



Teachers' Work Burnout, Social Support, and Resilience Amidst Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between teachers' work burnout, perceived social support, and resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed through a survey questionnaire administered to 124 teachers in Tago 3 District, Division of Surigao del Sur. Descriptive statistics and Pearson's Correlation Test were used for data analysis. The findings revealed that teachers generally exhibited low levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, while their sense of personal accomplishment was high. High levels of perceived social support were reported across family, significant others, and friends, signifying strong external resources for emotional and practical support. The resilience level among teachers was normal. A weak, negative correlation was found between work burnout and social support, suggesting that increased social support is associated with reduced burnout, though other factors also contribute. A moderate, positive correlation was observed between work burnout and resilience, indicating that even resilient teachers may experience elevated burnout due to pandemic-related pressures and demands. The study concludes that strong social support networks serve as protective factors against burnout, and enhancing resilience is crucial for effective coping and adaptation to life's challenges. It is recommended that schools foster positive and safe workplaces and implement programs to strengthen peer support, collaboration, and teacher resilience.

Keywords: *work burnout, perceived social support, resilience*

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1 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented interruptions to different sectors around the world, among which the education system has encountered significant challenges (UNESCO 2020, Wajdi et al. 2020). Schools had to undergo a paradigm shift to continue delivering quality education through various learning models and platforms. The sudden transition from traditional in-person learning to online education presented a completely different experience for learners and educators, requiring rapid adaptation, often with limited alternative options. Teachers, as the frontline of this drastic change, were tasked with navigating new technologies, engaging students in virtual classrooms, and managing increased workloads in

unfamiliar and demanding situations (Pokhrel & Chhetri 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic not only brought an abrupt transition in how teachers deliver education but reportedly affected their mental health in various ways (Kush et al. 2022, Jakubowski & Dominik 2021, Rabacal et al. 2020).

Work burnout is one mental health issue experienced by teachers. Work burnout is a psychological condition that occurs as a prolonged negative reaction to chronic perceived personal stressors (Maslach & Leiter 2016). These reactions are categorized into three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, which denotes a feeling of being emotionally overextended and tired by work; depersonalization, which is characterized by a cynical attitude toward work and others;

and a decline in personal accomplishment, which indicates a sense of ineffectiveness in one's professional life (Maslach et al. 2001).

Burnout is the physical, emotional, and mental state exhaustion (Piperac et al. 2021), triggered by extreme and continual stress, and is a growing concern in school settings (Langley-Evans 2023). Job burnout among teachers, caused by high demands of teaching tasks and prolonged hours (Wu et al. 2016), usually affects the teachers' teaching quality and well-being (Capone & Petrillo 2018, Domitrovich et al. 2016).

Amid these challenging times, social support has emerged as one of several potential psychological resources to counter the negative effects of burnout. Social support is the perception that family, friends, and others are available to offer psychological needs, material, and overall assistance during difficult times (Ioannou et al. 2019). Social support can help reduce the adverse effects of stress on mental health (Mikkola et al. 2018), correlated to reduced levels of burnout (Hou et al. 2020), and mediate the negative effects of burnout on health (Ruisoto et al. 2021). A high perceived social support is also associated with better physical and mental health outcomes (Uchino et al. 2012).

Seeking social support manages burnout and serves as their coping strategy (Cruz & Macalisang 2024). Resilience is another psychological resource defined as the capacity to recover from difficulties or adapt to challenging and adverse circumstances (Fletcher & Sarkar 2013), positively keep mental health even if subjected to difficulties due to various demands and limitations of the job (Chmitorz et al. 2018, Kangas-Dick and O'Shaughnessy 2020, Mansfield et al. 2016), helps deal with stress and trauma and bounce back from adversity with varying severity over a lifetime (Day and Gu 2014, Windle et al. 2011).

Individuals with higher levels of resilience were significantly less likely to experience burnout, particularly high emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, or a reduced sense of personal accomplishment (Nantsupawat et al., 2024)

The study on the interplay between work burnout, social support, and resilience is one important area that remains interesting, particularly among teachers facing the pressures of the pandemic. While there is evidence pointing out that social support and resilience can aid in alleviating burnout, few studies have investigated how these

factors interact specifically within the framework of teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Addressing this gap is essential for improving strategies that can help teachers strengthen their resilience and understand how to access appropriate social support for improved well-being. Hence, this study sought to investigate the levels of work burnout, social support, resilience, and the significant relationships among these variables.

2 Materials and Methods

Research Design

The study utilized a quantitative research method, specifically a descriptive-correlational design, which facilitated the researchers in gathering data through a survey questionnaire distributed to the identified sample size.

Sampling Technique

The researchers employed a complete enumeration method, selecting 124 elementary and secondary teachers from Tago 3 District, Division of Surigao del Sur, as participants during the data collection period. Most of the teacher participants were 30 years old or younger (Figure 1), predominantly female (Figure 2), and married (Figure 3).

Instruments Used

This study utilized a survey questionnaire using the three standardized tests, which served as the measures or instruments in this study: Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI-ES), Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), and Brief Resilience Scale (BRS).

The initial part of the survey questionnaire collected demographic data such as gender, age, and civil status. The MBI-ES 4th Edition comprises three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. This scale measures job-related experiences, exploring how educators perceive work and interaction with colleagues (Maslach et al. 1986). The MSPSS measures the adequacy of social support from family, friends, and partners (Zimet et al. 1988), while BRS is a self-assessment tool to measure individual resiliency (Smith et al. 2008). The psychometric properties of MBI-ES were confirmed with Cronbach's alpha values of .90 for emotional exhaustion, .76 for depersonalization, and .76 for personal accomplishment and with reliability estimates of 0.88, 0.74, and 0.72, respectively

Distribution of Participants according to their Age

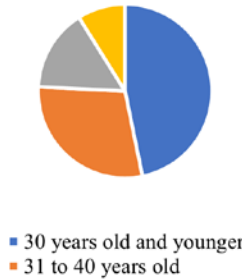


Figure 1. Age Distribution of Participants

Distribution of Participants according to their Sex



Figure 2. Sex Distribution of Participants

Distribution of Participants according to their Civil Status



Figure 3. Civil Status Distribution of Participants

(Chalghaf et al. 2019). MPSS also showed good internal consistency for its three measured dimensions, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .91 for significant others, .87 for family, and .85 for friends, while yielding an overall reliability of .88. (Zimet et al.1988), BRS also demonstrated a very good internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha between .80 to .91 (Smith et al. 2008).

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers ensured the approved letter

from the Office of the District In-Charge, Division of Surigao del Sur, in conducting the study face-to-face since online platforms were not feasible for the target participants with challenges for internet connectivity. The researcher provided the participants with a formal letter and informed consent for voluntary participation and attached the research instrument. During the data gathering, the researchers followed the safety and minimum health standards provided by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF).

Data Analysis Procedure

The data were tallied, tabulated, processed, and analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and weighted mean. The study used Pearson's Correlation Test to determine the significant relationship between teachers' work burnout, perceived social support, and resiliency.

3 Results and Discussion

The Level of Work Burnout, Perceived Social Support, and Resiliency

The results on the level of burnout per dimension indicated that the overall weighted mean for teachers' emotional exhaustion was low ($M = 2.37$, $SD = 1.05$) (Table 1), suggesting low levels of fatigue and emotional depletion. Depersonalization was also low ($M = 1.59$, $SD = 1.11$) (Table 2), reflecting minimal feelings of detachment and impersonal attitudes. In contrast, personal accomplishment was high ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 0.92$) (Table 3), indicating a strong sense of competence and achievement in their work. Emotional exhaustion is described as the experience of emotional depletion resulting from stress, pressure, tension, and work overload related to one's work. As a result, individuals may constantly feel fatigued and feel low energy when facing the challenges of day-to-day responsibilities. Depersonalization is characterized by negative behaviors and cynicism in work relationships, while low personal accomplishment refers to feelings of incompetence and ineffective relating to work output (Maslach & Leiter 2016). Overall, the teachers' degree of burnout has a positive implication as they exhibited low levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization while maintaining a high sense of personal accomplishment. This suggests that teachers effectively maintain motivation and manage stress, contributing to a healthier work environment and improved work outcomes. Studies have shown that work burnout among teachers is highly influenced by psychosocial work determinants like stress, dissatisfaction, ambiguity of roles and responsibilities and even unmotivated students (Belay et al. 2023), heavy workload and high job demand (Belay et al. 2023, Tang et al. 2013), and designated administrative tasks (Musa et al. 2018).

Teachers showed a high level of perceived social support across all dimensions, including family ($M = 5.92$, $SD = 1.60$), significant others ($M = 5.97$, $SD = 1.23$), and friends ($M = 5.61$, $SD =$

1.31). Overall, the average score also reflects a high level of perceived social support ($M = 5.83$, $SD = 1.31$) (Table 4). The high perceived social support suggests that these relationships are accounted as strong external sources of emotional and practical support for teachers. Social support plays a vital role in keeping emotional well-being, coping with stress, and overcoming life's challenges (Harandi et al. 2017, Li et al. 2018). It serves as a direct predictor of life's significance and positively influencing self-affirmation while also being associated with lower levels of depression and anxiety (Hurd et al. 2013).

Meanwhile, most of the teachers experienced a normal or average level of resilience ($M=3.21$, $SD = 0.37$) (Table 5). Resilience is the capability to adjust and succeed in challenging situations, including difficult students, demanding workloads, and an unfavorable workplace atmosphere in schools (Mansfield et al. 2016). Teacher resilience plays a vital role in teaching and teacher education globally (Wang 2021), a significant factor that can help lessen burnout among educators (Polat & İskender 2018). Resilient teachers are better able to recover from drawbacks and sustain their motivation and vigor, which helps reduce stress levels (Daniilidou et al. 2020).

Significant Relationships in Teachers' Work Burnout, Perceived Social Support, and Resiliency

The teachers' level of work burnout and social support showed a weak and negative correlation ($r=-0.222$, $p=0.013$). Its p-value is less than 0.05, thus indicating that the relationship between the teachers' burnout and social support is statistically significant. The negative correlation coefficient indicates that the direction of its relationship is inversely related, which means that as social support increases, levels of work burnout among teachers tend to decrease. However, the weak strength of this correlation indicates that while social support may help reduce burnout, other factors likely contribute to the burnout levels experienced by teachers. Similar findings also found that social support has been correlated with burnout (Hou et al. 2020). It highlighted the substantial connection between social support and teacher burnout, suggesting that strong social support from colleagues (internal support within the educational workplace) and reassurance and empowerment from significant individuals, such as family and friends (external support outside the educational workplace), can help alleviate burnout and defend from negative

Table 1. Level of Emotional Exhaustion of Participants

Level	<i>f</i>	%	Mean ± Standard Deviation
Never	31	25.0	2.37 ± 1.05
Very low	43	34.7	
Low	26	21.0	
Moderate	19	15.3	
High	5	4.0	
Total	124	100.0	

Legend: 0-0.99= Never; 1.00 – 1.44 = Very Low; 1.45 – 2.44 = Low; 2.45 – 3.44 = Moderate; 3.45 – 4.44 = High; & 4.45 – 5.00 = Very High

Table 2. Level of Depersonalization (DP) of Participants

Level	<i>f</i>	%	Mean ± Standard Deviation
Never	63	50.8	1.59 ± 1.11
Very low	32	25.8	
Low	21	16.9	
Moderate	8	6.5	
Total	124	100.0	

Legend: 0-0.99= Never; 1.00 – 1.44 = Very Low; 1.45 – 2.44 = Low; 2.45 – 3.44 = Moderate; 3.45 – 4.44 = High; & 4.45 – 5.00 = Very High

Table 3. Level of Personal Accomplishment (PA) of Participants

Level	<i>f</i>	%	Mean ± Standard Deviation
Never	1	.8	2.37 ± 1.05
Very low	4	3.2	
Low	22	17.7	
Moderate	49	39.5	
High	43	34.7	
Very High	5	4.0	
Total	124	100.0	

Legend: 0-0.99= Never; 1.00 – 1.44 = Very Low; 1.45 – 2.44 = Low; 2.45 – 3.44 = Moderate; 3.45 – 4.44 = High; & 4.45 – 5.00 = Very High

Table 4. Level of Perceived Social Support of Participants according to its Three Domains of MSPSS

Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Family	5.92	1.6	High
Significant Others	5.97	1.23	High
Friends	5.61	1.11	High
Total	5.83	1.31	High

Legend: 1.00 – 2.9 = Low Support; 3 – 5 = Moderate Support; 5.1– 7 = High Support

Table 5. Level of Resilience of Participants

Level	%	Mean ± Standard deviation
Low Resilience	16.1	3.21 ± 0.37
Normal Resilience	83.9	
Total	100.0	

Legend: 1.00 – 2.99 = Low Resilience; 3 – 4.30 = Normal Resilience; 4.31– 5 = High Resilience

Table 6. Relationship among Teachers' Work Burnout, Perceived Social Support, and Resilience

Null hypothesis, Ho	*Correlation Coefficient r	p-value	Statistical Decision	Remarks
There is no significant relationship between the teachers' level of work burnout and social support.	-0.222	0.013	Reject Ho at $\alpha=0.05$	Inversely related; the strength of the relationship is weak.
There is no significant relationship between the teachers' level of work burnout and resilience.	0.322	0.000	Reject Ho at $\alpha=0.05$	Directly related; the strength of the relationship is moderate.

consequences (Fiorilli et al. 2019, Marcionetti & Castelli 2023).

Social support can effectively lighten occupational burnout and enhance job satisfaction, which in turn helps individuals maintain good psychological health (Gündüz et al. 2019).

In terms of teachers' level of work burnout and resilience, it showed a moderate and positive correlation ($r=.32$, $p < .001$). Its p-value is less than 0.05, suggesting that relationship between the teachers' burnout and resilience is statistically significant. This finding also corresponds to the existing literature, which showed that burnout and resilience are correlated among teachers (Li 2023, García & Gambarte 2019). Teachers with meager strategies for resilience are more susceptible to the harmful effects of stress and burnout. While those with high resilience skills are better equipped to cultivate personal resources that help them lessen the negative impacts of their workplace (Ferradás et al. 2019).

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

Teachers in this study experienced low levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization but with a high level of a sense of personal accomplishment, hence generally demonstrating a low level of work burnout. The low level of work burnout may be attributed to having the external resources of their strengths, such as their social support from family, friends, and significant others, and having considerable internal or psychological strength, such as being resilient, which have helped teachers endure all the challenges and difficulties that they were facing related to their work during COVID-19 pandemic. These external and internal resources potentially serve as their protective factors. The inverse direction of the relationship between social support and work burnout means that as social support

increases among teachers, their level of work burnout also decreases. Its weak correlation suggests that though social support has a significant and positive consequence in reducing burnout, other important factors can also help teachers deal with their work burnout, which serves as a point for further studies. The observed result of having a moderate and positive correlation between work burnout and resilience suggests that though teachers exhibited a high level of resilience, they still experienced a high level of work burnout at the time of the survey.

Given the significant role of social support in reducing burnout, it is recommended that schools actively cultivate a positive workplace through collaboration, peer support, open communication, and a sense of camaraderie. Additionally, building resilience among teachers is essential for effectively coping with challenges, adapting to change, developing a positive mindset, and constructively recovering from setbacks in life.

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5 Statement of Conflict of Interest

The authors state that they have no conflicts of interest.

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