

“How does population’s characteristics matter when it comes to job burnout?” A study in context of Indian banking sector.

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to examine the impact of demographic variables on burnout and its dimensions among banking sector employees. Six banks are selected (public and private sector) from India. The study investigates the influence of demographic variables (age, gender and marital status) on burnout. Data collection is done with the help of questionnaire, which was provided to the employees online. Maslach burnout inventory is used to collect the data from the employees along with their demographic characteristics. T – test and f – test has been applied on the collected data for the analysis. The results clarify how these variables impact burnout. And it is discovered from the findings that these variables account for significant impact on burnout. Female employees, married employees and younger employees experience high level of burnout as compared to their counterparts. The study will provide some important insights to future researchers and also to the organizations to reduce employee burnout.

Keywords: Burnout, Exhaustion, Cynicism, Inefficacy, Demographic Variables.

Introduction

Organization’s work environment is becoming demanding swiftly, and it gets difficult for the employees to cope up in such unstable environment. Job requirements, hectic schedules, meeting targets, take a toll on employees and increases the stress. Now a days, technology is growing tremendously but still employees face difficulties at work place. When after putting ample number of efforts also this stress is not managed, it leads to burnout. Recent studies and researches have revealed some shocking details about burnout which are certainly very sensitive and should not be neglected. It’s the need today that burnout and its impact should be clearly understood. It’s easy to target individuals that they are burnt out but it’s the organization that gives spark to burnout of employees.

Well, let’s understand what is burnout. Burnout firstly came into light during 1970’s in the USA. It was later defined as “a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job” (3). “Burn-out is a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed” as mentioned in ICD – 11(1). The three key dimensions of burnout are exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy. Exhaustion represents the basic individual stress component of burnout which is concerned with reduction in energy. Cynicism is related to interpersonal component of burnout which is concerned with feeling distant from one’s job. Inefficacy shows self - evaluation component of burnout (2). Burnout is often misunderstood as depression, but these two are different. Excessive burnout can lead to depression, but both of these needs different approach while treating. It is not always necessary that all the employees working on the same job will suffer from burnout, because it depends on the person factors of the individuals also (4). The concept of burnout was emerged when a study was conducted on healthcare providers and service providers (3). Initially it was thought that burnout only occurs in these sectors because of relatively more human interactions but as more studies were conducted, subsequently researchers came to a conclusion that other sectors are also not free from burnout (5). There are several consequences of burnout like occupational, physical, affective, psychological, and exhaustive. Occupational consequences lead to job dissatisfaction, absenteeism. It can be observed at two levels: company level and worker level and both of them are correlated (6). Physical consequences include hypertension, increased body weight, headache, etc. During recent pandemic burnout was felt by many employees and managers, it leads to depression, no fixed sleeping pattern and employees also feel mentally disturbed. Emotional exhaustion is also

an integral part of burnout. It also displays adverse results for an individual like feeling of doubt, damage of self-esteem to name a few (7).

After thorough researches and reviews on this term, some researchers have come up with few theories. Some of them are (1) conservation of resource theory, (2) matching – mismatching theory, (3) emotional contagion theory. Conservation of resource theory states that job burnout is influenced by some cultural and social factors also. Individuals try to obtain and safeguard valuable resources and when they fear that they will lose the hold of these resources then job burnout takes place. Matching mismatching theory of burnout is based on the demands and resources that an employee derives from his job. Job demands are over burden of work, time constraints, unhealthy relationships in the organization etc. On the contrary resources of the job can be social, organizational, physical facets that can curtail job demands. If these job demands outstrip job resources, it gives rise to fatigue. When this fatigue is not cured over time, it grows into burnout (8). It is said that burnout can spread. It is very habitual for persons to feel emotionally attached with others they work with. Emotional contagion theory expounds that burnout can also occur in groups, people working in same group have to face same situations, their ideologies are same and through their interactions they develop same emotions (9). This burnout is very evident in healthcare providers and teaching employees and can also be seen between married couples (10).

Review of literature

One of the first works on burnout was published many years ago (11), but it was further defined later on in 1981(12). The first definition described that burnout is a result of constant stress at work, which has not been handled properly. And majorly earlier it was seen in healthcare and service professionals. The most commonly used instrument to determine burnout is Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Later on, after studying the phenomenon in depth dimensions of burnout like exhaustion, depersonalization and cynicism were popularized (12) (13). Burnout has a detrimental effect on the health of individuals. It can affect an individual both physically and mentally. All the three elements have an impact on the health but exhaustion has significantly more prominent when it comes to mental health related aftermaths (7). Eventually job burnout can also lead to death. An eight - year study took place in Finland on Finnish forest industry workers to know the link between job burnout and injuries. And it was found out that there is a connection between the both and workers who were male and worked manually were more prone to injuries, although depersonalization element of burnout had no relation with the injuries of workers (14). A cross-sectional study conducted on female workers in Sweden cleared that 21% of women encountered high burnout. And these workers were more youthful in age, separated, their education level is low, financially weak etc, as compared to those with low burnout (15). A study conducted in Tokyo, Japan on nursing staff revealed that nursing staff from big hospitals are less burnout as compared to those from relatively small hospitals. It can be said that the environment or the circumstance in which they were working had a greater impact on them than their individual characteristics (16). Likewise in recent time during COVID – 19 pandemic burnout was increased as compared to pre pandemic time (17). Talking about the dimensions of burnout and their effects, it was found out in a study conducted on psychologists that depersonalization element of burnout was lower in them as in contrast to that of social workers and nurses (18). Unfavourable outcomes of burnout and the damage that it does demands interventions. These are not only helpful for the employees but they are beneficial for the organizations also. Interventions improves work life of employees and reduces employee turnover (19). There are two fundamental types of interventions. One that focus on individual level strategies and other that are concerned about the organizational level. Interventions that are tailored for individuals or employees help them to manage their stress to combat burnout. Although very less literature is available on organizational interventions but job redesign is treated as most vital of them all (20). To win the battle against burnout, it's important to analyse it. And for the measurement of burnout several tools are invented by the researchers. The most widely used tool is MBI – Maslach burnout inventory. This was the very first too that was invented and it measures all the three dimensions of burnout (12). To make it more specific and easier, MBI is categorised into three types according to the professions of the employees i.e. MBI – GS (general survey), MBI – HSS (human services survey) and MBI – ES (educators survey) (3). After MBI the second most used measure is burnout measure (BM). It was developed in 1980s and initially had 21 items. Later on, a shorter version of this scale, which included 10 items was introduced (21).

Research objective

The objective with which this study is undertaken, is to grasp the knowledge about the impact of various demographic variables on burnout and its dimensions. Age, gender and marital status are the demographic variables that are taken and their impact on burnout (personal burnout, work related burnout and client related burnout) are studied in this study.

Research methodology

Research Design: This study is descriptive in nature, as here impact of various demographic variables is assessed on burnout. The demographic variables that are considered in this study are marital status, age and gender of banking sector employees.

Sample and sampling technique: The present study was conducted among 600 employees. The employees were

from six selected Indian banks from both public and private sector. Three banks were selected from each sector and stratified random sampling technique was applied for the selection.

Data collection: For collection of data an online questionnaire was distributed to the selected participants. Questionnaire included in this survey is well established and is most frequently used burnout assessment tool. Maslach burnout inventory – human service survey (MBI – HSS) is used in this study to measure the dimensions of burnout i.e. emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment and depersonalization.

Table 1: Sample distribution of the study

Demographic Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	376	62.7
	Female	224	37.3
	Total	600	100.0
Marital Status	Married	350	58.3
	Unmarried	250	41.7
	Total	600	100.0
Age	20-30	136	22.7
	30-40	172	28.7
	40-50	160	26.7
	Above 50	132	22.0
	Total	600	100.0

Results

The following tables represent the analysis of data.

Table 2: Mean, Standard deviation & t-statistics: Burnout in relation to Gender

Burnout	Variable	N	Mean	Standard	t- stat	P
Personal Burnout	Male	376	3.15	1.34	-7.231	.000
	Female	224	3.96	1.29		
Client - related Burnout	Male	376	3.75	1.06	-7.356	.000
	Female	224	4.38	0.93		
Work - related Burnout	Male	376	2.55	1.12	-11.331	.000
	Female	224	3.62	1.09		
Overall Burnout	Male	376	3.15	0.85	-12.320	.000
	Female	224	3.99	0.71		

The above table displays the descriptive statistics that states that gender has a significant influence on burnout of employees in selected banks of northern India.

Results indicate that female employees (Mean = 3.96, Standard deviation = 1.29) experienced a higher level of personal burnout in comparison to their male counterparts (Mean = 3.15, Standard deviation = 1.34). Burnout related to the clients is also higher in female employees (Mean = 4.38, Standard deviation = 0.93) in comparison to male employees (Mean = 3.75, Standard deviation = 1.06). Work related burnout is also highly experienced by female employees (Mean = 3.62, Standard deviation = 1.09) and male employees experience relatively low burnout (Mean = 2.55, Standard deviation = 1.12). It can be seen that overall burnout is experienced more in female employees (Mean = 3.99, Standard deviation = .71) than male employees (Mean = 3.15, Standard deviation = .85).

It can be seen that female employees experience relatively higher level of burnout. And gender accounts for significant difference in the level of burnout among the employees of selected banks in northern India at 5% level of significance.

Table 3: Mean, Standard deviation & t-statistics: Burnout in relation to Marital Status

Burnout	Variable	N	Mean	Standard	t- stat	P
Personal Burnout	Married	350	4.09	0.99	15.938	.000
	Unmarried	250	2.56	1.36		
Client - related Burnout	Married	350	4.41	0.79	13.358	.000
	Unmarried	250	3.39	1.10		

Work - related Burnout	Married	350	3.41	1.08	12.300	.000
	Unmarried	250	2.30	1.11		
Overall Burnout	Married	350	3.97	0.51	22.248	.000
	Unmarried	250	2.75	0.83		

The above table displays descriptive statistics (Mean & Standard Deviation) along with independent t-test statistics for analyzing the level of personal burnout, client – related burnout, work – related burnout and overall burnout as experienced by the employees of selected banks in Northern India on the basis of marital status. Descriptive statistics specify that married employees experienced a higher level of personal burnout (Mean = 4.09, Standard deviation = .99) in comparison to unmarried employees (Mean = 2.56, Standard deviation = 1.36). Client related burnout is of higher level in married employees (Mean = 4.41, Standard deviation = .79) in comparison to unmarried employees (Mean = 3.39, Standard deviation = 1.10). If we talk about work-related burnout, married employees (Mean = 3.41, Standard deviation = 1.08) dominate unmarried employees (Mean = 2.30, Standard deviation = 1.11). Overall burnout is higher in married bank employees (Mean = 3.97, Standard deviation = .51) in comparison to unmarried employees (Mean = 2.75, Standard deviation = .83). Overall, it can be said that marital status does account for significant difference in the level of burnout among banking sector employees at 5% level of significance.

Table 4: Mean, Standard deviation & f-statistics: Burnout in relation to Age

Burnout	(Age in years)	N	Mean	Standard	F- stat	P
Personal Burnout	20-30	136	3.96	1.32	15.414	.000
	30-40	172	3.66	1.18		
	40-50	160	3.16	1.33		
	Above 50	132	3.01	1.52		
Client - related Burnout	20-30	136	4.51	0.89	20.239	.000
	30-40	172	4.03	0.97		
	40-50	160	3.81	1.07		
	Above 50	132	3.61	1.11		
Work - related Burnout	20-30	136	3.65	1.14	21.653	.000
	30-40	172	2.82	1.08		
	40-50	160	2.71	1.17		
	Above 50	132	2.68	1.27		
Overall Burnout	20-30	136	4.04	0.74	34.959	.000
	30-40	172	3.50	0.84		
	40-50	160	3.23	0.79		
	Above 50	132	3.10	0.94		

Descriptive statistics of the table infers that indicate that employees in higher age groups experienced a lower level of personal burnout (above 50 years: Mean = 3.01 Standard deviation = 1.52) in comparison to the employees in younger age groups (20-30: Mean = 3.96, Standard deviation = 1.32). Client related burnout is less in the age group (above 50 years: Mean = 3.61, Standard deviation = 1.11) in comparison to the employees in younger age groups (20-30: Mean = 4.51, Standard deviation = 0.89). Work-related burnout is lower in (above 50 years: Mean = 2.68, Standard deviation = 1.27) in comparison to the employees in younger age groups (20-30: Mean = 3.65, Standard deviation = 1.14). Overall burnout is also states that employees that are older in age experience less burnout (above 50 years: Mean = 3.10, Standard deviation = .94) in comparison to the employees in younger age groups (20-30: Mean = 4.04, Standard deviation = .74). This shows that level burnout reduces with advancement in age. The results are further tested for its statistical significance using F test (One-way ANOVA). As evident, the calculated p value (.000) is less than the assumed level of significance (i.e., .05), therefore it can be inferred that the extent of burnout significantly differs among bank employees on the basis of age.

Discussion

This study examines the impact of different demographic variables i.e. age, gender and marital status on burnout of banking sector employees of India. Personal burnout, work related burnout and client related burnout is taken into consideration. From the results of the analysis, it can be inferred that female bank employees experience high level of burnout as compared to that of male employees and it can also be seen that overall burnout also differs among female and male employees. Researches related to gender give different results. Some studies stated that

women face high level of burnout due to biasness at work and the responsibilities. The results of the findings are similar to the study conducted on physicians, which also revealed that women physicians face higher burnout because of the workload, spending more time with patients, lack of resources. Factors related to organization's work culture like more men in leadership roles, discrepancy in salary, workplace harassment also play a major role in gender differentiation in burnout (22). It's essential for the organizations to make policies catering all age groups as it's clear from the results that young bank employees are more prone to burnout as compared to employees of older age groups, as older employees have become more flexible with time and they have also developed strategies to cope up with the stressful environment. The third characteristic that is studied is marital status. And it is very clear from the results, that married bank employees experienced significantly high level of burnout as compared to unmarried employees. Marital status can have an impact on many aspects of employees. Married employees have to look after their families, they need emotional support, a better work - family balance and their stress gets triggered differently as compared to that of unmarried employees. A study conducted in China on manufacturing industry employees, disclosed that work motivation works as a guarding wall against burnout for the married employees (23).

Implications

The results of this study will work as an awakening alarm for the HR managers and policymakers. To keep the employees, stress free and away from burnout, a supportive environment should be created. It is very important for the employers and higher authorities of the organizations to understand what is leading to the burnout of the employees and how it is felt among different groups. Strategies should be tailored keeping in mind both younger and older employees. Older employees can feel difficulty and face numerous challenges because of their age like health issues etc. Whereas young employees can feel lack of motivation, excessive work load, higher job demands. Gender disparities should also be well thought of while framing policies in the organization. Studies have shown that women employees encounter higher burnout as compared to male employees. One of the major reasons is inequality and glass ceiling at workplace. Supportive organizational environment should be created for women keeping in mind the different roles they play at work and at home. As mentioned above in this paper in conservation of resource theory that, social factors also influence burnout. It is said that in most of the cases married persons have greater support from their spouse. Social support plays a key role in work-life balance (24). Interactive programs should be formulated to increase communication and to build strong connections for the employees who feel isolated.

Conclusion

In the current study the impact of demographic variables on burnout has been studied. The data was collected from banking sector employees of northern India (Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan). Results revealed that there is a considerable influence of demographic variables on burnout. Younger employees encounter higher level of burnout as compared to older employees. It can be said that young employees face work related stress, they are unable to cope up with the job demands and work schedule. It clarifies that different age groups need different strategies, as they have different needs. The analysis showcased that gender does account for significant influence on burnout. Female employees experience high level of burnout when compared with male counterparts. Differentiation in salary is one of the major stress factors. According to a survey data on SEO – search engine optimization, women workers are paid less salary than their male colleagues. The difference in the salary is roughly about 14% (25). There is a gender gap in other sectors also, and strategies should be made to minimize it. Marital status also plays vital role in influencing burnout. Employees that are not married face relatively less burnout than married employees, as the results clarified. The aftereffects of burnout are really concerning. It can disturb an employee physically and mentally both. Physical illness can include constant stress which can lead to fatigue, weak immunity etc. Disturbed mental health can create a path for depression, anxiety etc. Burnout can also affect the relationship with the people at work and at home. As far as organizations are concerned, the effect of burnout can also be seen on its functioning. Increased burnout in employees can increase the rate of turnover, absenteeism and efficiency. This can arise the need for recruiting more employees and ultimately increasing the cost for the organization. To cope up with these situations timely actions should be taken. Organizations should foster supportive environment to cater different needs of the employees. Management should understand the demographic factors thoroughly. They might not be same in every organization. The formulated policies should be flexible and programs should be conducted to nurture the mental health of the employees. Providing for an inclusive environment can relieve the risk burnout across different groups of employees.

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