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Original Research Article

Exploring the dimensions of burnout syndrome among academicians: a survey study

Daman Preet Singh, Retasha Soni*

Saket College of Physiotherapy, Panchkula, Haryana, India

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***Correspondence:**
Dr. Retasha Soni,
E-mail: retashasingh@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Background: Burnout has become a growing concern among academicians due to the heavy workload, emotional strain, and constant performance pressures in academic life. It can lead to reduced productivity, low job satisfaction, and poor mental and physical health. Addressing burnout is essential to maintain academic quality, career satisfaction, and institutional effectiveness. This study aimed to assess the levels of burnout among academicians of various disciplines and to identify key factors contributing to it.
Methods: Data were collected from 148 academicians employed in colleges and universities by using the standardized Copenhagen Burnout Inventory through an online survey, distributed via email and social media (Google forms). Participants were informed about the study's purpose and provided instructions before completing the survey. Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater burnout.
Results: The participants had a mean age of 40.08±8.77 years. Overall, 51.35% reported mild burnout, 33.78% moderate burnout, and 2.7% severe burnout. The highest burnout scores were observed in the personal and work-related domains, whereas colleagues-related burnout was comparatively lower. The findings indicate a high prevalence of burnout among academicians, particularly influenced by gender, marital status, parental responsibilities, academic rank, and commuting stress. Engagement in recreational activities was inversely related to burnout, indicating its protective role.
Conclusions: The study revealed a high prevalence of burnout among academicians, driven by a combination of personal, occupational, and institutional stressors. The findings highlight the need for proactive measures such as workload regulation, supportive mentorship, flexible work policies, and wellness initiatives to promote faculty well-being and prevent professional exhaustion.

Keywords: Academicians, Burnout, Copenhagen burnout, Mental stress

INTRODUCTION

The increasing demands of modern life and the dual pressures of professional and personal responsibilities have significantly heightened the risk of burnout among individuals. Growing competition and workplace expectations further increases this stress, placing employees under constant pressure to perform.[1] Burnout syndrome is a psychological condition that arises from prolonged exposure to unmanaged occupational stress, characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a diminished sense of personal accomplishment. Originally introduced by Herbert Freudenberger in the 1970s, burnout has since been recognized as a serious occupational health concern that adversely impacts productivity, job satisfaction, and overall mental well-being across diverse professions.[2-4] The World Health Organization classified burnout as an "occupational phenomenon" in the 11th revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11), describing it as a

syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been effectively managed.[5] Research has shown that burnout extends beyond any single profession, affecting individuals in teaching, healthcare, law enforcement, administration, and even those engaged in unpaid or academic work.[6]

The education sector has emerged as one of the most vulnerable to burnout due to increasingly demanding work environments and performance expectations.[7,8] Academicians represent a unique occupational group exposed to multifaceted pressures related to teaching, research, administrative duties, student mentorship, and personal commitments creating significant mental strain.[9-11] The constant need to meet deadlines and maintain high standards of performance, while balancing personal commitments, contributes to emotional exhaustion and psychological distress.[12] Such pressures have been strongly linked with depletion of mental resources and a higher likelihood of burnout among academic professionals.[13,14]

Studies conducted across various countries highlight differing prevalence rates of burnout in academia. In Nigeria, 57.7% of academic physicians in tertiary hospitals experienced burnout.[15] In India, approximately 40% (39.76%) of medical college faculty reported burnout symptoms.[16] Similar trends have been documented in France, where 40% of medical faculty, and in Brazil, about 41% of university professors experienced burnout.[17,18] In Malaysia, Fadzil et al also identified burnout among faculty in science and technology disciplines, though the prevalence rate was unspecified.[19]

Burnout has been increasingly described as a "silent threat" within the workforce because it develops gradually and often goes unnoticed until its effects become severe. It undermines physical health, emotional stability, and job performance, potentially leading to chronic stress, depression, cardiovascular issues, and premature withdrawal from professional life.[10,20,21] Due to its insidious progression, individuals may fail to recognize its impact until it significantly disrupts both personal well-being and organizational functioning. Furthermore, burnout has far-reaching organizational consequences, including absenteeism, reduced productivity, and weakened team cohesion. Among the many adverse consequences of burnout, the decline in job satisfaction is particularly concerning. When employees lose engagement or a sense of purpose in their work, their morale and motivation diminish, reinforcing the ongoing cycle of exhaustion and detachment.[10,11]

Given the growing evidence that burnout adversely affects professional efficiency, psychological well-being, and institutional productivity, it becomes important to understand its scope within academia. Despite increasing awareness, comprehensive data encompassing in diverse academic disciplines still remains limited. Therefore, the present study sought to assess the prevalence of burnout syndrome among academicians of various disciplines and to underscore its potential consequences for individual well-being and organizational performance. By addressing this gap, the study aims to contribute to the expanding body of evidence emphasizing the urgent need for preventive strategies and institutional interventions to mitigate burnout in higher education settings.

METHODS

This cross-sectional, questionnaire-based study was conducted among academicians employed in colleges and universities across India from January 2024-August 2024. The study aimed to include a diverse group of academic professionals representing different disciplines. This study involved a voluntary participation and the online survey was administered through Google forms. The questionnaire included an informed consent statement at the beginning, and participants were required to provide consent before proceeding. Participants were informed that their responses would remain confidential and will be used solely for the research purposes. The survey link was circulated via email and various social media platforms to ensure wide participation. The term academic was broadly defined to include all faculty categories, tenured and non-tenured staff, full-time and part-time lecturers, and teaching or research assistants in colleges or universities.[22]

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The study included academicians of both genders who had been employed in their current institution for at least one year and voluntarily provided informed consent to participate. Individuals who declined to give consent or submitted incomplete questionnaires were excluded from the final analysis.

Procedure

The questionnaire, presented in English, included a brief introduction outlining the study objectives and clear instructions for completion. The questionnaire included sections on demographic details, occupational profile, and work–life balance. Burnout was assessed using the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI), an open-access, validated tool developed by Kristensen et al that measures three domains: personal, work-related, and colleague-related burnout.[23] Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater burnout. CBI scores were categorized as follows: 0-24: no burnout, 25-49: mild burnout, 50-74: moderate burnout, 75-99: severe burnout, 100: complete burnout.

Statistical analysis

The collected data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics included frequency tables, measures of central tendency, and

measures of dispersion. Inferential statistics, including Chi-square, Mann-Whitney U test and Spearman's Correlation test were used to assess relationships between variables and draw conclusions. Quantitative data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.

RESULTS

This study included 148 academicians (60.8% females, 36.5% males and 2.7% who did not prefer to reveal their gender; mean age =40.08±8.77 years). Most participants were from nuclear families (68.9%), and 43.2% had children (Table 1). Assistant professors constituted 43.2%, while 48.5% were employed in the government sector and 56.7% of them were holding full-time permanent positions. Nearly half (43.2%) had over 11 years of academic experience. The majority worked 5-7 hours daily (40.5%), taught 1-2 classes per day (59.5%), and 28.4% handled more than four subjects annually. Over a third (37.8%) had administrative duties, while 67.6% reported that scholarly publications were mandatory (Table 2).

Most respondents (70.2%) were from health and rehabilitation sciences (from various departments like anatomy, physiology, medicine, pharmacology, physiotherapy, and nursing), with smaller groups from engineering and technology (13.5%), social sciences/humanities (sociology, arts, law) (8.1%), research and basic sciences (5.4%), and commerce and business (2.7%) (Table 6).

Table 1: Socio-demographic variables of the participants.

Variables	n=148 (%)
Age (years)	40.08±8.772
Gender	
Male	54 (36.5)
Female	90 (60.8)
Prefer not to say	04 (2.7)
Marital status	
Married	106 (71.6)
Single	38 (25.7)
Divorced	02 (1.4)
Widow/widower	02 (1.4)
Family type	
Joint	46 (31.1)
Nuclear	102 (68.9)
Level of education	
Bachelor's	18 (12.2)
Master's	50 (33.8)
Ph.D.	80 (54.1)
Do you have kids	
Yes	92 (43.2)
No	56 (37.6)

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of burnout across three domains, work-related, colleagues-related, and personal. Mild to moderate burnout was most prevalent in the work-related (83.8%) and personal (82.4%) domains, while colleagues-related burnout showed comparatively lower levels, with 41.9% reporting mild and 25.7% moderate burnout. Severe or complete burnout was rare across all domains. Figure 2 presents the distribution of total burnout levels among academicians, further highlighting the predominance of mild to moderate burnout symptoms.

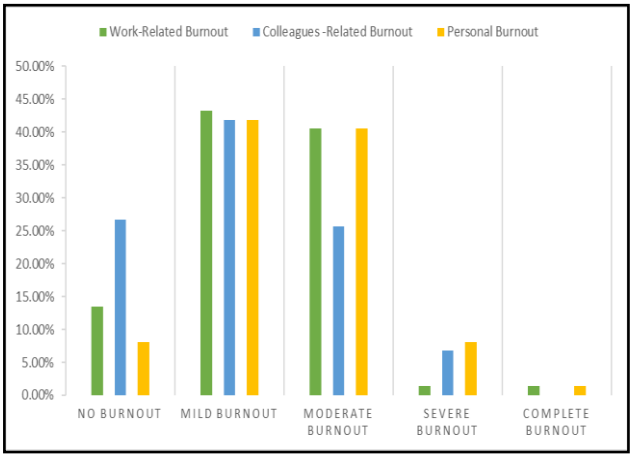

Figure 1: Distribution of burnout levels across different domains among academicians.

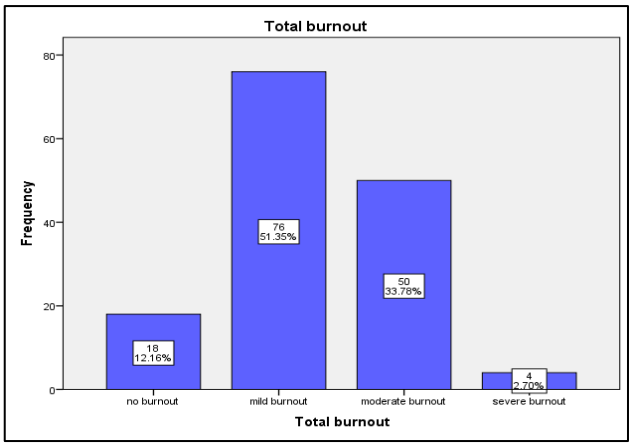

Figure 2: Distribution of participants based on total level of burnout.

Figure 3 Illustrates the comparative mean ranks of total burnout across genders, highlighting a noticeably higher level among females. A Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to examine gender differences in total burnout scores among academicians. The results revealed a statistically significant difference between males and females (U=1866.00, Z=-2.56, p=0.010). Female academicians exhibited higher burnout levels (mean rank =78.77) compared to their male counterparts (mean rank =62.06). This finding suggests that female participants experienced significantly greater overall burnout.

Table 2: Representing the occupational profile of the study participants.

Variables	n=148 (%)
Academic rank	
Professor	20 (13.50)
Associate professor	44 (29.71)
Assistant professor	64 (43.20)
Lecturer	20 (13.50)
Working sector	
Government	72 (48.56)
Semi-government/government aided	14 (9.46)
Private	58 (39.19)
Other	04 (2.70)
Nature of employment	
Part-time	08 (5.41)
Full time on tenure track/contract/ad-hoc	56 (37.84)
Full time permanent	84 (56.76)
Academic discipline	
Health and rehabilitation sciences	104 (70.2)
Research and basic sciences	08 (5.4)
Social sciences/humanities	12 (8.1)
Engineering and technology	06 (4.0)
Commerce and business	04 (2.7)
Total academic experience	
Less than 3 years	32 (21.62)
3-5 years	10 (6.67)
6-8 years	24 (16.22)
9-11 years	18 (12.16)
More than 11 years	64 (43.24)
Teach whom	
Undergraduate	34 (23)
Post-Graduate	44 (29.7)
Both	44 (29.7)
Ph.D.	4 (2.7)
All of the above	22 (14.9)
Courses/subjects teach/year	
One	26 (17.6)
Two	12 (8.1)
Three	40 (27)
Four	28 (18.9)
More than four	42 (28.4)
Average working hours/day	
<5 hours/day	06 (4.1)
5-7 hours/day	60 (40.5)
>7 hours/day	50 (33.8)
Flexible	32 (21.6)
Average number of classes/day	
1-2 classes/day	88 (59.5)
3-4 classes/day	52 (35.1)
5 or more classes/day	08 (5.4)
Average number of hours spent/week on administrative duties along with academic work	
Less than 5 hours	48 (32.4)
5-10 hours	56 (37.8)
More than 11 hours	30 (20.2)
Not applicable (I do not have administrative responsibilities)	14 (9.5)

Continued.

Variables	n=148 (%)
Mandatory to produce scholarly articles	
Yes	100 (67.6)
No	22 (14.9)
Sometimes	26 (17.6)

Table 3: Association of work-life balance factors with burnout dimensions.

Variables	Frequency (%)	Personal burnout***	Work related burnout***	Colleagues related burnout***	Total burnout***
Family responsibilities affect job performance					
Never	16 (10.8)	46.60, 0.000**	21.91, 0.039*	34.47, 0.000**	34.22, 0.000**
Rarely	42 (28.4)				
Sometimes	74 (50)				
Often	16 (10.8)				
Always	0				
Bring office work at home					
Never	2 (1.4)	36.67, 0.002*	27.30, 0.038*	24.28, 0.019*	40.24, 0.000**
Rarely	34 (23)				
Sometimes	56 (37.8)				
Often	46 (31.1)				
Always	10 (6.8)				
Skip/miss meals because of work					
Never	28 (18.9)	79.27, 0.000**	25.66, 0.059	40.66, 0.000**	66.47, 0.000**
Rarely	42 (28.4)				
Sometimes	64 (43.2)				
Often	10 (6.8)				
Always	4 (2.7)				
Skip family/friends' functions because of work					
Never	10 (6.8)	76.63, 0.000**	98.25, 0.000**	39.25, 0.000**	64.14, 0.000**
Rarely	34 (23)				
Sometimes	76 (51.4)				
Often	24 (16.7)				
Always	4 (2.7)				
Suffer from stress related health issues					
Yes	52 (35.1)	28.48, 0.000**	11.39, 0.022*	18.33, 0.000**	16.85, 0.001*
No	96 (64.9)				
Usual time to reach to workplace					
less than 15 minutes	38 (25.7)	47.40, 0.000**	32.15, 0.001*	30.31, 0.000**	33.32, 0.000**
15-30 minutes	52 (35.1)				
30-60 minutes	34 (23)				
More than 60 minutes	24 (16.2)				
Commuting distance bother and add to routine stress					
Yes	64 (43.2)	29.13, 0.000**	17.46, 0.002*	17.38, 0.001*	25.12, 0.000**
No	84 (56.8)				
Indulge in recreational activities					
Once a week	20 (13.6)	59.20, 0.000**	13.69, 0.090	37.60, 0.000**	21.87, 0.005*
Twice a week	18 (12.2)				
More than twice a week	16 (10.8)				
Once or twice a month	22 (14.8)				
Not at all	72 (48.6)				
Lose much sleep over job/academic worries					
Never	14 (9.5)	79.73, 0.000**	60.42, 0.000**	52.33, 0.000**	146.03, 0.000**
Rarely	40 (27)				
Sometimes	66 (44)				

Continued.

Variables	Frequency (%)	Personal burnout***	Work related burnout***	Colleagues related burnout***	Total burnout***
Often	26 (17.6)				
Always	2 (1.4)				

*Significant at p<0.05; **Highly significant at p<0.001, ***Chi-square value and p value

Table 4: Results of chi-square test showing association between categorical variables and CBI burnout domains.

Variables	Personal burnout***	Work-related burnout***	Colleagues related burnout***	Total burnout***
Gender	11.6, 0.169	33.01, 0.000**	12.53, 0.052	11.08, 0.086
Marital Status	17.94, 0.117	21.91, 0.038*	59.85, 0.000**	19.43, 0.022*
Family Type	21.39, 0.000**	10.41, 0.034*	9.84, 0.020*	7.16, 0.067
Have Kids	3.66, 0.453	9.52, 0.049*	0.967, 0.809	9.29, 0.026*
Mandatory to produce scholarly articles	16.76, 0.033*	26.73, 0.001*	9.39, 0.153	24.76, 0.000**
Level of Education	46.37, 0.000**	23.82, 0.002*	18.84, 0.004*	29.40, 0.000**
Academic Rank	0.35.54, 0.001*	21.74, 0.040*	14.34, 0.111	17.43, 0.042*
Working Sector	26.20, 0.010*	15.71, 0.205	14.34, 0.111	12.09, 0.208
Nature of employment	10.59, 0.226	7.69, 0.464	7.82, 0.251	7.46, 0.280
Teach whom	33.42, 0.006*	33.15, 0.007*	25.21, 0.014*	25.15, 0.036*

Significant at p<0.05; **Highly significant at p<0.001, ***Chi-square value and p value.

Table 5: Correlation between different burnout dimensions and professional characteristics (Spearman's rho, n=148).

Variables	Personal burnout***	Work related burnout**	Colleagues related burnout***	Total burnout***
Age (in years)	−0.235, 0.002*	-0.353, 0.000**	0.073, .376	-0.230, 0.005*
Total academic experience	−0.081, 0.329	-0.109, 0.185	0.073, 0.378	-0.045, 0.590
Courses/subjects taught per year	0.075, 0.367	0.034, 0.682	-0.047, 0.568	0.090, 0.275
Number of classes per day	0.313, 0.000**	0.233, 0.004*	0.136, 0.100	0.202, 0.014*
Average hours per week on administrative duties	0.065, 0.436	0.038, 0.643	-0.072, 0.382	0.092, 0.264
Working hours per day	0.068, 0.412	0.010, 0.907	-0.023, 0.785	0.089, 0.282

*Significant at p<0.05; **Highly significant at p<0.001, ***Shows Spearman's Correlation and p value

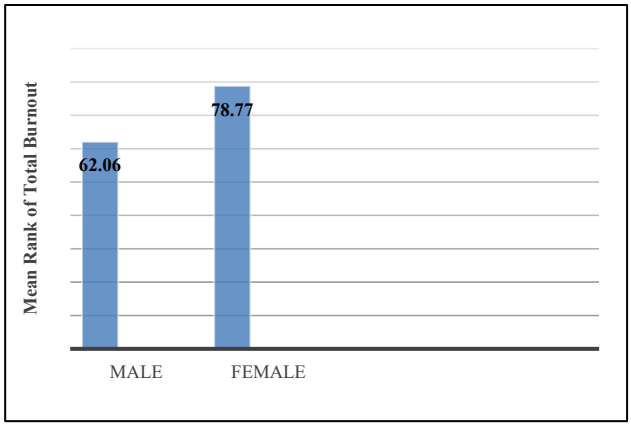

Figure 3: Comparison of total burnout between genders (Mann-Whitney U test).

In Table 3 respondents whose family responsibilities often affected job performance showed significantly higher burnout across all domains (p<0.001). Similarly, bringing office work home and skipping meals due to work were strongly linked to elevated burnout, particularly in personal and total domains. Missing family or social events, stress-related health issues, and longer or stressful commutes were also significantly associated with higher burnout levels (p≤0.002). In contrast, engaging in recreational activities was inversely related to burnout, suggesting a protective effect. Losing sleep over job worries showed the strongest association, especially with total burnout (χ^2=146.03, p<0.001).

In Table 4 significant associations were observed between gender and work-related burnout (χ^2=33.01, p<0.001), suggesting that job-related demands may affect males and females differently. Marital status was strongly linked to colleagues-related (χ^2=59.85, p<0.001), work-related and total burnout (χ^2=19.43, p=0.022), while family type showed robust associations with all burnout domains, indicating that home environment influences emotional and interpersonal stress. Having children was related to

higher work-related and total burnout, reflecting the strain of balancing parenting and academic duties.

The mandatory requirement to publish scholarly articles was significantly associated with personal, work-related and total burnout, underscoring the pressure of academic productivity. Educational level and academic rank were also strongly linked with burnout across multiple domains, implying that higher qualifications and senior roles bring increased responsibilities and stress. Working sector was associated only with personal burnout, suggesting institutional differences in workload or support systems. In contrast, nature of employment showed no significant association with burnout. However, the type of students taught was significantly related to all burnout domains ($p<0.05$), indicating that teaching responsibilities and student complexity play a critical role in shaping burnout experiences among academicians.

Spearman's correlation analysis was conducted to determine the association between different burnout dimensions and various professional characteristics. A significant negative correlation was found between age and both personal burnout ($r=-0.235$, $p=0.002$) and work-related burnout ($r=-0.353$, $p=0.000$), as well as total burnout ($r=-0.230$, $p=0.005$). Total academic experience showed a weak and non-significant negative correlation with all burnout domains ($p>0.05$), suggesting that while more experienced faculty members may have slightly lower burnout levels. Similarly, the number of courses or subjects taught per year and average hours spent per week on administrative duties did not show any significant association with burnout. However, a significant positive correlation was observed between the number of classes taken per day and both personal burnout ($r=0.313$, $p=0.000$) and work-related burnout ($r=0.233$, $p=0.004$), as well as with total burnout ($r=0.202$, $p=0.014$). In contrast, working hours per day showed no significant relationship with any burnout domain ($p>0.05$), indicating that it is not merely the duration of work but rather the intensity and structure of the workday (e.g., class frequency) that plays a more critical role in burnout development (Table 5).

Table 6: Chi-square analysis of burnout levels (CBI) across academic disciplines.

Academic discipline (frequency and percentage)	Personal burnout	Work-related burnout	Colleagues-related burnout	Total burnout
Health and rehabilitation sciences (n=104,70.2%)	$\chi^2=14.82$, $p=0.005$*	$\chi^2=12.47$, $p=0.014$*	$\chi^2=9.31$, $p=0.025$*	$\chi^2=13.56$, $p=0.009$*
Research and basic sciences (n=8, 5.4%)	$\chi^2=6.91$, $p=0.032$*	$\chi^2=5.88$, $p=0.053$*	$\chi^2=4.27$, $p=0.093$*	$\chi^2=6.24$, $p=0.042$*
Social Sciences/Humanities (n=12, 8.1%)	$\chi^2=9.84$, $p=0.021$*	$\chi^2=8.67$, $p=0.034$*	$\chi^2=7.12$, $p=0.052$*	$\chi^2=9.11$, $p=0.028$*
Engineering and Technology (n=20, 13.5%)	$\chi^2=4.83$, $p=0.089$	$\chi^2=3.94$, $p=0.136$	$\chi^2=2.67$, $p=0.263$	$\chi^2=4.11$, $p=0.128$
Commerce and Business (n=4, 2.7%)	$\chi^2=5.24$, $p=0.073$	$\chi^2=4.58$, $p=0.101$	$\chi^2=3.91$, $p=0.142$	$\chi^2=4.96$, $p=0.082$

*Significant at $p<0.05$; **Highly significant at $p<0.001$.

The chi-square analysis demonstrated significant variation in burnout levels across academic disciplines, particularly within larger groups. Faculty from health and rehabilitation sciences, who form most of the sample (70.2%), showed statistically significant associations with all dimensions of burnout ($p<0.05$ in all cases). In research and basic sciences, significant associations are observed for personal burnout and total burnout, while in work-related and colleagues-related burnout approach did not reach statistical significance. Given the small sample size in this group (5.4%), these findings suggest a tendency toward burnout, though results should be interpreted cautiously. Participants from social sciences and humanities also demonstrate significant associations with personal, work-related, and total burnout. Colleagues-related burnout is marginally non-significant. This suggests that faculty in these disciplines experience considerable personal and occupational stress, potentially related to teaching load, academic pressures, and role expectations. In contrast, engineering and technology faculty do not show statistically significant associations with any burnout dimension. Although some burnout is present, it does not reach significance, indicating comparatively lower or more manageable burnout levels in this group. Similarly, commerce and business faculty show no statistically significant burnout across any domain. However, the very small sample size (2.7%) limits strong conclusions, and these results should be interpreted with caution. Overall, the results suggest that burnout patterns vary across disciplines, with the highest burden and variability observed in health-related academic fields (Table 6).

DISCUSSION

This study demonstrates that burnout among academicians is both widespread and multifactorial. Overall, over 80% of participants in this study reported at least mild to moderate symptoms in either the personal or work-related domains while approximately 74% showed

colleagues related burnout. These findings resonate with recent evidence indicating that higher education faculty face elevated burnout risk due to excessive workloads, performance pressures, and institutional demands.[24,25]

In this study, several sociodemographic and professional factors showed meaningful associations with different dimensions of burnout, while a few did not. Gender was not significantly related to personal burnout or overall burnout scores; however, it showed a strong association with work-related burnout. This suggests that although male and female academicians may experience similar levels of general fatigue or personal exhaustion, workplace demands, role expectations, and institutional pressures may affect genders differently, leading to unequal levels of work-related strain. Our findings showed that female academicians experienced significantly higher burnout levels than male participants, this is consistent with existing literature where Spanish university faculty reported higher emotional exhaustion and perceived stress in women compared to men.[26] Similarly, broader research indicates that women in academia often face greater emotional strain, potentially due to the combined pressures of professional duties, household responsibilities, and caregiving roles.[27-29] Supporting this trend, Griebler found that exhaustion symptoms were nearly twice as common among female teachers (21%) compared with male teachers (11%).[30] Together, these findings highlight the gendered nature of burnout and the need for targeted institutional support.

The findings indicate that personal life circumstances such as marital status, having children, and family structure show meaningful associations with different burnout domains. Marital status may add emotional and practical responsibilities that interact with work stress, consistent with evidence that family demands can intensify burnout when personal or organizational resources are inadequate.[31] Family structure also shapes the level of support available at home. Individuals in joint or extended families often face competing role expectations and limited personal recovery time, increasing emotional exhaustion.[32] Conversely, those living in nuclear families may experience insufficient social support and greater responsibility for household and caregiving duties, which can heighten vulnerability to personal and work-related burnout.[31,32] Similarly, having children was significantly associated with higher work-related and total burnout, aligning with prior research showing that parenting increases time pressure and emotional demands, reducing opportunities for rest and recovery.[33,34] These challenges may be amplified in academia, where high workloads and limited schedule flexibility can exacerbate work–family conflict and elevate burnout risk.

The requirement to produce scholarly articles was significantly linked to higher levels of personal, work-related, and total burnout. Previous researches shows that academic demands particularly publication pressure is one of the key predictors of burnout among faculty.[24,35] Similarly, the level of education was associated with all burnout domains, suggesting that academicians with advanced qualifications often face greater administrative, supervisory, and research responsibilities, heightening exhaustion and strain.[28] Conversely, those with lower qualifications may encounter limited institutional support or job security, which can also elevate stress.[36] Together, these findings underscore that both performance expectations and academic hierarchy significantly shape burnout risk.

Academic rank was significantly associated with personal, work-related, and total burnout, but not with colleagues-related burnout. This suggests that hierarchical differences in academia affect individual and role-based stress more than interpersonal factors. Senior faculty often experience heavier administrative and leadership demands, whereas junior staff may face job insecurity and limited autonomy both contributing to burnout.[28,37] Working sector showed a significant link only with personal burnout, indicating that sector-specific conditions such as job stability, institutional expectations, and administrative culture may shape emotional exhaustion more than professional or collegial domains.[36,38]

The nature of employment did not show significant associations with any burnout domain ($p>0.05$), suggesting that employment status alone may not distinctly influence burnout. This may be because workload demands and role expectations tend to be similar across different types of positions. In contrast, the level or type of students taught was significantly associated with all burnout dimensions. Teaching postgraduate or mixed-level students may impose greater cognitive, supervisory, and evaluative demands, contributing to elevated personal and work-related strain. This aligns with the research that highlighted that teaching intensity, student diversity, and supervision responsibilities are major predictors of academic burnout.[37,39] These findings emphasize that the complexity of teaching roles, plays a more critical role in faculty exhaustion and stress.

Age showed a significant negative correlation with personal, work-related, and total burnout, indicating that younger academicians experienced higher burnout levels. This aligns with prior findings suggesting that early-career faculty face greater stress due to job insecurity, workload pressure, and performance expectations, while senior staff may have better coping mechanisms and stability.[28,38] Academic experience and number of subjects taught per year were not significantly correlated, suggesting that duration or course volume alone does not determine burnout risk. However, the number of classes taught per day was positively correlated with burnout, implying that teaching intensity and frequent class transitions may heighten emotional fatigue.[24] Administrative duties and total working hours showed no

significant associations, supporting the view that the qualitative demands of academic work, rather than the quantity of hours, are more predictive of burnout.[40]

Burnout levels differed significantly across academic disciplines. Academicians from health and rehabilitation sciences, research and basic sciences, and social sciences/humanities reported significantly higher personal, work-related, and overall burnout scores ($p<0.05$). These findings suggest that faculty in these disciplines may be particularly vulnerable to burnout across multiple dimensions, likely due to heavier workloads, greater emotional demands, and intensive interpersonal interactions inherent to health-related and social science professions. However, these results should be interpreted with caution, as sample sizes in the latter two disciplines were relatively small. In contrast, no significant associations were observed among academicians from engineering and technology and commerce and business, which may likewise be attributable to limited sample representation. Overall, these findings indicate that burnout may be discipline-specific, potentially reflecting variations in teaching intensity, research expectations, and patterns of student engagement. Consistent with this interpretation, previous studies have reported higher burnout among faculty in health-related and social science disciplines, where emotionally demanding student interactions and heavier workloads are more prevalent.[37,38]

Several work–life balance variables showed significant associations with burnout dimensions. Academicians who reported that family responsibilities affect job performance experienced significantly higher levels of personal, work-related, and total burnout, highlighting the strain of balancing professional and domestic roles.[41] Similarly, bringing office work home and skipping meals or family functions due to work were strongly linked to higher burnout across all domains, consistent with findings that blurred work–home boundaries and poor self-care contribute to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization.[31,38] Those suffering from stress-related health issues also exhibited greater burnout, confirming the reciprocal relationship between chronic stress and somatic complaints.[20] A study found that teachers experiencing high levels of burnout were more likely to suffer from mental health problems such as anxiety and sleep disturbances.[42]

Furthermore, longer commuting times and perceived commuting stress were significantly associated with higher burnout levels. Extended travel to work can increase fatigue, reduce time for rest and personal activities, and heighten stress even before the workday begins.[43] These findings suggest that commuting is not just a logistical burden but an important occupational health factor influencing academic well-being. Lack of recreational engagement was another strong predictor, participants with limited or no leisure activities reported markedly higher burnout, supporting evidence that recovery experiences buffer occupational stress.[44] Finally, sleep disturbances due to job worries had the most robust association with total burnout, underlining the critical role of restorative sleep in preventing emotional exhaustion and maintaining well-being.[45]

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design captures participants' responses at a single point in time and therefore does not allow for causal inferences or assessment of changes in burnout over time. Second, the study relied on a self-administered, online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, which may have introduced self-selection and response bias. Participation was voluntary, and academicians with stronger opinions or experiences related to burnout may have been more inclined to respond. Additionally, self-reported data are subject to recall bias and social desirability bias, which may have influenced the accuracy of responses. Third, although efforts were made to include academicians from diverse disciplines across India, the sampling approach using email and social media platforms limits control over the sampling frame and may affect the representativeness of the sample. The future studies should use a longitudinal design to track how burnout changes over time during a faculty member's career. Including objective measures along with interviews or focus groups, could provide a clearer picture. Additionally, factors like national education policies, institutional work culture, and social expectations about balancing work and family should be explored in future research.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study shows that burnout among academicians is a serious and widespread problem influenced by many personal and professional factors. The findings revealed that gender, marital status, family type, parental responsibilities, academic rank, educational level, and working sector were significant predictors of burnout. Additionally, long commuting times, stress from publication requirements, bringing work home, skipping meals, and losing sleep due to job worries were key contributors. Conversely, engagement in recreational activities was associated with lower burnout levels. The high levels of burnout, especially in the personal and work-related areas, highlight the need for strong institutional support rather than relying only on individual coping efforts. Colleges and universities should focus on managing workload, providing mentoring opportunities, and ensuring easy access to mental health support to create a healthier work environment. Publication requirements should be supported with proper guidance, protected research time, and teamwork opportunities instead of being treated as strict targets. Similarly, family-friendly measures like flexible working hours, childcare facilities, and support for those managing both home and work responsibilities can help reduce stress. Early career faculty need special attention through mentoring, stress

management, and peer-support programs to help them adjust to academic life. Furthermore, disciplines that involve more emotional and interpersonal interaction such as health and social sciences may require customized support like regular recovery breaks, peer discussions, and awareness about emotional fatigue. Collectively, these measures can help mitigate burnout and promote a healthier, more productive academic culture.

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