

Relationship Between Self-Esteem, Burnout, and Psychological Well-Being among Guidance and Counselling Teachers

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the levels of self-esteem, burnout, and psychological well-being among guidance and counseling teachers in the Johor Bahru district. It also investigates the relationships between self-esteem and psychological well-being, as well as between burnout and psychological well-being among school counselors. A quantitative research design employing a full population sampling technique was used, involving 100 guidance and counseling teachers serving in schools across the Johor Bahru district. Data were collected using three validated instruments administered in their Malay-language versions: the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES, $\alpha = .89$), the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI, $\alpha = .91$), and the Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWB, $\alpha = .88$). The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical procedures to determine the levels and relationships among the study variables. The findings indicate that the levels of self-esteem ($M = 2.170$, $SD = .378$), burnout ($M = 2.070$, $SD = .781$), and psychological well-being ($M = 2.230$, $SD = .468$) among the teachers were at a moderate level. Correlational analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and psychological well-being ($r = .762$), and a significant negative relationship between burnout and psychological well-being ($r = -.732$). These results indicate that higher self-esteem is associated with greater psychological well-being, while higher burnout corresponds with lower levels of psychological well-being. The study highlights the importance of strengthening self-esteem and implementing effective burnout management strategies among guidance and counseling teachers. The findings provide practical insights for school administrators and relevant stakeholders in designing targeted intervention programs, psychological support initiatives, and stress management strategies aimed at enhancing the well-being and professional effectiveness of school counselors. The findings support theoretical perspectives in educational psychology and counselor well-being, highlighting self-esteem as a psychological resource that enhances well-being, while burnout functions as a detrimental occupational stress factor. The results suggest the need for institutional strategies that strengthen counselors' self-esteem and reduce burnout through targeted psychological support, resilience training, and stress management programs within school systems.

Keywords— School counseling, Psychological well-being, Occupational burnout, Self-esteem, Counselor well-being, Educational psychology

INTRODUCTION

The psychological well-being of school counselors has become an increasingly important issue within educational psychology and school-based mental health services. School counselors play a central role in supporting students' socio-emotional development, academic adjustment, and mental health needs within educational institutions. However, despite their critical role in promoting student well-being, the psychological well-being of counselors themselves has received comparatively limited attention in educational research and policy implementation, particularly within developing educational systems. Previous studies have demonstrated that counselors' well-being is closely linked to the effectiveness of counseling interventions, professional competence, and the quality of therapeutic relationships established with students (Bali-Mahomed

et al., 2021; Mullen et al., 2020). Consequently, maintaining high levels of psychological well-being among school counselors is essential for sustaining effective counseling services in schools.

In recent years, the professional responsibilities of school counselors have become increasingly complex. Rapid technological advancements, the integration of digital counseling platforms, and evolving educational expectations have significantly expanded counselors' professional roles. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the nature of educational work environments, requiring counselors to adapt to hybrid counseling modalities, digital communication tools, and emerging psychosocial challenges among students. These evolving demands require counselors not only to possess strong counseling competencies but also to maintain adaptive psychological resources that enable them to manage occupational stress and professional responsibilities effectively (Bardhoshi et al., 2021; Holman et al., 2019).

Despite growing recognition of counselor well-being in international literature, empirical studies examining psychological well-being among school counselors in Southeast Asian contexts remain relatively limited. Much of the existing literature on psychological well-being within educational settings tends to focus primarily on students or classroom teachers, with comparatively fewer studies investigating the internal psychological factors affecting school counselors. In particular, limited attention has been given to the roles of self-esteem and occupational burnout as key determinants of counselors' psychological well-being. Self-esteem has been widely recognized as a critical psychological resource that enhances emotional resilience, professional confidence, and adaptive coping strategies (Orth & Robins, 2019). Conversely, burnout characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment has been consistently associated with decreased psychological well-being, reduced professional efficacy, and increased risk of occupational disengagement (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Bernales-Turpo et al., 2022).

Within the Malaysian education system, the professional roles of Guidance and Counseling Teachers extend beyond traditional counseling responsibilities. In practice, many GBK are frequently required to undertake additional duties such as administrative tasks, co-curricular management, and teaching responsibilities that fall outside the scope of their primary counseling functions. These additional responsibilities may increase occupational stress and heighten the risk of burnout, thereby potentially undermining counselors' psychological well-being and professional functioning.

At the national level, mental health has emerged as a major public health concern in Malaysia. Findings from the National Health and Morbidity Survey indicate that the prevalence of depression among Malaysians increased substantially from approximately 12% in 2011 to nearly 29% in 2020 (Nur Ashidah Yahya & Fariza Md. Sham, 2020). This trend highlights the growing importance of psychological support services within educational institutions. As frontline mental health support providers in schools, school counselors are expected to address increasingly complex psychosocial issues among students while simultaneously managing their own professional and emotional demands.

The situation is particularly relevant in the state of Johor, where recent reports indicate a significant increase in mental health-related cases among the population. Ling Tian Soon (2023) reported that the prevalence of mental health concerns in Johor increased from approximately 11% to 20% over recent years. Such trends place additional pressure on school counseling services and may indirectly affect the psychological well-being of counselors working within school systems. However, empirical research examining the internal psychological factors influencing counselors' well-being in this regional context remains limited.

In response to these concerns, this study aims to examine the relationships between self-esteem, burnout, and psychological well-being among Guidance and Counseling Teachers in the state of Johor. Specifically, the study seeks to

- (1) Determine The Levels Of Self-Esteem, Burnout, And Psychological Well-Being Among School Counselors
- (2) Investigate The Relationships Between Self-Esteem And Psychological Well-Being As Well As Between Burnout And psychological well-being.

By identifying these relationships, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the psychological factors that influence counselor well-being and provides empirical insights that may inform institutional strategies aimed at supporting counselor mental health and professional sustainability within the Malaysian education system.

LITERATURE

Self-esteem refers to the extent to which individuals evaluate and value themselves positively. It represents an individual's perception of personal worth, competence, and self-respect within both personal and social contexts (Rosenberg, 1979; Rouault et al., 2022). Individuals with high self-esteem typically demonstrate greater confidence, accept both their strengths and limitations, and perceive themselves as deserving of positive outcomes and achievements. In contrast, individuals with low self-esteem tend to perceive themselves as less capable or less valuable, which may negatively influence their emotional stability and professional functioning (Syropoulou et al., 2021).

Within educational psychology, self-esteem is widely recognized as an important psychological resource that enhances resilience, professional motivation, and adaptive coping mechanisms among educators. Recent studies indicate that teachers with higher levels of self-esteem are better able to manage occupational stress, maintain professional commitment, and sustain psychological well-being (Orth & Robins, 2022; Ezza Mad Baguri et al., 2022). For instance, Ezza Mad Baguri et al. (2022) found that self-esteem significantly predicted teacher resilience ($p = 0.005$), highlighting its role as a key psychological protective factor in educational professions. Similarly, Abdullah and Sajit (2024) reported a strong positive relationship between assertiveness and self-esteem ($p = 0.001$), suggesting that educators with higher self-esteem tend to demonstrate stronger interpersonal confidence and professional self-efficacy.

Further research indicates that internal professional factors such as teaching experience, professional motivation, and self-confidence play a stronger role in shaping teachers' self-esteem compared to demographic variables (Yunus & Hussein, 2024). Individuals with higher self-esteem are also more capable of managing occupational stressors, maintaining work motivation, and sustaining psychological well-being in demanding work environments (Mufidah, 2024). These findings collectively suggest that self-esteem functions as an important psychological foundation that supports educators' emotional stability and professional effectiveness.

Burnout is a psychological syndrome resulting from prolonged exposure to chronic occupational stress, particularly in professions that require intensive interpersonal interaction and emotional engagement. Maslach (1978) conceptualized burnout as comprising three primary dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (cynicism), and reduced personal accomplishment. Counselors and educators who experience burnout often report physical fatigue, mental exhaustion, emotional depletion, and a diminished sense of professional effectiveness (Duncan & Pond, 2024).

Within educational settings, burnout has emerged as a significant concern due to increasing workloads, administrative responsibilities, and emotional demands associated with supporting students' psychological needs. Research indicates that school counselors who experience higher counseling workloads tend to report higher levels of burnout. For example, Fye, Bergen, and Baltrinic (2020) found that counselors conducting more than 21 consultation hours per month reported the highest burnout levels. Similarly, McCade, Frewen, and Fassnacht (2021) identified a significant relationship between burnout and depression among therapists ($r = .44$), suggesting that burnout may contribute to broader psychological distress among helping professionals.

More recent research also highlights the heightened risk of burnout among educators during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Thomas et al. (2024) reported that the prevalence of burnout among teachers during the pandemic ranged from 25% to 74%, largely due to increased digital workload, remote teaching demands, and limited institutional support. Maung et al. (2022) further reported that approximately one in five teachers (20%) experienced moderate to extremely severe stress during the pandemic as a result of excessive additional responsibilities. These findings underscore the importance of addressing burnout as a critical occupational risk factor affecting educators' psychological well-being.

Psychological well-being refers to the degree to which individuals function optimally and experience positive psychological functioning in their lives (Ryff & Singer, 1996; Morin, 2024). Ryff's (2014) multidimensional model conceptualizes psychological well-being through several components, including self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relationships, environmental mastery, and autonomy. Individuals with high psychological well-being tend to experience greater life satisfaction, emotional stability, productivity, and healthy interpersonal relationships.

Within educational professions, psychological well-being is considered a crucial factor that supports professional performance, job satisfaction, and effective engagement with students. Teachers and counselors with higher psychological well-being are more likely to demonstrate emotional resilience, positive professional attitudes, and effective interpersonal communication with students and colleagues (Salavera et al., 2024). Conversely, low psychological well-being has been associated with increased occupational stress, emotional exhaustion, and reduced professional commitment.

Research has also highlighted the role of workplace conditions in shaping educators' psychological well-being. Shah et al. (2024) reported that workplace support serves as an important protective factor against burnout, whereas job dissatisfaction is often identified as an early contributor to burnout development (Nguyen & Kremer, 2022). In addition, differences in psychological well-being have been observed across teaching contexts. Salavera et al. (2024) reported variations in well-being between early childhood educators and primary school teachers, largely influenced by differences in life satisfaction and professional demands.

A growing body of literature suggests that self-esteem and burnout are key psychological factors influencing psychological well-being among educators. Self-esteem functions as a protective psychological resource that strengthens emotional resilience and enhances individuals' capacity to cope with occupational stress. Hyunju Choi et al. (2023) found that low self-esteem was significantly associated with higher levels of academic burnout ($b = -0.91, p < 0.05$), highlighting the protective role of self-esteem against emotional exhaustion. Similarly, Zhao et al. (2021) identified a positive relationship between academic engagement and self-esteem ($r = 0.23, p < 0.05$), suggesting that individuals with higher self-esteem are more likely to demonstrate motivation and persistence in their professional roles.

Additional studies also demonstrate a direct relationship between self-esteem and psychological well-being. Enting et al. (2024) reported a moderate-to-strong positive relationship between self-esteem and psychological well-being ($\beta = .417$). Likewise, Hatun and Türk Kurtça (2025) reported a significant negative relationship between self-esteem and stress ($r = -0.442$), indicating that individuals with higher self-esteem tend to experience lower psychological distress. Jennifer Asing (2025) further emphasized that individuals with moderate-to-high self-esteem tend to maintain positive self-perceptions, set realistic goals, utilize feedback constructively, and cope effectively with challenging situations.

Conversely, burnout has consistently been identified as a major predictor of reduced psychological well-being among education professionals. Ab Majid and Surat (2024) reported that burnout significantly predicts lower psychological well-being among teachers. Similarly, Mohamed et al. (2021) identified a strong positive relationship between psychological distress and burnout ($r = .668$), suggesting that individuals experiencing higher emotional distress are more vulnerable to burnout. Psychological distress often manifests through emotional discomfort, anxiety, perceived stress, insomnia, and chronic fatigue, which may ultimately contribute to more serious mental health problems such as depression.

Overall, the literature suggests that self-esteem functions as a protective psychological resource, whereas burnout acts as a risk factor that undermines psychological well-being. Understanding the interaction between these variables is therefore essential for identifying strategies to support the mental health and professional sustainability of educators, particularly school counselors who operate within emotionally demanding educational environments.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a survey method grounded in a descriptive—

correlational research design. The adoption of this design enabled a systematic investigation of both the levels of the principal psychological constructs and the relationships among them. Specifically, the study aimed to determine the levels of self-esteem, burnout, and psychological well-being among school guidance and counseling teachers, while simultaneously examining the relationships between these constructs. The descriptive dimension of the design facilitated the comprehensive characterization of respondent demographics and the quantitative assessment of the targeted psychological variables within the study population. Descriptive research, as highlighted by Shinija (2024), is particularly useful for generating a systematic and detailed representation of a population or phenomenon, thereby providing a contextualized understanding of existing conditions.

Complementing the descriptive component, the correlational dimension of the research design was utilized to examine the associations among the variables without introducing any form of experimental manipulation. Correlational research is appropriate when the objective is to identify both the direction and the strength of relationships among naturally occurring variables (Rangkuti & Albina, 2025). Accordingly, the descriptive–correlational framework aligns closely with the objectives of the present study, which focus on understanding the interrelationships among psychological constructs within authentic educational contexts. The study was implemented using a cross-sectional design, whereby data were collected at a single point in time through the administration of standardized self-report questionnaires to the participants.

The sampling strategy employed in this study was total population sampling, in which all members of the identified population were included as respondents. This strategy was considered methodologically appropriate due to the relatively small and accessible size of the target population, thereby enabling comprehensive representation while reducing the likelihood of sampling bias (Zrineh et al., 2026). A total of 100 secondary school guidance and counseling teachers participated in the study, representing approximately 97% of the overall population. The sample consisted of 73 female teachers and 27 male teachers. All participants were full-time guidance and counseling teachers serving in both urban and rural secondary schools across the Johor Bahru district.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising four sections: Section A, Section B, Section C, and Section D. Section A gathered demographic information related to the respondents. Section B measured self-esteem using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale developed by Morris Rosenberg (1965). Section C assessed burnout using the Maslach Burnout Inventory developed by Christina Maslach and Susan E. Jackson (1981). Section D measured psychological well-being using the Psychological Well-Being Scale developed by Ryff and Keyes (1995). These instruments were selected due to their extensive application in psychological and educational research and their well-established psychometric properties, including demonstrated reliability and validity across diverse research contexts.

The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29.0. Descriptive statistical techniques were employed to compute mean scores, standard deviations, percentages, and frequency distributions. These statistical indicators facilitated the interpretation of the distribution and central tendency of the measured constructs. For interpretative purposes, mean scores were categorized into three levels: scores ranging from 1.00 to 1.99 were interpreted as indicating a low level, scores ranging from 2.00 to 2.99 were interpreted as indicating a moderate level, and scores ranging from 3.00 to 4.00 were interpreted as indicating a high level. This categorization enabled clearer interpretation of the respondents' levels of self-esteem, burnout, and psychological well-being.

DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the mean scores for self-esteem, burnout, and psychological well-being among teachers, all of which are situated within the moderate range, with respective values of 2.170, 2.070, and 2.230. The observed moderate level of self-esteem suggests that teachers possess a reasonably balanced yet not fully optimized sense of self-worth. This is reflected in their capacity to maintain a positive self-concept, establish realistic and attainable goals, utilize evaluative feedback for self-improvement, derive satisfaction from positive life experiences, and demonstrate adaptive coping when confronted with professional and personal challenges

(Samiyah Ashfaq, 2025). However, the moderate positioning also indicates potential limitations in the consolidation of a consistently strong and resilient self-evaluative framework.

The findings further indicate that burnout among guidance and counselling teachers in Johor Bahru is also at a moderate level. This suggests that while teachers remain functionally capable of fulfilling their professional roles and responsibilities, they are concurrently experiencing a sustained level of occupational stress. Such a condition reflects a state of partial emotional exhaustion and reduced psychological energy, which, if left unaddressed, may progressively undermine both professional effectiveness and psychological well-being (Kamarudin & Taat, 2020). The presence of moderate burnout is therefore indicative of a critical threshold that warrants preventive and intervention-oriented attention.

In a similar vein, the level of psychological well-being among teachers is also positioned within the moderate range. The mean scores derived from the employed instrument reflect a balanced yet non-optimal state of emotional and psychological functioning. Specifically, teachers demonstrate a moderate capacity in core dimensions of well-being, including self-acceptance, the ability to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationships, and ongoing personal growth. Nevertheless, the persistence of unmanaged or inadequately managed stressors may have cumulative adverse effects. Empirical indicators point to a concerning trend of early retirement among teachers, with 67.44 percent attributing their decision to a "loss of interest," corresponding to approximately 19,000 cases recorded up to 2022. This pattern raises significant concerns regarding the long-term sustainability of the education system and highlights the broader systemic implications associated with diminished teacher well-being (Razid, 2025).

Collectively, these findings underscore the necessity for comprehensive and strategically integrated interventions aimed at enhancing teachers' psychological functioning. Specifically, there is a critical need to strengthen stress management competencies, reinforce social support mechanisms, and implement targeted self-esteem enhancement programs. Such initiatives are essential not only for improving individual well-being but also for sustaining professional engagement and ensuring the overall effectiveness of the educational workforce.

Table 1: Analysis of Mean and Standard Deviation for the Levels of Self-Esteem, Burnout, and Psychological Well-Being Among Teachers by Gender

Table: Mean and Standard Deviation of Self-Esteem, Burnout, and Psychological Well-Being by Gender

Gender	Self-Esteem (Mean)	Self-Esteem (SD)	Burnout (Mean)	Burnout (SD)	Psychological Well-Being (Mean)	Psychological Well-Being (SD)
Male	2.074	0.267	2.185	0.681	2.111	0.423
Female	2.206	0.407	2.027	0.816	2.274	0.479
Total	2.170	0.378	2.070	0.781	2.230	0.468

Table 2 presents the results of the Mann–Whitney U test conducted to examine potential differences in self-esteem levels between male and female guidance and counselling teachers in secondary schools in Johor Bahru. The analysis revealed that there is no statistically significant difference between the two gender groups ($U = 856.0, p = .122$). This finding indicates that self-esteem levels among male and female teachers are statistically comparable within the context of this study.

From a methodological perspective, the non-significant result suggests that gender does not function as a differentiating factor in influencing self-esteem among guidance and counseling teachers in this sample. This may imply that both male and female teachers operate within relatively similar professional environments and psychosocial contexts that shape their self-evaluative perceptions in comparable ways. Consequently, the findings provide empirical support for the assumption of gender equivalence in self-esteem within this professional group, thereby reinforcing the notion that interventions aimed at enhancing self-esteem may be designed in a gender-neutral manner.

Table 2: Mann–Whitney U Test Analysis for Differences in Self-Esteem by Gender

Test Statistic	Value
Mann–Whitney U	856.000
Wilcoxon W	1234.000
Z	-1.545
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.122

As presented in Table 3, an independent samples t-test was conducted to determine whether statistically significant differences exist in the levels of burnout and psychological well-being between male and female guidance and counselling teachers in secondary schools in Johor Bahru. The analysis revealed that the t-value for burnout was $t = 0.895$, with a corresponding p-value exceeding the conventional threshold of statistical significance ($p > .05$), indicating that the observed difference between gender groups is not statistically significant. Similarly, for psychological well-being, the t-value was $t = -1.555$, with a p-value also exceeding the established significance level ($\alpha = .05$), further indicating the absence of a statistically significant difference.

From an inferential standpoint, these findings suggest that gender does not constitute a significant differentiating variable in relation to burnout and psychological well-being within this sample. The comparable mean levels observed across male and female teachers imply that both groups are likely exposed to similar occupational demands, psychosocial stressors, and professional environments, which in turn shape their experiences of burnout and psychological functioning in analogous ways. This pattern of non-significance underscores the potential uniformity of work-related experiences among guidance and counselling teachers, regardless of gender.

Consequently, the findings provide empirical support for the assumption of gender equivalence in both burnout and psychological well-being within this professional context. This has important implications for the design and implementation of intervention strategies, suggesting that initiatives aimed at reducing burnout and enhancing psychological well-being may be effectively developed and applied without the need for gender-specific differentiation.

Table 3: Independent Samples t-Test Analysis for Differences in Burnout and Psychological Well-Being by Gender

Variable	Assumption	F	Sig.	t	Two-Sided p
Burnout	Equal variances assumed	1.486	0.226	0.895	0.373
	Equal variances not assumed			0.973	0.335
Psychological Well-Being	Equal variances assumed	6.996	0.010	-1.555	0.123
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.646	0.106

Table 4 demonstrates that self-esteem is significantly and positively correlated with psychological well-being ($r = .762$) among guidance and counseling teachers. This strong association suggests that higher levels of self-esteem are closely linked to enhanced psychological functioning within this professional group. The finding is consistent with Ibrahim (2021), who assert that individuals possessing elevated self-esteem are better equipped to manage occupational stressors, sustain intrinsic motivation, and maintain overall psychological stability. Similarly, Muris and Otgaar (2023) reported a substantial correlation between self-esteem and self-compassion ($r = .65$), with both constructs uniquely contributing to the prediction of psychological well-being, thereby highlighting the multifaceted nature of adaptive self-related processes.

Further empirical support is provided by Bhardwaj and Sethi (2024), whose analysis revealed that self-esteem was significant predictor of academic resilience ($\beta = .422, p < .01$), functioning as a protective psychological resource that mitigates the adverse effects of stress and anxiety. In addition, Niles et al. (2024), emphasized the

interrelated roles of self-efficacy and emotional intelligence in shaping the psychological well-being of counseling teachers, suggesting that these constructs operate synergistically with self-esteem. This perspective is reinforced by Bali Mahomed (2021), who identified a strong positive correlation between self-esteem and teachers' psychological well-being ($r = .677$), further substantiating the robustness of this relationship across different contexts.

Collectively, these findings underscore the critical role of self-esteem as a foundational psychological construct that contributes significantly to teachers' well-being. From a practical standpoint, the results highlight the necessity of implementing targeted interventions aimed at enhancing self-esteem among teachers. Such initiatives are likely to yield substantial benefits, not only in terms of improving individual psychological well-being but also in strengthening the overall effectiveness and sustainability of guidance and counseling services within the educational system.

Table 4: Spearman Correlation Analysis to Examine the Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Psychological Well-Being

Variable	Self-Esteem	Psychological Well-Being
Self-Esteem		
Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.762**
Sig. (2-tailed)		< .001
N	100	100
Psychological Well-Being		
Correlation Coefficient	0.762**	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	< .001	
N	100	100

Table 5 demonstrates that burnout is significantly and negatively associated with psychological well-being ($r = -.732$), indicating a strong inverse relationship between the two constructs among guidance and counseling teachers. This finding suggests that higher levels of burnout are systematically linked to diminished psychological functioning, including heightened emotional distress, increased occupational fatigue, and reduced career satisfaction. Such evidence reinforces the conceptualization of burnout as a critical risk factor that undermines the psychological health of education professionals. The present result is consistent with recent empirical studies identifying burnout as a robust predictor of reduced psychological well-being within educational contexts (Thomas, 2024; Ab Majid & Surat, 2024). Furthermore, teachers operating within supportive and positive work environments tend to report lower levels of burnout, underscoring the protective role of organizational support in mitigating burnout-related outcomes (Sohail et al., 2023).

Additional evidence provided by Mohamed et al. (2021) indicates that academicians experiencing elevated psychological distress are more susceptible to burnout, as reflected by a moderate positive correlation ($r = .668$). This relationship highlights burnout as a potential early warning indicator of more severe mental health conditions, including depressive symptomatology. In parallel, Nguyen and Kremer (2022) identify job dissatisfaction as a salient antecedent in the progression of burnout, suggesting that unfavorable work conditions may initiate a cascade of negative psychological outcomes. Collectively, these findings emphasize the importance of addressing both individual and organizational determinants in efforts to mitigate burnout among teachers.

From a practical and policy-oriented perspective, the findings of this study highlight the urgent need to cultivate a supportive and conducive working environment that proactively reduces the risk of burnout. Interventions should focus on enhancing workplace support systems, promoting psychological resilience, and improving job satisfaction to safeguard teachers' well-being.

In conclusion, the present findings provide compelling empirical evidence that burnout constitutes a significant and detrimental factor influencing teachers' psychological well-being. As burnout levels increase, a

corresponding decline in psychological well-being is observed, thereby reinforcing the critical need for targeted intervention strategies within the educational system.

Table 5: Spearman Correlation Analysis to Examine the Relationship Between Burnout and Psychological Well-Being

Variable	Burnout	Psychological Well-Being
Burnout		
Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-0.732**
Sig. (2-tailed)		< .001
N	100	100
Psychological Well-Being		
Correlation Coefficient	-0.732**	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	< .001	
N	100	

The findings of this study yield substantial theoretical, practical, and future research implications within the domains of educational psychology and counseling. From a theoretical standpoint, the statistically significant positive association between self-esteem and psychological well-being provides robust support for Self-Esteem Theory (Rosenberg, 1965), which posits that individuals’ evaluative perceptions of self-worth are central determinants of their psychological functioning. In this context, self-esteem emerges as a foundational psychological resource that reinforces emotional stability, adaptive functioning, and overall well-being (Nagar & Saxena, 2024). Empirical evidence further substantiates this position, indicating that higher levels of self-esteem are associated with notable reductions in depression (18%) and anxiety (32%) among individuals (University of Michigan School of Public Health, 2025), thereby reinforcing its protective psychological function.

In parallel, the observed negative relationship between burnout and psychological well-being is congruent with Burnout Theory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981), which conceptualizes burnout as a multidimensional construct characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. These dimensions collectively contribute to the deterioration of psychological well-being. Contemporary findings by Tang et al. (2025) further affirm that burnout exerts a detrimental impact on the psychological functioning of professionals. Moreover, empirical evidence indicates that emotional exhaustion significantly predicts withdrawal behavior ($\beta = -.059, p < .001$), thereby confirming burnout as a critical risk factor that undermines psychological well-being (Ismailova et al., 2025). Consequently, the present study extends existing theoretical discourse by providing additional empirical validation that burnout constitutes a dominant psychological risk factor among guidance and counseling teachers.

From a practical perspective, the identification of moderate levels of self-esteem among guidance and counseling teachers underscores the necessity for targeted professional development initiatives that emphasize self-efficacy enhancement, reflective practice, and adaptive self-management competencies. Such initiatives are consistent with the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) framework endorsed by the Board of Counselors, as well as the strategic priorities outlined in the Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM 2013–2025) (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2023). These findings reaffirm the role of self-esteem as a critical protective factor that can buffer against occupational stress and enhance psychological resilience among teachers.

Furthermore, the study highlights significant implications for educational leadership and policy development. School administrators and professional bodies, including the National Union of the Teaching Profession (NUTP) Malaysia, are urged to design and implement comprehensive, sustainable support systems that prioritize teachers’ psychological well-being. Structured interventions, including psychosocial support programs, workload management strategies, and well-being monitoring mechanisms, are essential in fostering a supportive professional environment. Such systemic support not only safeguards teachers’ mental health but

also enhances the quality and effectiveness of counseling services delivered to students (Bali Mohamed, 2021).

From the perspective of future research, the present findings provide a critical empirical foundation for advancing scholarly understanding of psychological well-being among guidance and counseling teachers. Given the cross-sectional nature of this study, future research should consider adopting longitudinal designs to capture the dynamic interplay between self-esteem, burnout, and psychological well-being over time (Li et al., 2022). Such approaches would enable a more nuanced understanding of causal relationships and developmental trajectories.

In addition, the study underscores the necessity of expanding the scope of sampling to include a more heterogeneous population of teachers across different geographical regions, institutional settings, and educational levels. The current focus on a single district may constrain the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, incorporating more diverse samples is essential to enhance external validity and ensure that findings are representative of the broader Malaysian educational context (Creswell & Poth, 2023). Future studies should also explore additional contextual and psychological variables that may influence teachers' well-being, such as organizational climate, leadership style, and coping mechanisms.

In conclusion, this study provides a comprehensive examination of the interrelationships between self-esteem, burnout, and psychological well-being among guidance and counseling teachers in Johor Bahru. The findings indicate that self-esteem is positively associated with psychological well-being, whereas burnout demonstrates a strong negative association. These results suggest that teachers with higher levels of self-esteem are more likely to experience enhanced psychological well-being, while elevated burnout significantly undermines their psychological functioning. Collectively, the study not only fulfills its stated research objectives but also offers a robust empirical foundation for the development of targeted interventions, policy frameworks, and future research aimed at strengthening the psychological well-being of guidance and counseling teachers.

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