


BURNOUT: A PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTKaushik V.^{1*}, Titus S.²DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55968/ijems.v12i03.324>^{1*} VishwaDeep Kaushik, P.hD Research Scholar, Department of Physical Education, Banasthali Vidyapith, , Rajasthan , India.² Sophie Titus, Head of Department, Department of Physical Education, Banasthali Vidyapith, , Rajasthan, India.

Burnout is a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job. It is defined by the three dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and professional inefficacy. As a reliably identifiable job stress syndrome, burnout clearly places the individual stress experience within a larger organizational context of people's relation to their work. Burnout impairs both personal and social functioning. This decline in the quality of work and in both physical and psychological health can be costly not just for the individual worker, but for everyone affected by that person. Interventions to alleviate burnout and to promote its opposite, engagement with work can occur at both organizational and personal levels. The social focus of burnout, the solid research basis concerning the syndrome, and its specific ties to the work domain make a distinct and valuable contribution to people's health and well-being.

Keywords: Stress, Anxiety, Psychological Health, Social relationship

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Definition and Assessment

Burnout is a psychological syndrome of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy in the workplace. It is considered to be an individual stress experience embedded in a context of complex social relationships, and it involves the person's conception of both self and others on the job. Unlike unidimensional models of stress, this multidimensional model conceptualizes burnout in terms of its three core components.

Burnout Components

Exhaustion refers to feelings of being overextended and depleted of one's emotional and physical resources. Workers feel drained and used up, without any source of replenishment. They lack enough energy to face another day or another person in need. The exhaustion component represents the basic individual stress dimension of burnout.

Cynicism refers to a negative, hostile, or excessively detached response to the job, which often includes a loss of idealism. It usually develops in response to the overload of emotional exhaustion and is self-protective at first – an emotional buffer of detached concern. But the risk is that the detachment can turn into dehumanization. The cynicism component represents the interpersonal dimension of burnout. Inefficacy refers to a decline in feelings of competence and productivity at work. People experience a growing sense of inadequacy about their ability to do the job well, and this may result in a self-imposed verdict of failure. The inefficacy component represents the self-evaluation dimension of burnout.

What has been distinctive about burnout is the interpersonal framework of the phenomenon. The centrality of relationships at work – whether it be relationships with clients, colleagues, or supervisors – has always been at the heart of descriptions of burnout. These relationships are the source of both emotional strains and rewards, they can be a resource for coping with job stress, and they often bear the brunt of the negative effects of burnout. Thus, if one were to look at burnout out of context and simply focus on the individual exhaustion component, one would lose sight of the phenomenon entirely.

The principal measure of burnout is the Maslach

Burnout Inventory (MBI), which provides distinct assessments of each of the three burnout components. Different forms of the MBI have been developed for different types of occupations: the human services survey (MBI-HSS), the educators survey (MBI-ES), and the general survey (MBI-GS). As a result of international interest in burnout research, the MBI has been translated into many languages.

Burnout Correlates

Unlike acute stress reactions, which develop in response to specific critical incidents, burnout is a cumulative stress reaction to ongoing occupational stressors. With burnout, the emphasis has been more on the process of psychological erosion and the psychological and social outcomes of this chronic exposure, rather than just the physical ones. Because burnout is a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job, it tends to be fairly stable over time.

Health Symptoms of the three burnout components, exhaustion is the closest to an orthodox stress variable, and therefore is more predictive of stress-related health outcomes than the other two components. Exhaustion is typically correlated with such stress symptoms as headaches, chronic fatigue, gastrointestinal disorders, muscle tension, hypertension, cold/flu episodes, and sleep disturbances. These physiological correlates mirror those found with other indices of prolonged stress. Similarly parallel findings have been found for the link between burnout and various forms of substance abuse.

In terms of mental, as opposed to physical, health, the link with burnout is more complex. It has been assumed that burnout may result in subsequent mental disabilities, and there is some evidence to link burnout with greater anxiety, irritability, and depression. However, an alternative argument is that burnout is itself a form of mental illness, rather than a cause of it. Much of this discussion has focused on depression, and whether or not burnout is a different phenomenon. Research has demonstrated that the two constructs are indeed distinct: burnout is job-related and situation-specific, as opposed to depression, which is general and context-free.

Job Behaviors Burnout has been associated with various forms of job withdrawal

- absenteeism, intention to leave the job, and actual turnover. However, for people who stay on the job, burnout leads to lower productivity and effectiveness at work. To the extent that burnout diminishes opportunities for satisfying experiences at work, it is associated with decreased job satisfaction and a reduced commitment to the job or the organization. People who are experiencing burnout can have a negative impact on their colleagues, both by causing greater personal conflict and by disrupting job tasks. Thus, burnout can be contagious and perpetuate itself through informal interactions on the job. There is also some evidence that burnout has a negative spillover effect on people's home life.

Engagement: The Opposite of Burnout

The opposite of burnout is not a neutral state, but a definite state of mental health within the occupational domain. Engagement with work is a productive and fulfilling state, and is defined in terms of the same three dimensions as burnout, but the positive end of those dimensions rather than the negative. Thus, engagement consists of a state of high energy (rather than exhaustion), strong involvement (rather than cynicism), and a sense of efficacy (rather than inefficacy). One important implication of the burnout–engagement continuum is that strategies to promote engagement may be just as important for burnout prevention as strategies to reduce the risk of burnout. A workplace that is designed to support the positive development of the three core qualities of energy, involvement, and effectiveness should be successful in promoting the well-being and productivity of its employees, and thus the health of the entire organization. From this perspective, health is not limited to the physical or emotional well-being of individuals but is evident in enduring patterns of social interactions among people.

A Mediation Model of Burnout and Engagement

Inherent to the fundamental concept of stress is the problematic relationship between the individual and the situation. Thus, prior research has tried to identify both the key personal and job characteristics that put individuals at risk for burnout. In general, far more evidence has been found for the impact of job variables than for personal ones. These job factors fall into

Six key domains within the workplace: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values.

However, more recent theorizing has argued that personal and job characteristics need to be considered jointly within the context of the organizational environment. The degree of fit, or match, between the person and the job within the six areas of work life, will determine the extent to which the person experiences engagement or burnout, which in turn will determine various outcomes, such as personal health, work behaviors, and organizational measures. In other words, the burnout–engagement continuum (with its three dimensions) mediates the impact of the six areas of work life on important personal and organizational outcomes.

Job Characteristics: Six Areas of Work Life

An analysis of the research literature on organizational risk factors for burnout has led to the identification of six major domains. Both workload and control are reflected in the demand–control model of job stress, and reward refers to the power of reinforcements to shape behavior. Community captures all of the work on social support and interpersonal conflict, while fairness emerges from the literature on equity and social justice. Finally, the area of values picks up the cognitive-emotional power of job goals and expectations.

Workload Both qualitative and quantitative work overload contribute to burnout by depleting the capacity of people to meet the demands of the job. When this kind of overload is a chronic job condition, there is little opportunity to rest, recover, and restore balance. A sustainable workload, in contrast, provides opportunities to use and refine existing skills as well as to become effective in new areas of activity.

Control Research has identified a clear link between a lack of control and high levels of stress and burnout. However, when employees have the perceived capacity to influence decisions that affect their work, to exercise professional autonomy, and to gain access to the resources necessary to do an effective job, they are more likely to experience job engagement.

Reward Insufficient recognition and reward (whether financial, institutional, or social) increases

People's vulnerability to burnout, because it

Devalues both the work and the workers, and is closely associated with feelings of inefficacy. In contrast, consistency in the reward dimension between the person and the job means that there are both material rewards and opportunities for intrinsic satisfaction.

Community Community has to do with the ongoing relationships that employees have with other people on the job. When these relationships are characterized by a lack of support and trust and by unresolved conflict, then there is a greater risk of burnout. However, when these job-related relationships are working well, there is a great deal of social support, employees have effective means of working out disagreements, and they are more likely to experience job engagement.

Fairness Fairness is the extent to which decisions at work are perceived as being fair and equitable. People use the quality of the procedures and their own treatment during the decision-making process as an index of their place in the community. Cynicism, anger, and hostility are likely to arise when people feel they are not being treated with the respect that comes from being treated fairly.

Values Values are the ideals and motivations that originally attracted people to their job, and thus they are the motivating connection between the worker and the workplace, which goes beyond the utilitarian exchange of time for money or advancement. When there is a values conflict on the job and thus a gap between individual and organizational values, employees will find themselves making a trade-off between work they want to do and work they have to do, and this can lead to greater burnout.

Personal Characteristics

Although job variables and the organizational context are the prime predictors of burnout and engagement, a few personality variables have shown some consistent correlational patterns. In general, burnout scores are higher for people who have a less hardy personality, who have a more external locus of control, and who score as neurotic on the Five-Factor Model of personality. There is also some evidence that people who exhibit type A behavior (which tends to predict coronary heart disease) are more prone to the exhaustion dimension of burnout. There are few consistent relationships of burnout

With demographic characteristics. Although higher age seems to be associated with lower burnout, it is confounded with both years of experience and with survival bias (i.e., those who survive early job stressors and do not quit). Thus, it is difficult to derive a clear explanation for this age pattern. The only consistent gender difference is a tendency for men to score slightly higher on cynicism. These weak demographic relationships are congruent with the view that the work environment is of greater significance than personal characteristics in the development of burnout. Implications for Interventions The personal and organizational costs of burnout have led to the development of various intervention strategies. Some try to treat burnout after it has occurred, while others focus on how to prevent burnout by promoting engagement. Intervention may occur on the level of the individual, workgroup, or entire organization. At each level, the number of people affected by an intervention and the potential for enduring change increase.

The primary emphasis has been on individual strategies to prevent burnout, rather than social or organizational ones. This is particularly paradoxical given that research has found that situational and organizational factors play a bigger role in burnout than individual ones. Also, individual strategies are relatively ineffective in the workplace, where the person has much less control of stressors than in other domains of his or her life. There are both philosophical and pragmatic reasons underlying the predominant focus on the individual, including notions of individual causality and responsibility and the assumption that it is easier and cheaper to change people instead of organizations.

Recently, the range of options for intervention has expanded, given the recognition of (1) aiming for the positive goal of promoting engagement and (2) using the six areas of work life to better identify the critical intervention targets. These options have now been incorporated into both individual and organizational strategies, all of which focus on the job context and its impact on the people who work within it.

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