



Emotional-Cognitive Dynamics of “Waitance”: Unraveling its Relationship with Teaching Burnout

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Abstract The current paper delves into the concept of “waitance”, as the tendency to passively await events without taking any action. Under a comprehensive model, this psychological phenomenon is categorized based on intensity, valence, expectation, and waiting periods. The emotional-cognitive dynamics of waitance along with its connection with teaching burnout is the major concern of this study. Along with providing a valuable framework for educators and policymakers, as well as fostering a resilient teaching environment, this research highlights the practical importance of addressing waitance. It also identifies possible directions in further studying the role organizational support plays in mitigating waitance and burnout. The result is likely to increase the resilience and job satisfaction of educators.

Keywords: *Cognition, Emotion, Education, Waitance, Burnout*

1. Introduction

In ordinary life people tend to procrastinate, being convinced that someone else might always perform their work or a lucky situation will solve all problems. The tendency to wait and hope that the environment will be controlled by other forces is a kind of indispensable characteristic in human behavior. This shows the significance of a psychological concept called ‘waitance’ as proposed by the author of this study.

Waitance as the combination of “wait” and “expectance”, describes a psychological tendency to wait and expect something positive or negative to happen without taking sufficient action or responsibility. Waitance can be affected in many ways, for example by individual differences (personality traits, cultural contexts, and educational backgrounds) or environmental contexts. Studies show that personality factors such as perfectionism and optimism (Carver & Scheier, 2014; Denissen et al., 2019), cultural traits like power distance and uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede et al., 2010), and aspects of the environment, and social norms may also add effects on wait time and expectancy (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008).

Taking into consideration the intrinsic quality of waitance, it is easy to note that there must be an apparent void in its connection with teacher burnout. A

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number of factors that cause teacher burnout are suggested by previous studies (e.g., Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Apart from the above factors, it appears that emotional-cognitive dynamics of waitance in educational settings need to be deeply studied. Therefore, this study seeks to fill these gaps and investigate how such dynamics might enhance or mitigate teaching burnout. In particular, the author aims to paint a picture of waitance and provide practical applications for educators who wish to create healthy learning environments. In this study, the author discusses how such a notion can restructure the well-being of teachers.

2. Waitance Defined

The tapestry of human behavior discloses cognitive and emotional processes in the psychology of waitance. Waitance explains a specific psychological habit in which one waits while the events occur without putting any considerable effort into controlling how things will take place. It comes out that this passive approach of anticipation highlights a fresh orientation in living with uncertainties. The psychology of waitance reveals the cognitive and emotional processes which underlie motivation for such a tendency to stay behind. This idea involves temporal discounting, which includes reducing the worth of postponed outcomes in order to encourage immediate gain (Frederick et al., 2002; Pishghadam et al., 2021). Indeed, temporal discounting indicates actions instead of non-actions, but waitance reflects the preference for inaction over action. While expectancy and waitance are two separate types of expectation conditions, they still differ. The forecasting of what will happen in this period is called anticipation, and it involves both mental and emotional preparation for the situation. Action is provoked by anticipation, which implies that the people work and prepare for what they are about to receive. This is a temporary state that may coincide with certain results which lead to anxiety or fear. On the other hand, waitance is a psychic disposition that passively attends to some action without sufficient activity done in order to influence and determine results. In contrast to anticipation, waitance focuses on a passive position whereby people may not actively work to unfold events. It is an extended state of waiting that does not have a definite termination. When an individual demonstrates waitance, he or she may also rely on some outside factors that will be spontaneously resolved, creating a lack of decisions and inactivity. This passive waiting does not have the characteristics of proactivity and lacks temporal specificity as in anticipation. Anticipation and waitance have a characteristic of looking ahead as well, but anticipation is more active and time-oriented. On the other hand, passivity, potential endurance, and lack of action are linked to waitance.

The psychology of waitance, which has been addressed in this study, is a basis for the exploration of cognitive-emotional interaction during prolonged waiting periods. This is closely associated with active and passive coping, defining the individual's strategies for dealing with stressors (Babicka-Wirkus et al., 2021; Carver et al., 1989; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Direct actions on the stressor to minimize or eliminate it are characteristic of active coping, while passive coping implies avoidance of interaction with the problem. However, coping is an individual response to a specific source of stress, whereas waitance represents universal readiness for waiting and the belief that something will occur. Moreover, procrastination and waitance, though similar in some aspects, lead to different human responses. Procrastination is a universally known topic, which implies putting off particular tasks that then result in increased stress and negative consequences. It is a task-based activity and refers to any form of behavior with visible deadlines. On the contrary, waitance is a broader phenomenon explaining the readiness of an individual to wait for either good or bad results that cannot be influenced by any task. It is beyond task avoidance, a relatively wider proclivity to sit back and watch passively as events unwind without choices. Although procrastination stems from delayed actions, waitance is a more general stance that reflects an attitude to be spectators rather than agents of events. Knowing these distinctions can reveal how individuals maneuver between anticipation, decision-making, and action. This difference is similar to the distinction between state and trait anxiety, whereby these are types of anxiety that people experience. State anxiety is a transient, situational feeling of nervousness or apprehension. Trait anxiety, on the other hand, is a stable personality characteristic that determines an individual's susceptibility to fear in different situations (Attwood et al., 2017; Endler, 1983). Still, waitance is a behavioral disposition, regardless of the emotional valence of the outcome.

Similarly, yet from an emotional platform, waitance critically influences the personal experience. This psychological condition is usually characterized by anxiety and tension, especially when the outcome

remains ambiguous. The incessant feeling of ignorance can lead to stress and become part of the emotional burden throughout this period. At the same time, impatience becomes commonplace as people demand resolution or clarity, leaving them with anxiety and annoyance. Thus, the experience is full of emotional challenges which could be linked to the dual nature of waitance. On the positive side, there can be hope and optimism that balances off some of the distressing emotions. People can find comfort in waiting for good things to happen, creating an atmosphere of optimism. Thus, waitance is a continuum that may be overwhelming and hopeful. During the waiting period, emotional reactions can move from being relieved to feeling disappointed. The end of waitance, be it successful or unsuccessful, brings with it an emotional release. Favorable outcomes have the potential to bring relief, while negative ones are able to cause frustration. Boredom also arises in being made to wait for a long time, especially when an individual feels idle or is not stimulated. These emotions reflect the findings of waiting lines psychology, which studies people’s perception and response to a wait situation (Larson, 1987; Ohlmeier et al., 2020). Yet, although the psychology of waiting lines concentrates on external factors, which formulate the perception of time spent in a queue (length, fairness, and feedback), waitance argues internal and external variables influencing decisions to wait by taking into account the cognitive and emotional processes involved in waiting for outcomes.

3. Types of Waitance

The author suggests a model for a better understanding of waitance. This four-cell model provides a structured framework for understanding waitance based on two key dimensions: expectation and waiting. Figure 1 shows different aspects of waitance.

Figure 1
Waitance in Terms of Expectation and Waiting

		Waiting	
		Long	Short
Expectation	High	Prolonged Waitance with High Anticipation (PWHA)	Intense Waitance with High Anticipation (IWHA)
	Low	Prolonged Waitance with Low Anticipation (PWLA)	Intense Waitance with Low Anticipation (IWLA)

A. Prolonged Waitance with High Anticipation (PWHA):

- *Description:* It is a psychological trait characterized by a prolonged and high anticipation for positive or negative results. A person in this state expects a significant event or an intervention and waits patiently for a long time. Even after a prolonged period of waiting, they can remain positive/negative yet passive by expecting that some external forces or events will create a positive/negative change.
- *Example:* A small town that has to go through a long-term drought may expect an occurrence of a miracle that would cause it much-needed rain. But even with a long period of waiting, the residents predict better things to come and hope for an external force or transformative event that will bring relief from their water shortage.

B. Intense Waitance with High Anticipation (IWHA):

- *Description:* It is a psychological condition characterized by a short and high anticipation before a positive or negative outcome occurs. People of this state have very high expectations for upcoming events and may experience intense emotional stress when events take place in a short period.

- *Example:* Imagine a Ph.D. graduate who has impressive academic performance and many publications. This person who just finished his studies expects to be offered a job from renowned universities without actually applying for the positions. After graduation, the student is hopeful for calls from top-notch organizations and thinks his papers would be enough to trigger prominent universities' interest in offering him a job.

C. Prolonged Waitance with Low Anticipation (PWLA):

- *Description:* It is a psychological propensity to have long and suppressed anticipation of either positive or negative realization, with a prolonged waiting time. People in such a state adopt low-expectancy attitudes towards intervention from the outside and remain passive for long periods.
- *Example:* For example, take a person who, after multiple attempts to improve their financial fortunes, has finally settled for an extended period of economic struggles. Even though this person lived through a long period of financial difficulty, he or she does not expect any positive change shortly. They wait passively for a long time, uncomplainingly accepting the situation without actively demanding or expecting any major changes.

D. Intense Waitance with Low Anticipation (IWLA):

- *Description:* It is a psychological tendency characterized by a mild and short-lived anticipation for positive or negative consequences with a relatively brief wait time. People have little hope for external intervention, and the waiting time without seeking solutions or being responsible is short.
- *Example:* Let us consider a student who has left his coursework almost throughout the semester and is now facing an approaching date for a project. After realizing that they are not likely to deliver a good piece of work, the student has a brief and mild anticipation for the impending deadline. While the waiting time is short, the student does not get involved in taking the initiative to improve the project.

Waitance may be low or high, negative or positive; thus, individuals can experience a low or high level of waitance for every single situation where the events are positive or negative (i.e., PWHA, IWHA, PWLA, and IWLA). A high level of waitance points to more reactivity and passivity, but a low level of waitance refers to the case of greater proactivity and activity. Figure 2 shows types of waitance.

Figure 2

Waitance in Terms of Intensity and Valence

		Valence	
		Positive	Negative
Intensity	High	Miraculous	Disastrous
	Low	Rewarding	Punishing

A. Miraculous Waitance:

- *Description:* It is a psychological readiness with a high/low anticipation for a positive outcome that has an intense and optimistic wait state. The people in this state wait passively with hopes, expecting a radical and miraculous intervention.
- *Example:* After trying all avenues, a job seeker passively waits for the dream offer's knock without actively applying. The wait is nerve-racking, and the person assumes that a great job offer is imminent without having to do anything else.

B. Disastrous Waitance:

- *Description:* It is about a psychological condition when people have a high/low anticipation. This comes along with negative expectations or anxiety about possible bad outcomes. It represents a pessimistic waiting period.
- *Example:* When it comes to examination, an unprepared student will await the results with great apprehension of failure. There is unbearable tension, and the person remains completely passive, just hoping that, for some reason, the results may turn out to be favorable.

C. Rewarding Waitance:

- *Description:* It characterizes a state of anticipation to which some people are exposed and defines this waiting with positive expectations. It implies a more inviting mode of waiting that breeds positive results. The state is less passive.
- *Example:* A shopper on the internet who has followed up on an order and prepared for its arrival, waits with much patience to get his or her long-awaited package. The wait is there, but the individual purposely follows it and perceives a more positive waiting situation.

D. Punishing Waitance:

- *Description:* It arises when people reach a high/low level of anticipation, but negative expectations or uncongenial outcomes come with waiting. It attests to a position of less passive waiting on something bad about to happen.
- *Example:* The student who has habitually skipped classes and assignments awaits to receive his academic results. This student is aware of the possible outcomes that his wrongdoings may bring as well as future poor scores. Despite the low anticipation, future negativity refers to reverberations from past activities. The student passively waits for the coming academic results, assuming that they will be negative because of his laziness and lack of involvement.

Based on Figures 1 and 2, we can have at least sixteen waitance types to illustrate its intricacy (Figure 3).

Figure 3
Types of Waitance

		Valence			
		Positive		Negative	
Intensity	High	PWHA	IWHA	PWHA	IWHA
		PWLA	IWLA	PWLA	IWLA
	Low	PWHA	IWHA	PWHA	IWHA
		PWLA	IWLA	PWLA	IWLA

This model offers a comprehensive insight into the concept of waitance and is a significant tool for people and researchers, allowing one to categorize the relevant psychological states. The author sought to address this by going into detail in each cell and exploring illustrative examples which would allow for a better understanding of the multidimensional nature of waitance, providing an initial basis for future applications. It should be mentioned that although waitance is a psychological tendency among human beings, it can be high in one culture and low in another one. That is why it is right to say that *waitance* (small letter w) is a psychological concept while *Waitance* (capital letter W) is a sociological one. From a sociological perspective, cultures can be categorized into high and low waitance. While in

high-waitance cultures, patience, hierarchy, fatalism, and tradition are significant, in low-waitance cultures, immediacy, pragmatism, individualism, and innovation are prioritized.

4. Teaching Burnout

Burnout in teaching is increasingly becoming an important subject that has led to empirical studies demonstrating the various factors responsible for this issue. A seminal study by Maslach and Leiter (2016) delineates three burnout components: Emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and decreased personal accomplishment. In general, research shows that high workload is an important factor associated with teacher burnout (Pishghadam et al., 2023a; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). In Hakanen et al.'s (2006) study, the correlation between workload demands and emotional exhaustion among teachers is significantly positive; hence, it means that more employees confronting the high level of job demand are more likely to have an issue with emotional fatigue—one facet of burnout.

Organizational factors play a vital role in teaching burnout. Horn et al. (2004), in their longitudinal study, showed how organizational climate affected teacher burnout. They showed that teachers in schools characterized by a positive organizational climate were found to be less prone to burnout than others working under hostile conditions. This emphasizes the need to reduce teaching burnout by addressing organizational issues. Moreover, interpersonal relationships in the school environment, such as relations with co-workers and administrators, are essential. The results of Skaalvik and Skaalvik's (2011) study testify to the importance of teacher-teacher relations because positive collegial relationships serve as a buffer against burnout. In addition, empirical studies have covered student-related factors that contribute to teacher burnout. Student misbehavior and classroom disruptions have been listed as major sources of teacher stress (Collie et al., 2012; Norouz Kermanshahi & Pishghadam, 2022). Montgomery and Rupp's (2005) study also revealed a significant relationship between student misbehavior and teacher burnout. It is clear that classroom dynamics and student behavior play a part in teacher stress, creating the vulnerability to develop into burnout.

Furthermore, the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic with respect to teaching burnout presented an unprecedented situation, leading to different hazards and stressors for teachers. Numerous researchers explored teachers' mental health and well-being during the pandemic to understand how they manage online or hybrid teaching. Roloff et al. (2022) conducted a systematic review that revealed emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were higher for teachers during the pandemic, being related to low levels of self-efficacy and well-being. The review found that the following factors served as protective tools: school leaders and colleagues' sufficiency support and personal and professional resources. Gershenson and Holt (2023) investigated burnout levels among teachers both before and throughout the pandemic, using data from two nationally representative surveys in the US. It was revealed that burnout increased significantly during the pandemic, especially among female, young, and less experienced teachers. The results of the study also revealed that autonomy, collaboration, and feedback significantly reduced burnout among teachers. These studies indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated the teacher burnout issue, highlighting the necessity to devote more attention and support to the specific needs of teachers in this aspect.

Another variable that contributes to the development of teaching burnout is teachers' self-efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy seems to have a negative correlation with burnout in the sense that teachers with high teacher self-efficacy experience low levels of burnout (Huang et al., 2019; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Also, teacher self-efficacy can moderate the outcomes of workload, organizational climate, and student behavior for burnout. For instance, Brouwers and Tomic (2000) discovered that teacher self-efficacy acted as the mediator between student misbehavior and emotional exhaustion. In turn, teacher self-efficacy may also moderate the effects of professional development and feedback on burnout while providing support to teachers (Li, 2023). For instance, a study by Klassen and Chiu (2011) established that teacher self-efficacy mediated the relationship between professional development and burnout. What these studies indicate is that teacher self-efficacy would be considered as one of the important variables that can solve or lessen burnout among teachers.

The other factor that may contribute to teaching burnout is teacher engagement or the level of interest and involvement, as well as the emotional dedication teachers demonstrate toward their work. Previous

empirical investigations reveal that teacher engagement has a positive relationship with well-being and negative ties to burnout, so highly engaged teachers tend to report better moods along with fewer symptoms of being burnt out (Bakker et al., 2014; Pishghadam et al., 2023a; Pishghadam et al., 2023b). Besides, the engagement of teachers can also be affected by some other factors like workload, organizational climate, and student behavior, which are also associated with burnout in teachers (Tao et al., 2022). For instance, Hakanen et al. (2006) showed that teacher engagement moderated the relationship between workload and burnout. Other aspects like professional development, feedback, and support can also be the drivers of teacher effectiveness that may increase teachers' motivation and satisfaction. For example, in another study carried out by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), the factors used at workplaces such as autonomy, feedbacks, etc. were established to be positive predictors of teacher engagement. These studies suggested that if teachers are engaged, they may avoid burnout or lessen its effect.

In short, empirical evidence shows the interrelationships between various factors behind teacher burnout. Correcting problems with workload, improving organizational climate and consolidating positive relationships within the school environment are fundamental steps in preventing burnout of teachers.

5. Waitance and Burnout

The emotional and cognitive component of prolonged waiting manifests the complex relationship between waitance and teacher burnout. Waitance has particular types of anticipatory periods that result in an increase in the level of stress and emotional exhaustion as the central element of teacher burnout. Lower personal accomplishment, as another feature of burnout, is associated with the passive characteristics of waitance, which denotes that people continue to do nothing when actions are required. This includes variants of waitance, such as Miraculous Waitance and Disastrous Waitance, which signify positive and negative characteristics that could result from waitance in the context of teacher burnout. For example, those engaged in Miraculous Waitance may remain inactive regarding external interventions such as better organizational climate or reduced workload in the hope of positive changes that help lower burnout. But people with a Disastrous Waitance attitude wait for the negative things like being troubled by poorly behaved students, which makes them stressed and leads to burnout.

Waitance insights provided by the comprehensive model (Figure 3) establish the relationship between the particular types of waitance and the factors contributing to burnout. IWHA individuals may have a short intense peak of anticipation that marks a source of emotional stress in teaching burnout. Similarly, people in PWLA could showcase a long-term and barely noticeable wait that could appear as the ongoing emotional exhaustion of teachers dealing with endless troubles all over.

Since teaching burnout is linked to workload, organizational climate, and interpersonal relationships, it is essential to understand the role of waitance in determining educators' reactions to preventive measures or mechanisms. Interventions designed to eliminate waitance and promote proactive thinking may decrease the level of burnout in teachers. Human factors of long waits and the introduction of supportive processes may also contribute to teachers' quality of life.

In addition, the analysis of waitance as a method of exploration of teacher burnout reveals another perspective on preventive measures and resilience-enhancing mechanisms in the educational environment. The designed intervention mechanisms that can benefit the people who are in the teaching profession may include individuals who wait for changes in the organization, better performance on the part of the students, or other transformative actions. The provision of professional courses such as coping ability, time management, and decision-making might equip this group of teachers with the ability to cope with uncertainties in a better way.

Such realization of the nuances of the emotional and cognitive aspects of waitance by educational systems might yield an appropriate deliberate intervention that would create a proactive mentality in the teachers, which leads to a better and sustainable professional life as a teacher. Finally, the notion of waitance offers a new view of the adequacy of uncovering the emotional-cognitive dynamics in the learning environment. The inclusion of waitance perspectives in the discussions about the teacher

burnout problem contributes to clarifying the dynamics of the relationship between psychological dispositions and teachers' welfare, proposing directions for personalized interventions, and recommendations aimed at creating a more health-conducive environment in education.

6. Concluding Remarks

Researching waitance and its complicated involvement with teacher burnout has proposed a new point of discussion, which is the part of human behavior within education. The intricacies of emotional-cognitive processes associated with waiting periods allow us to understand how teachers are coping with the teaching process. The inclusive model, which was introduced in this study and divided waitance into separate levels based on intensity, valence, expectation, and waiting time also helps to understand psychological problems better. The integration of waitance and teacher exhaustion aids administrators as well as policymakers in establishing an environment for teachers' development.

The focus on waitance for investigating teaching burnout draws attention to personalized approaches focusing on individual challenges faced by educators. The identification of waitance as a mediating factor in emotional exhaustion, lack of personal accomplishment, and depersonalization among teachers may lead to the development of new interventions. Such active approaches as creative professional development programs, support networks, and open communication culture ensure that educators find it easy to address uncertainties and challenges. By combining the concepts that are inherent to waitance with those about teaching burnout, educational establishments can take a pre-emptive approach and improve the overall well-being of their teachers along with their professional satisfaction. One of the possible implications of waitance for teaching and learning is that it may lead to exvolvement (Akbari & Pishghadam, 2022), where teachers and students become emotionally detached from the educational situation and lose interest in the teaching and learning process and outcome. This may result in lower levels of motivation, satisfaction, and performance, as well as higher levels of burnout among teachers and students. What is important is that we should prevent teachers from "waitiving" situations. In fact, "waitants" are more exvolved (passive systems/passivity theory) than (active systems/activity theory) involved.

In the end, as we delve into the complex interdependence between psychological tendencies and teaching burnout, it becomes evident that dealing with the emotional-cognitive construction of waitance is not only an academic endeavor but also has practical implications for promoting a resilient educational environment. In this way, by acknowledging and responding to the specific problems presented in waiting tendencies, we open up a path towards an enriching teaching profession that challenges us at all times for the sustainability of our role as educators. Studying teaching burnout and waitance, this study builds some routes for further investigation. Ensuing research projects may, therefore, investigate the design and efficacy of targeted interventions that are able to address the emotional-cognitive implications of waitance. The investigation into the impact of technology in minimizing waitance and burnout presents an avenue for further study, as does a focus on longer-term effects caused by organizational support. Through the unfolding of waitance and its connection to teacher burnout, academic society can aim to form climates that attest to challenges but also pursue resilience, well-being, and a sense of professional accomplishment.

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