

EXAMINING IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHICS ON BURNOUT AMONGST MANAGERS IN THE PRIVATE BANKING SECTOR IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Burnout is a significant concern in the banking industry, impacting employees' well-being and job performance. This study investigates the level of burnout or emotional exhaustion among managers in the private banking sector in India, focusing on metro cities Delhi/NCR, Pune, and Hyderabad. The research aims to assess if burnout within managers varies based on their gender, marital status, and age groups. The results show that burnout levels significantly differ across age groups, with those aged above 35 experiencing the highest burnout, followed by those below 25 and then those between 25-35 years. However, burnout levels did not show significant variations based on gender or marital status. The findings suggest that HR practitioners in private banks should pay attention to the burnout levels of senior employees, especially those above 35 years, to ensure a sustainable and productive workforce.

KEYWORDS: *Burnout, Emotional Exhaustion, Private Bank, Managers.*

Introduction

The Indian economy is currently undergoing a rapid transformation, leading to substantial growth in the banking industry. Notably, since 2014-2015, there has been a significant increase in overall credit growth. This sector comprises a diverse array of financial institutions, as of September 2022 there are 12 public sector banks, 22 private sector banks, and 46 foreign banks. Additionally, there are 56 regional rural banks, 1485 urban cooperative banks, and a large number of rural cooperative banks and cooperative credit institutions (IBEF, 2023). This diverse and expanding banking ecosystem demonstrates the resilience and adaptability of the Indian financial sector in meeting the diverse needs of its population and driving economic growth. As India continues to forge ahead with its economic reforms and technological advancements, the banking industry is expected to play a pivotal role in supporting and fueling the nation's progress. Thereby underpinning India's position as a key player in the global financial arena.

With its vast scale, the banking industry offers promising employment opportunities to numerous individuals, making it an appealing prospect for recent graduates. However, the industry's rapid expansion and dynamic nature present challenges in managing human resources effectively. One major concern is employee burnout and exhaustion, necessitating a focused effort on enhancing employee wellbeing to improve long-term employee performance (Hashemnia et al., 2014).

In the context of India's burgeoning employment opportunities, employers face difficulties in addressing employee turnover (Gupta and Shaheen, 2017). This turnover is often influenced by employee exhaustion (Wright and Cropanzano, 1998; Roy and Vishwanathan, 2018), requiring careful attention to employee retention strategies and employee well-being initiatives to create a sustainable and productive workforce.

Stress is a significant concern in the banking industry, affecting both the mental and physical well-being of employees and influencing their job performance and personal health (Comish and Swindle, 1994). Daily interactions at work can become stressors, especially when employees interact with customers. It is crucial for bank employees to be mindful of how they express their emotions during

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customer interactions to prevent stress (Hashemnia et al., 2014). Job burnout, often viewed as an individual's response to emotional and interpersonal stressors within the workplace that is linked to work pressure and occupational stress (Maslach et al., 2001). Emotional exhaustion refers to a state of emotional fatigue and reduced energy (Maslach et al., 2001). Although it is also characterized by depersonalization and absence of personal achievements, authors state that usually it is emotional exhaustion that is triggered first then depersonalization and non-personal achievement (Aronsson et al., 2017). This is what makes emotional exhaustion unique measurement for burnout.

Research in India has consistently shown that banking employees, especially in the private sector, experience significant occupational stress (Toor and Kang, 2018). Excessive competitive environments in private banks can lead to exhaustion and psychological problems (Sharmila and Poornima, 2011). Private sector bank employees often experience higher stress levels due to role stressors and workload stress compared to their public sector counterparts (Rao et al., 2014) such as high targets, longer work hours, new technology, quicker transfers and so on. Gorji et al. (2012) in comparative study of bank employees in Iran also found that employee performance is more gravely hit in private sector versus public sector due to emotional exhaustion. Sahu and Yadav (2013), comparing 200 managers of private and public sector for burnout they found that private sector managers experienced higher exhaustion more so in males than the public sector. Private sector banking employees face higher stress levels compared to their public sector counterparts due to factors like high workload, role stress, long working hours, and organizational politics (Kunte et al., 2017). Managers who act as the bridge between subordinates and higher management have to learn the art of balancing their several roles, be adaptable to changing circumstances, and also be responsible for their personal performance all at the same time, therefore they are subjected to even greater stress than other cohorts. These stressors can also lead to burnout, as evident from studies linking work-family conflict and workload pressures to work exhaustion in bank employees (Khanna and Maini, 2013). However, limited evidence exists on the impact of demographics on burnout specifically for managers in the private bank sector in India.

Recent study on banking marketing executives (Singh, 2019) also provide evidence that emotional exhaustion on account of workload and dealing with customers is detrimental to their mental health wellbeing. After accounting for occupational stress researchers have found private bank employees are more involved in their jobs yet it is the public sector bank employees who are more satisfied at workplace (Akhtar and Nadir, 2016). Singh et al. (2022) recently focused on officer grade employees in India, revealing that over 75% of such employees fell into the criteria of the pathological and high-risk burnout group. However, this study was limited to a specific city and did not specifically focus on private bank employees at managerial level nor at their demographics. Das (2020) found that banking women employee pre and post marriage experience higher levels of occupational stress, work family conflict leading to higher levels of emotional exhaustion. Further research is needed to understand the impact of demographics on burnout of this specific group of banking professionals.

The aim of this study is therefore to evaluate the impact of demographics on the level of burnout or emotional exhaustion within managers working in private banking sector in India primarily from metro cities Delhi/NCR, Pune, and Hyderabad.

- H₁:** There will be significant difference between genders (male and female) on the level of burnout of managers in private banking sector.
- H₂:** There will be significant difference between marital status (single and married) on the level of burnout of managers in private banking sector.
- H₃:** There will be significant difference between age groups (<=25 years, >25 to <=35 years, >=35 years) on the level of burnout of managers in private banking sector.

Methodology

Cross sectional data was collected in the form of judgemental sampling from private banks. The sample for the survey were managerial employees 273 in number Portfolio Managers, Corporate Banking, Managers, Credit Managers, Senior Managers, Assistant General Managers (AGM), Branch Managers, Managers, Regional Managers, Divisional Managers, Relationship Managers and so on). Data came across the following banks AXIS bank, ICICI bank, IDFC bank, HDFC bank, Citi bank, DBS bank, and Kotak Mahindra bank. The data was collected both online and offline by contacting the private bank branches across three cities pune, delhi/ncr, and hyderabad. The demographics of the study is as given in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographics

	Demographic Characteristics	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	154 (56%)
	Female	119 (44%)
Marital Status	Single	80 (30%)
	Married	193 (70%)
Age Groups	<=25 years	99 (36.4%)
	>25 to <=35 years	98 (35.8%)
	>=35 years	76 (27.8%)

Measurements

The respondents were asked to fill in demographic details along with their contact details. The scale for burnout was used from Demerouti et al. (2010) with 8 items as given in Table 3. The burnout scale required respondents to mark from "1 = strongly disagree" to "5 strongly agree", and reverse code for reverse items. The normality and homogeneity of variance was tested using Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Levene's Test of Equality respectively, where data was found to be non-normal data (see Table 2). Hence the data analysis was conducted using non-parametric methods measuring varying mean ranks between two groups Mann-Whitney U test and three groups Kruskal-Wallis H test. The reliability of scale was attested using cronbach alpha value found above 0.72 (Drost, 2011). The software used to evaluate the data was IBM SPSS 24 and MS-Excel.

Table 2: Tests of Normality

	Mean	SD*	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
			Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
BR1	2.55	1.245	0.188	273	0.000	0.891	273	0.000
BR2	2.79	1.062	0.264	273	0.000	0.867	273	0.000
R_BR3	2.67	0.985	0.299	273	0.000	0.846	273	0.000
BR4	2.60	0.988	0.230	273	0.000	0.892	273	0.000
R_BR5	2.62	0.987	0.269	273	0.000	0.872	273	0.000
R_BR6	2.53	1.040	0.267	273	0.000	0.883	273	0.000
BR7	2.57	0.961	0.228	273	0.000	0.894	273	0.000
R_BR8	2.67	0.978	0.242	273	0.000	0.888	273	0.000
BR_mean	2.6279	0.60555	0.109	273	0.000	0.967	273	0.000

*SD Standard Deviation
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 3: Burnout (Emotional Exhaustion) Scale Adopted from Demerouti et al. (2010)

There are days when I feel tired before I arrive at work.
After work, I tend to need more time than in the past in order to relax and feel better.
I can tolerate the pressure of my work very well. R
During my work, I often feel emotionally drained.
After working, I have enough energy for my leisure activities. R
Usually, I can manage the amount of my work well. R
After my work, I usually feel worn out and weary.
When I work, I usually feel energized. R

Results and Discussion

The results of the Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis H test are provided in Table 4. The results found significant difference of burnout levels between age groups, and non-significant difference between gender or marital status groups. The results in Table 4, confirm acceptance of hypothesis H1, while H2 and H3 are rejected.

For H1, age group >35 year had highest mean rank 158.78, which significantly differed from >25 to <=35 year (125.70) and <=25 year (131.47) at p<0.05 significance value. The results confirm that burnout levels significantly vary across age groups with those aging more than 35 years at senior position experienced significantly higher burnout followed by those less than 25 years new entrants and last those between 25-35 years of age. The results, however, do not support hypothesis H2 and H3. The gender based and marital status based groups did not show significant difference between their burnout levels.

Table 4: Non Parametric Rank Test

	Burnout	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Gender Mann-Whitney U	Male	129.75	19981.5
	Female	146.38	17419.5
	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.83	
Marital Status Mann-Whitney U	Single	135.8	10864
	Married	137.5	26537
	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.871	
Age group Kruskal-Wallis H	<=25	131.47	
	>25 to <=35	125.70	
	>35	158.78	
	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.016* (p<0.05)	

The outcome of this result has significance in how HR practitioners from private banks can understand which cohort undergoes burnout (emotional exhaustion) more often and undertake remedial measures for the same. It is well known in literature that burnout has negative impact on job performance and organizational performance (Wright and Cropanzano, 1998). It is therefore essential that HR practitioners pay attention to this research. From these results it can be understood that senior aging employees with age higher than 35 years are more exposed to burnout at managerial levels. It can be explained that post 35 years employees who settle into senior position face acute stress of managing within rapidly changing work environment such as extended work hours, increased job demands or workload, and time constraints compared to middle age groups (>25 to <=35 years) who are better equipped to changing work environment. Again, aging literature also supports that stress peaks around the mid-life popularly understood as mid-life crisis as well approximately post 35 years (Griffiths et al., 2009). Hence it is possible that significant work-life pressures and workload pressure increases burnout within this cohort. Followed by younger employees (<=25 years) who have reached managerial positions and whose burnout levels are significantly higher than middle age group. This can be explained by stress that younger employees face as they enter the organization, adapting to work environment, supervisors, colleagues, norms and procedures. Alternatively this burnout level can also be attributed to the pressures of the sector as a whole, where younger employees are expected to be more productive and hence they are loaded with work more than aging employees. Both the age groups experience burnout on account role stressor or workload stressors. That is role stressors encompass various demands arising from the multiple task related factors that employees face, which include factors like role ambiguity, role conflict, and workload (Landy and Conte, 2007). Role ambiguity refers to the degree of uncertainty an individual experiences or encounters unclear information related to their role (Fried, Shirom, Gilboa, and Cooper, 2008). Role conflict arises when an individual faces conflicting demands in their work environment (Fried et al., 2008). Workload entails an overwhelming amount of demands in the workplace (Maslach et al., 2001). Prolonged exposure to these stressors is an essential component of the burnout process and contributes to an increase in strain (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007).

The result of younger and older age group experiencing burnout more irrespective of the gender and marital status is in alignment with previous research. Recent study by Franz et al. (2021) who found early career employees experiencing higher levels of burnout and cynicism irrespective of gender marital status, or education levels.

Limitations

The cross-sectional nature of this study restricts its ability to establish causal relationships between variables. Furthermore, the sample size is limited to 273 managers from three Indian cities, which offers potential for researchers to investigate this topic in different cultural contexts beyond India. Additionally, while this study focused on the critical aspect of burnout, emotional exhaustion, future researchers have the opportunity to explore the other two dimensions of depersonalization and lack of personal achievement as well. By conducting further research in these areas, a more comprehensive understanding of burnout in the banking sector and its impact on employee well-being can be achieved. Lastly, the paper is limited to understanding the demographic group that is most exposed to stress and does not explore antecedent's specific to that group, studies can explore causes for this in future.

Conclusion

Private sector banking employees face higher stress levels compared to their public sector counterparts, largely due to factors like high workload, role stress, and long working hours. This study evaluates burnout levels among specifically managers in the private banking sector, focusing on Delhi/NCR, Pune, and Hyderabad. The results indicate that burnout levels significantly vary across age groups, with those above 35 experiencing the highest burnout, followed by those below 25 and between 25-35 years. Gender and marital status did not show significant differences in burnout levels.

These findings hold significance for HR practitioners in private banks, helping them identify cohorts more vulnerable to burnout. Addressing burnout is crucial, as it adversely affects job and organizational performance. Senior employees above 35 face increased stress due to changing work environments, while younger employees in managerial positions may experience stress during organizational adaptation.

Addressing stress in the banking sector is crucial for promoting employee well-being and enhancing overall organizational performance. Strategies to mitigate stress could include implementing better work-life balance. Some suggested strategies can be providing adequate support and training for managers to handle their multifaceted roles, and fostering a positive and supportive work environment. Additionally, conducting further research that delves into the specific stressors faced by different segments of employees, including managers, and their impact on burnout can provide valuable insights for developing targeted interventions. HR practitioners must prioritize employee well-being and implement strategies to manage burnout effectively. Understanding the factors influencing burnout can lead to tailored interventions to mitigate its impact. Additionally, continuous research in this area can contribute to maintaining a healthy and productive workforce within the banking industry. By proactively addressing stress-related challenges through above mentioned strategies banks can not only safeguard the health and productivity of their employees but also cultivate a more resilient and thriving workforce that contributes to the sustainable growth of the banking industry in India.

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