Research Paper

A Study on Workplace Stress, Burnout & Occupational Commitment among Mental Health Professionals

Ananya Roy[1]*

ABSTRACT

Professionals in the mental health field frequently experience high levels of stress, which can lead to burnout & the symptoms show up as emotional weariness, overload or tiredness, depersonalization, and a negative self-perception. Standardized scales were used to measure occupational commitment, burnout & workplace stress among mental health professionals. Clinical psychologists, psychotherapists, and counselors within the age range 23-40 years were among the mental health professionals considered. Results found that organizational commitment is significantly positively correlated to personal accomplishment and significantly negatively correlated to workplace stress and emotional exhaustion. Strategies for reducing stress and burnout at workplace may benefit them which include being under supervision, support groups and self-care measures in addition to assistance provided by the organization.

Keywords: Mental Health Professionals, Workplace Stress, Burnout, Occupational Commitment

"Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is the probable reason why so few engage in it." —Henry Ford

Having mental health conditions and seeking help for it in a country such as India is seen as a very hush-hush topic, though the irony is that it is a country with one of the highest mental health illnesses. However, being mentally well goes much beyond simply being free of mental illness and the professionals working in this field are vastly outnumbered as compared to the population. According to report (NMHS, 2017) an estimated 150 million individuals in India require interventions for their mental health with respect to that we only have 1.93 mental health professionals available per 100,000 people (WHO, 2017).

Mental health professionals are prone to experiencing stress and burnout due to the nature of their work. Stress is experienced when one is not able to adequately meet the demands from their environment. According to a study, coping with patients' suffering, feeling overburdened, feeling underappreciated and under-resourced are all primary determinants of

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[1]MA Clinical Psychology, Dept. of Psychology, Amity University, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India
*Corresponding Author

stress. Low satisfaction in three areas, including connections with patients, families, and employees, professional status/esteem, and intellectual stimulation, was also linked to burnout. Additionally, consultants who believed they had received insufficient management and communication training were more likely to experience burnout (Ramirez et al., 1996).

Burnout is a state of physical and emotional exhaustion resulting from engagement over an extended period in emotionally taxing professional conditions as is the condition with mental health care professionals. Pines & Maslach (1974) examined burnout on 76 participants from San Francisco-area mental health facilities produced a considerable number of statistically meaningful results. They discovered that the more time employees spent working in the mental health sector, the less they enjoyed dealing with patients, were less effective working with them, and had less humanistic views regarding mental illness.

Reduced job satisfaction, absenteeism, staff turnover, and pessimism are effects of stress and burnout. All these are factors that could weaken commitment towards the organization they work in. Organizational commitment is seen as the commitment an employee has towards the organization, they are working in. Çınar (2022) through a systematic review and meta-analysis found that overall, there was a positive correlation between organizational commitment and work satisfaction that was statistically significant.

Workplace Stress
According to WHO (2003) workplace stress is "the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope". Beehr & Newman (1978) defined workplace stress as "a condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs and characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning."

Deng et al. (2019) found among 1594 Chinese health care workers of public hospitals that job stress was positively associated with public service motivation and job performance. A COVID-19 study involving 403 healthcare workers in pandemic and non-pandemic hospitals discovered that 'intent to leave' and 'job stress' were substantially greater among healthcare professionals working in the pandemic hospital than those working in the non-pandemic hospital (Tabur et al., 2022). In a study involving health professionals working in hospitals, it was shown that 68.2% of workers reported experiencing workplace stress. Workplace stress is more common among health professionals who work 50 hours or more each week, on night shifts, and occasionally on bases (Birhanu et al., 2018)

Burnout
Freudenberger popularized the term burnout and described it as "becoming exhausted by making excessive demands on energy, strength, or resources in the workplace" (Freudenberger, 1974, p. 159). He also listed some personality factors which were more likely to experience burnout, those being 'the dedicated and the committed'. "Burnout is a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur in every individual who works with other people in some capacity" (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1997, p.192). Burnout is studies under three areas in this study emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Feelings of being emotionally exhausted and overextended by others are referred to as emotional exhaustion. Depersonalization is the process of developing cynical and

dehumanising views toward those who receive one's services. Reduced personal accomplishment describes a deterioration in one's perception of one's own competence and professional success (Vercambre, 2009).

Silvia & Menezes (2008) studied prevalence of burnout syndrome in community-based health agents. According to the findings, burnout syndrome was evident in 24.1% of the respondents. Reduced personal achievement, depersonalization, and moderate to high degrees of emotional tiredness were noted in 70.9%, 34.0%, and 47.5% of the individuals, respectively. Peterson (2008) did a cross-sectional study of employees in a Swedish County Council found that employees with burnout had the most Self-reported symptoms of depression, anxiety, sleep disturbance, memory impairment, and neck and back pain than those who experienced only exhaustion, disengagement from work, or no burnout.

Organizational Commitment
Porter & Lawer (1965) defined organizational commitment as "the desire developed by the employee that leads him/her to make high efforts for the good of the institution, too long to remain in it, and to accept its main objectives and values." Organizational commitment is characterized as "a psychological state that (a) characterizes the employee's relationship with the organization, and (b) has implications for the decision to continue or discontinue membership in the organization" (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 67).

Abdallah et al. (2007) carried out research on the interrelationships between job involvement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment whose findings indicated that job involvement was positively and significantly affecting job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Also, job satisfaction was positively related to organizational commitment. Gorgulu (2016) found that there is a positive correlation and significant relation between medical staff's emotional exhaustion and desensitization, sub-dimensions of burnout. Between the normative commitment sub-dimension and both internal and external work satisfaction, there is a positive connection and significant relationship.

Purpose
The purpose is to study workplace Stress, Burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment) and Occupational Commitment of Mental Healthcare Professionals.

Hypothesis
- There is a significant relationship between organizational commitment and workplace stress.
- There is a significant relationship between organizational commitment and occupational exhaustion.
- There is a significant relationship between organizational commitment and personal assessment
- There is a significant relationship between organizational commitment and depersonalization

METHODOLOGY
*Sample***:** The sample consisted of 34 Mental health Professionals which consisted of clinical psychologists, psychotherapists, and counselors from 23-40 years of age from Delhi.

Measure
- **Workplace Stress Scale** (The Marlin Company and The American Institute of Stress, 2009) measures stress experienced at workplace consisting of 8 items on 5-point Likert scale ranging from Never to Very Often.
- **The Maslach Burnout Inventory:** (Maslach et al., 1997) is a measurement of work-related burnout composed of the three subscales of emotional exhaustion (9 items), depersonalization (5 items), and accomplishment (PA) (8 items). It ranges from 0= Never to 6= Every Day
- **The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire:** (Mowday et al., 1979) is a 15-item scale that measures employees' organizational commitment and ranges from 1= Strongly disagree to 7= Strongly agree.

Procedure
The participants were informed about the purpose of the research and the questionnaires were filled through Google forms. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of the information to elicit their honest responses without any fear or inhibitions. Standardized psychological tests were administered to participants.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS
Results
The responses of the participants were analyzed using Pearson's correlation to see the relationship between elements of burnouts, workplace stress and organizational commitment.

Table 1: N, Mean and SD of all variables

	Emotional Exhaustion	Deprsonalization	Personal Accomplishment	Workplace Stress	Organisational Commitment
N	34	34	34	34	34
Mean	21.1	7.59	31.0	21.9	74.8
Standard Deviation	10.6	7.14	9.91	5.46	16.9

Table 2 : showing correlation between all the variables

	Emotional Exhaustion	Deprsonalization	Personal Accomplishment	Workplace Stress	Organisational Commitment
Emotional Exhaustion	—				
Deprsonalization	0.422*	—			
Personal Accomplishment	0.587***	-0.321	—		
Workplace Stress	0.551***	0.480**	-0.262	—	
Organisational Commitment	- 0.440**	-0.264	0.438**	-0.347*	—

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS
The result found out that that organizational commitment is significantly positively correlated to personal accomplishment (r=0.438, p<.001) and significantly negatively correlated to workplace stress (r=-0.347, p<.01) and emotional exhaustion (r=-0.440, p<0.1). No significant relationship could be found between organizational commitment and depersonalization. Although a significant positive correlation between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization was found (r=0.561, p<.001). It was also found out that workplace

stress is significantly positively correlated to emotional exhaustion (r=0.551, p<.001) and depersonalization (r=0.480, p<.01).

The results are in line with previous research, Werang et al. (2021) found a significant negative correlation between organizational commitment and emotional exhaustion and Ngirande (2021) found a negatively significant correlation between organizational commitment and workplace stress. They also noted that job satisfaction did not help to minimize the relationship between workplace stress and organizational commitment. Robinson et al., (2003) noted that those experiencing high levels of emotional exhaustion experienced even higher levels of personal accomplishment. Thus, it can be determined that burnout and workplace stress both have an impact on organizational outcome.

CONCLUSION

It has long been recognized that mental health professionals have a greater risk of developing burnout and stress which seriously impacts their personal wellbeing as well as the quality of care that they may be providing and this research's aim was to study the correlation between burnout, stress and organizational commitment. Mental health professionals are important as they are the ones who are providing aid to the people suffering from mental health disorders helping them manage though their illness, thus it is essential that the mental health of these people within the organization they are working in is also looked after as factors such as burnout and stress has impact on both their work self as well as private self. Thus the organizations after hiring should induct them with skills needed to attain work life balance as well setting realistic goals and expectation towards their workload and other things such as being under supervision and being part of support groups regularly assessing the emotional, psychological and spiritual wellbeing and seeking therapy when needed, organizations should also provide proper training where they are taught proper selfcare measures and can detect the early signs of stress and burnout caused by the workplace.

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