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Work Burnout: Unbalanced Job Demands and Job Resources?

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Abstract

The emerging need of job demands and uncommon downfall of job resources leading to the work burnout. The urgency of sustaining the job driven by the factor of insecurity of losing the job and not being able to maintain the income. Obviously, work burnout developed by the associating issues related to job demands and job resources. Therefore, this study aims to identify on how job demands and job resources causing work burnout. This study focusing on Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) by Kristensen, Borrits, Villadsen and Christensen (2005). Personal burnout, work related burnout and colleague related burnout were the main indicators in classifying the term of work burn out. 100 respondents from higher institution in Malaysia participated in this study. Quantitative methods were chosen to analyse the demographic and the descriptive analysis. The questionnaire entails of 4 sections, a) demographic profile, b) personal burnout, c) work related burnout and d) colleague related burnout. This study manages to explore the intensity of job demands and job resources related with the work burnout. The findings presented the work burnout affected by the job demands and job resources. In future investigations, it might be possible to correlate work burnout with job performance. A further study with more focus work management on job demands and job resources are therefore suggested. The confusion between job demands and personal needs will lead to poor working management and this is obviously indicates the unbalanced of job demands and job resources.

Keywords: Work Burnout, Burnout, Job Demands, Job Resources, CBI Inventory

Introduction

Background of Study

In the new norm after being hit with Covid-19, work burnout has become a central issue for those struggling working at home and working at office. Investigating work burnout in this study is a continuing concern for many to understand the relationship with the job demands and job resources. Recent evidence suggests that workplace interferences which encourage the pleasure of these basic needs to enhance work burnout (Patel & Bartholomew, 2021). The issue has grown in importance considering the pandemic. Throughout this study the work burnout will be focusing on personal burnout, work-related burnout, and colleague related burnout. The criteria for job demands were measured differently according to the job environment (Khan et al., 2014). In the case of job demands, job resources also have been associated with work burnout. In addition, Patel and Bartholomew (2021) justified the negative effect of job demands related to job resources. The lack of job resources leading to work burnout.

Statement of Problem

The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on Malaysia's labour economy. Since the chain of events is still developing and the second and third waves of the pandemic are still spreading over the globe, economists have not yet fully assessed the pandemic's impact (Chan & King, 2020). According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM), the unemployment rate grew to 4.5 percent (2020) from 3.3 percent (2019), or there were 711,000 job losses and working-hour reductions adopted by companies as cost-cutting measures. These effects were seen in practically all industries (2020). Moreover, the number of unemployed people decreased by 3.0 percent, or 19.9 thousand people to 649.3 thousand in April 2022, continuing a downward trend that had lasted nine months (March 2022: 669.2 thousand persons). As a result, after two years of the COVID-19 pandemic in the nation, the unemployment rate decreased to below 4% for the first time, to a record 3.9 percent (March 2022: 4.1 percent).

Job demands are related to cognitive and emotional demands involving psychological effort such as physical, mental, social, or organisational aspects of work (Hakanen et al., 2006). Job demand depletes employees' mental and physical resources, triggering a health impairment process that leads to burnout. In contrast, Hakanen et al (2008) stated that job resources aid either an intrinsic or extrinsic motivational role since workers who lack resources will not be able to cope with high demands.

Schaufeli (2015) in the context of health and welfare in the Netherlands has investigated the relationship between job demand and job resources. The study's findings imply that organisations and employees benefit more when they invest in increasing job resources rather than in reducing job demands. However, this study only focuses on both variables generally. Explain the effect of personal burnout. Therefore, since there is still limited study concerning personal burnout in job demand, thus originality of this study.

Hence, this study is done to investigate the answer to the following questions.

- RQ1- How do job demands lead to work burnout?
- RQ2- How do job resources lead to work burnout?

Literature Review

Characteristics of Work Burnout

Figure 1 presents Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) by (Kristensen et al., 2005). CBI encompasses three components in the theory, namely personal burnout, work related burnout and colleague related burnout. Personal burnout describes to the level of physical and emotional tiredness and fatigue a person experiences. Meanwhile work-related burnout is defined as the level of stress and tiredness that a person perceives to be related to their job on a physical, psychological, or behavioural level. Finally, colleague related burnout is defined as the level of stress and tiredness that a person perceives as related to his or her work with colleague.

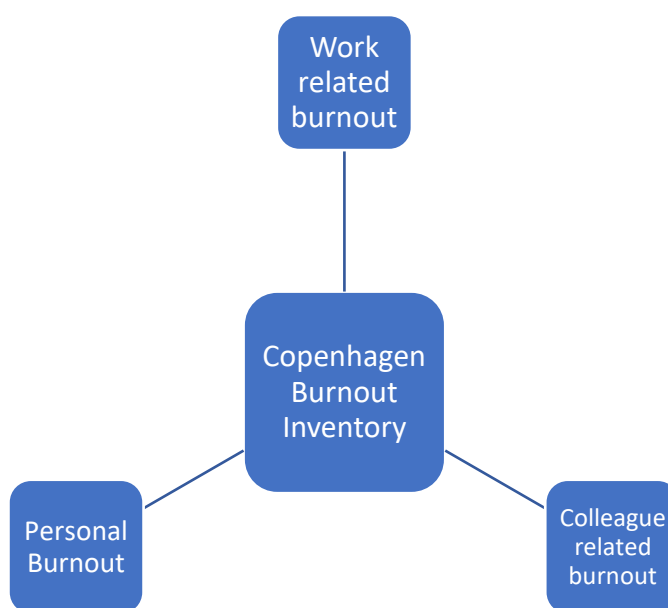


Figure 1 : Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI)

Causes of Work Burnout

Psychological exhaustion at workplace is referred to as work burnout. It is often thought to be a bad psychological condition and a result of work stress. This definition also highlights a person's work expectations and talents are out of balance for a while (Lin et al., 2014). The concept of work burnout was originally introduced by Freudenberger in 1974 when he intended to describe employees who are frequently involved in interpersonal work (Maslach & Jackson, 1984). The World Health Organization (2019) described burnout as a condition emerging from continuous occupational stress that has not been properly handled and it has three characteristics: (1) emotions of energy depletion; (2) increasing mental detachment from one's employment or sentiments of cynicism towards one's career; and (3) decreased professional efficacy. "Cynicism" can be regarded as a particular type of physical or mental separation from work roles. For instance, a cynical employee will respond to the related work demands by turning into more frustrated depersonalised (Wu et al., 2022). Recent study from Fadare et al (2022) showed that burnout and professional contentment were strongly correlated with work demands, whereas the opposite was true for work resources. Work resources refers to the social, psychological, and physical components of a work that may be useful in accomplishing work goals, lessen the physiological and psychological cost of meeting

working expectations. Furthermore, Grobler, Wörnich, Carrell, Elbert and Hatfield (2002) showed that cause of work burnout is simply the employee's entire view of reciprocity, which includes salary discontent and inadequate assistance, encouragement, and promotions. Meanwhile, Maslach et al (2001) revealed that burnout arises from social relationship between employee and employer which is usually found in asymmetrical professional relationships. Besides, some of the main causes for the development of work burnout include an imbalance between job expectation and abilities, a lack of work management, an effort reward imbalance, and extended work stress (Awa et al., 2010).

Past Studies

Past Studies of Work Burnout

Following the global COVID-19 pandemic, burnout became a major topic, making 2020 and the next coming years as transformation years in the workplace. Thus far, studies have been done to investigate the effects of work burnout especially during lockdown period. Some of the employees reportedly have trouble using the internet because of logistical and financial constraint (Fadare et.al., 2022). These issues may cause misunderstandings, which could result in unclear or erroneous information being conveyed and stale talks.

Apart of that, Shlenskaya et al (2020) study found that working from home has significantly boosted the amount of time spent in front of the computer and made it harder to distinguish between work and balancing it with the personal life. Long periods of time staring at a computer screen can have negative health effects, including dry eyes, neck ache, and hazy vision. One of the top studies on the impacts of work burnout is The Copenhagen Burnout Inventory: A New Tool for the Assessment of Burnout from the National Institute of Occupational Health, Copenhagen O, Denmark. In their journal article showed that internal reliability was extremely high and it shows employees are more likely to experience sleeping disorder and tender their resignation because of work burnout in the future.

Past Studies of Causes of Work Burnout

To date, the causes of work burnout have been the subject of numerous studies. According to Patel et. al (2021), they used the job demand-resources (JD-R) model and self-determination theory to examine the effects of job resources and job demands on work burnout among 102 physical therapists. The findings show that job demands, such as physical demand and secondary trauma, predict a significantly greater likelihood of work burnout, whereas job resources, like autonomy and competence, seem to be important predictors. The main factor contributing to teacher burnout is an imbalance between job demands and resources. According to a study titled "Conceptual Review of Job demands, Burnout, and Resources in Teaching" by Khan et. al (2014), these imbalances are seen to be important predictors of burnout. In addition to outlining the causes of work burnout, they also highlight interpersonal conflicts and ambiguity, conceptualising burnout, emotional exhaustion, disengagement, and personal accomplishment as well as workload, unpleasant working conditions, social demands, techno stressors, career demands, and role conflict.

By incorporating self-regulation viewpoints into JD-R theory, Bakker and Vries (2021) propose that short-term job strain and eventual burnout are related to persistently high job demands and limited resources as well as an inability to control oneself. Based on the model, workers who are under more strain at work are more likely to adopt maladaptive self-regulation

strategies including coping inflexibility and self-defeating behaviour. Consequently, stable resources are more essential when the job becomes more demanding. Next, Alarcon (2011) presented findings on job demands, resources, and attitudes in relation to work burnout using the conservation of resources theory (COR). Alarcon held that increased job demands, a lack of resources, and a lack of organisational adaptability all contribute to burnout.

High job demands include workload, role ambiguity, role conflict, role stress, stressful occurrences, and work pressure. According to Baker and Demerouti (2017), employees who are subjected to high job demands for an extended period develop chronic weariness and psychologically disengagement from their professions. They also concurred that burnout is also affected by job resources. Fewer job resources prohibited an employee to achieve work goals and promote growth and development on the job. Resources for the job include physical, psychological, social, and organizational aspect. Work begins to lose its significance and obstructs the satisfaction of innate psychological needs when resources like social support, autonomy, and skill variation are insufficient. These all play a part in work burnout.

Conceptual Framework

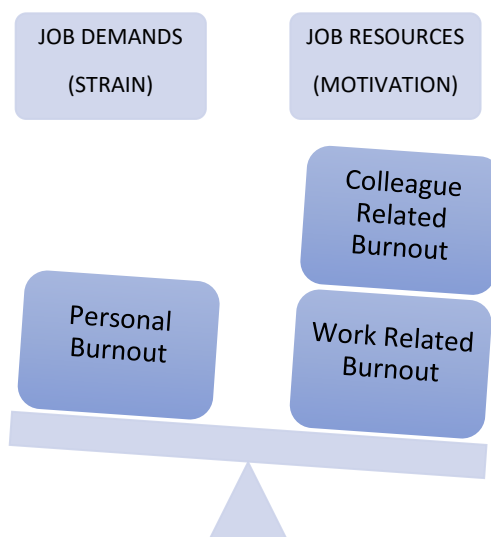


Figure 1- Conceptual Framework of the Study
Work Burnout: Unbalanced Job Demands and Job Resources?
(Source: Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Kristensen et al., 2005)

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study. This study's main root is from the job demands that strain and also job resources that motivates in organisational outcomes by (Bakker & Demerouti, 007). The factors are then supported by the factors in work burnout by (Kristensen et al., 2005). In the context of this study, job demands, and job resources are seen as balancing factors that lead to organisational outcomes.

Job Demands

Employees begin working from home or remotely as the virus spreads. The team dynamics will change, and they will need to adjust to new and strange work patterns, and there will be new communication channels. The transition of this adjustment in job demands leads to

personal burnout (Fadare et.al., 2022). It has been demonstrated that outside of work hours, co-workers and employers overwhelmed employees with emails and WhatsApp, and telegram messages and furthermore, long work hours, nonstop video meetings, and the need to keep up with additional channels of communication are the main causes where all of these lead to serious work burnout effects.

Job Resources

Job resources can be demotivating factors with the interference from colleague-related and work-related burnout. Work burnout can occur when all the two factors of job resources are not met. The two factors of job resources are used as the framework to explicate the link between job resources and the organisational outcomes by (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). With the reference to Figure 1, the job resources can be demotivating factors with interference from colleague-related and work-related burnout. Next, the job resources can lead to colleague-related burnout and nevertheless, the job resources may lead to work-related burnout.

Methodology

This quantitative study is done to investigate on how job demands and job resources leads to work burnout. 100 participants were chosen from higher institution in Malaysia. The instrument (refer to table 1) used is a survey adapted from (Kristensen et al., 2005). Apart from the demographic profile in Section A., there are 3 other sections, section B has 6 items on personal burnout. Section C has 7 items on work-related burnout and section D has 6 items on colleague related burnout.

Table 1

Distribution of Items in Survey

SECTION	FACTORS	NO OF ITEMS
B	Personal Burnout (PB)	6
C	Work Related Burnout (WRB)	7
D	Colleague Related Burnout (CRB)	6
	TOTAL NO OF ITEMS	19

Data is collected via google form and analysed using SPSS version *26. The SPSS analysis revealed a Cronbach analysis of 0.934 thus showing high internal reliability for the instrument. Data is presented in terms of percentage for the demographic profile and mean scores to answer the research questions.

Findings

Findings for Demographic Profile

1	Male	6%
2	Female	21%
3	Prefer not to say	73%

Figure 1- Percentage for Gender

1	20 to 29 years old	12%
2	30 to 39 years old	59%
3	40 to 49 years old	24%
4	50 to 59 years old	5%

Figure 2- Percentage for Age Group

1	SPM/STPM	3%
2	Diploma	17%
3	Degree	11%
4	Master	54%
5	Phd	15%

Figure 3- Percentage for Highest Academic Level

Figure 1 shows the percentages for gender profile for this study. Interestingly, 73% preferred not to reveal their gender. Figure 2 shows the age ranges from 20 to 59 years old. The highest percentages are from the group 30 to 39 years old. Figure 3 shows the percentage of highest academic level of respondents. 54% of the respondents are Master holder, followed by Diploma (17%), PhD (15%) and Degree (11%). Subsequently the least of the respondents are holding SPM certificate with 3%, respectively.

Findings for Job Demands

This section presents data to answer research question 1: How do job demands lead to work burnout? In the context of this study, job demands are causes from personal burnout.

STATEMENT	Mean
PB1 How often do you feel tired?	1.7
PB2 How often are you physically exhausted?	3.9
PB3 How often are you emotionally exhausted?	3.8
PB4 How often do you think "I can't take it anymore!"	3.9
PB5 How often do you feel worn out?"	3.1
PB6 How often do you feel weak and susceptible to illness?	3.4

Figure 4- Mean for Personal Burnout

Figure 4 shows the mean distribution for personal burnout with job demand as the factor. Statistically, most of the respondents are feeling physically exhausted and burdened with their existing workload as indicated in PB2 (How often are you physically exhausted?) and PB4 (How often do you think "I can't take it anymore!") with both mean score of 3.9. Furthermore, the mean score for PB3 (How often are you emotionally exhausted?) and PB6 (How often do you feel weak and susceptible to illness?) are 3.8 and 3.4 respectively. Regarding PB5 (How often do you feel worn out?"), the mean score registered is 3.1. The least mean score obtained is 1.7 for PBQ1 (How often do you feel tired?) which indicates most of the respondents seldom feel tired.

Findings for Job Resources

This section presents data to answer research question 2: How do job resources lead to work burnout? In the context of this study, job resources can become demotivating factors with the existence of (a) work related burnout, and (b) colleague-related burnout.

STATEMENT	Mean
WRB1 Do you feel worn out at the end of the working day	3.1
WRB2 Are you exhausted in the morning at the thought of another day at work?	3.6
WRB3 Do you feel that every working hour is tiring for you?	3
WRB4 Do you have enough energy for family and friends?	2.9
WRB5 Is the nature of your work emotionally exhausting?	3.2
WRB6 Does your work frustrate you?	3.4
WRB7 Do you feel burnt out because of your work?	2.9

Figure 5- Mean for Work-Related Burnout

Figure 5 presents mean for work-related burnout. Most respondents agreed to the statement 'Are you exhausted in the morning at the thought of another day at work?' with mean value of 3.6, followed by 'Does your work frustrate you?' with mean value of 3.4 and 'Is the nature of your work emotionally exhausting?' with mean value of 3.2. Next, the mean value of 'Do you feel worn out at the end of the working day' and 'Do you feel that every working hour is tiring for you?' are 3.1 and 3, respectively. The lowest mean with 2.9 correspond to the statement 'Do you have enough energy for family and friends?' and 'Do you feel burnt out because of your work?'

STATEMENT	Mean
CRB1 Do you find it hard to work with colleagues?	3.2
CRB2 Does it drain your energy to work with colleagues?	2.8
CRB3 Do you find it frustrating to work with colleagues?	2.8
CRB4 Do you feel that you give more than you get back when you work with your colleagues?	2.7
CRB5 Are you tired of working with your colleagues?	3
CRB6 Do you sometimes wonder how long you will be able to continue working with your colleagues?	2.6

Figure 6- Mean for Colleague Related Burnout

Figure 6 which is about colleague-related burnout summarizes the whole six percentage graphs into their mean reading respectively. In terms of the question: Do you find it hard to work with colleagues? (CRB1) had the highest mean value of 3.2 indicating that colleague-related burnout leads to work burnout and CRB5 (Are you tired of working with your colleagues is 3.0 respectively. Apart from that, CRB2 (Does working with colleagues drain your

energy?) and CRB3 (Is it frustrating to work with colleagues?) as both questions have the same mean score of 2.8. In response to CRB6 (Do you sometimes wonder how long you will be able to continue working with your colleagues?), the lowest mean value is 2.6.

Conclusion

The main goal of this study was to determine on job demands and job resources lead to work burnout. One interesting finding is the mean for “How often do you feel tired?” was the lowest with the mean score 1.7 compared to all the items in personal burnout dimension. Contrary to the expectations, this justified feeling tired did not correlate with the job demands. Fadare et. al (2022) support the shift of the findings clarifying on job demands leads to personal burnout. Furthermore, it can be supported with the finding of “How often do you think “I can’t take it anymore!” with the mean score of 3.9. This justified the job demands did give impact on the burnout.

Next, the mean score for the item “Are you exhausted in the morning at the thought of another day at work?” was 3.6. A possible explanation for this result may be the over demanding of job tasks (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). This factor may explain the relatively high mean score for the item. This study has found that generally job demands and job resources did leading to the work burnout. This new understanding should help to improve the roles of employers and working colleagues in the impact of work burnout. This study also lays the groundwork for future research to delve into the work burnout post pandemic and focusing the relationship between job demands and job resources. However, the generalisability of these results is subject to certain limitations. For example, this study focuses on respondents from higher institutions. Despite its limitations, the study certainly offers valuable insights on the unbalanced of job demands and job resources. A greater focus on job loads and the segregation of the task should be monitored to minimize the impacts of the work burnout. There are a few important changes which need to be made, such as the flexible working place should be continued and taken together the findings, better planning in work management will be implemented if the employees can choose to work from office or remotely from the home.

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