



**BURNOUT AND WORK ENGAGEMENT AMONG COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TEACHERS: A STUDY OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING IN J&K**

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**ABSTRACT**

Little research has focused on understanding the relevance of both the concepts of burnout and work engagement in relationship to college and university faculty in a developing country like India. Using path analysis, the study indicates that both the burn out and work engagement of faculty are inversely related. The study also examines the magnitude of faculty burnout and engagement in college and universities in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, the northern most part of India. Further, besides making comparison between college and university faculty burnout and engagement, the study attempts to identify the reasons of such gap and highlight the relevance of these constructs in education sector.

**KEYWORDS: Burnout, Work Engagement, Faculty, Higher Education, India**

The term “burnout” originated during the 1960s as an explanation of the effect of drug abuse on an individual. Burnout has become an “expression” used to express an almost unlimited variety of social and personal problems. It is a bad issue which affects the happiness of not only millions of human services’ workers but of their tens of millions of clients as well. Potential victims of the attitude and behaviour are the teachers and their students, psychotherapists and their patients, caseworkers and their clients (Azeem, S. M., & Nazir, N. A., 2008). However, it does not give us the clear definition of burnout and for its clarity and measurement, an instrument has been accepted, the Maslach Burnout Inventory.

Burnout is a process by which too much involvement at work leads to high depletion of energetic and social resources. This sometimes shows clearly itself by physical signs, such as exhaustion,

fatigue and somatization; behavioral signs such as an inability to hold in emotions and social withdrawal; cognitive signs, such as cognitive tunneling and unwillingness to change that is being sometimes shared with other team members and clients in a cynical way; and reduced competence, expressed in working for long hours, doing less and less in more and more time (Freudenberger, H.J., 1974).

The aim of this study is to determine job burnout and its relation with the components of job burnout in the performance of the higher education personnel. (Gorji M., 2011).

Staff burnout leads the certain adverse effects in the work setting: higher rates of illness, lower staff morale, increased use of alcohol, low satisfaction, high staff turnover, reduced quality of service, and poor customer outcomes (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). Thus, burnout has its roots in providing protection and service occupations, in providing the relationship between provider and recipient. This interpersonal context of the job means that from the beginning burnout was studied not so much as an individual stress response, but was studied in terms of an individual's relational transactions in the workplace. Moreover, this interpersonal context focused attention on the individual's emotions, and on the motives and values that underlines his or her work with recipients. Burnout had been recognized as a problem by both social reporters and practitioners long before it had a recognized name and had become a focus of systematic study by researchers. Burnout is a syndrome in reaction to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job (Schaufeli et al., 2008). The psychological sensitivity in each job is a good stage for stress and jobs accidents, so prevention of job burnout as the main problem of public healthcare.

### **WORK ENGAGEMENT**

Kahn (1990) outlined three psychological antecedents to engagement that are influenced by individual differences as well as the work context. First, individuals must sense meaningfulness in their work role. Second, individuals must feel safe to express themselves without fear of negative consequences. Psychological safety may be experienced when interpersonal relationships are supportive and trusting, when managers are supportive and clear, or when organizational norms are clearly delineated. Third, and finally, Kahn proposed that employees must also feel that they have the personal resources necessary to engage. Psychological availability, according to Kahn, is the sense of having physical energy, emotional energy, and psychologically security about one's work and one's status. These three psychological conditions; meaningfulness, safety, and availability are precursors to employees' abilities to engage themselves in their work roles.

The study accepted direct as well as indirect significant relationships between various job resources and customer satisfaction. The study has also shown the relevance of the work engagement in as

much that apart from the direct positive effects of work engagement on customer outcomes. Work engagement also mediates the causal relationship between employee satisfaction and customer outcomes (Siddiqi, 2014).

Engaged workers are more open to new information, more productive, and more willing to go the extra mile. The relationship between trust and work engagement is felt stronger that leads to an upward spiral effect. The relationship between the two forms of trust and work engagement is mutually reinforcing overtime. More specifically, an upward spiral effect: high levels of trust in top management, immediate supervisor and co-workers and a high tendency to trust others boosts work engagement, which instantly increases trust at all three levels of the organizational hierarchy by affecting an individual's behaviour to trust. In addition, the present analysis also examines the interaction effects of state and trait trust on work engagement (Chughtai & Buckley, 2008). Managers want to improve staff engagement as this tends to lead to staff performance, reduces staff turnover and improves the well-being of employees. Three different approaches have been used to measure employee engagement, namely engagement as a description of conditions under which people work, engagement as a behavioural outcome, and engagement as a psychological presence (Admasachew & Dawson, 2011).

Employees who are engaged, generally invests considerable amount of work effort into behaviours those are appropriate for performing their work roles in as much as work engagement is employees attitude characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption at their work place (Schaufeli, et al., 2002). Several authors such as Richardsen, A. M et al., (2006) suggested the control, rewards, recognition and value are suitable for the work engagement, which results in employee job satisfaction and the desired psychological outputs. The engagement of the employees make a proper way to present them in a positive feeling and in return presents a work behavior. Work engagement refers to the workers who are engaged are mentally present to entirely express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally in their work roles. It has three dimensions, first- how much a worker is attached to his /her work, second-the mental extent to which a worker feels safe that his/her work will not lead to any un-expected result and third- how many resources can be required to develop the worker's performance in the work environment. Also, these strongly affecting factors are positively related with work engagement. These dimensions of work engagement help us in handling the work and to handle the customers which provide its effects on job demands and customer satisfaction.

## RESEARCH GAPS

Very little or no research has been conducted in the state of J&K in order to explore the sources of burnout among college and university teachers. Reviewing the relevant literature, the authors have a strong feeling that college teachers have more feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment than the university teachers. The present study aims to examine as to why college and university teachers exhibit low work engagement. This provides us a research gap to work on.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To study Burnout and Work engagement among college and university teachers in institutions of higher learning in J&K, a questionnaire survey was conducted. The basic issues concerning the study's research design and methodology are discussed below:

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has been undertaken with the following objectives:

- To examine the magnitude of faculty Burnout and engagement in college and universities of Kashmir province.
- To make a comparison of college and university teachers.
- To identify reasons which are related to faculty burnout in the institutions of higher learning in J&K.
- To make a comparison of reasons as identified above (3).

## HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The study revolves round the following hypotheses:

H1: College faculty is less engaged than the university faculty.

H2: Both college and university faculty experience employee burnout.

H3: The perceptual gap between college and university faculty is substantial and significant in terms of work engagement.

## THE SAMPLE

The study is conducted in the state of J&K .The selection of respondents is made by using the random sampling, representing college and university teachers in the institutions of higher learning in J&K. The sample size consists of 300 college and university employees from five districts of the state.

## DATA COLLECTION

Survey method was adopted for the collection of data .The data represents the burnout and work engagement among college and university teachers. Correlation, standard deviation is used to get

the accurate result. The data is collected from colleges of five districts namely Srinagar, Ananathnag, Pulwama, Ganderbal and Bandipora. The author has taken 30 employees from each district college. So, the total number of college faculty is 150. Also, the author has taken a sample of 150 University teachers from five universities of Kashmir. Among them, 30 employees have been taken from each university. So, that the total sample of college and university faculty taken is 300.

#### **THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS AND SCALE PURIFICATION**

The most commonly used instrument for the measurement of burnout is the MBI-GS (Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach, & Jackson, 1996). Based on the notion that exhaustion, cynicism and efficacy can be broadened beyond the interpersonal domain that is characteristic for the human services, they distinguished three generic burnout dimensions that were labeled exhaustion, cynicism and efficacy, respectively. We used the scales measuring the core dimensions of burnout, namely exhaustion, cynicism and absorption. All scales consist of five items. Examples are: I feel used up at the end of a working day (exhaustion), I doubt the significance of my work (cynicism) and In my opinion, I am a good teacher (Efficacy). The internal consistencies (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) of both scales were good: 0.67 for exhaustion, 0.71 for cynicism and efficacy 0.69.

To capture the notion of employee level of work engagement, seventeen-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) originally developed by Schaufeli *et al.* (2002) was used. The scale specifically captures the view of all the three domains of the work engagement like 'vigour', 'dedication', and 'absorption'. In order to examine the work engagement in college and university teachers, we used the scales assessing vigor (six items), dedication (five items) and absorption (six items) to assess the core dimensions of engagement. Examples are: when I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work (vigor), I am enthusiastic about my work (dedication) and I am immersed in my work (absorption). The engagement items were similarly scored as the items of the MBI- GS. Cronbach's was 0.61 for vigor, and 0.72 for dedication and absorption 0.68.

#### **ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

The present analysis is comprised of three main steps for ascertaining the causal relationships between several constructs.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics, Inter-Item Correlations and Alpha Values of the Variables**

Variables	Mean	S.D	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Exhaustion	3.61	0.76	1.00					
2.Cynicism	3.57	0.83	0.33*	1.00				
3.Efficacy	3.70	0.79	0.37*	0.47*	1.00			
4.Vigor	3.68	0.71	0.51*	0.37*	0.48*	1.00		
5.Dedication	3.27	0.86	0.53*	0.43*	0.39*	0.38*	1.00	
6.Absorption	3.59	0.93	0.33*	0.51*	0.37*	0.43*	0.36*	1.00
Cronbach's alpha			0.67	0.71	0.69	0.61	0.72	0.68

Notes:  $\chi^2 = 836.1$ ,  $df = 348$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $RMR = 0:051$ ,  $GFI = 0:79$ ,  $AGFI = 0:77$ ,  $CFI = 0:89$ . Correlation coefficients are estimates from LISREL all of two-standard error interval estimates do not include 1\*\*Single item indicator, and its measurement error was set to 0 because of identification problem; All correlations are significant at  $< .05$

*First*, the impact of various dimensions of burnout on work engagement was measured. *Second*, the impact that is exerted by employee work engagement on university and college faculty was measured. *Finally*, the total effects those are exerted by several dimensions of burnout either directly on university and college faculty engagement or indirectly through employee work engagement was also measured with the help of path analysis. The estimation of both direct as well as indirect effects made it possible to measure the extent of mediation by intermediating variable. However; the author estimated a measurement model to examine the relationships through path analysis using maximum likelihood parameter estimation with AMOS 7.0 (Arbuckle, 2006).

### **ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

The pattern of analyzing and reporting of decomposed direct as well as indirect effects on performance through path analysis is in line with that followed by Iverson et al. (1996). This facilitated in measuring the extent of mediation by intermediating variables. We estimated a measurement model prior to examining the relationships through path analysis. Table 1 shows, the measurement model, that provides a reasonable fit to the data, whereas the  $\chi^2$  value is statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 836.1$ ,  $df = 348$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $RMR = 0:051$ ,  $GFI = 0:79$ ,  $AGFI = 0:77$ ,  $CFI = 0:89$ ). The goodness-of-fit index (GFI) and the adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) were 0.79 and 0.77 respectively. The CFI showed a high value of 0.89. Thus, slightly low Cronbach's alpha value in a few

constructs is not considered to be a problem with the analysis. Further, generally the alpha-estimates are nearer the cutoff point (0.68).

**Table 2: Influence of Burnout on Work engagement in educational setting**

Independent Variables	Dependent variables		
	Vigor	Dedication	Absorption
1.Exhaustion	-0.39*	-0.19**	-0.11***
2.Cynicism	-0.49***	-0.35**	-0.53*
3.Efficacy	-0.11***	-0.31*	-0.23**
R2	0.38	0.36	0.37

\* < 0.001 ; \*\* < 0.1 ; \*\*\* < 0.05

The result clearly indicate that almost all the three burnout dimensions (exhaustion, Cynicism and Efficacy) drive the overall role directly on Work engagement (Vigor, Dedication and Absorption). However, Efficacy is obviously more influential antecedent of the Vigor (b = -11, p < 0.05, Dedication (b = -0.31, p < 0.001) and Absorption (b = -0.23, p < 0.1). Both Exhaustion and Cynicism participation also influence upon their responses, however with lower significance (significance ranging from < 0.001 to < 0.05).

**Table 3: Work engagement: A comparative study of College and University Faculty.**

Variables	College faculty			University faculty			Gap in %age	P-value
	Mean Score	%age of Mean score	S.D	Mean Score	%age of Mean score	S.D		
1.Vigor	3.02	60.4	0.987	3.68	73.6	1.053	13.2	0.002**
2.Dedication	3.25	65.0	0.684	4.04	80.8	0.893	15.8	0.000*
3.Absorption	3.43	68.5	1.008	3.97	79.4	0.904	10.9	0.004**
Overall		64.63			77.93		13.3	0.001*

\* < 0.0001; \*\* < 0.01; \*\*\* < 0.05

Table 3 indicates that some noteworthy and significant difference in opinion on all the components of 'work engagement' is found in between the college teachers and the university teachers. The mean score and %age mean score of college faculty is 3.02 (60.4 %) for Vigor, 3.25 (65.0 %) for dedication and 3.43 (68.5%) for absorption. Also, the standard deviation is 0.987 for vigor, 0.684 for dedication and 1.008 for absorption. The mean score and %age mean score of university faculty is



3.68 (73.6%) for vigor, 4.04 (80.8%) for dedication and 3.97 (79.4%) for absorption. The standard deviation is 1.053 for vigor, 0.893 for dedication and 0.904 for absorption. The highest variation is on 'dedication' (a difference of 15 %, P value = 0.000) followed by 'vigor' (a difference of 12 %, p value = 0.002) and the lowest, however significant difference in opinion appears in 'absorption' (a difference of only 8%, p value = 0.004). The results summarized in table-3 reveals that excepting with the component 'absorption' the perception of college teachers is in line with that of university teachers. The aim of this study was to examine whether the dimensions of burnout and work engagement are bipolar constructs representing each other's opposite. In order to investigate this we used the MBI-GS (measuring burnout using negatively formulated items only) and the UWES (measuring work engagement using positively formulated items only), practically, these scales measure parallel dimensions use items with overlapping content. In addition, we examined the relationships of the derived dimensions to exhaustion, cynicism, efficacy, vigor, dedication and absorption. Taken together, the results inhibit us from providing a simple answer to the question whether burnout and work engagement are bipolar constructs. Our findings indicate that we should answer this question for each dimension separately. While the identification dimensions of burnout (cynicism) and work engagement (dedication) seem to be each other's opposite, the energy dimensions (exhaustion vs. vigor) seem to represent two separate but highly related constructs. This conclusion can be justified both on the basis of the CFA findings, and the pattern of relationships with other constructs.



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