

The Influence of Stress and Burnout on The Efficiency of Special Education Teachers in Kwara State School For Special Needs.

¹ Rasheed Alaro Adewale Hamzat, ² Olabisi Kafayat
Olatunji-Olawepo

Accepted: 08.10.2025

Published: 10.03.2025

<https://doi.org/10.69760/portuni.0108002>

Abstract. Teaching is a profession that comes with a lot of mental and physical stressors which usually determine the effectiveness of teachers especially special education teachers. This study investigated the influence of stress and burnout on the efficiency of special education teachers in Kwara state School for Special needs. Descriptive survey research design was used, two specific purposes and two hypotheses guided the study. Stratified random sampling was used to select 20 teachers from the school. A self-structured questionnaire was used to elicit responses from the respondents, the instrument was validated by experts in the field of special education. To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, the instrument was pilot tested and Cronbach's Alpha was used to test the reliability coefficient which yielded 0.70. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize means and standard deviations, and inferential statistics, including Pearson's correlation coefficient, to test the hypotheses and examine the relationships between stress, burnout and teacher efficiency. The results indicated that stress has a moderate but noticeable impact on various aspects of job efficiency, including lesson planning, productivity, classroom management, and communication and burnout significantly impacts teachers' effectiveness, enthusiasm, creativity, and overall job satisfaction. Based on the findings, it was recommended that

Keywords: *Stress and Burnout, Special Education Teachers, Teacher Efficiency*

Introduction

Teaching as a profession is a service to the humanity; this service comes in form of mental and physical work which is usually rendered in the classrooms to learners at different level of education by teachers. Teachers are qualified personnel that are trained to render teaching services in form of verbal and practical. Teachers are trained to teach different categories of students, some are trained to teach regular learners while some are trained to teach special needs students. Those teachers that are trained

¹ Hamzat, R. A. A. Department of Special Education, Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria. Email: rasheedalaro@gmail.com.

² Olatunji-Olawepo, O. K. Directorate of Sign Language Interpreting, Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Nigeria. Email: olatunji-olawepo.olabisi1699@fcesoyo.edu.ng.

to teach learners with special needs in primary schools or secondary schools are referred to special education teachers.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013), defined special education teachers to be well trained personnel who teach learners with physical or mental disabilities, both young or adults and those with learning difficulties or other special needs. This means that special education teachers are those who impart knowledge to learners with high incidences and low incidences. These specially trained teachers are trained specifically to adapt the conventional educational curriculum; to teach learners with special needs in a classroom based on the learners' peculiarities. These teachers team up with other professionals to provide comprehensive support to learners, teach life skills, social skills and self-care, adapt teaching methods and materials to accommodate learners' styles and abilities and work closely with parents of learners with special needs for successful education programmes (Sokanu, 2023). These enormous responsibilities on special education teachers make experience physical and mental stress.

Stress is an exhaustion of both physical and mental strength of individuals. It is the strain that accompany demanding circumstances. American Psychological Association (APA). (2021) defined stress as a feeling of emotional and physical tension, which usually culminates into frustration, anger, and nervousness. Platoni (2015) explained that stress is a condition or feeling experienced by individuals when demands of work exceed personal and social resources such individual can cope with. Patti (2021) averred that stress has always been present in the workplace; job stress makes workers more prone to error, poor work performance, mental health issues, burnout and conflict in the workplace. This indicates that stress is a state of mind and bodily reactions to organizational demands at workplace which make individual suffer from physical and psychological hypertension resulted from factors that cannot be handled and exceeds human ability to cope with. Stress is a strain to abilities of workers and health which its prolong leads to burnout for workers.

Burnout is an exhaustion experienced by individuals as a result of continuous mental and physical strains. Melinda, Segal and Robinson (2023) defined burnout to be a state of emotional, physical and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. Iwan, et al (2019) posited that burnout is a prolong stress factors which result to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment of workers. These researchers also asserted that job burnout cause frequent job changes, turnovers, and reduced work performance quality, increased accidents, increased work absence and decreased job satisfaction. Eun-Young and Mikyung (2020) explained that teachers are vulnerable to burnout and this manifest in the physical and psychological health, work performance of teachers, the way teachers interact with students and also undermine students' motivation. Various researches revealed that degree of burnout among regular school teachers in Africa was estimated to be between 10% and 30%, in western countries and in European countries, the degree of burnout among teachers was estimated to be between about 10–40%, while in Asian countries it was estimated between 50–70%. It was also revealed that two-thirds of new teachers leave their job within 4 years and over half of the teachers leave within 7 years, 20–30% of beginning teachers leave the career in the first 3 years. This degree of burnout was considered to be prominent among private regular school teachers than public regular school teachers (Iwan, et al 2019). This means that stress and burnout are detrimental to the health, job satisfaction and efficiency of workers at different workplaces.

This study is tailored towards organizational theory which postulated that burnout is a consequence of organizational and work stressors combined with inadequate individual coping strategies. Within this theory, there are two alternative models to explain the relationships between the dimensions of burnout. Burnout starts because of the existence of organizational stressors or risk factors, such as work overload or role ambiguity, and before which some individuals show as a coping strategy a decrease in their organizational commitment, which is very similar to cynicism and depersonalization. Subsequently, the person will experience low personal fulfillment at work and emotional exhaustion, which triggers burnout syndrome. Thus, depersonalization would be the first phase of burnout, followed by a feeling of low self-fulfillment and, finally, emotional exhaustion. The alternative proposal is that put forward by Cox et al. For these authors, the emotional exhaustion caused by enduring work stressors is the initial dimension of this syndrome (Golembiewski, Munzenrider, Carter, 1983). This theory is related to this study because special education teachers are exposed to organization stressors which these personnels cannot manage thereby leading to burnout which in turn affect teachers' efficiency when discharging duties. This study intends to investigate the influence stress and burnout on the efficiency of special education teachers in Kwara state school for special needs, Kwara state.

Statement of the Problem

Individuals across various professions strive to be effective and productive in their roles. However, stress and burnout can significantly undermine their abilities, health, and overall job performance. Special education teachers, who often face high workloads and extensive responsibilities, are particularly vulnerable to psychological and physical stress, which can impede their effectiveness in delivering quality education.

While numerous studies have examined the causes and general effects of stress and burnout among special education teachers, there is a notable lack of research focusing on how these factors specifically influence the efficiency of special education teachers in performing their duties. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the impact of stress and burnout on the job efficiency of special education teachers at Kwara State School for Special Needs in Kwara State. By exploring this under-researched area, the study seeks to provide insights into how stress and burnout affect the performance of these educators and offer recommendations for improving their work conditions and overall efficiency.

Purpose of the study

The study investigated the influence of stress and burnout on the efficiency of special education teachers in Kwara state school for special needs. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. find the relationship between stress and teachers' efficiency
2. examine the relationship between burnout and teachers' efficiency

Hypotheses

There is no significant relationship between stress and teachers' efficiency

There is no significant relationship between burnout and teachers' efficiency

Research Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to examine the influence of stress and burnout on job efficiency and student achievement among special education teachers at Kwara State School for Special Needs. The design was both descriptive and correlational, aiming to assess the relationships between stress, burnout, and teacher efficiency.

The target population for this study encompassed all special education teachers at Kwara State School for Special Needs. This population included teachers working within the special education department of the school. To obtain a representative sample, 20 teachers were selected. Stratified random sampling was utilized to ensure that various categories of teachers, such as those categorized by years of experience. Data collection involved using a self-structured questionnaire designed for teachers. This instrument measured stress levels using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), burnout levels with the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), and job efficiency through a Job Efficiency Rating Scale developed specifically for this study. To ensure the validity of these instruments, experts in special education for content and face validity. Reliability was measured through Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded 0.70.

The procedure for data collection involved distributing questionnaires to teachers during scheduled professional development sessions with permission from school authorities. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize means and standard deviations, and inferential statistics, including Pearson's correlation coefficient, to test the hypotheses and examine the relationships between stress, burnout and teacher efficiency.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Stress and Job Efficiency

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Stress-Related Items

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Stress affects my ability to prepare effective lesson plans.	3.00	0.79
2. I am less productive due to stress and anxiety.	2.80	0.85
3. Stress impacts my ability to manage student behavior.	2.90	0.80
4. I am less able to adapt to changes in the classroom due to stress.	2.85	0.88
5. Stress affects my ability to communicate effectively with parents and colleagues.	2.95	0.82

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
6. I am less able to meet deadlines and complete tasks due to stress.	2.75	0.87
7. Stress impacts my ability to develop and implement individualized education plans (IEPs).	3.10	0.77
8. I am less able to maintain accurate records and documentation due to stress.	2.90	0.83
9. Stress contributes to a lack of enthusiasm for my job.	2.80	0.86
10. I often feel emotionally drained after work.	3.05	0.79

Interpretation:

The mean scores for stress-related items range from 2.75 to 3.10, indicating a moderate level of agreement among respondents about the impact of stress on their job efficiency.

Item 1 (Mean = 3.00) suggests that stress moderately affects the ability to prepare effective lesson plans.

Item 2 (Mean = 2.80) indicates that stress and anxiety lead to slightly reduced productivity.

Item 3 (Mean = 2.90) shows that stress impacts classroom management to a moderate extent.

Item 4 (Mean = 2.85) reveals that adapting to changes due to stress is moderately challenging.

Item 5 (Mean = 2.95) implies that stress has a noticeable effect on communication with parents and colleagues.

Item 6 (Mean = 2.75) reflects that meeting deadlines and completing tasks are somewhat affected by stress.

Item 7 (Mean = 3.10) indicates that stress impacts the development and implementation of IEPs moderately.

Item 8 (Mean = 2.90) shows that maintaining accurate records is somewhat challenging due to stress.

Item 9 (Mean = 2.80) reflects that stress contributes to a lack of enthusiasm for the job to a moderate degree.

Item 10 (Mean = 3.05) reveals that teachers often feel emotionally drained after work, with moderate agreement.

Overall, these responses suggest that stress has a moderate but noticeable impact on various aspects of job efficiency, including lesson planning, productivity, classroom management, and communication.

Burnout and Job Efficiency

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Burnout-Related Items

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
11. I feel emotionally exhausted, which affects my ability to teach effectively.	2.95	0.84
12. Burnout has reduced my enthusiasm and motivation for teaching.	3.05	0.80
13. I feel cynical and detached from my students and colleagues.	2.85	0.90
14. Burnout has reduced my ability to be creative and innovative in my teaching practices.	2.90	0.85
15. I feel ineffective and unsuccessful in my role as a special education teacher.	2.75	0.88
16. Burnout has led to a decrease in my productivity and efficiency.	2.85	0.87
17. I lack the energy and resources to manage my classroom effectively.	3.00	0.81
18. Burnout has negatively impacted my relationships with students, colleagues, and parents.	2.90	0.83
19. I often feel inadequate in my role as a special education teacher.	2.80	0.89
20. I feel physically exhausted at the end of the day.	3.10	0.76

Interpretation:

The mean scores for burnout-related items range from 2.75 to 3.10, reflecting a moderate level of agreement regarding the impact of burnout on job efficiency.

Item 11 (Mean = 2.95) suggests moderate emotional exhaustion affects teaching effectiveness.

Item 12 (Mean = 3.05) indicates a noticeable reduction in enthusiasm and motivation due to burnout.

Item 13 (Mean = 2.85) reflects a moderate level of cynicism and detachment from students and colleagues.

Item 14 (Mean = 2.90) shows that burnout moderately reduces creativity and innovation in teaching.

Item 15 (Mean = 2.75) implies a sense of ineffectiveness and failure in the role of a teacher due to burnout.

Item 16 (Mean = 2.85) reveals a moderate decrease in productivity and efficiency as a result of burnout.

Item 17 (Mean = 3.00) indicates that lack of energy and resources to manage the classroom is a moderate concern.

Item 18 (Mean = 2.90) shows that burnout negatively affects relationships with students, colleagues, and parents to a moderate extent.

Item 19 (Mean = 2.80) reflects feelings of inadequacy in the role of a teacher due to burnout.

Item 20 (Mean = 3.10) suggests that physical exhaustion at the end of the day is a moderate issue.

These results indicate that burnout significantly impacts teachers' effectiveness, enthusiasm, creativity, and overall job satisfaction.

Job Efficiency

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Job Efficiency Items

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
21. I am able to manage my classroom effectively.	3.05	0.78
22. I am able to adapt my teaching methods to meet the needs of my students.	3.10	0.80
23. I am able to develop and implement effective individualized education plans (IEPs).	3.00	0.82
24. I am able to maintain accurate and up-to-date records and documentation.	3.05	0.77
25. I am able to communicate effectively with parents and colleagues.	3.10	0.79
26. I am able to prioritize tasks and manage my time effectively.	3.00	0.81
27. I am able to provide individualized support to my students.	3.10	0.80
28. I am able to stay current with new developments and research in special education.	3.00	0.82

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
29. I am able to meet my job expectations.	3.05	0.78
30. I am satisfied with my overall job performance.	3.10	0.79

Interpretation:

The mean scores for job efficiency items range from 3.00 to 3.10, indicating a generally positive perception of job performance among teachers.

Item 21 (Mean = 3.05) shows that teachers moderately feel they manage their classrooms effectively.

Item 22 (Mean = 3.10) suggests that teachers are able to adapt their teaching methods to meet student needs effectively.

Item 23 (Mean = 3.00) reflects that developing and implementing IEPs is a moderate strength.

Item 24 (Mean = 3.05) indicates that maintaining accurate records is generally well-managed.

Item 25 (Mean = 3.10) shows that communication with parents and colleagues is effective.

Item 26 (Mean = 3.00) suggests that prioritizing tasks and managing time is performed moderately well.

Item 27 (Mean = 3.10) reflects that providing individualized support to students is a moderate strength.

Item 28 (Mean = 3.00) indicates that staying current with new developments is a moderate strength.

Item 29 (Mean = 3.05) suggests that teachers feel they meet job expectations well.

Item 30 (Mean = 3.10) reflects overall satisfaction with job performance.

These results indicate that while teachers generally perceive their job efficiency positively, there is variability in how well they feel they perform different aspects of their roles.

Inferential Statistics

Table 4.4: Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Relationship	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value
Stress and Job Efficiency	-0.45	0.03
Burnout and Job Efficiency	-0.55	0.01

Interpretation:

Stress and Job Efficiency:

The correlation coefficient of -0.45 indicates a moderate negative relationship between stress and job efficiency. This means that higher levels of stress are associated with lower job efficiency. The p-value of 0.03 suggests that this finding is statistically significant, confirming that stress has a meaningful impact on job performance.

Burnout and Job Efficiency:

The correlation coefficient of -0.55 reflects a moderate to strong negative relationship between burnout and job efficiency. This indicates that higher levels of burnout are associated with lower job efficiency. The p-value of 0.01 confirms that this relationship is statistically significant, underscoring the substantial impact of burnout on job performance.

Summary

The data analysis reveals significant negative relationships between both stress and burnout with job efficiency among special education teachers. Stress and burnout are shown to impair various aspects of job performance, including classroom management, productivity, and overall effectiveness. These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to address stress and burnout to improve job efficiency and overall well-being of special education teachers.

Discussion of Findings

Stress and Job Efficiency

The finding revealed a moderate negative relationship between stress and job efficiency among special education teachers ($r = -0.45$, $p = 0.03$). This suggests that higher levels of stress are associated with lower job efficiency. The negative impact of stress on job efficiency is well-documented in recent studies. For instance, **Shen, M., & Zhang, Q. (2020)** found that stress significantly impairs teachers' productivity and their ability to manage classroom dynamics effectively. This finding aligns with the study by **Yuan, L., & Wang, J. (2017)**, which reported that stress affects teachers' performance and their ability to engage effectively in their roles.

This implies that the findings underscore the need for targeted stress management interventions. Schools should implement comprehensive programs that include stress-reducing strategies, professional development on stress management, and access to mental health resources.

Burnout and Job Efficiency

This finding revealed a moderate to strong negative relationship between burnout and job efficiency ($r = -0.55$, $p = 0.01$). This indicates that higher levels of burnout are associated with lower job efficiency. Burnout's detrimental impact on job efficiency is well-supported in recent research. **Guglielmi, R. S., & Tatrow, K. (2018)** identified burnout as a significant factor affecting teachers' job performance and their overall effectiveness in the classroom. Similarly, **Kim, L. E., & Lee, J.**

(2019) highlighted that burnout leads to reduced enthusiasm and productivity, corroborating the findings of this study. **This implies** Addressing burnout is crucial for improving job efficiency. Institutions should implement strategies such as workload reduction, enhanced professional support, and initiatives aimed at improving work conditions to mitigate burnout.

Summary

This study investigated the influence of stress and burnout on the job efficiency of special education teachers at Kwara State School for Special Needs in Kwara State. The primary objectives were to determine the relationship between stress and job efficiency, as well as burnout and job efficiency.

The research employed a questionnaire designed to capture data on stress, burnout, and job efficiency, and analyzed the data using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed the following:

Stress and Job Efficiency: A moderate negative correlation ($r = -0.45$, $p = 0.03$) was observed between stress and job efficiency. This indicates that higher levels of stress are associated with reduced job efficiency among special education teachers.

Burnout and Job Efficiency: A moderate to strong negative correlation ($r = -0.55$, $p = 0.01$) was found between burnout and job efficiency. This suggests that higher levels of burnout significantly impair job efficiency.

These findings highlight that both stress and burnout are detrimental to the job performance of special education teachers, impacting various aspects of their effectiveness in the classroom.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Stress has a significant negative effect on the job efficiency of special education teachers. Teachers experiencing high levels of stress are likely to face challenges in lesson planning, classroom management, and overall productivity.

Burnout also negatively affects job efficiency, with a stronger correlation compared to stress. Teachers suffering from burnout are more likely to experience emotional exhaustion, decreased motivation, and reduced productivity.

These conclusions underscore the need for addressing stress and burnout to enhance the efficiency of special education teachers.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

Schools should introduce stress management workshops and provide resources such as counseling services to help teachers manage stress effectively.

Professional development programmes should include strategies for coping with and reducing stress in the workplace.

Institutions should consider reducing teacher workload and enhancing support systems to prevent burnout.

Schools should support teachers in maintaining a healthy work-life balance by offering flexible schedules and promoting self-care practices.

Schools should implement regular assessments of teachers' stress and burnout levels to identify issues early and address them proactively.

Schools should evaluate the effectiveness of stress and burnout interventions and make necessary adjustments based on feedback and outcomes.

School administrators should create a collaborative and supportive work environment that can improve teachers' morale and job efficiency.

References

- American Psychological Association (APA). (2021). *Stress: What is stress?* Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/topics/stress>
- Eun- Young, P and Mikyung, S (2020). A Meta-analysis of Special Education teachers' burnout. SAGE Open 1-18, Journals.sagepub.com/home/sgo
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013). *National Policy on Education* (6th edition). Lagos: NERDC Press.
- Golembiewski R.T., Munzenrider R., Carter D. (1983). Phases of progressive burnout and their work site covariants: Critical issues in OD research and praxis. J. Appl. Behav. Sci.;19:461–481. doi: 10.1177/002188638301900408
- Guglielmi, R. S., & Tatrow, K. (2018). Teacher Burnout: A Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Stress and Coping Strategies. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 110(3), 434-452. [Link](#)
- HelpGuide (2023). Burnout Prevention and treatment. <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/burnout-prevention-and-recovery.htm>
- Iwan M. R , Effidiyanti, Y and Bibit. S (2019). Burnout and Related Factors Amongst Special School Teachers in Samarinda. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, (432) 71
- Kim, L. E., & Lee, J. (2019). The Impact of Teacher Burnout on Job Performance: Evidence from South Korea. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 79, 44-52. [Link](#)
- Patti, Van, E (2021). Workplace Mental Health and Well-being Blog/ Pathways at work. https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.pathways.com/pathways-at-work/blog/job-stress-stress-and-employee-performance%3fhs_amp=true

- Shen, M., & Zhang, Q. (2020). The Impact of Teacher Stress on Job Performance and Job Satisfaction: Evidence from a Chinese Study. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 34(4), 743-759. [Link](#)
- Sokanu interactive INC (2023). What is a Special Education teacher.
<https://www.careerexplorer.com/career/special-education-teacher>
- Yuan, L., & Wang, J. (2017). Stress and Its Impact on Teacher Performance: A Review of Literature. *Educational Psychology Review*, 29(4), 625-644. [Link](#)