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Teacher Burnout and Classroom Environment: Associations with Student Engagement, Perceived Teacher Support and Disciplinary Climate in Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

This research study was design to understand teachers' opinions regarding the home versus school education differences in primary student development while identifying possible learning challenges that home-schooled students face compared to their classmates in regular classrooms. It was a Phenomenology study to dig out the teachers' perspective regarding their experience with homeschooled children in term their social adjustment, academic performance and overall development in comparison to children enrolled in traditional schools. The research design conformed to qualitative methods through conducting interviews with fifteen primary-grade teachers in five schools. The analysis showed that an integrated educational approach improves student grades simultaneously with enhancing students' interaction and pushing better participation from parents. The respondents identified problems which include disparity in resource availability and parent-school communication irregularities. Teachers shared that homeschooled children are more studious, independent and responsible however their social skills are weak. Students with traditional education system are more active in co-curricular activities and more enjoy group work. Teachers' views show that there is no huge gap between both of these children however homeschooled children face issues in adjustment initially they requires individual attention from the teachers but gradually they adopt the situation on their individual pace. The research ends with the findings that homeschooling creates individualized educational experiences and promotes independent thinking but faces difficulties with social engagement and diverse learning content demands coordinated actions between teachers and monetary bodies and guardians to support students' equal academic and social development between all educational contexts.

Introduction

An emerging body of research indicates that teacher burnout, often characterized by emotional fatigue, depersonalization and lowered personal achievement, may carry over into the classroom ecology of the psychology of teachers (Maslach et al., 1996; EdInstruments, n.d.). Teacher burnout has been high in the post-pandemic phase and the increasing behavioral issues, and national surveys reported high stress and turnover intentions among teachers (Kaufman et al., 2023). In this respect, the issue of the relationship between burnout and fundamental aspects of the classroom environment such as student engagement, teacher support, and disciplinary climate has acquired an urgent empirical priority.

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model presents an effective point of reference to describe these relationships. According to JD-R theory, strain and motivation are produced by combining high demands (e.g., workload, disruptive behavior) and low resources (e.g., support, autonomy), and thus affect performance and climate (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017; Inceoglu et al., 2022). Recent reviews that use JD–R in education highlight that demands are always predictors of lower teacher well-being, but resources safeguard it and have the potential to support effective classroom processes (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017; Salmela-Aro et al., 2023). An extremely recent meta-analytic study of teachers also demonstrates strong correlations between JD-R variables and teacher well-being, which do not deny the applicability of the model to modern-day school environments (Zhang et al., 2025).

There is growing longitudinal evidence showing that burnout and classroom climate are bi-directional. Alamos and colleagues (2022) have discovered reciprocal relationships between burnout and relational classroom climate among teachers in a multilevel, across-year study, which implies that the higher the burnout the more conflictual the relationships and the worse the relationship climate, in its turn, predicting rise in burnout over time. To supplement this, Zee et al. (2024) demonstrate that self-efficacy of teachers varies in response to the relational climate of classrooms (e.g., closeness vs. conflict), which corresponds to how the social-emotional classroom fabric produces and is produced by teacher beliefs essential to regulating engagement and behavior.

Student engagement and learning outcomes are also related to teacher burnout. One systematic review found a consistent body of evidence that teacher burnout is correlated with lower-quality student motivation and in some studies, poor academic performance-but further more robust causal designs are still required (Madigan and Kim, 2021). Teacher support, on the other hand, instructional, emotional, and autonomy-supportive practices, has a stable positive relationship with greater student engagement at all levels of schooling, as demonstrated in recent meta-analytic and systematic reviews (Lei et al., 2023; Opazo-Zamora et al., 2024). As the ability of teachers to offer warm and autonomy-supportive interactions may be diminished by burnout, it is likely to disrupt this pathway of engagement (Madigan and Kim, 2021; Alamos et al., 2022).

A third pillar of the environment, directly related to student learning and teacher stress is the disciplinary climate, which is the perceived orderliness and clarity of rules in classrooms. The results of international tests demonstrate that classes with disciplinary climate are more successful, and the numbers of disturbances are decreased; on the other hand, chaos is linked with low performance and depleted teacher resources (OECD, 2019, 2023). Disruption is high, and this increases demands, given JD–R predictions. (e.g., emotional labor, classroom management load), raising burnout risk; elevated burnout may then weaken behavior management, creating a negative

feedback loop that further degrades climate (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; OECD, 2019; Alamos et al., 2022).

Combined, existing bodies of knowledge suggest that teacher burnout is confounded with the interactional aspects of classroom life. It probably reduces perceived teacher-support (by lowering emotional availability and instructional focus), undermines student engagement (by less effective motivational and relationship practices), and both causes and results in disciplinary climate problems. Nonetheless, there are still gaps: most studies are cross-sectional; constructs, including engagement and support, are assessed using different measures; and not many studies collectively model all three environmental dimensions and burnout used in secondary schools (Madigan and Kim, 2021; Alamos et al., 2022). To fill these gaps, the current research will investigate the relationship between teacher burnout and classroom environment particularly student engagement, perceived teacher support and disciplinary climate in order to define the areas to focus on prevention and intervention. The hypothesis is that, based on the JD-R theory, the increased level of burnout will be associated with the reduced levels of student engagement and perceived support and worse disciplinary climate, with possible dynamics of reciprocal correlations over time (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017; Alamos et al., 2022; OECD, 2019).

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between teacher burnout and student engagement in secondary school classrooms?
2. How does teacher burnout relate to perceived teacher support provided to students?
3. Is there a significant association between teacher burnout and the disciplinary climate of classrooms?
4. To what extent can teacher burnout predict overall classroom environment (student engagement, teacher support, and discipline)?

Hypotheses

- **H1**: Teacher burnout will be negatively associated with student engagement.
- **H2**: Teacher burnout will be negatively associated with perceived teacher support.
- **H3**: Teacher burnout will be negatively associated with disciplinary climate.
- **H4**: Teacher burnout will be a significant negative predictor of the overall classroom environment (combined dimensions of engagement, support, and discipline).

Methodology

Research Design

The research design used was quantitative in nature and correlational in nature to investigate the relationship between teacher burnout and classroom environment (student engagement, teacher support and disciplinary climate). The design was selected due to its ability of the researcher to quantify relationships between psychological constructs and environmental constructs without controlling any variable, which makes it an appropriate design in educational contexts (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Population and Sample

The population of interest entailed secondary school teachers in the state and independent schools in [your region/country]. Teachers in this grade were chosen due to the large workload, behavioral issues, and accountability stress that lead to burnout (Madigan and Kim, 2021).

A sample of 200 teachers was considered adequate and justified based on recommendations for correlational studies, which suggest at least 10–15 participants per variable for stable estimates (Green, 1991). As the study examined four main constructs (burnout, student engagement, teacher support, and disciplinary climate), a minimum of 160 participants was required; thus, 200 provided both statistical power ($\beta = .80$ at $\alpha = .05$) and a buffer for potential non-response.

Participants were selected using a multistage sampling technique. First, schools were stratified by sector (public vs. private) to ensure representativeness. Within each stratum, schools were randomly selected, and then teachers were invited to participate voluntarily.

Research Instruments

1. In order to measure Teacher Burnout, the Maslach Burnout Inventory, used to measure emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment, was used in the form of the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI-ES) (Maslach et al., 1996).
2. The Classroom Environment was measured by teacher perceptions of:
    - Student Engagement (measured with the Student Engagement Scale; Fredricks et al., 2004).
    - Teacher Support (scored with modified scales of Lei et al., 2023).
    - Disciplinary Climate (scored with the assistance of items of the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey - TALIS, 2019).

All the instruments proved to be highly psychometrically valid in prior research. The pilot test involving 20 teachers will promote sense of clarity and reliability in the local environment.

Data Collection Procedure

School administrations and other education authorities gave permission. A sheet of information told the participants about the nature, confidentiality, and voluntary nature of the study. The questionnaires were distributed in the paper-and-pencil format and were collected within two weeks. All participants were informed.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data was performed with SPSS and AMOS. Mean, standard deviations, frequencies were calculated to describe the variables of teacher burnout and classroom environment. To test the bivariate relationships, Pearson correlation analysis was carried out. In order to analyze the predictive relationships, multiple regression and structural equation modeling (SEM) were performed, which allowed analyzing the direct and indirect effects of burnout on dimensions of classroom environment.

Ethical Considerations

Institutional Review Board (IRB) provided ethical approval. To protect confidentiality, the data were allocated codes rather than names. The participants were at liberty to drop out without being penalized.

Findings

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of teacher burnout and classroom environment variables.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (N = 200)

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Minimum	Maximum
Teacher Burnout	3.41	0.76	1.80	5.10
Student Engagement	3.62	0.71	2.00	5.20
Teacher Support	3.89	0.65	2.10	5.00
Disciplinary Climate	3.55	0.68	2.00	5.00

Interpretation: Teachers reported moderate levels of burnout (M = 3.41), while classroom environment factors such as student engagement (M = 3.62), teacher support (M = 3.89), and disciplinary climate (M = 3.55) were perceived at moderately positive levels.

Correlation Analysis

Table 2 shows Pearson correlation coefficients among the study variables.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix of Teacher Burnout and Classroom Environment Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Teacher Burnout	1			
2. Student Engagement	**-0.46***	1		
3. Teacher Support	**-0.52***	0.49*	1	
4. Disciplinary Climate	**-0.38***	0.42*	0.45*	1

*p < .01

Interpretation: Teacher burnout showed significant negative correlations with all three classroom environment dimensions: student engagement (r = -0.46), teacher support (r = -0.52), and disciplinary climate (r = -0.38). This indicates that higher burnout is linked to less engagement, weaker support, and poorer discipline.

Regression Analysis

Multiple regression was conducted to examine the predictive power of teacher burnout on the classroom environment dimensions.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Results Predicting Classroom Environment Dimensions from Teacher Burnout

Dependent Variable	B	SE	β	t	p	R^2
Student Engagement	-0.41	0.09	-0.39	-4.56	.000	.21
Teacher Support	-0.47	0.08	-0.45	-5.88	.000	.26
Disciplinary Climate	-0.36	0.11	-0.31	-3.27	.001	.15

Interpretation: Teacher burnout significantly predicted student engagement ($\beta = -0.39$, $p < .001$), teacher support ($\beta = -0.45$, $p < .001$), and disciplinary climate ($\beta = -0.31$, $p < .01$). Teacher support was the most strongly affected dimension ($R^2 = .26$), suggesting burnout has the largest impact on teachers' ability to provide effective support.

Structural Equation Model (SEM) – Overall Effect

A SEM model was tested with teacher burnout as the predictor and the three classroom environment dimensions as outcomes. Model fit indices were acceptable ($\chi^2/df = 2.10$, CFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.06).

- Teacher burnout → Student Engagement ($\beta = -0.41$, $p < .001$)
- Teacher burnout → Teacher Support ($\beta = -0.48$, $p < .001$)
- Teacher burnout → Disciplinary Climate ($\beta = -0.34$, $p < .01$)

Interpretation: The SEM confirmed that higher burnout significantly reduced all three classroom environment factors, with teacher support showing the strongest path.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics revealed that teachers reported **moderate levels of burnout** (M = 3.41, SD = 0.76). In contrast, the classroom environment variables were rated relatively positively, with student engagement (M = 3.62, SD = 0.71), teacher support (M = 3.89, SD = 0.65), and disciplinary climate (M = 3.55, SD = 0.68) all above the scale midpoint (Table 1).

Correlations

Pearson correlation analysis indicated that **teacher burnout was significantly and negatively correlated** with all three classroom environment variables: student engagement ($r = -0.46$, $p < .01$), teacher support ($r = -0.52$, $p < .01$), and disciplinary climate ($r = -0.38$, $p < .01$) (Table 2). This suggests that higher burnout among teachers is associated with lower student engagement, weaker teacher support, and less effective classroom discipline.

Regression Analysis

Multiple regression results showed that teacher burnout was a **significant negative predictor** of student engagement ($\beta = -0.39$, $p < .001$), teacher support ($\beta = -0.45$, $p < .001$), and disciplinary climate ($\beta = -0.31$, $p < .01$). Teacher support had the strongest association ($R^2 = .26$), indicating that teacher burnout most strongly influences the degree of support provided to students (Table 3).

Structural Equation Modeling

The SEM analysis confirmed these relationships, with acceptable model fit indices ($\chi^2/df = 2.10$, CFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.06). Teacher burnout had significant negative paths to student engagement ($\beta = -0.41$, $p < .001$), teacher support ($\beta = -0.48$, $p < .001$), and disciplinary climate ($\beta = -0.34$, $p < .01$). Collectively, these findings support all four hypotheses of the study.

Discussion

This study was aimed at investigating the connection that exists between teacher burnout and classroom atmosphere with special consideration to student engagement, teacher support, and disciplinary climate. The findings have supported the idea that the more teachers experience burnout, the more adverse the classroom environment will be, which is expected as predicted by the Job Demands Resources (JD-R) theory (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017).

First, the significant negative association between **teacher burnout and student engagement** (r = -0.46) supports prior research suggesting that emotionally exhausted teachers struggle to foster motivation and active learning among students (Madigan & Kim, 2021). When teachers experience burnout, they may lack the energy and enthusiasm needed to design engaging lessons or respond effectively to students' needs, which may contribute to disengagement.

Second, perceived teacher support was most closely connected with teacher burnout (-0.45). The results are consistent with those of Lei et al. (2023) and Opazo-Zamora et al. (2024) who discovered that teacher support is a key predictor of student engagement and well-being. Burnout can lower the emotional availability of the teachers, who will be less likely to provide encouragement, feedback, and autonomy-supportive practices. Therefore, indirectly, burnout can be detrimental to students, as it will destroy one of the most important assets of their education.

Third, the research observed that there is a strong negative correlation between the teacher burnout and disciplinary climate (= -0.31). This is similar to OECD findings (2019, 2023) that disorder and lack of structure in the classroom is correlated with teacher stress and poor student performance. The teachers that are burned-out might not be as effective in supporting the same rules or breaking up disruptions, and this situation triggers a negative feedback loop in which poor climate results in higher stress, which, in turn, contributes to burnout (Alanos et al., 2022).

On the whole, the results support the bi-directionality of processes of teacher burnout and classroom climate. It has been demonstrated that bad relational climates may deliver burnout and vice versa (Alanos et al., 2022; Zee et al., 2024). The given dynamic highlights the necessity of system-wide interventions that can assist in both teacher well-being and classroom management.

Implications

The implications of these findings are some of the following. Schools and policymakers should:

1 Support teacher well-being through an emphasis on reducing the heavy workload and allowing access to stress management and counseling services.
2 Become professionally stronger in terms of classroom management, strategies of student engagement, and supportive teaching strategies.
3 Create favorable school environments, because favorable work conditions can counterbalance burnout and assist teachers to maintain effective classroom behaviors (Salmela-Aro et al., 2023).

Conclusion

Overall, this paper confirms that teacher burnout is a major factor that creates adverse effects on student engagement, teacher support, and disciplinary climate. Burnout prevention has become one of the most important educational issues because tackling the well-being of teachers allows enhancing the classroom atmosphere and student performance alike.

Recommendations

1. The paper found out that burnout among teachers is correlated with low student engagement; thus, schools must adopt a teacher well-being program like stress management courses, mindfulness programs, and counseling sessions to ensure that teachers remain energized and enthusiastic in the classroom.
2. Evidence also showed that teacher support is most influenced by burnout; therefore, education authorities need to minimise the excessive workloads and administrative pressures to allow the teachers more time to teach and offer emotional support to students.

Since the results showed that burnout significantly reduces teachers' ability to provide support, professional development must be strengthened with a focus on student engagement strategies, autonomy-supportive practices, and effective classroom management to equip teachers with tools to buffer against exhaustion.

3. The analysis also showed that burnout has a negative effect on the disciplinary climate; therefore, school leaders ought to implement coherent behavior management policies and restorative practice as they encourage positive teacher student interactions to establish orderly and equitable classroom settings.
4. Since the results demonstrated that the less strong teacher support and involvement is associated with the increased burnout, the schools should also promote peeric collaboration and mentorship structures, which decrease teacher isolation and promote professional belongingness.
5. Lastly, since the existing literature demonstrates that teacher burnout compromises classroom quality, policymakers need to incorporate teacher well-being into school improvement models and make sure that funding centers resources on burnout prevention as well as academic impact.

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