



Burnout in Service Sector : A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Burnout in service sector has gained significant attention over the last several years. Given the intense emotional demands of the work environment, employees are particularly susceptible to developing burnout above and beyond usual workplace stress. Service sector, in particular, can cause a significant degree of burnout, leading to interference with individuals' ability to establish rapport, sort through diagnostic dilemmas, and work through complex decision making. Overall, burnout is associated with a variety of negative consequences including depression, risk of errors, and negative effects on employee's safety. This study is an effort to do comparison of the burnout in public and private sector employees of Indore city. Understanding of this analysis may help organization to improve the condition in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. This will help the employees to achieve their goals with the development of organization.

Key Words: *Burnout, Public Sector, Private Sector, Comparative Study.*

Introduction

Corporate pundits said that in recent years the rise in stress and burnout has seen across all spheres of life, particularly in the workplace. Burnout in organizations is a wide-spread phenomenon with far-reaching practical and economic consequences. The concept of burnout started as a 'grassroots' description of prolonged occupational stress among human service workers, where former engaged employees gradually get overwhelmed of emotional exhaustion, loss of energy, and withdrawal from work (Freudenberger, 1974; Maslach, 1982). Thus, the burnout concept was developed from field of observations – not from theory. Burnout is a syndrome of mental, physical and emotional exhaustion due to long term involvement in emotionally demanding situations (Pines and Aronson, 1988). When individuals face stress due to various conditions of their occupation and fail to cope with stress, it results into burnout. The employee who suffers burnout becomes disorganized, disoriented and it may result into harmful psychological and physiological effects. Burnout also adversely affects employees' turnover and leads to adverse impact on organizational effectiveness. A happy employee is considered as much more productive as compared with the employees with higher level of burnout. If employees are delighted with the organization, then they would play a vital role in decision making towards the services and work offered by the organization. In contrast, a burned out employee will likely to exhibit unfavorable attitude that will ultimately affect the behaviors. Burnout has also been described in terms of various models. Multidimensional models have emphasized the multidimensionality of construct. Process models have proposed the gradual development of burnout and the impact of unmet expectations and dysfunctional coping strategies (Fauth et al., 2009). Stage models have explained the sequences of three dimensions (Golembiewski et al., 1998). Well-being model has explained personal accomplishment in terms of competency domain and two other dimensions in affective domain (Thornton, 1980).

The 3 main components associated with burnout are:

Emotional exhaustion,

Depersonalization, and
Diminished personal accomplishment

Emotional exhaustion results in apathy and loss of concern; as emotional resources are depleted, helping professionals feel they cannot give of themselves at a psychological level. Depersonalization is characterized by the development of negative and cynical attitudes toward the recipient of care. Diminished personal accomplishment is characterized by the tendency to evaluate oneself negatively, particularly in relation to one's work with patients (Wise and David, 1975). In the light of stated facts, studying job burnout is more important in service industry. Service sector is considered as one of the leading sectors where 80% of total employees interact with customers. It is also noted that employees spend approximately 72 hours in a week with low level of rewards and benefits due to which they have difficulty in making the ends meet. Such workplace environment leads to the job burnout where professionals exhausted emotionally, detach their effort from their occupation and could not make the hallmark in their career. Moreover, the service sector employee feels high incongruence between their capabilities and workload and personal needs and reward and benefits. Thus, it can be viewed that studying burnout in service sector is expected to provide significant insights about job burnout (Schaufeli et al., 1993)

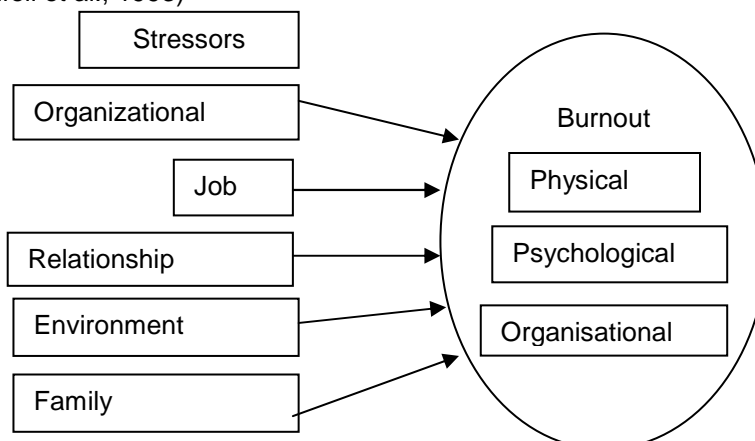


Figure 1: Source: <http://www.academicjournals.org/AJBM>

Today, stress and burnout is one of the major problems faced by the employees of the service sector across the globe. There is considerable reason to believe that the employees today is significantly more at risk of serious "burnout" in comparison to professional working in other sectors. Though this industry is one of the most demanding fields in the modern world, the professionals working in this field need not only to be physically fit but mentally sharpened also. The workload and forceful target orientation change them into stressed person. Their stress and burnout reveals through their behavior at work place and with their families as well.

Review of the Literature

Work place attitudes and behaviors such as job burnout, stress and workplace performance have largely been investigated in the developed countries (Baba et al., 1998; Jex, 1998). It was proposed that burnout exists when employees detached themselves emotionally from their jobs, treating humans as cases and low level of involvement in the recipients' issues (Daley, 1979). Burnout is becoming a global phenomenon affecting all countries, all professions and all categories of employees, and society in general. A survey conducted by the Hong Kong based "Political and Economic Risk Consultancy" found that stress and burnout levels are rising all over the world (Kuo-Shun 2011). Certain variables of job stress i.e. role ambiguity, group or political pressures, responsibility, under participation, powerlessness, low status, poor interpersonal relationships, and lack of social and administrative support have been found to be significant correlates of burnout (Rupert et al., 2005). Burnout is a direct outcome of an



individual's perceptions about job satisfaction and his/her performance which in turn indirectly effects organizational commitment resulting in a desire to quit (Low et al., 2001). Burnout faced by an employee adversely affects the level of his/her commitment towards the organization (Tan et al., 1998).

A mainstream group of employees articulated that their organizations did not care for its employees and sometimes employees don't like to work with their organizations indicating high levels of stress and burnout among them and majority were between the age brackets of 26-35 years. Misfit with organization, no part in decision making, were reported main causes of stress as well no control over work environment, personality traits, lack of relaxation along with ambiguous rules affect employees performance (Hogan and Holland 2003). Better managed employees are more cooperative and serve as assets for an organization and when their stress is ignored by the employer the results are increased absenteeism, cost, low productivity, low motivation and usually legal financial damages (The Office of Radiation, Chemical and Biological Safety, 1999).

Research exploring the difference of gender in job burnout noted contradictory findings. Some of the studies reported that there is no difference in job burnout on the basis between male and female (Daley, 1979). Some studies reported male employees experiencing higher level of burnout than female employees. It was reported that job burnout is less in married employees than that in single employees (Taycan et al., 2006). Also no difference was found between single and married employees with respect to job burnout (Gulalp et al., 2008). As far as job burnout with respect to different age group is concerned, higher level of burnout among older employees was reported while cynicism was lower at the age of 36 to 41 than before and after it. Working experience found to have significant effects on job burnout in various studies (Ahola et al., 2006). Employees having long experience with the same position at job place, his level of burnout decreases (Numerof et al., 1984).

However, job burnout with respect to working hours was studied and it was found that employees with long working hours are more likely to experience job burnout than those who have less working hours at workplace. (Bramhall et al., 1981). Studies in UK found that there are some occupations that are reporting worse than average scores on each of the factors such as physical health, psychological well-being, and job satisfaction. The relationship between variables can be very important to academicians (Dowell et al., 2001). If a definite link exists between two variables, it could be possible for an academicians to provide intervention in order to increase the level of one of the variables in hope that the intervention will also improve the other variable as well (Brown et al., 1982).

At last we can say that burnout and stress can be viewed both as intrinsic factor as well as extrinsic factor. In other words it is experienced due to factors inherent within an individual's personality or due to factors prevailing within the environment. Therefore it becomes extremely important both for the individual and the organization to work in the area of 'burnout and stress management' (Goodman et.al, 1998).

Keeping in view the above mentioned indications, the present research was designed to understand the high and low burnout of service sector employee.

Objective

To do the comparative study of burnout between public and private service sector.

Hypothesis

H₀₁: Private and public service sector employees do not differ in their burnout.

H_{a1}: Private and public service sector employees differ in their burnout.

Research Design and Sample

The study has conducted in Indore city. The employees of the service sector were the sampling unit for the study and 1024 respondents were studied, out of which 512 were from public sector

and 512 from private sector. The Convenient judgment sampling technique was used to select the respondents. Figure shows the conceptual framework of sample collection :

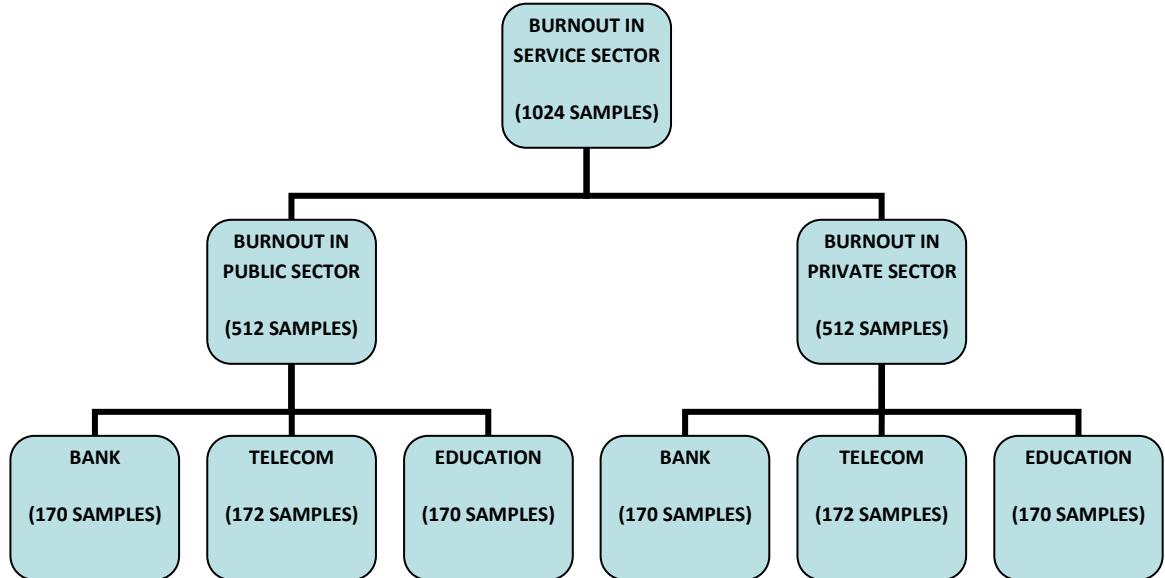


Figure 2: Sample Collection of Burnout in Service Sector
Data Collection Source

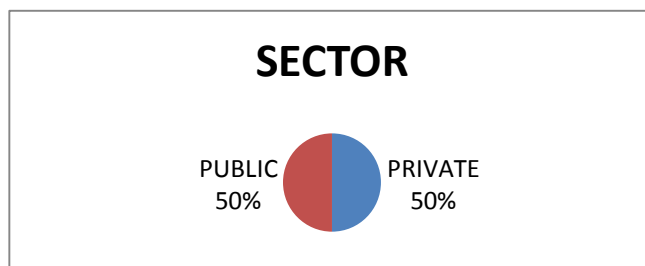
Both primary and secondary sources have used to collect the data. Standard questionnaire from the book titled “Developing Managerial Skills in Organizational Behavior” authored by Lisa A. Mainiero and Cheryl L. Tromley, Edition: Second, Pearson Education has been considered to collect the primary data. This scale is based on 7-point Likert scale. Several journals, magazines, internet, etc. were used as secondary data collection sources.

Data Analysis Tool

Statistical measures such as t-test were used to interpret the obtained data and to do the comparative study. The tools were applied through Statistical Software SPSS 17.

Analysis and Findings

Sector Analysis



Reliability Analysis - Scale (Cronbach Alpha)

Cronbach Alpha is .909 which is closer to 1.00 which shows that internal consistency is good hence the data is reliable for 1024 No. of Cases and 50 No. of Items.

Reliability Coefficients	
No of Cases	1024
No of Items	50
Cronbach Alpha	.909

Table 1: Reliability Coefficients



Results And Discussion

Group Statistics

Sector	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Burnout Public	512	3.6836	.75489	.03336
Private	512	3.9013	.81304	.03593

Table 2: t-test for burnout between private and public sector employees

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
								Lower	Upper
BURNOUT Equal variances assumed	2.073	.150	-4.439	1022	.000	-.21763	.04903	-.31384	-.12141
Equal variances not assumed			-4.439	1016.425	.000	-.21763	.04903	-.31384	-.12141

Table 3: Independent Sample Test

From the obtained result it is noted that private sector employees scored higher mean values (3.6836) than public sector employees (3.9013). The associated *p* value is .000 (2-tailed test). Since the *p*-value is 0.000 ($p < .05$), we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is difference between the burnout of public and private service sector at 5% significance level. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. So private sector employees have more burnout than public sector employees.

Suggestions

The employees can reduce their burnout by becoming more organized both at work and family. They can use relaxation techniques, yogas and pranayams and quality management practices to reduce their burnout level.

Conclusions

To do the quality management practices for global excellence the educators need to develop an active awareness of burnout and ought to consider incorporating relevant instruction and interventions during the process of training the employees. Much remains to be accomplished with respect to the area of burnout. Although in the above review many different causes of stress and burnout, empirical research has yet to identify, which explain the variance of burnout. Comparison studies remain to be undertaken between public sector and private sector professions to determine the differing burnout levels. Additionally more specific investigations remain to be conducted to determine exactly what it is about gender or age that affects burnout. It is a young field of endeavor, and will, most likely, remain a "hot topic" for a long time to come.

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