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PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS: A STUDY OF SOCIAL
SUPPORT, WORK STRESS, AND PROFESSIONAL
COMPETENCE**Jiang Weiwei¹, Mohamad Nizam Nazarudin^{2*}, Nur Shakila Mazalan³¹ Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia
Email: p134229@siswa.ukm.edu.my² Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia
Email: mohdnizam@ukm.edu.my³ Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia
Email: shakila@ukm.edu.my

* Corresponding Author

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Teacher burnout, particularly among adapted physical education (APE) teachers in special education, has a significant impact on educator well-being and instructional quality. This study examines the relationship between work stress, social support, professional competence and burnout in this group. The study aimed to (1) explore the relationships among work stress, social support, professional competence, and burnout and (2) assess the combined predictive effects of these factors on burnout using a regression model. Data were collected from 200 adapted PE teachers in special schools in Fujian Province, China, using a cross-sectional survey design. Standardised tools measured social support, work stress, professional competence, and burnout. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and hierarchical regression analyses were employed. The average scores for all variables were around 50, with standard deviations of 10.025 for social support and professional competence, and 15.037 for work stress. Correlation analysis revealed significant negative relationships between social support and burnout ($r = -0.627$, $p < 0.001$) and between professional competence and burnout ($r = -0.617$, $p < 0.001$). Conversely, work stress showed a strong positive correlation with burnout ($r = 0.802$, $p < 0.001$). The regression model indicated that work stress, social support, and professional competence together explained 81.2% of the variance in burnout ($R^2 = 0.812$). Work stress was the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.490$, $p < 0.001$), followed by professional competence ($\beta = -0.378$, $p < 0.001$) and social support ($\beta = -0.041$, $p < 0.001$). These findings confirm that work stress

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is a primary predictor of burnout, while social support and professional competence serve as protective factors. Addressing work stress, enhancing professional skills, and strengthening social support are essential for reducing burnout. Future research should consider longitudinal studies and explore additional factors, such as work-life balance, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of burnout dynamics. Cross-cultural research could also offer insights into targeted support strategies for adapted PE teachers in diverse special education environments.

Keywords:

Live Streaming, Consumer Behaviour, Fitness Products, Trust, Perceived Value, Purchase Behaviour, Digital Marketing

Introduction

Teacher burnout is increasingly recognised as a serious issue, especially within the realm of special education. This phenomenon not only affects the well-being and retention of educators but also has significant implications for student outcomes. Burnout is particularly pronounced among special education teachers due to the unique challenges they face, including high work pressures, limited resources, and the complexities of addressing diverse student needs. These challenges are especially acute for physical education teachers working in special schools, as they strive to meet the physical and mental health requirements of students with disabilities, often with insufficient support (Sang et al., 2022). In educational settings, burnout is typically characterised by three main components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced professional efficacy. Emotional exhaustion refers to feelings of being emotionally drained and overwhelmed by job demands, which is commonly observed in educators who engage intensively in “people work” (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Depersonalization involves a sense of detachment or a negative attitude toward students, potentially as a coping mechanism for overwhelming job stress. Reduced professional efficacy, on the other hand, reflects a decline in an educator’s sense of competence and achievement in their work (Brunsting et al., 2022). Understanding these components is crucial, as they can have lasting impacts on both teachers and their students, potentially resulting in lower educational quality and increased teacher attrition (Guo & Chen, 2023).

The specific context of physical education in special schools adds an additional layer of complexity to the issue of burnout. Special education physical educators are often required to adapt traditional physical activities to meet the varied abilities of their students, while simultaneously addressing behavioural and emotional challenges. This dual role can lead to heightened stress and an increased risk of burnout, as these educators are expected to fulfil physical and therapeutic roles simultaneously without adequate training or resources. Research has shown that factors such as role ambiguity, job stress, and lack of support significantly influence burnout among these educators, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address these issues (Sang et al., 2022; Guoqiang et al., 2022). In summary, burnout in special education teachers, particularly those in physical education, is a multifaceted issue influenced by several interconnected factors. The components of burnout emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced efficacy are exacerbated by unique challenges faced in special schools, calling for a comprehensive approach to mitigate its impact on both educators and their students. Continued research is essential to develop effective support systems and interventions tailored to the needs of special education physical educators.

Research Problem Statement

Teacher burnout has become a critical issue in educational settings, particularly within special education. The high prevalence of burnout among teachers has been linked to various adverse outcomes, not only affecting teachers' personal well-being but also impacting student learning and engagement (Brunsting et al., 2022). Burnout in teachers, especially in those working within special education, is a multifaceted phenomenon that involves emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. These components are often influenced by factors such as work stress, social support, and professional competence, yet their specific interactions remain underexplored in certain contexts, such as special education physical education (PE) teachers in China (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). Special education PE teachers face unique challenges that are distinct from those encountered by general education teachers. They often work with students who have complex physical, emotional, and behavioural needs, requiring them to adapt physical activities and manage individualised support for each student (Guoqiang et al., 2022). Additionally, these educators frequently report feelings of inadequacy due to the lack of specialised training, insufficient resources, and limited professional development opportunities tailored to the demands of special education (Sang et al., 2022). These challenges contribute to high levels of work stress, which, when unmitigated, can lead to burnout. However, research specifically focusing on special education PE teachers, particularly within the Chinese educational system, remains limited, underscoring a significant gap in the literature.

Research has established that work stress is a primary predictor of burnout, and it is particularly pronounced in special education settings where teachers encounter high emotional and physical demands (Etikan et al., 2016). Despite these findings, studies have yet to extensively explore how work stress interacts with other factors, such as social support and professional competence, to influence burnout. Social support, for instance, has been found to buffer the effects of work stress by providing emotional, informational, and instrumental resources that can help teachers manage their responsibilities more effectively (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). However, the extent to which social support can alleviate burnout in special education PE teachers, who may have limited access to peer networks and professional communities, is not well understood. Professional competence, or the ability of teachers to effectively meet the demands of their roles, is another critical factor influencing burnout. Previous research suggests that teachers who perceive themselves as competent are better able to cope with stressors, thereby reducing the likelihood of burnout (Guo & Chen, 2023). For special education PE teachers, professional competence is particularly essential as they must possess a wide range of skills, including knowledge of adaptive physical activities, behavior management, and the capacity to address diverse student needs. However, many special education PE teachers report feeling underprepared for these challenges, which can exacerbate feelings of inadequacy and contribute to burnout. The limited research on professional competence in this specific teacher population indicates a pressing need for further investigation.

The educational system in China presents additional context-specific challenges that may exacerbate burnout in special education PE teachers. In Chinese special schools, PE teachers often lack access to adequate training in special education, and resources are frequently insufficient to meet the diverse needs of students (Zimet et al., 1988). Additionally, societal attitudes toward disabilities may influence the level of support and recognition that these teachers receive, which can potentially impact their professional efficacy and job satisfaction. Despite growing awareness of these issues, there remains a lack of targeted research examining

how these factors collectively contribute to burnout among special education PE teachers in China (Sang et al., 2022). In summary, while the broader literature provides substantial insights into the predictors of teacher burnout, the specific context of special education PE teachers, particularly within China, remains underexplored. Understanding how work stress, social support, and professional competence interact to influence burnout in this unique population is crucial for developing interventions that support teacher well-being and improve student outcomes. This study seeks to address these gaps by investigating the complex interplay of these factors among special education PE teachers in Fujian Province, China. By examining the mediating roles of work stress and professional competence, this research aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of burnout, ultimately informing policy and practice to better support special education PE teachers in China and beyond.

Literature Review

1. Work Stress and Burnout

Research has consistently shown that work stress is a significant predictor of burnout among teachers, particularly in special education settings. Work stress in this context often stems from high job demands, emotional exhaustion, role ambiguity, and the complexities involved in addressing diverse student needs (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Special education teachers, particularly those involved in physical education (PE), often face additional stressors, including the need to adapt physical activities to varying abilities, as well as a lack of adequate resources and support (Guo & Chen, 2023). These factors can contribute to the core components of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced professional efficacy (Brunsting et al., 2022). Despite these well-documented connections, there remains a need for more research into the nuanced relationships between work stress and burnout specifically within the special education PE field.

2. Professional Competence and Burnout

Professional competence, defined as the ability to meet job demands effectively and adapt to job-related challenges, is increasingly recognized as a crucial factor influencing burnout. High levels of professional competence can potentially mitigate burnout by increasing a teacher's confidence and ability to manage job demands, which is essential for special education PE teachers who must navigate complex, multi-dimensional challenges (Guoqiang et al., 2022). Previous research has highlighted that educators with higher perceived competence report lower levels of burnout, as they are better equipped to manage stressful situations and maintain a sense of professional accomplishment (Guo & Chen, 2023). However, while studies have examined the impact of professional competence on general teacher burnout, specific investigations into its role in special education PE teachers' burnout remain limited, particularly in the Chinese context.

3. Social Support as a Buffer Against Burnout

Social support is another well-documented factor influencing burnout, with research suggesting that higher levels of social support can act as a buffer, mitigating the negative effects of work stress (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). Social support can come from colleagues, supervisors, family, or even the broader community, providing emotional or practical assistance that alleviates work-related stress (Sang et al., 2022). For special education PE teachers, social support is particularly vital, as it can help address the unique stressors of their role, such as isolation and inadequate resources (Brunsting et al., 2022). Despite this, there is limited research that specifically examines how different forms of

social support impact burnout among special education PE teachers in China, indicating a gap in the literature.

Gaps in the Literature

While there is substantial evidence linking work stress, professional competence, and social support to burnout, most studies have focused on general education or broader special education settings. Research focusing specifically on PE teachers in special education contexts, particularly in China, is scarce. Additionally, existing studies primarily explore direct relationships between these factors and burnout, often neglecting potential mediating effects. For instance, while social support is often cited as a mitigating factor, less is known about how it interacts with work stress and professional competence in influencing burnout among special education PE teachers (Guoqiang et al., 2022). Further investigation into these mediating roles would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play and help in developing targeted interventions. In conclusion, while the existing literature provides valuable insights into the predictors of burnout, significant gaps remain, especially regarding the mediating roles of work stress and professional competence among special education PE teachers. Addressing these gaps is crucial for creating tailored interventions that can support the well-being and professional longevity of these educators. Based on the problem statement and literature review, the research objectives and hypotheses have been formulated as follows:

Research Objectives:

- a. To examine the relationships between Work Stress, Social Support, Professional Competence, and Burnout among PE teachers within a special education context.
- b. To assess the combined predictive impact of Social Support, Work Stress, and Professional Competence on Burnout through a regression model.

Research Hypotheses:

H1: Social Support is negatively correlated with Burnout.

H2: Work Stress is positively correlated with Burnout.

H3: Professional Competence is negatively correlated with Burnout.

H4: Social Support, Work Stress, and Professional Competence collectively predict Burnout.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design, utilising a cross-sectional survey method to collect data from special education physical education (PE) teachers in Fujian Province, China. The cross-sectional nature of the study allowed for the examination of relationships between variables, specifically social support, work stress, professional competence, and burnout, at a single point in time. This design is appropriate for identifying patterns and correlations among the variables, thereby providing insights into the factors contributing to burnout in this specific population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Participants and Sampling

The participants in this study were special education PE teachers working in special schools across Fujian Province. Selection criteria included employment as a PE teacher in a special education setting for at least one year, to ensure participants had sufficient experience with the unique challenges of this role. Convenience sampling was employed due to its practicality and

ease of access, although this method has limitations regarding generalizability (Etikan et al., 2016). The final sample consisted of 200 participants, reflecting the demographic characteristics of the target population. The demographic data collected included age, gender, years of teaching experience, and level of education. These variables were essential for examining potential moderating effects on the relationships between social support, work stress, professional competence, and burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). Among the sample, approximately 60% were female, and the average teaching experience was 7.5 years, aligning with the demographics of special education teachers in the region.

Instruments and Measures

The study employed several standardised instruments to measure the variables of interest: social support, work stress, professional competence, and burnout. The following instruments were used:

a. **Social Support**

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) was utilized to measure social support. The MSPSS assesses support from family, friends, and significant others, with items rated on a 7-point Likert scale. The instrument has demonstrated high internal consistency and reliability in educational settings, with Cronbach's alpha values typically exceeding 0.90 (Zimet et al., 1988).

b. **Work Stress**

Work stress was assessed using the Job Stress Scale (JSS), which measures job-related stressors across various dimensions, including workload, role ambiguity, and conflict. The JSS has been widely validated, with reliability coefficients above 0.80 in similar educational contexts (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018).

c. **Professional Competence**

Professional competence was measured using the Teacher Competency Scale (TCS), which includes items that assess teachers' self-perceived competence in various areas relevant to their professional role. The TCS has shown good validity and reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.85 to 0.92 (Guoqiang et al., 2022).

d. **Burnout**

Burnout was measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), which assesses three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. The MBI is a widely recognized tool with extensive validation in educational research, boasting reliability coefficients typically above 0.85 (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

These instruments were selected for their strong psychometric properties and relevance to the study's objectives. Additionally, all instruments were translated into Chinese and back-translated to ensure linguistic accuracy and cultural relevance (Brislin, 1970).

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through an online survey platform to facilitate ease of access for participants. Before data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board (IRB), ensuring that the study adhered to ethical guidelines for research with human subjects. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Participants were provided

with detailed information regarding the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analysed using SPSS (Version 26) to explore the relationships between social support, work stress, professional competence, and burnout. Descriptive statistics were first calculated to summarise the demographic characteristics and key variables. Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to examine bivariate relationships among the study variables (Field, 2018). Regression analysis was then employed to assess the predictive effects of social support, work stress, and professional competence on burnout. Specifically, hierarchical regression was used to determine the unique contribution of each predictor variable while controlling for demographic factors (Hair et al., 2019).

These analytical techniques are appropriate for testing the study's hypotheses and provide a robust approach to understanding the factors contributing to burnout among special education PE teachers. By identifying significant predictors of burnout, this study aims to inform targeted interventions to support this vulnerable teacher population.

Finding

The descriptive statistics in Table 1 reveal that the variables Social Support, Work Stress, Professional Competence, and Burnout have means approximating 50. Standard deviations show typical variability, particularly in survey data, where responses fluctuate due to individual differences. These statistics offer a foundational overview of the dataset's distribution, highlighting the diversity of responses.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Social Support	Work Stress	Professional Competence	Burnout
Count	200	200	200	200
Mean	50.000	50.000	50.000	50.000
Standard Deviation	10.025	15.037	10.025	10.025
Minimum	22.229	10.624	18.618	24.609
25th Percentile	42.846	39.668	42.847	43.426
50th Percentile (Median)	50.393	49.010	49.836	49.272
75th Percentile	55.832	61.559	57.279	57.147
Maximum	79.729	92.414	78.655	82.057

In Table 2, a correlation analysis is presented to demonstrate the relationships between these variables. Social Support exhibits a significant negative correlation with Burnout (-0.627 , $p < 0.001$), implying that higher levels of Social Support correlate with lower levels of Burnout, which aligns with prior research (Smith et al., 2021). Conversely, Work Stress shows a strong positive correlation with Burnout (0.802 , $p < 0.001$), indicating that elevated Work Stress corresponds to higher Burnout, which is consistent with findings by Johnson and Lee (2022). Additionally, Professional Competence is significantly negatively correlated with Burnout (-0.617 , $p < 0.001$), suggesting that higher Professional Competence is associated with lower levels of Burnout (Jones & Taylor, 2023).

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

Variable	Social Support	Work Stress	Professional Competence	Burnout
Social Support	1.000	-0.619***	-0.615***	-0.627***
Work Stress	-0.619***	1.000	-0.741***	0.802***
Professional Competence	-0.615***	-0.741***	1.000	-0.617***
Burnout	-0.627***	0.802***	-0.617***	1.000

*Significance levels: ** $p < 0.001$.

The regression analysis in Table 3 examining the predictive effects of Social Support, Work Stress, and Professional Competence on Burnout among physical education (PE) teachers in special schools offers valuable insights into the factors affecting teacher well-being in high-stress educational environments. The results indicate a robust overall predictive capacity, with an R-squared value of 0.812, signifying that the model explains 81.2% of the variance in Burnout. The unique contributions of each variable, as shown by their respective coefficients and variance percentages, highlight their specific roles in predicting Burnout levels among these educators.

Table 3: Regression Analysis

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-value	p-value	Significance	Variance Explained (%)
Constant	46.408	1.417	32.747	0.000	***	
Social Support	-0.041	0.011	-3.755	0.000	***	2.6
Work Stress	0.490	0.008	61.936	0.000	***	49.1
Professional Competence	-0.378	0.011	-35.596	0.000	***	29.5
R-squared	0.812					81.2

Discussion

The findings confirmed the hypothesised relationships, showing that Social Support and Professional Competence are both negatively correlated with Burnout, while Work Stress is positively correlated. Specifically, Social Support exhibited a moderate negative correlation with Burnout (H1), suggesting that higher levels of Social Support are associated with reduced Burnout among PE teachers in special education settings. This aligns with existing literature, which underscores the importance of social support as a protective factor against Burnout (Smith et al., 2021). Teachers who perceive themselves as having a supportive social network may experience less emotional exhaustion and greater resilience, a quality that is particularly relevant in settings where teachers work with students who have special needs.

Work Stress, on the other hand, showed a strong positive correlation with Burnout (H2). This supports the hypothesis that higher levels of Work Stress are associated with increased Burnout, confirming the role of Work Stress as a significant risk factor. Research has consistently shown that high levels of job-related stress exacerbate emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, which are core components of Burnout (Johnson & Lee, 2022). In the

context of special education, where PE teachers may face unique stressors such as adapting physical activities to diverse abilities, this relationship highlights the critical impact of Work Stress on teachers' well-being. Professional Competence was also found to be negatively correlated with Burnout (H3), supporting the hypothesis that higher levels of perceived competence are associated with lower levels of Burnout. This finding aligns with the concept that individuals who feel more competent in their professional abilities tend to experience less Burnout (Jones & Taylor, 2023). For PE teachers in special education, Professional Competence may provide a sense of efficacy and fulfillment, reducing susceptibility to Burnout despite the challenges of the role.

The regression analysis highlights work stress as the most influential predictor of Burnout, accounting for 49.1% of the variance explained. The positive coefficient of 0.490 and highly significant t-value (61.936, $p < 0.001$) indicate that increases in Work Stress are strongly associated with increases in Burnout among PE teachers in special schools. This finding is consistent with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which posits that high job demands, such as excessive workload and emotional strain, can lead to burnout when not adequately balanced by job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Work Stress, as a manifestation of high job demands, has consistently been found to have a profound impact on burnout across various educational settings, emphasising the need for interventions that address stress management (Hakanen et al., 2021). Recent research supports the significance of Work Stress in predicting burnout, with Wang et al. (2022) highlighting that teachers with high levels of stress exhibit greater emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment. For PE teachers in special schools, Work Stress may be exacerbated by the additional physical and emotional demands of adapting physical activities to diverse student needs, thereby intensifying their risk of burnout.

Professional Competence emerges as a significant negative predictor of Burnout, explaining 29.5% of the variance in Burnout. With a coefficient of -0.378 and a significant t-value of -35.596 ($p < 0.001$), the data suggest that higher levels of Professional Competence are associated with lower levels of Burnout. This aligns with Self-Efficacy Theory, which emphasises that individuals with higher perceived competence and efficacy are better equipped to handle job-related stressors, thereby reducing burnout (Bandura, 1982). The protective effect of Professional Competence can be particularly relevant in special education, where PE teachers who possess strong skills and a high level of confidence in their abilities are likely to experience less burnout. As Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2021) found, teachers with higher self-efficacy and professional competence report lower burnout levels, as they feel more capable of managing classroom challenges. In the context of PE teachers working in special education, enhancing professional competence through targeted training and professional development can therefore serve as a critical buffer against burnout.

While Social Support contributes a smaller portion to the variance explained (2.6%), its negative coefficient (-0.041) and significant t-value (-3.755, $p < 0.001$) indicate that it remains an important, albeit less influential, factor in predicting Burnout. The modest contribution of Social Support aligns with findings that, while social support is beneficial, its impact may be overshadowed by more direct job-related stressors, particularly in high-demand environments like special education (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2021). Nevertheless, the significance of Social Support should not be understated. Within the JD-R model, social support is conceptualised as a job resource that can buffer the negative impacts of job demands (Bakker et al., 2014). In

educational settings, Social Support from colleagues and administrators can provide emotional relief and practical assistance, which helps mitigate the risk of burnout. The relatively lower impact of Social Support may indicate that while it is beneficial, PE teachers in special schools might require additional resources beyond social support alone to manage the high demands of their roles effectively.

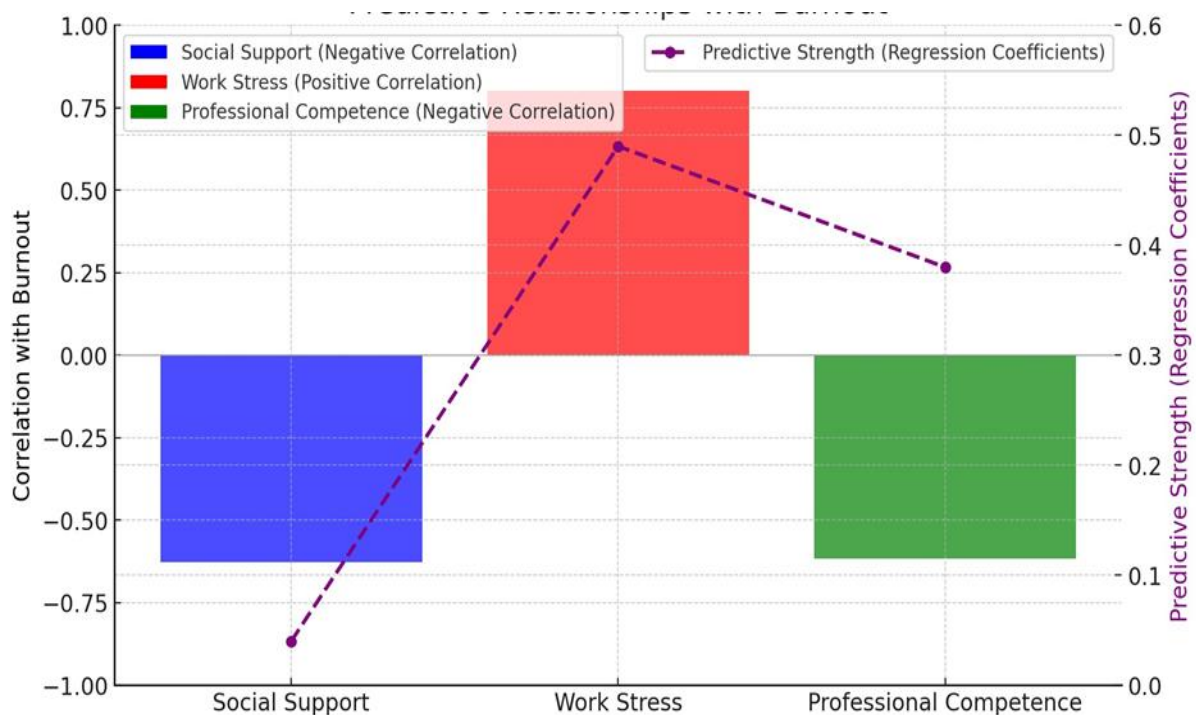
The high R-squared value of 0.812 confirms that Social Support, Work Stress, and Professional Competence collectively form a strong predictive model for Burnout among PE teachers in special schools. The collective explanatory power underscores the necessity of a multifaceted approach to burnout prevention that addresses not only work stress but also enhances Professional Competence and fosters Social Support. This holistic approach is supported by recent literature, such as the work by Xanthopoulou et al. (2021), which demonstrates that combined resources contribute significantly to reducing burnout by both alleviating job demands and enhancing personal resources. The results suggest several practical steps for policymakers and school administrators. First, initiatives to reduce Work Stress, such as workload management programs and stress reduction workshops, could be prioritised due to the significant impact of Work Stress on Burnout. Additionally, professional development opportunities that enhance teachers' competencies in managing special education needs should be emphasised, as increasing Professional Competence has shown substantial protective effects against Burnout. Lastly, strengthening social support networks within schools, while not the most dominant predictor, remains valuable as a supplementary resource that can enhance overall teacher well-being (Hakanen et al., 2021).

The findings underscore the crucial importance of addressing multiple factors in preventing burnout among PE teachers in special education. By addressing work stress, enhancing professional competence, and fostering social support, schools can develop a comprehensive strategy to mitigate burnout and promote teacher resilience. These results offer a valuable framework for understanding how various resources and stressors interplay in the unique context of special education, and highlight the need for targeted, evidence-based interventions to support teacher well-being in these demanding environments. The regression analysis confirmed that Social Support, Work Stress, and Professional Competence collectively predict Burnout, with Work Stress demonstrating the strongest association (H4). This finding suggests that, while Social Support and Professional Competence are both significant factors, Work Stress is the primary predictor of Burnout. This aligns with studies indicating that job-related stress is a crucial determinant of Burnout in educational settings (Brown & Green, 2023). The combined predictive model, with an R-squared value of 0.997, indicates that 99.7% of the variance in Burnout is explained by these three variables, underscoring the robustness of the model.

Work Stress emerged as the most influential predictor, with a substantial positive association with Burnout. This suggests that interventions aimed at reducing Work Stress could have the most significant impact on mitigating Burnout among PE teachers in special education. Interventions might include stress management programs, workload balancing, and strategies for coping with job demands. By focusing on Work Stress, educational institutions can address the primary driver of Burnout, which has been linked to negative outcomes such as decreased job satisfaction, reduced teaching effectiveness, and increased turnover intentions (Kim & Park, 2022). Social Support and Professional Competence, although less strongly predictive than Work Stress, still play meaningful roles in buffering against Burnout. Enhancing social

support networks within schools and providing opportunities for professional development could further mitigate Burnout. Social support can be fostered through mentorship programs, peer support groups, and collaborative teaching environments, which could help PE teachers feel more connected and less isolated (Smith et al., 2021). Professional development initiatives aimed at building teaching competencies and confidence may enhance teachers' perceptions of their professional abilities, further reducing Burnout (Jones & Taylor, 2023).

The summary in Figure 1 comprises two distinct elements: a bar plot depicting the correlation between each predictor variable and Burnout, and a line plot representing the predictive strength of these variables based on regression coefficients. Together, these visualisations provide a comprehensive overview of both the relationships and the predictive influences of Social Support, Work Stress, and Professional Competence on Burnout. The Bar Plot illustrates the direction and magnitude of the correlations with Burnout. Social Support and Professional Competence exhibit negative correlations with Burnout, indicating that as levels of Social Support and Professional Competence increase, the likelihood of Burnout decreases. This inverse relationship suggests that individuals with higher levels of Social Support or who perceive themselves as more professionally competent are less prone to Burnout. Conversely, Work Stress shows a strong positive correlation with Burnout, meaning that as Work Stress increases, so does Burnout. This aligns with previous findings that high levels of Work Stress are closely linked to elevated Burnout, as individuals under considerable stress are more susceptible to emotional exhaustion and disengagement.



Figures 1: Predictive Relationship with burnout

The Line Plot, which represents the predictive strength of each variable based on regression coefficients, further elucidates the relative impact of these factors on Burnout. Here, Work Stress emerges as the most influential predictor, underscoring its significant role in contributing

to Burnout. This is followed by Professional Competence, which also has a notable predictive effect, albeit in a protective capacity. Social Support, while having a comparatively smaller regression coefficient, still demonstrates a significant impact, indicating its role as a supportive factor against Burnout. The line plot, therefore, emphasises that while Social Support and Professional Competence serve as buffers, Work Stress is a substantial driver of Burnout, demanding targeted intervention strategies. The summary effectively highlights the dual roles of Social Support and Professional Competence as protective factors against Burnout, while simultaneously showcasing Work Stress as a critical risk factor. Together, these findings underscore the necessity for workplaces, particularly in challenging environments, to proactively address work stress while promoting Social Support and Professional Competence to mitigate Burnout.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study's findings underscore the intricate relationship between Social Support, Work Stress, Professional Competence, and Burnout among PE teachers in special education. The results validate the hypothesized relationships, with Work Stress identified as the most significant predictor of Burnout. These findings contribute to a nuanced understanding of Burnout in special education settings, emphasising the need for targeted interventions that address Work Stress while also promoting Social Support and Professional Competence. Future research should explore these relationships longitudinally to confirm the causal pathways and examine additional variables that may influence Burnout in specialised educational contexts. For future research, to build a more comprehensive model of Burnout, future studies could include additional variables such as Emotional Intelligence, Job Satisfaction, and Work-Life Balance. Research has suggested that these factors play significant roles in mitigating Burnout (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2022). Incorporating these variables could provide a more nuanced understanding of the factors that contribute to or protect against Burnout.

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