School Geographical Location and Its Influence on Teacher Burnout in Public Secondary Schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Ideally, teachers should work in stress-free environments to effectively fulfill their teaching roles. However, they often face various challenges while carrying out their responsibilities. This study examined the influences of school geographical location on teacher burnout in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and was founded on the Multidimensional Theory of Burnout and Golembiewski and Munzenrider's models of burnout. It targeted 154 principals and 2383 teachers from 154 schools, in addition to 25 Teachers Service Commission (TSC) officers and 7 Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) from Tharaka Nithi County. Out of these, 343 teachers and 46 principals from 46 schools, in addition to all the 25 TSC and 7 QASO officers, were sampled using two-stage cluster random sampling, purposive sampling, and simple random techniques. Data was collected using questionnaires from teachers, interview schedules from TSC and QASO officers, and data collection forms. The reliability of the questionnaires was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which yielded values of 0.78 and 0.87 for school geographical location and teacher burnout, indicating good reliability at 0.7. Quantitative data from questionnaires was analyzed descriptively by using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, as well as inferentially by using Pearson correlation. For qualitative data from open-ended questions in the questionnaires, interviews, and secondary data transcripts, content analysis was employed. The study established that school geographical location had a significant influence on teacher burnout ($r = 0.186$, $P<0.05$). Based on the findings, it was concluded that school geographical location predicted teacher burnout. The study recommended building sufficient housing as well as other social amenities for teachers, even in remote areas, to make work bearable for teachers. The study's primary beneficiaries are teachers, principals, TSC officers, and QASO officers.

Keywords: *School Geographical Location; Teacher Burnout; Secondary Schools; Tharaka Nithi County; Kenya*

I. INTRODUCTION

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

Herman et al. (2020), in their study in Missouri, discovered different aspects of school climate related to the three burnout dimensions, namely: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and feelings of low personal accomplishment. Further, the inverse relationship between school climate and burnout was mediated by teacher satisfaction levels for both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization dimensions.

This study was based on the assumption that school geographical location affected teachers' burnout. In Australia, teachers in non-urban locations were faced with less workload due to smaller class sizes compared to those in urban areas and were less prone to suffer burnout (Hardwick-Franco, 2019). The situation is not any better in most African countries, such as Kenya. This current study was focused on Tharaka Nithi County in Kenya. A study by Muguongo (2015) found that in Maara Sub-County of Tharaka Nithi, lack of resources, understaffed schools, and long distances to school, which were aggravated by poor roads, contributed to stress and poor job satisfaction among

teachers. However, the direct link between the work environment and burnout was not explicitly studied by Muguongo's study. This meant that this hypothesized relationship remained largely unexplored.

Tharaka Nithi is also faced with a lack of resources, understaffed schools, a shortage of 506 teachers, heavy workloads, poor learning facilities, and long distances to school (Tharaka Nithi County Government, 2022). In some schools, the ratio of teacher to student exceeded 1:40, as recommended by the Ministry of Education (2016). Most of the schools are located in rural areas, with the average distance to school from urban areas, where teachers reside, ranging from three to 12 km. Due to the hardships faced, there are incessant demands by teachers for transfers from schools located in remote areas. In response, some of the teachers had high levels of alcohol abuse, which resulted in other vices such as the display of unbecoming behavior and complaints from students (Tharaka Nithi County, 2022). Consequently, it remained a daunting task for the education authority to maintain staffing balance in the county. This led to high levels of burnout. This study set out to examine the effect of school geographical location on teacher burnout in public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study was to assess the influence of school geographical location on teacher burnout in public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

1.2 Research Hypotheses

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

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Shen et al. (2015) sought to find out how teacher burnout in schools located in different districts affected student motivation and learning processes. Data was collected from 1,302 high school students and their 33 physical education teachers in 20 high schools. Located in two school districts in a major Midwest metropolitan area in the United States, both schools were demographically similar. The findings showed that the location of the school had significant influences on burnout among teachers, with distance to the school having a direct relationship with teacher burnout. This is related to a study by Maithya (2009) that links school location and teacher burnout. Since some teachers in Tharaka Nithi district walk long distances to school, it was pertinent to find out how this influenced burnout among them.

Esonwanne and Aguwa (2014) carried out a study on "burnout, psychological distress, and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Enugu, Southeast Nigeria." Data was collected from 432 teachers using the Maslach burnout inventory, the general health questionnaire (GHQ-12), and the generic job satisfaction scale. The study established that the school environment affected students' discipline as well as the psychological health of teachers. In some instances, schools were located in areas with high levels of negative influence from the community. This led to increased indiscipline cases, leading to increases in stress and burnout among teachers, as envisaged by this current study. Though also based on primary data sources, the former study was carried out in another part of Africa, and the level to which the findings apply to Kenya was hard to fathom without studies such as this one.

Hardwick-Franco (2019) carried out a study titled, "Educational leadership is different in the country; what support does the rural school principal need?" The findings showed that in Australia, the majority of small schools were situated in non-urban locations. As such, the further the schools were from urban areas, the smaller they tended to be. Based on the school location, it was established that teachers in non-urban locations were faced with less workload due to smaller class sizes compared to those in urban areas and were less likely to suffer burnout. This current study aims to find out whether there are significant differences between school location and teacher burnout in Tharaka Nithi County. It was to find out whether schools in urban areas were characterized by an increased student population, as identified by Sichambo (2012), indiscipline, and better facilities than those in rural areas, and whether teaching obligations and distance to school contributed to teachers' burnout in Tharaka Nithi County.

Bataineh and Alsagheer (2012) carried out "An investigation of social support and burnout among special education teachers in the United Arab Emirates." Data was collected from a sample of 300 special education teachers using completed burnout and sources of social support questionnaires. The data was analyzed using Pearson correlation and analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedures. The findings revealed that schools located in poor locations contributed to stress among teachers. This study is remotely related to the study by Hardwick-Franco (2019), which drew a link between school location and burnout among teachers. In this regard, working in rural and poorly

staffed schools contributed to increases in workload and, by extension, high burnout levels among teachers. Further, the former study was focused on special education students, which was not the focus of this current study. This created an empirical literature gap.

Puhan et al. (2015) carried out a study titled "Burnout among secondary school teachers and responsible potential sources and symptoms: a critical analysis." Data was collected from a sample of 250 secondary teachers in Khurdha District, India, using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) Educational Survey tool. The findings showed that high levels of physical and emotional exhaustion among teachers were often attributable to the place of posting. Since schools in rural areas are often found in remote areas, this current study hypothesized that this could contribute to increases in teachers' burnout. This current study set out to investigate the level to which these findings applied to Tharaka Nithi County.

2.1 Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study was founded on Golembiewski and Munzenrider's (1988) model of burnout. Golembiewski and Munzenrider proposed an alternative model of the burnout process (Golembiewski & Munzenrider, 1981, 1984, 1988). The two proposed a strongly modified sequence of the burnout processes, although they agreed with the three-dimensional nature of burnout, as put forth by Maslach (1982), who proposed a theory of burnout sequencing. The theory assumes burnout as a sequential process that emanates from the emotional demands related to dealing with clients. The theory states that, as a defensive coping strategy, people distance themselves from others psychologically and limit their involvement with others. According to Golembiewski and Munzenrider, depersonalization comes first. This then leads to a reduction in personal accomplishment, which goes on to bring about emotional exhaustion. The reason for depersonalization coming up first is because it is largely a professional detachment that emanates from dealing with others in an objective way (Lee & Ashforth, 1993). This phenomenon is termed depersonalization, which is seen as "an emotional buffer between individuals and imposing coping demands." Eventually, the person realizes the increasing distance between their original expectations at the workplace and their current attitude. This breeds a sense of inadequacy in abilities to perform their expected jobs (teaching in the case of this study), ability to relate with people, and a sense of diminished abilities to accomplish personal goals (due to challenges related to school location and facilities) (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). In the context of this current study, this theory explains the impact of the emotional demands of handling these pressures on teachers' burnout, feelings of inadequacy, and their eventual performance.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

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

3.2 Location of the Study

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

3.3 Target Population

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

Table 1
Target Population

Category	Population
Principals	154
Teachers	2383
TSC Officials	25
QASOs	7

3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

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

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

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

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

The sample size was shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Sample Size

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

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

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

3.6 Pilot Study

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

3.7 Validity of the Instruments

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

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

3.8 Reliability of the Instruments

Instrument reliability is "the capacity of a research tool to dependably measure features of concern over time" (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). Since the questionnaires contained psychometric scale tests, the Cronbach Alpha (α), a scale test for related statements in questionnaires, was used to test the reliability of the questionnaires. This is a reliability coefficient ranging from 0 to 1, whose cut-off point is 0.7 (which signifies acceptability). It was used to test the internal consistency of research items. The study was cross-sectional since the data was collected at one point in time. This meant that the reliability of the research instruments was assumed at the time of data collection. In this study, Cronbach Alpha values of 0.78 and 0.87 were obtained for school geographical location and teacher burnout respectively as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Reliability Testing

Variable	No. of Item	Cronbach Alpha (α)
School Geographical location	8	0.78
Teacher Burnout	8	0.87

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

3.9 Data Analysis

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

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Demographics of the Participants

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

Table 4
Response Rate

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

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

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

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

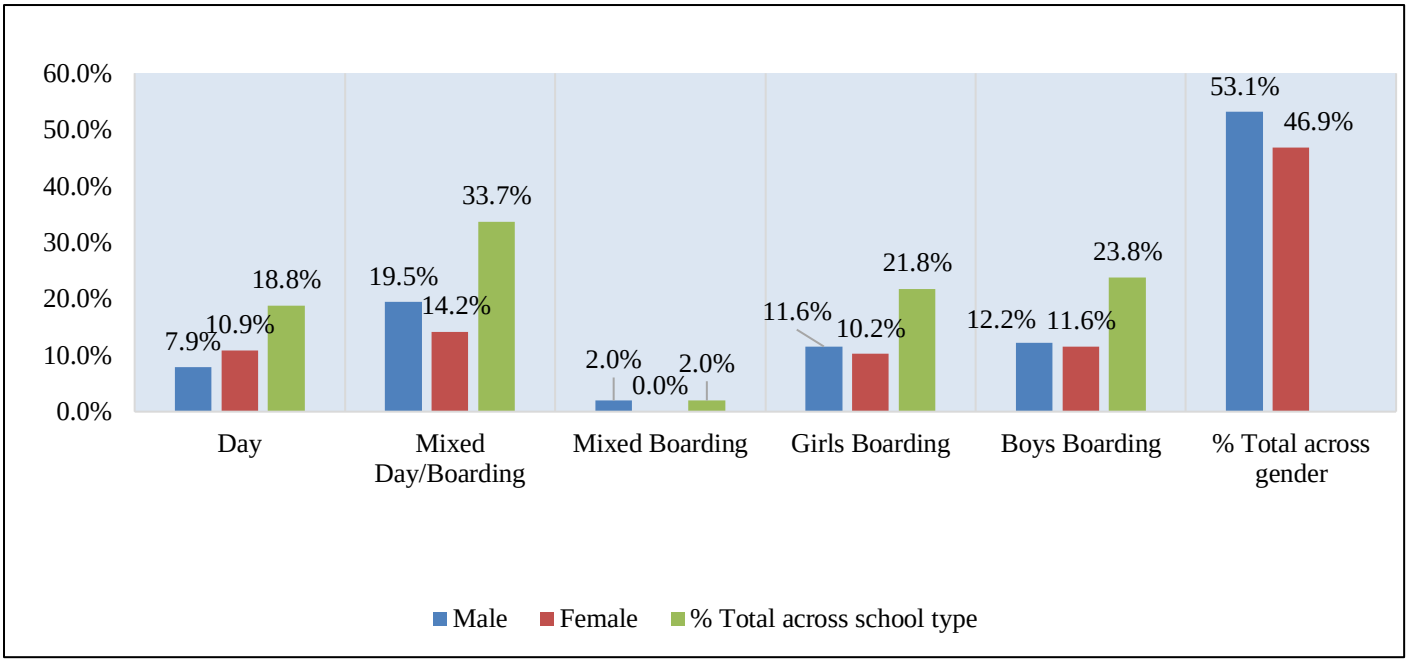


Figure 1
Gender and School Type

The study sought to establish the duration of working as a teacher to gain insight into the level of reliance on their responses. The results showed that the teachers had sufficient experience to provide trustworthy information regarding the impact of school working conditions on teachers in Tharaka Nithi. The results also demonstrated that both sexes were fairly represented among newly hired (less than two years old) teachers. However, there was a

significant gender gap among teachers who had taught for between two and five years, with more men (22.1%) than women (12.9%). The fact that more female teachers (8.9%) than male teachers (4.3%) were evident in the category of 11 to 20 years indicated that female teachers often worked in the field longer. Therefore, teachers who truly continue in the profession for a long time find contentment, self-satisfaction, and fulfillment. Previous studies have found a significant relationship between work experience and teachers' job satisfaction in their line of employment. The management working relationships were what determined the teaching profession and job happiness, indicating that abilities were learned through experience in various work stations (Babbie, 2013). The findings are presented in Figure 2.

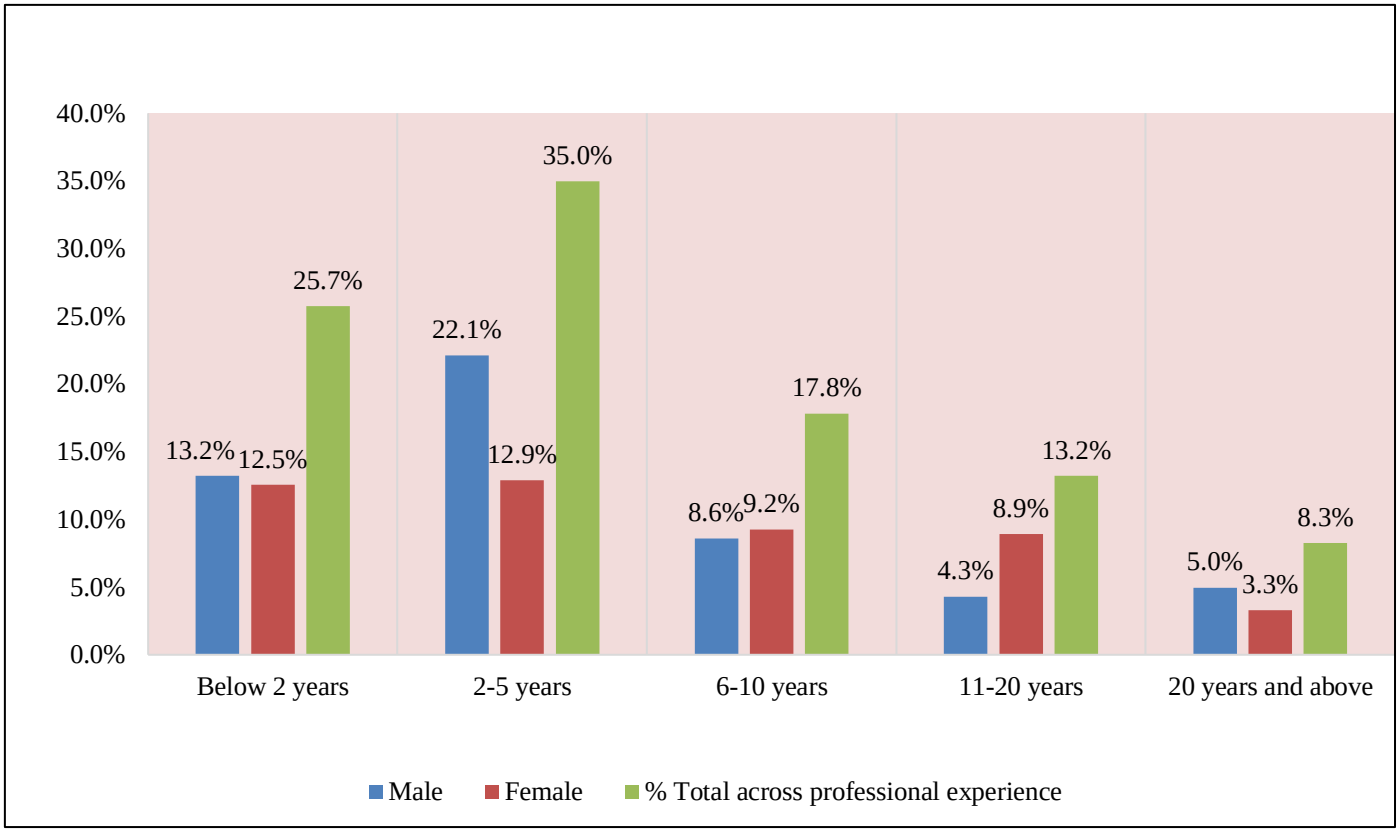


Figure 2
Gender and Professional Experience

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

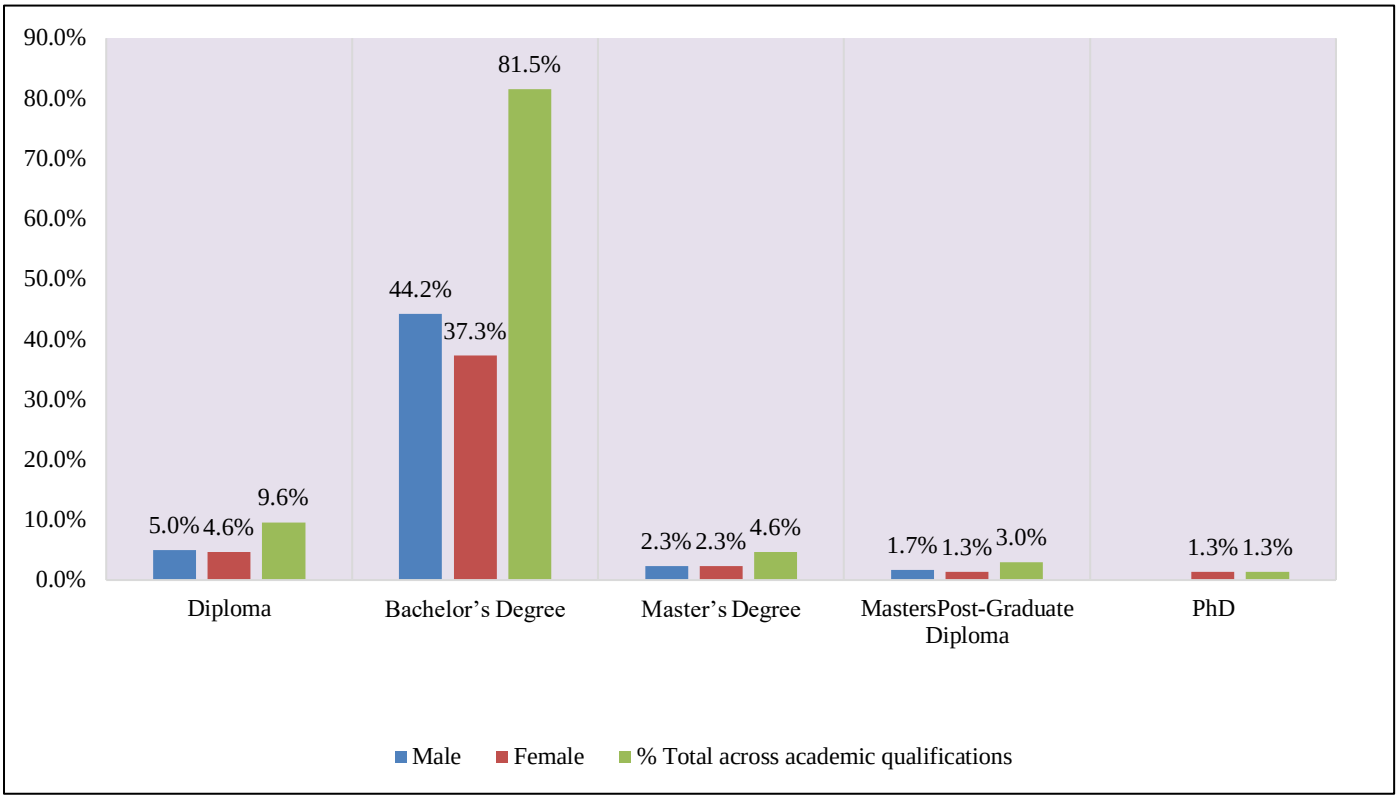


Figure 3
Gender and Academic Qualification

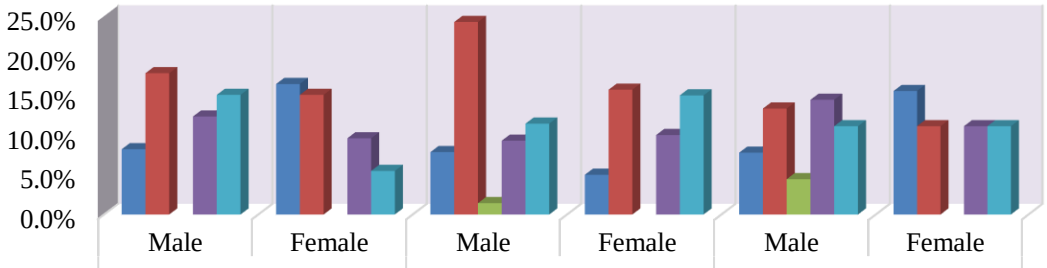
4.2 School Geographical Location and Teacher Burnout

The fourth objective of the study was to assess the influence of school geographical location on teacher burnout in public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. First, a cross-tabulation across gender, school types, and location of the school in day school, male teachers (7.8% and 15.6 % of female teachers, respectively) indicated that the near distance to school had a low impact on teacher burnout. In contrast, 8.2 % and 16.4 % of male and female teachers, respectively, indicated that distance had a high impact on teacher burnout. Finally, 7.9 % and 5.0 % of male and female teachers, respectively, indicated that moderate distance had a moderate impact on teacher burnout.

In a mixed-day or boarding school, male teachers (17.8% and 15.1 % of female teachers, respectively) indicated the far distance had a high impact on teacher burnout. In contrast, 13.3 % and 11.1 % of male and female teachers indicated that nearby distance had a low impact on teacher burnout. Finally, 24.3 % and 15.7 % of male and female teachers, respectively, indicated that moderate distance had a moderate impact on teacher burnout.

In girls' boarding school, male teachers (12.3% and 9.6 % of female teachers, respectively) indicated far distance had a high impact on teacher burnout. In contrast, 14.4 % and 11.1 % of male and female teachers, respectively, indicated that near distance had a low impact on teacher burnout. Finally, 9.3 % and 10.0 % of male and female teachers, respectively, indicated that moderate distance had a moderate impact on teacher burnout.

In boys' boarding school, male teachers (15.1 and 5.5 % of female teachers, respectively) indicated far distance had a high impact on teacher burnout. In contrast, 11.1 % and 11.1 % of male and female teachers, respectively, indicated that near distance had a low impact on teacher burnout. Finally, 11.4 % and 15.0 % of male and female teachers, respectively, indicated that moderate distance had a moderate impact on teacher burnout. The findings suggested that there were significant differences between male and female teachers on the influence of the location of school on teacher burnout. The findings are presented in Figure 4.



	FAR DISTANCE		MODERATE DISTANCE		NEAR DISTANCE	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Day	8.2%	16.4%	7.9%	5.0%	7.8%	15.6%
Mixed Day/Boarding	17.8%	15.1%	24.3%	15.7%	13.3%	11.1%
Mixed Boarding			1.4%		4.4%	
Girls Boarding	12.3%	9.6%	9.3%	10.0%	14.4%	11.1%
Boys Boarding	15.1%	5.5%	11.4%	15.0%	11.1%	11.1%

Figure 4
Gender, School Types and Location of the School

The teachers were asked to indicate how school geographical location related to teacher burnout. As presented in Table 5, the teachers agreed to a moderate extent that (M = 3) school location affected teacher burnout. This finding was in agreement with the finding by Esonwanne and Aguwa (2014), which established that schools located with high levels of negative influences from the community increased indiscipline cases, leading to increases in stress and burnout among teachers, as envisaged by this current study.

Table 5
School Location Affects Teacher Burnout

Descriptive Statistics				
Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
School location [where the school is situated] affects teacher burnout	1	5	3	1.48

N=303

The teachers also agreed to a high extent that (M = 4) long distances to school contributed to teacher burnout, as shown in Table 6. School location was identified as a major predictor of burnout among teachers (McCaughtry et al., 2015). This was due to the fact that long distances to school led to physical exhaustion and burnout (Jensen, Solheim, & Idsoe, 2019). The findings of this current study thus confirm the findings of the two aforementioned studies. Since the former studies were undertaken in other parts of the world, it was evident that exhaustion and burnout due to distance from school were global challenges.

Table 6
Long Distance to School Contributes to Teacher Burnout

Descriptive Statistics				
Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Long Distance to school contributes to teacher burnout	1	5	4	1.40

N=303

The teachers also agreed to a high extent that schools in areas with poor roads and means of transport also contributed to teacher burnout (M = 4), as shown in Table 7. These findings were in agreement with the study by Shen

et al. (2015), which showed that the location of the school had significant influences on the distance to school and had a direct relationship with teacher burnout.

Table 7

Schools in Areas with Poor Roads and Means of Transport and Teacher Burnout

Descriptive Statistics				
Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Schools in areas with poor roads and means of transport contribute to teacher burnout	1	5	4	1.36

N=303

The teachers also agreed that, to a high extent, schools in areas with high pupil-to-teacher ratios increased the workload for teachers, leading to burnout (M = 4), as presented in Table 8. Sichambo (2012) showed that teachers were often required to offer their services in environments often replete with huge student populations and large class sizes. This placed extra demands on them, leading to burnout, as established by this current study.

Table 8

Schools in Areas with a High Pupil-To-Teacher Ratios and Teacher Burnout

Descriptive Statistics				
Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Schools in areas with a high pupil-to-teacher ratios increase the workload for teachers leading to burnout	1	5	4	1.17

N=303

The teachers agreed that, to a moderate extent, schools in environments with high indiscipline levels among students affected learning processes, leading to an increase in teacher burnout (M = 3). These findings, as presented in Table 9, are similar to those by Sichambo (2012), who established that schools in urban areas were characterized by a high student population, which led to indiscipline and thus teacher burnout.

Table 9

Schools in Environments with High Indiscipline Levels among Students and Teacher Burnout

Descriptive Statistics				
Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Schools in environments with high indiscipline levels among students affect learning processes leading to an increase in teacher burnout	1	5	3	1.42

N=303

On the other hand, the teachers agreed to a moderate extent; (M = 3) teachers in rural schools had smaller class sizes and were less prone to suffer burnout than those in urban schools. This finding, as shown in Table 10, is in agreement with the findings by Hardwick-Franco (2019) that teachers in non-urban locations were faced with less workload due to smaller class sizes compared to those in urban areas and were less prone to suffer burnout.

Table 10

Teachers in Rural Schools Have Smaller Class Sizes and Are Less Prone to Suffer Burnout than Those in Urban Schools

Descriptive Statistics				
Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Teachers in rural schools have smaller class sizes and are less prone to suffer burnout than those in urban schools	1	5	3	1.37

N=303

However, they agreed to a high extent, (M=4) working in rural and poorly staffed schools contributed to increases in high burnout levels as shown in Table 11. These findings agreed with the study by Hardwick-Franco (2019) that drew a link between school location and burnout among teachers. As such, working in rural and poorly staffed schools contributed to increases in workload and by extension high burnout levels among teachers.

Table 11

Working in Rural and Poorly Staffed Schools Contributes To Increases in High Burnout Levels

Descriptive Statistics				
Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Working in rural and poorly staffed schools contributes to increases in high burnout levels	1	5	4	1.28

N=303

The teachers, as shown in Table 12, also agreed to a great extent that posting teachers in places without adequate housing and other social amenities contributed to teacher burnout (M = 4). These findings were similar to those by Bataineh and Alsagheer (2012), who showed that schools located in poor locations contributed to stress among teachers.

Table 12

Posting in Places without Adequate Housing and Other Social Amenities and Teacher Burnout

Descriptive Statistics				
Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Posting in places without adequate housing and other social amenities contributes to teacher burnout	1	5	4	1.14

N=303

The study established that the school environment affected students' discipline as well as the psychological health of teachers. This finding was similar to the study by Esonwanne and Aguwa (2014), who established that the school environment affected students' discipline as well as the psychological health of teachers.

In some instances, schools were located in areas with high levels of negative influences from the community. This led to increased indiscipline cases (Sichambo, 2012); leading to increases in stress and burnout among teachers as envisaged by this current study. These findings were supported by one respondent who said that:

> *School location especially long distances and unfavorable weather conditions were stressors leading to teacher burnout (*Respondent II, Tharaka Nithi County, May 2022).
>
> Another respondent supported these findings by saying that:
>
> *In some incidences, school location contributed to teacher burnout. This was especially for schools that were located far from urban areas* (Respondent IX, Tharaka Nithi County, May 2022).

Furthermore, the majority of schools were situated in non-urban locations. As such, the further the schools were from urban areas, the more unfriendly the environment they created, which contributed to stress and burnout. Furthermore, the study established that teachers complained that the majority of schools were situated in non-urban locations. As such, the further the schools were from urban areas, the more unfriendly the environment they created. This finding concurred with the finding by Puhan et al. (2015), which showed that high levels of physical and emotional exhaustion among teachers were often attributable to the place of posting. To support this, one of the respondents said:

> *Based on the school location, teachers were faced with insecurity challenges, poor living conditions, bad weather, hostile communities, and lack of medical facilities among others that exposed them to burnout* (Respondent XXII, Tharaka Nithi County, May 2022).

Based on the school location, it was established that teachers were faced with insecurity challenges, poor living conditions, bad weather, hostile communities, and a lack of medical facilities, among others, that exposed them to burnout. The finding was supported by Bataineh and Alsagheer (2012), who opined that schools located in poor locations contributed to stress among teachers. Since schools in rural areas of Tharaka Nithi County were often found in remote areas, this current study concluded that this contributed to increases in teachers' burnout.

The Pearson correlation as presented in Table 13 shows that there was a positive and significant correlation between teacher burnout in Tharaka Nithi County and school geographical location ($r = 0.186$, $P<0.05$). The finding was similar to the findings by Bataineh and Alsagheer (2012) and Hardwick-Franco (2019), which established a link between school location and burnout among teachers. The study hypothesis that there was no statistically significant relationship between school geographical location and teacher burnout in public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya, was thus rejected.

Table 13

Pearson Correction between School Geographical Location and Teacher Burnout

		Teacher Burnout Scale Scores
School Location Scale Scores	Pearson Correlation	.186**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001
	N	303
	R^2	0.03
***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*		

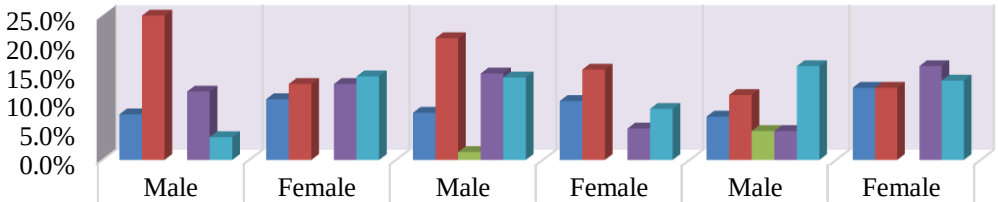
4.3 Teacher Burnout (Dependent Variable)

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

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

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

In boys boarding school, male teachers (16.3%) and female teachers (13.8%) indicated that less resources had a high impact on teacher burnout. In contrast, 3.9% and 14.5% of male and female teachers indicated that more resources had a low impact on teacher burnout. Finally, 14.3% and 8.8% of male and female teachers rated school types as having a moderate impact on teacher burnout. The findings showed that there were significant differences between male and female teachers on the effect of school types on teacher burnout. The findings are presented in Figure 5. The findings showed that burnout was higher in mixed-day and boarding schools as well as boys' boarding schools. This was due to challenges related to high disciplinary demands in schools of different genders, with boys' schools being more demanding (Al-Tayyar, 2005).



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

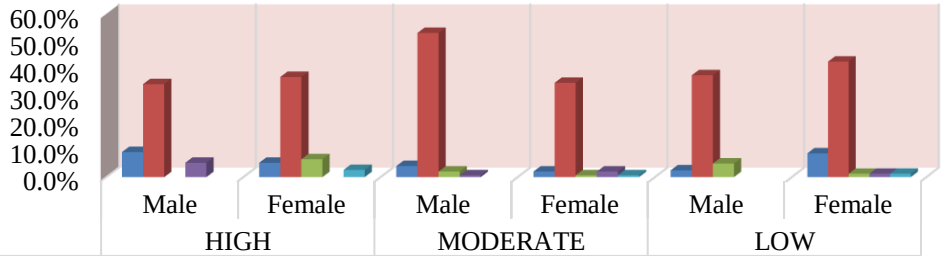
Figure 5

Gender, School Types and Teacher Burnout Levels

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

About 34.2% of male teachers and 36.8% of female teachers have a bachelor's degree qualification, which has a high impact on teacher burnout. In contrast, 37.5% and 42.5% of male and female teachers, respectively, related bachelor's degree qualifications with a low impact on teacher burnout. Finally, 53.1% and 34.7% of male and female teachers, respectively, related bachelor's degree qualification with a moderate impact on teacher burnout. This further supported the study by Babbie (2013), which revealed that divergent experiences due to training affected resilience to burnout differently.

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



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

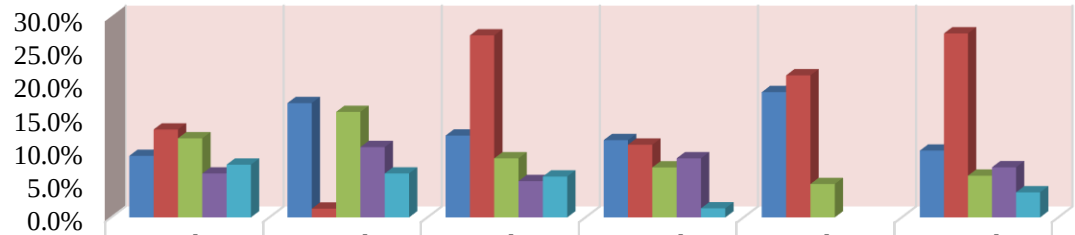
Figure 6
Gender, Academic Qualifications and Teacher Burnout Levels

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

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

About 11.2% of male teachers and 15.8% of female teachers rated professional experience of 6–10 years as having a high impact on teacher burnout. In contrast, 5.0% and 6.3% of male and female teachers, respectively, rated professional experience of 6–10 years as having a low impact on teacher burnout. Finally, 8.8% and 7.5% of male and

female teachers, respectively, rated professional experience of 6–10 years as having a moderate impact on teacher burnout. And for 11–20 and above, the rating indicated significant differences between males and females, as shown in Figure 7. These findings revealed that work experience affected burnout levels, as advanced by Babbie (2013).



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

Figure 7
Gender, Professional Experience and Teacher Burnout Levels

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

Table 14
Burnout Leads To High Levels of Drunkenness among Teachers

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

N=303

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

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

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

N=303

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

Table 16

There Are High Levels of Absenteeism among Teachers Due To Burnout

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

N=303

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

Table 17

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

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

N=303

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

Table 18

There Are High Levels of Lateness among Teachers Due to Burnout

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

N=303

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

Table 19

Burnout Leads to Failure to Meet Targets among Teachers

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

N=303

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

Table 20

Burnout Affects Teachers' Performance in Class

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

N=303

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

Table 21

Burnout Leads to Poor Class Management among Teachers

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

N=303

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

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

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of school geographical location on teacher burnout in public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. Pearson correlation showed there was a positive and significant correlation between teacher burnout in Tharaka Nithi County and school geographical location ($r = 0.186$, $P<0.05$). Based on these findings, it was established that places where schools were located affected teacher burnout, mostly due to poor infrastructure and long distances to school in some instances. Based on the findings, it was concluded that teacher burnout was influenced by school geographical location, among other factors. This was in line with the Multidimensional Theory of Burnout and Golembiewski and Munzenrider's (1988) Model of Burnout, which showed the context of a person influences their propensity to suffer burnout.

5.2 Recommendations

The study recommended that education stakeholders should come up with funding to build sufficient housing as well as other social amenities for teachers, even in remote areas, to make work bearable for teachers and other government officials. The government should align the curriculum in such a way that its delivery even in remote areas is tenable and sensitive to the realities of remote areas.

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