

العنوان :

دراسة العلاقة بين عوامل الإرهاق المهني وعلاقات الموظفين في قطاع الرعاية الصحية في المملكة العربية السعودية, دراسة مستشفى الدكتور سليمان فقيه، المملكة العربية السعودية (DSFH)

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## **Introduction**

The healthcare sector is one of the most demanding industries worldwide, characterized by high-pressure environments, long working hours, and emotionally intensive responsibilities. Healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurses, and administrative staff, are frequently exposed to workplace stressors that can contribute to burnout, a psychological state marked by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Burnout not only affects the mental and physical well-being of employees but also has serious implications for patient care, job satisfaction, and overall healthcare efficiency (Bhatti, 2023).

In Saudi Arabia, the healthcare sector has been undergoing rapid transformation due to Vision 2030, which aims to enhance healthcare services, increase privatization, and improve working conditions for medical professionals. While these reforms present opportunities for growth and development, they also introduce new challenges, such as increased workload, higher expectations, and greater organizational changes, which may contribute to employee stress and burnout. The increasing demand for healthcare services, workforce shortages, and administrative burdens further exacerbate burnout among employees, making it a critical issue that needs to be addressed. Burnout among healthcare workers is a well-documented phenomenon that stems from various factors, including excessive workload, lack of autonomy, insufficient managerial support, and emotional strain from patient interactions. Studies suggest that burnout negatively impacts employee morale, increases turnover rates, and decreases the quality of patient care. When healthcare professionals experience prolonged burnout, they are more likely to exhibit decreased job satisfaction, lower commitment to their organization, and strained relationships with colleagues (Asfahani, 2024).

The three primary dimensions of burnout, as identified by Maslach and Jackson (1981) in the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), include emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced

personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion refers to feeling drained and overwhelmed due to work-related stress, while depersonalization involves developing a detached or cynical attitude toward patients and colleagues. Reduced personal accomplishment is associated with feelings of ineffectiveness or unfulfillment in one's job role. These dimensions not only affect individual well-being but also impact team dynamics, communication, and workplace harmony. In the Saudi Arabian healthcare sector, where teamwork and collaborative decision-making are essential, burnout can weaken employee relationships and disrupt the effectiveness of healthcare service delivery (Alzoubi et al.,2023).

Employee relations refer to the overall interactions, communication, and collaboration between employees and their management. Strong employee relations foster job satisfaction, commitment, and a positive work culture, while poor relationships can lead to conflict, dissatisfaction, and disengagement. In healthcare settings, where effective teamwork and coordination are vital, strained employee relations due to burnout can lead to increased workplace conflicts, reduced teamwork and cooperation, lower employee engagement and motivation, and higher turnover rates. These factors collectively impact the efficiency and quality of healthcare services, making it essential to explore how burnout affects workplace relationships (Muthuswamy,2022).

The Saudi Arabian healthcare sector faces unique cultural and organizational dynamics that influence employee relations. Factors such as hierarchical workplace structures, cultural expectations, and managerial approaches play a significant role in shaping workplace interactions. Understanding how burnout influences these relationships is crucial for developing effective intervention strategies to enhance employee well-being and organizational performance. While extensive research has been conducted on burnout in global healthcare settings, there is limited research specifically examining the relationship between burnout factors and employee relations

in the Saudi Arabian healthcare sector. Given the rapid expansion of healthcare services and the increasing demand for medical professionals, it is imperative to investigate how burnout affects interpersonal dynamics, workplace communication, and overall job satisfaction among healthcare employees (Ayyashi et al.,2024).

By exploring this relationship, this study aims to identify key burnout factors that affect healthcare employees in Saudi Arabia, examine how burnout influences employee relations, teamwork, and workplace collaboration, assess the impact of burnout on job satisfaction, turnover intention, and overall organizational effectiveness, and provide recommendations for reducing burnout and improving employee relations in healthcare organizations.

### **Problem Statement**

Burnout among healthcare professionals is a growing concern in the Saudi Arabian healthcare sector, particularly as the industry undergoes rapid transformation due to Vision 2030 initiatives. Healthcare workers, including doctors, nurses, and administrative staff, are frequently subjected to high workloads, long shifts, emotional strain, and increased patient demands, all of which contribute to physical and mental exhaustion. These stressors not only affect individual well-being but also have negative consequences for employee relations, workplace collaboration, and overall healthcare service delivery. Despite the critical role of strong employee relations in ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of healthcare services, the link between burnout and employee interactions remains underexplored in the Saudi Arabian context. Burnout can lead to strained communication, workplace conflicts, reduced teamwork, and high turnover rates, ultimately compromising the quality of patient care and organizational performance. Moreover, hierarchical workplace structures, cultural factors, and organizational expectations in Saudi Arabia may further influence the way burnout manifests and affects professional relationships (Alharbi et al.,2023).

Although research on burnout in healthcare settings has been conducted globally, there is limited empirical evidence on how burnout factors such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment impact employee relations in Saudi Arabian healthcare institutions. Understanding this relationship is essential for developing targeted interventions, improving workplace dynamics, and creating a healthier work environment. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the relationship between burnout factors and employee relations in the Saudi Arabian healthcare sector. By identifying key stressors and their impact on workplace interactions, the research aims to provide actionable recommendations for reducing burnout, enhancing teamwork, and improving overall job satisfaction among healthcare professionals in Saudi Arabia.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the key burnout factors affecting healthcare professionals in the Saudi Arabian healthcare sector?
2. How does burnout influence employee relations and workplace interactions in healthcare institutions?
3. What organizational strategies can be implemented to reduce burnout and enhance employee relations?

### **Research Objectives**

1. To identify the key burnout factors affecting healthcare professionals in the Saudi Arabian healthcare sector.
2. To examine the impact of burnout on employee relations, teamwork, and workplace communication in healthcare institutions.
3. To explore effective organizational strategies and interventions for mitigating burnout and improving employee relations in the Saudi Arabian healthcare sector.

## **Research Significance**

### **Theoretical Significance**

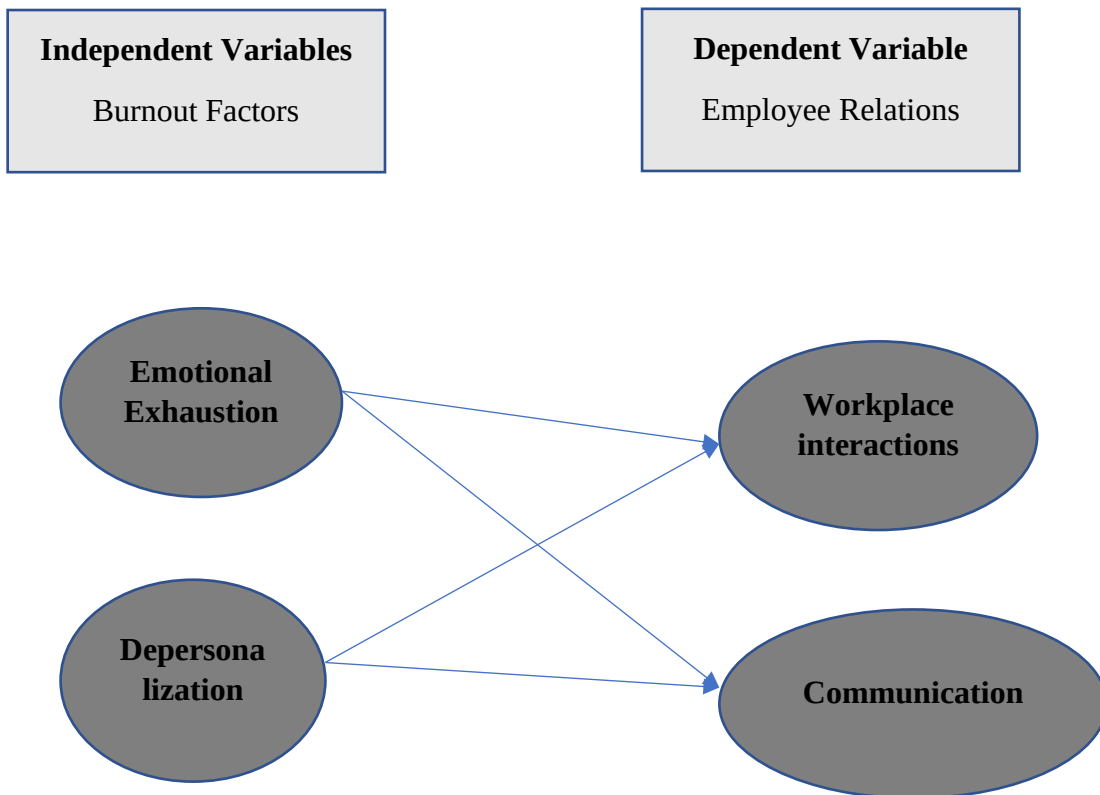
This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on burnout and employee relations in the healthcare sector, particularly within the Saudi Arabian context, where cultural and organizational dynamics may influence how burnout manifests and impacts workplace interactions. By examining the relationship between burnout factors (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment) and employee relations, this research expands theoretical frameworks related to occupational stress, job satisfaction, and organizational behavior in healthcare settings. Furthermore, this study builds on Maslach's Burnout Theory and workplace psychology models, providing insights into how burnout influences interpersonal relationships and team dynamics. The findings may serve as a foundation for future research on employee well-being, organizational development, and workforce sustainability in high-stress environments.

### **Practical Significance**

From a practical perspective, this study provides valuable insights for healthcare administrators, policymakers, and human resource professionals in Saudi Arabia. Understanding the impact of burnout on employee relations can help organizations develop effective intervention strategies, such as stress management programs, workload redistribution, and mental health support services, to improve employee well-being and workplace harmony. Additionally, the study's findings can guide policy reforms and organizational improvements by highlighting the need for supportive leadership, enhanced communication channels, and workplace culture shifts to reduce burnout and foster a more collaborative and productive work environment. Implementing these changes can lead to lower turnover rates, improved healthcare service delivery, and better patient outcomes, ensuring a more sustainable and resilient healthcare workforce in Saudi Arabia.

## Variables in the Study

- ✓ **Independent Variables** is : Burnout Factors with dimension Emotional Exhaustion ,  
Depersonalization
- ✓ **Dependent Variable** is Employee Relations with dimension Workplace interactions ,  
communication



## Research Hypotheses

1. H<sub>1</sub>: There is a statistically significant negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and employee relations in the Saudi Arabian healthcare sector.
2. H<sub>2</sub>: Depersonalization has a statistically significant negative impact on workplace interactions, teamwork, and communication among healthcare professionals.
3. H<sub>3</sub>: Reduced personal accomplishment is statistically significantly associated with **lower** employee engagement and job satisfaction in healthcare institutions.

## **Literature review**

Siraj et al. (2023) conducted a national cross-sectional survey to examine the relationship between burnout, resilience, supervisory support, and quitting intention among healthcare professionals in Saudi Arabia. The study found that burnout was significantly associated with an increased likelihood of quitting, indicating that healthcare professionals experiencing high levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were more inclined to leave their jobs. However, the research also highlighted the role of resilience and supervisory support in reducing burnout effects. Employees who reported higher levels of supervisory support demonstrated greater resilience and were less likely to consider quitting. The study emphasized the importance of leadership involvement in fostering a supportive work environment, implementing stress management programs, and promoting resilience-building initiatives to retain healthcare professionals and enhance workplace well-being.

Elbarazi et al. (2017) conducted a systematic review analyzing the prevalence and contributing factors of burnout among healthcare professionals in Arab countries. The review synthesized findings from multiple studies and concluded that burnout levels were alarmingly high in the region, primarily due to excessive workloads, prolonged working hours, emotional exhaustion, and insufficient institutional support. The study found that factors such as job dissatisfaction, lack

of autonomy, and work-related stress significantly contributed to burnout. Moreover, the review suggested that healthcare institutions in Arab countries need to implement organizational changes, such as providing mental health support, promoting work-life balance, and offering professional development opportunities to mitigate burnout. It also recommended that policymakers focus on creating better working conditions and enforcing policies that prioritize employee well-being to ensure a sustainable healthcare workforce.

Al-Omari et al. (2019) examined the predictors of burnout among healthcare providers working in private hospitals in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Using a cross-sectional study design, the researchers identified long working hours, job insecurity, and inadequate workplace support as major contributors to burnout. The study found that healthcare providers in private hospitals faced significant challenges related to workload intensity, high patient demands, and limited professional autonomy, which exacerbated stress and led to higher burnout rates. Furthermore, the study suggested that private healthcare institutions should adopt proactive measures, such as flexible work arrangements, mental health support programs, and leadership training to help reduce burnout. By implementing these strategies, hospitals can improve employee retention, job satisfaction, and overall workplace productivity.

Almeneessier and Azer (2023) explored the relationship between burnout and emotional intelligence among academics and clinicians at King Saud University. The study found that individuals with higher levels of emotional intelligence experienced lower levels of burnout, indicating that emotional regulation and interpersonal skills played a crucial role in mitigating workplace stress. The research emphasized that healthcare professionals and academics who were able to manage their emotions effectively were more resilient to the pressures of their work environment. The authors recommended integrating emotional intelligence training into medical

and academic curricula to equip professionals with essential skills for handling stress, improving communication, and maintaining job engagement. The study concluded that fostering emotional intelligence could be a key strategy in reducing burnout and enhancing both personal and professional well-being among healthcare professionals.

## **Theoretical foundations of the study**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of existing literature on burnout and its impact on employee relations, with a particular focus on the healthcare sector in Saudi Arabia. Burnout has been widely recognized as a critical issue affecting healthcare professionals, leading to decreased job satisfaction, strained workplace interactions, and increased turnover rates. This review explores the definitions and dimensions of burnout, the contributing factors, and its effects on workplace relationships. Additionally, it examines relevant theoretical models and empirical studies that provide a foundation for understanding the relationship between burnout factors and employee relations in the Saudi Arabian healthcare sector.

### **2.2 Concept of Burnout**

Burnout is a psychological condition resulting from prolonged work-related stress, characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. According to Maslach and Leiter (1997), emotional exhaustion occurs when employees feel drained and unable to cope with job demands. Depersonalization refers to a cynical and detached attitude toward colleagues and patients, which negatively affects workplace interactions. Reduced personal accomplishment manifests as a sense of inefficacy and dissatisfaction with one's professional contributions. In the healthcare sector, burnout is particularly prevalent due to high emotional

demands, patient care responsibilities, and administrative pressures, making it a significant factor affecting employee relations (Alharbi et al., 2023).

### **2.3 Factors Contributing to Burnout in the Healthcare Sector**

Burnout in the healthcare sector is influenced by various organizational and individual factors. One of the primary contributors is excessive workload and long working hours, which increase stress levels and limit employees' ability to recover from job-related fatigue (Elbarazi et al., 2017). Additionally, job demands, and role ambiguity contribute to burnout when healthcare professionals face unclear responsibilities, high patient loads, and inadequate staffing (Al-Omari et al., 2019).

Another crucial factor is the lack of supervisory support, where ineffective leadership and insufficient managerial involvement exacerbate stress levels among healthcare workers (Siraj et al., 2023). When employees do not receive adequate support and recognition from their supervisors, they are more likely to experience emotional exhaustion and disengagement. Furthermore, emotional labor, which involves managing emotions while interacting with patients, significantly contributes to burnout. Healthcare professionals frequently deal with high-stress situations, including patient suffering and loss, which can lead to emotional detachment and decreased motivation (Almeneessier & Azer, 2023).

### **2.4 The Impact of Burnout on Employee Relations**

Burnout has profound effects on workplace relationships, including decreased teamwork, poor communication, and increased interpersonal conflicts. The Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) suggests that workplace relationships are built on mutual support and reciprocity. When employees experience burnouts, their ability to engage in meaningful social interactions declines, leading to withdrawal from teamwork and collaborative efforts. Emotional exhaustion reduces employees'

willingness to communicate effectively, which negatively impacts patient care and organizational efficiency. Depersonalization, another key dimension of burnout, creates psychological distance between employees, resulting in a lack of empathy and support among team members. Healthcare professionals experiencing burnout may struggle to maintain positive relationships with colleagues, leading to workplace dissatisfaction and increased turnover intentions. Reduced personal accomplishment further exacerbates these challenges, as employees who feel ineffective in their roles are less likely to engage with their teams and contribute positively to workplace interactions (Harder et al.,2015).

## **2.5 Theoretical Models Explaining Burnout**

Several theoretical models help explain burnout and its effects on employee relations. The Job Demand-Resources (JD-R) Model (Demerouti et al., 2001) highlights the interaction between job demands, such as workload and emotional strain, and job resources, such as support and career development opportunities. When job demands outweigh available resources, burnout is more likely to occur. This model is particularly relevant in healthcare settings, where high job demands are common, and insufficient resources can lead to employee stress and disengagement (Shirtaheri et al.,2020).

The Maslach Burnout Theory (Maslach & Leiter, 1997) categorizes burnout into three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. This framework is widely used in research on healthcare professionals, as it captures the psychological and professional consequences of burnout. The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989) suggests that employees strive to maintain personal and job-related resources, such as time, energy, and emotional resilience. When these resources are depleted due to workplace stress,

burnout occurs, negatively affecting workplace relationships and productivity. The Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) emphasizes the role of intrinsic motivation and autonomy in workplace well-being. Employees who experience burnout often feel a loss of control over their work, leading to decreased motivation and weaker employee relations. By fostering supportive work environments that enhance autonomy and competence, organizations can mitigate burnout and improve workplace interactions.

## **2.6 Empirical Studies on Burnout and Employee Relations in Saudi Arabia**

Several studies have explored burnout and its impact on healthcare professionals in Saudi Arabia. Siraj et al. (2023) conducted a national survey examining the relationship between burnout, supervisory support, and quitting intention. Their findings indicated that burnout significantly increased turnover rates, but strong managerial support helped reduce these effects, highlighting the importance of leadership in preventing burnout. Elbarazi et al. (2017) conducted a systematic review analyzing burnout prevalence in Arab countries. Their study found that excessive workloads, emotional exhaustion, and inadequate institutional support were the primary contributors to burnout. The study recommended workplace interventions, such as stress management programs and improved work-life balance policies, to address these challenges.

Al-Omari et al. (2019) focused on burnout predictors in private hospitals in Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Their study identified long working hours, job insecurity, and limited autonomy as key stressors affecting healthcare professionals. The study suggested that private healthcare institutions implement flexible work arrangements and mental health support initiatives to mitigate burnout effects. Almeneessier & Azer (2023) explored the link between emotional intelligence and burnout among academics and clinicians at King Saud University. Their findings showed that

individuals with higher emotional intelligence exhibited lower burnout levels, suggesting that emotional regulation skills play a crucial role in managing workplace stress and maintaining positive employee relations.

## **2.7 Strategies for Reducing Burnout and Improving Employee Relations**

To address burnout and enhance workplace interactions, several strategies can be implemented. Organizations can introduce workplace support programs, such as counseling services and stress management training, to help employees cope with job-related stress. Leadership development programs can equip supervisors with the skills needed to provide effective support and foster a positive work environment. Work-life balance policies are essential in preventing burnout, as reducing excessive working hours and offering flexible scheduling options can improve employee well-being. Additionally, investing in professional development opportunities, such as career advancement programs and training workshops, can increase employee motivation and engagement, ultimately strengthening workplace relationships (Hall ,2019).

## **Methodology**

### **Research Approach**

This study adopts an analytical approach to investigate the impact of burnout factors—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment—on employee relations in the Saudi Arabian healthcare sector. The research aims to Identify the extent to which burnout affects employee relations. Examine the influence of depersonalization on workplace interactions, teamwork, and communication. Assess the relationship between reduced personal accomplishment and job satisfaction.

### **Research Sample**

To ensure the reliability and generalizability of the findings, a structured questionnaire will be distributed among healthcare professionals working in hospitals and healthcare institutions in Saudi Arabia. The sample will include a diverse range of employees to reflect different levels of experience, job roles, and work environments.

### **Research Tools**

The primary research tool for this study is a questionnaire designed to assess burnout levels and their impact on employee relations. The questionnaire will incorporate standardized scales to measure emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, alongside factors related to employee engagement, teamwork, and communication.

### **Statistical Methods**

To analyze the collected data, the study will use the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The following statistical techniques will be applied:

- Means and standard deviations to analyze participant responses.
- Pearson correlation coefficient to examine the relationships between burnout factors and employee relations.
- Cronbach's alpha to ensure the reliability and validity of the research instrument.

### **Research Structure**

The study is organized into five main chapters to ensure clarity and coherence in presenting the research findings.

- Chapter (I): Introduction – This chapter provides an overview of the research problem, objectives, significance, and scope. It also outlines the research questions and hypotheses that will guide the study.

- Chapter (II): Literature Review – This section reviews previous studies, theories, and relevant research findings related to burnout and its impact on employee relations. It establishes the conceptual framework for the study by highlighting key gaps in the existing literature.
- Chapter (III): Methodology – This chapter details the research design, including the chosen methodology, data collection tools, sampling techniques, and statistical analysis methods. It explains how the study will be conducted to ensure validity and reliability.
- Chapter (IV): Analysis and Results – In this section, the collected data will be analyzed using statistical methods. The results will be presented in tables, graphs, and descriptive summaries to illustrate the relationships between burnout factors and employee relations.
- Chapter (V): Conclusion and Discussion – This final chapter discusses the key findings, compares them with existing literature, and presents their implications. It also includes recommendations for policymakers, healthcare institutions, and future researchers.

### **Study Limitations**

1. Sample Size and Generalizability – The study may have limitations in sample size, which could affect the generalizability of the findings across different healthcare institutions in Saudi Arabia. Workplace environments, job roles, and hospital policies vary, making it difficult to apply the results universally to all healthcare professionals in the region.
2. Cross-Sectional Design and Self-Reported Data – Since the study is cross-sectional, it captures data at a single point in time, limiting the ability to establish causality between burnout factors and employee relations. Additionally, reliance on self-reported questionnaire data introduces the possibility of response bias, as participants may overstate or understate their experiences due to social desirability concerns.

3. Cultural and External Influences – The research is conducted within the cultural and institutional context of Saudi Arabia, where workplace hierarchies and leadership styles may influence burnout differently compared to other regions. Moreover, external factors such as government healthcare policies and economic conditions are not directly accounted for, which could affect employee relations and well-being.
4. Measurement and Scope Limitations – While validated statistical tools will be used, subjective interpretations of questionnaire items may impact the accuracy of results. Additionally, the study focuses only on healthcare professionals, excluding administrators and policymakers, whose perspectives on burnout and workplace challenges could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issue.

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**Proposal Title:**

**Examining the Relationship Between Burnout  
Factors and Employee Relations in the Saudi  
Arabian Healthcare Sector: A Study of Dr.  
Soliman Fakeeh Hospital, Saudi Arabi (DSFH)**

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