

The Impact of Job Burnout on Performance Efficiency of Senior High School Teachers at Shiyan Foreign Language School in Shenzhen, China

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Abstract: This quantitative study examined job burnout and performance efficiency among 150 senior high school teachers at Shiyan Foreign Language School in Shenzhen, China. The research had three objectives: (1) to assess the level of job burnout, (2) to evaluate the level of performance efficiency, and (3) to examine the relationship between these variables. Data were collected using a questionnaire and analyzed through descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (correlation and multiple regression analysis). The results revealed that most teachers did not show signs of burnout in terms of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, but reported a high level of personal accomplishment. Correlation analysis indicated that performance efficiency was negatively related to emotional exhaustion ($r = -0.350$) and depersonalization ($r = -0.749$), while personal accomplishment had a significant positive relationship ($r = 0.703$), all at the 0.01 significance level. Furthermore, regression analysis confirmed that all three dimensions of job burnout significantly influenced performance efficiency at the 0.05 level. In conclusion, the study demonstrates that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization negatively affect performance efficiency, while personal accomplishment positively enhances it. These findings highlight the predictive role of job burnout in teacher performance and provide practical insights for managing teacher well-being and productivity.

Keywords: Job Burnout, Performance Efficiency, Teachers

1. Introduction

China's secondary education has expanded significantly since achieving universal compulsory education in 2011. The government has implemented quality improvement measures including the 2003 curriculum reform (focusing on innovation) and establishing educational groups like Jianping to promote modern pedagogy (Wang et al., 2024). However, the persistent exam-oriented system continues to burden teachers with pressure from multiple stakeholders (Zhang, 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically accelerated digital transformation in secondary schools, compelling teachers to rapidly acquire technological skills for online instruction and assessment (Keshavarz & Li, 2023). This transition substantially increased workloads, exacerbating teacher burnout.

Job burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Siadari & Safrin, 2024), significantly impacts teaching quality and teacher retention (Belay et al., 2023; Sun & Dapat, 2024). For high school teachers, primary risk factors include excessive workload, role ambiguity, and inadequate organizational support (Gao, 2024; Angus & Luna-Angus, 2023). Research demonstrates that collaborative work cultures (Trinkenreich et al., 2023) and professional autonomy (Moon & Choi, 2023) have been shown to alleviate burnout and maintain performance even under moderate stress conditions. Despite the growing literature, few empirical studies have specifically examined how burnout directly affects performance outcomes in elite Chinese secondary schools, highlighting the importance of such research.

Shenzhen's Shiyan Foreign Language School exemplifies this context. As a high-achieving institution with rigorous academic standards, its teachers are required to manage multiple responsibilities—ranging from instruction and assessment to curriculum design and student guidance (Gao, 2024). These demanding professional duties, compounded by societal expectations and frequent policy shifts, create chronic stress that can evolve into burnout, ultimately impairing teaching effectiveness (Yanna et al., 2023). Therefore, studying job burnout in this particular school is especially relevant, as its competitive environment and high academic benchmarks are critical factors that may intensify teacher stress and burnout.

This study thus examines the relationship between job burnout and performance efficiency among senior high school teachers. Such research is vital not only for identifying systemic challenges within the education sector but also for offering evidence-based insights to inform policy formulation, teacher wellness programs, and sustainable professional development (Lu, 2023; Francisco et al., 2024). The findings can further be applied to design structured support systems that enhance teacher performance and promote long-term educational quality.

2. Research Objective

2.1 To explore the level of job burnout among senior high school teachers for Shiyan foreign language school in Shenzhen, China.

2.2 To assess the level of performance efficiency among senior high school teachers for Shiyan foreign language school in Shenzhen, China.

2.3 To examine the relationship between job burnout and performance efficiency among senior high school teachers for Shiyan foreign language school in Shenzhen, China.

3.literature review

3.1 Theory, Concept and Related Research

3.1.1 Job Burnout

Maslach's burnout theory identifies emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment as the three core dimensions of burnout. These symptoms are particularly common among educators due to heavy workloads and administrative pressures, and they have direct consequences on both teacher well-being and professional performance. Recent studies also highlight that individual factors, such as gender, play a role in burnout experiences. For instance, female teachers often report higher levels of emotional exhaustion, whereas male teachers are more likely to exhibit depersonalization (Gao, 2024). In addition, organizational factors, including leadership structure, managerial support, and workplace climate, can either exacerbate or alleviate burnout (Moon & Choi, 2023).

The COVID-19 pandemic further intensified the issue by accelerating digital transformation in education. Teachers were required to rapidly adapt to online teaching and assessment, which significantly increased workloads and technological stress (Keshavarz & Li, 2023). This demonstrates that burnout is not only an individual-level psychological condition but also deeply connected to organizational and systemic contexts. Although Maslach's theory is effective for diagnosing burnout, its reliance on self-report measures and its limited consideration of organizational dimensions restrict its explanatory scope. Therefore, integrating Maslach's framework with the JD-R Model offers a more comprehensive perspective, as it accounts for both job demands and job resources, and supports practical interventions such as workload management and the establishment of emotional support systems for teachers.

3.1.2 JD-R Model

The JD-R Model examines workplace health via job demands and resources. Demands trigger burnout, while resources foster engagement. Applied to education, it suggests reducing bureaucratic tasks and strengthening peer collaboration. Despite criticisms of oversimplification, it remains practical for improving teacher motivation and reducing stress through organizational adjustments.

3.1.3 Performance Efficiency

Teacher efficiency encompasses task execution (teaching) and contextual contributions (collaboration). Burnout undermines both through exhaustion and detachment. Critical safeguards include skill development, institutional support, and balanced workloads. Prioritizing these areas ensures sustained educational quality amid rising demands.

3.1.4 Work-Life Balance

Teacher effectiveness hinges on work-life equilibrium, challenged by grading burdens and after-hours work. Solutions include flexible scheduling, time management training, and institutional wellness programs. Balanced teachers exhibit higher retention and job satisfaction, directly benefiting student outcomes. Systemic support is essential to sustain this balance.

3.2 Research Framework

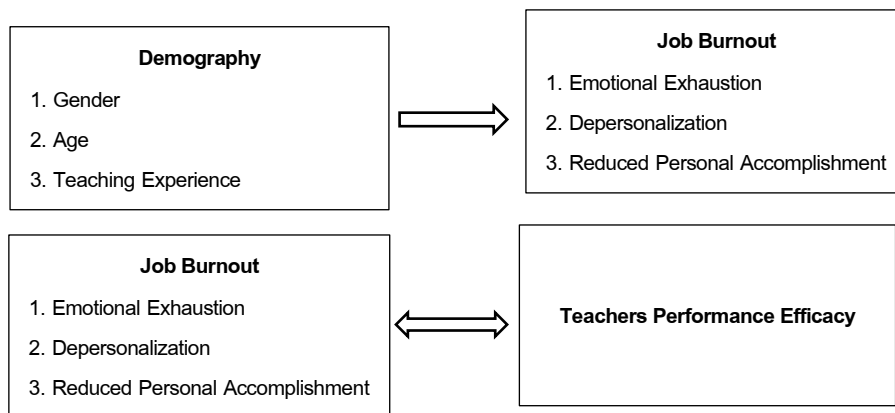


Figure 1 Research Framework

4. Research Methodology

This quantitative study employs questionnaires to investigate job burnout and performance efficiency among senior high school teachers at Shenzhen's Shiyan Foreign Language School. The institution was selected for its diverse faculty and rigorous academic environment, providing an optimal context for examining this relationship. Study specifics include:

4.1 Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of 238 teachers from Shiyan Foreign Language School. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's formula (1973) with a margin of error of 5%, resulting in a sample of 150 teachers, which is considered suitable for statistical analysis.

4.2 Research Instruments and Quality Assessment

The data collection instrument used in this study was a self-administered questionnaire completed by 150 teachers from Shiyan foreign language school. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: 1) General Information – 7 items 2) The level of job burnout among senior high school teachers for Shiyan foreign language school, Shenzhen, China – 15 items and 3) The level of performance efficiency among senior high school teachers for Shiyan foreign language school, Shenzhen, China – 15 items. Sections 2 and 3 utilized a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Lowest, 5 = Highest).

To ensure validity and reliability, content validity was assessed by three experts. The Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) values ranged from 0.67 to 1.00, indicating that the items were consistent with the study's objectives. Reliability was examined using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, which yielded a value of 0.739. This value is within the acceptable range, demonstrating that the instrument was reliable and suitable for data collection.

4.3 Data Collection

The researcher collected data by distributing online questionnaires to a sample group of 150 participants. The results showed that all questionnaires were fully completed and successfully collected.

4.4 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the following statistical methods:

4.4.1 Descriptive Statistics (frequency and percentage) to present respondents' general information. And mean (\bar{X}) and Standard Deviation (S.D.) to evaluate the levels of job burnout and performance efficiency.

4.4.2 Inferential Statistics, including Pearson's Correlation Analysis, to examine the relationship between job burnout and performance efficiency, and Multiple Regression Analysis to

test the influence of job burnout on performance efficiency among senior high school teachers at Shenzhen's Shiyan Foreign Language School.

5. Research Findings

5.1 General Information of the Respondents

The majority of respondents were female (56.7%) and most were aged between 46–55 years (38.0%). The largest group had 11–15 years of teaching experience (30.7%) and held a Master's degree (67.3%). Most teachers were categorized as Intermediate Teachers (69.3%). In terms of subjects taught, Politics was the most common (24.0%). Additionally, 82.0% served as homeroom teachers, and 18.0% held administrative or leadership roles.

5.2 Opinions on the Level of Job Burnout Among senior high school teachers for Shiyan foreign language school in Shenzhen, China

According to the findings on job burnout levels among senior high school teachers for Shiyan foreign language school in Shenzhen, China:

5.2.1 For Emotional Exhaustion, the overall level was rated as “Disagree” ($M = 1.83$, $S.D. = 0.68$), indicating that most teachers do not feel emotionally exhausted from their work.

5.2.2 For Depersonalization, the level was also “Disagree” ($M = 1.75$, $S.D. = 0.67$), showing that teachers do not feel detached from their students or colleagues.

5.2.3 For Personal Accomplishment, the level was “Agree” ($M = 4.18$, $S.D. = 0.67$), suggesting that most teachers feel a strong sense of achievement and pride in their teaching outcomes.

5.3 Opinions on the level of performance efficiency among senior high school teachers for Shiyan foreign language school in Shenzhen, China

According to the findings on performance efficiency among senior high school teachers for Shiyan foreign language school in Shenzhen, China:

5.3.1 For Teaching Effectiveness, the overall level was rated as “Agree” ($M = 4.20$, $S.D. = 0.60$), indicating that most teachers perceive themselves as effective in delivering instruction.

5.3.2 For Teaching Efficiency, the level was “Strongly Agree” ($M = 4.24$, $S.D. = 0.59$), reflecting that teachers believe they work productively and manage time and resources effectively.

5.3.3 For Educational Research and Professional Development, the level was “Agree” ($M = 4.19$, $S.D. = 0.72$), suggesting that teachers are engaged in academic research and strive for continuous professional growth.

5.4 Hypothesis Testing Results

5.4.1 The results of Hypothesis 1 testing indicate that job burnout is significantly correlated with the performance efficiency of high school teachers for Shiyan foreign language school in Shenzhen, China.

Table 1 Hypothesis 1 was tested by examining the correlation coefficients between job burnout and the performance efficiency of teachers.

| Variable | Emotional Exhaustion (X ₁) | Depersonalization (X ₂) | Personal Accomplish ment (X ₃) | Performance Efficiency (Y) |
|---|--|--|---|----------------------------------|
| Emotional Exhaustion (X ₁) | 1 | | | |
| Depersonalization (X ₂) | 0.053 | 1 | | |
| Personal Accomplishment (X ₃) | 0.005 | -0.785** | 1 | |
| Performance Efficiency (Y) | -0.350** | -0.749** | 0.703** | 1 |

**Statistically significant at the 0.01 level

Table 1 presents the results of Hypothesis 1 testing, using Pearson's correlation coefficient to examine the relationship between job burnout and performance efficiency among senior high school teachers at Shiyan Foreign Language School in Shenzhen, China.

1) Emotional Exhaustion (X₁) shows a statistically significant negative correlation with Performance Efficiency (Y) ($r = -0.350$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that as teachers' emotional exhaustion increases, their performance efficiency tends to decline. Although this correlation is moderate, it demonstrates a clear adverse effect of emotional fatigue on performance.

2) Depersonalization (X₂) has an even stronger negative correlation with Performance Efficiency ($r = -0.749$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that when teachers feel increasingly detached or disengaged from their work, their efficiency is likely to decrease substantially.

3) Personal Accomplishment (X₃) is positively correlated with Performance Efficiency ($r = 0.703$, $p < 0.01$). This means that teachers who perceive a greater sense of accomplishment are more likely to perform their roles effectively, highlighting the importance of positive self-evaluation in sustaining efficiency.

Additionally, there is a strong negative correlation between Depersonalization (X_2) and Personal Accomplishment (X_3) ($r = -0.785$, $p < 0.01$). This implies that teachers experiencing higher levels of depersonalization tend to report a reduced sense of personal achievement.

In summary, the correlation analysis confirms that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization are key risk factors that reduce teachers' performance efficiency, while personal accomplishment plays a crucial role in enhancing their efficiency.

5.4.2 Results of Hypotheses 2–4 Testing

Table 2 The Analysis of the Impact of Job Burnout on the Performance Efficiency of High School Teachers for Shiyan foreign language school in Shenzhen, China.

| Job burnout | | Unstandardized | | Standardized | t | Sig. | Collinearity | |
|---|--|----------------|-------|---------------|---------|--------|--------------|-------|
| | | coefficients | | coefficients | | | statistics | |
| | | B | SE | Beta | | | Tolerance | VIF |
| (Constant) | | 4.190 | 0.292 | | 14.327 | 0.000* | | |
| Emotional Exhaustion (X ₁) | | -0.226 | 0.031 | -0.327 | -7.208 | 0.000* | 0.992 | 1.008 |
| Depersonalization (X ₂) | | -0.324 | 0.051 | -0.465 | -6.342 | 0.000* | 0.380 | 2.629 |
| Personal Accomplishment (X ₃) | | 0.239 | 0.051 | 0.340 | 4.645 | 0.000* | 0.381 | 2.622 |
| R | | 0.838 | | R square | 0.702 | | | |
| Adjusted R2 | | 0.696 | | F-ratio | 114.496 | | | |
| Sig. | | 0.000 | | Durbin-Watson | 1.738 | | | |

* Statistically significant at the 0.05 level

According to Table 2, the preliminary assumptions for conducting a multiple linear regression analysis (MRA) are as follows:

5.4.2.1 The Tolerance values range from 0.381 to 0.992, all of which are greater than 0.3. This indicates that the independent variables are not highly correlated with one another and are statistically independent, showing no issues of multicollinearity.

5.4.2.2 The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values range from 1.008 to 2.629, all of which are below the threshold of 10. This further confirms the absence of multicollinearity among the independent variables.

5.4.2.3 The Durbin-Watson statistic is 1.738, which falls within the acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.5, indicating that there is no autocorrelation among the residuals.

Table 2 presents the results of multiple regression analysis, examining the influence of the three dimensions of job burnout emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment—on teachers' performance efficiency.

The regression model yields $R = 0.838$ and $R^2 = 0.702$, indicating that these three variables together explain 70.2% of the variance in teachers' performance efficiency. The F -value = 120.166 ($p < 0.05$) confirms that the overall regression model is statistically significant.

Emotional Exhaustion (X_1) has a standardized regression coefficient (Beta) = -0.327 ($t = -7.208$, $p < 0.001$). This result suggests that an increase in emotional exhaustion significantly reduces performance efficiency.

Depersonalization (X_2) shows a stronger negative impact, with Beta = -0.465 ($t = -6.342$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that higher levels of depersonalization lead to a substantial decline in performance efficiency.

Personal Accomplishment (X_3) has a positive effect on performance efficiency, with Beta = 0.340 ($t = 4.645$, $p < 0.001$). This demonstrates that teachers with a higher sense of accomplishment tend to perform more efficiently, reinforcing the protective role of positive self-perception.

Overall, the regression analysis emphasizes that job burnout significantly affects teachers' performance efficiency in both negative and positive directions. Emotional exhaustion and depersonalization are detrimental to efficiency, whereas personal accomplishment helps counterbalance these effects by enhancing performance outcomes.

5.4.3 Hypothesis 5: Demographic factors including gender, age, and teaching experience affect the level of job burnout among senior high school teachers for Shiyan foreign language school.

5.4.3.1 Gender: Female teachers reported significantly higher emotional exhaustion than male teachers ($F = 5.225$, Sig. = 0.024), while no significant differences were found in depersonalization and personal accomplishment.

5.4.3.2 Age: No statistically significant differences were found across all dimensions of job burnout by age group (Sig. > 0.05).

5.4.3.3 Teaching Experience: No statistically significant differences were observed in burnout levels when classified by years of teaching experience (Sig. > 0.05).

6. Discussion

Emotional exhaustion affecting the performance efficiency of high school teachers for Shiyan foreign language school in Shenzhen, China.

The findings confirm that **emotional exhaustion** has a significant negative impact on the performance efficiency of senior high school teachers. Teachers who feel drained, demotivated, and overwhelmed by their responsibilities tend to be less effective in teaching and student engagement. This result aligns with Maslach and Jackson's (1981) theory, which identifies emotional exhaustion as a core dimension of burnout, and the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), which explains how an imbalance between excessive job demands and limited resources leads to exhaustion and reduced performance. At the systemic level, this issue has been aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which increased teachers' workloads through online instruction and the need to master new technologies. These systemic pressures highlight the need for organizational and policy-level interventions.

Depersonalization affecting the performance efficiency of high school teachers for Shiyan foreign language school in Shenzhen, China.

Depersonalization was found to have the strongest negative impact on performance efficiency. Teachers who are emotionally detached or disengaged from their students and professional roles demonstrate diminished commitment and lower classroom effectiveness. Maslach and Leiter (2016) describe depersonalization as a defense mechanism against prolonged exhaustion, but one that ultimately undermines professional dedication. This study's results are consistent with the global patterns reported by Magtalas (2024) and Kilonzo (2018), confirming that teacher burnout is not only a localized issue but a broader educational concern. Effective interventions must therefore address organizational factors, such as reducing unnecessary administrative workloads, enhancing professional autonomy, and fostering a supportive school culture.

Personal Accomplishment affecting the performance efficiency of high school teachers for Shiyan foreign language school in Shenzhen, China.

In contrast, personal accomplishment shows a strong positive relationship with teacher performance efficiency. Teachers who feel competent and take pride in their professional achievements tend to demonstrate greater motivation, resilience, and classroom effectiveness. This result is supported by Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, which highlights the role of confidence in sustaining resilience, as well as the JD-R Model, which positions personal accomplishment as a vital job resource. Such resources buffer against burnout and sustain teaching quality in the long term.

Contextualization and Limitations: These findings must also be interpreted within the specific working environment of teachers at Shiyan Foreign Language School. The post-pandemic transition to online workloads, the increasing reliance on technology, and the school's highly demanding work culture represent systemic stressors that amplify burnout risks. Despite these contributions, the study has limitations. The use of self-report questionnaires may introduce response bias, the sample size was restricted to one school, and performance efficiency was measured through subjective evaluation rather than objective metrics. These limitations highlight the need for further studies with larger and more diverse samples, as well as mixed-method approaches to triangulate findings.

Practical Implications: Based on the findings, several practical implications emerge that can guide school administrators in addressing teacher burnout and enhancing performance efficiency. First, it is essential to establish a balance between teaching responsibilities and administrative tasks so that teachers are not overwhelmed by excessive non-teaching duties that drain their energy and reduce classroom effectiveness. In addition, schools should provide strong institutional support through professional development opportunities, technological training, and adequate access to resources, ensuring that teachers are well-equipped to handle evolving educational demands, particularly in the post-pandemic digital context. Moreover, motivation-enhancing policies are needed, such as recognition systems that acknowledge and reward high-performing teachers, which can boost morale and reinforce professional commitment. Finally, cultivating a collaborative and supportive school culture is critical, as it can strengthen teachers' emotional resilience, reduce feelings of isolation, and promote a shared sense of purpose within the institution. Collectively, these measures can help mitigate the negative effects of burnout, sustain teacher motivation, and improve the overall quality of education in the long term.

7. Recommendations for Future Research

7.1 Expanding the Sample: Future studies should broaden the sample to include teachers from different educational levels, such as primary and vocational schools, to allow for cross-context comparisons. This addresses the limitation of the present study, which collected data from a single institution and therefore limits the generalizability of the findings.

7.2 Using Qualitative Methods: Future research should employ qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews, to explore the lived experiences of teachers experiencing burnout, including their coping strategies and recovery processes. This would complement the limitation of relying solely on quantitative self-report questionnaires in the present study.

7.3 Examining Additional Variables: Future studies should include other variables that may influence teacher performance, such as leadership style, organizational commitment, or school culture, to overcome the limitation of this study which focused only on burnout and performance efficiency. A broader set of variables would help build a more comprehensive explanatory model.

7.4 Conducting Comparative Research: Comparative studies should be undertaken across educational districts or school types to analyze how policy contexts and institutional environments shape burnout and teacher performance. Such research would extend the findings toward clearer policy recommendations and practical applications.

7.5 Integrating Psychological Constructs: Future studies should also integrate psychological constructs, such as emotional resilience or emotional intelligence, to design long-term strategies for strengthening teacher well-being and sustaining performance efficiency.

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