

Studying Burnout Syndrome on multidisciplinary workers

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Abstract. The main goal of this exploratory paper was to apply the Maslach Burnout Inventory-HSS (MBI-HSS) on various workers within the State Secretariat of Justice and Citizenship (SEJUS) in Brasília (Brazil) in a department that deals with violence against women, as well as understand the stressors that may contribute to high rates of this syndrome. A questionnaire was made to collect demographic data, calculate Burnout scale, and gather opinions of workers. Besides the department incommending 78 people, only 22 employees answered the survey and most had “lack of support and recognition”, “management”, “complexity of demands” and “policies” as stress factors mentioned during the research, in which shows high rates of Burnout Syndrome. The conclusion is brief, as the group who answered the formulary was small and data is not enough, but it brings reflections about future studies that should be made, as well as identifying and discussing about changes in the workplace that could be made to lessen the rates of this pathology.

Keywords. Burnout, workplace, mental health, policies, exploratory research.

1. Introduction

Created in 1981, the Maslach Burnout Inventory was made to measure the level of burnout, depersonalization and self achievement in those workers.

Burnout is a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people in some capacity. [1]

Besides not being classified as a medical condition, World Health Organization defines burnout as “a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by three dimensions:

- feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion;
- increased mental distance from one’s job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one’s job;
- and reduced professional efficacy.

Burn-out refers specifically to phenomena in the occupational context and should not be applied to describe experiences in other areas of life.” [2]

In order to understand more about this syndrome

and what the stress factors are, this study was developed as a exploratory research.

2. Methodology

2.1 Survey

An anonymous survey was made and sent to 78 workers from State Secretariat of Justice and Citizenship (SEJUS) located in Brasília, Brazil, in which only 22 answered. It was divided in 3 parts: the first containing questions regarding demographic data (position held, age, years in position and gender), the second being a questionnaire including a Burnout Self-Test provided by the The New Mexico Public Regulation Commission [3] slightly adapted to the workers’ reality and translated to Portuguese, and a final section where participants could contribute with opinions and additional comments and answered the following questions voluntarily:

- Do you know about the Burnout Syndrome? If so, how did you get to know about it?
- Do you have any psychological condition? If so, what is it?
- What stresses you the most at work?
- Do you think your workplace provides

support for workers experiencing some form of burnout?

- In stressful situations, how do you usually deal with them?
- Is your way of dealing with stress considered healthy?

2.2 MBI Scale

The scale utilized is published by The New Mexico Public Regulation Commission. It has 22 questions that has to be scored in a scale from 0 to 6, and its results are separated in 3 sections:

- Section A: Burnout
 - o Total 17 or less: Low-level burnout;
 - o Total between 18 and 29: Moderate burnout;
 - o Total over 30: High-level burnout.
- Section B: Depersonalization
 - o Total 5 or less: Low-level burnout;
 - o Total between 6 and 11 inclusive: Moderate burnout;
 - o Total of 12 and greater: High-level burnout.
- Section B: Personal achievement
 - o Total 33 or less: High-level burnout;
 - o Total between 34 and 39, inclusive: Moderate burnout;
 - o Total greater than 40: Low-level burnout.

3. Results

3.1 Participants

Table 1 – Gender variety

	Number of people	Percentage
Female	19	86.4%
Male	3	13.6%
TOTAL	22	100%

Table 2 – Age range

	Number of people	Percentage
21 to 30 y.o	3	13.6%
31 to 40 y.o	9	40.9%
41 to 50 y.o	8	36.4%
51 to 60 y.o	2	9.1%
TOTAL	22	100%

Table 3 – Occupation

	Number of people	Percentage
Advisor	1	4.5%
Administrative assistant	3	13.6%
Social worker	7	31.8%
Educator	1	4.5%
Pedagogue	2	9%
Psychologist	7	31.8%
Civil servant	1	4.5%
TOTAL	22	100%

Table 4 – Years in experience

(years)	Number of people	Percentage
0 to 5	14	63.6%
6 to 10	2	9.1%
11 to 15	3	13.6%
16 to 20	3	13.6%
TOTAL	22	100%

Whithin the research, it was collected that most of workers are females (86.4% - see **Table 1**). The age range mostly varies from 31 to 50 years old (77.3%) – see **Table 2**. The prevalent occupations are psychologists (31.8%) and social workers (31.8%) – see **Table 3**. And also, 63.6% of people have 0 to 5 years of experience in the job – see **Table 4**.

3.2 Burnout

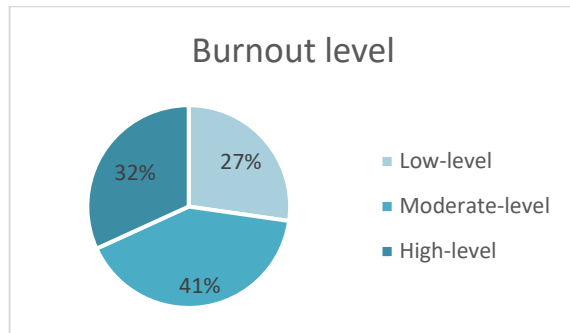


Figure 1

After analysing the results of the survey, in **Figure 1** It's noticeable that out of 22 participants, 27% (6) are in low-level, 41% (9) in moderate-level and 32% (7) in high-level burnout.

3.3 Depersonalization

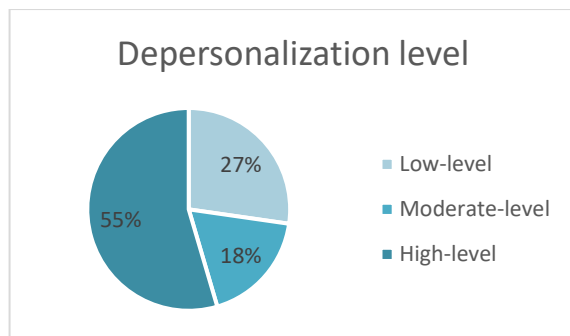


Figure 2

In **Figure 2** it is possible to notice that most workers are in a High-level of depersonalization, indicating that they are rather "dehumanizing" interpersonal relations and presenting a major notion of detachment.

3.4 Personal achievement

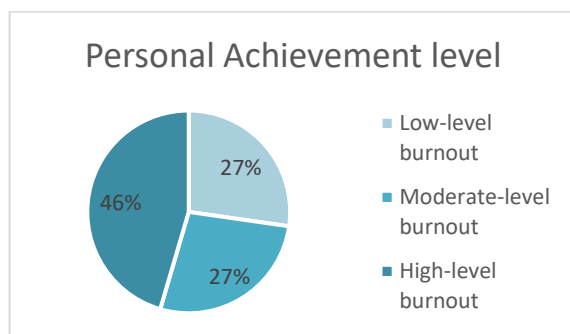


Figure 3

In this case, higher scores show lower levels of burnout. **Figure 3** shows 46% of people might have consequences of burnout and depersonalization, showing that they are probably doubting their own abilities.

3.5 Relevant additional information

Table 5 – Do you know burnout?

	Number of people	Percentage
Yes	18	94.7%
No	1	5.3%
TOTAL	19	100%

Table 6 – Do you have any psychological conditions?

	Number of people	Percentage
Yes, anxiety	10	47.6%
Yes, anxiety and depression	4	19%
Yes, Bipolar Disorder	1	4.8%
Yes (not specified)	1	4.8%
No/Do not know	5	23.8%
TOTAL	21	100%

Table 7 – What stresses you the most at work?

Reason	Number of citations
Not having support/recognition	5
Problems regarding management	4
Complexity of demands	4
Policies	4
Interpersonal relationships	3
Not enough responsibility from other people	2
Instability	2
Pression	1
Dealing with stories regarding violence	1
"Rigid" service	1
Feeling of impotence	1
Precarious conditions at work	1
Working too far from home	1

Table 8 – Do you think your workplace provides support for workers experiencing some form of burnout?

	Number of people	Percentage
No	16	76.2%
Kinda	1	4.8%
Not sure	4	19%
TOTAL	21	100%

Table 5 shows that Burnout Syndrome is well known within workplace, and additional responses implied that employees either learn about it while studying in university, in social medias or at work.

Demonstrated on **Table 6**, statistics show only 23.8% of workers either do not have any pathologies or do not know about the presence of psychological conditions.

Table 7 reveals the multiple reasons workers feel most stressed about at work. The prevalent ones are not having enough support/recognition, problems regarding management (not specified), complexity of demands and policies.

Finally, **Table 8** indicates that the big majority of people (76.2%) do not recognize receiving support from their workplace if any form of exhaustion is experienced.

4. Discussion and conclusion

After gathering all information, the main problem found is: Education about Burnout is not enough, action should be taken in order to improve the employees’ productivity and well-being at work.

The fact that the most cited stressors such as management and policies are more frequent than dealing with trauma/violence against woman is expected since studies have shown that those are indeed, factors that contribute to stress. Therefore, it would be interesting to investigate how the management is affecting these workers (e.g.: assessment of leadership quality), in a way that could offer new perspectives and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the topic being studied.

However, some limitations have been identified, including individual diagnosis and ways to reduce exhaustion in an already educated environment as well as promote healthy work practices, suggesting the need for additional research on the topic. Future studies could explore specific questions to deepen the knowledge surrounding this, such as: Why isn’t burnout a medical condition? And how does it affect employment law?

Continuing research in this field is crucial, as one of

the interviewed expressed “not being heard at their work”. Informations like this take part in improvement on care practices, developing theories, or investing in public policies, for example.

5. Acknowledgement

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6. References

[1] Maslach, Christina & Jackson, Susan & Leiter, Michael. (1997). The Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual.

[2] International Classification of Diseases Eleventh Revision (ICD-11). Geneva: World Health Organization; 2022. License: CC BY-ND 3.0 IGO.

[3] The New Mexico Public Regulation Commission. Burnout Self-Test 2.