Influence of Job Stress and Burnout on Turnover Intentions of Special Education Educators in Northern Region of Ghana.

By

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the effect of job-related stress and burnout on the turnover intentions of special education educators in the northern region of Ghana. The study used a cross-sectional design with a sample size of twenty-five special education educators. The researchers used a questionnaire for the study. The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling was utilised to measure the association between job-related stress and burnout, occupational stress and turnover intentions, and the connection between burnout and turnover intentions. The results showed a statistically significant positive association between occupational trauma and burnout. Similarly, the results showed a statistically significant positive association between occupational trauma and special education educators' turnover intentions. Finally, the findings showed a statistically significant positive association between burnout and special education educators' turnover intentions. This study concludes that managers of special education institutions should develop and implement stress management programs such as mindfulness techniques, time management workshops and support groups to help special education educators effectively cope with stress at work.

Keywords: Burnout, Job satisfaction, Occupation, Turnover intentions, Special educators, stress

1. Introduction

Vieira and Santos (2010) argued that occupational stress has, over the years, become a global concern. Stress is a complex psychological and physical response to perceived challenges or threats, characterized by mental or emotional tension. It occurs when individuals face situations that surpass their ability to cope or manage, leading to various responses that can impact mental and physical health (Peele & Wolf, 2020). It is also a situation where a person faces both an opportunity and a constraint related to their desires, with the outcome appearing both ambiguous and crucial at the same time (Goswami, 2015). The concept of stress is multifaceted, involving interplay among cognitive, emotional, and biological factors, and can manifest in different ways depending on the nature and severity of the stressor. Job stress, also known as occupational or work stress, refers to the physical and psychological responses to environmental or situational demands that exceed a person's perceived resources to cope (Cox & Griffiths, cited in Rathi & Kumar, 2022). It is also described as the response individuals may have when they face work demands and pressures that are not aligned with their knowledge and abilities, challenging their capacity to handle them (World Health Organization, cited in Kanellakis et al., 2018). This occurs when individuals confront challenging work tasks beyond their skills and knowledge, diminishing their ability to perform effectively (Kanellakis et al., 2018). Occupational stress is a common experience among professionals across various fields, including special education educators. Several factors contribute to job-related stress, and scholarly research has identified key elements involved in its development. High workload and job demands are primary stressors, frequently resulting in feelings of overwhelm and exhaustion. Additionally, lack of job control, insufficient resources, and unclear role expectations can heighten workplace stress (Hobfoll, 2011). Interpersonal relationships and social dynamics within the workplace also significantly influence job-related stress. Conflicts with colleagues or supervisors, poor communication, and a lack of social support can increase stress levels (Beehr, Jex, Stacy, & Murray, 2018). Moreover, organizational factors such as ineffective leadership, limited opportunities for advancement, and the absence of recognition or reward systems can create a stressful work environment (Sauter, Hurrell, & Cooper, 2013).

Today, professionals in various fields often face significant stress when performing their duties. However, occupational stress has been shown to seriously affect workers' well-being and welfare, job efficiency, and overall performance (Vallasamy et al., 2023). Studies have revealed that workplace stress is linked with absenteeism, inefficiency, and labor turnover, as stress-affected individuals often experience emotional fatigue, anxiety, poor sleep, and burnout (Jonsdottir et al., cited in Vallasamy et al., 2023). Peele and Wolf (2020) argued that one major profession recognised over the years as causing severe stress is teaching. Authorities emphasise that stress is a significant problem within the teaching profession. According to Addison and Yankyera (2015), teachers face various workplace challenges, including psychological trauma, job-related pressure, occupational dissatisfaction, burnout, and intentions to leave. The high prevalence and global nature of these problems demand serious attention, as teachers' stress remains a topic of worldwide debate (Peele & Wolf, 2020). Kyriacou, cited in Owusu (2021), described teachers’ stress as the undesirable experiences teachers endure, manifesting in negative feelings such as anxiety, frustration,

discomfort, and hopelessness caused by certain elements or demands of their job. Yusuf et al. (2015) studied 300 primary school teachers in Nigeria and identified inadequate job satisfaction and lack of school amenities as key stressors. Kyriacou, as cited in Yusuf et al. (2015), listed major causes of teacher stress as lack of motivation, discipline challenges, time pressure, heavy workload, self-esteem issues, role conflict, and poor working conditions. A report by Owusu and Nkyi (2021) on workplace tension found that teachers frequently complain about high stress levels and low job satisfaction. The situation appears even more severe for special education educators, as teaching students with special needs can be particularly stressful. Appiah (2017) notes that students with special needs encompass a wide range of disabilities and challenges, including learning disabilities, autism, physical disabilities, and emotional or behavioral disorders. Therefore, special education educators must address diverse needs within a single classroom, which can be overwhelming. Many students with exceptionalities require individualized education plans with specific accommodations and modifications. Customizing instruction to meet these needs can be costly and stressful, often leading to burnout. Chen et al. (2013) describe burnout as a prevalent work-related outcome caused by job stress. Kusi et al. (2014) concur, stating that in today's fast-paced, dynamic work environment, burnout is an evolving issue with serious consequences for employees and employers, including special education educators. Burnout, as a fundamental effect of stress, can negatively impact teachers' job satisfaction (Li et al., 2024). Studies show that burned-out workers are more likely to fall ill, resign, or turn to drugs and substance abuse (Lee & Wolf, 2018). One critical response for dissatisfied, burned-out teachers is to consider quitting the profession. Such teachers often leave, especially when alternative jobs seem more profitable and satisfying (Oh & Wolf, 2023). It is important to recognise that organizational costs of burnout and occupational stress include a marked increase in employee turnover, decreased productivity, and reduced efficiency. Stress and burnout are interconnected concepts that attract significant attention in the field of psychology. Stress is a physical and mental response to perceived threats, while burnout involves emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a diminished sense of achievement (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Both conditions are linked to adverse outcomes such as health problems, mental health issues, decreased job satisfaction, and poorer work performance (Bakker et al., 2014). Yang et al. (2015) investigated the relationship between stress and burnout among healthcare professionals in Singapore, finding that those experiencing high stress were more likely to show burnout symptoms like emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. These individuals also found less meaning in their work, which worsened their burnout. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2019) studied 386 teachers in China and found that those with high stress levels reported more burnout symptoms. These teachers were less likely to see their jobs as challenging, further exacerbating burnout. Owusu (2021) discovered a significant link between work-related trauma and burnout among senior secondary school teachers in the Cape Coast Municipality. The study also found that job-related stress significantly influenced turnover intentions, whereas burnout did not have a substantial impact. Li et al. (2024) examined job burnout among nurses in China, revealing that high stress levels were associated with increased burnout and lower job satisfaction. These stressed employees also found less meaning and reward in their work, which contributed to their burnout and dissatisfaction.

Several researchers have investigated the connection between strain and turnover intentions among educators. Mahmood et al. (2022) study among teachers in Pakistan on job pressure and turnover intentions among school teachers revealed a moderate level of positive connection between educators' job stress and turnover intentions, as well as job stress, which is a significant determinant of educators' turnover intentions. Müller et al. (2018) investigated how job demands, interpersonal relationships, and organisational climate affect teacher turnover intentions in Germany. The investigation found that job demands were the most significant predictors of turnover intentions, while interpersonal relationships and organizational climate had less impact on teachers' decisions to leave their positions. Additionally, the connection between strain and turnover intentions is influenced by job gratification. Liu et al. (2019) conducted a similar study in China involving 538 primary school teachers. The results of the investigation indicated that burnout was a significant predictor of turnover intentions, with emotional fatigue once again being the primary predictor. Also, in this study, career satisfaction acts as a link between burnout and turnover intentions. However, the investigation also emphasized the role of organizational commitment and support as additional factors influencing turnover intentions in the Chinese setting.

Feng et al., (2023) studied the influence of burnout on turnover intentions among 3236 Chinese general practitioners and found that 65.02 percent reported a medium or high level of emotional fatigue. Additionally, 38 percent reported a significant level of depersonalization, 62.02 percent experienced a reduction in personal achievement, and 71.08 percent showed a relatively high intention to seek another position (turnover). The study revealed that emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal achievement all contributed to job dissatisfaction, while turnover intention resulting from burnout was specifically linked to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. It was also found that job gratification had a negative effect on turnover intentions and partly mediated the impact of emotional fatigue and depersonalization on turnover. Another study by Zhang et al (2023) on teacher burnout and turnover intentions in China found that teacher burnout has a significant and motivating influence on turnover intentions, whereas work gratification has a notably harmful impact. Moreover, job satisfaction partly mediated the relationship between burnout and turnover intentions, with this association being stronger for individuals with high proactive dispositions than for those with low proactive dispositions.

These studies highlight that burnout is a critical predictor of teacher turnover intentions across various educational settings, with emotional exhaustion being the most significant component. Job gratification consistently mediates the correlation between burnout and turnover intentions, signifying that higher job satisfaction can mitigate the adverse influences of burnout on turnover intentions. Factors such as low salaries, inadequate breaks and holidays, student behaviour, and a heavy workload of teachers also play crucial roles in specific educational contexts like China (Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012).

Several studies have been conducted across various African countries on occupational stress, career satisfaction, and teacher turnover intentions. In Ghana, Boye et al. (2023) studied 20 Junior school teachers in Tema West Municipality, and the results showed that Junior high school teachers

frequently experience stress. Key sources of job-related stress identified included lack of resources and materials, heavy workload, lack of support from leadership, and excessive workplace pressure. The study also found a significant negative correlation between job-related stress and work engagement. Similarly, Owusu and Nkyi (2021) observed that most Ghanaian teachers are unmotivated and dissatisfied due to low wages, poor working conditions, and high-stress environments. Addison and Yankyera (2015) reported that because of inadequate wages, insufficient accommodation, limited allowances, few promotion opportunities, and stress, many teachers are leaving the Ghanaian education sector. Other research in Ghana has shown that teacher shortages are common in the teaching sector (Ngmenkpieo et al., 2023; Sam et al., 2014). Ngmenkpieo et al. (2023), in their study of Nkoranza North District, found that salary increases, professional development opportunities, valuing the teaching profession, involving teachers in policy decisions, and prioritizing teachers' welfare reduce teachers' intentions to leave. The study by Sam et al. (2014), in public senior high schools in Kwabre East District of the Ashanti Region, Ghana, explored teacher retention and attrition, revealing that many teachers tend to leave if their schemes of service, salaries, and classroom conditions are not improved. These researchers identified high educator turnover as a primary cause of shortages, with teachers leaving their positions at high rates. Similarly, an investigation by Kusi et al. (2014) showed a high turnover rate among teaching staff at the University of Winneba, Ghana. The finding indicated that the Ghana Education Service (GES) loses many teachers to other jobs each year. This alarming trend negatively impacts the special education curriculum, disrupting the implementation of individualized educational programs, hampering the development of student-teacher relationships, and resulting in a lack of expertise in special education methods. It is important to note that students with special needs include a wide range of disabilities and challenges, such as learning disabilities, autism, physical disabilities, and emotional or behavioral disorders. Therefore, special education educators need to be equipped to handle diverse needs within a single classroom, which can be overwhelming and stressful due to the heavy workload (Appiah, 2017). Many students with exceptionalities require individualized education plans involving specific accommodations and modifications, adding to the stress faced by special educators and potentially leading to burnout. Based on this background, this study aims to examine the effect of work-related stress and burnout on the turnover intentions of special education educators in the Northern Region of Ghana.

This investigation aims to determine the influence of work-related stress and burnout on the turnover intentions of special education educators in the Northern Region of Ghana.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Determine the association between stress and burnout among special educators in the Northern Region of Ghana
2. Determine the relationship between stress and turnover intentions among special educators in the Northern Region of Ghana.
3. Find out the relationship between burnout and turnover intention among special educators in the Northern Region of Ghana.

1.1 Research Questions

What is the relationship between stress and burnout among special educators in the Northern Region of Ghana?

1. What is the relationship between stress and turnover intentions among special educators in the Northern Region of Ghana?
2. What is the relationship between burnout and turnover intention among special educators in the Northern Region of Ghana?

2. Methods

2.1 Research Design

This study used a cross-sectional design, utilising a survey method for data collection. Prasad, Kumar and Kumar (2024) described survey research as a technique for gathering data by asking respondents for information through written or verbal questions. The variables of interest in the study include job-related stress, burnout, and turnover intentions among special education educators. By simultaneously collecting data on these variables, this design allows for the identification of patterns and trends within the dataset, enhancing the comprehension of the associations among stress, burnout, and turnover intentions (Emmel, 2014).

2.2 Study Population

The population is regarded as the complete group of entities or persons that a researcher has some interest in and plans to research (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The population of the study comprised 25 special education educators in Tamale and Savelugu in the Northern Region of Ghana.

Table 1: Population distribution of special education educators

Gender	Number of Special Education Teachers
Male	14
Female	11
Total	**25**

2.3 Sample Size

In this study, the entire population was used as the sample size. Given the small population size and to ensure maximum representation, all 25 special education educators were used for the study. This approach is supported by literature, which suggests that using the entire population as the sample size is acceptable when the population is small (Kish,1965). A total of twenty-five special education educators took part in the study.

2.4 Sampling Techniques

The purposive sampling technique was employed because the idea was to understand the phenomenon of job-related stress, burnout, and turnover intentions. Therefore, there is a need to

select respondents who have adequate knowledge within these areas. In this regard, purposive sampling was used to choose special education educators in basic schools for the investigation.

2.5 Instrumentation

A self-designed questionnaire was employed to collect the data for the investigation. The questionnaire was used because each respondent received the same set of questions in the same manner. It also allows the researchers to obtain original data from the sample of the population quickly (Borgobello, Pierella & Pozzo, 2019). The questionnaire included closed-ended questions based on a 5-point Likert-type scale. The Likert scale is a widely recognised psychometric instrument for assessing dispositions, views, and perceptions. It presents respondents with a series of items and asks respondents to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement on a scale, typically ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." This scale consists of several ordinal response options ranging from 1 to 5. The questionnaire was divided into four sections: A, B, C, and D. Section A collected demographic information about the respondents, while the remaining sections addressed each of the research objectives.

2.6 Data Collection Procedure

The researchers obtained an introduction letter from the University for Development Studies to assure respondents that the purpose of the data collection was solely for academic purposes. Informed consent was obtained from each respondent taking part in the study. The respondents were informed about the study's aim, nature, potential benefits, and risks. The respondents were again assured of their right to stop taking part in the research at their convenience without consequences. Besides, respondents' anonymity and confidentiality were assured. In addition, measures were ensured to prevent potential discomfort to participants. Among some were ensuring that the interview questions are sensitively phrased and devoid of invasive questioning. The respondents were also aided with available support services in the improbable event that they experienced any harm after or during their participation in the study.

The researchers gathered data from primary sources, specifically focusing on responses related to work-related stress, burnout, and turnover intentions. The researchers visited the respondents at their respective schools and administered the instruments. The purpose of the research was clarified, and the respondents agreed to participate in the investigation. After obtaining their consent, the questionnaires were distributed. Each participant was given one week to finish and return the questionnaire. This was to ensure that participants had sufficient time to provide thoughtful responses. A total of 25 questionnaires were distributed, and all 25 completed questionnaires were successfully retrieved within the data collection period, resulting in a 100% response rate.

2.7 Validity and Reliability

Validity demonstrates how research items truly measure the constructs that such items are intended to measure and how realistic the findings will be (Field, cited in Taherdoost, 2016). Creswell and Poth (2016) mentioned that the fundamental procedure embraced by researchers to determine the

content validity of any research instrument relies on professional opinion. To this end, the researchers solicited expert views from other researchers who are in the area of study. This enhanced the face validity of the study.

Reliability demonstrates that the study can be repeated with the same outcome since it is the extent to which results are consistent over time (Kothari, 2013). Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the internal consistency. The value of Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0 to 1. A high alpha indicates high internal consistency. Generally, an alpha of 0.7 or higher is deemed acceptable for a study (Pallant, 2020). Concerning the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the PLS Algorithm is run to generate Cronbach's Alpha. It is calculated using the formula:

$$CR = \frac{\text{Sum of squared loadings on construct}}{\text{Sum of squared loadings on construct} + \text{Sum of squared residual}}$$

The Cronbach alpha output for the variables is displayed in Table 2

Table 2: Test Results for Construct Reliability

Constructs	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Occupational Stress	5	0.763	0.858	0.673
Burnout	5	0.850	0.902	0.754
Turnover Intentions	5	0.798	0.908	0.832

2.8 Data Analysis and Presentation

The survey data were organised and analysed using the Statistical Product and Service Solution Version 29. The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was utilised to achieve the objectives of the investigation. PLS-SEM is a multivariate analysis technique that integrates multiple regression and factor analysis to analyze structural linkages and relationships. Hair et al. (2016) noted that PLS-SEM is preferred by many scholars because it can model multiple exogenous variables along with several endogenous variables in path analysis, showing causality and mediating effects, unlike OLS, which only models' linear relationships among variables.

In using Smart PLS software, the initial step was to define the structural model representing the hypothesised relationships between stress and burnout, stress and turnover intention, and burnout and turnover intention. This step involved specifying the directional paths between the variables and identifying any control variables or moderators that might influence the relationships.

Next, Smart PLS software was used to estimate the model parameters. The fitness of the model was then assessed using goodness-of-fit measures such as the goodness-of-fit index (GoF) and the standardized root mean square residual. Subsequently, the bootstrapping algorithm was run to examine the path coefficients, which indicate the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables, and to determine whether these relationships were statistically significant as suggested by Hair et al. (2019).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Relationship between stress and burnout, stress and turnover intentions, as well as burnout and turnover intention

Partial Least Squares (PLS) Structural equation model (SEM) was employed to test the associations between stress and burnout, stress and turnover intentions, as well as burnout and turnover intention among special education educators. The assessment involved a two-stage PLS-SEM analysis: (1) the measurement model assessment, followed by (2) the structural model assessment.

3.2 Evaluation of Measurement Model

The measurement model was first examined to obtain the fitness of the constructs specified in the model, as suggested by Lowry & Gaskin (2014). The examination of the measurement model was critical since it offered the researchers an opportunity to ascertain the validity and consistency of the survey tool in measuring the variables it was intended to measure. The measurement model was evaluated by examining indicators 'reliability, internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. These are illustrated in Tables 3-6.

Table 3: Indicators Reliability Assessment

Constructs	Occupational Stress	Burnout	Turnover Intention
OCI	0.923		
OC2	0.873		
OC3	0.735		
OC4	0.916		
OC5	0.833		
BO1		0.894	
BO2		0.912	
BO3		0.796	
BO4		0. 807	
BO5		0. 966	

TI1	0.893
TI2	0.915
TI3	0.933
TI4	0.732
TI5	0.988

Field Survey, 2025

According to Gefen and Straub (2005), indicator reliability shows the strength and ability of an indicator to consistently measure a construct. The reliability of indicators was examined using their outer loadings with a 0.7 threshold, as argued by Gefen and Straub. Indicators that were poorly loaded below 0.7 were all deleted, and the PLS-Model was run again. The indicator reliability results are submitted in Table 3. All five constructs were each measured using several items. However, none of the items loaded poorly below the 0.7 threshold as suggested by Geffen and Straub (2005).

Table 4: Test Results for Convergent Validity

Constructs	**No. of items**	**Cronbach's Alpha**	**Composite Reliability**	**Average Variance Extracted (AVE)**
Occupational Stress	5	0.763	0.858	0.673
Burnout	5	0.850	0.902	0.754
Turnover Intentions	5	0.798	0.908	0.832

Field Survey, 2025

Convergent validity was examined using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) as recommended by Sarstedt, Ringle & Hair (2017). Convergent validity ensures that a group of items is effective in measuring the same construct (Cheung & Wang, 2017). AVE was used to assess the constructs' convergent validity with an adopted 0.50 threshold. As contained in Table 4, the constructs all have their AVE exceeding 0.50, signifying that adequate convergent reliability exists.

Table 5: Discriminant Validity Results

Constructs	Occupati Stress	Burnout	Turnover intention
Occupational Stress			
Burnout	0.608		
Turnover intentions	0.288	0.313	

Field Survey, 2025

Discriminant validity explains the uniqueness of a construct relative to other constructs in the structural model (Zait & Bertha, 2011). The proposed model exhibits good discriminant validity if the variables' heterotrait-monotrait exogenous construct (HTMT) scores are below 0.9 (Sarstedt, Ringle & Hair 2017). The outcomes of the discriminant validity test are shown in Table 5. Since the HTMT scores for all the dimensions in Table 5 are below 0.9, adequate discriminant validity is confirmed.

Evaluation of Structural Model

Having established the level of validity and reliability of the variables through the measurement model assessment, the next step was to examine the structural model to determine the level of significance and associations among the variables in the model. The structural model was examined by performing a multicollinearity test, R^2 (coefficient of determination), model fit test, and the predictive relevance of the model (Hair, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2013).

Table 6: Multicollinearity Test

Constructs	Burnout	Turnover Int.
Occupational Stress	2.59	1.074
Burnout	1.957	
Turnover intentions	2.13	

Field Survey, 2025

Gunst (2018) observed that multicollinearity is present when variables within the model are highly correlated. Gunst highlighted that the multicollinearity test eliminates the issue of biased estimation of coefficients and is determined by considering each construct's Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). A minimum VIF of less than 5 is needed to avoid multicollinearity. The multicollinearity test results are presented in Table 6. All the variables have their VIF value being less than 5, implying that no problem with multicollinearity is present.

Testing for Relationships

Objective 1: Relationship between stress and burnout

Table 7: Test for Relationships

Relationships	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Decision
Objective 1: Occupational stress -> burnout	0.476	0.484	0.115	4.129	0.002	Supported

Field Survey, 2025

The partial least squares structural equation modeling bootstrapping procedure was utilised to test the associations and level of significance among variables within the hypothesised model using a two-tailed t-distribution. Bootstrapping is explained as a non-parametric technique that provides P values, which makes testing and examination of the relationships among variables possible. The path coefficients that have P values less than 0.05 are considered substantial (Boos & Stefanski, 2011). The outcomes are presented in Table 7.

The outcomes show that the hypothesised link between strain and burnout is supported at $p<0.05$. Thus, there is a statistically significant influence of work-related stress on burnout.

Objective 2: Relationship between Stress and Turnover Intentions

Table 8: Test for Relationships

Relationships	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Decision
Objective 2: Occupational stress -> turn over intentions	0.596	0.618	0.055	10.832	0.004	Supported

Field Survey, 2025

The partial least squares structural equation modelling bootstrapping method was further used to test the associations between stress and turnover intentions and the significance level in the hypothesized model using a two-tailed t-distribution. The path coefficients that have P values less than 0.05 were deemed significant, as argued by Boos & Stefanski (2011). The outcomes are

presented in Table 8. The results reveal that the hypothesised association between work-related stress and turnover intentions is supported at p<0.05. Thus, there is a statistically significant effect of work-related stress on turnover intentions

Objective 3: Relationship between Burnout and Turnover Intention

Table 9: Test for Relationships

Relationships	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Decision
Objective 3: Burnout -> turn over intentions	0.277	0.285	0.115	2.409	0.001	Supported

Field Survey, 2025

The partial least squares structural equation modelling bootstrapping method was further used to test the association between burnout and turnover intentions and the level of significance in the hypothesised model using a two-tailed t-distribution. The path coefficients that have P values less than 0.05 were considered significant, as argued by Boos and Stefanski (2011). The results are presented in Table 9. The outcome indicates that the hypothesised relationship between burnout and turnover intentions is supported at p<0.05. Thus, burnout has a statistically significant effect on turnover intentions.

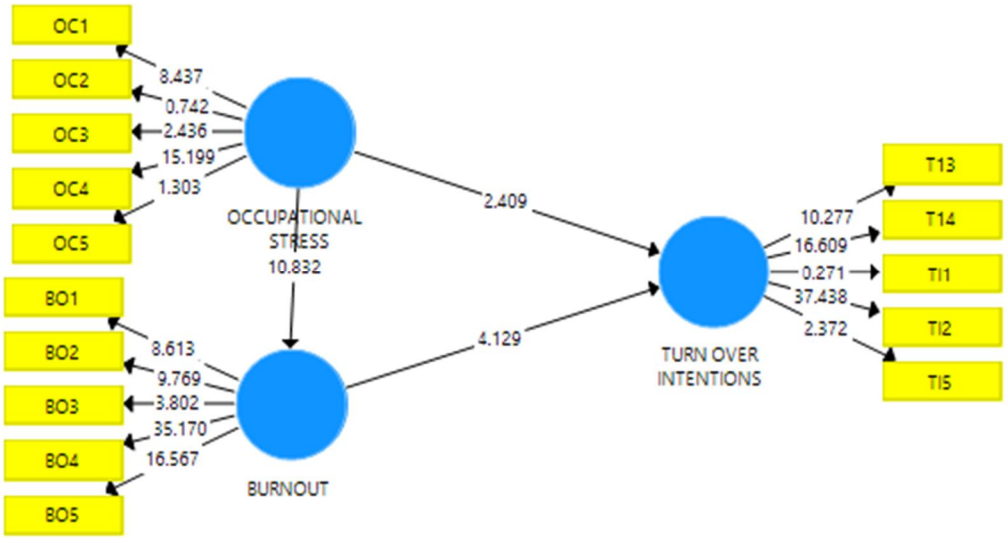

Figure 4.1 PLS Algorithm Result for direct relationships

R^2 (Coefficient of Determination)

Table 10: R^2 and R^2 Adjusted Results

Endogenous construct	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Turnover Intentions	0.909	0.907
Burnout	0.788	0.768

Field Survey, 2025

The R^2 (coefficient of determination) was examined to determine the predictive power of the structural model. R^2 shows the combined effects or impacts of the exogenic variables on the endogenic variable (Mela & Kopalle, 2002). As shown in Table 10, the R^2 value for special education educators' turnover intentions is 0.909. This means that both occupational stress and burnout combined explain over 90% of the variance in special education educators' turnover intentions. Similarly, the R^2 value for burnout is 0.788. This means that occupational stress explains over 78% of the variance in special education teachers' burnout. The R^2 values for both burnout and turnover intentions can be considered as being of substantial effect, highlighting the overwhelming effect of work-related stress and burnout on special education educators' turnover intentions.

Model fitness

Table 11: Model fit summary

	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.013
d_ULS	3.181
d_G	1.665
Chi-Square	1503.741
NFI	0.642

Field Survey, 2025

Standardized Root Mean Square Residuals (SRMR) were used to examine the model fitness. SRMR measures the average differences between the hypothesised and observed covariance matrices (Hair et al., 2014). According to Hair et al., the model is considered to have a good fit if the SRMR value is below 0.08. The model fitness test results are presented in Table 11. Since the model SRMR value is 0.013, the model has a good fit.

4. Discussion of Findings

4.1 The associations between stress and burnout among special education educators

The first objective of this study was to determine the relationships between stress and burnout among special education educators. The result revealed a statistically significant link between stress and burnout. This is supported by Owusu's (2021) study, which discovered a significant connection between work-related trauma and burnout among senior secondary school educators in the Cape Coast Municipality. This underscores the critical need for targeted interventions to address the well-being of special education educators in Northern Region of Ghana. The finding buttressed previous research that highlighted the detrimental impact of job-related stressors on burnout among various occupational groups, including educators. For instance, Yang et al. (2015) carried out an investigation examining the link between stress and burnout among healthcare professionals in Singapore, and the results indicated that healthcare professionals enduring high stress levels were more prone to burnout symptoms, such as emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation. In the context of special education, the challenges faced by the educators are often compounded by additional stressors, including high student needs, limited resources, and increased administrative demands. Studies by Burke et al. (2017) have highlighted the unique stressors experienced by special education educators and their susceptibility to burnout due to the nature of their work. The implication of this finding underscores the critical need for targeted interventions to lessen work-related stress and cultivate a supportive work setting for special education teachers. This means implementing interventions geared toward the diverse difficulties faced by special education teachers can enhance their resilience and job satisfaction, ultimately reducing burnout. The finding also suggests that as stress levels rise, special education educators are more likely to contemplate leaving their positions. Understanding and addressing the sources of stress in this profession may therefore be crucial in retaining skilled educators of special schools.

4.2 The Relationships between stress and turnover intention among special education educators

The finding revealed a significant statistical outcome of stress on turnover intention among special education educators. This finding resonates with Mahmood et al. (2022) study among teachers in Pakistan on job pressure and turnover intentions among school teachers, which revealed a moderate level of positive connection between educators' job stress and turnover intentions, as well as job stress, which is a significant determinant of educators' turnover intentions. Previous studies have elucidated the intricate relationship between stress and turnover intention within the context of education. For example, research (Oh & Wolf, 2023) identified the unique stressors experienced by special education educators, such as high student needs, resource constraints, and administrative demands. These stressors have been linked to increased burnout and heightened turnover intention among special education educators, reflecting the challenges inherent in this specialised field. Following the outcomes of this study, it is argued that high turnover intention rates among special education educators have detrimental effects on schools and students. Teacher turnover intention disrupts continuity of care and can hinder academic progress for students with diverse learning needs. The finding implies that addressing the root causes of turnover intention, such as

occupational stress, is essential for retaining talented special education educators within the field and also fostering stability within special education programs in Ghana.

4.3 The Relationships between burnout and turnover intention among special education educators

The discovery of a statistically positive outcome of burnout on special education educators' turnover intentions, as revealed by this study, highlights the critical need for designed interventions to address the well-being of educators in this vital sector. The finding is consistent with previous research that has highlighted the detrimental effect of burnout on turnover intention among occupational groups, including special education educators. For instance, a study (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014) revealed a positive statistical effect of burnout on turnover intentions among teachers who teach students with disabilities. Their finding proved that when teachers experience burnout, they feel emotionally drained, detached from their work, and disillusioned with their ability to make a meaningful difference in the lives of their students. The findings by Li et al. (2024) also suggested that the relationship between burnout and turnover intention among special education educators is a significant area of concern within the field of education. Burnout, characterized by emotional fatigue, isolation, and reduced personal success, is a dominant phenomenon among educators, specifically those working in specialised fields such as special education. The implication of the finding is that mechanisms should be put in all work places to check burnout in order to reduce the attrition the employees. In the context of special needs educational institutions, management of the schools should ensure that the educators welfare are catered for to avoid turnover of the teaching staff.

5. Conclusions

The investigation revealed a statistically significant positive connection between stress and burnout. This implies that as stress levels increase, burnout also tends to increase. Such a finding underscores the importance of addressing stress to mitigate burnout among special education educators. Also, among special education educators, the research identified a statistically significant positive relationship between stress and turnover intention. This suggests that as stress levels rise, special education educators are more likely to contemplate quitting their jobs for better jobs elsewhere. Understanding and addressing the sources of stress in this profession may therefore be crucial in retaining skilled educators. Additionally, the investigation found a statistically significant positive association between burnout and turnover intentions among special education educators. This indicates that higher levels of burnout are linked with a greater likelihood of considering leaving one's job. Efforts to prevent or alleviate burnout among special education educators may contribute to reducing turnover rates in this profession.

5.1 Recommendations

Based on the outcomes of the investigation, the following recommendations were formulated**:**

Firstly, special education institutions managements should develop and implement stress management programs tailored specifically for special education educators. These programs could

include strategies such as mindfulness techniques, time management workshops, and support groups aimed at helping special education educators effectively cope with and reduce their stress levels.

Secondly, recognising the effect of burnout on turnover intentions, it is essential for the Special Education Directorate to enhance support systems within special educational institutions for the educators. This may involve establishing mentorship programs, providing access to counselling services, and fostering a culture of open communication where educators feel comfortable discussing their challenges and seeking assistance when needed. Finally, to address stress and burnout, efforts should be made by the heads of special schools to promote work-life balance among special education educators. This may be in the form of encouraging flexible work schedules, regular breaks during the workday, and opportunities for professional development and self-care. Additionally, administrators should strive to create positive work setting values and prioritise the well-being of teachers, thereby reducing the likelihood of burnout and turnover intentions.

Conflict of Interest

We co-authors have seen and accepted the contents of the manuscript provided and there exists no conflict of interest to the report. We certify that the submission is original and it is not under review at any other publication.

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