

# **FEMALE ACADEMICIANS ARE BURNOUT IN PAKISTAN UNIVERSITIES?**

**Faisal Khan<sup>1</sup>, Qaiser Khan<sup>2</sup> & Arab Naz<sup>3</sup>**

*<sup>1</sup>Department of Management Sciences, University of Swabi, KP Pakistan*

*<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Management, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Skudai, Johor, Malaysia,*

*<sup>3</sup>University of Malakand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan*

## **ABSTRACT**

*Burnout is the chronic perception of the academicians to cope the demands in the jobs. Burnout is a complex syndrome, which originated by physiological, behavioral, cognitive and situational pressures of more personal and stress factors. The study is an attempt to determine burnout in female academician and examine their relationship with organizational demands like workload. This study collected data from the survey questionnaire from 299 female respondents in universities. Burnout has been examined on Oldenberg Burnout Inventory (OLBI). The results of the study found that married female academicians have high levels of burnout and also significant relationships were found between the workload with emotional exhaustion and disengagement among the female academicians. The current study provides the practical implications and recommendations for future research.*

**Keywords:** *Emotional Exhaustion, Disengagement, Female Academicians, Oldenburg Burnout Inventory*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Burnout is a dramatic phenomena in education., while education is considered as one of the development process of a nation. Teaching places radical changes occur in the educational system, which increases the level of stress rather than decreases the level of burnout and turnover. Therefore, teaching profession was not exempted from burnout and considered is one of the major problems among the academicians within the institution. Furthermore, in teaching profession burnout occurs in academicians due to student's negative attitude and learning, where the interest of academicians decreases and affect their health, happiness and social interaction with students and colleagues. Similarly, Capel (1991), that "negative reactions and attitudes toward the academician in particular and the learning situation in general. Negative reactions are connected with reduced quality in teaching, less flexibility to accept various student needs, and poor academician-student interactions".

Besides these, other symptoms of the academician burnout are lack of interest in the teaching profession, communication and delivering lessons, turnover, absenteeism, and low productivity of both academicians and students (Dworkin, 1985; Leithwood, Menzies, Jantzi & Leithwood, 1999). In other side, Khan, Yusoff and Khan (2014) also

examined that as demands increase and lack of resources in the working place of rapid change in environment, it increases the level of burnout. Burnout is a complex condition, it can be originated by physiological, behavioral, cognitive and situational pressures of more personal and stress factors. Burnout in academicians has considered one of the stressful professions in life. Burnout is the results of chronic perception which is unable to cope with the job demands. Therefore, from these studies, it was extracted that academician burnout is the negative effect on the workplace, motivation and increases turnover, where this stress turns to psychological, physiological and behavioral changes. Several numbers of studies has been done on the academician burnout in different countries (Mukundan & Ahour, 2011), and reported that burnout is a social problem and need a conceptual model.

Burnout is related to physical and mental symptoms. It is related to emotional instability of high work place demands and having insufficient resources. Burnout is the extension of strain which has been linked to chronic, job stressors. Job burnout is at a higher level in different working environments, which resulted in decreases in self-esteem, job performance, job satisfaction and the general tendency of employees to opt for turnover (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001; Schwab, Maslach & Jackson, 1993). From early studies, burnout was conceptualized as the multi-component (emotional exhaustions, depersonalization and personal accomplishment) construct. Thus, burnout is subjected "as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with people in some capacity" (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter., 1996) p.4. Maslach's (1999) defined that burnout as "an emotional state in which the worker loses his beliefs and positive feelings (optimism), his sympathy and his respect for the clientele. This moral exhaustion is often accompanied by physical exhaustion, illness or disorders evolving in psychosomatic mode" (p. 212).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Burnout term is used as a symbolic representation of the "smothering of a fire or the extinguishing of a candle" (Khan, Yusoff, 2014; Schaufeli, Leiter & Maslach, 2009). Most cited works that investigated burnout in the last four decades include Freudenberger (1974), Maslach (1981), Bekker, Croon and Bressers (2005) and Schaufeli, Leiter and Maslach (2009). Introduced by American researchers, the recent history of the concept of burnout reveals that it was not an aberrant response of some people, but an agreed upon initiative in mid-1970s in the United States (Freudenberger, 1974; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter., 2001)(Yusoff & Khan, 2013). Freudenberger (1974) defined burnout as "to fail, to wear out or become exhausted by excessive demands on energy, strength or resources" p. 159. Freudenberger and Richelson identified burnout as "state of fatigue or frustration

brought about by devotion to a cause, way of life, or relationship that failed to produce the expected reward” p. 666 (Tsigilis, Koustelios & Togia, 2004).

Emotional Exhaustion is the exploratory factor of burnout. It refers to the feelings of over stress on the academicians in the daily routine life during the job. Emotional exhaustion has been measured on the bases of lack of enthusiasm and the sense of emotional draining from other colleagues during the job (Khan. et al., 2014). In other words, the researcher defined the energy depletion or the draining of emotional resources. Secondly, disengagement which defined the negative attitude towards the colleague and clients (Khan, Rasli, Khan, Yasir & Malik, 2014). Few studies reported that the disengagement is the outcome of emotional exhaustion while it is considered one of the important factors of burnout (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001b; Khan et al., 2014). It is also defined as the development of negative, cynical attitudes towards the clients or colleagues in the work. Stress increases burnout, but stress is not the main cause of burnout (Burisch, 2006). Initially, teaching profession was categorized among the “low stress occupation”(Fisher, 1994) having less workload and frequent opportunities (Gillespie, Walsh, Winefield, Dua & Stough., 2001).

The people thought that university teaching has work freedom, flexible working hours and less workload. However, with the emergence of new political and socioeconomic trends, the educational institutions have also changed and teaching is now considered as a tough profession (Winefield et al., 2003). It has been observed in the recent two decades that, such advantages no more exist. Therefore, in countries like United States of America, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand a significant rise in occupational stress among the teaching community has been observed (Fevre, Matheny, & Kolt, 2003). Similarly, Bekker et al., (2005) and Lackritz (2004) studied nursing and university academician in the Netherlands and found that emotional exhaustion and sickness absence were more female nurses. The non-work attitude was also positively related to sickness absence while age was negatively correlated to emotional exhaustion.

Apart from other variables, the demographic variables, such as age, gender, marital status, education and employment status effect academicians. Thus, Russell *et, al.*, (1987) prove in their study that demographic variables have effects on academicians burnout. Similarly, in turkey the authors Kirilmaz, Clelen and Sarp (2003) reported the level of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization with demographic variables. Evers, found that age has a significant relationship with academician burnout and some of the other research found an insignificant relationship like Anderson and Iwanicki, (1984), Jackson, Schwab and Schuler, (1986). Evers, Tomic and Brouwer, (2004) studied in Hong Hang

and reported the burnout level in academicians youngest were significantly burnout as compare to older academicians.

Tracy (2000) examined that as "a general wearing out or alienation from the pressures of work" (p. 6). The author Understanding burnout to be personal and private is problematic when it functions to disregard the ways burnout is largely an organizational issue caused by long hours, little down time, and continual peer, customer, and superior surveillance. In Chinese Secondary school academicians reported a significant relationship between the burnout and gender (Luk, Chan, Cheong & Ko, 2010).

### **Research Objectives**

On the bases of aforementioned discussions the following research objective was formulated.

- To determine the emotional exhaustion level among female academicians.
- To examine the disengagement level among female academicians.
- To determine the workload level among female academicians.
- To investigate the relationship between workload with emotional exhaustion and disengagement among female academicians.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The proposed study was conducted in the female academicians at the universities in Pakistan. A questionnaire was distributed in 299 female academicians of various departments, including Biological Sciences, Pharmacy, Psychology, Social Science and some other departments of the universities in Islamabad Pakistan, where 224 were returned and response rate was 75%. The filled questionnaire was analyzed, where 65.25% of the population were married and 34.75% were unmarried. The proposed study was used descriptive method for data analysis. Preparation of data in an understandable form is an important step in the data analysis process.

For data analysis the two important steps were must conduct like entering and coding of data in specific software. During entry of data, special care is taken on the reverse items. In coding of data, every variable were defined parameters of name, type, value that as 1 for male and 2 for females. An analysis was carried through Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 21. The completeness, consistency and eligibility of the data were also checked and then the data analysis was carried out.

### **Insturments**

Standardized questionnaire was adapted from the relevant literature for attempting the data collected regarding study variables like workload, emotional exhaustion and

disengagement. The study uses five 5 Likert scale, which is used more acceptable scale in the social sciences. Questionnaire consists of two sections, Section A, consist of demographic like age, gender, qualification, experience and marital status and section B, consist of workload and Burnout scale called Oldenberg Burnout Inventory (OLDI). Workload measured with the help of dimensions like overload demands and number of working hours. The workload is measured through 12 items including five items adapted from Crespo and Bertrand (2013), three items of Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) and four items of Fimian and Fastenau (1990) with reliability values of 0.67, 0.81 and 0.75 respectively.

Burnout will be measured by the two factors, including emotional exhaustion and disengagement. The researcher will employ OLBI, which is an alternative inventory to MBI (Demerouti., Mostert., & Bakker., 2010). OLBI consists of sixteen items and having some negative and positive questions, in which eight items are of emotional exhaustion (Refer Appendix "B" items 45-52) and eight items are of disengagement (Refer Annex "B" items 52-60). The reliability values reported are 0.82 and 0.83 of Cronbach's alpha (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001a; Demerouti., Bakker., Vardakou., & Kantas., 2003). Bakker *et al.*, (2004) reported reliability of 0.75 and 0.81 Cronbach's alpha.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1 provides the personal information about female academicians in Islamabad universities in Pakistan. A Table consists of informations about age, experience and education. A total of 299 questionnaires was distributed where the 224 was used for the final data analysis. Furthermore, table explained that married academicians were more than unmarried, because as an evidence of the study in Pakistan unmarried female academicians have more problems in performing their jobs in each and every working environment. Therefore, the married females were 56.63 percent and unmarried were 34.38 percent of universities in Islamabad.

Moreover, Table also provides females academicians were mostly in the age of 30 to 35, because in this age, most of the academicians were busy in establishing their families and still young, but in the meanwhile they have also responsibility of work the demands of the job to improve their professional skills and knowledge (Khan, Rasli, Khan, et al., 2014). The study also provides the details that the number of education level is also low due to the stress and pressures on them from the workplace.

Table 1 Respondents Characteristics in Banking Sector

Characteristics	Respondents (n)	%age
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	147	65.63
Unmarried	77	34.38
<b>Age</b>		
Above 35	46	20.53
31-35	123	54.91
Less than 30	65	29.01
<b>Experience</b>		
Less than 5 years	42	18.75
From 5 to 7	145	64.73
More than 10	37	16.51
<b>Qualification</b>		
Bachalors	32	14.29
Masters	164	73.21
MS	28	12.50

Table 2, discusses the means, standard deviations, Minimum and Maximum of the two burnout dimensions and organizational factors. The Table shows the three different scores such as, emotional exhaustion, disengagement and workload scores. The level of emotional exhaustion score changed from 1 to 4 and having mean and standard deviation are 11.3 and 7.23, disengagement level from 2 to 5, having the means and standard deviation are 9.76 and 5.45, while workload level is from 1.00 to 5.00 and mean of 10.4 with standard deviation is 6.42.

Table 2 Descriptive Analysis

Subscales	Marital Status	Number of Respondents	Means	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Workload	Married	147	13.4	6.42	1.00	5.00
	Unmarried	77	12.2	5.34		
Emotional Exhaustion	Married	147	11.3	7.23	1.00	4.00
	Unmarried	77	10.8	6.77		
Disnegagement	Married	147	9.76	5.45	2.00	5.00
	Unmarried	77	8.12	4.99		

Table 2, also shows the results of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), which examined the level of significant difference between the emotional exhaustion, disenagagment and workload among the female academicians. In addition, Table also explained the

comparison between the married and unmarried female academicians. Therefore, as an evidence from Pakistan universities, there is a high level of workload, emotional exhaustion and disengagement has been found in married academicians having standard deviation is 6.42, 7.23 and 5.45.

Table 3, shows the Correlation for workload and burnout dimensions. The analysis declared that there is positive relationship between workload and burnout dimension, especially, emotional exhaustion and disengagement. Workload shows a strong relationship with emotional exhaustion at 0.643, while having  $r$  value between disengagement and workload is 0.567, which is also positively significant. In addition, the results also show that the level of emotional exhaustion is high in female faculty member as compared to disengagement.

Table 3: Correlation between Variables among Female Academicians

Dimensions	Workload	Emotional Exhaustion	Disengagement
Workload	1		
Emotional Exhaustion	.643***	1	
Disengagement	.567***	.675***	1

\*\*\*Significant value is .001

## DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The current Study use female academicians in the literature of job burnout. Several studies were conducted in both academicians in the different services sectors such as educations, health, police etc., but few studies were conducted in female academicians. Therefore, the main objectives of the research study were to examine the effect of burnout on the female academicians in universities of Islamabad Pakistan. Several studies reported in different countries like, Malaysia and Canada etc that high level of burnout, especially emotional exhaustion was found in females (Khan et al., 2014). Therefore, the researcher feels that less attention has been given to study on female burnout in Pakistan, this regards the researcher took the sample from female academicians in Pakistan universities and concentrate on those initial issues which affect the female job in Pakistan. Similarly, Diener (2009) stated that "life satisfaction is an overall assessment of feelings and attitudes about one's life at a particular point in time ranging from negative to positive. It is one of the three major indicators of well-being: life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect".

Furthermore, the study also identified the positive relationship between the demand like workload on the female academicians in Pakistan universities. As an evidence of the present study, it is concluded that a positive relationship exists among the workload in

female burnout. Moreover, as the level of workload has increased the level of emotional exhaustion and disengagement is increasing among the academicians (Khan, Rasli, Khan, et al., 2014; Mukundan & Khandehroo, 2010). In contrary, the study was conducted in Malaysia and they found that Workload has no significant effect on the burnout dimensions among female teachers in low level (Mukundan & Ahour, 2011).

Furthermore, this research study is important for female academicians, to know the antecedents and precedents of burnout. The academicians manage the level of stress and burnout before affecting their performance, health and well being in the practical life. From previous discussion, it is clear that burnout among female academicians is considered is a debatable topic in the field of research. Therefore, the study also recommended for administration and policy makers give attention and priority to female burnout in Pakistan universities. On the same way, Malsach *et al*, (1996), also reported that "the teaching profession has been subject to increased pressure by society to correct social problems (e.g., drugs, alcohol and sexual abuse), educate students in academic and skill areas, provide enrichment activities, meet the individual needs of the students with a wide range of abilities, and encourage moral and ethical development" (p. 205).

The study recommended the policy makers of an organization that Stress Management Training is needed for the employees to manage or control their work performance and stress levels, which lead to burnout from the organization and colleagues. The study also recommended to the administration for the interventions regarding both physical and psychological stress.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study determines the relationship between workload, emotional exhaustion and disengagement in the universities of Islamabad Pakistan. The variables of the research study were chosen due to vital significant role in the in the female academicians working life and changes in the rules of promotions, productivity evaluation in Higher Education Commission of Pakistan. The study used the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLDI) for identifying the level of burnout and relationship with organizational demand like workload among female academicians. Therefore, the study concluded that there is a high level of burnout exist in married female academicians and also find a positive relationship between the organizational demand like workload and burnout dimensions especially emotional exhaustion and disengagement among female academicians in universities of Islamabad Pakistan. The study also presents study both faces of females burnout among different countries. Furthermore, it presents the study different aspects or factors affecting academicians from burnout in the universities in different countries and



especially in Pakistan. The study also presents the implications for both the individual, administration and policy level.

## References

- Anderson, M. B. G., & Iwanicki, E. F. (1984). Teacher Motivation and its Relationship to Burnout. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 20(2), 109-132.
- Bakker, Demerouti, E., & Verbeke., W. (2004). Using the job demands-resources model to predict burnout and performance. *Human Resource Management*, 43(1), 83-104.
- Bekker, M. H. J., Croon, M. A., & Bressers, B. (2005). Childcare involvement, job characteristics, gender and work attitudes as predictors of emotional exhaustion and sickness absence. *Work & Stress*, 19(3), 221-237.
- Burisch, M. (2006). *Das Burnout-Syndrom*: Springer.
- Capel, S. A. (1991). A longitudinal study of burnout in teachers. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 61(1), 36-45.
- Crespo, M., & Bertrand, D. (2013). Faculty Workload in a Research Intensive University: A Case Study: CIRANO.
- Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2001a). The Job Demand - Resource Model of Burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 499-512.
- Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2001b). The Job Demands-Resources Model of Burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 499-512.
- Demerouti., E., Bakker., A. B., Vardakou., I., & Kantas., A. (2003). The convergent validity of two burnout instruments: A multitrait-multimethod analysis. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 19, 12-23.
- Demerouti., E., Mostert., K., & Bakker., A. B. (2010). Burnout and work engagement: A thorough investigation of the independency of both constructs. *Journal occupational health Psychology*, 15(3), 209-222.
- Diener, E. (2009). Subjective well-being *The science of well-being* (pp. 11-58): Springer.
- Dworkin, A. G. (1985). When teachers give up: Teacher burnout, teacher turnover and their impact on children (Vol. null).
- Evers, W. J., Tomic, W., & Brouwers, A. (2004). Burnout among Teachers Students' and Teachers' Perceptions Compared. *School Psychology International*, 25(2), 131-148.
- Fevre, M. L., Matheny, J., & Kolt, G. S. (2003). Eustress, Distress and interpretation in occupational Stress. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 18(7), 726-744.
- Fimian, M. J., & Fastenau, P. S. (1990). The validity and reliability of the Teacher Stress Inventory: A re-analysis of aggregate data. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 11(2), 151-157.

- Fisher. (1994). Stress in academic life: The mental assembly line. Guildford, England: Society for Research into Higher Education; Maidenhead, BRK, England: *Open University Press*.
- Freudenberger. (1974). Staff burnout. *Journal of Social Issues*, 30, 159-165.
- Freudenberger., H. J., & Richelson., G. (1980). Burn-out: the high cost of high achievement: Anchor Press.
- Gillespie., N. A., Walsh., M., Winefield., A. H., Dua., J., & Stough., C. (2001). Occupational stress in universities: Staff perceptions of the causes, consequences and moderators of stress. [doi: 10.1080/02678370117944]. *Work & Stress*, 15(1), 53-72.
- Jackson, Schwab., R. L., & Schuler., R. S. (1986). Toward an understanding of the burnout phenomenon. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71(4), 630-640.
- Khan, F., Rasli, A. M., Khan, S., Yasir, M., & Malik, M. F. (2014). Job burnout and professional development among universities academicians. *Science International Lahore*, 26(4), 1693-1696.
- Khan, F., Rasli, A. M., Yusoff, R. M., Faizan Malik, M., Muddassar Khan, M., & Khan, Q. (2014). Effect of Emotional Exhaustion on Organizational Commitment among Academicains. *Science International*, 26(5).
- Khan, F., Yusoff, R. M., & Khan, A. (2014). Job Demands, Burnout and Resources in Teaching a Conceptual Review. *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 30(1), 20-28.
- Khan., F., Rasli, A. B. M., Yusoff, R. M., Malik, M. F., Khan, M. M., & Khan, Q. (2014). Effect of Emotional Exhaustion on Organizational Commitment among Academicains. *Science International Lahore*, 26(5), 2433-2437.
- Kırılmaz, A. Y., Çelen, Ü., & Sarp, N. (2003). İlköğretimde Çalışan bir Öğretmen Grubunda "Tükenmişlik Durumu" Arastırması. *İlköğretim Online*, 2(1).
- Lackritz, J. R. (2004). Exploring burnout among university faculty: incidence, performance, and demographic issues. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20(7), 713-729.
- Leithwood, K. A., Menzies, T., Jantzi, D., & Leithwood, J. (1999). 4. Teacher Burnout: A Critical Challenge for Leaders. Understanding and preventing teacher burnout: A sourcebook of international research and practice, 85.
- Luk, A. L., Chan, B. P., Cheong, S. W., & Ko, S. K. (2010). An exploration of the burnout situation on teachers in two schools in Macau. *Social indicators research*, 95(3), 489-502.
- Maslach, & Jackson., S. E. (1981). The measurement of experienced burnout. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 2(2), 99-113.
- Maslach, C. (1999). Progress in Understanding Teacher Burnout. *Understanding and preventing teacher burnout: A sourcebook of international research and practice*, 211.
- Maslach., Jackson., S. E., & Leiter., M. P. (1996). *Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual* (Third ed.): Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

- Maslach., Schaufeli., W. B., & Leiter., M. P. (2001). Job Burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 397-422.
- Mukundan, J., & Ahour, T. (2011). Burnout among female teachers in Malaysia. *Journal of International Education Research (JIER)*, 7(3), 25-38.
- Mukundan, J., & Khandehroo, K. (2010). Burnout among English language teachers in Malaysia. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research (CIER)*, 3(1), 71-76.
- Russell., D., Altmaier., E., & Van., V. D. (1987). Job-related stress, social support, and burnout among classroom teachers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 72(2), 269-274.
- Schaufeli., Leiter., M. P., & Maslach., C. (2009). "Burnout: 35 years of research and practice". *Career Development International*, 14(3), 204-220.
- Schwab, Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1993). Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual.
- Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2011). Teacher job satisfaction and motivation to leave the teaching profession: Relations with school context, feeling of belonging, and emotional exhaustion. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(6), 1029-1038.
- Tsigilis, N., Koustelios, A., & Togia, A. (2004). Multivariate relationship and discriminant validity between job satisfaction and burnout. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 19(7), 666 - 675.
- Winefield, Gillespie, N., Stough, C., Dua, J., Hapuarachchi, J., & Boyd, C. (2003). Occupational Stress in Australian University Staff: Results From a National Survey. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 10(1), 51-63.
- Yusoff, R. M., & Khan, F. (2013). Stress and Burnout in the Higher Education Sector in Pakistan: A Systematic Review of Literature. *Research Journal of Recent Sciences*, 2(11), 90-98.