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BURNOUT IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

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Abstract. Recent scientific findings as well as situation with big share of remote work in different fields have rised the importance of the burnout gained attention in academic studies world-wide. Many researchers studied different aspects of burnout and came with different important findings. Aim of this study is to investigate main aspects for burnout of the teaching staff of higher education institutions and compare results in different countries. Research methods: scientific publications analysis and survey of teaching staff on aspects related to burnout in higher education. Research results show data related in general on satisfaction of the workplace of the teaching staff, as well several aspects dominating in work organization.

Keywords: burnout, higher education institution, teaching staff, organization of work.

JEL Classification: A23, C83, I23, I25, O1.

Introduction

Research results in situation with big share of remote work in many fields have indicated the importance of the burnout in academic studies world-wide. Many researchers studied different aspects of burnout and came with different important findings.

Burnout syndrome has appeared as important and popular aspect of theoretical studies in the 1970's. Since then, many researchers have discussed the nature of this syndrome and provided definitions of it. However, only in 2019 World Health Organisation included burnout in the Classification of Diseases, but without considering it as medical condition.

Teachers are considered as one professions associated with the high level of stress they feel during they work. Teaching staff of the Higher Education Institutions are responsible for acquisitions of knowledge by the students as future professionals (Teles et al., 2020).

Aim of this study is to investigate main aspects for burnout of the teaching staff of higher education institutions and compare results in different countries.

Tasks of the research: 1) investigate how recent scientific findings reflect burnout aspects in several fields including higher education; 2) analyze views of members of academic staff in different countries on several burnout aspects; 3) determine whether the views do not differ statistically significant in analysed countries.

Research methodology: scientific publications analysis and survey of teaching staff on aspects related to burnout in higher education. Survey was organized via survey platform *QuestionPro*. Invitations for surveys were sent to academic staff on their e-mails. For survey data analysis there are used indicators of descriptive statistics: indicators of central tendency or location (arithmetic means, mode, median), indicators of variability or dispersion (range, standard deviation, standard error of mean), testing of statistical hypotheses with t-test and analysis of variance – ANOVA and investigating the correlation between several analysed variables. Survey data were analysed with SPSS.

1. Challenges of burnout in the situation of higher education realization in the case of unexpected conditions – pandemia

Recent findings of academic researchers on several aspects of burnout of employees in higher education (Peacock, 2022) have indicated many aspects with online teaching self-efficacy during COVID-19 and changes with their associated factors and moderators (Ma et al., 2021), with importance of student self-disclosure and

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faculty compassion in online classrooms (Lindecker & Cramer, 2021), with proactive strategies for countering the detrimental outcomes of qualitative job insecurity in academia (Urbanaviciute et al., 2021) and with increased importance for higher education realization in the situation of pandemia, including increasing the relationship between life satisfaction, engagement, and burnout with special application to higher education teachers (Costa & Oliveira, 2022) in Portugal as well as many other similar findings in other countries. An adaptive and strategic human-centred design approach to shaping pandemic design education that promotes wellbeing is rised by researchers (van der Bijl-Brouwer & Price, 2021; Shoaib et al., 2022) with involvement of older employees (Korsakienė et al., 2017) suggesting innovative and effective approaches. Researchers (Turhah et al., 2021) have investigated the psychometric properties of the German short version of the Maslach burnout inventory in realisation of student survey.

Concept of the Burnout emerged in the USA in 1970's, when Herbert J. Freudenberger started to research concept of staff-burnout. One of the main reasons why Freudenberger started to be interested in this topic is because he experienced some of the symptoms of burnout. Back then, in 1974, he discussed that burnout might have very different symptoms, which depend on the person itself. As physical signs of the burnout as exhaustion and fatigue are mentioned, as well as frequent headaches, sleeplessness and shortness of breath. Behavioural signs are anger, irritation and frustration. Under the lightest pressure, the person who experiences burnout might start to express emotions in crying and screaming. Person might hedge itself from the society, as well as become stubborn and inflexible, develop negative attitude to any change, cynicism also might be expressed. Thus, a person looks and acts depressed (Freudenberger, 1974).

Burnout specifics can be described in it development process – this syndrome develops through long period of time and symptoms can arise in a years. It is very important to recognise first symptoms of this phenomenon to stop it (Tukaev et al., 2021; Chan et al., 2021). In 1983 Savicki and Cooley stated that burnout should be studied as a phenomenon of the profession, and not as a result of individual specifics of the person (Savicki & Cooley, 1982). In 1994 Jacob Weisberg defined burnout as complex phenomenon, what is difficult to be measured.

Authors of the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory define work-related burnout as "The degree of physical and psychological fatigue and exhaustion that is perceived by the person as related to his/her work", what is focused on the persons own attribution of symptoms related to his or her work (Kristensen et al., 2005).

World Health Organisation (WHO) defines burnout as "a syndrome conceptualised as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed". There are three dimensions what describe the burnout by WHO: feelings of energy depletion, increasing mental distance and reduced personal efficacy. By now, burnout is included in the 11th revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) as an occupational phenomenon, but is not classified as a medical condition (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2022). As it is shown, definition of the burnout provided by the WHO combines threes factors of the burnout, which was proposed by the Christina Maslach.

Christina Maslach is one of the most popular researchers in the field of burnout studies. In one of her earliest research she defines burnout as a "syndrome of emotional exhaustions and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do "people work" of some kind". As a key aspect of the burnout syndrome, emotional exhaustion is mentioned. Second aspect is depersonalisation – cynical feeling and attitudes toward clients. The third aspect is reduced personal accomplishment, what can be described as reduced productivity, low morale. Employees are dissatisfied with the accomplishments and feel unhappy (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). In her book "The truth About Burnout", what was written together with Michael P. Leiter, Maslach states that rise of burnout is influenced by the following factors: work overload, lack of control, lack of fairness, lack of community and a value conflict (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

One of the recent definitions of the burnout was stated in 2021 by international expert panel of the Scandinavia Journal of Work, Environmental and health as "In a worker, occupational burnout of occupational physical and emotional exhaustion state is an exhaustion due to prolonged exposure to work-related problems". However, one of the main burnout researchers W. Schaufeli has concluded, that discussion about the definition of burnout continues, despite the agreement that exhaustion is key element of the burnout, because it is not clear, what kind of the exhaustion – emotional, physical, mental of cognitive. The researcher has stated that the different kinds of exhaustion have not been discussed systematically in the literature by the 2021. As Schaufeli has stated, some of the researchers state that exhaustion is the only element of the burnout, cancelling the other two dimensions of the Maslach Burnout Inventory as unneeded (Schaufeli, 2021).

Results of research in year 2003 showed impressive correlation between job satisfaction and mental health factors, like burnout, lowered self-esteem, anxiety and depression. The results confirm that dissatisfaction at work can be dangerous to the mental health of employees (Faragher et al., 2003) which is recognised as factor influencing academic staff in many countries.

An important aspect of work-life balance (which is considered one of the factors influencing burnout) is the amount of time a person spends at work. OECD research shows that long work hours can harm the health of the employee and increase stress. 11% of the employees in the OECD studied countries work 50 and more hours per week. What is interesting, that in Latvia only 1% of the employees work very long hours, which is much less than OECD 11% in average (OECD, 2021).

It is interesting, that recent studies shows how managers experience less stress than employees, and are less affected by the burnout. High level of power and self-efficacy are important factors for better mental health (Korman et al., 2022; Raišienė et al., 2020, 2015).

As a prevention and treatment of the burnout, Christina Maslach in one of her recent research mention following:

a) changing the work pattern (working hours should be reduced, as well es overload should be avoided and balance between work life and personal life should be found;
b) getting social support from family and friend;
c) using the relaxation strategies;
d) taking care about health and take exercises;
e) using different self-analysis techniques for better understanding.

However, in 2016, Christina Maslach mentioned that very little research has been done to evaluate the mentioned approaches in terms of their efficacy in reducing the risk of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Those aspects are still on the research agenda for academic researchers.

2. Tools and techniques to measure burnout

As a result of the broad amount of research on burnout that Christina Maslach has done with her colleagues, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was designed. The purpose of MBI was to measure hypothesised aspects of burnout. Inventory consists of the questionnaire, and every statement was rated in two dimensions – frequency and intensity, but the questions were in following subscales – emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, depersonalisation and involvement.

Maslach used this inventory to survey police officers in 1979, and approved hypothesis that burnout is related to the desire to leave the job, as well as the hypothesis that person with burnout has difficulties with their families, gets angry on the people he is living with, and if this person is also scored in the MBI with emotional exhaustion, he would rather prefer to spend the time alone, than with his family.

The study of 43 physicians in California showed that emotional exhaustion scores were higher for those physicians, who spend most of their working time with their patients, but lower scores were shown by those who were partially teaching (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Despite the fact that Maslach Burnout Inventory is most widely used tool to measure burnout in the World, in 2005 Tage Kristensen with his colleagues came out with new burnout measurement model – Copenhagen Burnout Inventory.

Authors state that despite the fact that MBI seems to be perfect instrument to measure burnout, it is unclear how it can measure three main dimensions of burnout independently (emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment), if Maslach definition of burnout is described as simultaneous occurrence of all three dimensions, what gives one concept, but three independent measures.

Authors of Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) place fatigue and exhaustions as core of the inventory. Copenhagen Burnout Inventory is divided into three parts – personal burnout, client-related burnout and work – related burnout (Kristensen et al., 2005). Several other aspects are analysed by other researchers.

3. Burnout in the Higher Education Institutions

Psychological stress in the workplace and its consequences, which leads to problems with health and life satisfaction, has become important and popular topics in recent years. Pedagogical profession arised the interest due to it's specifics – social nature of the work.

The authors of the recent study state that burnout can be predicted by factors of emotional demand and lack of balance between professional and private life (Druge et al., 2021) what is recognized by many researchers world-wide.

Mulyany and his colleagues in the recent research done in 2021 state that improvement of the working conditions like pay rate, school environment and colleague behavior can reduce teacher's burnout. Also, burnout rate can be reduced by balancing personal life and work-life (Mulyani et al., 2021) what is recognized more and more often in recent years.

Alqafari (2021) has identified levels of burnout among teachers of students with learning disabilities in Ryiadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. Despite the fact, that Education Department of Saudi Arabia has optimize working conditions for teachers of students with learning disabilities, the results of the research showed high emotional exhaustion level. Author states there is a need to improve level of psychological, social and professional support (Alqafari, 2021).

Recent research related to the burnout of the teachers in the Italy proved that 8.2% of the Italian teachers participated in the research suffer from the burnout. 29.2% had high level of emotional exhaustion and 33.8% high depersonalization scores. These results prove that teachers are at high risk of burnout (Pedditzi et al., 2021).

In 2021 in the Czech Republic, researchers used the Teachers Satisfaction Inventory to research burnout among 90 teachers. The results of the research suggest that lower job satisfaction is associated with a higher degree of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization among surveyed teachers (Cech et al., 2021).

In Argentina teachers were affected by the occupational stress because of the online studies and suspension of offline classes. During the period of pandemic of Covid-19, teachers faced the work overload, what was one of the reasons of the appearance of various symptoms of burnout. Authors have stated that it is necessary to implement intervention measures to prevent burnout, like workshops, training, focus groups in order to optimize physical health of teachers (Rubilar & Oros, 2021).

One of the recent research results has shown that enthusiasm is highly correlated with emotional exhaustion. According to this study management of the higher education institutions should create an environment to prevent the adverse effects of emotional exhaustions and motivate them to me more successful (Kasalak & Dagyar, 2022).

Fostering optimism of teachers and good relationships with colleagues are methods that indicate how to increase teacher job and life satisfactions, as well as reduce the risk of burnout (Marcionetti & Castelli, 2022).

One of the recent studies showed that online meetings of professors and other teaching staff in order to share and exchange difficulties and strategies how to deal with all the difficulties and problems caused by remote teaching and evaluation of student success. Creation of the resilient community where all the problems are solved on the daily basis and synergy between students and professors are created might work on burnout avoidance (García-Rivera et al., 2022). Those aspects in higher education during the last two years are becoming more and more important around the globe.

4. Empirical research results

Results of academic staff in higher education institutions on questions "Please evaluate how adequate your workload in relation to salary is" with evaluation scale 1-10, where 1-not adequate 10-very adequate and "Please evaluate support you receive from the side of higher education institution (HEI) in conduction of research (Information what tools and techniques can be used for better research conduction process, as well as information about publishing possibilities)" with evaluation scale 1–10, where 1 – I haven't got any information; 10 – I have all the information I need to conduct a research with main indicators of descriptive statistics is reflected in Table 1.

Table 1. Main indicators of descriptive statistics of evaluations on some aspects of higher education organisation in respective higher education institution (source: Julija Mironova conducted survey in 2022)

Statistical indicators		Please evaluate how adequate your workload in relation to salary is	Please evaluate support you receive from the side of HEI in conduction of research
N	Valid	123	125
	Missing	2	0
Mean		5.28	5.12
Std. Error of Mean		0.206	0.207
Median		6	5
Mode		6	6
Standard Deviation		2.284	2.313
Range		9	9
Minimum		1	1
Maximum		10	10

Data in Table 1 indicate that on both aspects analyzed by members of academic staff have different evaluations with covering all evaluation scale by respondents with arithmetic mean of the evaluations for adequacy of workload to salary which was 5,28 with the most often given evaluation 6 (characterized by mode), half of respondents gave evaluation 6 or less and half of respondents gave their evaluation 6 or more (characterized by median).

The variability of responses by the respondents had bigger variability for evaluations on support by the higher education institution for conducting research characterized by range, by standard deviation and by standard error if mean; arithmetic mean of the evaluations by respondents was 5,12 with the most often evaluation 6 (characterized by mode), half of respondents gave evaluation 5 or less and half of respondents gave evaluation 5 or more (characterized by median).

Distribution of evaluations by respondents on question "Please evaluate how adequate your workload in relation to salary is" with evaluation scale 1–10, where 1 – not adequate 10 – very adequate are reflected in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of responses on the adequacy of the workload in relation to salary (source: Julija Mironova conducted the survey in 2022)

Evaluation	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	6	4.8	4.9	4.9
2	8	6.4	6.5	11.4
3	21	16.8	17.1	28.5
4	10	8.0	8.1	36.6
5	16	12.8	13.0	49.6
6	26	20.8	21.1	70.7
7	13	10.4	10.6	81.3
8	14	11.2	11.4	92.7
9	5	4.0	4.1	96.7
10	4	3.2	3.3	100.0
Total	123	98.4	100.0	
Missing	2	1.6		
Total	125	100.0		

Data from Table 2 indicate that on adequacy of workload in relation to salaries are rather different with rather big share of evaluations on 3 (16.8%) and only 3.2% of respondents gave the highest evaluations. Distribution of responses on support from higher education institution in conduction of research (Information what tools and techniques can be used for better research conduction process, as well as information about publishing possibilities)" with evaluation scale 1–10, where 1 – I haven't got any information; 10 – I have all the information I need to conduct a research is included in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of responses on support from HEI for conducting research (source: Julija Mironova conducted the survey in 2022)

Evaluation	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	5	4.0	4.0	4.0
2	16	12.8	12.8	16.8
3	15	12.0	12.0	28.8
4	14	11.2	11.2	40.0
5	19	15.2	15.2	55.2
6	21	16.8	16.8	72.0
7	10	8.0	8.0	80.0
8	16	12.8	12.8	92.8
9	7	5.6	5.6	98.4
10	2	1.6	1.6	100.0
Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Data of Table 3 indicate that there is very different situation on providing information for possibilities for research in different higher education institutions. In scientific papers it is mentioned that attitudes are different depending on gender; values of main indicators of descriptive statistics on evaluations by gender on some aspects of higher education organisation in respective higher education institution (on adequacy of workload and salary, as well as on support for research from the higher education institution are reflected in Table 4.

Table 4. Main indicators of descriptive statistics on evaluations by gender on some aspects of higher education organisation in respective higher education institution (source: Julija Mironova conducted survey in 2022)

Gender	Statistic indicators	Adequacy of workload and salary	Support from HEI for research
Male	Mean	5.57	4.78
	N	40	41
	Std. Deviation	2.374	2.264
	Median	6	5
	Minimum	1	1
	Maximum	10	9
	Range	9	8
	Std. Error of Mean	0.375	0.354
Female	Mean	5.13	5.29
	N	83	84
	Std. Deviation	2.240	2.331
	Median	5	5
	Minimum	1	1
	Maximum	10	10
	Range	9	9
	Std. Error of Mean	0.246	0.254

Data of Table 4 indicate that there are differences in evaluations on analyzed aspects by male and female respondents with higher evaluations by male respondents for adequacy for workload and salary, but lower average evaluations by male respondents for support for research by the HEI higher are by female respondents. Stated question – are those average differences in evaluations by male and female statistically significant. Results of testing of statistical significance on average evaluations by gender with t-test are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Main indicators t-test on average evaluations by gender on some aspects of higher education organisation in respective higher education institution (source: Julija Mironova conducted the survey in 2022)

Analysed aspects	t-test for Equality of Means				
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Adequacy of workload and salary	1.006	121	0.316	0.442	0.440
Support for research	–1.148	123	0.253	–0.505	0.440

Data from the t-test indicate that there are statistically significant differences in the views of male and female respondents, male evaluations are smaller in their thoughts related to the adequacy of the workload and the salary, and also higher evaluations on support from higher education institutions related to information on research. In scientific publications, it was indicated that there are several attitudes on analysed aspects in several countries. Data from the main indicators of analysis of variance – ANOVA are included in Table 6.

Table 6. Main indicators of ANOVA in testing differences of average evaluations by countries (source: Julija Mironova conducted the survey in 2022)

Indicator	Sum of Squares	Value of Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Adequacy of workload and salary	Between Groups	3.051	4	0.763	0.142	0.966
	Within Groups	633.550	118	5.369		
	Total	636.602	122			
Support from HEI for research	Between Groups	51.505	4	12.876	2.526	0.044
	Within Groups	611.695	120	5.097		
	Total	663.200	124			

The data in Table 6 indicate that the analysis of variance ANOVA results confirm that the evaluations of respondents on the adequacy of workload and salary and support from higher education institutions for research are statistically different by country.

Table 7. Main indicators of correlation analysis (source: Julija Mironova conducted the survey in 2022)

Analysed aspects	Indicators of correlation	Adequacy of workload and salary	Support of HEI for research
Adequacy of workload and salary	Pearson Correlation	1	0.435**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	123	123
Support of HEI for research)	Pearson Correlation	0.435**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	123	125

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Data in Table 7 indicate that there is statistically significant correlation at the 0,001 level on adequacy of academic staff workload and salary and support of higher education institution support for research; those who gave higher evaluations on support of higher education institution support for research consider that their workload is adequate to salary.

Conclusions

Burnout is one of the very often analysed aspects on personnel issues in scientific research with special attention also in higher education where burnout is getting bigger importance in situation of remote work – those aspects are becomming for academic disscusions reflected in scientific research results more and more often.

Balance between professional work and personal life is recognised as one of reduction aspects in burnout in higher education.

There are several attitudes of higher education institution employees in academic positions related to their self-evaluations on adequacy of the workload and salary; they differ by gender and by country having bigger evaluation by male persons – more male persons consider that the workload and salary are adequate.

There is several attitude of higher education institution employees in academic positions related to their thoughts on support of higher education institution on support for research, they differ by gender and by country having bigger evaluation by male persons on salary and workload adequacy, but male persons evaluations consider lower average evaluations than female members of academic staff that support of higher education institution on support for research.

More support of higher education institution for information about research in the higher education institution substantiates to claim to consider that the workload of academic staff is adequate to salary – it is confirmed by statistically signifficiant correlation.

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Contribution

Jūlija Mironova – conception and design of the work, analysis of scientific publications and previous conducted research results, development of draft of the survey questionnaire, acquisition of data from survey;

Biruta Sloka – corrections of conception and design of the work, analysis of scientific publications and previous conducted research results, contribution in development of the survey questionnaire; analysis and interpretation of data; preparation of conclusions and recommendations, revising the article for important intellectual content.

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