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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### LEVELS OF BURNOUT AMONG HEAD TEACHERS' IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF BUTULA SUB-COUNTY

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#### ABSTRACT

Burnout is one of the factors that adversely affects human resource in performance of work. Studies have revealed that in schools burnout inactivates head teachers reducing their achievement. School factors such as lack of physical facilities, inadequate rewards and school insecurity increase level of burnout which has been linked to underperformance by head teachers and translate to poor academic performance in schools. In Butula Sub-county, preliminary survey on five head teachers indicated that head teachers were experiencing burnout. The objective of this study was to determine burnout levels among head teachers in public primary schools in Butula Sub County. A conceptual framework showing the relationship between independent variables (school factors) and dependent variable (head teachers burnout) were used to guide the study. The findings of the study were that the overall burnout level among head teachers was moderate. The study concluded that head teachers experience moderate burnout. The study recommended that head teachers should adopt methods of dealing with burnout by addressing school factors that influence burnout. The findings of this study are significant to stakeholders in education as they provide information that can inform policy formulation that can minimize burnout among head teachers.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Burnout is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and low personal accomplishment. An administrator who suffers burnout experiences fatigue that inactivates them thereby reducing their achievement. For various reasons, head teachers undergo circumstances which they cannot control. Consequently, they feel unable to properly perform the tasks required of them as expected by stakeholders, as well as the serious negative effects on their teaching roles. The average hours spent at work by principals and deputies/assistants ranges between 51-60 hours per week during term time and 25-30 hours per week during gazetted holiday periods. Too many participants in the survey were working too many hours and it is taking a toll on their greatest support group; their families (Riley, 2017). In Kenya, public servants are supposed to work for 40 hours per week (Republic of Kenya, 2016).

A lot of work that causes prolonged accumulation of stress is known to influence burnout (Ng'ang'a, 2012). In turn, burnout causes emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and low personal accomplishment (Sagara, 2012). Burnout is related to a situation in which a person feels overworked, confused about work expectations and priorities, concerned about job security, under-appreciated and over-committed with responsibilities that are immensurable with pay (Freudenberger, 1974; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). A school administrator is the most influential factor in the success of a school. Apart from teaching like the other teachers, the duties of the school administrator include teaching their subject of specialization to enable them supervise curriculum implementation, implement government policies, be resourceful in attracting funding and prudently manage the same, supervise members of staff – teaching and non-teaching, they manage students' affairs as well as maintain good public relations and a sense of commitment to duty, hence a role model to teachers, students and the community in general. This is a major responsibility with many tasks. The demands of such tasks can place the school administrators at a risk of burnout (Ngari, Ndungu, Mwonya, Ngumi, Mumiukha, Chepchieng, & Kariuki, 2013).

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Studies around the world have indicated that principals and head teachers suffer different levels of burnout. The United Kingdom's Health and Safety Executive acknowledges that the top seven most stressed professionals are teachers, nurses, managers, social workers, road transport drivers, police officers and prison officers (Willis, 2005). Preliminary survey on head teachers in Butula Sub-County indicated they suffer from a high level of burnout. There was a gap on the level of head teachers' burnout in Butula Sub-county and therefore this study aimed to fill it. Freudenberger (1974) associated burnout with people in helping positions that experienced a state of exhaustion and fatigue as a result of working too long, too much and too intensely with needy clients at the expense of their own needs. Twenty-first century educators are faced with more demands than teachers in any previous era (Kozol, 2008). Due to the break-down of families, they are expected to act as social workers, health care providers, and parents while continuing to educate the children about core content areas, technology, and the global community. Teachers are also faced with a growing amount of paperwork, pressure to teach and administer standardized tests, and a constant need to defend themselves against the public belief that schools are failing the children of the nation. Career-related stress from difficult students, excessive work hours, new and additional demands, and negative relationships with co-workers or administrators takes a prolonged period of time to fix. Burnout results as a response by teachers who have trouble coping with the challenges of the job. It comes about when the teacher feels he has invested a lot in his work, trying by all means to make his work meaningful, but finds himself running empty and in vain (Schwab & Iwanicki, 1982; Dewe 1986; Jackson, Rothman, & De Vijver, 2006; Ngeno, 2007).

Borritz (2006) states that the core of the job in human service work is professional and constitutes the relationship between the employee and the client. This means that the employee is acting on behalf of society in order to bring about a change in the client (to become healthy, more educated, less criminal, etc). Educators and the general public have time and again expressed concern over factors that influence student performance in examinations. The most outstanding factor has to do with the organizational management of schools. For instance, Rutter, Maughan and Mortimer (1979) and Wekesa (1993) note that to improve students' performance, head teachers are first required to improve the management of the schools. Of paramount importance, therefore, is the proper management of teachers because its absence will invariably lead to low productivity on the part of the teachers (Republic of Kenya, 1988).

**Synthesis of literature on levels of burnout among head teachers in public primary schools:** Freudenberger was the first to use the concept 'burnout' in 1974 to indicate the physical and affectionate responses resulting from workers' long term exposure to stress in occupations that develop high expectations without protection especially those providing human services such as health, media, police and education. He began researching on burnout during the free clinic movement and found that those involved were becoming 'inoperative to all intents and purposes' due to the extreme working conditions (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter (1996), well-known researchers of burnout, constructed burnout as a construct of three components: emotional exhaustion,

personal accomplishment, and depersonalization. 'Emotional exhaustion' is described as feelings of being busy, tiredness, exhaustion and overload. 'Personal accomplishment' is the person's self-evaluation of their own work and 'depersonalization' is when a person has a tendency to isolate themselves from others. Figure 1 shows Jenkins' Model of stress reaction which gives a clear illustration on how burnout results from chronic stress.

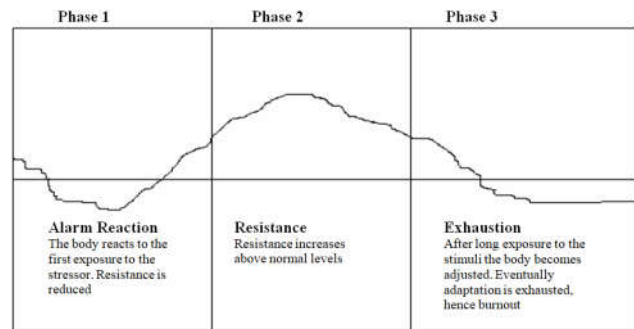


Figure 1. Jenkins' Model of Stress Reaction (Melgosa, 2004)

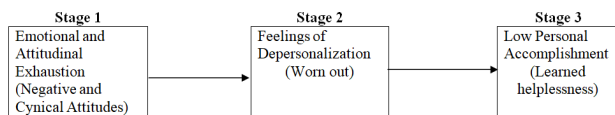
Figure 1 shows that the exhaustion phase is the extreme case of stress which affects the body and is characterized by mental and physical disorders. This is the burnout effect which leads to illnesses, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, low personal accomplishment and in extreme cases, leads to death (Sagara, 2012). There have been a number of researches on burnout on educators. In a study on the impact of occupational stress on secondary school head teachers in Kisumu County, Sagara (2012) says that occupational stress is the strain imposed on an employee's physical, social and emotional states as a result of unfavorable workplace environment and practices. The effects of stress and burnout also differ as shown in the Table 1.

Table 1. Effects of Stress and Burnout

Stress	Burnout
-Characterized by over engagement.	-Characterized by disengagement.
-Emotions are overactive.	-Emotions are blunted.
-Produces urgency and hyperactivity.	-Produces hopelessness and helplessness.
-Loss of energy.	-Loss of motivation, ideals and hope.
-Leads to anxiety disorders.	-Leads to detachment and depression.
-Primary damage is physical.	-Primary damage is emotional.
-May kill one prematurely	-May make life seem not worth living.

Table 1 indicates the effects of stress and burnout. When stressed, a person is over engaged, overactive, produces urgency, energy is lost, experience anxiety disorders and damage is physical but in burnout, a person is disengaged, emotions are blunted, is hopeless, has no motivation, is detached, damage is emotional and life seems not worth living. Since teaching is a "highly emotional and bafflingly chaotic" profession, teachers are vulnerable to lengthy periods of work-related stress (Brookfield, 2006). Burnout is widespread among teachers due to different factors. Each year a number of teachers leave the occupation and those who keep up teaching in spite of their exhaustion have a negative influence on the quality of education (Azar & Reyhane, 2014). In a related study, Dworkin's (2014) research shows teacher entrapment, rather than teacher turnover, as the greater problem in education today. Teachers are now more likely to spend their entire working lifetime disliking their careers (and sometimes their students), rather

than quitting their jobs. The greater the degree of burnout experienced by an employee, the lower the satisfaction s/he derives from the job and, subsequently, the lower the commitment to the job. From the observations of Maslach and Jackson (1981) the first stage of burnout is characterized by chronic feelings of emotional and attitudinal exhaustion that begins with a feeling of uneasiness, and mounts as the joy of teaching gradually slips away. At this stage, the teacher expresses personal feelings of weariness and irritability; lacks energy, joy, enthusiasm, satisfaction, motivation, interest, zest, concentration and self-confidence. He develops cynical attitudes towards students, and begins to dread the idea of waking up early to face a new school day. As the teacher enters the second stage of burnout, he changes from being warm and caring, to feelings of depersonalization displayed in withdrawal from contact with students. At this stage, the teacher records a higher rate of absence from school and lessons (Farber, 2000). Psychologically, he ignores or refuses to recognize his students; treating them as impersonal objects, calling them by derogatory names or using labels to describe them. The third stage of burnout occurs when teachers begin to feel that they are no longer accomplishing anything worthwhile in their work. If this feeling is prolonged, the teacher's motivation may reduce to the extent where failure becomes a way of life. The three stages are shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. Three Stages of Burnout (Farber, 2000)**

Previous studies have associated burnout with health challenges for employees with serious implication(s) on their job satisfaction and commitment (Maslach & Leiter, 1996). These studies have shown that burnout negatively correlated with job satisfaction and workplace commitment. Various studies have been done to find the level of burnout amongst educators. The United Kingdom's Health and Safety Executive acknowledges that the top seven most stressed professionals are teachers, nurses, managers, social workers, road transport drivers, police officers and prison officers (Willis, 2005) as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Rank of Professions by Stress Levels**

Profession Area	%
Education	54
Media specialists	51
Professional service providers	50
Information providers	45
Health care providers	42
Travel and leisure providers	39
Financial service providers	34
Accountants and financial workers	25
Manufacturers	20

\*Source: Willis (2005)

While analyzing burnout on elementary school principals in Turkey, Bas and Yildirim (2012), used Maslach Burnout Inventory to analyze level of burnout and found that elementary schools principals had "low" level of emotional exhaustion, "moderate" level of reduced personal accomplishment and "moderate" level of depersonalization.

Their study involved 190 elementary school principals from Nigde, Turkey. The data of their research were collected by using the Maslach Burnout Inventory in a questionnaire. Bas and Yildirim (2012) analyzed the data by using Social Package for Statistical Sciences version 15.0. The data collected for the study were analysed by using Mann Whitney-U test and variance analysis (F test). The Mann Whitney-U test was used to compare between elementary school principals' burnout levels in terms of gender. The managerial experience, education levels and the working places of the school principals were compared with the help of one-way ANOVA (variance) test and Tukey-HSD test was used in order to find the variance of the difference.

Results of their study show that elementary school principals had "moderate" level of burnout. It was found out that there was a statistical significant difference between elementary school principals in terms of gender in reduced personal accomplishment and depersonalization sub-scales of the inventory. According to this result, female elementary school principals had higher reduced personal accomplishment and depersonalization levels than their male counterparts. On the other hand, it was found a statistical significant difference between schools principals in relation to managerial seniority. According to result of the research, school principals were found to differ in reduced personal accomplishment sub-scale so that less experienced school principals had higher burnout levels than their counterparts. It was also found out that there were not any statistical significant difference between elementary school principals in terms of educational level and working place variables. The study investigated how elementary school principals' burnout is related to gender, managerial seniority, education level and working place.

The general survey method was adopted in the research and Cronbach's Alpha levels representing the internal consistency of the sub-scales were .86 (emotional exhaustion) .64 (depersonalization) and .74 (reduced personal accomplishment). Cronbach's Alpha level of the total inventory was calculated as .89. Riley (2017) while analyzing The Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey 2016 Data, found that principals experience high levels of job demands (1.5 times the general population) emotional demands (1.7 times) and emotional labour (1.7 times) being the highest demands when compared to the general population. This is correlated with higher levels of burnout (1.6 times higher), stress symptoms (1.7 times higher), difficulty sleeping (2.2 times higher), cognitive stress (1.5 times higher), somatic symptoms (1.3 times higher), and, depressive symptoms (1.3 times higher). Most principals described themselves as passionate educator so it would be crucial to determine whether this represented risk or protection as related to school setting.

Nevertheless, a lot of studies have been done on burnout among teachers. For instance, in a research on burnout levels of Jordanian teachers of English, El-Omari and Freihat (2011) found the level of emotional exhaustion was 30.92, depersonalization 17.33 and personal accomplishment was 31.58 according to Maslach Burnout Inventory for the three dimensions. This was high level for emotional exhaustion and depersonalization sub-scales and average for personal accomplishment sub-scale. They explain that for various

reasons, teachers undergo some circumstances which they cannot control, and eventually feel unable to properly perform the tasks required of them as expected by administrators and decision makers, as well as the seriously negative effects on students' teaching. El-Omari and Freihat (2011) say that burnout has negative effects on teachers' physical and psychological health. Regarding the physical health, it increases teachers' feeling of funwell, tension, high blood pressure, backache, headache, indisposition, insomnia and frequent flu.

A study aimed at investigating the levels of burnout experienced by special education teachers in the State of Kuwait (Abo & Salem, 2013) revealed that female teachers are overwhelmed with pressing feelings and burdens which subject them to greater psychological burnout as compared with their male counterparts. Abo and Salem (2013) used psychological burnout scale to investigate psychological burnout among female and male teachers and got their levels as follows: male teachers had a mean of 23.08 in emotional exhaustion with standard deviation of 4.70, depersonalization of 40.36 with standard deviation of 12.83 and personal accomplishment of 35.36 with standard deviation of 16.30. On the other hand, the female teachers' level of burnout was as follows: emotional exhaustion of 38.60 and standard deviation of 14.23, depersonalization of 23.44 with standard deviation of 8.41 and personal accomplishment was 19.00 with standard deviation of 6.91. These results indicate that the teachers had a high level of burnout in all the sub-scales.

Maslach and Jackson (1986) and Gursel *et al.* (2002) found that male teachers tend to score higher than female teachers on the depersonalization sub-scale. These authors attribute this gender difference to sex role socialization that results in the different career expectations of men and women. However, Bhadoria and Singh (2011) found the opposite in which female participants showed higher levels of depersonalization. Variables such as cultural factors and concept interpretation, could have led to different findings. Occupational burnout among head teachers in Nigeria studied by Emmanuel, Fayankinnu and Bolanle (2015) showed that job satisfaction significantly increased the extent to which head teachers experienced occupational burnout. Similarly, workplace commitment significantly predicted occupational burnout such that head teachers who were committed to their workplace tended to report occupational burnout. Workplace commitment increased the degree to which job satisfaction led to occupational burnout among head teachers. Louw, George and Esterhuysen (2011) examined burnout amongst urban secondary school teachers in Namibia. The main findings of the 337 teachers who participated in the research indicated a mean level for emotional exhaustion as 19.71 and standard deviation was 12.85. On depersonalization, the mean was 6.66 and standard deviation was 8.68 and the mean on personal accomplishment was 32.79 and standard deviation 5.76. The study showed that the participants experienced similar levels of burnout compared to teachers in other countries. The results of the Namibian teachers' higher level of emotional exhaustion (compared to depersonalization and personal accomplishment) correspond with those of teachers in the USA (Maslach & Jackson, 1986; Schemuly, Schemuly & Meyer, 2011), approximately a quarter of the teachers experienced high levels of emotional exhaustion, whilst only 12.2% experienced high levels of depersonalization.

Furthermore, about the same number of teachers experienced both low and high levels of personal accomplishment.

Prevalence of burnout syndrome and its health effects among academic staff at MuhiMaslach Burnout Inventory University of health and allied sciences, Dar es salaam Tanzania was studied by Lema (2012). It indicated that prevalence of burnout syndrome was 31.8% where 8.1% had a high degree of burnout syndrome, 9.5% had average and 14.2% had low. Respondents who experienced average and high psychological distress were significantly associated with burnout syndrome. Lema (2012) concluded that presence of burnout syndrome and psychological distress among the respondents greatly affects work performance.

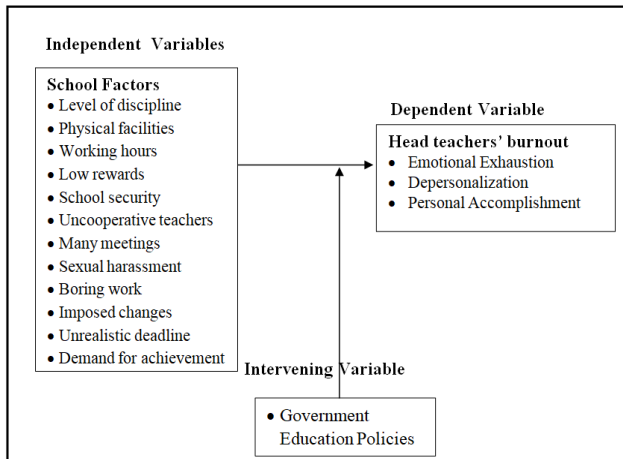
The Seed (2008), while analyzing the causes of violent student riots in secondary schools in Kenya noted that head teachers are overworked and suffered stress and burnout. In Kenya, school administrators are the most influential factor in the success of a school. The duties of the school administrator include teaching their subject of specialization to enable them supervise curriculum implementation, be resourceful in attracting funding and prudently manage the same, supervision of the members of staff both teaching and non-teaching, management of students' affairs as well as having good public relations and a sense of commitment to duty, hence a role model to teachers, students and the community in general. This is a major responsibility with many tasks. The demands of such tasks can place the school administrators at the risk of burnout (Ngari *et al.*, 2013). Another study done in Nyanza by Sagara (2012) revealed that the phenomenon of occupational tedium had serious negative consequences for the teachers, as evidenced in their accounts of their work experiences. A common behavioural outcome of such situations, if left unattended, is that teachers leave the profession or change jobs. It is debatable, however, which is the lesser evil: losing educators or retaining teachers who experience high levels of occupational tedium and involuntarily remain in their positions (Otieno, Matanga, & Odera, 2014).

A study done in Bungoma North District on causes of burnout among secondary school teachers by Sichambo, Maragia and Simiyu (2012), revealed that teachers are exposed to classrooms full of students, have to play the roles of classroom teachers, examiners, administrators, disciplinarians, counselors and ensure students achieve highly. When all these are done regularly, they add up to a large workload making teachers overwhelmed, drained and exhausted. The researchers concluded that apart from the normal classroom teaching, teachers had a number of remedial lessons to attend to: larger classes to handle, a lot of paper work while some had to stay in their work stations outside their normal school timings in order to complete various tasks. All these factors contributed to burnout among teachers. From the studies mentioned above, little is known about level of burnout among head teachers. There was a need to find the level of burnout among head teachers in Kenya and compare results with other studies in the world and therefore this study filled this gap.

**Research Objective:** The research objective was to: Determine burnout levels among head teachers in public primary schools in Butula Sub-County.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study is based on the premise that there are school factors that lead to burnout. Burnout in turn leads to illnesses, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, low personal accomplishment and in extreme cases, leads to death (Sagara, 2012). This leads to loss of energy and reduction in productivity. Previous studies have associated burnout with health challenges for employees with serious implication (s) on their job satisfaction and commitment (Maslach & Leiter, 1996). The influence of a head teacher on a school’s managerial environment cannot be overstated in view of the fact that they initiate policies that provide guidelines for action (Pugh, 1989). This study was conceptualized on the basis of school factors as independent variable and burnout among head teachers as the dependent variable. The intervening variable was government policies. Head teachers who suffer from burnout may not perform their work as expected and therefore this study investigated level of burnout among head teachers’. The variables involved in this study were illustrated in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: Conceptual Framework showing level of burnout among head teachers’ in public primary schools**

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The target population was 61 head teachers and one Sub-county Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. Saturated sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 55 head teachers and one Sub-county Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. Data were collected using Maslach Burnout Inventory questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis guide. The validity of the research instruments were ascertained by experts in the school of education. Test-retest was conducted to determine reliability of the head teachers’ questionnaire which had a coefficient of 0.87 for emotional exhaustion, 0.89 for depersonalization and 0.92 for personal accomplishment at p value of 0.05. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages.

**RESULTS**

**Demographic Data of Head Teachers:** Section one of the head teachers’ questionnaire revealed the demographic information of the head teachers as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Demographic Information of the Head Teachers**

Demographic Characteristics	F	%
Age	31 – 40 yrs	03 5.5
	41 – 50 yrs	27 49.0
	51 – 60 yrs	25 45.5
Total	55	100
Gender	Male	47 85.3
	Female	08 14.7
Total	55	100
Professional Qualification	Certificate	11 20.0
	Diploma	36 65.3
	B.ED	08 14.7
Total	55	100
Headship Experience	0-5 yrs	15 27.2
	6-10 yrs	17 30.8
	11-15 yrs	13 23.6
	16-20 yrs	05 9.2
	21-25 yrs	05 9.2
Total	55	100

**Table 4. Head Teachers’ Teaching Workload**

No. of lessons	F	%
5 – 10	02	3.8
11 – 15	05	9.2
16 – 20	18	32.6
21 – 25	14	25.3
26 – 30	14	25.3
31 – 35	02	3.8

**Table 5. Average Hours Spent per Day by the Head Teachers at the Workplace**

Daily hrs	F	%
6 – 10	25	45.5
11 – 15	29	52.6
16 – 20	01	1.8

Data on Table 3 shows that the head teachers were in the age bracket of 31-60 years. Majority of the head teachers 27(49.0%) were in the age bracket of 41-50 years and very few 3(5.5%) were between 31-40 years. A large percentage of head teachers 25(45.5%) were between 51- 60 years. There was gender imbalance in headship position since majority of the head teachers 47(85.3%) were male and only 8(14.7%) were female.

On educational qualification, majority of the head teachers (65.3%) were diploma holders, 20.0% certificate holders and only 14.7% had a university degree. There was no head teacher who had a post graduate degree. Majority of the head teachers had served in their position for less than 15 years. That is 0 – 5 years (27.2%), 6 – 10 years (30.8%) and 11 – 15 years (23.6%). A few head teachers (9.2%) had an experience of more than 20 years and between 16 – 20 years respectively. Table 4 indicates that all head teachers had a teaching subject and majority of them 18(32.6%) taught between 16-20 lessons per week. Very few 02(3.8%) taught between 5 -10 lessons and more than 30 lessons respectively, 9.2% taught between 11-15 lessons, 14(25.3%) between 21 - 25 lessons and 14(25.3%) between 26-30 lessons. The findings concur with those of Sagara (2012) who studied on secondary school principals in Kisumu County, Kenya and established that all administrators had a teaching subject. The revised scheme of service for non-graduate teachers state that head teachers’ responsibility includes classroom teaching (Teachers Service Commission, 2007). Studies by Schaufeli, Taris and van Rhenen, (2008) and Emmanuel (2015) have



shown that the more employees engage with their job the more the tendency of experiencing occupational burnout. The researcher then considered the number of hours spent by the head teachers at their work station and the results were as shown in Table 5.

Data in Table 5 shows that most head teachers 29(52.6%) were at their work stations for between 11- 15 hours on a normal working day. According to Republic of Kenya (2016), a public servant is supposed to work for eight hours every working day. A large percentage of the head teachers 25(45.5%) spent between 6 – 10 hours a day at school while a very small percentage of the head teachers 01(1.8%) spent more than 15 hours at school in a day. This is higher than the official working time given as 8 hours a day.

**Research Question:** The research question responded to was: What are the burnout levels among head teachers in public primary schools in Butula Sub-County? The overall rating on burnout was as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6. Levels of Burnout among Head Teachers in Butula Sub-County**

Rating	Level of burnout	Frequency	%
0 -25.32	Low	14	25.5
25.33- 40.55	Average	20	36.4
40.56- 100.00	High	21	38.1
Total		55	100

**Key:** Interpretation levels of burnout based on Maslach and Jackson, (1986) - low at ≤ 25.32, average at 25.33 – 40.55 and high at ≥ 40.56

**Table 7. Emotional Exhaustion Levels of Burnout among Head Teachers in Butula Sub-County**

Rating	Level of burnout	Frequency	%
0 - 16	Low	11	20.0
17 - 26	Average	15	27.3
27 - 54	High	29	52.7
Total		55	100

**Key:** Interpretation of emotional exhaustion levels of burnout based on Maslach and Jackson, 1986 - low at ≤ 16, average at 17–26 and high at ≥ 27

Table 6 indicates that majority of the head teachers 21(38.1%) are in the high level of burnout, 20(36.4%) are moderately burned out while the minority 14(25.5%) suffer from low level of burnout. The mean level of burnout in this study was 35.76 (moderate). Table 7 indicates that majority of the head teachers (52.7%) are in the high level of the first stage of burnout emotional exhaustion, 27.3% are moderately burned out at this sub-scale while the minority (20.0%) suffer from low level of emotional exhaustion. The mean level of emotional exhaustion in this study was 27.18 (high). Table 8 indicates that majority of the head teachers (69.1%) are at a low level of depersonalization; 20.0% at a moderate level and the minority (10.9%) are at a high level of depersonalization sub-scale of burnout. The mean level of depersonalization sub-scale was 7.09 (low). Table 9 indicates that majority of the head teachers (56.6%) are at a low level of Personal Accomplishment sub-scale of burnout; 25.3% at a high level and minority (18.1%) at a moderate level. The mean level was 35.41 (moderate). Table 10 above indicates that the widest range (47.00) was on emotional exhaustion sub-scale of burnout followed by (36.00) personal accomplishment and then by (21.00) depersonalization.

**Table 8. Depersonalization Level of Burnout among Head Teachers in Butula Sub-County**

Rating	Level of burnout	Frequency	%
0 - 8	Low	38	69.1
9 - 13	Average	11	20.0
14 - 30	High	06	10.9
Total		55	100

**Key:** Interpretation of Depersonalization levels of burnout based on Maslach and Jackson, (1986) - low at ≤ 8, average at 9–13 and high at ≥ 14

**Table 9. Personal Accomplishment Level of Burnout among Head Teachers in Butula Sub-County**

Rating	Level of burnout	Frequency	%
0 – 30	High	14	25.3
31 - 36	Average	10	18.1
37 - 48	Low	31	56.6
Total		55	100

**Key:** Interpretation of Personal Accomplishment levels of burnout based on Maslach and Jackson (1986) - low at ≥ 37, average at 36–31 and high at ≤ 30

**Table 10. Sub-scale Burnout Level among Head Teachers**

Sub-scale	N	Range	Mean		Std. Dev	Variance	Level of
	Stat	Stat	Stat	S. Error	Stat	Stat	burnout
Emotional exhaustion (EE)	55	47.00	27.18	1.55	11.55	133.48	High
Depersonalization (DP)	55	21.00	7.09	.69	5.12	26.30	Low
Personal accomplishment (PA)	55	36.00	35.41	1.22	9.11	83.17	Average

The mean statistic for emotional exhaustion (27.18) is high according to Maslach Burnout Inventory manual, depersonalization is low (7.09) and Personal accomplishment is moderate at 35.41.

## DISCUSSION

Male head teachers dominate the administrative positions in primary school sub-sector of education. This finding is consistent with studies in Kenya by Wasonga (2014), Kiumi (2008), Gachoki (2006) who researched on secondary school principals, Aujata, Simatwa, and Yalo (2014) who researched on deputy head teachers, Bas and Yildirim (2012) who researched on elementary school principals in Turkey and a study in the United Kingdom by Menaha, Amaratunga and Haigh (2008) who established that few women were administrators. It is an indication that women are generally fewer than men in administration at all basic school levels in the world. The findings vary from those of Bas and Yildirim who found that (18,94%) of the elementary school principals were graduates of the senior high school, (78,42%) of the school principals were undergraduates and (2,63%) of them had postgraduate level of education. This variation could be because in Kenya, the entry qualification of primary school teachers was certificate and those who progressed further were due to their own initiative. Studies done in Kenya by Wasonga (2014) and Gachoki (2006) on secondary school principals that showed that majority of head teachers in rural schools had an experience of less than eleven years at administrative position, and a study by Bas and Yildirim (2012) who researched on elementary school principals in Turkey shows that the general administrative experience for majority of head teachers is below fifteen years. In an analysis of the world education indicators, long working

hours and work overload are significant in fluencers of teacher burnout (Amimo, 2012, Fisher, 2011, and Bayani *et al* 2013). The findings of this study concur with the following studies: El-Omari and Freihat (2011) who researched on burnout levels of Jordanian teachers of English and found the level of emotional exhaustion was 30.92; Ayeni (2012) in a study to investigate the relationship between burnout and psychophysiology among lecturers in a tertiary institution in Nigeria, found the level of emotional exhaustion was 29.27; Abo and Salem (2013) used psychological burnout scale to investigate the levels of burnout experienced by special education teachers in the State of Kuwait and established the female teachers' level of burnout in emotional exhaustion sub-scale was 38.60; Maslach and Jackson (1986) and Schemuly, Schemuly and Meyer (2011) who conducted their studies in USA and established a high level of emotional exhaustion in teachers. The findings are inconsistent with the following studies: While analyzing burnout on elementary school principals in Turkey, Bas and Yildirim (2012), used Maslach Burnout Inventory to analyze level of burnout and found that elementary schools principals have "low" level of emotional exhaustion. Louw, George and Esterhuysen (2011) examined burnout amongst urban secondary school teachers in Namibia. The main findings of the 337 teachers who participated in the research indicated a mean level for emotional exhaustion as 19.71 (average). Louw, George and Esterhuysen (2011) examined burnout amongst urban secondary school teachers in Namibia. The main findings of the 337 teachers who participated in the research indicated a mean level for depersonalization was 6.66 (low); Maslach and Jackson, (1986) and Schemuly, Schemuly and Meyer, (2011) who studied level of burnout among educators in USA and established that they had low level in depersonalization sub-scale. The findings vary from the following studies: In a study to investigate the relationship between burnout and psychophysiology among lecturers in a tertiary institution in Nigeria, Ayeni (2012) found a high percentage (49.63%) in depersonalization; In a research on burnout levels of Jordanian teachers of English, El-Omari and Freihat (2011) found the level of depersonalization was 17.33 (high); While analyzing burnout on elementary school principals in Turkey, Bas and Yildirim (2012), used Maslach Burnout Inventory to analyze level of burnout and found that elementary schools principals have "moderate" level of depersonalization; Abo and Salem (2013) used psychological burnout scale to investigate the levels of burnout experienced by special education teachers in the State of Kuwait and established that the teachers had a high level of burnout in all the sub-scales. In comparison with other studies, the findings are consistent with Louw, George and Esterhuysen (2011) who found a moderate level of Personal Accomplishment; El-Omari and Freihat (2011) who found the level of personal accomplishment sub-scale was 31.58 (moderate); and Bas and Yildirim (2012), who used Maslach Burnout Inventory to analyze level of burnout and found that elementary schools principals had "moderate" level of personal accomplishment. The findings are inconsistent with the findings of Ayeni (2012), and Abo and Salem (2013) who established high levels of Personal accomplishment. The findings in all the sub-scales of burnout with other studies reveal that they vary in levels and standard deviations: Abo and Salem (2013) used psychological burnout scale to investigate psychological burnout among female and male teachers and established their levels as follows: male teachers had a mean of 23.08 in emotional exhaustion with SD of 4.70, Depersonalization of

40.36 with SD of 12.83 and Personal Accomplishment of 35.36 with SD of 16.30. On the other hand, the female teachers' level of burnout was as follows: emotional exhaustion of 38.60 and SD of 14.23, Depersonalization of 23.44 with SD of 8.41 and Personal Accomplishment was 19.00 with SD of 6.91. These results indicate that the teachers had a high level of burnout in all the sub-scales. Louw, George and Esterhuysen (2011) examined burnout amongst urban secondary school teachers in Namibia. The main findings of the 337 teachers who participated in the research indicated a mean level for emotional exhaustion as 19.71 and standard deviation was 12.85. On depersonalization, the mean was 6.66 and SD was 8.68 and the mean on personal accomplishment was 32.79 and SD 5.76. Apart from Abo and Salem (2013), the researchers mentioned above used Maslach Burnout Inventory to investigate level of burnout and all of them have variation in the mean of the three sub-scales. The closer SD is to zero, the more confidence you can have in predicting that the level of burnout among head teachers was equal to the mean of the group. Conversely, the further SD is from zero, the less confidence you have (Spatz, 2008). This indicates that it is not easy to predict the level of burnout among head teachers because the environment in which they work vary, the facilities are not the same and their attachment to the job also varies. This also indicates that different educators at different levels of education and areas of study vary in their level of burnout therefore this study sought to fill this gap in Butula Sub-County.

## Conclusion

Head teachers in public primary schools suffer different levels of burnout with the mean being moderate. Mean level of burnout among head teachers in the subscales were high in emotional exhaustion, low in depersonalization and moderate in personal accomplishment. This indicates that not all individuals follow the stages of three sub-scales of burnout from emotional exhaustion, depersonalization then personal accomplishment.

## Recommendations

Structures should be established that give head teachers induction on strategies of coping with burnout. Head teachers have often attended management courses therefore a unit on strategies of coping with burnout should be incorporated. Teachers also need to know how to relate with a burned out head teacher to avoid being the triggers of aggravated stress.

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