

A Research on Demographic Indicators of Retail Sector Employees' Burnout Level in Silifke

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Abstract

Burnout has especially been observed in occupations which require a high level of interaction with people. Burnout is described as the continuous chronic sensitiveness that employees suffer from and occurs as a reaction to stress. It is stated that burnout syndrome causes important problems especially for working people and people who got burnout syndrome suffer from physical and psychological disorders. Burnout syndrome may result in absenteeism, not being at work during the office hours, increase of employee turnover rates, not concentrating on his/her task which all result in low performance and cause high cost for organizations. The purpose of study is to determine in the retail sector burnout level of health workers and to present the burnout level in terms of some variables.

Keywords: Burnout, Medical Staff, Burnout Dimensions

1.Introduction

The term burnout has first been used by psychoanalyst J. Freudenberger. Freudenberger has described burnout as “failure, exhaustion, decrement of energy and power or exhaustion of internal sources as a result of unsatisfied needs of individuals (transmitting Ardiç & Polatçı 2008). During the past 40 years burnout has attracted the attention of both academicians and managers because of its effects on employees and organizations (Halbesleben & Buckley 2004).

There is an increasing competitiveness in nowadays business life due to the environmental transformation of business. Therefore, companies compel employees for insuperable type of work load as an opportunity to decrease wages.

Employees are physically, emotionally and psychologically exposed to an increasing exhaustion because of being stuck in their demands for working conditions and private life. As a result, there is a decrease in energy, urge to work and organizational commitment (Maslach & Leiter 1997). It has been observed that, there is a high level of discontinuity and low level of labor force turnover among employees having low organizational commitment (Randall 1987). Thus, companies lose experienced labor force and as a result they face higher costs in human resources management.

Burnout syndrome causes serious discomfort and problems over employees. Therefore, it has been observed that employees under burnout syndrome experience physical and psychological problems in addition to breakdowns in service quality (Renzi *et al.* 2005) which would lead to an “unenviable situation for organizations” and “unsatisfactory situation for customers”. Employees under burnout syndrome appear as a serious issue for human resources departments. It is possible to anticipate that employees having burnout syndrome might expose negative attitudes to customers and perform a low quality service than it is expected.

2.The Concept and Dimensions of Burnout

Burnout, according to Brenninkmeijer and Yperen (2003) can be expressed as mental exhaustion derived from chronic stress caused by business life. Another definition of burnout according to Maslach (2003) can be figured out as a continuous form of vicious syndrome occurred in business environment. The main reason of chronic stress can be explained due to the conflict between employee and working conditions.

Maslach (2003) defined burnout as a continuous chronic sensitivity derived from employees as a result of stress at work. Maslach (1981) in another research defined burnout as “emotional exhaustion that employees can frequently experience” and denoted burnout in 3 dimensions as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and diminished personal accomplishment (Tanner *et al.* 2002). In this context, researcher has developed Maslach Burnout Index which became the basis of latter researches in academic field.

Dimensions of burnout according to Maslach can be categorized as follows:

2.1. Emotional Exhaustion; has been described as the extinction of emotional sources and psychological deconcentration of employees (Maslach & Jackson 1981).

As a result of emotional exhaustion, it is possible to experience the feeling of emotionally being overloaded, to be routed against other peoples' emotional expectations, exhaustion and burnout. The feeling of inefficiency against meeting other peoples' expectations brings about reduction of occupational efforts and communication with others (transmitting Hamann & Gordon 2010).

2.2. Depersonalization; occurs for employees as a tendency to perform a given job deservedly in the early periods of burnout syndrome. This tendency, by the time turns into depersonalization that ignores and trivializes other people's needs in addition to evaluation of other people as an object instead of an individual. In latter stages the level of depersonalization is deeply perceived as a consequence of ignorance (transmitting Hamann & Gordon, 2010) It is also observed that a person with high level of depersonalization might expose negative attitude not only for employers but also for co-workers and for the organization. Symptoms of depersonalization occurs as the use of insulting expressions, very long conversations with colleagues, extending time outs and the use of jargon in unnecessary situations.

2.3. Diminished Personal Accomplishment; can be expressed as the tendency to evaluate oneself negatively (Cordes & Dougherty 1993). This situation occurs when a person feels inadequate against a situation in which his help is asked. In other words, he interrogates his own occupational efficiency as a result of the feeling of worthless in his own profession. Finally, depression emerges with the decrement of self-confidence and self-esteem (Hamann & Gordon 2010).

3. Factors that Cause to Burnout Syndrome

Maslach figures out the leading factors of burnout as excess working load, level of control, insufficient rewards, relationship with colleagues, lack of justice and conflicts of value (transmitting Cullen *et al.* 2008). It has also been stated that an increase over loading at work causes a higher emotional loading. In addition, long working hours, role conflict, absence of strengthening implementations, disparage, absence of positive feedback, limited holidays and limited time-outs and problems at communication can also be described as factors that evokes to burnout (Unger 1980).

Personal sources of burnout according to Unger (1980) are expressed as indefinite limits, ignoring the importance of his own needs, physical and psychological isolation from environment, weakness and lack of professional identity. Moreover, Çavuş and Demir (2010) stressed the relationship among demographic factors such as age, marital status, working time, gender and burnout. Another research conducted by Akçamete *et al.* (2001) exerted that individuals with Type A characteristics have higher tendency to burnout during their research on the relationship between personal characteristics and burnout (transmitting Şahinoğlu & Arkar 2011) In addition, Şahinoğlu and Arkar (2011) stressed the relationship among temperament and burnout. However, Şeşen (2010) expressed that working conditions have higher effects on burnout than personal characteristics of individuals.

4. Results of Burnout Syndrome

Jenkins and Maslach (1994) figure out that burnout syndrome engenders psychological and physical discomfort over employees. In addition, Maslach describes the first symptoms of burnout as loss of energy, decrease in performance, inefficiency against given jobs and frustration on target oriented groups (transmitting Eivazi *et al.* 2013).

Physiological symptoms of burnout can be defined as headache, rising cholesterol, sleepiness, sleep disorders, feeling of physical exhaustion and use of alcohol and drugs as a result (Maslach & Jackson 1981). Experiencing the above mentioned discomfort and disorder situations of individuals will neither satisfy the individual himself nor the manager. On the other hand, psychological symptoms occur as volatility, anxiety, perturbation, pessimism, lack of feelings of friendship and charity, paranoid ideas and depression (Ardıç & Polatçı 2008).

Burnout syndrome according to organization will cause increasing number of complaints and unsatisfied customers due to outrageous behaviors and breakdowns in meeting customers' needs. Furthermore, absence of employees at working hours, increasing labor force turnover levels, lack of concentration of employees and decrease in performance would cause high costs for organizations (Vahey *et al.* 2004).

5. Aim and Scope of the Research

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of food and clothing sectors due to an increase of shopping malls in Turkey. Therefore, there is a progress in employment level for these sectors. Retail sector when compared to other sectors represents bigger opportunities for employment. Labor force turnover levels are more than 50% in retail sector due to low wages and long working hours (<http://www.tobb.org.tr>). High level of labor force turnover

also brings about waste of organizational resources which engenders high costs for organizations.

Providing necessary environment for self-satisfaction and high concentration of workers constitute the basis of maximum productivity in human resources management. Therefore, it would be impossible to constitute productivity of workers with reluctance to work and having low level of concentration.

Service quality and number of unsatisfied customers is expected to decline due to employees' unhappiness and low commitment levels to organization.

The aim of this research is to identify the burnout levels of 120 employees in retail sector in Silifke and to assess the impacts of demographic factors on burnout.

6. Research Methodology

Maslach Burnout Scale (MBS), developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981) has been used in this research in order to measure the burnout level of employees in retail sector in Silifke. The scale measures burnout level in 3 dimensions which are constituted from 22 expressions. First dimension is emotional exhaustion (EA) that is based on 9 expressions. Second dimension is depersonalization (DP) that is based on 5 expressions. Third dimension is personal accomplishment (PA) that is based on 8 expressions. SPSS 19 has been used in the research to analyze the data gathered from survey.

6.1. Reliability Analysis of the Scale

Reliability analysis of the subdimensions of MBS is based on the calculation of Cronbach Alpha coefficient. Results of the reliability of the sub-dimensions are as follows:

Table 1. Reliability Analysis

	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Expressions
Emotional Exhaustion (EA)	0,850	9
Depersonalization (DP)	0,640	5
Personal Accomplishment (PA)	0,693	8

Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha) of sub-dimensions of MBS:

$0.00 \leq \alpha < 0.40$ scale is not reliable

$0.40 \leq \alpha < 0.60$ scale has low reliability

$0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.80$ scale is relatively reliable

$0.80 \leq \alpha \leq 1.00$ scale has high reliability

(Akgül & Çevik 2003)

Emotional Exhaustion (Cronbach's Alpha=0,850) has the highest reliability level among the reliability levels of other sub-dimensions. On the other hand, reliability of Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment ($0,60 \leq \alpha \leq 0,80$) is acceptable.

According to the results of above mentioned reliability levels, it is possible to evaluate that participants' response is sufficient to make statistical inference.

7. Research Findings and Discussion

This research aims to evaluate the burnout levels of 120 employees in retail sector in Silifke and to assess the impacts of demographic factors on burnout levels. This chapter of the research figures out the research findings and discussion.

Table 2. Demographic Information

		Number	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	60	50,0%
	Female	60	50,0%
Age Groups	16-24	27	23,9%
	25-32	34	30,1%
	33-42	25	22,1%
	43	27	23,9%
Marital Status	Married	60	50,4%
	Single	48	40,3%
	Divorced/Widowed	11	9,2%
Number of Children	0	61	51,3%
	1	17	14,3%
	2	24	20,2%
	3	11	9,2%
	4	6	5,0%
Education Level	Primary School	35	29,4%
	High school	43	36,1%
	Associate Degree	28	23,5%
	Graduate school	13	10,9%

Table 3. Information about Working Conditions

		Number	Percent (%)
Sector	Food	59	50,0%
	Clothing	59	50,0%
Work load	18-56 Hours	27	22,9%
	57-69 Hours	19	16,1%
	70-80 Hours	26	22,0%
	81 Hours and more	46	39,0%
Wages	Less than Minimum Wage	26	21,8%
	Minimum Wage	30	25,2%
	950-1500 TL	37	31,1%
	1500-2500 TL	17	14,3%
	2500 TL and more	9	7,6%
Would you consider working in a different job if you had the opportunity?	No	49	41,2%
	Yes	70	58,8%

Table 4. Evaluation of the Scores of the Scale

	Burnout Levels		
	Low	Normal	High
Emotional Exhaustion	10-16	17-26	27 and more
Depersonalization	0-6	7-12	13 and more
Personal Accomplishment	39 and more	32-38	0-31

Table 4 indicates the high scores of Depersonalization and Emotional Exhaustion which correspond to high level of burnout. On the other hand, low scores of Personal Accomplishment correspond to high level of burnout.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional Exhaustion	119	,00	36,00	18,34	8,10
Depersonalization	119	,00	18,00	7,97	4,12
Personal Accomplishment	119	7,00	32,00	20,16	5,30

Table 5 indicates that participants of the survey have normal level of burnout in terms of Emotional Exhaustion (Mean=18,34), normal level of burnout in terms of Depersonalization (Mean=7,97) and high level of burnout in terms of Personal Accomplishment (Mean=20,16).

Table 6. Comparison of Sub-dimensions According to Gender

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P values
Emotional Exhaustion	Male	59	18,10	8,71	0,747
	Female	60	18,58	7,51	
Depersonalization	Male	59	7,83	4,54	0,707
	Female	60	8,11	3,69	
Personal Accomplishment	Male	59	20,28	5,71	0,808
	Female	60	20,0500	4,90	

According to Table 6, it is possible to state that high scores of Personal Accomplishment correspond to high level of burnout. Moreover, Mean of Males' Emotional Exhaustion (18,1±8,71) takes place in Normal Burnout level. Mean of Females' Emotional Exhaustion (18,5±7,51) also takes place in Normal Burnout level which is higher than males. However, there is no any statistical significance (p=0,747) between male and female scores. As a result, it is possible to express that male and female participants have similar Emotional Exhaustion levels.

It is also clear from Table 6 that burnout level of participants increase due to high scores of Depersonalization. Depersonalization level of male participants occur in Normal level (7,83±4,54) which is less than the level of female participants (8,1±3,69). However, there is no any statistical significance (p=0,707) between male and female scores.

Mean of male participants' Personal Accomplishment according to Table 6 is (20,2±5,71), which corresponds to high level of burnout. Furthermore, mean of female participants' Personal Accomplishment is (20,0±4,90) which is less than the score of male participants. However, there is no any statistical significance (p=0,808) between male and female scores.

Table 7. Comparison of Sub-dimensions According to Age

Descriptives					
	AGE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P values
Emotional Exhaustion	16-24	27	19,77	8,19	0,369
	25-32	34	16,35	7,75	
	33-42	25	18,56	6,95	
	43 and older	27	19,29	9,80	
Depersonalization	18-28	27	8,51	3,90	0,412
	29-38	34	7,11	4,27	
	39-47	25	7,60	4,02	
	48 and older	27	8,70	4,46	
Personal Accomplishment	16-24	27	20,59	5,09343	0,986
	25-32	34	20,11	5,26719	
	33-42	25	20,24	5,83295	
	43 and older	27	20,48	5,31594	

It is observed from Table 7 that there is no effect of age on sub-dimensions of burnout with p values respectively (p=0,369); (p=0,412); (p=0,986). All 3 dimensions of burnout are observed to appear in Normal and similar levels that correspond to high level of burnout.

Table 8. Comparison of Sub-dimensions According to Marital Status

Descriptives					
	MARITAL STATUS	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P values
Emotional Exhaustion	Married	60	18,2	8,00	0,047
	Single	48	16,4	7,21	
	Divorced/Widowed	11	22,7	7,39	
Depersonalization	Married	60	8,0	4,33	0,106
	Single	48	7,1	2,71	
	Divorced/Widowed	11	10,2	4,69	
Personal Accomplishment	Married	60	19,9	5,14	0,188
	Single	48	19,9	5,40	
	Divorced/Widowed	11	22,2	5,74	

Marital status as shown on Table 8 only affects Emotional Exhaustion among other sub-dimensions of burnout. Moreover, Divorced/Widowed participants have the highest level ($22,7 \pm 7,39$) of Emotional Exhaustion while Single participants have the lowest level ($16,4 \pm 7,21$). On the other hand, there is a statistical significance ($p=0,047$) between Marital Status and Emotional Exhaustion.

Table 9. Comparison of Sub-dimensions According to Having Children

Descriptives					
	HAVING CHILDREN	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P values
Emotional Exhaustion	No	61	17,73	7,81	0,404
	Yes	58	18,98	8,41	
Depersonalization	No	61	7,60	3,67	0,320
	Yes	58	8,36	4,54	
Personal Accomplishment	No	61	19,81	5,04	0,464
	Yes	58	20,53	5,57	

According to p Values indicated in Table 9, there is no statistical significance among sub-dimensions of burnout and having children.

Table 10. Comparison of Sub-dimensions According to Education

Descriptives					
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P values
Emotional Exhaustion	Primary School	35	17,91	3,92	0,097
	High school	43	19,90	4,62	
	Associate Degree	28	17,42	3,77	
	Graduate school	13	16,30	4,02	
Depersonalization	Primary School	35	8,7714	4,51	0,347
	High school	43	7,9535	3,91	
	Associate Degree	28	7,7500	3,66	
	Graduate school	13	7,3846	4,53	
Personal Accomplishment	Primary School	35	17,94	5,61	0,044
	High school	43	19,97	4,92	
	Associate Degree	28	21,25	6,13	
	Graduate school	13	22,76	2,71	

Table 10 indicates that participants with High School degree have the highest score ($19,9 \pm 4,62$) of Emotional Exhaustion while participants with Graduate degree have the lowest score ($16,3 \pm 4,02$). Furthermore, there is no any statistical significance for this difference ($p=0,097$).

Depersonalization levels also appear to be similar in almost all educational levels of participants. Therefore, difference among the scores ($p=0,347$) does not constitute a statistical significance.

Participants with High School degree have the highest score ($22,7 \pm 2,71$) of Personal Accomplishment while participants with Graduate degree have the lowest score ($14,1 \pm 3,49$), ($p=0,044$).

Table 11. Comparison of Sub-dimensions According to Profession

Descriptives					
	Sector	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P Values
Emotional Exhaustion	FOOD	59	18,06	7,41	0,713
	CLOTHING	60	18,61	8,78	
Depersonalization	FOOD	59	7,66	4,24	0,413
	CLOTHING	60	8,28	4,00	
Personal Accomplishment	FOOD	59	20,7627	5,29	0,226
	CLOTHING	60	19,5833	5,28	

The comparison of sub-dimensions of burnout syndrome according to profession displays that the level of burnout is higher in clothing sector when compared to food sector. However, this difference is not statistically significant according to p values.

Table 12. Comparison of Sub-dimensions According to Weekly Workload

Correlations				
		Emotional Exhaustion	Depersonalization	Personal Accomplishment
Weekly Workload	Pearson Correlation	0,380	0,400	-0,560
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,040	,037	,026
	N	118	118	118

Spearman's Rho Correlation Coefficient is used to determine the linear relationship among the difference in scores sub-dimensions of Burnout and weekly workload. Thereby, an increase in individuals' weekly workload also causes increases in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization which finally ends up as an increase in the level of burnout. (respectively $r=0,380$; $p=0,040$, $r=0,400$; $p=0,037$). On the other hand, there is a negative statistically significant correlation ($r=-0,560$; $p=0,026$) among the change in weekly workload and personal accomplishment. Therefore, an increase in weekly workload will cause a decrease in personal accomplishment.

Table 13. Comparison of Sub-dimensions According to Working Year

Correlations				
		Emotional Exhaustion	Depersonalization	Personal Accomplishment
Year at Work	Correlation Coefficient	,074	,057	,016
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,426	,541	,866
	N	118	118	118

Spearman's Rho Correlation Coefficient is used to determine the linear relationship among the difference in scores of sub-dimensions of Burnout and working year. However, the difference is not statistically significant according to p values.

Table 14. Comparison of Sub-dimensions According to Wage

Descriptives					
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P Values
Emotional Exhaustion	Less than Minimum Wage	26	19,00	7,72	0,956
	Minimum Wage	30	18,33	7,71	
	Between 800-1500 TL	37	18,13	8,67	
	Between 1500-2500 TL	17	17,23	9,34	
	2500 TL and more	9	19,44	6,89	
Depersonalization	Less than Minimum Wage	26	8,23	3,37	0,738
	Minimum Wage	30	8,06	4,33	
	Between 800-1500 TL	37	7,89	4,14	
	Between 1500-2500 TL	17	6,94	4,98	
	2500 TL and more	9	9,22	3,92	
Personal Accomplishment	Less than Minimum Wage	26	19,07	4,29	0,626
	Minimum Wage	30	20,33	6,23	
	Between 800-1500 TL	37	19,94	5,09	
	Between 1500-2500 TL	17	21,17	4,81	
	2500 TL and more	9	21,77	6,59	

It is clear from Table 14 that monthly wage levels do not have any positive or negative statistical effect on sub-dimensions of burnout.

Table 15. Comparison of Sub-dimensions According to Previous Work Experience

Group Statistics					
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P Values
Emotional Exhaustion	Have you ever worked before?				0,597
	no	65	17,98	7,738	
	yes	54	18,77	8,570	
Depersonalization	no	65	7,72	4,00	0,467
	yes	54	8,27	4,27	
Personal Accomplishment	no	65	19,75	5,32	0,352
	yes	54	20,66	5,27	

Table 14 indicates that previous work experience does not have any positive or negative statistical effect on sub-dimensions of burnout.

Table 16 shows that emotional exhaustion level scores of employees that consider changing job (20,2±7,84) are statistically and significantly higher than employees (14,8±7,46) that do not consider changing their job. On the other hand, depersonalization level scores of employees that consider changing job (8,6±4,13) are statistically and significantly higher than employees (6,75±3,85) that do not consider changing their job.

Finally, there is no statistical significance among personal accomplishment level scores of employees that consider changing their job (19,8±5,02) and that do not consider changing their job (20,7±5,81), (p=0,423).

Table 16. Comparison of Sub-dimensions According to Employees' Willingness to Change the Job?

Group Statistics					
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P Values
Emotional Exhaustion	Would you consider changing your job?				P<0,001
	no	41	14,80	7,46	
	yes	78	20,20	7,84	
Depersonalization	no	41	6,75	3,85	0,019
	yes	78	8,61	4,13	
Personal Accomplishment	no	41	20,70	5,81	0,423
	yes	78	19,88	5,02	

Results and Discussion

The aim of this research is to investigate the level of burnout and effects of demographic factors on burnout for 120 retail sector workers. Research results and discussions are as follows.

Research results indicate that employees are in normal burnout interval level in terms of Emotional Exhaustion and are also in normal Depersonalization interval levels. In addition, employees demonstrate a high level of burnout due to lack of Personal Accomplishment.

It is understood from research results that employees having graduate school degree have the highest level of Personal Accomplishment when comparing education level and sub-dimensions of burnout. Therefore, it is believed that improvements in promotion, wage and working conditions will make employees feel self-esteem which finally results in less level of burnout.

According to research findings, marital status affects Emotional Exhaustion levels of employees. In other words, Emotional Exhaustion mostly occurs in the category of divorced/widowed employees. The main reason for this situation might be explained as the negative point of view of society against these individuals. On the other hand, different complications for married employees have also been observed during this research. Thus, organizational and managerial professional support must be provided for all type of employees in order to eliminate their feeling of burnout.

60% of employees mentioned that they are working 70 hours and more per week. This situation also leads to an increase of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization as sub-dimensions of burnout. As a result, decrease in customer satisfaction occurs due to lack of working motivation of employees. Therefore, employers have observe the working stress of employees and adjust the distribution of work in order to minimize the negative effects of burnout.

It is also vital for employers not to face their employees against excessive working load. In other words, providing resting time and providing opportunities for spending leisure time, constituting cooperation among employees will decrease uncertainty and negative effects of excessive work load. (Behar vd,2007:948).

Employers considering changing their job have high levels of burnout for Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization. Consequently, it is also very important to decrease long working hours and dissolve uncertainty in inter-organizational roles while constituting appreciation of employees to make them feel valuable for their organization.

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