Research Journal in Advanced Humanities

RJAH

https://doi.org/10.58256/rnycf913

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Section: *Sociology and Community Development*

Exploring the relationship between self-efficacy and burnout among special education teachers for children with Down syndrome

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ABSTRACT

Background: Special education teachers working with Down syndrome students face unique professional and emotional challenges that may increase their risk of burnout. Self-efficacy is essential to teachers' ability to adapt and withstand work pressures. *Objectives:* The study aimed to explore the relationship between self-professional competence and occupational burnout among special education teachers working with Down syndrome students in Kuwait. It also sought to identify differences in levels of professional competence and occupational burnout according to some demographic variables such as gender, years of experience, educational level, and economic status. *Methods:* The study relied on the correlational descriptive approach, in which (167) teachers were selected using the stratified random sample method to ensure the representation of all target groups. Data were collected using two standardized scales: the Occupational Competency Scale for Education for People with Disabilities (TSDES) and the Spanish Occupational Burnout Scale (SBI-DP). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-test and ANOVA, and multiple regression analysis. The results showed that the level of self-professional competence of teachers was average (M = 53.01), with the "Education" dimension recording the highest average (M = 14.15), while the lowest average was in the "Teacher Support" dimension (M = 5.89). Burnout was also average (M=68.18), with the "apathy" dimension recording the highest average (M=18.92). Statistical analyses revealed statistically significant differences due to variables of gender, years of experience, and economic status, while educational qualification did not show a significant effect. The results of the regression analysis also showed that the "professionalism" dimension was the strongest negative predictor of occupational dropout (β = -0.674, p<.001), while the "teacher support" (β=0.416) and "classroom management" (β=0.393) were positive predictors. The model explained 41.2% of the variation in levels of burnout (R^2 = 0.412). *Conclusion:* The study emphasizes the importance of enhancing the professionalism of special education teachers as a protective factor against professional burnout, and recommends designing training programs and developing psychological and professional support strategies that reduce work-related stress and reduce burnout in special education environments.

KEYWORDS: burnout, down syndrome, professionalism, self-professional competence, special education teachers

Research Journal in Advanced Humanities

Volume 6, Issue 3, 2025

ISSN: 2708-5945 (Print)

ISSN: 2708-5953 (Online)

ARTICLE HISTORY

Submitted: **29 May 2025**

Accepted: **16 July 2025**

Published: 02 **August 2025**

HOW TO CITE

Yahya M, K., & Salwa M, A.-M. (2025). Exploring the relationship between self-efficacy and burnout among special education teachers for children with Down syndrome. *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities*, 6(3). https://doi.org/10.58256/rnycf913

Published in Nairobi, Kenya by Royallite Global, an imprint of Royallite Publishers Limited

Introduction

Self-efficacy and burnout are connected psychological concepts that affect performance and well-being, especially in stressful work contexts. According to Bandura's social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is a person's confidence in their ability to complete tasks and overcome obstacles. (Donahue, 2019; Matos et al., 2022)Due to persistent academic pressure, 61.6% of university students in China and 82% experience educational burnout, which affects academic performance and mental and physical health (Zhang et al., 2025). Professional competence is essential to educational quality, especially in special education, where teachers confront double hurdles when working with students with conditions like Down syndrome. Theoretical knowledge, applied skills, and favorable attitudes toward students help professionals with daily work constraints (Bint Abdul Rahman Al-Muqrin, 2024). Self-efficacy and special education teacher burnout are regularly linked. Self-efficacy reduces emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and boosts personal success (Buzzai et al., 2024; Sarıçam & Sakız, 2014). Occupational burnout causes negative emotions, emotional attrition, depersonalization, and diminishing achievement, Teachers' mental health is at risk and requires effective prevention. Teachers' concerns about inclusive practices, disability attitudes, and working conditions can mediate this link (Nuri et al., 2017). Shorter-hour teachers have worse self-efficacy. (Park & Shin, 2020). Burnout dimensions are linked to student age, stress, and school personnel assistance. This concept arises from various interactions between individuals and their work environments. Teachers' effectiveness beliefs and these criteria support student self-organization and learning (Antoniou et al., 2023). Maslash and Jackson (1981) define burnout as low personal achievement (the teacher's perception of failure despite effort), emotional weariness (energy and resource depletion), and depersonalization (Glock & Costa, 2024). Self-efficacy, the feeling that one can handle demands and problems, is linked to a fulfilled life and good mental health. Education burnout causes negative attitudes and low self-efficacy (Zhang et al., 2025).

Self-efficacy views in teachers' ability to improve student learning protect them from burnout. (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). According to Bandura's social cognitive theory (2001), self-efficacy interacts with behavior and environmental factors to affect teachers' stress, prejudice, and burnout. New vocational education and training teachers in Quebec must obtain pedagogical qualifications to transition from technical experts to beginners in teaching. This study assessed 21 teachers' self-efficacy tactics, including performance, resource mobilization, professional development, and positive attitudes (Gagnon & Dubeau, 2023). Self-efficacy protects teachers from burnout, while racial bias increases it. Ethnic minority students are stereotyped as unmotivated. There are numerous disruptions in the classroom and problems with discipline. Teaching these pupils with bias can create a stressful environment (Glock & Costa, 2024). Male teachers report higher self-efficacy than Bathe females. Self-efficacy positively correlates with teaching experience, while it negatively correlates with the number of students receiving support. Pandora's sources of self-efficacy found that physiological/emotional states were associated with self-efficacy in teachers of autistic pupils, but not mastery or social orientation (Mastrothanasis et al., 2021; Ruble et al., 2011). Understanding and addressing the self-efficacy of special education instructors is crucial for improving student outcomes.

Self-efficacy negatively impacts teacher burnout, according to research. Studies demonstrate that self-efficacy factors inversely affect burnout (Aftab et al., 2012). Study confirms (Brown, 2012) moan self-efficacy Linked Personal achievement is favorably linked to reduced emotional exhaustion. Gender variations in fatigue occur, but self-efficacy is not statistically significant, and structural equation modeling implies that self-efficacy substantially predicts occupational burnout. Much research has examined these variables, to assess burnout and its relationship to 262 Portuguese teachers' personal and professional traits (Gagnon & Dubeau, 2023). Burnout increased with age and experience, especially among general education teachers, and was positively associated with special needs pupils in courses. The findings validated MY HEART and suggested more research. You showed Study results (Bint Abdul Rahman Al-Muqrin, 2024). On 118 teachers to Self-efficacy and exhaustion are strongly correlated, with gender and specialization differences. Modeling structural equations indicated that self-efficacy significantly predicts burnout, confirming its importance in special education teacher participation and achievement. A light survey of 372 teachers produced results. Modeling structural equations showed instructors' worries mediated self-efficacy, emotional fatigue, and depersonalization. High relationships were identified between self-efficacy, emotions, fears, and all burnout components. The results show that improving special education teacher efficiency reduces negative attitudes and exhaustion (Buzzai et al., 2024). A study examined self-efficacy and burnout in 70 Northern Cyprus special education instructors by gender, educational

level, hours worked, and student number (Nuri et al., 2017). Stronger working hours were associated with stronger self-efficacy, and seniority affected psychological exhaustion. Self-efficacy, stress, and school support were strongly associated with emotional burnout, depersonalization, and low achievement among special education instructors in 41 meta-analyses (n = 6623 teachers). While reducing burnout, self-efficacy increases stress and insufficient support. This highlights the need for support programs to boost teachers' health and performance and lower turnover (Park & Shin, 2020). A systematic evaluation of 11 research studies found that teacher self-efficacy was negatively connected with "depersonalization" and more strongly with "emotional burnout" than personal achievement. A thorough analysis of 42 samples of 5,665 teachers found moderate to significant relationships between self-efficacy and burnout, supporting the idea that self-efficacy helps reduce occupational burnout (Wang & Wang, 2022).

Greece performed research (Antoniou et al., 2023). It proposed and tested a model for special education teachers' work participation to determine how job satisfaction, burnout, and personal traits affect it. The study included 664 public and private school teachers, and the regression analysis and confirming factors showed strong model fit, confirming the importance of these variables in increasing teacher participation and developing effective training programs. Research showed (Glock & Costa, 2024). A study of 84 Italian and German teachers found that classroom management self-efficacy prevented emotional stress and lower achievement, but racial bias depersonalized teachers. The findings suggest reducing racial bias through interventions to improve teachers' mental health and learning environments, but further research is necessary.

The study specifically aims to investigate the correlation between self-efficacy and burnout in Turkish special education instructors. The Maslach Burnout Inventory and self-efficacy measure were utilized by 118 teachers from various disciplines. With significant gender and specialization differences, self-efficacy strongly predicted combustion dimensions. Modeling structural equations corroborated.

Self-efficacy and burnout affect special education instructors' performance, Research shows teacher self-efficacy beliefs predict burnout (Ruble et al., 2011). Self-efficacy and burnout depend on gender, education, hours spent, and students. Personal, computer, and contextual factors like collective self-efficacy and job organization affect special education teacher burnout (Nuri et al., 2017). Teachers' concerns about inclusive practices affect self-efficacy and fatigue, especially emotional burnout and depersonalization (Benigno et al., 2025). In this high-risk profession, interventions that include individual qualities and work situation are needed to boost self-confidence and prevent burnout.

The association between special education teachers' self-efficacy and burnout has been explored, although most studies have ignored demographic characteristics and burnout levels. Few studies have employed advanced analytical models to predict self-efficacy-based burnout. More importantly, most of this study was done in different cultural and educational contexts, making it hard to relate to current educational and social conditions, this study fills this gap and develops a predictive model of special education teachers' self-efficacy and burnout in this new context by examining differences, relationships, and levels.

Most studies on special education teachers' self-efficacy and burnout have failed to account for demographics or burnout levels, Few studies have employed advanced analytical models to predict self-efficacy-based burnout, Importantly, most of this study was done in different cultural and educational backgrounds, making its conclusions difficult to apply to present educational and social conditions, This study fills this gap by evaluating differences, relationships, and levels and building a prediction model of special education instructors' self-efficacy and burnout in this new situation.

Questions

1. What are the levels of professional competence and psychological tiredness among special education instructors working with Down syndrome?
2. Does gender, experience, and educational qualification affect special education instructors' professional competence and psychological exhaustion?
3. How do professional competence factors (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) predict psychological weariness in special education instructors dealing with Down syndrome?
4. Is there a correlation between professional competence and psychological exhaustion in special education instructors working with Down syndrome?

Methodology

Design study

Due to the research objectives of revealing the association between self-efficacy and psychological weariness among special education teachers working with Down syndrome students, the study used the correlational descriptive approach. This method lets researchers analyze the link between the two variables in the workplace without affecting any independent or dependent factors. This method was used to describe the phenomenon and assess the link between demographic characteristics (age, education, economic position, number of years of experience), self-efficacy, and psychological weariness in the sample.

Participants

In Kuwait, 167 male and female special education teachers with direct experience teaching and caring for Down syndrome pupils were studied. The sample was selected based on specific criteria, including being on the job, having at least one year of practical experience in this category, and meeting the study's demographic dimensions of age, education, economic status, and years of experience. To equalize demographic representation, stratified random sampling was used. The data showed that 79.0% of respondents were 30-35 years old and 21.0% were 24-29. Most (76.1%) had bachelor's degrees, while 23.9% were postgraduates. Most participants (80.8%) were middle-class economically. Compared to 19.2% for low. The percentage of those with less than 10 years of experience was 22.2%, those with 10-20 years 38.3%, and those with 20+ years 39.5%. The data was collected using a Google Forms questionnaire and distributed to participants after obtaining their voluntary consent, following scientific research ethics, including confidentiality, privacy, and respecting participants' choices to participate or withdraw.

Tabel 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Study Sample

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
AGE	24–29 years	35	20.96
	30–35 years and above	132	79.04
EDU	Bachelor's degree	127	76.05
	Postgraduate studies	40	23.95
ECO	Low	32	19.16
	Medium	135	80.84
EXPE	Less than 10 years	37	22.16
	More than 10 years and less than 20 years	64	38.32
	More than 20 years	66	39.52

Charts reveal that 79% of responders are 30–35 years old and 21% are 24–29. 76.1% of the sample has a bachelor's degree, while 23.9% have postgraduate degrees. In terms of economic status, 80.8% were intermediate and 19.2% low. The sample had the most people with more than 20 years of practical experience (39.5%), followed by 10–20 years (38.3%), and less than 10 years (22.2%). These data show a bigger sample of university graduates, consistent income, and long-term workers.

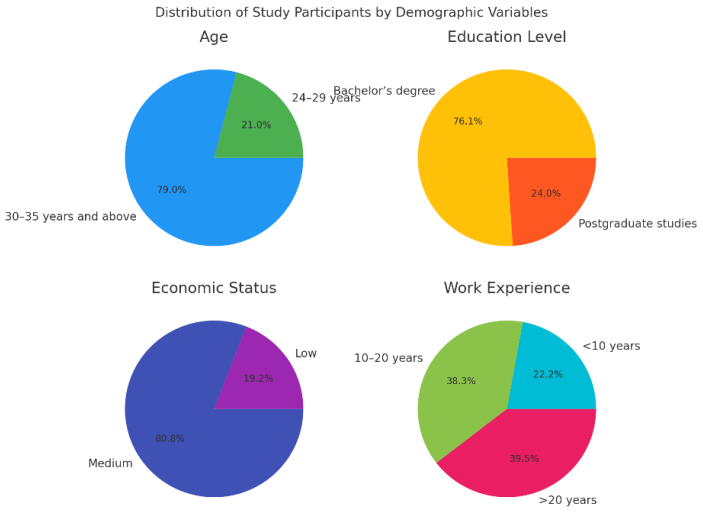

Figure 1. Distribution of Participants by Demographic Variables

Ethical Considerations

This study considered all ethical issues and allowed teachers to participate at their discretion after receiving enough information. After discussing the study's goals, procedures, and dangers, informed consent forms were signed. Participants were informed that they could leave the study at any moment without penalty, and their personal data was kept confidential and used solely for scientific research. Publishing reports and outcomes without participant identification was also stressed. The study followed Institutional Research Ethics Committee ethical guidelines to establish ethical controls.

Instrument

1. **The Teaching Students with Disabilities Efficacy Scale** (TSDES) is developed by Dawson and Scott (2013) and consists of 20 items divided into five main dimensions: Instruction, Professionalism, Teacher Support, Classroom Management, and Related Duties.). The paragraphs of the scale are answered using a 9-point Likert scale ranging from (1 = certain I cannot do) to (9 = certain I can do). The results of the original studies showed that the scale has a high internal stability for all dimensions (Cronbach's alpha between 0.779 and 0.913), and the confirmatory factor analysis supported the validity of the scale construction and the existence of five distinct conceptual dimensions. The scale was developed and tested on a sample of 431 teachers and teachers in training from three American universities.
2. **The Spanish Burnout Inventory (SBI-DP)** developed by Gil-Monte and Faúndez (2011) consists of 20 items divided into four main dimensions: enthusiasm for work (paragraphs 1, 5, 10, 15, 19), psychological exhaustion (paragraphs 8, 12, 17, 18), apathy (paragraphs 2, 3, 6, 7, 11, 14) and guilt (paragraphs 4, 9, 13, 16, 20). Paragraphs are answered according to a five-pointed Likert scale ranging from (0 = never) to (4 = in a form Very frequent daily). Studies have shown that the stability coefficients (Cronbach alpha) for all dimensions were higher than 0.70, indicating that the scale has good psychometric properties to measure occupational burnout in workers in stressful work environments. The Spanish Burnout Scale (SBI-DP) was translated into Arabic using front and reverse translation, and then reviewed by experts to ensure linguistic and cultural accuracy and conformity with the original

Statistical

Descriptive statistics (arithmetic averages and standard deviations) were used to assess Down syndrome special education teachers' professional competence and psychological weariness. Multiple Variance Analysis (MANOVA) was used to look at how professional competence and psychological exhaustion varied based on gender, years of experience, and educational qualifications, with follow-up tests to see the specific differences when the results were significant. Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple linear regression analysis were used to determine how professional competence dimensions predict psychological burnout.

Results

1. ***Levels of professional competence and psychological burnout among special education teachers working with people with Down syndrome?***

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the dimensions of the professional competence scale

Dimension	Mean	Std. Error of Mean	Std. Deviation
Instruction	14.150	0.184	2.376
Professionalism	13.916	0.256	3.305
Teacher Support	5.892	0.207	2.678
Classroom Management	7.796	0.238	3.080
Related Duties	11.263	0.285	3.687
TSDES. Total	53.018	0.900	11.630

Table (2) shows that the highest average achieved was in **the Instruction dimension** with an average of **14.150**, followed by **Professionalism**, while **the Teacher Support dimension recorded** the lowest average (**5.892**). The overall score of the scale was **53,018**, reflecting an overall level of professional competence among special education teachers working with people with Down syndrome.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of the dimensions of the psychological exhaustion scale

Dimension	Mean	Std. Error of Mean	Std. Deviation
Enthusiasm towards the Job	17.263	0.434	5.611
Psychological Exhaustion	12.389	0.311	4.018
Indolence	18.928	0.401	5.177
Guilt	14.928	0.354	4.578
SBI-DP Total	68.186	1.410	18.216

Table (3) shows that **the Indolence** dimension had the highest average (**18.928**), while the lowest average was in **the Psychological Exhaustion** dimension (**12.389**). The overall score of the scale was **68,186**, indicating an overall level of psychological exhaustion among special education teachers.

2. ***Differences in levels of professional competence and psychological exhaustion among special education teachers according to sex (male/female), years of experience, and educational qualification?***

Table 4: The effect of independent variables on the dimensions of professional competence and the total degree of the tool among special education teachers (Down syndrome)

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Push	Mean Square	F	Sig.
AGE	Instruction	32.752	1	32.752	6.310	.013
	Professionalism	116.637	1	116.637	12.322	.001
	Teacher Support	26.542	1	26.542	4.102	.044
	Classroom Management	282.472	1	282.472	36.076	.000
	Related Duties	138.929	1	138.929	11.361	.001
	TSDES.	1507.189	1	1507.189	12.453	.001
EDU	Instruction	4.294	1	4.294	0.827	.364
	Professionalism	0.682	1	0.682	0.072	.789
	Teacher Support	3.124	1	3.124	0.483	.488
	Classroom Management	24.906	1	24.906	3.181	.076
	Related Duties	3.040	1	3.040	0.249	.619
	TSDES.	19.160	1	19.160	0.158	.691
ECO	Instruction	2.031	1	2.031	0.391	.533
	Professionalism	117.178	1	117.178	12.379	.001
	Teacher Support	101.610	1	101.610	15.705	.000
	Classroom Management	14.415	1	14.415	1.841	.177
	Related Duties	91.197	1	91.197	7.458	.007
	TSDES.	1272.808	1	1272.808	10.516	.001
EXPE	Instruction	17.956	2	8.978	1.730	.181
	Professionalism	1.388	2	0.694	0.073	.929
	Teacher Support	4.825	2	2.412	0.373	.689
	Classroom Management	48.140	2	24.070	3.074	.049
	Related Duties	90.026	2	45.013	3.681	.027
	TSDES.	358.503	2	179.251	1.481	.230

Age significantly affected all dimensions of professional competence, including teaching competence, professionalism, teacher support, classroom management, profession-related duties, and overall competence (TSDES) (p<.05p<.05p<.05). The economy had a substantial impact on professionalism, teacher support, occupation-related duties, and overall competence (p=.001p=.001p=.001p=.001). Experience significantly affected classroom management (p=.049p=.049p=.049) and occupation-related duties (p=.027p=.027). Academic qualification did not significantly affect any professional competence characteristic (p>.05). The

Multiple Comparison Tests (LSD) demonstrated statistically significant differences in teaching skill between teachers with less than 20 years of experience and those with more than 10 years.

Table 5: Differences between independent variables on the dimensions of psychological exhaustion among special education teachers

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Push	Mean Square	F	Sig.
AGE	Enthusiasm towards the job	63.285	1	63.285	2.348	.127
	Psychological Exhaustion	99.540	1	99.540	8.831	.003
	Indolence	150.474	1	150.474	6.456	.012
	Guilt	46.518	1	46.518	2.262	.135
	(SBI-DP)	1071.784	1	1071.784	3.671	.057
EDU	Enthusiasm towards the job	47.839	1	47.839	1.775	.185
	Psychological Exhaustion	.048	1	.048	.004	.948
	Indolence	2.019	1	2.019	.087	.769
	Guilt	8.014	1	8.014	.390	.533
	(SBI-DP)	.111	1	.111	.000	.984
ECO	Enthusiasm towards the job	195.648	1	195.648	7.259	.008
	Psychological Exhaustion	25.492	1	25.492	2.262	.135
	Indolence	47.219	1	47.219	2.026	.157
	Guilt	52.422	1	52.422	2.549	.112
	(SBI-DP)	745.068	1	745.068	2.552	.112
EXPE	Enthusiasm towards the job	258.036	2	129.018	4.787	.010
	Psychological Exhaustion	397.485	2	198.743	17.633	.000
	Indolence	214.214	2	107.107	4.595	.011
	Guilt	12.218	2	6.109	.297	.743
	(SBI-DP)	2753.611	2	1376.805	4.716	.010

The difference test indicated that age significantly affected burnout and sloth but not job enthusiasm or guilt. In all dimensions of psychological exhaustion, academic qualification did not show any statistically significant differences (p>.05p>.05p>.05), indicating that the educational level is not a determinant of teacher differences in this aspect. For the economic situation, a statistically significant effect was observed on work enthusiasm. Years of experience were a factor affecting several dimensions, as the results showed significant differences in enthusiasm for work, psychological burnout, laziness, and the overall scale (SBI-DP). It did not affect guilt.

Multiple comparisons show statistically significant variations in job burnout parameters by experience. More experienced workers had higher work enthusiasm and less psychological exhaustion and apathy than less experienced workers, especially those under 20 years old, who had high SBI-DP scale levels of psychological exhaustion, dullness, and total burnout. No significant changes were found in guilt across groups. These findings show that extended work experience promotes professional adaptation and reduces job burnout.

3. *The relative contribution of the dimensions of professional competence in predicting the level of psychological exhaustion among special education teachers working with people with Down syndrome*

The fourth model (M_4) has the highest explanatory power, with a coefficient of determination R2=0.412R^2 = 0.412R2=0.412. This implies that the model explains 41.2% of psychological burnout among special education teachers working with Down syndrome students. Adjusted R2R^2R2 value of 0.397 confirms model stability, accounting for predictor count. The low root mean square error (RMSE = 14.142) suggests strong forecast accuracy and low estimate error.

A regression analysis showed that professionalism was the strongest negative predictor of burnout levels

(β=-0.674, p<0.001), indicating that higher professionalism significantly reduces burnout. However, "Teacher Support" (β=0.416) and "Classroom Management" (β=0.393) were found to be positive predictors, suggesting they may be linked to higher burnout levels. These findings highlight the necessity for training programs that boost teachers' professionalism and provide support systems and classroom management measures to reduce work-related stress.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients of Professional Competence Dimensions Predicting Burnout

Independent Variables	Unstandardized B	Standard Error	Standardized Beta	t	p
Constant	36.079	4.869	—	7.410	< .001
Instruction	0.687	0.540	0.116	1.272	0.205
Professionalism	-4.583	0.588	-0.674	-7.789	< .001
Teacher Support	2.291	0.554	0.416	4.139	< .001
Classroom Management	1.941	0.493	0.393	3.942	< .001

The regression model explains 41.2% of the difference in psychological burnout among special education instructors dealing with Down syndrome students (R^2 = 0.412, R^2 adjusted = 0.397). Professionalism (β = -0.674, p <.001) is the largest negative predictor, indicating that instructors with high professionalism experience reduced burnout rates. Positive and significant contributions from teacher support (β = 0.416, p <.001) and classroom management (β = 0.393, p <.001) indicate their crucial role in predictive burnout. In contrast, the final model did not show a significant predictor after teaching (β = 0.116, p = 0.205). These data show that professional competence is multifaceted and affects teacher burnout differently. This is in the variance table.

Table 7: ANOVA for Model 4 (M_4): Predictive Model Significance

Source	Sum of Squares	Push	Mean Square	F	p
Regression	22685.544	4	5671.386	28.357	< .001
Residual	32399.702	162	199.998		
Total	55085.246	166			

ANOVA results show that independent variables (professional competence dimensions) significantly explain variation in psychological exhaustion among special education teachers (F = 28.357, p <.001). The Model Summary table indicates a high explanatory ability (R^2 = 0.412) and aligns with the regression coefficients table of the fourth model, which indicates a significant contribution of three professional competence dimensions to predicting psychological burnout.

4. The relationship between professional competence and psychological exhaustion among special education teachers working with people with Down syndrome?

Table8: Correlation between Teaching Efficiency and Burnout Dimensions

	Instruction	Professionalism	Teacher Support	Classroom Management	Related Duties	TSS	Enthusiasm	Psychological Exhaustion	Indolence	Guilt	SBI-DP Total Score
Instruction	—	0.192**	0.276***	0.086	0.360***	0.459***	0.138*	0.013	0.155*	0.181**	0.146*
Professionalism	0.192**	—	0.613***	0.677***	0.693***	0.863***	0.237**	0.436***	0.388***	0.234**	0.354***

Teacher Support	0.276***	0.613***	—	0.333***	0.639***	0.751***	-0.231	0.030	-0.093	-0.133	-0.129
Classroom Management	0.086	0.677***	0.333***	—	0.648***	0.757***	0.346***	0.349***	0.523***	0.321***	0.428***
Related Duties	0.360***	0.693***	0.639***	0.648***	—	0.906***	0.217**	0.278***	0.392***	0.225**	0.326***
TSS	0.459***	0.863***	0.751***	0.757***	0.906***	—	0.203**	0.314***	0.384***	0.229**	0.317***
Enthusiasm	0.138*	0.237**	-0.231	0.346***	0.217**	0.203**	—	0.715***	0.826***	0.830***	0.936***
Psychological Exhaustion	0.013	0.436***	0.030	0.349***	0.278***	0.314***	0.715***	—	0.711***	0.597***	0.802***
Indolence	0.155*	0.388***	-0.093	0.523***	0.392***	0.384***	0.826***	0.711***	—	0.818***	0.938***
Guilt	0.181**	0.234**	-0.133	0.321***	0.225**	0.229**	0.830***	0.597***	0.818***	—	0.904***
SBI-DP Total Score	0.146*	0.354***	-0.129	0.428***	0.326***	0.317***	0.936***	0.802***	0.938***	0.904***	—

Pearson's correlation coefficient demonstrated a statistically significant link between TSDES and SBI-DP dimensions. Strong positive correlations exist between TSDES and Instruction, Professionalism, Teacher Support, Classroom Management, and Related Duties ($r = 0.459$, $p < .001$). It appears that teachers' ability to work with disabled children is closely linked to their overall teaching skills. Enthusiasm had a strong positive correlation with Psychological Exhaustion, Indolence, and Guilt ($r = 0.715 – 0.936$, $p < .001$), indicating a close relationship between burnout dimensions and teaching efficiency. Moderate associations were also found between burnout and some teaching ability aspects like Classroom Management and Related Duties, suggesting that work stress affects teachers' performance. These data support the idea that teachers' competency in working with disabled students is positively connected with their capacity to cope with professional stress, with burnout perhaps mediating this relationship.

Professional burnout dimensions (SBI-DP) are positively correlated with teaching competency with students with disabilities (TSDES). Higher teacher competency is linked to greater work enthusiasm, burnout, dullness, guilt, and total burnout to varied degrees. These findings suggest that high efficiency may increase occupational stress and burnout due to high job expectations. Supports that, the necessity of psychological and professional assistance for teachers to preserve competency and minimize burnout.

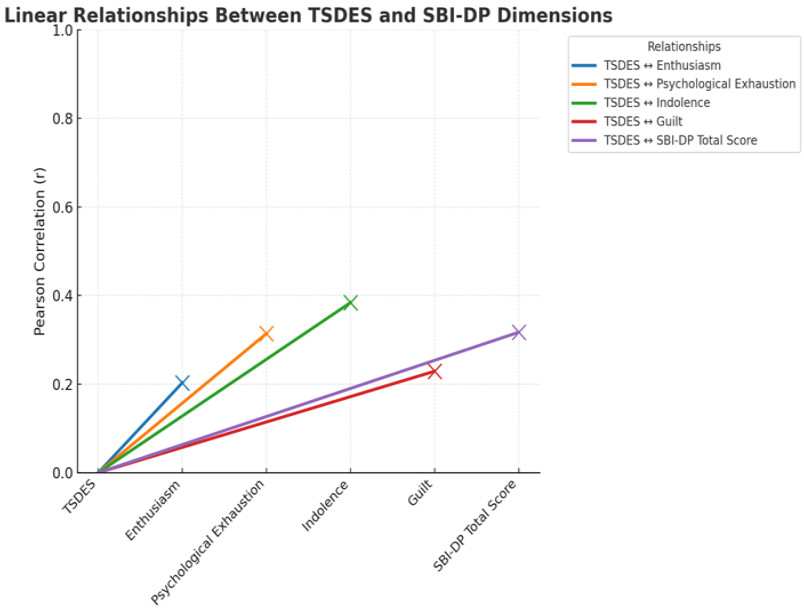

Figure 2: Teaching Efficacy and Burnout: Linear Relationships

Discussion

The results of the study showed that the level of professionalism of special education teachers working with Down syndrome students was average, with the "education" dimension achieving the highest average, while the "teacher support" dimension was the lowest. This finding is consistent with what he referred to I'll give it to me (Dawson & Scott, 2013) argues that special education teachers often have moderate levels of competence, as a result of their acquisition of acceptable theoretical knowledge and practical skills, with gaps in institutional support.‹ It also supported(Ruble et al., 2011) This trend, stressing that the disparity of sources of self-efficacy leads to different performance across different dimensions‹ In contrast, I found (Wang & Wang, 2022) high professional competency among language teachers due to comprehensive assistance programs. Thus, these teachers' average self-efficacy does not indicate poor performance, but rather highlights the challenges they face and the need for professional support and ongoing training to improve their self-efficacy and help Down syndrome students succeed in school (Friedman, 2003; Shoji et al., 2016). The researchers attribute this finding to the fact that teachers often rely on their individual expertise to develop their teaching skills in the absence of comprehensive systematic training programs, which enhances performance in the "education" dimension but leaves clear gaps in other dimensions such as "teacher support". This analysis is based on Bandora's social cognitive theory (Lopez-Garrido, 2023) which believes that self-efficacy is affected by past experiences and social support, which explains the impact of the lack of institutional support networks on this particular dimension As for occupational burnout, the results showed that it was at an average level, with "apathy" recorded as the highest dimension. This finding is consistent with what he referred to (Park & Shin, 2020) Their study showed that occupational burnout often appears at average levels in special education teachers as a result of constant pressure. (Glock & Costa, 2024) this trend highlights "apathy" as a common defensive mechanism, however, found (Antoniou et al., 2023) Reduced combustion in supportive workplaces. According to the researchers, Kuwaiti special education teachers' high demands and limited resources cause frequent psychological attrition, which can lead to emotional withdrawal or dull behaviors as a coping mechanism. This explanation supports Maslach and Jackson's (1981) idea that stress and lack resources cause burnout (Ballantyne & Retell, 2020; Friedman, 2003)

With regard to demographic differences, the study showed statistically significant differences in professional competence and psychological exhaustion due to gender, years of experience, and economic status, while no differences in educational qualification appeared. These findings are consistent with my findings (Nuri et al., 2017; Sarıçam & Sakız, 2014) which found an impact of gender, experience, and economic status on levels of efficiency and burnout. However (Brown, 2012) we found no gender effect on self-efficacy. Female teachers generally take on extra obligations outside of work, whereas extended experience helps teachers design stronger field challenge tactics. Without qualification gaps, academic programs may not teach instructors practical skills, highlighting the need for continued training and professional development. With "professionalism" as

the strongest negative predictor of professional burnout, "teacher support" and "classroom management" were positive. The result matches (Buzzai et al., 2024) which showed that professionalism reduces burnout levels by enhancing self-confidence and flexibility, and also supported (Benigno et al., 2025). The role of efficiency in classroom management as an influencing factor pressures, and In contrast, found (Aftab et al., 2012) that all efficiency dimensions provided equivalent protection. The researchers believe that professionalism gives teachers a greater sense of competence and control over work situations, while a high reliance on colleagues or excessive classroom management may indicate a lack of institutional resources, increasing stress. This analysis uses self-regulation theory. (Zhang et al., 2025) which emphasizes the role of professional competence in supporting teachers' ability to organize their response to daily stressors..

Burnout has become an important topic in recent years, largely due to its association with low productivity, attrition, absenteeism, emotional disconnection and loss of interest in work. (Matos et al., 2022) Burnout can influence student learning and lecturers' health and well-being in higher education. Professors are especially susceptible to burnout due to bureaucracy, publishing pressures, funding, classroom modifications, personal contacts, and contract uncertainty in higher education. Alvis et al. found (Alves et al., 2019) In Brazil, over a third of professors displayed burnout symptoms, and in the US, 40% did. Burnout lowers lecturers' quality of life and health satisfaction and lowers their perceived work quality.

The study found a strong negative correlation between self-professional competence and professional burnout in special education instructors dealing with Down syndrome students (Maddux, 2016) Teacher support and classroom management contributed positively to predicting it. These results can be explained in light of Maslash and Jackson's theory of combustion occupations' (Maslach, 1998). Burnout is a psychological syndrome caused by chronic exposure to work stress, and manifests itself in three dimensions: emotional burnout, depersonalization, and low personal achievement. According to this theory, the high levels of apathy observed by the study reflect teachers' attempt to cope with extreme stress through emotional detachment from work, which is consistent with its findings. (Park & Shin, 2020) in a meta-analysis that showed a moderate prevalence of burnout in special education teachers, as well as with results (Maslach & Jackson, 2013). She highlighted the role of emotional burnout in predicting personality decomposition in teachers. These findings underscore the importance of viewing occupational burnout as a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by complex individual and institutional factors.

However, Bandura's social cognitive theory helps explain the self-professional competence study's findings. She believes that direct performance experiences, observation and social modeling, verbal persuasion, and emotional and physiological state shape self-efficacy (Bandura, 2001; Bandura et al., 2001; Bandura & Evans, 2006). This suggests that teachers with more professionalism may have been able to overcome problems and decrease burnout due to their cumulative expertise and positive reinforcement from earlier successes (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). According to (Ruble et al., 2011) the lack of institutional support may weaken self-efficacy and increase pressure vulnerability, so the study's low "teacher support" may indicate a lack of social components like modeling and social support.

Looking at results through resource theory and conservation. The association between self-efficacy and occupational burnout appears to reflect instructors' psychosocial resources. This idea states that people attempt to acquire, conserve, and guard resources, and when they are exhausted without recompense, burnout occurs. High professionalism is a psychological resource that can shield instructors from burning, whereas relying on teacher support and classroom management shows a deficit in institutional resources and might raise stress (Holmgreen et al., 2017) (Hobfoll et al., 2016). This emphasizes the need of a supportive work environment that uses teachers' internal and external resources to reduce burnout and sustain self-efficacy (Prapanjaroensin et al., 2017).

Strengths and Limitations

The use of standardized and accurate measurement instruments and its focus on a professional group that has received scant attention in Arab research make this study strong. Demographic groupings were better represented by stratified random sample selection. The study's transversal design makes causal inferences difficult, and subjective surveys can skew responses. Professional competence and burnout should be studied longitudinally, according to the study. The study also struggled to reach enough special education teachers

and culturally adapt measurement instruments to the local workplace. In a high-pressure workplace, data protection and participant privacy demanded strict ethical considerations.

Recommendations

The report proposes ongoing training programs for special education instructors, focusing on "teacher support" and "classroom management" skills that need the most improvement. Psychosocial support programs in schools are also recommended to prevent teacher burnout and improve well-being. She also emphasizes aligning educational programs with Kuwait's cultural and socioeconomic environment to better address difficulties, finally, longitudinal research to investigate relationship changes are encouraged. Professional competence and burnout over time.

Conclusion

This study shows that special education teachers' self-professional competence is linked to burnout. Professional development and emotional support reduce work-related pressures, making professional teachers less vulnerable to burnout. The study proposes supporting educational policies to establish a healthy work environment and continual teacher training to improve professional skills and adaptability.

Funding Statement

This work was supported and funded by the Deanship of Scientific Research at Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU) (grant number IMSIU-DDRSP2501).

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