

# 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*

13 **1. INTRODUCTION**

14

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

27

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

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

47

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

61

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

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

91

## 92 **1.1 PRESENT STUDY**

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

106

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

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

121

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

## 129 **1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

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

144

145

## 146 **2. MATERIAL AND METHODS**

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

155

## 156 **2.1 Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Method**

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

162

## 163 **2.3 Instrument**

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

180

181 Prior to the main data collection, the instrument was content validated by few content experts  
182 to assess its clarity and relevance. Based on the feedback received, minor adjustments were  
183 made to improve the clarity and readability. The instrument demonstrated strong internal  
184 consistency, with Cronbach`s alpha coefficients exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70  
185 [33] for all constructs, indicating reliable measurement of the variables under investigation.  
186 Specifically, the Cronbach`s alpha coefficients were 0.85, 0.78, 0.70, and 0.77 for affective  
187 well-being, behavioral well-being, health well-being, and burnout constructs, respectively.  
188 Descriptions of the items associated with the three components of occupational well-being  
189 and burnout constructs are shown in Table 1. Additionally, few "check-all-that-apply" questions

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

194

195 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 feel 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.

196

197

## 198 **2.4 Data Collection**

199 The link to the Google Form was shared with teachers through email and messaging platforms  
 200 such as Facebook Messenger and Telegram. Measures were implemented to ensure that  
 201 each teacher could only submit one response. The survey was conducted from June 1 to 30,  
 202 2024.

203

204

## 205 2.5 Data Analysis

206 Data from a Google spreadsheet was imported, cleaned, and analysed using the statistical  
207 software RStudio (version 2024.04.1+748). Statistical significance was determined at the  $p$   
208  $<.05$  threshold. Both descriptive (i.e., mean, standard deviation, frequency tables, frequency  
209 counts, percentages) and inferential statistics (i.e., correlation analysis and two sample  
210 independent  $t$ -test) were calculated. Prior to any analyses, reverse coding of the items  
211 requiring it was done.

212

## 213 3. RESULTS

214

### 215 3.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

216

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

219 Table2. Demographic information.

		Sex					
		Male		Female		Total	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
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
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
	Primary School	42	18.4	31	17.8	73	18.2

School Level	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

220

### 221 3.2 Teacher Occupational Well-being and Burnout Information by Gender

222 Table 3 presents the results of an analysis focusing on various components of occupational  
 223 well-being and burnout among Bhutanese teachers. Teachers` occupational well-being in the  
 224 sample was assessed across three dimensions: affective well-being (component includes  
 225 feelings of job anxiety, depression related to work, and emotional exhaustion), behavioral well-  
 226 being (component includes confidence in teaching abilities, career aspirations, and perceived  
 227 competence), and health well-being (component includes physical symptoms due to stress,  
 228 sleep difficulties, overall health impact, and perceived work ability). Table 2 shows the mean  
 229 (M) values for each construct by gender and the final sample. It is clear that teachers are  
 230 experiencing noticeable level of anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion, with emotional  
 231 exhaustion being the highest. The average emotional exhaustion score for the whole sample  
 232 is 3.7, with males reporting slightly lower emotional exhaustion ( $M = 3.4$ ) compared to female  
 233 counterparts ( $M = 3.7$ ). This suggests that while anxiety and depression are present, emotional  
 234 exhaustion is more pronounced, particularly among female teachers. In other words, female  
 235 teachers are experiencing more emotional drain and feelings of being used up. However, the  
 236 results of an independent two-sample  $t$ -test do not show significant difference on affective  
 237 well-being components in terms of gender. In each case, the absolute value of the  $t$ -value is  
 238 less than the critical  $t$ -value ( $\pm 1.96$ ), indicating that the difference between male and female  
 239 teachers for anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion are not statistically significant at  
 240 the 0.05 level.

241

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

Indicator	Final Sample (n = 402) M	Gender		t	Teacher Burnout		
		Male (n = 228) M	Female (n = 174) M		Final Sample (n = 402)	Male (n = 228)	Female (n = 174)
<b>Affective Wellbeing</b>							
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
<b>Behavioural Well-being</b>							
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
<b>Health Well-being</b>							
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

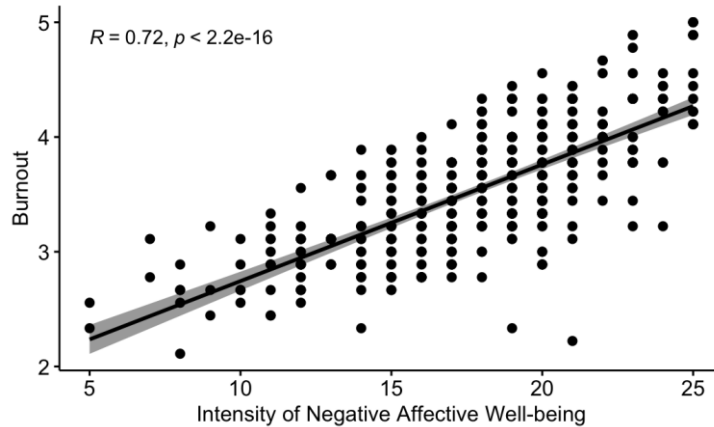
Note: \* Significant difference. at  $p < 0.05$

243

244

245 As seen in the table, the relationship between various components of occupational well-being  
246 and burnout among Bhutanese teachers, both for the entire sample and gender-wise was also  
247 examined. Teachers with scores of 4 or higher for components with single item (or mean  
248 scores of 4 or higher in case of components with more than one item) were considered to be  
249 experiencing feelings of job anxiety, depression related to work, and emotional exhaustion.  
250 From the table, it is clear that the average emotional exhaustion score for the entire sample is  
251 3.7 on a 5-point scale, indicating a moderate level of emotional exhaustion. Among male  
252 teachers, the average emotional exhaustion score is 3.4, also indicating a moderate level. In  
253 comparison, female teachers have an average emotional exhaustion score of 3.7, consistent  
254 with a moderate level of emotional exhaustion. Similarly, teachers with burnout score of 4 or  
255 higher were considered to be experiencing burnout. The analysis of the collected data reveals  
256 significant positive correlations ( $r = 0.72$ ) between teachers experiencing higher levels of  
257 negative affective states and burnout. A scatter plot (Figure 1) illustrates this relationship,  
258 showing a positive correlation between higher negative affective states, such as anxiety,  
259 depression, and emotional exhaustion, and higher burnout scores. This visualization  
260 emphasizes that as teachers' negative affective experiences increases, so do their burnout  
261 levels, highlighting the critical link between negative affective well-being and occupational  
262 burnout.

263



264

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

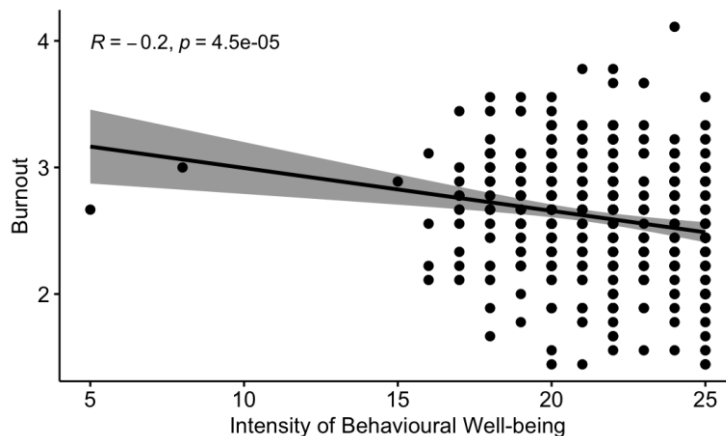
266

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

276

277 Behavioral well-being encompasses indicators such as confidence, competence, and  
 278 aspirations. The mean scores of these indicators are relatively high across both genders,  
 279 indicating that teachers generally feel competent and confident in their professional roles, with  
 280 mean scores for confidence at 4.4, competence at 4.3, and aspirations at 4.2. These high  
 281 scores suggests that teachers generally feel capable and motivated in their work, which is a  
 282 positive aspect of their occupational well-being. Moreover, the consistency of these scores  
 283 between genders indicates that, on average, male and female teachers perceive their ability  
 284 to manage their professional role similarly. The results of an independent two-sample  $t$ -test  
 285 also do not show significant difference on behavioral well-being components in terms of  
 286 gender. When examining the incidence of burnout, a slight disparity emerges. Only one female  
 287 teacher reported experiencing burnout due to each component of behavioral well-being, while  
 288 no male teachers reported such burnout. This difference, though minimal, suggests that  
 289 female teachers are facing unique stressors or challenges that contribute to burnout even  
 290 when their behavioral well-being is high. Additionally, the Spearman rank correlation analysis

291 further enriches this understanding by showing a negative correlation ( $r = -0.20$ ) between  
292 behavioral well-being and burnout. This implies that higher behavioral well-being is associated  
293 with lower levels of burnout. A scatter plot (Figure 2) illustrates this relationship. This finding is  
294 critical as it highlights protective role of behavioral well-being against burnout, emphasizing  
295 the importance of fostering a supportive and effective work environment to mitigate burnout  
296 among teachers.



297

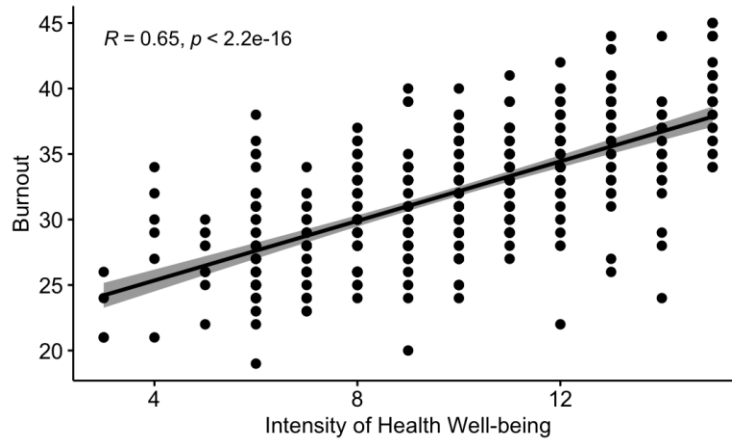
298 **Figure 2.** Scatter plot showing negative correlation between behavioral well-being and  
299 burnout

300

301 Health well-being is measured by physical symptoms due to stress, sleep difficulties, overall  
302 negative health impacts, and perceived work ability. In the sample of 402 teachers, the mean  
303 scores for physical symptoms, negative health impacts, and work ability are 3.3, 3.1, and 4.0,  
304 respectively. The breakdown by gender shows that male teachers have slightly lower scores  
305 in physical symptoms (3.2) and negative health impacts (3.1) but a higher score in work ability  
306 (4.0). Female teachers exhibit slightly higher scores in physical symptoms (3.5), and work  
307 ability (3.7), but similar scores in negative health impacts. The  $t$ -values for these differences  
308 indicates that the only significant difference between male and female teachers is in physical  
309 symptoms ( $t = 2.41, p < 0.05$ ), with female teachers reporting more physical symptoms than  
310 male teachers. Despite the relatively similar scores in health well-being between genders, the  
311 burnout data reveals that the incidence of burnout due to health well-being is slightly higher in  
312 male teachers. The slightly higher physical symptoms and negative health impacts reported  
313 by male teachers could indicate a need for targeted interventions to reduce physical strain and  
314 addressing negative health impacts through wellness programs and health initiatives can play  
315 a vital role in sustaining teacher well-being and reducing burnout. Since work ability scores  
316 are higher for both genders, maintaining and enhancing work ability through professional  
317 development and support can be a key strategy to prevent burnout.

318

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



324

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

326

327 Among the three dimensions of occupational well-being, stakeholders should pay particular  
328 attention to the affective well-being constructs like anxiety, depression, and emotional  
329 exhaustion. These dimensions directly impact teachers` emotional health, and resilience,  
330 which are crucial for their overall well-being and effectiveness in the classroom. Emotional  
331 exhaustion, in particular, has the highest mean score ( $M = 3.7$ ) among the affective constructs.  
332 This relatively high mean score indicates that many teachers are experiencing significant  
333 stress and fatigue, with a higher incidence among female teachers ( $M = 3.7$ ) compared to  
334 male teachers ( $M = 3.4$ ). Additionally, emotional exhaustion, a key indicator of burnout, affects  
335 a significant portion of the teaching workforce. Specifically, 86 teachers (21.4% of the whole  
336 sample), including 34 female teachers (48.3% of female respondents) and 52 male teachers  
337 (37.7% of male respondents), reported experiencing emotional exhaustion. Teachers with  
338 mean scores of 4 or higher were considered to be experiencing feelings of emotional  
339 exhaustion. Similarly, teachers with mean burnout score of 4 or higher were considered to be  
340 experiencing burnout. This data highlights the urgent need for interventions to address burnout  
341 and support teachers` emotional health. Anxiety and depression also warrant attention due to  
342 their moderate scores.

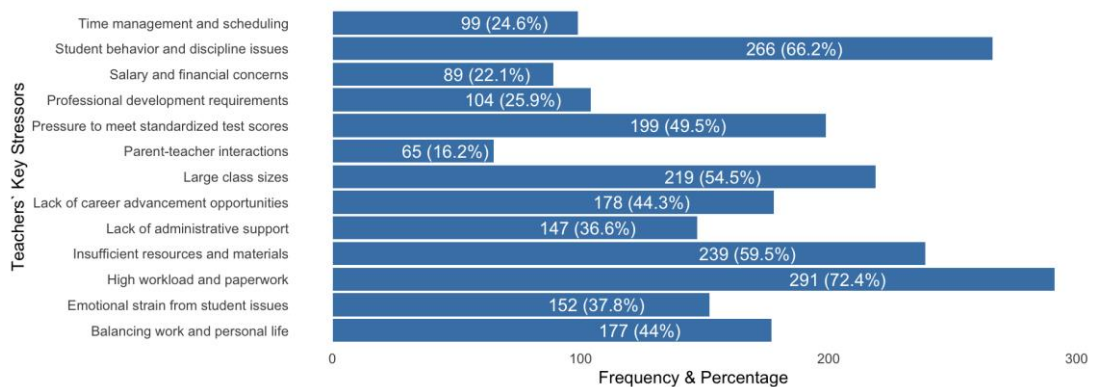
343

344 **3.3 Challenges Faced by Teachers: Key Stressors**

345

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

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**Figure 4.** Key stressors among teachers.

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371 Parent-teacher interactions are cited as a challenge by only 16.2% of teachers,  
372 making it the least frequently mentioned issue. While communication with parents is an

373 essential aspect of teaching, it appears to be less problematic compared to other factors. This  
374 may indicate that most teachers feel equipped to manage these interactions or that they  
375 encounter supportive and cooperative parents. Salary and financial concerns are challenging  
376 for 22.1% of teachers. Although financial issues are less frequently mentioned as a top  
377 concern, they still represent a significant challenge for a portion of the respondents. This  
378 suggests that while salary is a critical aspect of job satisfaction, other challenges may be more  
379 pressing in the day-to-day experience of teachers. Time management and scheduling are  
380 challenging for 24.6% of teachers. Balancing various responsibilities and effectively managing  
381 time can be difficult, but it is less frequently mentioned compared to workload, student  
382 behavior, and resource-related challenges. This indicates that while time management is a  
383 concern, it may be more manageable for many teachers compared to other more pervasive  
384 issues.

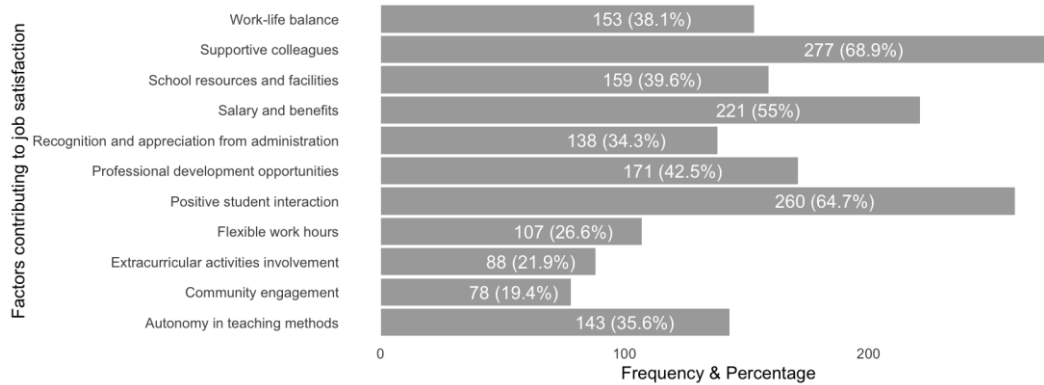
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### 386 **3.4 Key Drivers of Teachers` Job Satisfaction**

387

388 Despite the challenges, many aspects of teaching bring significant satisfaction to educators,  
389 fueling their dedication and passion for the profession. From the graph (Figure 5), the most  
390 satisfying aspects of the job for teachers are having supportive colleagues, experiencing  
391 positive interactions with students, and receiving competitive salary and benefits. On the other  
392 hand, community engagement, involvement in extracurricular activities, and flexible work  
393 hours, while still valued, are less significant in comparison. Supportive colleagues are vital for  
394 64.6% of teachers. This underscores the importance of a collaborative and encouraging work  
395 environment. Supportive colleagues can enhance morale, provide assistance in challenging  
396 situations, and contribute to a sense of community and belonging. This factor is crucial in  
397 fostering a positive work atmosphere, reducing stress, and promoting overall job satisfaction.  
398 Positive interactions with students are vital for 64.7% of teachers. This indicates that  
399 meaningful engagement and relationships with students are central to job satisfaction for many  
400 educators. Positive student interactions can provide a sense of fulfilment, purpose, and  
401 accomplishment, reinforcing the intrinsic rewards of teaching. This factor also highlights the  
402 impact of student behavior and relationships on teachers` professional experiences. Receiving  
403 competitive salary and benefits are key to job satisfaction for 55% teachers. Adequate salary  
404 and benefits ensure financial stability, which can reduce anxiety and improve quality of life.  
405 Additionally, competitive compensation packages can attract and retain talented staff, thereby  
406 contributing to a more experienced and motivated workforce. This factor highlights the critical  
407 role of financial incentives in employee retention and satisfaction.

408



**Figure 5.** Factors contributing to job satisfaction among teachers.

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

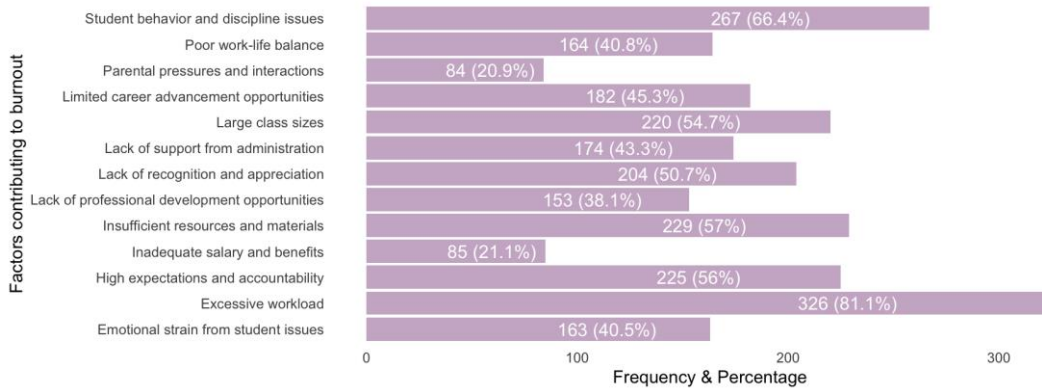
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### 3.5 Factors contributing to Burnout Among Teachers

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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

437 as a major contributor to burnout. Dealing with disruptive behavior and maintaining classroom  
 438 discipline can be draining and time consuming, adding to the stress levels of teachers. This  
 439 factor underscores the need for effective behavioral support and classroom management  
 440 strategies to help alleviate the pressure on teachers. Insufficient resources and materials are  
 441 problematic for 57% of teachers, contributing to their burnout. A lack of adequate teaching  
 442 supplies and resources can hinder teachers` ability to deliver effective instruction and meet  
 443 educational goals, leading to frustration and stress. Ensuring that teachers have the necessary  
 444 tools and materials is crucial in reducing their workload and enhancing job satisfaction.



445

446

**Figure 6.** Factors contributing to burnout among teachers.

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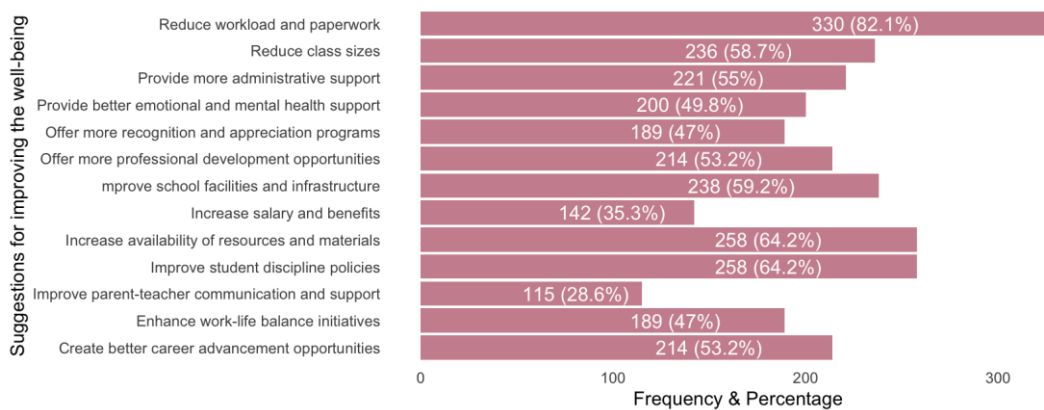
Inadequate salary and benefits are cited by only 21.1% of respondents as a contributing factor to burnout, making it the least frequently mentioned issue. While concern is important, they appear to be less critical compared to other factors directly related to workload, student behavior, and resource 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,

465 increase salary and benefits, and offer more recognition and appreciation programs are less  
 466 frequently mentioned. Reduce workload and paperwork is the most frequently suggested  
 467 improvement, with 82.1% of teachers advocating for it. This underscores the significant  
 468 administrative burden that teachers face, which can lead to stress and burnout. By reducing  
 469 these tasks, teachers would have more time to focus on instructional activities and student  
 470 engagement, ultimately enhancing their well-being and job satisfaction. Improve student  
 471 discipline policies are suggested by 64.2% of teachers. This suggestion highlights the need  
 472 for clear, consistent, and supportive discipline strategies to help teachers manage their  
 473 classrooms more effectively. Also, suggested by 64.2% of respondents, increasing the  
 474 availability of resources and materials is critical. Adequate teaching supplies and resources  
 475 are essential for delivering high-quality instruction. Ensuring that teachers have the necessary  
 476 materials can alleviate frustration and enhance their ability to meet educational goals, thereby  
 477 improving their overall well-being.

478



479

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

481

482 Improving parent-teacher communication and support is suggested by 28.6% of respondents,  
 483 making it one of the least frequently mentioned improvements. While important, this suggests  
 484 that many teachers may already feel relatively supported in this area or that other factors have  
 485 a more significant impact on their well-being. Suggested by 35.3% of teachers, increasing  
 486 salary and benefits is less frequently mentioned compared to other suggestions. Although  
 487 financial compensation is important, this indicates that other improvements might be more  
 488 pressing in enhancing teachers` day-to-day well-being and job satisfaction. Recognition and  
 489 appreciation programs are suggested by 47% of teachers. While important for boosting  
 490 morale, it is one of the less frequently mentioned suggestions, indicating that many teachers

491 may prioritize more practical changes such as workload reduction and discipline policy  
492 improvements over recognition programs.

493

#### 494 **4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

495

496 This study examined the relationship between teachers` occupational well-being and burnout.

497 To achieve this, well-being of teachers was assessed across three constructs to identify the

498 areas of greatest concern. Among the dimensions of occupational well-being, affective

499 constructs like anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion require significant attention, with

500 emotional exhaustion being notably high. The high prevalence of burnout due to emotional

501 exhaustion, depression, and anxiety among the teachers highlights a critical need for targeted

502 interventions. Addressing these burnout issues is essential to improve teachers` mental health

503 and overall well-being. On average, male teachers report slightly lower levels of emotional

504 exhaustion compared to their female counterparts. This suggests that, while anxiety and

505 depression are concerns for both genders, emotional exhaustion is particularly pronounced

506 among female teachers, indicating female teachers are experiencing more emotional drain

507 and feelings of being used up. However, male teachers, despite a lower average emotional

508 exhaustion, are more susceptible to burnout from emotional exhaustion than female teachers.

509

510 The findings also suggest that maintaining high levels of behavioral well-being, characterized  
511 by confidence, competence, and aspirations, is crucial for reducing burnout among teachers.

512 Given the slight gender disparity observed, particularly with one female teacher reporting

513 burnout, educational institutions should consider gender-sensitive approaches to support

514 teachers` well-being, ensuring that all educators receive the necessary resources and

515 environments to thrive professionally and mitigate potential stressors that could lead to

516 burnout. Research conducted among Bhutanese teachers [19] suggest that teacher stress

517 has become a key concern among many other issues in education. This study identified

518 several key stressors, including excessive teaching workload, high teacher-student ratios,

519 being compelled to teach multiple grades and subjects outside their areas of specialization,

520 time constraints for lesson planning and assessment, numerous curriculum changes and

521 increased expectations, and increased non-academic responsibilities. However, the study also

522 emphasizes the positive impact of supportive school leaders, who are associated with lower

523 stress levels and higher job satisfaction among teachers. Supportive leadership contributes to

524 a positive work environment that enhances teacher engagement and encourages greater

525 contributions. In line with these findings, our study also identifies significant stressors affecting

526 teachers` well-being and effectiveness, with high workload and paperwork being the most

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

548

549 The implications of these findings are significant for developing targeted interventions and  
550 support systems aimed at reducing emotional exhaustion and, consequently, burnout among  
551 teachers. For policy makers and educational administrators, the findings of this study  
552 underscore the importance of implementing strategies to mitigate emotional exhaustion, such  
553 as providing mental health resources, fostering a supportive work environment, and offering  
554 professional development opportunities focused on stress management [38]. Given the  
555 slightly higher mean emotional exhaustion among female teachers, gender-specific support  
556 programs may also be beneficial. Addressing the root causes of emotional exhaustion can  
557 lead to a decrease in burnout rates, ultimately improving teacher retention and the overall  
558 quality of education. Prior studies also support this finding, including the finding of [39], which  
559 indicated that teachers` emotional exhaustion is negatively related to students` achievement.  
560 Schools should continue to promote high levels of behavioral well-being among all teachers.

561

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563

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568 every step of this journey.

569 **COMPETING INTERESTS**

570

571 Author declares that no competing interests exist.

572

573 **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

574

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

578

579 **Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)**

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588 all input prompts provided to the generative AI technology

589 Details of the AI usage are given below:

590 1.

591 2.

592 3.

593

594 **Ethical Approval**

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

607 **Consent**

608 As per international standards or university standards, Participants' written consent has  
609 been collected and preserved by the author(s).

610

611

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