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Burnout, Leadership, and Institutional Effectiveness: Evidence from Pakistani Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

This paper also explores the association between organizational performance and employee burnout in the sector of higher education of Pakistan and how the perceived leadership support mediates the correlation. With mounting workloads, growing resource demands, and more and more expectations on universities to perform, academic and administrative employees are finding themselves more susceptible to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and less professional efficacy. One of the arguments of the study is that burnout is a serious threat to the productivity of the institution, the quality of the provided services, and the performance of the whole organization. In the empirical analysis, it has been found that the perception of the leadership support is a key mediating factor as it helps to reduce the stress and increase the motivation, as well as provide supportive environment in the workplace. The adverse consequences of burnout on performance are undermined significantly when leaders empathize, recognize and provide guidance. The research paper identifies the necessity of an intervention that is led by the leader, enhanced organizational policies, and well-being programs to enhance resilience among staff and allow a sustainable performance of institutions of higher learning. The findings are useful in guiding policymakers, college administrators and leadership practitioners.

Keywords: Employee Burnout, Organizational Performance, Perceived Leadership Support, Higher Education, Workplace Stress, Leadership Practices, Employee Well-Being, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

In the mid of 1970s the term burnout was envisaged in caretaking occupations and describes is the gradual exhaustions, loss of commitment and a psychological syndrome develop subsequent to the protracted stress (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). The term burnout is physiological, emotional, and mental exhaustion experienced due to chronic job stress and dissatisfaction (Iancu et al. 2018). Burnout is the psychological and physiological drainage of employee due to overextended work (Rajendran et al., 2020). This phenomenon leads to decreased motivation, reduce employee job satisfaction, and work engagement ultimately affecting organizational performance (Madigan & Kim, 2021). Burnout is the consequence of long occupational anxiety and exists in all occupation (Iancu et al. 2018) most human service workers (Jennett et al, 2021). The teaching profession is one of the most respected and loving occupation. Teachers are nation builders also play significant role country development and backbone of civilized society. Teachers are not limited to classroom activities but also performing multi-dimensional tasks and encounter diverse challenges. In this regard, teaching is a stressful profession (Tsabar, 2017), consequently face high attrition (Sutcher et al., 2016). According to statistics, about 200,000 are expected to switch the profession in United State at the end of 2025 (Sutcher et al., 2016) and shortage of experiences employees is pressing issue for leadership (Johnson & Good, 2018).

Research studies identified job dissatisfaction and burnout is the major cause of attritions (Chambers et al., 2019; Madigan & Kim, 2021). The job dissatisfaction greatly effect employees performance (Toropova et al., 2021) and prevailing burnout adversely affect organizational performance (Madigan & Kim, 2021). According to Springer and Nguyen (2019), the employees burnout mainly trigger by absence of perceived leadership support, inspiration and intensifying workload. The phenomenon of burnout has evident almost in all professions but main prevail in service providers (Iancu et al., 2018). The main causes of this prevalent is multifaceted demands and activities experienced by the employees (McCarthy et al., 2016), such as increasing workloads, performance evaluations and student discipline issues (Kyriacou, 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2003). According to Flook et al., (2013) employees are facing a considerable work pressures, trauma, and exhaustion caused by their multiple professional assignments. Stressors are the key contributor of burnout such as work management, excessive work, time and performance pressure and

lack of leadership support (Flook, et al., 2013; Maslach & Leiter, 2008; McCormick & Barnett, 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010).

Literature gap(s)

The existing literature evident that term burnout historical examined (Rumschlag, 2017) impact of burnout on job performance by (Chen et al., 2020; Hogan & White, 2021; Weißenfels, 2021), triggered job attrition (Hogan & White, 2021; Rajendran et al., 2020). Further burnout causes examined by (Prokopov et al., 2020), and symptoms like stress, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment (Al-Adwan & Al-Khayat, 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Sugrue, 2020) and allied aspects of burnout discussed by (Santoro, 2020; Rajendran et al., 2020; Nygaard, 2019). However, the impact of employees on organization with mediating role of leadership support has not yet empirically examined. The role of leadership becomes crucial in fostering resilience and preventing the detrimental effects of burnout. In this study, the researchers aim to unravel the intricate relationship between employees burnout and its impact on organizational performance placing a specific lens on the mediating role of leadership support.

Research Problem Statement

The employees burnout is the consequences of continues working and exhaustion (Skaalvik & Skaalvik 2017). Every profession has multi-dimensional activities and employees undertake diverse assignments. In this regard, every profession is count a stressful occupation experiencing burnout and demanding full time dedication and commitments (Skaalvik & Skaalvik 2020). The burnout is not only compromises well-being but also a potential spillover effects on performance (Herman et al., 2018). Burnout is likely to increase job dissatisfaction, depression, and motivation to switch profession-cum-organization. To overcome these issues organizations are practicing diverse strategies that hold a potential influence to reduce employee burnout. Despite, organizations are always strive to create and provide a conducive work environment to optimize outcomes, however, the burnout remains a pressing concern due to lack of effective leadership support. In this regard, this research study was conduct to investigate how leadership practices mediate the effects of burnout on organizational performance.

Significance of the study

This research study is significant as it explores the intricate relationships between employee burnout, perceived leadership support, and organizational performance. Employee burnout not only affects well-being but also has broader adverse implications on outcomes. By focusing on the mediating role of perceived leadership support, this research seeks to uncover potential strategies to alleviate the adverse effects of burnout on employees and performance. Understanding how leadership practices contribute to employee well-being and workplace dynamics. The research findings may significantly contribute valuable insights to organization, policymakers, and researchers, offering guidance on fostering a positive workplace environment that ultimately enhances organization outcomes. In essence, this study is significant because it positively influences the organizational landscape by addressing a critical issue that influences the heart of the employees and performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employees Burnout

The burnout among employees is classified as a mental health issue that can lead to a range of physical and psychological difficulties. This condition negatively impacts organizational performance (Chen et al., 2020; Herman et al., 2018; Hogan & White, 2021; Klusmann et al., 2016; Weißenfels, 2021; Zhao & Ding, 2019) and diminishes job satisfaction (Chen et al., 2020). The presence of employee burnout also increases the rate of job attrition (Brasfield et al., 2019; Carson et al., 2018; Hogan & White, 2021; Perrone et al., 2019; Rajendran et al., 2020; Sabagh et al., 2018). Factors contributing to employee susceptibility to burnout include stress from coworker behavior, time constraints, economic conditions, and adverse relationships with colleagues (Al-Adwan & Al-Khayat, 2017).

According to Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2020), chronic job demands and stressors are the starting points of burnout, which can deplete employee energy and ultimately result in burnout. Oberle et al. (2020) identified several contributing factors to burnout, such as fulfilling various organizational demands, navigating difficult relationships within social and workplace contexts, and experiencing pressure to complete tasks promptly. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2020) also discovered that various job demands and

resources are predictive of different aspects of burnout, noting that the relationships between (a) job demands and resources and (b) motivation and well-being are mainly indirect, mediated by burnout (p. 612).

Emotional Exhaustion

The Emotional exhaustion occurs when an individual feels overwhelmed by their job (Rumschlag, 2017). A depressed mood might have a positive correlation with this exhaustion (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2020). Teachers who dedicate extra hours to paperwork beyond school hours may experience heightened levels of exhaustion (Rumschlag, 2017). If teachers are suffering from emotional exhaustion, there could be repercussions for the students, the school districts, and the teachers themselves (Rumschlag, 2017).

Depersonalization

Depersonalization is characterized by a detached or impersonal reaction to someone's service, care, treatment, or instruction (Rumschlag, 2017). In cases of depersonalization, teachers may begin to view certain students as beyond help, feeling they are somehow responsible for their struggles (Rumschlag, 2017). This detachment can also foster a negative attitude toward colleagues (Al-Adwan & Al-Khayat, 2017). According to Al-Adwan and Al-Khayat (2017), this form of psychological burnout manifests as a cynical attitude toward students and parents, sometimes resulting in a lack of confidence in teachers' views of students and even offensive interactions (pp. 181-182).

Personal Accomplishment

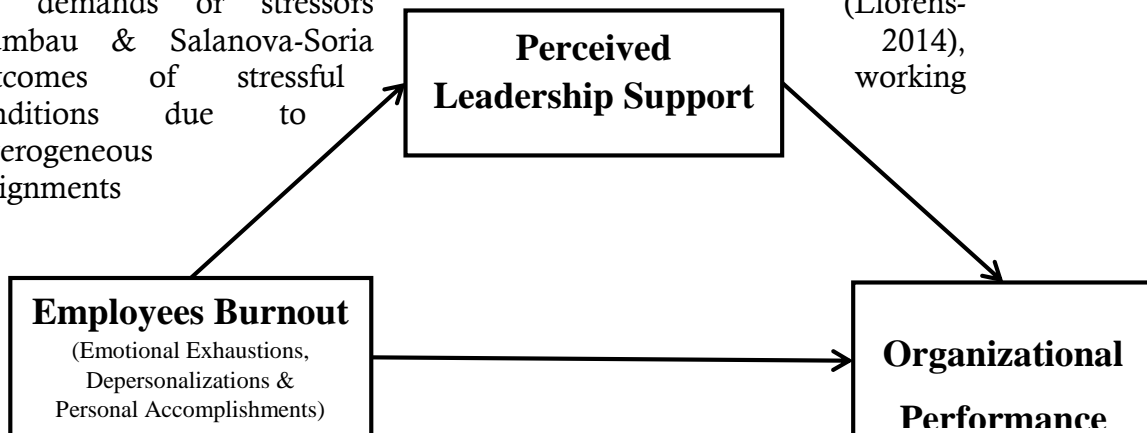
When employees begin to overly critique themselves, their sense of personal accomplishment may decline (Al-Adwan & Al-Khayat, 2017). They may start to feel that their efforts lack meaning or purpose (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Additionally, employees might question their own competence and doubt their ability to fulfill their responsibilities effectively (Al-Adwan & Al-Khayat, 2017). Sometimes, they believe they are acting with courage and compassion, when, in reality, they are enduring unhealthy situations and may hold unrealistic expectations (Krop, 2013).

Employees Burnout and Perceived Leadership Support

Burnout is evident almost in all professions but main prevail in teaching (Iancu et al., 2018), mainly trigger by lack of leadership support, inspiration, increasing workload and students misbehavior (Springer & Nguyen 2019). According to Santoro (2020) the burnout reduced if they are not given due consideration with little support from colleagues and leadership. Leadership emerges as a pivotal factor in mitigating burnout. Springer and Nguyen (2019) underscore the importance of leadership support, inspiration, and effective management of workloads in reducing burnout. Leaders who cultivate a positive work culture, prioritize well-being, and provide adequate support contribute to creating an environment where employees feel valued and capable of delivering their best. The role of leadership becomes crucial in fostering resilience among employees and preventing the detrimental effects of burnout.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

To develop a comprehensive theoretical framework for the complex and multifaceted phenomena this study adopt Maslach burnout model (Maslach & Jackson 1981). Maslach burnout model is conceptualized a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson 1981). It described an erosion of engagement (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Emotional exhaustion is key factor of burnout duly characterized by loss of energy and chronic fatigue (Pines et al., 1988; Schwarzer et al., 2000). Depersonalization reflects through negative attitudes towards work reduce capacity to respond the demands (Maslach et al., 2001) and reduced accomplishment refers to a negative self-evaluation and a feeling of not doing a good job (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Burnout begins with chronic job demands or stressors (Llorens-2014), working Gumbau & Salanova-Soria outcomes of stressful conditions due to heterogeneous assignments



(Shirom et al., 2009)

Conceptual Framework

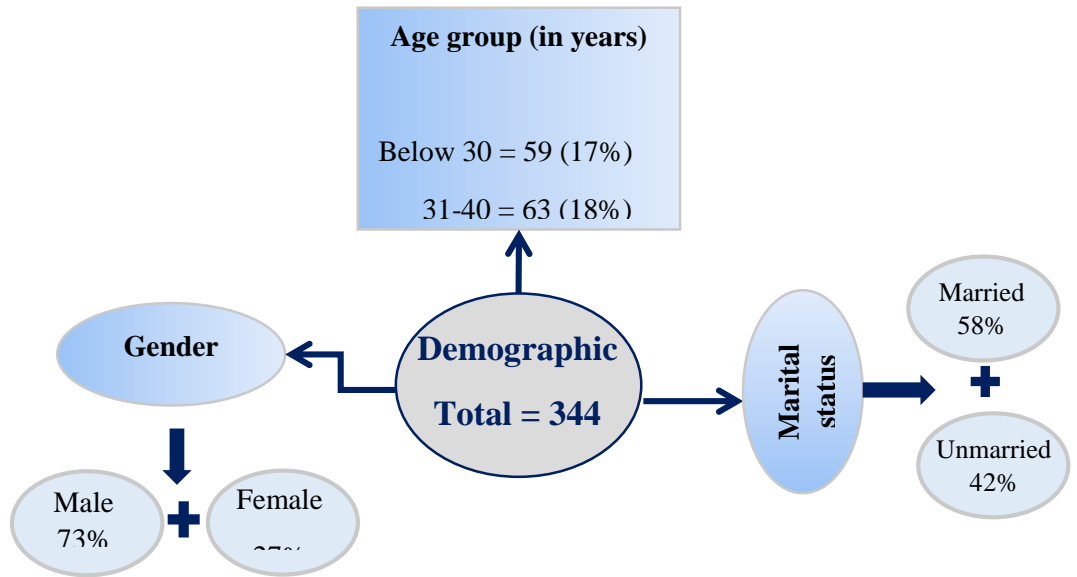
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study based on survey approach was undertake to examine the relationship between employees burnout and organizational performance with lens of mediating effect of perceived leadership support. For this purpose, the required data was collected from teaching faculty of public sector universities chartered by Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Accordingly, multi-stages random sampling technique was applied. At first stage 50% universities were randomly selected that have 2040 permanent teachers. Further sample size calculated through Yamane formula (Yamane 1967) and determined sample size is 344. The required data collected through questionnaire adapted from Maslach Burnout Inventory that comprised 22 items for Employees Burnout (EB) (Maslach et al., 1986) and Perceived Leadership Support (PLS) has 05 items (Martin et al, 2013) accordingly Organizational Performance (OP) has 06 items (Fu-Jin et al. 2010). The collected data analyzed through SPSS software and AMOS software that includes Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and SEM.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Descriptive statistics

The demographic details of respondents presented below.



Exploratory Factor Analysis

The construct validity examined through exploratory factor analysis and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was conducted to examine items envisaging for each factor also the presence of partial correlations amid factors as recommended by Leech, Barrett and Morgan, (2005).

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.970
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	24756.995
	Df	595
	Sig.	.000

The statistical value of KMO is .97 (higher than .50) and the value of Bartlett test is .000 (less than 0.05). Accordingly, all values are within the acceptable range that satisfied the assumption of sphericity.

Factor loading and Communalities

	Factor			Communalities
	1	2	3	
EB1	.978			.957
EB2	.984			.969

EB3	.990	.980
EB4	.990	.981
EB5	.973	.948
EB6	.972	.948
EB7	.951	.910
EB8	.963	.931
EB9	.905	.823
EB10	.977	.955
EB11	.972	.946
EB12	.977	.958
EB13	.983	.967
EB14	.887	.788
EB15	.954	.917
EB16	.939	.889
EB17	.946	.901
EB18	.904	.830
EB19	.983	.967
EB20	.940	.887
EB21	.984	.968
EB22	.936	.877
OP1	.929	.866
OP2	.910	.833
OP3	.930	.874
OP4	.924	.860
OP5	.948	.903
OP6	.924	.869
PLS1	.913	.844
PLS2	.834	.702
PLS3	.920	.867
PLS4	.906	.835
PLS5	.904	.822

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

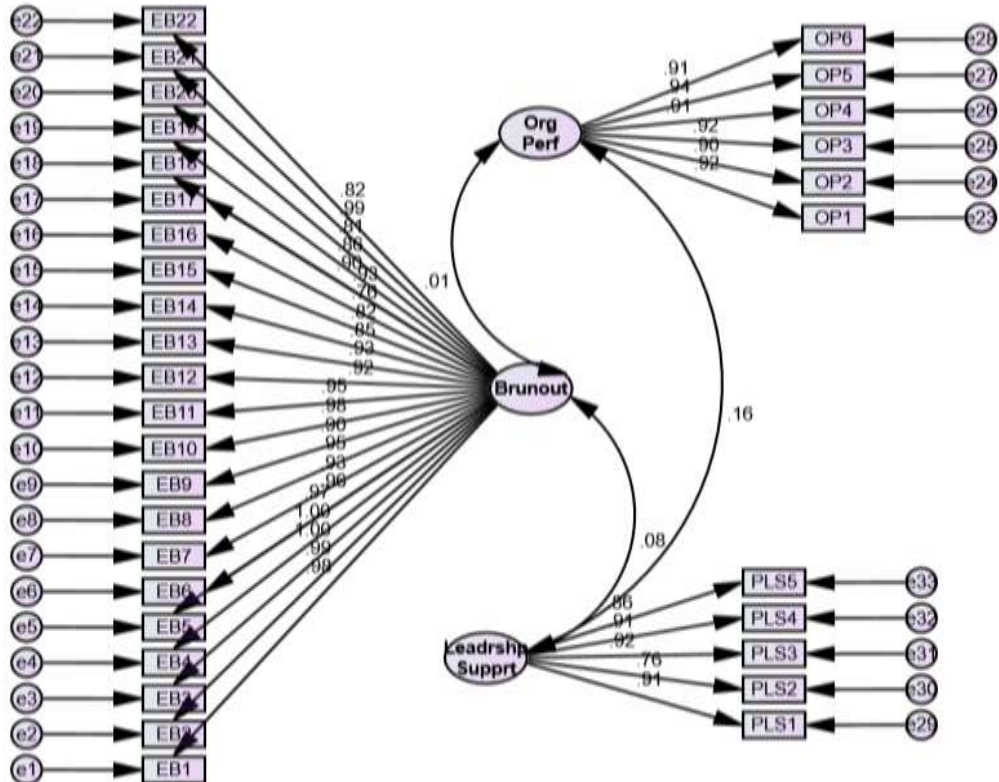
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 4 iterations.

The above table depicts that all factors have loaded in respective variables and communalities values also within the acceptable range as suggested by Leech et al., (2005). Consequently, no item has dropped and total 5 iterations were run.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

CFA was applied to evaluate the validity and reliability of the measurement model. The statistical values of model factor loading are higher than 0.70 (acceptable range). The model fit indices presented in the subsequent table also depict that model is good fit.



Model Fitness Indices

Model fit measure	Acceptable value*	Measure value
X2 / df	≤ 3.00	1.9
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	.05
GFI	≥ .90	.95
AGFI	≥ .80	.83
RMR	≤ .05	.03
CFI	≥ .90	.96
RFI	≥ .90	.97
NFI	≥ .90	.93
TLI	≥ .90	.98
IFI	≥ .90	.94

*Hair et al., (2010), Hu and Bentler (1999)

The table shows that all statistical values are within the acceptable range as suggested by Hair et al., (2010) and Hu and Bentler, (1999). Therefore, no validity concern has found in the construct.

Validity Statistics

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	EB	OP	PLS
EB	0.992	0.849	0.007	1.000	0.921		
OP	0.969	0.838	0.024	0.970	0.009	0.915	
PLS	0.941	0.763	0.024	0.950	0.082	0.156*	0.874

EB=Employees Burnout, OP=Organizational Performance,
PLS=Perceived Leadership Support

HTMT Analysis

The construct HTMT values also found within acceptable range as per suggested values of (Henseler et al., 2015).

	EB	OP	PLS
EB			
OP	0.019		
PLS	0.084	0.150	

Structural Equation Modeling

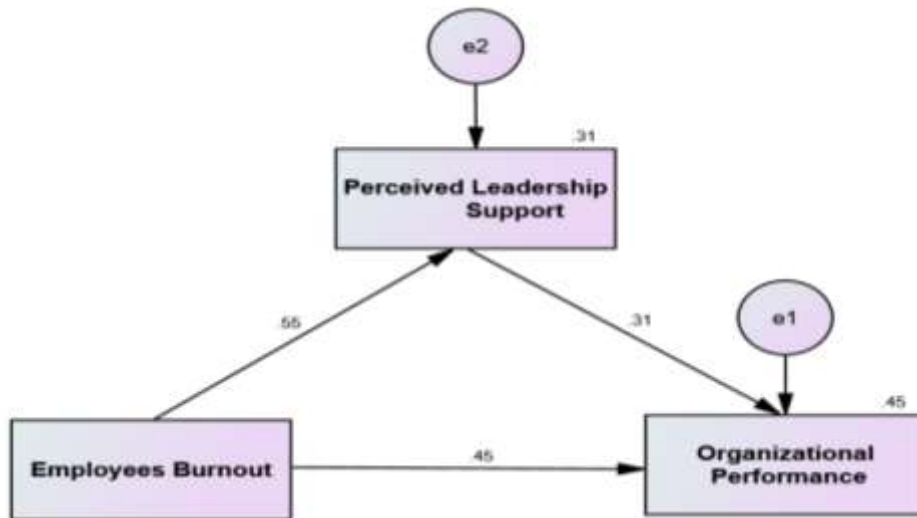


Figure: Measurement Model

The measurement model reflects the direct effect of employees burnout on organizational performance. The model also reflects the mediating role of perceived leadership support between employees burnout and organizational performance. The statistical values of the model show that 1% deviation in employees burnout may cause 45% changes in organizational performance with 55% deviation in perceived leadership support. Meanwhile the model also reflects that 1% deviation perceived leadership support cause 31% organizational performance.

Measurement Model Statistics

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
PLS	<---	EB	.549	.169	3.248	***	
OP	<---	EB	.453	.172	2.633	.001	
OP	<---	PLS	.297	.146	2.034	***	

In above table, the SEM values present the magnitude and direction of relationship. The values reflect that employees burnout has significant positive impact on perceived leadership support as C.R. value (3.248) p-value (***). Further, indicate employees burnout has significant positive impact on and organization performance as the C.R. value (2.633) and p-value .001). The tabulated values show that perceived leadership support has significant positive impact on organizational performance as C.R. value (2.034) p-value (***).

Table: Direct, Indirect and Total Effect

		EB	PLS
Standardized Total Effects	PLS	.549	.000
	OP	.453	.297
Standardized Direct Effects	PLS	.549	.000
	OP	.453	.297
Standardized Indirect Effects	PLS	.000	.000
	OP	.453	.000

EB= Employees Burnout, OP= Organizational Performance, PLS= Perceived Leadership Support

The tabulated values present the standardized total effect of employees burnout on organizational performance with mediating lens of perceived leadership support. Table also shows direct effects of employees burnout on organizational performance without considering the mediator. Further table show the indirect effects of employees burnout on organizational performance within the existence of perceived leadership support without considering direct effects.

CONCLUSION

This research study was conducted to examine to unravel the intricate relationship between employees burnout and its impact on organizational performance placing a specific lens on the mediating role of leadership support. For this purpose the a

quantitative study based on survey approach was adopted. Accordingly, the teaching faculty members of public sector universities chartered by Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were count population and multi-stages random sampling technique was applied for sample selection. At first stage 50% universities were randomly selected further sample size calculated through Yamane formula (Yamane 1967). The required data collected through adapted questionnaire and collected data analyzed through SPSS software and AMOS software that includes Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and SEM.

The statistical findings of research study show that that all statistical values are within the acceptable and no validity concern and proposed model has found good fitted for further analysis. Accordingly, further statistical analysis show the total effect of employees burnout on organizational performance with mediating lens of perceived leadership support and direct as well as indirect effects of employees burnout on organizational performance. The SEM results present the magnitude and direction of relationship. The values reflect that employees burnout has significant positive impact on perceived leadership support as C.R. value (3.248) p-value (***). Further, indicate employees burnout has significant positive impact on and organization performance as the C.R. value (2.633) and p-value .001). The tabulated values show that perceived leadership support has significant positive impact on organizational performance as C.R. value (2.034) p-value (***). These findings of research study are consistent with previous studies of (Herman et al., 2018; Hogan & White, 2021; Jennett et al, 2021; Johnson & Good, 2018; Klusmann et al., 2016; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Prokopov et al., 2020; Rajendran et al., 2020; Rajendran et al., 2020; Springer and Nguyen 2019; Weißenfels, 2021).

Study Recommendations

This research study revealed that employees burnout has positive impact organizational performance however the perceived leadership support shaping the magnitude of relationship. Considering this, it is suggested that organization may develop and implement a mechanism to measure leadership support interventions over period of time that includes but not limited to training in supportive communication, recognition programs.

Further, suggest that organization must track long-term changes in burnout and its impact on organizational performance. This may helpful to identify sustainable approaches toward leadership support. It is recommended to conduct a research study to investigate the virtual work arrangements and burnout and whether perceived leadership support differs in virtual work environment in contrast to in-person settings. Also recommend further research study to examine the influence of cultural and demographic variables the perception of leadership support and burnout.

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