



Midocean University
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**The Effect of Job Burnout on Job Satisfaction:
A Case Study on Administrative Workers in Saudi
Universities**

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Introduction:

Employees are the most important key to the success of an organization. Organizations can enhance job satisfaction and performance if employees have positive working relationships with each other and with the organization. Employees with satisfying experiences in their work are most likely to stay. Therefore, intrinsically motivated employees are known to work effectively and produce superior outcomes (Rinny et al., 2020).

One of the key elements in improving performance and developing a person's favourable perception of his work is job satisfaction. People will experience internal conflict, often known as "stress," when they discover a condition in their living or working environment that disagrees with their current skills and facilities. Stress is characterized as the inability to make a decision when faced with positive, negative, or neutral situations related to one's workplace. When one works in a dynamic setting that is not entirely within their control, stress becomes unavoidable. These days, employees are more concerned with their work lives, and many feel that job stress leads to physical, emotional, and social problems (Mardikaningsih & Sinambela, 2022a).

As a main focus of attention in the research field of work psychology is the worker mental overload (Fernández-Suárez et al., 2021). Employees who are unable to handle additional professional pressure and are completely dissatisfied with the environment are expected to experience burnout (Nguyen & Malik, 2022). It mainly occur in poorly organized and managed organizations that exhaust their employees and consume their psychological resources (Edú-Valsania et al., 2022). Burnout is a reaction that arises from prolonged exposure to a variety of stresses, the most significant of which are those related to one's profession (Nguyen & Malik, 2022). It is seen lately as an important hazard in the society since it generates a significant cost to the individual as well as the organization. Even though, it was initially considered to effect health care givers only, today it includes all sort of professions (Edú-Valsania et al., 2022). Human resources in the organization are required to be able to manage their employees so that the output produced can be in line with expectations. They must pay attention to the needs and expectations of employees in order to support efforts to achieve organizational goals and reach employee satisfaction which is an important factor as it motivates employees to work and eventually leads to prospects of success as a result of their efforts (Mardikaningsih & Sinambela, 2022a).

Job satisfaction is a significant concern. Low job satisfaction lead to low job performance, low provided service quality and as a result low customer satisfaction. High workload, unfavorable working environment, and conflicts lead to have low job satisfaction (X. Wang et al., 2022a). The level of satisfaction for the employese at work varies from one to another and from time to time for the same employee. Moreover, the level of achievement can also affect the level of job satisfaction. In the end, the level of satisfaction affect the quality of work provided by the employee (Mardikaningsih & Sinambela, 2022a).

Because of the growing complexity and the global change, the education system suffered from the same problems as all other organizations. Several studies focused on this area to investigate the impact of the job context on the job satisfaction for the workers in the education field (Gutiérrez-Banegas, 2019). Moreover, higher education, which is represented by the universities, is considered one of the highest prevalence areas of burnout. Consequently, recent investigations inquired the cause behind it which resulted in mental overload, different stages of students, low rewards, and psychological demands (Fernández-Suárez et al., 2021). As a result, this study plans to investigate the relationship between job satisfaction and job burnout in the field of universities. Since there has been other research that studied this in other geographical areas, this research will focus on the public and private universities in Saudi Arabia.

Research problem :

Burnout arise as a result of work routine and workload in everyday tasks which leads to low job satisfaction (Mardikaningsih & Sinambela, 2022b). Moreover, studies showed that turnover intention is a result of low job satisfaction (X. Wang et al., 2022b). As a result, human resources must have a plan to manage these problems (Mardikaningsih & Sinambela, 2022b).

Additionally, the institutions of higher education should be more aware of the environment that improves the talent retention (Mwesigwa et al., 2020). Moreover, research groups have shown a high frequency of burnout in universities where it seems that burnout damage a career (Ye et al., 2021).

Consequently, this research will study the effect of job burnout on job satisfaction for the employees in the administrative posotions especially in the universities of Saudi Arabia including private and public universities.

Research Importance:

Human resources are one of the main assets for any organization. In today's competitive world, organizations are facing lots of struggles to keep and retain their employees. High turnover has been identified as one of the main problems in any organization. They are under massive pressure to satisfy and retain their staff in order to achieve the organizations' goals, especially the ones who are considered trained and dedicated employees (Anees et al., 2021; Mardikaningsih & Sinambela, 2022b).

Job burnout is considered a psychological syndrom which appears as a result of work-related stressors. It causes depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and reduce the accomplishments of a person (P. Wang et al., 2020). In any job, employees have problems regardless of their responsibilities. However, there are lots of limitations regarding the awareness of the responsibilities and duties assigned to the employees which in the end cause burnout. Burnout must be addressed immediately by the human resources since it causes prolonged disturbances otherwise (Mardikaningsih & Sinambela, 2022b).

On the other hand, job satisfaction is the experience an employees has towards their jobs. There are many factors that cause low job satisfaction such as the attitude of other employees, stress, low income, and heavy workload which all lead to job burnout and negatively affect the performance of the employees. Since the employees' commitment to their organization is related to their satisfaction, human resources must be aware of the problem and improve the level of their satisfaction (P. Wang et al., 2020).

Numerous research studied the relationship between job satisfaction and the resulting performance. However, there is no clear picture about the mechanism in which job satisfaction lead to burnout especially in universities. One of the main professions susceptible to burnout are the university professionals (P. Wang et al., 2020). However, a limited number of researches studied the effect of buronout on job satisfaction for the administrative employees in the universities.

Research Objectives:

- To investigate the influence of job burnout on job satisfaction for administrative workers in public and private universities in Saudi Arabia.
- To identify the factors that cause job burnout for administrative workers in public and private universities in Saudi Arabia.
- To identify the effect of job burnout on the administrative workers in public and private universities in Saudi Arabia.
- Develop recommendations to mitigate the negative effects of Job Burnout.

Research Questions:

- Is there an effect of job burnout on job satisfaction for administrative workers in public and private universities in Saudi Arabia?
- What are the factors that cause burnout for administrative workers in public and private universities in Saudi Arabia?
- What is the effect of job burnout on the administrative workers in public and private universities in Saudi Arabia?
- What are the recommendations to mitigate the effects of job burnout for administrative workers in public and private universities in Saudi Arabia?

Research Hypotheses:

- There is a statistically significant relationship between job burnout and job satisfaction for the administrative workers in public and private universities in Saudi Arabia.
- There is a statistically significant effect of job burnout on the administrative workers in public and private universities in Saudi Arabia.

Literature Review:

Job satisfaction is related to the attitude of the employees towards their jobs, the emotions, behavior, and believes. It depends on organizational and individual factors. Some of these factors are personality, work environment, leadership, and workload (X. Wang et al., 2022b).

First Study (X. Wang et al., 2022b):

A significant concern in the healthcare system is the job satisfaction for the healthcare professionals. This is a result of the fact that low job satisfaction leads to low job performance, low quality of provided care, and as result, low patient satisfaction. This study aimed to examine the effect of job satisfaction on the organizational commitment and burnout in the health-care system using cluster sampling, linear regression, descriptive statistics, and Pearson correlation coefficient. The result of the study stated that job satisfaction negatively correlated with job burnout. As a result, the authors suggested that supporting policies for healthcare professionals could improve the job satisfaction for the healthcare professionals.

Second Study (Alrawashdeh et al., 2021):

Healthcare professionals are subject to increasing workload especially during crisis such as COVID-19 which leave them facing significant distress. As a result, this study aimed to assess the frequency of burnout on the job satisfaction using regression analysis. It resulted in the fact that there are several factors affected the job burnout such as low income, lack of personal protective equipment, night shifts, long hours, and working in highly loaded hospitals. All of which cause a low job satisfaction.

Third Study (Mardikaningsih & Sinambela, 2022b):

This study resulted in a negative effect of burnout on job satisfaction. The authors suggested that self-efficacy help in achieving the job satisfaction. Confidence in the available abilities tend to provide more satisfaction than any other factors. Yet, providing the employees with appropriate training and self-development programs could reduce the job burnout and overcome the issues that may be faced outside the work environment. Moreover, the workload must be managed carefully by the organization in order to get the best outcome. The study used a quantitative method on employees of a single company. Classical assumption test and hypothesis test were used as the data analysis technique using linear regression.

Fourth Study (Prasetya et al., 2021a):

Organizations are responsible for maintaining the satisfaction of the employees and the level of burnout. Individual who are unable to change the working conditions will experience stress and burnout. Burnout is the result of stress when it becomes uncontrollable, and it is more severe. As a result, this study aimed to analyze the effect of stress and burnout on job satisfaction. It employed a quantitative approach on a random sample of doctors and nurses at a specific hospital. The study resulted in that burnout had a negative impact on the job satisfaction and performance of the employee.

Fifth Study (Rony & Yulisyahyanti, 2022):

As a result of the globalization and digital transformation, individuals are required to improve their abilities and skills to keep up with the competition. This study was conducted to check the effect of work-life balance and burnout on job satisfaction of infrastructure and facilities officers. The authors used a questionnaire and analyzed the responses using descriptive statistics, classical assumption test, instrument test, hypothesis, and linear regression. The study resulted in that burnout has a negative effect on job satisfaction. However, the effect was not significant. This means that decreasing the burnout faced by the employees could help in increasing the job satisfaction and work productivity.

Sixth Study (P. Wang et al., 2020):

One of the most professionals who are susceptible to burnout are university teachers. The imbalance they perceive between their job demands and the lack of resources is what could be developed in burnout. Moreover, this burnout could be related to the negative attitude towards the students, low job satisfaction, and turnover intention. As a result, the study examined the relationship between job burnout, job satisfaction, job stress and organizational commitment among teachers in Chinese universities. The results indicated that job burnout and job satisfaction have a great effect on organizational commitment. Moreover, the job burnout appeared to be higher in the state universities. However, its effect on the organizational commitment and job satisfaction is lower than local universities.

Seventh Study (Safari, 2020):

As teachers play an important role in building students' future, this research was intended to study the level of burnout and job satisfaction among teachers of foreign language at universities and schools in Iran. A questionnaire was developed to study that effect, and the responses analysis resulted in that there is a negative correlation between burnout and job satisfaction. Even though they have a moderate level of burnout, they experience a high level of job satisfaction. The findings also showed that by increasing the level of job satisfaction, the level of burnout decreases.

Eighth Study (Mullen et al., 2021):

School counselors work with different stakeholders within the school, such as families, teachers, communities, and administrators. Several factors could affect the work of the counselor, including the caseload size of the students, which leads to stress and burnout. This research is a cross-sectional quantitative study which applied a questionnaire on school counselors in different schools in USA. The authors examined the level of burnout, stress, and satisfaction they have. The results indicated that high caseload size of students lead to higher potential of burnout and stress, which lead to low job satisfaction.

Ninth Study (Chen et al., 2020):

With the rise of coronavirus pandemic in 2019, universities shifted from physical to online teaching. This brought lots of problems which came as a result of teaching in front of a computer screen for long period of time with no interaction with students or whatsoever. In the long term, the problem of burnout among the teachers became increasingly severe. This research examined the influence of the professional identity on job burnout during COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, it studies the effect of job satisfaction on job burnout. An online survey was conducted on Chinese universities teachers. The results showed that job satisfaction has a significant negative impact on job burnout. Therefore, the study suggested that schools should work on finding solutions to improve the online teaching environment and maintain a sustainable development during such periods.

Tenth Study (Kara, 2020):

Visual art teachers are considered an important influencer on all areas of the students' learning journey. They also should have a high level of job satisfaction in order to help the students develop their aesthetic and artistic potentials. This research aimed to examine the job satisfaction and job burnout among visual art teachers in different areas of Turkey based on their age, professional seniority, gender, marital status, and school type. The main outcome of the study is that there is a significant but negative relationship between burnout and job satisfaction. Yet, according to the findings of the study, the relationship between job satisfaction and job burnout showed a significant difference based on gender, professional seniority, marital status, and school type.

Eleventh Study (Yang & Ling, 2023):

Job burnout among young university teachers is considered a serious issue that could affect their students' learning outcome, their well-being, and job performance. This research studied the impact of job satisfaction, among other factors on job burnout for young university teachers in China. The study performed regression analysis and mediation analysis. Both of them showed that low job satisfaction is related to high cases of job burnout. This means that young university teachers are more likely to suffer from job burnout and the need to have practical actions by the universities to protect them from burnout and increase the level of their job satisfaction.

Table 1 shows a summary of the previously discussed studies related to this study.

Table 1 Summary of Related Work

Study #	Reference	Field	Main findings	Country
1	(X. Wang et al., 2022b)	Healthcare	Improving job performance depends on improving job satisfaction and reducing job burnout	China
2	(Alrawashdeh et al., 2021)	Healthcare	Low income, lack of personal protective equipment, night shifts, long hours, and working in highly loaded hospitals all lead to job burnout and reduce job satisfaction.	Jordan
3	(Mardikaningsih & Sinambela, 2022b)	One company	Negative effects of burnout on job satisfaction.	Indonesia
4	(Prasetya et al., 2021a)	Hospital	Burnout had a negative impact on the job satisfaction and performance of the employee.	Indonesia
5	(Rony & Yulisyahyanti, 2022)	Infrastructure and facilities officers	Burnout has a negative effect on job satisfaction. However, the effect was not significant. This means that decreasing the burnout faced by the employees could help in increasing job satisfaction and work productivity	Indonesia

Continue Table 1 Summary of Related Work

Study #	Reference	Field	Main findings	Country
6	(P. Wang et al., 2020)	University teachers	Job burnout and job satisfaction have a great effect on organizational commitment. Moreover, the job burnout appeared to be higher in the state universities. However, its effect on organizational commitment and job satisfaction is lower than local universities.	China
7	(Safari, 2020)	Teachers	There is a negative correlation between burnout and job satisfaction. Even though they have a moderate level of burnout, they experience a high level of job satisfaction. The findings also showed that by increasing the level of job satisfaction, the level of burnout decreases.	Iran
8	(Mullen et al., 2021)	School counselors	High caseload size of students leads to higher potential of burnout and stress, which leads to low job satisfaction.	USA

Continue Table 1 Summary of Related Work

Study #	Reference	Field	Main findings	Country
9	(Chen et al., 2020)	University teachers	Job satisfaction has a significant negative impact on job burnout. Therefore, the study suggested that schools should work on finding solutions to improve the online teaching environment and maintain sustainable development during periods such as COVID-19.	China
10	(Kara, 2020)	Visual art teachers	There is a significant but negative relationship between burnout and job satisfaction. Yet, according to the findings of the study, the relationship between job satisfaction and job burnout showed a significant difference based on gender, professional seniority, marital status, and school type.	Turkey
11	(Yang & Ling, 2023)	Young university teachers	Low job satisfaction is related to high cases of job burnout. This means that young university teachers are more likely to suffer from job burnout, and the need to have practical actions by the universities to protect them from burnout and increase the level of their job satisfaction.	China

Most of the studies related to the relationship between job satisfaction and job burnout were conducted on healthcare professionals. Furthermore, China was the most explored area in this regard. However, a limited number of studies were conducted on the educational workers, especially administrative workers in universities. As a result, this study plans to examine the relationship between job burnout and job satisfaction among administrative workers in public and private universities in Saudi Arabia.

Theoretical Foundations of the Study:

This section will focus on studies related to the two important factors in the research, which are job burnout and job satisfaction.

Job Burnout:

Job burnout is defined as a variety of demands that include quantitative, qualitative, mental, and physical duties. It is an aspect that must be considered by every company, as it can increase the productivity of the employees. Studies stated that job burnout is a result of the activities that must be completed within a certain period of time in either a physical or psychological form. (Anees et al., 2021). It was also defined by (Prasetya et al., 2021b) as fatigue caused by prolonged and overwhelming stress. According to the authors, burnout is the difference between the character and hope of an individual with existing work conditions. However, burnout is not a symptom of work stress. It is the result of unmanaged work stress. In addition, Generational identity impacts workplace attitudes and practices that affect job burnout and turnover rates. Millennials, the youngest generation in the workforce, may have less acceptance for high-stress jobs. As such, they may quit jobs where they are unhappy, despite fewer job options, because of a lack of experience. Older employees, such as baby boomers and Gen Xers, may be able to tolerate the stress of being in a job even if they are unhappy because they do not have an educational or technological background compared to their younger coworkers. In either case, employees may become less satisfied with their situation, leading to job burnout and possible erosion in the quality of provided service (Abate et al., 2018).

Burnout has three dimensions that can be used as benchmarks (Rony & Yulisahyanti, 2022), namely:

1. Fatigue (Exhaustion): which is characterized by prolonged physical, mental, and emotional fatigue.
2. Cynicism: which is characterized by a cynical attitude and tends to withdraw from the work environment.
3. Ineffectiveness: which is characterized by feelings of helplessness and that all the given tasks are heavy.

Job Satisfaction:

Job satisfaction is a key work outcome produced by employees. It is directly impacted by job characteristics and working conditions. The primary focus is on how employees perceive their working environment, which indicates how well the job satisfies their needs (Ekowati & Amin, 2019).

Job satisfaction was simply defined by (Mwesigwa et al., 2020) as to how contented the employees are with their jobs. It has been noted that job satisfaction varies in the extent to which it measures feelings about the job (affective) or cognitions about the job (cognitive). Furthermore, it is defined as the degree to which a person is pleased or satisfied with the job at hand. In addition, (Prasetya et al., 2021b) stated that job satisfaction is an emotional state of an employee in response to their work in an organization, which has different connotations. Each connotation is relevant to job satisfaction when work results and rewards are adequate and fair. However, there is no benchmark for job satisfaction as each employee has different satisfaction standards. Employee satisfaction is relatively high when employees have good work discipline and morale within the work unit, and there is low employee turnover.

Yet, Job satisfaction can be improved by reconsidering the amount of load given to the employees, as excessive workload can reduce their job satisfaction (Anees et al., 2021). Also, increasing the income leads to an increase in the level of job satisfaction for the employees. It allows the employee to work independently and provides opportunities for clearly defined career advancement (Foy et al., 2019).

Moreover, job satisfaction has five different proportions (Rony & Yulisyahyanti, 2022), namely:

1. The work itself: where work assignments are considered interesting, provides opportunities to progress and learn by gaining experience, increasing abilities, and accepting responsibilities during work.
2. Salary or wages: namely, the amount of compensation received or earned by a person for their efforts, is adjusted to the workload considered appropriate in an organization.
3. Promotion opportunities: namely, opportunities to advance in the organization are related to promotion issues, opportunities for self-development, and career development.
4. Supervision: where there is a supervisor who can provide technical assistance and behavioural support.

5. Colleagues: where some of the co-workers are technically capable and provide social care.

Research Methodology:

- **Research Approach & Strategy**

The deductive approach will be used as the foundation for this research. by using this approach, hypotheses are formulated after reviewing the literature, and then they are put to the test to ensure validity.

The strategy that is used for analyzing and collecting the research data is known as the quantitative method. Based on the researcher's review of the literature, the majority of the research on this topic employs the quantitative method, which involves using a questionnaire.

- **Research Design**

There are two categories of data collection: primary and secondary. The primary data is collected for a particular purpose by researchers directly through a questionnaire respondent, whereas the secondary data is collected for some other purpose by other resources, including thesis, books, and journal articles, which are the primary research sources. Three databases will be used (Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and Deep Knowledge) for the purposes of data collection.

The research population will consist of employees who have worked for at least one year in either a private or a public university in Saudi Arabia in an administrative position. The targeted sample will be 200 employees; this number is ensured by continuing the sample selection process until the required sample size is obtained. Therefore, the sampling strategy that will be used is a non-probability sampling technique. Specifically, a convenience sampling because the researcher does not have access to a census of administrative workers in private and public universities in Saudi Arabia.

To examine the hypothesis, the data will be collected using an online questionnaire that will be distributed online through the e-mail and social media platforms. The questionnaire will have two sections. The first section is to collect the personal information such as gender, age, marital status, and educational qualification, whereas the second section will include the indicators to measure the effect of job burnout on job satisfaction.

The results of the questionnaire will be analyzed using the Statistical Software Suite (SPSS). The statistics will cover internal consistency (reliability), Pearson correlation, descriptive statistics, and calculating total scores of scales.

Study Tools:

Questionnaires: for collecting the data from employees in private and public universities in Saudi Arabia to know more about their experience and opinions.

Study Limits:

Objective Limits: The study will identify the effect of job burnout on job satisfaction in Saudi public and private universities.

Spatial boundaries: The Public and private universities in Saudi Arabia.

Temporal boundaries: Academic year 2025

Human boundaries: Applied to employees in administrative positions in the public and private universities in Saudi Arabia.

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