

## Original Research Article

# Job burnout in women and the need to use psychological services and counselling in workplaces

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### ABSTRACT

**Aims:** According to various reports, there are significant inequalities between men and women in terms of the incidence of occupational complications, including job burnout, and women suffer from this complication **more** than men.

**Study design:** Comprehensive reviews in this field present the conflict between work and family roles as a prominent factor in creating more burnout problems in working women.

**Place and Duration of Study:** The present study was a descriptive research by reviewing documents and library resources.

**Methodology:** The purpose of this stage was to comprehensively review the studies related to job burnout as well as a deeper and broader understanding of the role of organizational psychology in reducing job burnout among employees.

**Results:** Comprehensive reviews in this field present the conflict between work and family roles as a prominent factor in creating more burnout problems in working women. Considering the physical, psychological and professional consequences of job burnout in women, this study is trying to provide a comprehensive review and review of existing studies in the field of problems caused by job burnout in employees and also the role of psychological methods in work issues and problems.

**Conclusion:** to explain the importance of using psychological services and consultations, including online consultations, in reducing the burnout of women in service organizations.

*Keywords: Women, Job Burnout, Mental Health, Organizational Psychology, Career Counseling*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of rapid economic development, the quality of the workforce has attracted widespread attention, and in this regard, health is an important factor (Chu, 2021). According to various studies, there have been significant inequalities between men and women in terms of the incidence of psychological distress, and women suffer from psychological diseases to **more** than men (Bilodeau et al., 2020). According to researchers, the higher proportion of psychological problems among women is due to their greater exposure to stressors and their access to fewer resources than men (Milner et al., 2019; Simon, 2014). Also, comprehensive reviews in this field present the conflict between work and family roles

as a prominent factor in creating more psychological problems in working women (Rosenfield and Mouzon, 2013; Simon, 2014).

In addition to the mentioned cases, burnout is one of the most important factors that **leads** to the formation of more physical and psychological problems in working women. According to reports, although burnout is experienced by all genders and countries, however, women are more affected.

The most common definition of burnout is provided by Maslach et al. (2001), who described this condition as a combination of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal success. This syndrome is more common among employees working in service organizations and organizations that do "people work". Emotional exhaustion is the main element of this syndrome, which ultimately leads to an increase in symptoms of anxiety, depression, sleep disorders, physical symptoms, and impaired health behaviors.

According to some researchers such as Shirom et al. (1997) and Melamed et al. (1999), the unique content of job burnout is the chronic depletion of a person's energy resources and brings physical and mental fatigue in a person. From this point of view, burnout is conceptually similar to chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) and "vital fatigue" (VE), whose main characteristic is unusual fatigue and demoralization (Grossi et al., 2001).

According to recent research conducted by 360Learning, job burnout is the first reason that causes women to leave their jobs or intend to leave their jobs. In fact, 25% of women have left their current job or intend to leave their job due to job burnout, while this figure is somewhat lower for men and is equal to 21%.

In addition to the 360Learning survey, McKinsey's recent Women in the Workplace report found that 42% of women experience burnout compared to 35% of men. Another survey by LinkedIn shows the same trend, with 74% of women saying they experience work-related stress, compared to 61% of men. This statistic shows that job burnout is considered one of the key factors for women to resign and leave their jobs. That is why organizations should take an important step and devise necessary measures to help prevent job burnout in women (Campbell, 2022).

Among the reasons that cause women to experience burnout more, we can mention things such as long working hours. According to various reports, in recent years, the continuous increase in the working hours of employees **had** a direct impact on the health level of employees and has also harmed economic development and social stability (Chu, 2021).

In addition, women do more additional work outside of their official roles, including managing household affairs and raising children. Also, according to McKinsey's 2021 report, women are promoted to management positions at much lower rates than men, leaving companies unable to build a foundation for sustainable advancement at higher levels. In fact, for every 100 men hired and promoted to manager, only 72 women are promoted. Furthermore, women hold only 36% of management positions while men hold 62% of management positions. All these factors, i.e. longer working hours, taking on responsibilities related to household management, along with the fact that women continue to be promoted to managers at much lower rates than men, increase the likelihood of burnout in women (Campbell, 2022).

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It is worth mentioning that there is increasing evidence of the negative impact of job burnout on the physical and mental health of employees. At the individual level, burnout can cause serious problems such as headaches, insomnia, reduced work efficiency, impaired concentration, memory impairment, weak immune system, etc. In addition, mental health symptoms that are usually caused by job burnout have been presented by many researchers, an example of which is anxiety, depression and feelings of inferiority in the individual, which can lead to the low quality of the employee's performance in the daily work environment and Disruption in family and marital relationships as well as a decrease in the feeling of happiness in employees. At the organizational level, the symptoms of job burnout of talented people can lead to a general deterioration of organizational morale and a decrease in the efficiency of organizational operations (Zhang et al., 2020).

In this regard, some studies have investigated the relationship between job burnout and immune system performance and showed that with the increase of job burnout, the body's immune system performance will face significant disturbances (Bargellini et al., 2000; Nakamura et al., 1999). So'derfelt (1997) also reported a negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and blood immunoglobulins.

Considering the physical and psychological problems caused by burnout in employees, especially women, it is necessary that all organizations, especially service organizations whose employees face more burnout than other organizations, take important measures in order to face this job problem.

Among these measures, we can mention the use of career counseling and online psychology in the organization. It should be noted that the responsibilities of an organizational psychologist include providing psychological interventions to businesses, such as workplace counseling, to address psychological problems (Schultz et al., 2020). Basically, through workplace counseling, an organizational psychology specialist helps employees to perform optimally at work. From the point of view of organizational psychology, workplace counseling focuses on facilitating the personal development of employees as well as addressing stress-related problems (Moralo and Graupner, 2022). From this point of view, this study is trying to show the importance of using psychological counseling in reducing the burnout of women in Explain service organizations.

In 2018, researchers at the University of Montreal followed a four-year study of 2,026 employees (about half of whom were women) from 63 workplaces. The researchers concluded that there are differences between women and men in terms of the extent to which they experience burnout, because from the beginning, employees are exposed to different working conditions depending on their gender.

According to the researches based on personal resource for coping with the negative relationship between burnout and intrinsic job satisfaction in service employees, it was reported at high levels of physical fatigue, employees with high scores on harmonious passion at work presented higher levels of intrinsic satisfaction compared with employees with low passion at work (Benitez et al., 2023).

Based on the other research which was done about burnout and workplace incivility among emergency Medical services practitioners, burnout has detrimental consequences for health care organizations, clinicians, and the quality of care that patients receive (Lu et al., 2023)

recently Harris Poll also found that while roughly the same percentage of women and men reported feeling burned out in their work lives, 35 percent of women surveyed. they felt burned out at home as well. This statistic in men included only 25%. Also, 48% of the surveyed women stated that their job burnout is so intense that it keeps them awake at night. In this regard, according to experts, mixing work life and personal life can cause more harm to women. Because women are often more involved in child care and housework than men and spend roughly three times as many hours per week on housework, yet organizational expectations for women to keep up with work are similar to male employees and this will eventually lead more burnout in women. Considering this occupational complication in women as well as the physical, mental and professional consequences that burnout brings

for women, explaining the importance of using psychology and career counseling to female employees can be very important.

## **2. MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The present study was a descriptive research by reviewing documents and library resources. In this study, an attempt was made to conduct a comprehensive and in-depth review using scientific databases. The purpose of this stage was to comprehensively review the studies related to job burnout as well as a deeper and broader understanding of the role of organizational psychology in reducing job burnout among employees. According to the aforementioned, reviewing Iranian and English articles by searching in English language databases such as Researchgate, Springer, etc. , mental health, organizational psychology, occupational psychology, and in the Farsi language databases of the country's publications information bank, the academic Jihad Scientific Information Center database, the Noor specialized journals database, the Iran Information Science and Technology Research Institute, IranPsych, with the keywords job burnout, mental health, organizational psychology, Career counseling was done.

According to the conducted studies, the articles related to empirical foundations were divided into two sections: the role of job burnout on mental health and the role of psychology and job counseling on job burnout.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1 Theoretical Foundations**

In this section, an attempt is made to provide a complete review of the basics of job burnout and organizational psychology, which will be discussed in detail below:

#### **3.1.1 Burnout**

Burnout, as a common occupational phenomenon, is a syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). Long-term work stress can reduce people's job satisfaction and lead to chronic emotional distress, which turns into burnout syndrome. It is worth noting that burnout can occur in different industries and lead to immeasurable consequences (Peterson et al., 2019; Rodrigues et al., 2018; Smetackova et al., 2019).

In other words, burnout as a psychological syndrome includes chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors and is related to people's experiences at work as well as their reactions and responses to tasks, organizations, colleagues, customers and themselves (Creed et al., 2014). Pine believes that burnout is an amalgamation of physical and mental fatigue caused by long-term emotional deprivation. Shirom and Malamed also define job burnout as a kind of mental state caused by exhaustion of physical, emotional and cognitive energy. Job burnout, which is also referred to as "job killer", threatens the health of the individual, hinders the performance of the organization, and may even cause serious social problems (Zhang et al., 2020).

Why are women exposed to burnout more than men?

There are a number of factors that seem to increase the risk of burnout in women. In the following, some factors that lead to more burnout of women compared to men are discussed:

#### *Household chores*

Taking care of children and managing household **worksare** the factors that a major share of which is the responsibility of women, and this is one of the main factors in increasing job burnout in women. In this regard, University College London research (as reported in the independent) shows that women spend five times more than men and spend at least 20 hours a week on household chores and household management (Bowling, 2022).

#### *Mental load*

In addition to carrying out a disproportionate share of household duties, women also carry a greater "mental load". This mental load is an invisible category that is very involved in

managing family affairs. This concept refers to the mental demands and the need for constant awareness and planning for practical tasks such as medical appointments, managing children's school projects and affairs, organizing shopping lists and other family and household obligations. In other words, the duty of many women is to continuously plan the management of the house. This mental burden can be overwhelming and, despite depleting women's time and energy, it is rarely acknowledged (Bowling, 2022).

#### *Effects of burnout*

Among the effects of job burnout, we can mention things such as frequent job changes, loss of quality of work, absenteeism, as well as numerous psychological effects on the psyche of employees (Arsin et al., 2015).

According to several researchers, including Brandstätter et al. (2016) and Nielsen et al. (2016), job burnout can significantly affect people's mental health. Among the signs of psychological problems resulting from job burnout, we can mention irritability, depression, mental imbalance, lack of compassion towards those around you, suspicion towards everyone, mental imbalance and increased despair. Among the behavioral signs, we can mention things such as lack of efficiency at work, lack of job satisfaction, resigning from the job and requesting early retirement, as well as frequent absences from work.

Among the physical effects of job burnout, there are things like chronic headaches, sleep disorders, weight loss, stomach and digestive disorders, as well as long-term colds (Elahi and Mushtaq, 2012).

### **3.2 Organizational psychology History of development of organizational psychology**

The emergence of organizational psychology can be related to the early 20th century. During this period, some influential psychologists, such as James Cattle (1860-1944) at Columbia, Hugo Münsterberg (1863-1916) at Harvard, Walter Dill Scott (1869-1955) at Northwestern, Robert Yerkes (1885-1956) and Walter Bingham (1880-1952) at Dartmouth, and Lillian Gilberth (1872-1878) at Purdue studied what is now classified as organizational psychology. Cattle, Münsterberg and Scott were students of Wilhelm Wundt, the father of experimental psychology. Some of these researchers were working in the field of organizational psychology before World War I. Cattle's contribution to organizational psychology is largely reflected in the founding of a psychology consulting firm that is still operating today as The Psychology Company. In 1913, Münsterberg published *Psychology and Industrial Efficiency*, which covered topics such as employee selection, employee training, and effective advertising. Scott was one of the first psychologists to apply psychology to advertising, management, and personnel selection. In 1903, Scott published two books: *The Theory of Advertising* and *The Psychology of Advertising*. These books are the first books that describe the use of psychology in the world of organizations (Katzel and Austin, 1992).

#### Organizational psychology and its subfields

Since 1990, employee health has become a field of study in industrial and organizational psychology. Organizational psychology is the study of how people behave in work environments. Organizational psychology is closely related to personnel psychology and is related to the study of work at the organizational level to understand how employees function in an organization and how the organization functions as a whole (Coetzee and Schreuder, 2010).

According to the researchers, industrial and organizational psychologists work in commercial or industrial environments with the overall goal of directly benefiting from economic wellbeing, and their most important areas of expertise can be presented as follows:

- Recruitment and selection
- Training, assessment and review
- Professional guidance and career development

- industrial relationships
- Occupational health and safety
- Planning technological and organizational changes
- organizational behavior
- Ergonomics
- Consumer behavior • Job redesign • Marketing.

Personnel psychology is considered as one of the oldest and most traditional fields of organizational psychology (Muchinsky et al., 2005). This field is related to the scientific study of individual differences in work environments and includes activities such as job analysis, psychological assessment, selection and appointment of employees; employee compensation; training and development of employees; supporting career development; employee performance evaluation; attracting and retaining rare and critical talents; and encouraging compliance with employment laws. Personnel psychology, as a subfield of industrial and organizational psychology, shows the overlap between psychology and human resource management (Coetzee and Schreuder, 2010).

Organizational psychology focuses on the impact that organizations have on the attitudes and behavior of their employees. While personnel psychology deals more with individual level issues, organizational psychology aims to study work at the organizational level in order to understand how employees function in an organization and how the organization functions as a whole. Typical activities of organizational psychology include: promoting job satisfaction, group dynamics and teamwork, decision making, interpersonal conflict, motivation, power, communication, organizational change, organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment and employee participation, quality of work life, employee health and organization, leadership development and training, and organizational design, structure and development (Bergh, 2009; Coetzee and Schreuder, 2010).

Occupational psychology deals with the interaction between people and environments and tries to describe the nature of patterns of situations and experiences resulting from it throughout a person's life (Arnold and Randall, 2010). This sub-discipline focuses on providing models and explanations for organizational job-related activities such as:

- The origin and measurement of individual talents
- Character
- Interests and career orientations
- Ability to hire employees
- Job placement and mobility
- Career welfare experiences
- Choosing a job
- Work/family issues
- Retirement planning.

The positive psychology paradigm also focuses on maintaining the health and resilience of employees against hardships. Health-promoting factors that are encouraged include: internal locus of control, positive emotions, hope, optimism, self-efficacy, personal hardiness, and a sense of coherence (Bergh, 2009). In this paradigm, the factors related to the studied stress are organizational structure and job design, such as shift work, or specific task requirements and sources of organizational stress that may affect performance, commitment and attitudinal variables, harassment, work-family pressures. (Schreuder and Coetzee, 2010)

### **3.3 Empirical foundations Studies conducted in the field of the role of job burnout on mental health**

Wu (2020) in a study aimed at investigating the relationship between job burnout and mental health of teachers under work stress, showed that the work stress of teachers has a positive correlation with job burnout and mental health.

Salvagioni et al. (2017) in a study aimed at the physical, psychological and occupational consequences of burnout and through a systematic review of prospective studies, the purpose of their study was to summarize the evidence of the physical, psychological and occupational consequences of burnout. In this review article, among the 993 articles that were initially identified, 61 articles met the inclusion criteria, and finally 36 articles were analyzed due to having three criteria that should be met in prospective studies. Based on the results of this study, the physical consequences of job burnout were as follows:

High blood cholesterol, type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, hospitalization for cardiovascular disorders, musculoskeletal pain, long-term fatigue, headaches, digestive problems, breathing problems, severe injuries and even death.

The psychological effects of job burnout were also classified as follows:

Insomnia, depressive symptoms, use of psychotropic and antidepressant drugs, hospitalization for mental disorders and symptoms of mental illness.

Other results of this study include job dissatisfaction and absenteeism as professional consequences of job burnout.

at the end, these researchers stated that considering the individual and social effects of job burnout, the need for preventive interventions to prevent the formation of job burnout in employees is very prominent and vital.

Lizano (2015) in a study aimed at investigating the impact of job burnout on the health and well-being of human service workers, and in a systematic review, the findings of 19 experimental studies published between 1970 and 2014 that show the relationship between job burnout and emotional, psychological, It examines, combines, physiological and behavioral among human service workers. The findings of this study point to the destructive effect of job burnout on the psychological well-being of employees. Bayani and Samiei (2014) in a study titled "Effect of occupational stress and burnout on the mental health of elementary teachers: examining a hypothetical model" and in a non-experimental research (correlation) and using a structural model, to examine the relationship between variables they paid. These researchers tested a sample of 186 elementary school teachers from Azadshahr city in Golestan province with three scales (demographic questionnaire, general health questionnaire, and Maslach job burnout questionnaire) and the results of the data test showed that job stress and job burnout In teachers, it endangers their mental health.

Mousavi et al. (2018) in a study with the aim of investigating the relationship between stress and job burnout on the mental health of sports and youth workers in Tehran province and in a descriptive-correlational study, 286 employees of sports and youth departments in Tehran province were sampled. A multi-stage cluster was selected and tested using standard questionnaires of job stress, job burnout and mental health. The results of the research indicated that there is a significant relationship between job burnout and job stress with mental health.

These researchers stated that by focusing on the factors that cause stress and burnout of employees, it is possible to create conditions where employees can continue their activities in the organization with the least stress and as a result less physical, mental and emotional exhaustion, and this leads to Mental health improves more. Shahpuri and Abedi (2017) in a study aimed at meta-analysis of the relationship between job burnout and mental health in Iran and using the meta-analysis technique, showed that there is a strong and positive correlation between job burnout and mental health damage of employees and if it increases The level of job burnout among employees, damage to the mental health of employees is likely. Tahmasabi (2020) in a study with the aim of investigating the relationship between job burnout and mental health, considering the moderating role of psychological toughness and organizational self-esteem, selected all employees working in the headquarters and

operations department of Khuzestan-Ahvaz Gas Company and through questionnaires many were tested. The results of the data analysis of this research indicated that job burnout has a negative and significant relationship with mental health. Abdi Masuleh et al. (2006) in a study titled "Investigation of the relationship between job burnout and mental health: a study of 200 nurses" and in a descriptive study, 200 nursing personnel were selected and tested by multi-stage probability sampling method. The results of this study indicated that burnout plays a significant role in reducing the level of mental health of employees.'

### **3.4 Studies conducted in the field of the role of organizational psychology on job burnout**

Luken and Sammons (2016) in a systematic review of mindfulness practice to reduce burnout and in a systematic review study, showed that there is strong evidence for the use of mindfulness practice to reduce burnout among health care professionals and teachers. These researchers stated that more research is needed to fill the gap on whether mindfulness is effective for treating burnout in occupational therapists. Gorter et al. (2001) in a study aimed at investigating the role of job counseling program on job burnout, investigated the effects of psychological methods and job counseling on job burnout among general dentists. In this study, the psychological approach included individual counseling and group meetings using cognitive and behavioral intervention techniques in a 6-month period. The results of this study indicated that psychological counseling can play a significant role in improving job burnout.

In a study with the aim of investigating the effect of psychology and Davis' career adjustment method counseling on the burnout of Behbahan Islamic Azad University employees and in a quasi-experimental study, 40 male employees of Behbahan Islamic Azad University were tested. The results of the study of these researchers indicated that the use of psychological methods and career counseling in the Davis style can play an important and significant role in reducing employee burnout. In a study aimed at investigating the effect of group counseling on reducing women's burnout, Riahinia (2013) stated that burnout is one of the most important issues related to a person's job efficiency in the workplace, which is directly related to a person's psychological and physiological health. The researcher of this study tried to investigate the problem of job burnout among women university librarians and for this purpose, among the librarians working in TarbiatMoalem University, 30 women librarians were selected as a sample and tested. The results of this researcher's study showed that the use of psychological methods and therapeutic counseling can play an important role in reducing the burnout of female employees. Bahrami and Qaltash (2015) in a study with the aim of investigating the role of psychology and career counseling on employee burnout and in a semiexperimental research, 40 employees of the education management of District 1 in 2014 were tested using the job burnout questionnaire. The results of this research showed that psychology and job counseling by Davis' adaptation method has a positive effect on reducing employee burnout. In a study aimed at investigating the role of teaching positive thinking skills on nurses' burnout and in a quasi-experimental study, 30 nurses working at Razi Psychiatric Hospital in Tehran in 2013 were selected and tested. They gave. The results of this study showed that teaching positive thinking skills reduces nurses' burnout. Therefore, the method used in the present research can be considered as a suitable method for psycho-educational and counseling and therapeutic interventions in employees.

According to the contents discussed in the theoretical foundations and research background section, job burnout is one of the problems that can bring many bad consequences for the individual in terms of physical health, mental health, and behavioral health. . This issue is more important for women, because women are often responsible for more important tasks at home in addition to their jobs, such as managing family matters, taking care of children, family management, etc. (also in a practical way and mental load) and it is necessary that these multiple responsibilities of women be considered by the organization. Because if the

organization ignores the multiple responsibilities of women and does not try to improve the quality of their working life, it will not take long for the working women in the society, especially in service organizations, to increasingly face burnout and this will ultimately have consequences. It will be unpleasant for working women. The results of the review of various studies in the theoretical foundations section as well as the background of the studies indicated that burnout can bring many problems for the individual in terms of physical and mental health as well as professional consequences, which are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1. The results of job burnout based on different studies**

<b>Physical disorders</b>	<b>mental disorders</b>	<b>professional consequences</b>
Weakening of the body's immune system, coronary heart disease, types of diabetes, high blood cholesterol, muscle pains, hospitalization due to cardiovascular disorders, excessive and long-term fatigue, chronic headaches, numerous digestive problems, as well as numerous respiratory problems.	Showing symptoms of depression, insomnia, use of psychotropic and antidepressant drugs, hospitalization for mental disorders and symptoms of mental illness.	job dissatisfaction absence from work, Hypothyroidism

Given the consequences of burnout (Table 1), and indeed, given that many women spend time balancing their personal and professional commitments, there is an urgent need to help them take care of themselves. In this regard, the role of organizational psychology becomes very important. Based on the principles of this field, an organizational psychologist should

develop and apply interventions based on the principles of psychology to address individual, group and organizational well-being. Occupational health psychology is a sub-field of psychology related to work-related well-being and focuses on the impact of occupational stressors on the mental health of employees and includes interventions designed to improve employee health (Bergh, 2021).

According to Bal et al. (2019), organizational psychologists are responsible for ensuring the well-being of employees, and this task forms the cornerstone of their profession. The organizational psychologist uses psychological models to change behavior in organizations in order to improve work (Schultz et al., 2020) and solve problems in the workplace (Jex and Britt, 2014). It should be mentioned that today with the expansion of infrastructure related to information technology, online organizational psychology has also been able to play an important role in improving problems and issues related to employees' jobs. According to prominent psychologists of the Gallup Institute, some of the methods that organizational psychologists can help organizations in preventing the formation of job burnout in women can be presented as follows:

- Psychologists can advise managers of organizations to make time for regular meetings with women in their company to help women feel that their voices are heard: According to psychologists at Gallup, employees whose managers are always willing to listen to workrelated problems, 62% are less likely to experience burnout.

- Psychologists can help managers to examine unconscious biases in the workplace and prevent female employees from reaching positions of power and superiority.

- Psychology can help the organization to create a culture that supports work-life integration and understands the situation of women due to the fact that they may have more family responsibilities than male employees.

In addition, organizational psychologists can play an important role in reducing women's burnout by providing online counseling to female employees through the following approaches.

- Encourage healthy habits, such as exercise and proper nutrition, through fun health challenges.

- Promotion of positive thinking in women.

- Teaching ways to live happily

- Helping employees balance work and personal life and managing family matters
- Inducing the important role of women in the collection in achieving customer satisfaction

- Creating relaxing spaces for employees to get rid of stress.

- Teaching meditation, yoga and other stress reduction techniques.

- Promoting the value of regular breaks.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

To explain the importance of using psychological services and consultations, including online consultations, in reducing the burnout of women in service organizations.

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