



## EFFECT OF COGNITIVE BEHAVIOUR THERAPY IN THE MANAGEMENT OF BURNOUT AMONG EMPLOYEES

<sup>1</sup>S.GAYATHRI,

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, CBM College of Management, Sappanipatti & Research Scholar, Periyar University, Salem.

<sup>2</sup>Dr. VELAVAN,

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor and Head, Department of Business Administration, Government Arts College, Dharmapuri,

### Abstract

Burnout is psychological and mental condition, responding to high stress level at jobs. It is a multidimensional concept, covering the aspects such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and decreases personal focus on accomplishment of goals. The individuals, who suffer from burnout, have become worn-out from their jobs. The job burnout refers to depersonalization of negative shift in response to others, a decreased sense of personal accomplishment exhausting physically, mentally and emotionally. When a worker is on the road to burnout, he / she will probably experience several symptoms of burnout. The aim of the present study is to find out the effect of cognitive behaviour therapy in the management of burnout among employees. Burnout impair success in the family and vocational life. Once it is identified at an early stage, employees are helped in the management of burnout and enhance job satisfaction. The objectives of the present study are to find out the effect of cognitive behaviour therapy in the management of burnout among corporate employees and find out gender differences, if any, between men and women, in the management of burnout through intervention. Maslach uses Burnout Inventory to assess the burnout symptoms among employees. Experimental group is exposed to cognitive behaviour therapy. The results clearly indicate there is significant difference ( $p > .0001$ ) existing in the performance. The experimental group is faster ( $p > .0001$ ) than the control group in the management of burnout among employees through intervention. Women employees are faster ( $p > .0001$ ) than the men in the management of burnout through intervention. Practicing cognitive behaviour therapy regularly leads to success on family and vocational life, enhancing psychological wellbeing as well as mental health.

**Keywords:** Maslach Burnout Inventory, employees, men and women, burnout, cognitive behaviour therapy, success in family and vocational life

## Introduction

Burnout is psychological and mental condition, which happens to respond to high stress level at jobs; it is a multidimensional concept, which covers these aspects such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and decreases personal focus on accomplishment of goals. The individuals who suffer from burnout have become worn-out from their jobs. They are low in energy, fatigued, feel helpless, trapped and exhibit negative attitudes about themselves, work and life in general. Burnout affects the interpersonal relationships of employees (Vallard, et al., 2018; Hira Khan, et al., 2020).

The job burnout refers to depersonalization of negative shift in response to others, a decreased sense of personal accomplishment exhausting physically, mentally and emotionally. When a worker is on the road to burnout, he / she will probably experience several symptoms of burnout such as absenteeism, alcoholism, anxiety, apathy, boredom, callousness, conflicts with workers, cynicism, defensiveness, disillusionment, depersonalization, depression, drug dependence, exhaustion, family problems, fatigue, fault finding, frustration, hopelessness, hostility, indifference, insensitivity, irritability, isolation, job dissatisfaction, low morale, malaise, marital problems, moodiness, negativism, paranoia, pessimism, reduced accomplishments, resentment, sexual problems, suicide thought, weakness and withdrawal. The above-mentioned symptoms give an indication that the individual is towards the final stage of burnout. But no matter what the cause is, burnout always involves a pattern that leaves us de-energised and emotionally exhausted (Cames, et al., 2020; Mujitaba, 2020; Bellon., 2019; Grim, PR., 2019; John Xavier, 2010; Eizen, et al., 2008; Biokford, 2005; Malkinson, et al., 1997).

The individuals prone to job burnout are middle managers, physicians, psychologists, social workers, lawyers, school teachers and police officers. Other job that promotes burnout are the ones, in which, workers do repetitive or routine tasks, do not receive positive feedback or have great responsibility but little control. Some of the individual, who are more susceptible to burnout syndrome, are perfectionists, egotists, idealists and workaholics. Intrinsically motivated employees find their jobs more interesting and optimistic, put more effect in their work and have higher perseverance level because they gain contentment and fulfillment from performing a task itself. Such individuals have higher level of vitality, positive effect, self-esteem, absorption, concentration and persistence. Intrinsic motivation can be negatively associated with their burnout. High in intrinsic motivation can decrease their burnout in workplace (Hilderbrand et al., 2018; Ryan & Deci , 2000). The individuals, who suffer from burnout have become worn-out from their jobs. They are low in energy, fatigued, feel helpless, trapped and exhibit negative attitudes about themselves, work and life in general. Workplace stress has been demonstrated to have harmful; influence on the psychological wellbeing of the workers, as well as negative effects on productivity and profits (Cames, et al., 2020; Mujitaba, 2020; Bellon., 2019; Grim, PR., 2019; John Xavier, 2010; Eizen, et al., 2008; Biokford, 2005; Malkinson, et al., 1997).

## Cognitive Behaviour Therapy

Efforts are made to support programmes, promoting employee's occupational mental health. Due to high levels of stress and mental health issues, more than half of all working days are lost on every year. Cognitive behaviour therapy has found its way into the workplace. Cognitive behaviour therapy

can help to reduce time spent off work due to ill health. Cognitive behaviour therapy relieves the symptoms of mental health by focusing on how problems are perceived, how this can affect employees in the workplace and how employees feel physically and mentally in the workplace. Cognitive behaviour therapy helps to replace negative reactions with improved self-image, new coping mechanisms, problem-solving skills and more of self-control. Cognitive behaviour therapy changes the negative thoughts, feelings and actions in the workplace. Cognitive behaviour therapy targets in emotion regulation and social problem-solving skills that are associated with aggressive behaviour (Doge, 2003). The label cognitive behaviour is used to produce changes in thinking, feeling and behaviour (Kendall, 2006). Cognitive behaviour therapy is leading to success among employees.

Employees are exposed to relaxation therapy, systematic desensitization and mental imagery as a part of cognitive behaviour therapy. Employees remain at their work during intervention. The employees are exposed to Benson relaxation therapy on an empty stomach, twice a day, morning and evening, at their company premises, before and after the office hours, for one month. Cognitive behaviour therapy facilitates an earlier return to the workplace. Cognitive behaviour therapy reduces sickness, absence or losing valued members or staff from a company's workforce. Review of worldwide literature reveals that cognitive behaviour therapy is effective in the management of burnout and enhancement of job satisfaction among employees (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998; Van Dievendon, et al., 1998; Malkinson et al., 1997; Schaufeli, et al., 1996; Gordon - Brown & Soners, 1988; Higgins, 1986)

### **Purpose of the Study**

Industrial employees undergo a lot of emotional, social and behavioural changes due to work pressure. Pharmacopeial methods cannot give desired results and affects their family and vocational life. Hence, non-pharmacopeial methods are utilized to train employees to be successful in family and vocational life. The aim of the present study is to find out the effect of cognitive behaviour therapy in the management of burnout among employees. Burnout impairs success in the family and vocational life. Once it is identified at an early stage, employees are helped in the management of burnout. The objectives of the present study are to find out the effect of cognitive behaviour therapy in the management of burnout among employees and find out gender differences, if any, between men and women, in the management of burnout through intervention. Practicing cognitive behaviour therapy regularly leads to success on family and vocational life, enhancing psychological wellbeing as well as mental health. The present study is an attempt in this direction

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypothesis are drawn after reviewing the worldwide literature:

(Ha) Cognitive behaviour therapy is effective in the management of burnout among employees

(Ha) Men are faster than women in the management of burnout through cognitive behaviour therapy

**Tool for the Testing**

Employees are exposed to Maslach Burnout Inventory to identify early warning of burnout among employees. Short details of the psychological test are given below:

**Maslach Burnout Inventory**

Christina Maslach, et al., (1997) have developed Burnout Inventory to identify early warning of burn out symptoms. The employee is asked to fill up the personal details on the separate answer sheet and the following instructions are given:

“Read the statements carefully and determine how you currently feel about your job and its related aspects. Also, the list contains some common signs and symptoms that are associated with burnout or that are seen shortly prior to burnout. There is no right or wrong answers. Work as quickly as possible and circle the first responses that come in your mind. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by putting tick mark under the columns against each statement. Ratings are 0 (Never), 1 (A few times a year or less), 2 (Once a month or less), 3 (A few times a month), 4 (Once a week), 5 (A few times a week), 6 (Everyday). There are 25 statements. The burnout symptoms are Personal exhaustion (6 items), Personal accomplishment (8 items) and

Depersonalization (5 items). Other symptoms are 3 items. It usually takes 10 minutes to complete the test. The reliability and validity of the test is .84 and .92.

**SCORING:** Each correct response is awarded with one mark. Reverse scored items are 5, 7, 10-12, 16. Score ranges from 25 to 150.

- Scores 0-20 = Normal
- „ 21-40 = Few burnout symptoms
- „ 41-60 = some strong burnout feelings
- „ 61-80 = Substantial burnout symptoms
- „ above 81 = Severe burnout symptoms

The total score constitutes the Burnout Index. Lower the Burnout Index, higher the Job Satisfaction

**Sampling Design**

A brief description of the study is given to employees and their consent is obtained before the study. One five hundred healthy and well-motivated employees, age ranging from 30 to 40 years, having 5 years of working experience, are given Maslach Burnout Inventory.

**Table 1: Frequency distribution of the sample (n=500)**

BURNOUT		
Levels	Number	Percentage (%)
Low	300	60
High	200	40

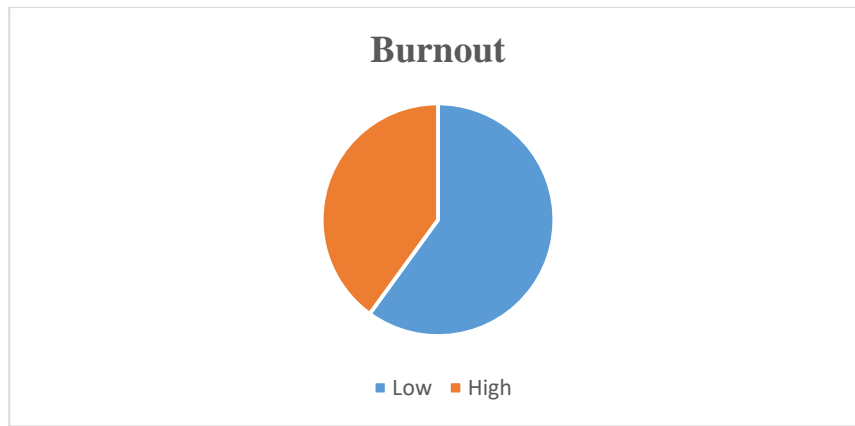


Figure 1: Pie chart shows Frequency distribution of the sample

Table 2: Sample Characteristics (n=120)

CONTROL		EXPERIMENTAL	
Men	Women	Men	Women
30	30	30	30

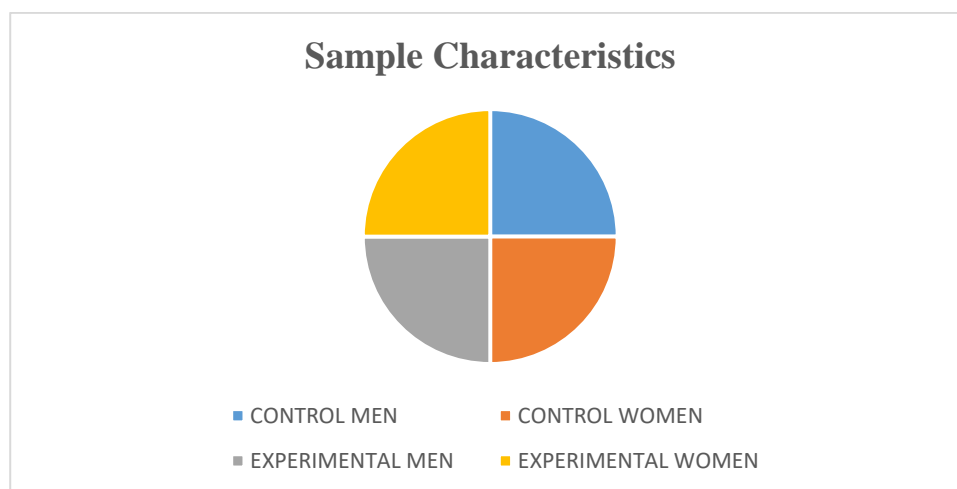


Table 1-2 and Figure 1-2 Pie chart show result of frequency distribution and sample characteristics. 500 college students are administered with Burnout Inventory to find out the level of burnout. Employees are able to understand and complete all the statements in the inventory. Out of 500 employees, 300 employees (60%) are asymptomatic and low on burnout symptoms. 200 employees (40%) are high on burnout. Out of 200 high burnout employees, 120 employees

are allotted randomly to control and experimental group, 60 employees in each group, 30 men and 30 women, for the final study. The experimental group is exposed to cognitive behaviour therapy, for a duration of thirty minutes, at company premises, for one month, whereas the control group is not exposed to any therapeutic intervention.

**Research Design**

The present research is an experimental study. This study incorporates matched group research design principles for testing the principal hypothesis and simple pretest-intervention - posttest design for testing the sub-hypothesis. Employees with burnout are managed through cognitive behaviour therapy. The area of the study for intervention is company premises, situated at Krishnagiri, Tamil Nadu. The research is carried out in three phases. Administration of tests are carried out during Phase one, therapeutic intervention is planned during Phase two and posttest, follow-up and feedback are taken care off during Phase three. Employees are administered Maslach Burnout Inventory

before starting the intervention, one month after continuous intervention and after six months after the posttest, during the follow-up.

**Statistics**

The data is analyzed statistically for within group differences and clinical significance, using mean, Sd and ANOVA tests, Statistical Package for Social Sciences, Version 21.

**Results and Discussion**

The findings of the present study have been discussed on Tables 3-6 and Figures 3 & 4 Bar Diagram.

**Table 3**

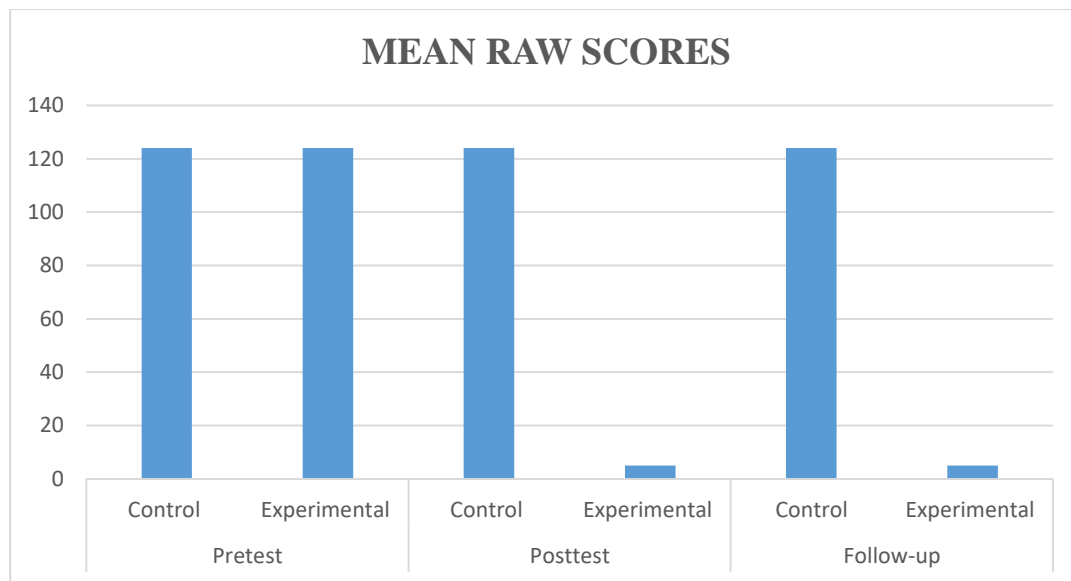
Burnout Inventory mean raw score and Sd of control (n=60) Vs. experimental group (n=60) over three phases of training

TEST PHASE	CATEGORY	MEAN	Sd	SIG.
Pretest	Control	124	1.37	NS
	Experimental	124	1.36	
Posttest	Control	124	1.37	p>.0001
	Experimental	5	0.39	
Follow-up	Control	124	1.37	p>.0001
	Experimental	5	0.39	

**Table 4**

ANOVA: Burnout Inventory mean raw scores of control (n=60) Vs. experimental group (n=60) over three phases of training

Parameters	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F-Value	P - Value
Pretest	0.3083	1	0.40833	0.7807	NS
	60.7	119	0.52		
Posttest	230.41	1	230.41	2391.26	p<.0001
	8.56	119	0.09		
Follow-up	232.2	1	232.2	2542.64	p<.0001
	9.67	119	0.07		



**Figure 3: Bar diagram shows Burnout Inventory mean raw score of control vs. experimental group employees over three phases of training**

Tables 3-4 and Figure 3 Bar diagram show Burnout Inventory mean raw score of control vs. experimental group employees over three phases of training. It is seen from the table that control and experimental group employees are high on Burnout Inventory mean raw scores during pretest. Calculated F - Value (0.7807) is lower than the tabular value, hence, the sample selected for the study is a homogeneous sample. Both the group of employees are suffering from burnout symptoms.

Posttest and follow up analysis reveal that experimental group is low on Burnout Inventory mean raw scores, compared to the pretest. Calculated posttest F- Value (2391.26) and Follow - up F - Value (2542.64) are higher than the tabular value, hence, there is an extremely significant difference ( $p > .0001$ ) existing in the performance. Experimental group employees are faster ( $p > .0001$ ) than the control group employees in the management of burnout through intervention.

With the cognitive behaviour therapy, the experimental group employees are low on Burnout Inventory mean raw scores than the control group. This may be

due to regular training of cognitive behaviour therapy. Experimental group employees are faster ( $p > .0001$ ) than control group in the management of burnout through intervention. Employees are high on job satisfaction and psychologically wellbeing through intervention.

Hypothesis stated “Cognitive behaviour therapy is effective in the management of burnout among employees” is accepted. Cognitive behaviour therapy helps the employees in the management of burnout.

The findings of the present study are corroborated with the research findings of Schaufeli & Enzmann (1998), Van Dievendon, et al., (1998), Malkinson et al., (1997), Schaufeli, et al., (1996), Gordon - Brown & Soners (1988) and Higgins (1986). They have delineated fact from the study that cognitive behaviour therapy is useful in the management of burnout.

**Comparison of Gender Differences**

TEST PHASE	CATEGORY	MEAN	SD	SIG.
Pretest	Control Males	124	1.37	NS
	Experimental Females	124	1.36	
Posttest	Control Males	124	1.37	p>.0001
	Experimental Females	5	0.39	
Follow-up	Control Males	124	1.37	p>.0001
	Experimental Females	5	0.39	

**Table 5**

Burnout Inventory mean raw score of control men (n=30) Vs. experimental women (n=30) over three phases of training

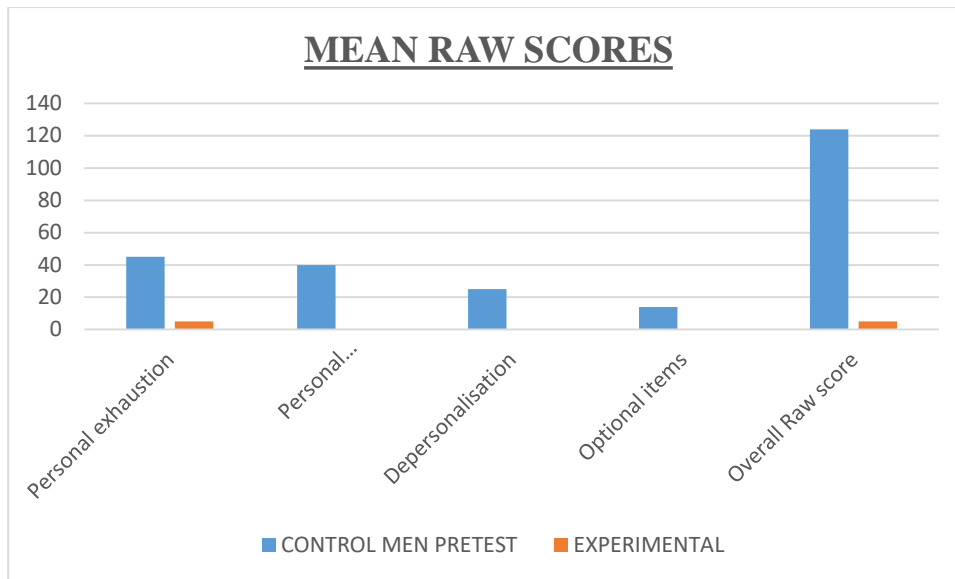
Maslach Burnout Inventory		
Burnout Symptoms	Control Men Pretest	Experimental Women Posttest
Personal exhaustion	45	5
Personal accomplishment	40	0
Depersonalization	25	0
Optional items	14	0
Overall Raw score	124/150	5/150

**Table 6**

ANOVA: Burnout Inventory mean raw score control men (n=30) Vs. experimental

wo men (n=30) over three phases of training

Parameters	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F-Value	P Value
Pretest	0.1333	1	0.1333	0.475	NS
	10.67	29	0.09		
Posttest	720.15	1	720.15	2508.23	p<.0001
	33	29	0.27		
Follow-up	1420.11	1	1420.11	3026.63	p<.0001
	20.18	29	0.15		



**Figure 4: Bar diagram shows Burnout Inventory mean burnout symptoms raw score of control males vs. experimental female corporate employees over three phases of training**

Tables 5-6 and Figure 4 Bar diagram show Burnout Inventory mean raw score of control men vs. experimental women employees over pretest vs. posttest phase of training. It is seen from the table that control and experimental group corporate employees are high on Burnout Inventory mean burnout symptoms raw scores during pretest. Calculated F - Value (0.475) is lower than the tabular value, hence, the sample selected for the study is a homogeneous sample. Both the group of corporate employees are suffering from burnout symptoms.

Posttest and follow-up analysis reveal that experimental females are low on Burnout Inventory mean raw scores, compared to the pretest. Calculated posttest F- Value (2508.23) and Follow - up F - Value (3026.63) are higher than the tabular value, hence, there is an extremely significant difference ( $p > .0001$ ) existing in the performance. Experimental women employees are faster ( $p > .0001$ ) than the control men employees in the management of burnout through intervention.

With the cognitive behaviour therapy, the experimental women

employees are lower than the control men Burnout Inventory mean raw scores. This may be due to regular training of cognitive behaviour therapy. Experimental women employees are faster ( $p > .0001$ ) than control men in the management of burnout through training. Women employees are high on job satisfaction and psychologically wellbeing through intervention.

Hypothesis stated “Men are faster than the women employees in the management of burnout” is rejected. In fact, women are faster than the men in the management of burnout through cognitive behaviour therapy. Cognitive behaviour therapy helps the employees in the management of burnout.

### Summary and Conclusions

The matched design, experimental study clearly indicates that cognitive behaviour therapy is helping in the management of burnout. The study also shows that the changes in the wellbeing have been carried out for a long duration of time, indicating that real learning has taken place. Cognitive behaviour therapy enables to overcome personal exhaustion,

enhance personal accomplishment and psychological wellbeing as assessed through Maslach Burnout Inventory. This study strongly suggests that cognitive behaviour therapy is effective in the management of burnout and enhancement psychological wellbeing and success in family and vocational life among employees.

### Findings of the Study

The major findings of the study are as follows:

- Experimental group is found to be faster in the management of burnout through cognitive behaviour therapy
- Experimental group is found to be low on burnout symptoms such as Personal exhaustion, Personal accomplishment and depersonalization, compared to control group through cognitive behaviour therapy
- Women are faster than men in in the management of burnout through intervention
- Of all the techniques, cognitive behaviour therapy is one of the best therapeutic techniques in the management of burnout
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