

## Emotional Exhaustion and Its Impact on Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment in Indonesian Elementary Schools

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Teacher emotional exhaustion holds profound significance in educational contexts due to its widespread impact on individual well-being, organizational commitment, professional effectiveness, and the overall quality of education.

**Objective:** This study intends to describe the effect of teachers' emotional exhaustion on teachers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the elementary schools of Merauke District, South Papua Province, Indonesia.

**Methods:** To attain the objective of the study, we employed a quantitative approach utilizing a survey research design. Two problem statements guiding this research are as follows: (a) Does teacher's emotional exhaustion negatively affect teachers' job satisfaction in the elementary schools of Merauke district, Papua, Indonesia? and (b) Does teacher's emotional exhaustion negatively affect teachers' organizational commitment in the elementary schools of Merauke District, South Papua Province, Indonesia? Three quantitative questionnaires were administered to 220 teachers, and samples were drawn conveniently from among the elementary school teachers of Merauke District, South Papua Province.

**Results:** The results reveal that teachers' emotional exhaustion negatively affects both teachers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the elementary schools of Merauke district, Papua.

**Conclusion:** Teacher well-being and commitment are critical pillars of school effectiveness and student achievement. When teachers feel satisfied and supported, they are more likely to remain dedicated to their roles and foster student success. Conversely, dissatisfaction often leads to disengagement and increased absenteeism. To sustain high levels of teacher satisfaction and commitment, it is essential to implement strategic interventions that address and alleviate emotional exhaustion.

**Unique Contribution:** This study addresses that existing knowledge gap by investigating the potential impacts of emotional exhaustion on teachers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment, particularly in the unique socio-educational context of remote areas in Papua. Understanding this relationship is crucial for developing targeted interventions that support teacher well-being, reduce absenteeism, and ultimately improve educational outcomes.

**Key Recommendations:** The results of this study may be useful for teachers to know how they can interact with fellow teachers and students and to what extent these emotions directly affect their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The findings of this study may also be useful for school principals and education policymakers at the local government level to take some strategic steps in securing teachers' emotions to improve job satisfaction and organizational commitment and, in turn, improve students' ability in reading, writing, and arithmetic (3Rs).

**Keywords:** teacher, emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, elementary schools

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## INTRODUCTION

Teaching is widely recognized as a demanding profession, often accompanied by significant emotional and psychological strain. In regions such as Papua and West Papua, this challenge is particularly acute. Reports of high teacher absenteeism in primary schools across these regions (UNICEF, 2012) have raised serious concerns among educational stakeholders. For instance, Werang et al. (2017) found that nearly one in three teachers in remote elementary schools in southern Papua were absent during school visits, suggesting systemic issues that may be linked to teacher well-being.

One prominent factor influencing teacher absenteeism and disengagement is emotional exhaustion—a core dimension of burnout (Klusmann et al., 2023; Maslach & Goldberg, 1998; Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Schaufeli et al., 2009). There are various definitions of emotional exhaustion. Demerouti et al. (2010) define emotional exhaustion as “a consequence of intense physical, affective and cognitive strain, such as a long-term consequence of prolonged exposure to certain job demands,” while Jin et al. (2020) assert that emotional exhaustion refers to the deterioration of psychological energy or the draining of emotional resources.

Among the three key features of burnout—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Mérída-López & Extremera, 2017)—emotional exhaustion is often understood as a state of feeling emotionally drained (Cui, 2022). This exhaustion is frequently triggered by persistent pressures such as overwhelming administrative responsibilities, the need to address diverse student needs, and an excessive workload (Hui et al., 2022). Teacher emotional exhaustion can stem from a range of factors, including demanding job responsibilities, complex emotional dynamics with leaders and colleagues, the challenge of meeting diverse student needs and managing difficult behaviors, as well as increasing administrative pressures and excessive workloads (Barello et al., 2021; Chaves-Montero et al., 2025; Choi et al., 2018; Yang, 2023; Zhao & Wang, 2024). When teachers experience high levels of emotional exhaustion, their overall well-being and professional commitment tend to decline. This, in turn, negatively affects their ability to contribute to school effectiveness and to support students’ development and success (Wullur & Werang, 2020).

Although numerous studies have explored either the contributing factors to teacher emotional exhaustion (e.g., Basim et al., 2013; Cuadrado et al., 2022; Dexter, 2020; Menon et al., 2024; Yao, 2015) or the impact of teacher emotional exhaustion (e.g., Avdi & Sudipto, 2013; Goetz et al., 2015; Gorji, 2011; Keller et al., 2014; Khan et al., 2014; Qureshi & Sajjad, 2015; Shamsafrouz & Haghverdi, 2015), there remains a need for deeper investigation into how emotional exhaustion specifically affects teachers’ job satisfaction and organizational commitment. While prior research has examined the causes and consequences of emotional exhaustion in educational settings, less attention has been given to how this psychological state may directly impact teachers’ job satisfaction and their commitment to the teaching profession.

To address this gap, the present study investigates how emotional exhaustion influences teachers’ job satisfaction and organizational commitment within the challenging socio-educational context of remote areas in Papua. Building on Werang et al.’s (2017, 2022) and Wea et al. (2020) findings, which highlight poor working conditions—such as isolation, inadequate housing, and limited community support—as major stressors, this research seeks to understand the psychological process through which these conditions may erode teacher motivation and engagement. Understanding this relationship is crucial for developing targeted interventions that support teacher well-being, reduce absenteeism, and ultimately improve educational outcomes.

This study focuses on elementary schools in the Merauke District of South Papua Province, Indonesia, which serve as both the population and the sample. Guided by a quantitative research approach and a survey design, the study seeks to answer two primary research questions: (a) Does teachers’ emotional exhaustion have a statistically significant

negative effect on their job satisfaction? and (b) Does teachers' emotional exhaustion have a statistically significant negative effect on their organizational commitment?

### Objective of the Study

In this study, we intend to explore how teachers' emotional exhaustion affects their job satisfaction and organizational commitment, taking the elementary school teachers in Merauke District, Indonesia, as the population and samples. In specific, the study sought to depict:

1. The impact of teacher emotional exhaustion on their job satisfaction in elementary schools of Merauke District, South Papua Province, Indonesia;
2. The impact of teacher emotional exhaustion on their organizational commitment in elementary schools of Merauke District, South Papua Province, Indonesia.

## HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Emotional Exhaustion Impacting Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a global concept comprised of various facets (Baxi & Atre, 2024) such as compensation, manager's concern for people, job design, social relationships, perceived long-range opportunities, perceived opportunities elsewhere, working conditions, and levels of aspiration and needs achievement (Rue & Byars, 2003). Hoppock (1935) defines job satisfaction as any number of psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstances that lead an employee to express their satisfaction with the job, while Jensen (2000) defines job satisfaction as "a sense of personal growth most often measured by the extent of new challenges and learning situations experienced." In a different vein, Ellickson and Logsdon (2002) view job satisfaction as the extent to which an employee enjoys their work.

Job satisfaction, in this paper, refers to the teachers' feelings and perceptions about their teaching work. The area of teacher job satisfaction is a conceptually broad domain, encompassing both the intrinsic characteristics of the job and the surrounding work environment, which a teacher finds either rewarding and satisfying or frustrating and dissatisfying (Snipes et al., 2005). From this viewpoint, the school principals are responsible for fostering teachers' positive perceptions of the teaching profession, enabling them to produce high-quality education.

Emotional exhaustion is widely recognized in the literature as a significant determinant of job satisfaction (e.g., Schulze-Hagenest et al., 2023; Skaalvik, 2020; Werang et al., 2024a). As we pursued to offer empirical evidence on how teachers' emotional exhaustion impacts their job satisfaction at the elementary schools of Merauke District, South Papua Province, Indonesia, we intend to probe the following research hypothesis:

H1: Teachers' emotional exhaustion has a significant negative impact on their job satisfaction at elementary schools of Merauke District, South Papua Province, Indonesia.

### Emotional Exhaustion Impacting Organizational Commitment

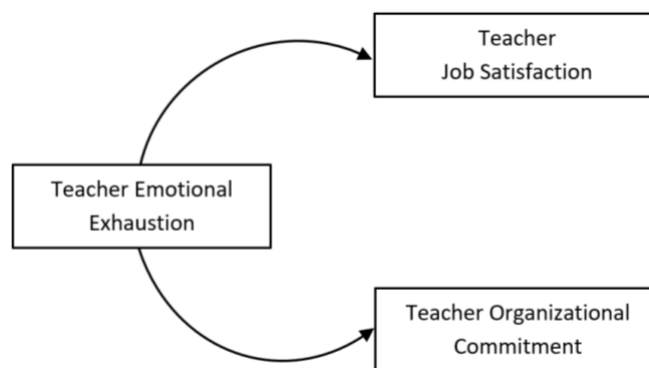
Organizational commitment has been defined in many different ways. Scholl (1981), for example, defines organizational commitment as the stabilizing force to maintain behavioral direction when expectancy conditions are not met or do not function adequately, while Brickman (1987) defines organizational commitment as a force that stabilizes an employee's behavior under circumstances where they would otherwise be tempted to change that behavior. Allen and Meyer (1990, 1996) endeavor to integrate the existing conceptualization of organizational commitment into a three-component model, namely: (a) affective commitment, an emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in a particular organization; (b) continuance commitment: perceived costs associated with leaving the current organization; and (c) normative commitment: perceived obligations to remain in the current organization.

The term 'organizational commitment' here refers to a teacher's commitment to teaching. Teacher commitment has been defined as a composite variable made up of the total score for organizational, professional, and union commitment (Figueira et al., 2015; Kalai et al., 2021). Organizational commitment refers to a teacher's commitment to a particular school and its vision (Lian et al., 2024), while professional commitment refers to the extent to which a teacher identifies with their teaching profession and accepts its values (Morrow & Goetz, 1988). Union commitment refers to a teacher's commitment to their professional associations or unions (Huang et al., 2021).

Emotional exhaustion is also recognized as closely related to teachers' organizational commitment (Majeed et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2014; Sarisik et al., 2019; Wullur & Werang, 2020). As we pursued to offer empirical evidence on how teachers' emotional exhaustion impacts their commitment to teaching at the elementary schools of Merauke District, South Papua Province, Indonesia, we intend to probe the following research hypothesis:

H2: Teachers' emotional exhaustion has a significant negative impact on their commitment to teaching at elementary schools of Merauke District, South Papua Province, Indonesia.

Based on the above proposed research hypotheses and existing studies exploring how teacher emotional exhaustion impact their job satisfaction and organizational commitment, the theoretical framework of the study is illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Theoretical Framework of the Study**

The theoretical framework of the study as elucidated in Figure 1 suggests how teacher emotional exhaustion impacts their job satisfaction and commitment to teaching. Since this theoretical framework is based on the existing previous findings and proposed research hypotheses, an actual study is needed to determine the real impact of teacher emotional exhaustion on their job satisfaction and commitment to teaching at the elementary schools of Merauke District, South Papua Province, Indonesia. In other words, the above proposed theoretical framework should be validated empirically to determine whether the teacher emotional exhaustion impacts significantly their job satisfaction and commitment to teaching at the elementary schools of Merauke District, South Papua Province, Indonesia.

## RESEARCH METHODS

To better understand how teachers' emotional exhaustion affects teacher's job satisfaction and teacher's organizational commitment in the elementary schools of the Merauke District, South Papua Province, we employed a quantitative approach using a survey research design (Agung et al., 2024; Werang et al., 2023a.b.; Werang et al., 2024b) as it sought to establish the effect of teachers' emotional exhaustion on teacher's job satisfaction and teacher's organizational commitment. We adopted a survey research design as it offers (a) high

representativeness, (b) cost-effectiveness, (c) convenience in data collection, (d) strong statistical significance, (e) minimal observer subjectivity, and (f) precise results (Margunayasa et al., 2024; Werang et al., 2025; Wolomasi et al., 2024).

Three survey questionnaires (teachers' emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment) were distributed to 220 elementary school teachers. Samples were drawn conveniently because many schools were in rural and remote areas. Teacher's emotional exhaustion was measured by modifying the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) into seven positive statements. The inventory utilized a four-point Likert scale: 4 = Strongly Agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree. Respondents were asked to respond to each statement on a scale of four alternatives: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD). Sample items include "I feel I get tired of my current job," "I feel that I have lost my enthusiasm about my profession," "I feel spiritually exhausted when I arrive at home after work," "I feel I get exhausted at work both emotionally and cognitively," "My shifts at work make me exhausted," "Working with people all day long constitutes a serious burden for me," and "It makes me stressful to be in a direct communication with people." We used Cronbach's alpha coefficient to assess the internal reliability of the instrument. The reliability of Cronbach's alpha of the data was 0.751.

Teacher's job satisfaction was measured by modifying Spector's job satisfaction survey (JSS) items into 18 positive statements. The inventory utilized a four-point Likert scale: 4 = Strongly Agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree. Respondents were asked to respond to each statement on a scale of four alternatives: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD). Sample items include "I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do," "My supervisor is competent in doing his/her job," "When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive," "I like the people I work with," "The benefits we receive are as good as most other organizations," "Communications seem good within this organization," "Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted," "I like doing the things I do at work," "The goals of this organization are clearly defined," "I feel a sense of pride in doing my job," "I am satisfied with my chances for promotion," "My job is enjoyable." We used Cronbach's alpha coefficient to assess the internal reliability of the instrument. The reliability of Cronbach's alpha of the data was 0.788.

Teacher's organizational commitment was measured by modifying Hayday's (2003) items into 15 positive statements). The inventory utilized a four-point Likert scale: 4 = Strongly Agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree. Respondents were asked to respond to each statement on a scale of four alternatives: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD). Sample items include "I tell my friends this is a good organization to work for," "I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization," and "I understand how my job contributes to the organization's goals and objectives," "I have a good understanding of where the organization is going," "I find that my values and organization's values are very similar," "I am willing to put in a great deal of extra effort to help this organization be successful," "I am glad that I chose to work here rather than one of the other jobs I was considering at the time I joined," "I care about the fate of this organization," "my organization inspires the best job performance from me," "I work in a well-managed organization," and "morale in this organization is good." We used Cronbach's alpha coefficient to assess the internal reliability of the instrument. The reliability of Cronbach's alpha of the data was 0.723.

Obtained data were analyzed statistically using the SPSS version 21 for Windows. Two research hypotheses that were examined in this study are as follows: (a) Teachers' emotional exhaustion has a significant negative impact on their job satisfaction at elementary schools of Merauke District, South Papua Province, Indonesia; and (b) Teachers' emotional exhaustion



has a significant negative impact on their commitment to teaching at elementary schools of Merauke District, South Papua Province, Indonesia.

### RESEARCH RESULTS

As previously mentioned, the obtained data were subjected to statistical analysis using the SPSS version 21 for Windows. The results of data analysis of the impact of teachers' emotional exhaustion on their job satisfaction and commitment to teaching at the elementary schools of Merauke District, South Papua Province, Indonesia, are presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

**Table 1. The effect of teachers' emotional exhaustion on their job satisfaction Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	76.657	3.046		25.164	.000
Emotional Exhaustion	-.635	.138	-.297	-4.599	.000

Note: a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

The data presented in Table 1 indicate that teachers' emotional exhaustion has a significant negative impact on their job satisfaction at the elementary schools of Merauke District, South Papua Province, Indonesia. This is evidenced by a negative  $\beta$  coefficient of -0.297, which is statistically significant at the  $\alpha = 0.05$  level. The negative  $\beta$  value confirms that higher levels of emotional exhaustion are associated with lower levels of job satisfaction among teachers. Furthermore, the  $\beta$  coefficient suggests that emotional exhaustion accounts for approximately 29.7% of the variance in job satisfaction, while the remaining 70.3% is likely influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

**Table 2. The impact of teachers' emotional exhaustion on their organizational commitment Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	63.961	2.060		31.044	.000
Emotional Exhaustion	-.448	.093	-.309	-4.797	.000

Note: a. Dependent Variable: Teachers' Commitment

The data displayed in Table 2 indicate that teachers' emotional exhaustion has a significant negative impact on their commitment to teaching at the elementary schools of Merauke District, South Papua Province, Indonesia. This is evidenced by a negative  $\beta$  coefficient of -0.309, which is statistically significant at the  $\alpha = 0.05$  level. The negative  $\beta$  value confirms that higher levels of emotional exhaustion are associated with lower levels of job satisfaction among teachers. Furthermore, the  $\beta$  coefficient suggests that emotional exhaustion accounts for approximately 30.9% of the variance in job satisfaction, while the remaining 69.1% is likely influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Teachers' job satisfaction and commitment to the profession are essential prerequisites for effectively meeting the complex demands of teaching. As aforementioned, this study aimed to disclose potential impact of teachers' emotional exhaustion on their job satisfaction and commitment to teaching at the elementary schools of Merauke District, South Papua Province, Indonesia. Emotional exhaustion is a prevalent psychological condition in the teaching profession (Agyapong et al., 2022; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016), especially for teachers who are teaching in the remote areas. This psychological condition has been predicted to strongly affect teachers' behaviors concerning teachers' job satisfaction (Allam et al., 2023; Prajogo, 2019) and organizational commitment (Majeed et al., 2023; Wullur & Werang, 2020). We suggested two hypotheses to be examined in this study. The proposed hypotheses were meant to provide an unblemished depiction of how teachers' emotional exhaustion affects their job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the elementary schools of Merauke district, Papua, Indonesia.

The sense of being emotionally overextended and exhausted due to their experience can determine the levels of teachers' job satisfaction. As the  $\beta$  coefficient value of this research is significantly negative at the level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ , the first hypothesis that teachers' emotional exhaustion has a significant negative impact on their job satisfaction at elementary schools of Merauke District, South Papua Province, Indonesia is confirmed, whereas the opposed hypothesis is unconfirmed. It reveals that when the research variable "teachers' emotional exhaustion" increased by one point, the research variable "teachers' job satisfaction" decreased by one point. It means that teachers will grow more dissatisfied when they are emotionally exhausted. On the contrary, teachers will grow more satisfied when they are emotionally happy. In other words, teachers with higher emotional exhaustion would demonstrate lower job satisfaction and vice versa. The findings of this study confirm that lower levels of emotional exhaustion are associated with higher job satisfaction, improved teaching quality, reduced absenteeism, and a decreased intention to quit (Arens & Morin, 2016; Braun et al., 2019; Klusmann et al., 2021a; Salvagioni et al., 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011, 2020).

Besides, the effect of teachers' emotional exhaustion on their organizational commitment is also examined in this research. Teachers with a high level of organizational commitment and low levels of emotional exhaustion are believed to demonstrate high performance to achieve school success, low rate of resignation and absenteeism, and high-quality services (Gemlik et al., 2010). As the  $\beta$  coefficient value was significantly negative at the level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ , then the second hypothesis that teachers' emotional exhaustion will negatively relate to teachers' organizational commitment in the remote elementary schools of Merauke district has also been confirmed. This means that teachers will be more uncommitted to the profession when emotionally exhausted. On the contrary, teachers will grow more committed to the teaching profession when they are emotionally happy. In other words, teachers with higher emotional exhaustion will demonstrate a lower level of organizational commitment to the teaching profession and vice versa. This research aligns with Gemlik et al.'s (2010) and Majeed et al.'s (2023) research findings that a significant negative relationship exists between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment and has meaningful descriptive power towards affective and normative commitment.

Generally speaking, the research findings indicate that high levels of teachers' emotional exhaustion have a strong impact on several negative outcomes for teachers themselves: reduced job satisfaction, lower commitment to the teaching profession, and a greater intention to transfer to another position or leave the profession entirely. Emotional exhaustion can make teachers feel less effective and motivated, which ultimately diminishes their satisfaction with their work. Numerous studies consistently report a negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and both job satisfaction and professional commitment. When teachers feel

emotionally drained, they are more likely to experience dissatisfaction, leading to a decline in their dedication to teaching. This emotional fatigue can also reduce their enthusiasm for their roles and responsibilities, potentially compromising their overall effectiveness and engagement in the classroom.

As it has been recognized that teaching is a demanding and sometimes even exhausting job (Keller et al., 2014; Kim et al. 2023). In the face of emotional distress, positive social interactions at school—such as support from principals and colleagues—can help teachers cope with their challenges and remain committed to the teaching profession. The findings of this study provide insights for the school principals and the educational policymaker at the government level as well to make some strategic efforts to secure teachers' emotion to promote the elementary school teachers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment and, in turn, to improve students' capabilities in reading, writing, and arithmetic (3Rs).

### **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

This paper provided findings from a study using a survey research design in which the effect of teachers' emotional exhaustion on their job satisfaction and organizational commitment was recorded from a sample of 220 elementary school teachers in Merauke District, South Papua Province, Indonesia. The data analysis results suggest that reducing emotional exhaustion among elementary school teachers could significantly and positively enhance their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The results demonstrate that the lower the teachers' emotional exhaustion, the higher their job satisfaction and organizational commitment; the higher their emotional exhaustion, the lower their job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

The practical implication of these findings as follows: (a) since this research deals with teachers' emotional exhaustion, elementary school teachers of Merauke district may benefit from the information on how they might interact with their fellow teachers and students and the extent to which these emotions affect directly to their job satisfaction and organizational commitment; and (b) this research provides an insight for the school principals and the educational policymaker at the government level as well to manage teacher's emotional exhaustion to promote teacher's job satisfaction and their organizational commitment in the elementary schools of Merauke district, Papua, Indonesia. Since research on this topic is still rare in the Merauke context, the results of this research may add to the existing literature on how teachers' emotional exhaustion affects their job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

### **LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This research has limitations in the number of samples and the research area. This research was only conducted in the elementary schools of Merauke district with a limited number of respondents. Therefore, future studies are strongly recommended to include a larger sample size to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, expanding the scope of the research area would provide a deeper understanding of teachers' emotional exhaustion and its impact on various aspects of school life.

### **DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).



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