustrated by my job as a teacher.
17	I feel used up at the end of the day a teacher.
18	I fee fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.
19	I feel I am positively influencing my students` lives through my work.
20	Working with students all day is really a strain for me.
21	I believe I have good work ability and can perform my job effectively.
22	I feel burned out from my work.
23	I feel I am working too hard in my job as a teacher.
24	I feel exhilarated after working closely with my students.

2.4 Data Collection

The link to the Google Form was shared with teachers through email and messaging platforms such as Facebook Messenger and Telegram. Measures were implemented to ensure that each teacher could only submit one response. The survey was conducted from June 1 to 30, 2024.

2.5 Ethical Clearance

Permission to collect data was sought from the TPSD under Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MOESD), the district education office, and the principals of selected schools. Specifically, formal communication, in the form of an official letter (MoESD/HRD/07/2023/347), was forwarded by MOESD to the district education office and school principals, apprising them of the study and soliciting their cooperation in facilitating the conduct of the study. With regard to the teacher participants, they were explicitly notified on the first page of the online survey created using Google Form that their participation is entirely voluntary. Additionally, by responding to the survey, participants were considered to have provided informed consent, acknowledging their voluntary participation in the study. Furthermore, participants were informed that the study's findings would not identify specific informants and that the collected data would be used exclusively for the stated research purpose.

2.6 Data Analysis

Data from a Google spreadsheet was imported, cleaned, and analysed using the statistical software RStudio (version 2024.04.1+748). Statistical significance was determined at the $p < .05$ threshold. Both descriptive (i.e., mean, standard deviation, frequency tables, frequency counts, percentages) and inferential statistics (i.e., correlation analysis and two sample independent *t*-test) were calculated. Prior to any analyses, reverse coding of the items requiring it was done.

3. RESULTS

3.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Table 2 summarises the demographic characteristics of the teacher participants who responded to the survey.

Table2. Demographic information.

		Sex					
		Male		Female		Total	
		n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Teaching Experience	< 5 years	34	14.9	42	24.1	76	18.9
	5 – 10 years	50	21.9	35	20.1	85	21.1
	11 – 15 years	56	24.6	28	16.1	84	21.0
	16 - 20 years	52	22.8	29	16.7	81	20.1
	> 20 years	36	15.8	40	23.0	76	18.9

Total		228	100	174	100	402	100
Education Level	B.Ed. Primary Education	42	18.4	50	28.7	92	22.9
	B.Ed. Secondary Education	63	27.6	55	31.6	118	29.4
	PGDE	48	21.1	35	20.1	83	20.6
	Master`s Degree	75	32.9	34	19.5	109	27.1
Total		228	100	174	100	402	100
Teaching Level	Grade K - 6	61	26.8	63	36.2	124	30.9
	Grade 7 - 8	41	18.0	42	24.1	83	20..6
	Grade 9 - 10	71	31.1	42	24.1	113	28.1
	Grade 11 -12	55	24.1	27	15.6	82	20.4
Total		228	100	174	100	402	100
School Level	Primary School	42	18.4	31	17.8	73	18.2
	Middle School	70	30.7	80	46.0	150	37.3
	High School	116	50.9	63	36.2	179	44.5
Total		228	100	174	100	402	100
Teaching Period (Week)	< 14 periods	26	11.4	4	2.3	30	7.5
	15 – 20 periods	77	33.8	67	38.5	144	35.8
	21 – 25 periods	95	41.7	84	48.3	179	44.5
	> 25 periods	30	13.1	19	10.9	49	12.2
Total		228	100	174	100	402	100

3.2 Teacher Occupational Well-being and Burnout Information by Gender

Table 3 presents the results of an analysis focusing on various components of occupational well-being and burnout among Bhutanese teachers. Teachers` occupational well-being in the sample was assessed across three dimensions: affective well-being (component includes feelings of job anxiety, depression related to work, and emotional exhaustion), behavioral well-being (component includes confidence in teaching abilities, career aspirations, and perceived competence), and health well-being (component includes physical symptoms due to stress, sleep difficulties, overall health impact, and perceived work ability). Table 2 shows the mean (M) values for each construct by gender and the final sample. It is clear that teachers are experiencing noticeable level of anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion, with emotional exhaustion being the highest. The average emotional exhaustion score for the whole sample is 3.7, with males reporting slightly lower emotional exhaustion (M = 3.4) compared to female counterparts (*M* = 3.7). This suggests that while anxiety and depression are present, emotional exhaustion is more pronounced, particularly among female teachers. In other words, female

teachers are experiencing more emotional drain and feelings of being used up. However, the results of an independent two-sample *t*-test do not show significant difference on affective well-being components in terms of gender. In each case, the absolute value of the *t*-value is less than the critical *t*-value (±1.96), indicating that the difference between male and female teachers for anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion are not statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 3. Teachers` occupational well-being and burnout information by gender

	Final	Gender			Teacher Burnout		
	Sample (n = 402)	Male (n = 228)	Female (n = 174)	*t*	Final Sample (n = 402)	Male (n = 228)	Female (n = 174)
Indicator	*M*	*M*	*M*				
Affective Wellbeing							
1. Anxiety	3.5	3.5	3.4	1.18	70	41	29
2. Depression	3.3	3.3	3.3	0.24	84	53	31
3. Emotional Exhaustion	3.7	3.4	3.7	0.44	86	52	34
Behavioural Well-being							
4. Confidence	4.4	4.4	4.4	0.35	1	0	1
5. Competence	4.3	4.3	4.3	0.03	1	0	1
6. Aspirations	4.2	4.2	4.2	0.31	1	0	1
Health Well-being							
7. Physical Symptoms	3.3	3.2	3.5	2.41*	70	42	28
8. Negative Health Impacts	3.1	3.1	3.1	0.77	74	44	30
9. Work Ability	4.0	4.0	4.0	0.49	1	0	1

*Note: * Significant difference. at p < 0.05*

As seen in the table, the relationship between various components of occupational well-being and burnout among Bhutanese teachers, both for the entire sample and gender-wise was also examined. Teachers with scores of 4 or higher for components with single item (or mean scores of 4 or higher in case of components with more than one item) were considered to be experiencing feelings of job anxiety, depression related to work, and emotional exhaustion. From the table, it is clear that the average emotional exhaustion score for the entire sample is 3.7 on a 5-point scale, indicating a moderate level of emotional exhaustion. Among male teachers, the average emotional exhaustion score is 3.4, also indicating a moderate level. In comparison, female teachers have an average emotional exhaustion score of 3.7, consistent with a moderate level of emotional exhaustion. Similarly, teachers with burnout score of 4 or higher were considered to be experiencing burnout. The analysis of the collected data reveals significant positive correlations (r = 0.72) between teachers experiencing higher levels of negative affective states and burnout. A scatter plot (Figure 1) illustrates this relationship, showing a positive correlation between higher negative affective states, such as anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion, and higher burnout scores. This visualization emphasizes that as teachers` negative affective experiences increases, so do their burnout

levels, highlighting the critical link between negative affective well-being and occupational burnout.

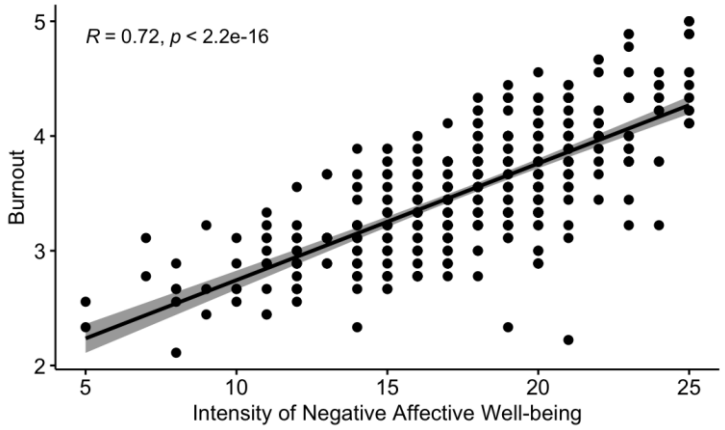

Figure 1. Scatter plot showing positive correlation between affective well-being and burnout

Among the entire sample of teachers, burnout due to emotional exhaustion, depression, and anxiety is reported by 86, 84, and 70 teachers, respectively. The high prevalence of emotional exhaustion, depression, and anxiety among the sample highlights a critical need for targeted interventions. Addressing these burnout issues is essential to improve teachers` mental health and overall well-being. Gender wise, it is clear that the number of male teachers experiencing burnout due to emotional exhaustion (n = 52) is higher than that of female teachers (n= 34), indicating that a higher number of male teachers are affected despite having a lower mean level of emotional exhaustion. This suggests that male teachers are more susceptible to burnout due to emotional exhaustion compared to their female counterparts.

Behavioral well-being encompasses indicators such as confidence, competence, and aspirations. The mean scores of these indicators are relatively high across both genders, indicating that teachers generally feel competent and confident in their professional roles, with mean scores for confidence at 4.4, competence at 4.3, and aspirations at 4.2. These high scores suggests that teachers generally feel capable and motivated in their work, which is a positive aspect of their occupational well-being. Moreover, the consistency of these scores between genders indicates that, on average, male and female teachers perceive their ability to manage their professional role similarly. The results of an independent two-sample t-test also do not show significant difference on behavioral well-being components in terms of gender. When examining the incidence of burnout, a slight disparity emerges. Only one female teacher reported experiencing burnout due to each component of behavioral well-being, while

no male teachers reported such burnout. This difference, though minimal, suggests that female teachers are facing unique stressors or challenges that contribute to burnout even when their behavioral well-being is high. Additionally, the Spearman rank correlation analysis further enriches this understanding by showing a negative correlation (r = - 0.20) between behavioral well-being and burnout. This implies that higher behavioral well-being is associated with lower levels of burnout. A scatter plot (Figure 2) illustrates this relationship. This finding is critical as it highlights protective role of behavioral well-being against burnout, emphasizing the importance of fostering a supportive and effective work environment to mitigate burnout among teachers.

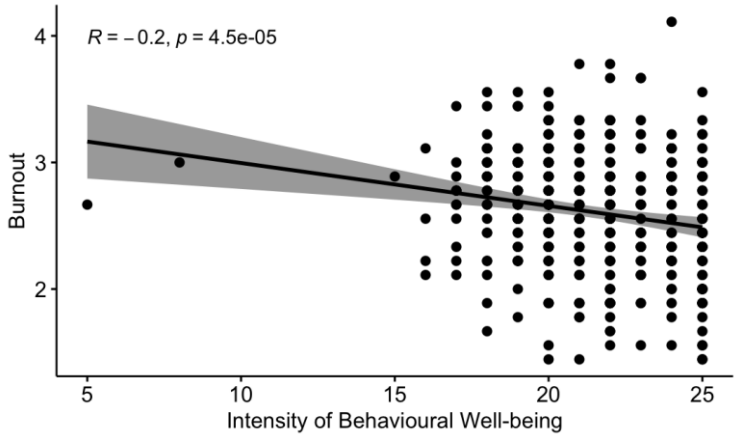

Figure 2. Scatter plot showing negative correlation between behavioral well-being and burnout

Health well-being is measured by physical symptoms due to stress, sleep difficulties, overall negative health impacts, and perceived work ability. In the sample of 402 teachers, the mean scores for physical symptoms, negative health impacts, and work ability are 3.3, 3.1, and 4.0, respectively. The breakdown by gender shows that male teachers have slightly lower scores in physical symptoms (3.2) and negative health impacts (3.1) but a higher score in work ability (4.0). Female teachers exhibit slightly higher scores in physical symptoms (3.5), and work ability (3.7), but similar scores in negative health impacts. The t-values for these differences indicates that the only significant difference between male and female teachers is in physical symptoms (t = 2.41, p < 0.05), with female teachers reporting more physical symptoms than male teachers. Despite the relatively similar scores in health well-being between genders, the burnout data reveals that the incidence of burnout due to health well-being is slightly higher in male teachers. The slightly higher physical symptoms and negative health impacts reported by male teachers could indicate a need for targeted interventions to reduce physical strain and addressing negative health impacts through wellness programs and health initiatives can play

a vital role in sustaining teacher well-being and reducing burnout. Since work ability scores are higher for both genders, maintaining and enhancing work ability through professional development and support can be a key strategy to prevent burnout.

Interestingly, Spearman rank correlation analysis also revealed a positive correlation ($r = 0.65$) between negative health well-being (high physical symptoms and negative health impacts) and burnout. This implies that teachers reporting more physical symptoms and negative health impacts, reported experiencing more burnout. A scatter plot (Figure 3) illustrates this relationship.

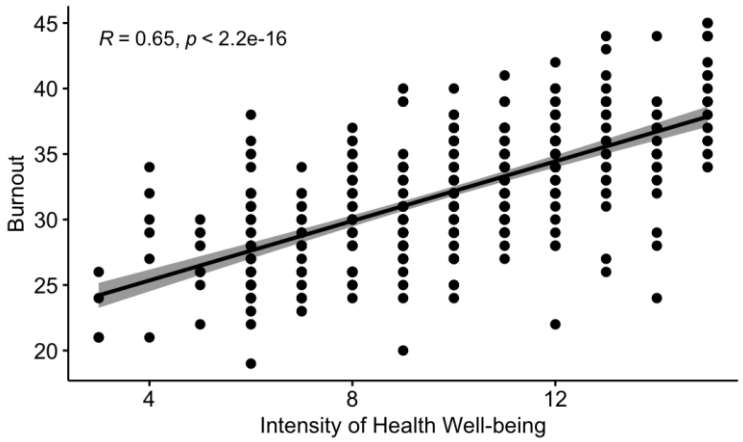

Figure 3. Scatter plot showing negative correlation between health well-being and burnout

Among the three dimensions of occupational well-being, stakeholders should pay particular attention to the affective well-being constructs like anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion. These dimensions directly impact teachers` emotional health, and resilience, which are crucial for their overall well-being and effectiveness in the classroom. Emotional exhaustion, in particular, has the highest mean score ($M = 3.7$) among the affective constructs. This relatively high mean score indicates that many teachers are experiencing significant stress and fatigue, with a higher incidence among female teachers ($M = 3.7$) compared to male teachers ($M = 3.4$). Additionally, emotional exhaustion, a key indicator of burnout, affects a significant portion of the teaching workforce. Specifically, 86 teachers (21.4% of the whole sample), including 34 female teachers (48.3% of female respondents) and 52 male teachers (37.7% of male respondents), reported experiencing emotional exhaustion. Teachers with mean scores of 4 or higher were considered to be experiencing feelings of emotional exhaustion. Similarly, teachers with mean burnout score of 4 or higher were considered to be experiencing burnout. This data highlights the urgent need for interventions to address burnout

and support teachers` emotional health. Anxiety and depression also warrant attention due to their moderate scores.

3.3 Challenges Faced by Teachers: Key Stressors

Globally, teachers often face numerous challenges in their profession that significantly impact their well-being and effectiveness [19]. From the graph (Figure 4), the most challenging aspects of the job for teachers are high work load and paper work, student behavior and discipline issues, and insufficient resources and materials. Conversely, parent-teacher interactions, salary and financial concerns, and time management and scheduling are perceived less challenging. High workload and paper work issues are challenging for 72.4% of teachers. This highlights the substantial administrative burden placed on teachers, which can distract from their ability to focus on instructional activities and student engagement. Managing extensive paperwork and heavy workloads can lead to stress and burnout, negatively impacting teachers` overall job satisfaction and performance due to reduced time for instructional activities and personal life, making it a critical area of concern. Student behavior and discipline issues are challenging for 66.2% of teachers. Dealing with disruptive behavior and maintaining classroom discipline can be exhausting and time-consuming, diverting attention from teaching and learning. These challenges can disrupt the learning environment, increases stress, and impact the overall effectiveness of teaching. This factor underscores the need for effective behavioral support systems and training in classroom management to help teachers handle such challenges more effectively. Insufficient resources and materials are problematic for 59.5% of teachers. A lack of adequate teaching supplies and resources can hinder teachers` ability to deliver high quality instruction and meet educational goals. This challenge points to the necessity for better funding and resource allocation to ensure that teachers have the tools they need to succeed.

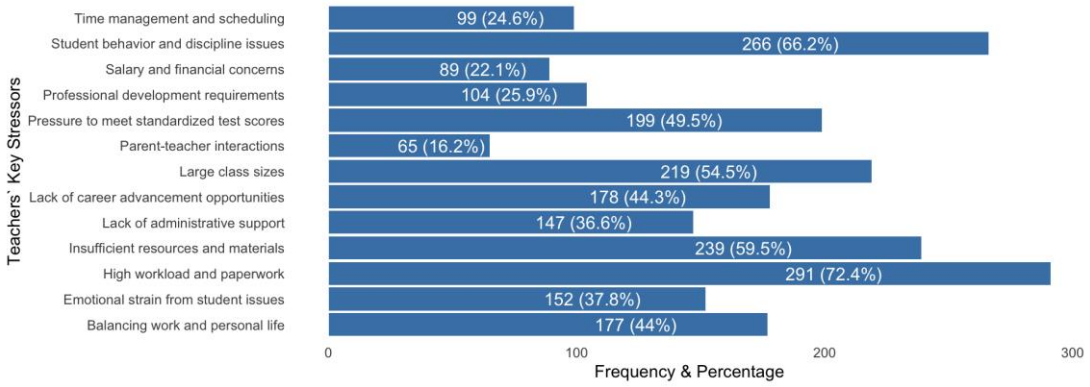

Figure 4. Key stressors among teachers.

Parent-teacher interactions are cited as a challenge by only 16.2% of teachers, making it the least frequently mentioned issue. While communication with parents is an essential aspect of teaching, it appears to be less problematic compared to other factors. This may indicate that most teachers feel equipped to manage these interactions or that they encounter supportive and cooperative parents. Salary and financial concerns are challenging for 22.1% of teachers. Although financial issues are less frequently mentioned as a top concern, they still represent a significant challenge for a portion of the respondents. This suggests that while salary is a critical aspect of job satisfaction, other challenges may be more pressing in the day-to-day experience of teachers. Time management and scheduling are challenging for 24.6% of teachers. Balancing various responsibilities and effectively managing time can be difficult, but it is less frequently mentioned compared to workload, student behavior, and resource-related challenges. This indicates that while time management is a concern, it may be more manageable for many teachers compared to other more pervasive issues.

3.4 Key Drivers of Teachers` Job Satisfaction

Despite the challenges, many aspects of teaching bring significant satisfaction to educators, fueling their dedication and passion for the profession. From the graph (Figure 5), the most satisfying aspects of the job for teachers are having supportive colleagues, experiencing positive interactions with students, and receiving competitive salary and benefits. On the other hand, community engagement, involvement in extracurricular activities, and flexible work hours, while still valued, are less significant in comparison. Supportive colleagues are vital for 64.6% of teachers. This underscores the importance of a collaborative and encouraging work environment. Supportive colleagues can enhance morale, provide assistance in challenging situations, and contribute to a sense of community and belonging. This factor is crucial in fostering a positive work atmosphere, reducing stress, and promoting overall job satisfaction. Positive interactions with students are vital for 64.7% of teachers. This indicates that meaningful engagement and relationships with students are central to job satisfaction for many educators. Positive student interactions can provide a sense of fulfilment, purpose, and accomplishment, reinforcing the intrinsic rewards of teaching. This factor also highlights the impact of student behavior and relationships on teachers` professional experiences. Receiving competitive salary and benefits are key to job satisfaction for 55% teachers. Adequate salary and benefits ensure financial stability, which can reduce anxiety and improve quality of life.

Additionally, competitive compensation packages can attract and retain talented staff, thereby contributing to a more experienced and motivated workforce. This factor highlights the critical role of financial incentives in employee retention and satisfaction.

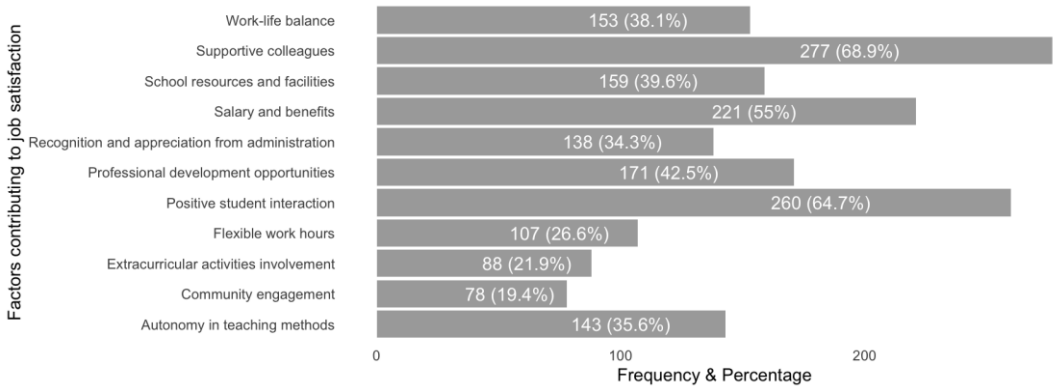

Figure 5. Factors contributing to job satisfaction among teachers.

Flexible work hours are important to only 26.6% of respondents, making it one of the least cited factors. This may indicate that, for many respondents, the structure of their work hours is already acceptable or that other factors play a more significant role in their job satisfaction. Community engagement is valued by 19.4% of teachers. This suggests that, for many respondents, direct interactions within the school environment and immediate job responsibilities are more impactful on their satisfaction than broader community involvement. Involvement in extracurricular activities is satisfying for 25% of teachers. Although it provides opportunities for additional engagement with students and can enrich the school experience, it is among the least cited factors. This might indicate that extracurricular activities are seen as supplementary to the core responsibilities and rewards of the job, rather than primary drivers of job satisfaction.

3.5 Factors contributing to Burnout Among Teachers

Teacher burnout is a complex issue influenced by several factors that can significantly impact their well-being and job satisfaction. From the graph (Figure 6), the top three factors contributing most to burnout among teachers are excessive workload, student behavior and discipline issues, and insufficient resources and materials. Conversely, inadequate salary and benefits, parental pressures and interactions, and lack of professional development opportunities are less frequently cited as burnout factors among teachers. The most frequently cited factor contributing to burnout, with 81.1% of teachers indicating that excessive workload

is a significant issue. This highlights the substantial burden of tasks and responsibilities that teachers face. Managing heavy workloads, including lesson planning, grading, and administrative duties, can overwhelm teachers and significantly impact their well-being and effectiveness. Student behavior and discipline issues are identified by 66.4% of respondents as a major contributor to burnout. Dealing with disruptive behavior and maintaining classroom discipline can be draining and time consuming, adding to the stress levels of teachers. This factor underscores the need for effective behavioral support and classroom management strategies to help alleviate the pressure on teachers. Insufficient resources and materials are problematic for 57% of teachers, contributing to their burnout. A lack of adequate teaching supplies and resources can hinder teachers` ability to deliver effective instruction and meet educational goals, leading to frustration and stress. Ensuring that teachers have the necessary tools and materials is crucial in reducing their workload and enhancing job satisfaction.

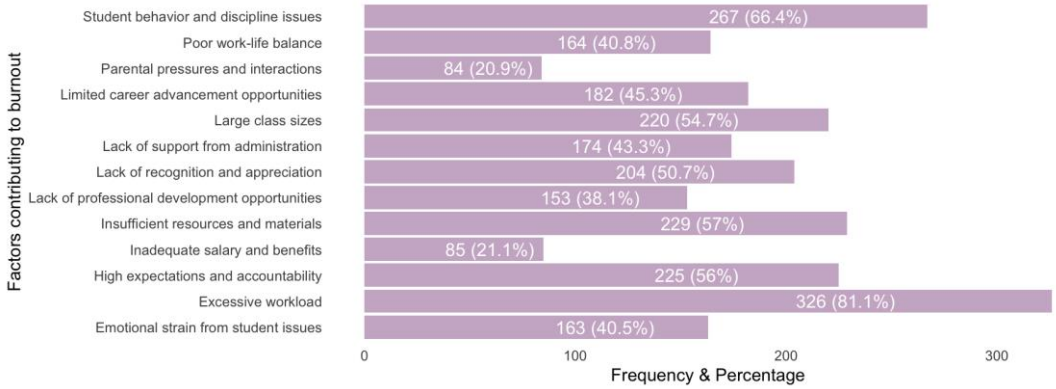

Figure 6. Factors contributing to burnout among teachers.

Inadequate salary and benefits are cited by only 21.1% of respondents as a contributing factor to burnout, making it the least frequently mentioned issue. While concern is important, they appear to be less critical compared to other factors directly related to workload, student behavior, and resource availability. This suggests that while financial stability is important, other more immediate and day-to-day challenges have a greater impact on burnout. Parental pressures and interactions are identified by 20.9% of teachers as a contributing factor to burnout. Although interactions with parents are an essential aspect of teaching, they appear to be more problematic compared to other colleagues. This may indicate that most teachers feel equipped to manage these interactions or that they may encounter supportive and cooperative parents. Lack of professional development opportunities is considered a burnout factor by 38.1% of teachers. This suggests that while opportunities for development are valued, the immediate demands of the job and resource constraints have a more substantial impact on burnout.

3.6 Suggestions for improving the well-being of teachers at school

From the graph (Figure 6), the top three suggestions for improving teacher-wellbeing are reduce workload and paperwork, improve student discipline policies, and increase availability of resources and materials. Conversely, improve parent-teacher communication and support, increase salary and benefits, and offer more recognition and appreciation programs are less frequently mentioned. Reduce workload and paperwork is the most frequently suggested improvement, with 82.1% of teachers advocating for it. This underscores the significant administrative burden that teachers face, which can lead to stress and burnout. By reducing these tasks, teachers would have more time to focus on instructional activities and student engagement, ultimately enhancing their well-being and job satisfaction. Improve student discipline policies are suggested by 64.2% of teachers. This suggestion highlights the need for clear, consistent, and supportive discipline strategies to help teachers manage their classrooms more effectively. Also, suggested by 64.2% of respondents, increasing the availability of resources and materials is critical. Adequate teaching supplies and resources are essential for delivering high-quality instruction. Ensuring that teachers have the necessary materials can alleviate frustration and enhance their ability to meet educational goals, thereby improving their overall well-being.

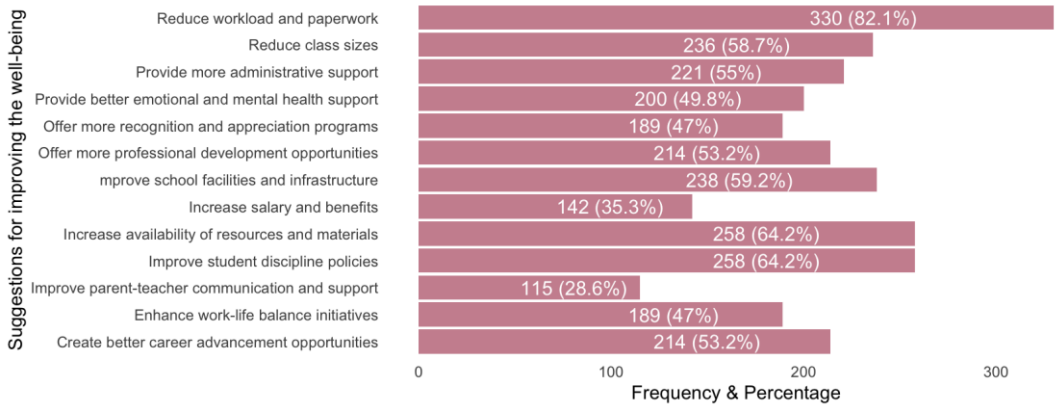

Figure 7. Suggestions for improving the well-being of teachers at school

Improving parent-teacher communication and support is suggested by 28.6% of respondents, making it one of the least frequently mentioned improvements. While important, this suggests that many teachers may already feel relatively supported in this area or that other factors have a more significant impact on their well-being. Suggested by 35.3% of teachers, increasing salary and benefits is less frequently mentioned compared to other suggestions. Although financial compensation is important, this indicates that other improvements might be more

pressing in enhancing teachers` day-to-day well-being and job satisfaction. Recognition and appreciation programs are suggested by 47% of teachers. While important for boosting morale, it is one of the less frequently mentioned suggestions, indicating that many teachers may prioritize more practical changes such as workload reduction and discipline policy improvements over recognition programs.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between teachers` occupational well-being and burnout. To achieve this, well-being of teachers was assessed across three constructs to identify the areas of greatest concern. Among the dimensions of occupational well-being, affective constructs like anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion require significant attention, with emotional exhaustion being notably high. The high prevalence of burnout due to emotional exhaustion, depression, and anxiety among the teachers highlights a critical need for targeted interventions. Addressing these burnout issues is essential to improve teachers` mental health and overall well-being. On average, male teachers report slightly lower levels of emotional exhaustion compared to their female counterparts. This suggests that, while anxiety and depression are concerns for both genders, emotional exhaustion is particularly pronounced among female teachers, indicating female teachers are experiencing more emotional drain and feelings of being used up. However, male teachers, despite a lower average emotional exhaustion, are more susceptible to burnout from emotional exhaustion than female teachers.

The findings also suggest that maintaining high levels of behavioral well-being, characterized by confidence, competence, and aspirations, is crucial for reducing burnout among teachers. Given the slight gender disparity observed, particularly with one female teacher reporting burnout, educational institutions should consider gender-sensitive approaches to support teachers` well-being, ensuring that all educators receive the necessary resources and environments to thrive professionally and mitigate potential stressors that could lead to burnout. Research conducted among Bhutanese teachers [19] suggest that teacher stress has become a key concern among many other issues in education. This study identified several key stressors, including excessive teaching workload, high teacher-student ratios, being compelled to teach multiple grades and subjects outside their areas of specialization, time constraints for lesson planning and assessment, numerous curriculum changes and increased expectations, and increased non-academic responsibilities. However, the study also emphasizes the positive impact of supportive school leaders, who are associated with lower stress levels and higher job satisfaction among teachers. Supportive leadership contributes to

a positive work environment that enhances teacher engagement and encourages greater contributions. In line with these findings, our study also identifies significant stressors affecting teachers` well-being and effectiveness, with high workload and paperwork being the most pressing issues for most of the teachers. Other major concerns include students` behavioral and disciplinary issues and insufficient resources. Other international study has also shown that negative teacher-student relationships are associated with lower levels of teachers` occupational well-being, that is, emotional exhaustion, and reduced work enthusiasm. Other studies have also found managing tardiness, disturbances, or other problematic behaviors as significant stressors for teachers [34]. Our findings` implications are clear: addressing the high workload and administrative burdens on teachers is essential to improve their job satisfaction and effectiveness. This supports prior study among Bhutanese teachers [19], which emphasized that supportive school leaders play a crucial role in reducing stress levels and increasing job satisfaction among teachers. Additionally, the study also emphasized that such leadership fosters a positive work environment, which enhances teacher engagement and encourages greater contributions. Similar assertion was also made by other international studies [35]. Our research highlights that schools and policymakers should focus on reducing paperwork, enhancing classroom management training, and ensuring adequate resources are available to support teachers [36]. By addressing these key areas, educational institutions can help alleviate stress, reduce burnout, and ultimately improve both teaching quality and student outcomes. Enhancing work ability through professional development and support is also essential for preventing burnout. Prior studies also support this finding, including the finding of [37], which indicated that a supportive leadership style is a significant predictor of higher work ability. Additionally, a comprehensive approach to improving teachers` health well-being can help sustain their professional performance and reduce burnout.

The implications of these findings are significant for developing targeted interventions and support systems aimed at reducing emotional exhaustion and, consequently, burnout among teachers. For policy makers and educational administrators, the findings of this study underscore the importance of implementing strategies to mitigate emotional exhaustion, such as providing mental health resources, fostering a supportive work environment, and offering professional development opportunities focused on stress management [38]. Given the slightly higher mean emotional exhaustion among female teachers, gender-specific support programs may also be beneficial. Addressing the root causes of emotional exhaustion can lead to a decrease in burnout rates, ultimately improving teacher retention and the overall quality of education. Prior studies also support this finding, including the finding of [39], which

indicated that teachers` emotional exhaustion is negatively related to students` achievement. Schools should continue to promote high levels of behavioral well-being among all teachers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful to the Ministry of Education and Skills Development for granting permission to collect data from teachers across the country, as well as to the school principals for their cooperation and approval in facilitating the data collection process. I also would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my family for their unwavering support and encouragement at every step of this journey.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author declares that no competing interests exist.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Karma was the sole author of this study, responsible for its design, performing the statistical analysis, writing the protocol, and writing the whole manuscript and approving the final manuscript.

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