



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

Gituriandu Tabitha<sup>1</sup>  
Mukolwe Newton (PhD)<sup>2</sup>  
Mwaura Kimani (PhD)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Maasa Mara University (tabbykarimi2@gmail.com)

<sup>1</sup><https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5909-7738>

<sup>2</sup>Maasai Mara University (newton.mukolwe@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup>Maasai Mara University (thinwamk07@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

Teachers' ought to work in an environment (context) free from too much stress, anxiety, exhaustion to avoid burnout. However, this is not the case in Tharaka Nithi County. Teachers in the county are faced with numerous stressors that could lead to burnout; limiting their abilities to meet teaching obligations. These include poor learning facilities and long distances to school among others. The study set out to determine the effects of workload, expected students' academic performance by school administrators, students' indiscipline issues, school geographical location and school physical facilities on teacher burnout in public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. The study adopted the descriptive survey design and was founded on the Multidimensional Theory of Burnout and Golembiewski and Munzenrider's model of burnout. It targeted 104 principals and 6862 teachers from 104 schools in addition to 10 Teachers Service Commission (TSC) officials and 10 Quality Assurance and Standards Officials (QASOs) from Tharaka Nithi County. Out of these, 378 teachers and 31 principals from 31 schools in addition to all the 10 TSC officials and 10 QASOs were sampled using two-stage cluster random sampling, purposively and simple random techniques. Data was collected using questionnaires from teachers, interview guides from TSC officials and QASOs, and data collection forms. Quantitative data from questionnaires were analyzed descriptively by use of frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations as well as inferentially by use of Pearson Correlation and multiple regression analysis at a 0.05 significance level. For qualitative data from open-ended questions in the questionnaires, interviews, and secondary data transcripts, content analysis was employed. The study established that school geographical location has significant effects on teacher burnout ( $r=0.186$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). Based on the findings it can thus be concluded that school geographical location affected teacher burnout. The study recommends that there should be effort to build sufficient housing as well as other social amenities for teachers even in remote areas to make work bearable for teachers and other government officials.

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

### I. INTRODUCTION

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

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

This study is pegged on the assumption that school geographical location affects teachers' burnout. In Australia, teachers in non-urban locations were faced with less workload due to smaller class sizes compared to those in urban areas and were less prone to suffer burnout (Hardwick-Franco, 2019). The situation is not any better in Most



African countries such as Kenya. This current study is focused on Tharaka Nithi County in Kenya. A study by Muguongo (2015) found out that in Maara Sub - County of Tharaka Nithi, lack of resources, understaffed schools and long distances to school which was aggravated by poor roads contributed to stress and poor job satisfaction among teachers. However, the direct link between the work environment and burnout was not explicitly studied by Muguongo's study. This means that this hypothesized relationship remains largely unexplored.

Tharaka Nithi is also faced with lack of resources, understaffed schools with the county having a shortage of 531 teachers in 2020, heavy workloads, poor learning facilities, and long distances to school. In some schools thus, the ratio of teacher to student exceeds 1:40 as recommended by the Ministry of Education (2016). Most of the schools are located in rural areas with the average distances to school from urban areas, where teachers reside, ranging from three to 12 km. Due to the hardships faced; there are incessant demands by teachers for transfers from schools located in remote areas. In response, some of the teachers had resulted to high levels of alcohol abuse which resulted in other vices such as display of unbecoming behaviour and complaints from students (Tharaka Nithi County, 2022). Consequently, it remains a daunting task for education authority to maintain staffing balance in the county. This could lead to high levels of burnout. This study thus set out to examine the effect of school geographical location on teacher burnout in public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

### 1.1 Objectives of the Study

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

### 1.2 Research Hypotheses

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no statistically significant relationship between school geographical location and teacher burnout in public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

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

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

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

Bataineh and Alsagheer (2012) carried out "An investigation of social support and burnout among special education teachers in the United Arab Emirates." Data was collected from a sample of 300 special education teachers using completed Burnout and Sources of Social Support questionnaires. Data was analyzed using Pearson correlation



and Analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedures. The findings show that schools located in poor locations contributed to stress among teachers. This study remotely relates to the study by Hardwick-Franco (2019) that draws a nexus between school location and burnout among teachers. In this regard, working in rural and poorly staffed schools contributed to increases in workload and by extension high burnout levels among teachers. Further, the former study was focused on special education students; which is not the focus of this current study. This creates an empirical literature gap.

Puhan, Dash, Malla, and Baral, (2015) carried out a study titled, “Burnout among secondary school teachers and responsible potential sources and symptoms-a critical analysis.” Data was collected from a sample of 250 secondary teachers in Khurdha District, India using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) Educational Survey tool. The findings show that high levels of physical and emotional exhaustion among teachers were often attributable to the place of posting. Since schools in rural areas are often found in remote areas, this current study hypothesizes that this could contribute to increases in teachers’ burnout. This current study sets out to investigate the level to which these findings apply to Tharaka Nithi County.

## 2.1 Theoretical Framework of the Study

The study was founded on the Multidimensional Theory of Burnout. Maslach (1982) proposes a theory of burnout sequencing. The theory assumes that burnout is sequential processes and that it emanates from the emotional demands related to dealing with clients. The theory posits that as a defensive coping strategy, persons distance themselves from others psychologically and limit their involvement with others (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). This phenomenon is termed as depersonalization which is seen as “an emotional buffer between individuals and imposing coping demands.” Eventually, the person realizes the increasing distance between their original expectations at the workplace and their current attitude. This breeds a sense of inadequacy in abilities to perform their expected jobs (teaching in the case of this study); ability to relate with people and; a sense of diminished abilities to accomplish personal goals (due to challenges related to school location and facilities (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). In this context of this current study, this theory explains the impact of the emotional demands of handling these pressures on teachers’ burnout, feelings of inadequacy and their eventual performance.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Design

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

### 3.2 Location of the Study

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

### 3.3 Target Population

A target population is “a group of individuals objects or items from which samples for measurement are taken” (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). This study targets 104 public schools in Tharaka Nithi County with 104 principals and 6862 teachers (Tharaka Nithi County Government, 2019). The study also targets 10 TSC officials and 10 Quality Assurance and Standards Officials (QASOs) from the county. These are targeted because these are directly responsible for issues affecting teachers. These are target population is as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Target Population*

Category	Population
----------	------------



Principals	104
Teachers	6,862
TSC Officials	10
QASOs	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,986</b>

### 3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The unit of observation in this study was individual schools while the unit of analysis in this study was principals, teachers, TSC officials, and QASOs. Two stage cluster random sampling was used to sample the schools to include in this study. In this light each sub-county (Tharaka North, Tharaka South, Meru South and Maara) formed a cluster. As such, 30% of the schools in each cluster were randomly sampled. This made a total of 31 schools from the total population of 104 schools. All the principals from the schools sampled were purposively included in the study. From the 31 schools, simple random techniques were used to obtain a sample of 378 teachers to take part in the study. This was done for purposes of ensuring that everybody targeted has equal chances of being selected. All the 10 TSC officials and 10 QASOs targeted were included in the study.

The sample size was obtained using the formula developed by Taro Yamane (Yamane, 1967). The formula is:  

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N * (e)^2}$$

Where:

n=the sample size;

N= the population size and;

e=the acceptable sampling error (assumed at 0.05).

The total for each stratum was collated,  $\sum (n_1 + n_2 + n_3 + n_4)$ , to make a total sample size (n) for the study as follows:  
 $n \approx 31 + 378 + 10 + 10 = 481$

The sample size was shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Sample Size*

Category	Population (N)	Sample (n)	Calculation
Principals	104	31	$n_1 = N * 30\%$
Teachers	6,862	378	$n_2 = \frac{N}{1 + N * (e)^2}$
TSC Officials	10	10	$n_3 = N$
QASOs Officials	10	10	$n_4 = N$

### 3.5 Data Collection Instruments

The study used questionnaires for teachers, interview schedules for Principals, TSC and QASO Officials, and document analysis.

### 3.6 Pilot Study

Pilot study was carried in Tharaka Nithi County out to ascertain the accuracy, clarity, and suitability of the research instruments. In this regard, a pilot study targeting 38 teachers (378 teachers\*10%) and three principals (21 principals\*10%) in the county was carried. This was based on the premise of Kothari (2004) who suggests that 10 to 30% of the study sample is enough for pilot studies. The pilot study sampled 10% of teachers and 10% head-teacher. Those who take part in the pilot study were not included in the final study.

### 3.7 Validity of the Instruments

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

To measure content validity, the questionnaire was presented to the university supervisors and other research experts in the university. Their expert opinion was sought and their review comments used to improve the



questionnaire. To measure construct validity, the questions were also evaluated against the desired outcome to see how valid they were to the study. The questions were also formulated based on the research questions and the literature gaps arising to enhance.

### 3.8 Reliability of the Instruments

Instrument reliability is “the capacity of a research tool to dependably measure features of concern over time” (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). Since the questionnaires contained psychometric scale tests, the Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ), a scale-test for related statements in questionnaires was used to test the reliability of the questionnaires. This is a reliability coefficient ranging from 0 to 1 whose cut-off point is 0.7 (which signifies acceptability). It was used in testing the internal consistency of research items. The study was cross-sectional since its data was collected at one point in time. This means that the reliability of the research instruments was assumed at the time of data collection. In this study Cronbach Alpha values of 0.82 and 0.87 were obtained for workload and school geographical location respectively as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
*Reliability Testing*

Variable	No. of Item	Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ )
Workload	8	0.82
Teacher Burnout	8	0.78

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

### 3.9 Data Analysis

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

## IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1 Demographics of the Participants

The researcher issued the questionnaires and interviewed various respondents. Out of the 378 students targeted by the study, 303 (80.2%) responded while 24 out of 31 principals (77.4%) were interviewed. Lastly, 9 out of 10 TSC officials (90%) and 8 out of 10 QASOs (80%) were interviewed. The overall response rate was 80.2% which was considered enough. The low response rate was caused by busy schedules among some of the respondents which made it untenable for them to participate in the study within the stipulated time. However, the response rate was considered sufficient for data analysis since as posited by Draugalis, Coons, and Plaza (2008), response rates of more than 60% should be the goal of researchers. Table 4 presents the response rate.

**Table 4**  
*Response Rate*

Category	Targeted	Responded	Response Rate
Teachers	378	303	80.2
Principals	31	24	77.4
TSC Officials	10	9	90.0
QASOs	10	8	80.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>80.2</b>



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

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

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

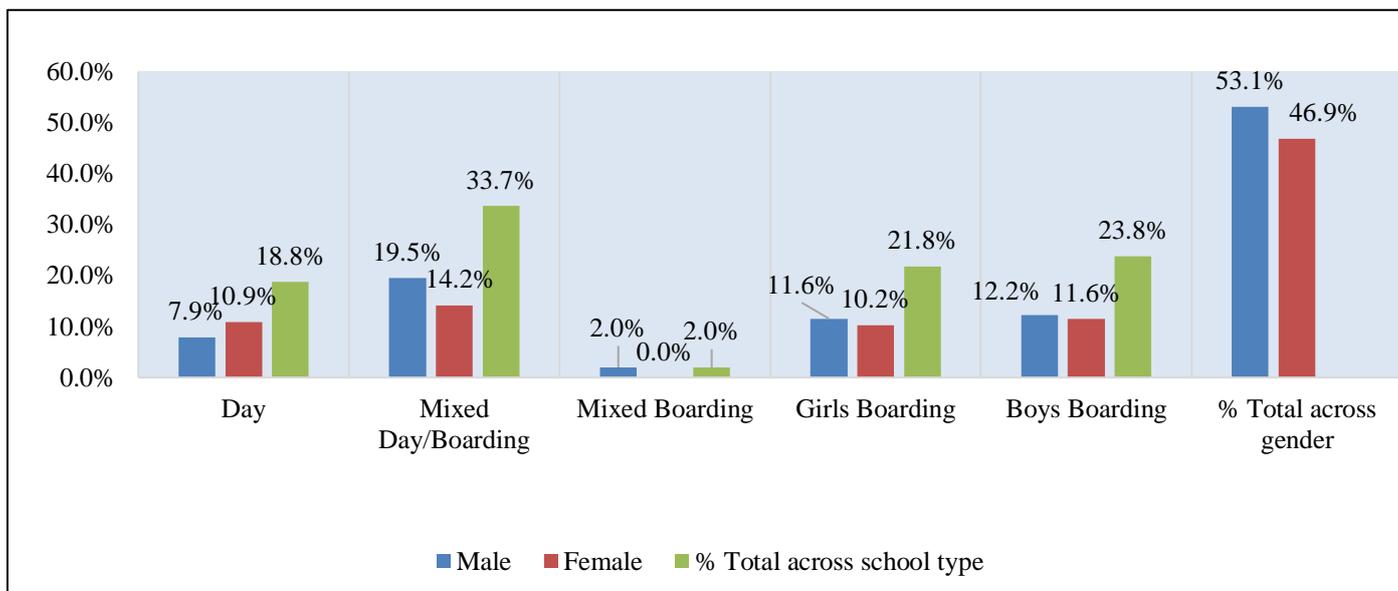
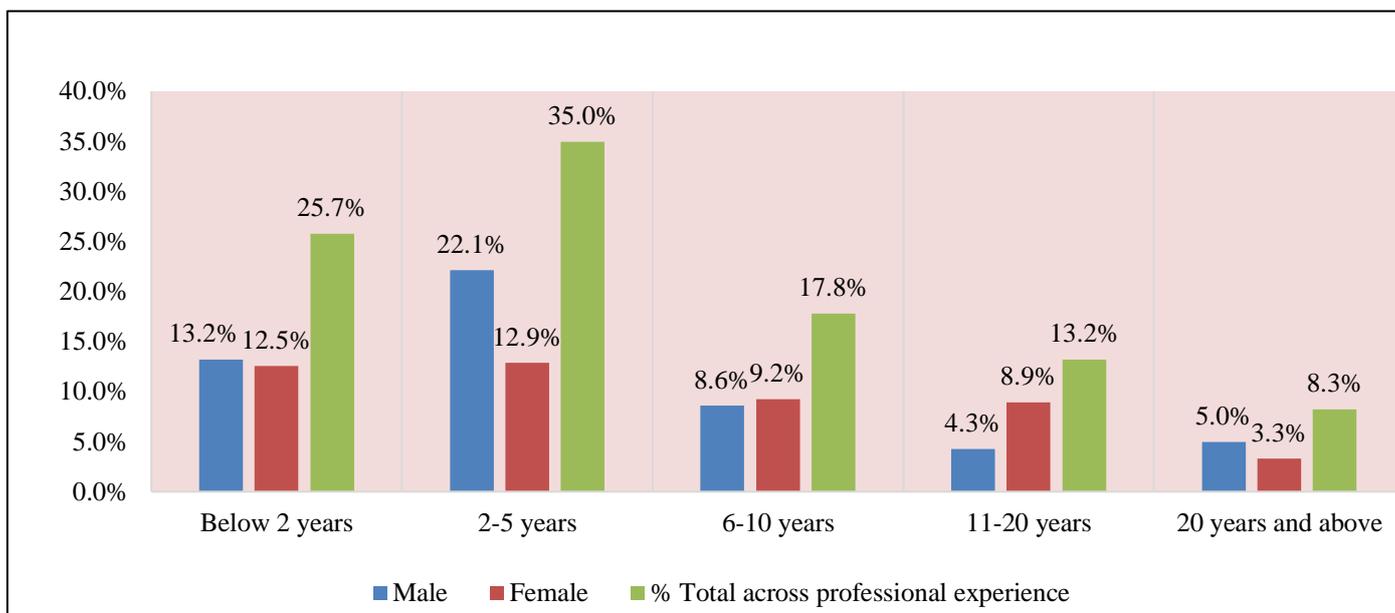


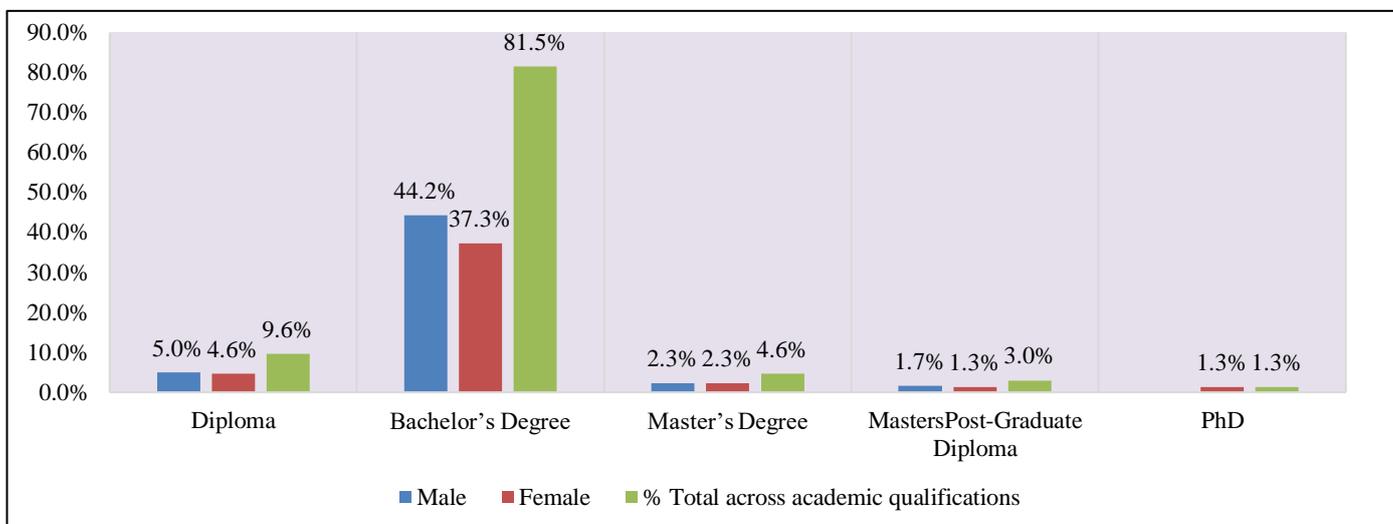
Figure 1  
**Gender and School Type**

The study sought to establish the duration of working as a teacher to gain insight into the level of reliance of their responses. The results show that the teachers had sufficient experience to provide trustworthy information regarding the impact of school working conditions on teachers in Tharaka Nithi. The results also demonstrate that both sexes were fairly represented among newly hired (less than two years) teachers. However, there is a significant gender gap among teachers who have taught for between two and five years, with more men (22.1%) than women (12.9%). The fact that more female instructors (8.9%) than male teachers (4.3%) are evident in the category of 11 to 20 years indicates that female teachers often work in the field for longer. Therefore, teachers who truly continue in the profession for a long time find contentment, self-satisfaction, and fulfillment. Previous studies have found a significant relationship between work experience and teachers' job satisfaction in their line of employment. The management working relationships are what determine the teaching profession and job happiness, indicating that abilities can be learned through experience in various work stations (Babbie, 2013). The findings are presented in Figure 2.



**Figure 2**  
*Gender and Professional Experience*

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



**Figure 3**  
*Gender and Academic Qualification*



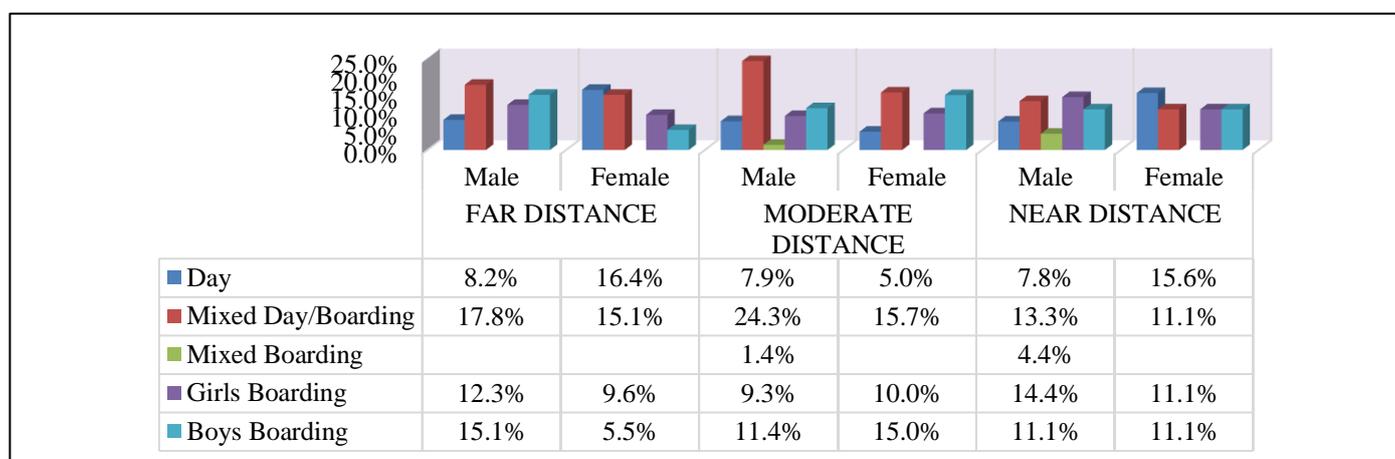
### 4.2 School Geographical Location and Teacher Burnout

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

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

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

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



**Figure 4**  
Gender, School Types and Location of the School

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

**Table 5**  
*School Location Affects Teacher Burnout*

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

N=303



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

**Table 6***Long Distance to School Contributes to Teacher Burnout*

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

N=303

The teachers also agreed to a high extent that schools in areas with poor roads and means of transport also contribute to teacher burnout ( $M=4$ ) as shown in Table 7. These findings are in agreement with the study by Shen, et al. (2015) which shows that the location of the school had significant influences on the distance to school having a direct relationship with teacher burnout.

**Table 7***Schools in Areas with Poor Roads and Means of Transport and Teacher Burnout*

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

N=303

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

**Table 8***Schools in Areas with a High Pupil-To-Teacher Ratios and Teacher Burnout*

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

N=303

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

**Table 9**

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

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

N=303

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

**Table 10**

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

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

N=303

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

**Table 11**

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

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

N=303

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

**Table 12**

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

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

N=303

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



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

School location especially long distances and unfavorable weather conditions are stressors leading to teacher burnout (Respondent II, Tharaka Nithi County, May 2022).

Another respondent supports these findings by saying that:

*In some incidences, school location contributes to teacher burnout. This is especially for schools that are located far from urban areas* (Respondent IX, Tharaka Nithi County, May 2022).

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

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

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

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

**Table 13**

*Pearson Correction between School Geographical Location and Teacher Burnout*

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

#### 4.3 Teacher Burnout (Dependent Variable)

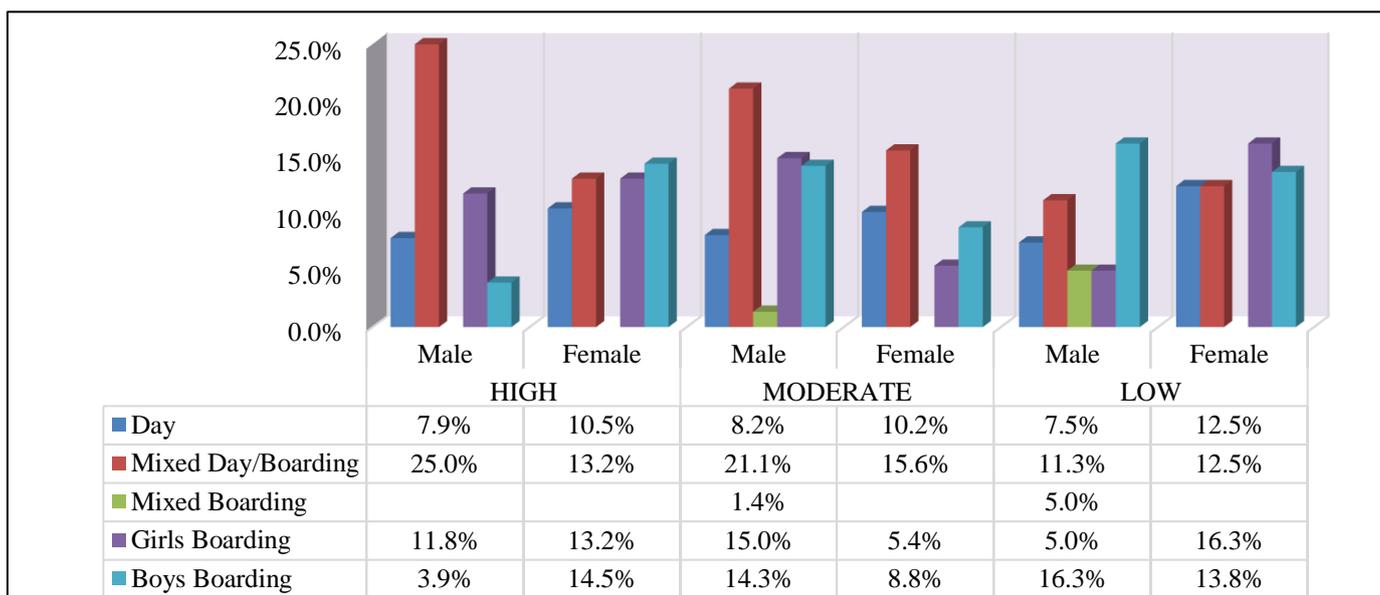
The respondents were asked to rate the effect of teacher burnout. First, a cross-tabulation across gender, school types and teacher burnout levels was undertaken. In day school, male teachers (7.9 and 10.5 % of female teachers rated school types as having a high impact on teacher burnout. In contrast,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

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



In girls boarding school, male teachers (11.8%) and 13.2 % of female teachers rated school types as having a high impact on teacher burnout. In contrast, 5.0 % and 16.3 % of male and female teachers rated school types as having a low impact on teacher burnout. Finally, 13.0 % and 12.4 % of male and female teachers indicated that moderate resources had a moderate impact on teacher burnout. These findings agree with the study by Muguongo (2015) that shows that the various schools have different resource endowment which could go on to affect burnout differently.

In boys boarding school, male teachers (13.9 %) and 12.6 % of female teachers indicated that less resources had a high impact on teacher burnout. In contrast, 3.6 % and 12.7 % of male and female teachers indicated that more resources had a low impact on teacher burnout. Finally, 15.0 % and 5.4 % of male and female teachers rated school types as having a moderate impact on teacher burnout. The findings show that there were significant differences between male and female teachers on the effect of school types on teacher burnout. The findings are presented in Figure 5. The findings show that burnout was higher in mixed day / boarding school as well as boys' boarding school. This could be due to challenge related to high disciplinary demands schools of different gender with boys' schools being more demanding (Al-Tayyar, 2005).

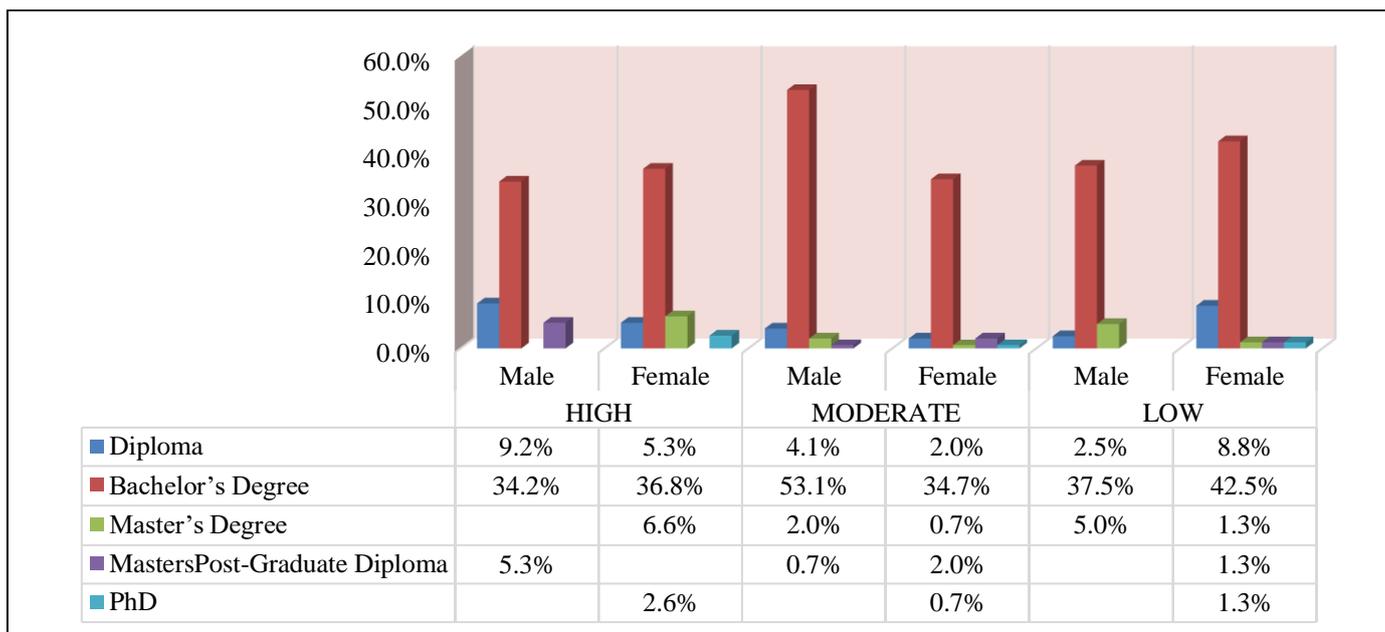


**Figure 5**  
*Gender, School Types and Teacher Burnout Levels*

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

About 34.2 % of male teachers and 36.8 % of female teachers related Bachelor's degree qualification with a high impact on teacher burnout. In contrast, 37.5 % and 42.5 % of male and female teachers related Bachelor's degree qualification with a low impact on teacher burnout. Finally, 53.1 % and 34.7 % of male and female teachers related Bachelor's degree qualification with a moderate impact on teacher burnout. This further supports the study by Babbie (2013) that shows that divergent experiences due to training can affect resilience to burnout differently.

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

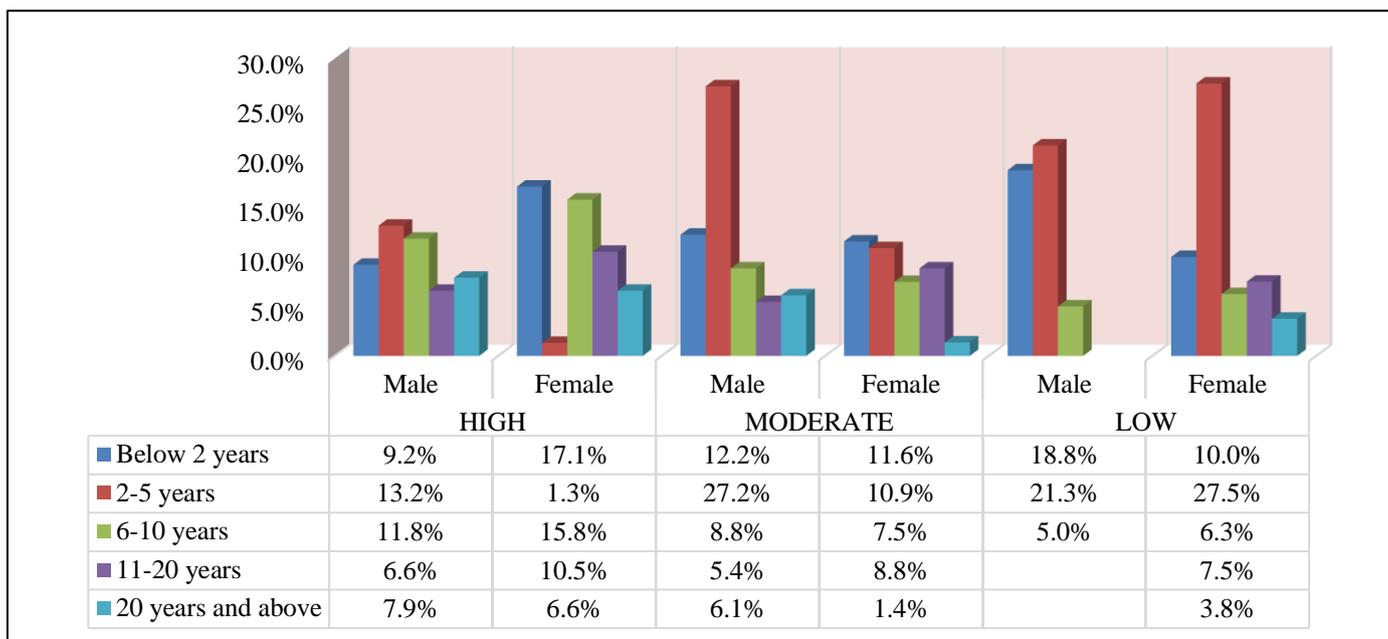


**Figure 6**  
*Gender, Academic Qualifications and Teacher Burnout Levels*

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

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

11.2 % of male teachers and 15.8 % of female teachers rated professional experience of 6-10 years as having a high impact on teacher burnout. In contrast, 5.0 % and 6.3 % of male and female teachers rated professional experience of 6-10 years as having a low impact on teacher burnout. Finally, 8.8 % and 7.5 % of male and female teachers rated professional experience of 6-10 years as having a moderate impact on teacher burnout. And for 11-20 and above, the rating indicated significant differences between male and female as shown in Figure 7. These findings show that work experience could affect burnout levels as posited by Babbie (2013).



**Figure 7**  
*Gender, Professional Experience and Teacher Burnout Levels*

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

**Table 14**  
*Burnout Leads To High Levels of Drunkenness among Teachers*

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

N=303

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

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

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

N=303

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

**Table 16***There Are High Levels of Absenteeism among Teachers Due To Burnout*

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

N=303

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

**Table 17***There Are Instances of Disobedience to Authority among Teachers Due to Burnout*

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

N=303

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

**Table 18***There Are High Levels of Lateness among Teachers Due to Burnout*

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

N=303

The respondents, as shown in Table 19, further agreed to a great extent (M=4) that burnout had led to failures to meet target among teachers. This was further in agreement with the Golembiewski and Munzenrider's (1988) Model of Burnout that shows that burnout contributes to failure to meet deadlines. This could go on to affect work processes as well as the overall performance of the teacher.

**Table 19***Burnout Leads to Failure to Meet Targets among Teachers*

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

N=303

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

**Table 20***Burnout Affects Teachers' Performance in Class*

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

N=303

Lastly, the teachers agreed to a great extent (M=4) that burnout led to poor class management among teachers as shown in Table 21. This buttresses the findings by Gacheri (2017) that shows that burnout could result in teachers being overwhelmed which could go on to challenge classroom management practices.

**Table 21***Burnout Leads to Poor Class Management among Teachers*

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

N=303

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

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

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusion

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

### 5.2 Recommendations

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



## REFERENCES

- Al-Tayyar, K. (2005). *Job satisfaction among psychology teachers in boys' secondary schools in Riyadh City, Saudi Arabia*. MA thesis, University of Bristol
- Babbie, E., 2013. *The practice of social research* (13th Ed.). Belmont: Wadsworth Pub. Co., 16-18
- Bataineh, O., & Alsagheer, A. (2012). An investigation of social support and burnout among special education teachers in the United Arab Emirates. *International Journal of Special Education*, 27 (2), 5-13.
- Cordes, C. L., & Dougherty, T. W. (1993). A review and integration of research on job burnout. *Academy of Management Review*, 18(1), 621-656.
- Diaz, C.I. (2018). The truth about teacher burnout; its work-induced depression American psychological associations. *Psych learning curve*. Retrieved from [psychlearningcurve.org/the-truth-about-teacher-burnout](http://psychlearningcurve.org/the-truth-about-teacher-burnout).
- Draugalis, J.R., Coons, S.J., & Plaza, C.M. (2008). Best Practices for Survey Research Reports: A Synopsis for Authors and Reviewers. *Am J Pharm Educ.*, 1(1), 72.
- Esonwanne, O., & Aguwa, E. (2014). Burnout, psychological distress and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Enugu, Southeast Nigeria. *Okwaraji, Aguwa, J Psychiatry*, 18(1), 14-66.
- Farrell, S., Moir, F., Molodynski, A., & Bhugra, D. (2019). Psychological wellbeing, burnout and substance use amongst medical students in New Zealand. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 31(1), 1-7.
- Gacheri, N.P. (2017). *Influence of classroom management practices on students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya*. Master's Thesis. Kenyatta University.
- Golembiewski, R., & Munzenrider, R., (1981). Efficacy of three versions of one burnout measure: MBI as total score, subscale scores, or phases? *Journal of Health and Human Resources Administration*, 7(1), 290-323.
- Golembiewski, R., & Munzenrider, R., (1984). Phases of psychological burnout and organizational covariants. *Organizational Development Journal*, 4(1) 25-30.
- Golembiewski, R., & Munzenrider, R., (1988). *Phases of burnout: Developments in concepts and applications*. New York: Praeger.
- Hardwick-Franco, K.G. (2019). Educational leadership is different in the country; what support does the rural school principal need? *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 22(3), 301-314.
- Jensen, M.T., Solheim, O., & Idsoe, E. (2019) Do you read me? Associations between perceived teacher emotional support, reader self-concept, and reading achievement. *Social Psychology of Education*, 22 (2), 247-266.
- Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2019). *Kenya 2009 Population and Housing Census Highlights*. Kenya national Bureau of Statistics.
- Kilonzo, M.T. (2018). Job burnout and performance of teachers in secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. *Journal of business and change management*, 5(1), 52-71.
- Kothari, C. (2004). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques* (2nd ed.). New Delhi: New Age Limited Publishers.
- Louw, D., George, E., & Esterhuysen, K. (2011). Burnout amongst urban secondary school teachers in Namibia.SA *Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 37 (1), 1.
- Maingi, M., Olaly, W., Sirera, A., & Kem, P. (2018). Impact of Level of Education on Alcohol Abuse among Teachers in Nyeri County, Kenya. 51940.
- Maithya, R. (2009). *Drug abuse in secondary schools in Kenya: developing a programme for prevention and intervention*. PhD Thesis. University Of South Africa.
- Maslach, C. (1982). *Burnout: The cost of caring*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- McCormack, N., & Cotter, C. (2013). *Managing burnout in the workplace: A guide for information professionals*. Oxford: Chandos Publishing.
- McLaughlin, K. (2018). *Teachers are seeing their colleagues leave the profession at an alarming rate, and this might be why*. Insider November 15. Retrieved from <https://www.insider.com/teachers-are-seeing-their-colleagues-leave-at-an-alarming-rate-2018-11>
- Ministry of Education. (2016). *Student Teacher Ratio*. Nairobi: Government Printer.
- Mugenda, O., & Mugenda, G. (2012). *Research methods Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. Nairobi: ACTS.
- Muguongo, Mary. (2015). Effects of compensation on job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Maara Sub - County of Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. *Journal of Human Resource Management*, 3(1), 47.
- Ndung'u, G.W. (2017). *Teacher Indiscipline and the Effectiveness of Disciplinary Measures Employed By Headteachers in Public Secondary Schools in Githunguri, Kiambu County, Kenya*. Master's Thesis. Kenyatta University, Kenya.



- Pucella, T. D. (2011). The Impact of National Board Certification on Burnout Levels in Educators. *Clearing House*, 84(2), 52–58.
- Schaufeli, W.B., & Enzmann, D. (1998). *The burnout companion to study and practice: A critical analysis*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Shen, B., McCaughtry, N., Martin, J., Garn, A., Kulik, N., & Fahlman, M. (2015). The relationship between teacher burnout and student motivation. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 85(4), 519–532.
- Sichambo, M. (2012). Causes of burnout among secondary school teachers. A case of Bungoma North-District-Kenya. *International Journal of Academic Research in progressive education and development act*, 1(4), 1.
- Tharaka Nithi County. (2022). *Alcohol Abuse in Schools*. Tharaka Nithi County: Ministry of Education.
- White, H. (2004). Citation Analysis and Discourse Analysis Revisited. *Applied Linguistics*, 25(1), 89-116.
- Yamane, T. (1967). *Statistics, An Introductory Analysis* (2nd Ed.). New York: Harper and Row.