

“An Empirical Study on Self-Efficacy as a Moderator Between Job Stress and Burnout Among Teachers of Selected Universities in Gujarat”

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Abstract

Universities play a pivotal role in shaping human capital and national development, with faculty members serving as the cornerstone of educational quality. However, teaching, once considered a low-stress profession, has become increasingly demanding, exposing educators to heightened levels of job stress and burnout. This study has tried to observe the relationship between job stress and burnout, while examining self-efficacy as a moderating factor. Job stress is analyzed through dimensions such as job security, work overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, and work-life balance, whereas burnout is conceptualized using Maslach's three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Self-efficacy, based on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, is considered across academic, research, and coping dimensions.

The study's conceptual findings, derived from random personal and telephonic interactions with faculty members across Gujarat, reveal a strong positive relationship between job stress and burnout. Faculty experiencing higher workloads, time pressures, and administrative constraints reported increased emotional exhaustion and disengagement. However, self-efficacy significantly moderated this relationship, reducing the negative impact of stress on burnout. Faculty with high self-efficacy demonstrated better coping abilities, resilience, and emotional stability, thereby experiencing lower burnout levels. Comparative results indicate that government university faculty generally experience moderate stress but benefit from higher job security and autonomy, which strengthen the moderating role of self-efficacy. Conversely, private university faculty face greater stress due to job insecurity, performance-based pressure, and limited autonomy, which weakens the buffering effect of self-efficacy.

Overall, the conceptual study underscores that self-efficacy functions as a psychological shield that mitigates the detrimental effects of job stress on burnout. Institutional initiatives such as faculty development programs, mentorship, and supportive work environments can enhance self-efficacy, reduce stress, and improve well-being among university faculty. Strengthening these psychological resources is crucial for sustaining motivation, satisfaction, and productivity within Gujarat's higher education system.

Keywords: Job Stress, Employee Burnout, Self-Efficacy, Higher Education, Faculty Well-being, Government and Private Universities, Gujarat, Conceptual study

1. INTRODUCTION

General Background:

The role of universities is very much important for the development of human being; higher educational institutions are responsible to provide competitive human capital to forecast and meet upcoming challenges of a country. Because of the multidimensional role of universities, they supply the lifeblood to society in various ways. So, for the quality of education teachers play an important role in a learning process. Teaching phenomena were once viewed as a low-stress occupation but results from recent studies revealed that university faculty is one of the most stressed occupational groups. This occupational stress is one of the major causes for incapability of employees to respond dynamic requirements.

According to Cooper (2004), Stress is defined by Latin word “string ere” which means “draw tight”. Teachers are

the important pillars of any nation; they are considered as nation builders. For these teachers must be social, economically, physically and socially balanced. Job stress can be defined as an unpleasant condition or state in an organization which negatively affects the individual well-being and performance. Work-related stress is not a new phenomenon, mental or physical illness is the results of this type of stress. Job burnout is a psychological disorder that teachers faced due to continuous stress and pressure, Maslach in 1993 divide burnout into 3 dimensions; emotional exhaustion (it involves the feelings of depression, distress and coping ability), depersonalization (it can be viewed as coping mechanism) and reduce personal accomplishment (It is a 3rd stage and individual decline the feelings of competencies and success, this prevent individual to put his or her full potential). Burnout seems to be a global phenomenon and its context changes from country to country in some country's burnout is considered as a medical diagnose but in some countries, it is considered as non-medical, social labels that carry a stigma in University teachers are stressed out in such environment and can't perform their tasks efficiently. Teaching is a profession but under stressful conditions, it's impossible for teachers to teach students.

University teachers are under heavy demands of HEC for further study and professional growth that is a stressful situation for teachers. Publication demands, job demands these all are creating a stressful environment for university teachers. Job stress, burnout among workers is measured in various other business sectors (especially in health and banking sector) but this effect is missing in university teachers. The objectives of this study are two firstly to measure the level of stress and burnout among public and private sector university teachers and secondly, this study intends whether self-efficacy acts as a moderating variable in the psychological disorder of university teachers.

The teaching profession can be highly stressful, and this stress may lead to reduced job satisfaction, burnout, and poor work performance. Stress is a normal response to upsetting or threatening events and becomes pathological when chronic. Chronic stress can impede day-to-day functioning and emotional balance, and it is a risk factor for developing other psychiatric illnesses, such as anxiety and depression. Prolonged teacher stress negatively correlates with job satisfaction and positively correlates with intending to leave the teaching profession. It may also result in withdrawal behaviour, including physically or psychologically leaving the work setting. Chronic stress may also lead to inappropriate anger and increased alcohol and drug consumption, and it can cause an individual to experience excessive anxiety, mental fatigue, and burnout, while also predicting increased depression. According to Maslach, stress occurs when a person perceives an external demand as exceeding their capability to deal with it. Teacher stress can be associated with demoralization, and a disrupted sense of self-consistency. (Belinda Agyapong)

Stress phenomenon has emerged as focal theme of research in work organisations due to its far-reaching consequences on organizational health and individual well-being. There exists multiplicity of theories and invalidated explanations for the term 'STRESS'. However, there is a general acceptance of the concept of stress as relational in nature, involving a transaction between the individual and the environment. Therefore, a study on stress should embrace two important interacting processes, namely, appraisal and coping. The appraisal process refers to the analysis of the determinants of stress (STRESSORS) and its effect on the individual's physical, psychological, and behavioural well-being (STRAIN). The coping process is nothing but the different ways of dealing with stress. Thus, gaining a greater understanding of the processes related to stress has relevance for employees, organisations, and society. (Saranya A S, January 1999)

Stress Typologies:

The employee in an organisation is not independent in performing his job activities. His performance should satisfy the expectations of people at his workplace. Thus, performance in an organisation not only depends upon the task/job activities and work environment, but also on the "interpersonal connections" established by the employee with those working with him. This is referred to as his "job role". For certain employees, the demands of the job role may threaten to exceed his capabilities leading to "Role Stress".

Organizational Stress refers to the total of the various types of chronic stresses experienced by employees in their organizational role, namely, Role Ambiguity, Role Stagnation, Role Overload, Role Erosion, Role Conflict, Role Isolation, Role Expectation Conflict, Resource Inadequacy, Personal Inadequacy etc.

Job stress can be positive or negative. Some work situations may have positive challenges and excitement, while others are very threatening and anxiety arousing. "Eustress" or positive stress is one where the situation offers an opportunity to the individual to gain something. In its absence the individual lacks the 'edge' necessary for peak performance. Promotions to new jobs make the employees feel anxious about their new work assignments, though they look forward to the additional challenges, rewards, and excitement. In these cases, the new and uncertain job situations create positive stress also called "Eustress" as stated by Hans Selye (1956).

"Distress" or negative stress is associated with heart-disease, alcoholism, drug abuse, marital breakdown, absenteeism, child abuse and a host of other social, physical, organizational and emotional problems. For example, when managers are given major projects to complete under severe time pressure, they feel very tense and nervous

about being unable to get their work done on time. (Saranya, 1999)

BURNOUT:

Burnout is considered a stress-related problem for individuals who work in interpersonally oriented occupations such as healthcare and education. According to Shukla et al., burnout among professionals such as teachers can result from excessive demands on their energy, strength and resources. There is increasing evidence that burnout as a negative stress response represents a risk factor not only for depression but also for cardiovascular and other somatic diseases. Researchers conceptualize burnout as having three interrelated components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.

Emotional exhaustion represents emotional depletion and a loss of energy. Depersonalization is the interpersonal dimension of burnout. It refers to a negative, callous, or excessively detached response to other people. There is evidence that job satisfaction is negatively associated with emotional exhaustion and positively associated with self-perceived accomplishment, but not significantly related to cynicism. Additionally, reduced accomplishment describes the self-evaluation dimension of burnout, including feelings of incompetence and a lack of achievement and productivity at work. Mild burnout involves short-lived irritability, fatigue, worry, or frustration. Moderate burnout has the same symptoms but lasts for at least two weeks, whereas severe burnout may also entail physical ailments such as ulcers, chronic back pain, and migraine headaches. Research suggests that workplace improvements to reduce burnout could prevent adverse sequelae, improve health outcomes, and reduce healthcare expenditures. More systematic research is needed to further understand the factors in the workplace to address burnout and improve teacher health outcomes.

The three dimensions of burnout as defined with the useful resource of Maslach and Jackson (1986, 1998) are:

Emotional exhaustion (EE) that's the primary person stress size (Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter, 2001) refers to "feelings of being emotionally over prolonged and exhausted via one's artwork. It suggests depletion of one's emotional property. Employees revel in worn-out and used up with none supply of replenishment. They lack enough power to face each different day or another man or woman in want".

Depersonalization refers to "a horrific cynical or excessively indifferent reaction to one-of-a-kind people i.e. the recipients of one's provider. It is miles an unfeeling and impersonal reaction, which regularly includes loss of idealism. It usually develops in response to overload of emotional exhaustion. The depersonalization dimension represents the interpersonal size of burnout."

Personal accomplishment refers to "a decline in feelings of competence and productiveness at work. Humans experience a growing experience of inadequacy about their ability to help customers and this can bring about a self-imposed verdict of failure. The non-public accomplishment duration represents the self-evaluation dimension of burnout."

SELF EFFICACY:

Self-efficacy is defined as someone's belief approximately one's functionality to prepare and execute course of movement critical to gain a motive. In different phrases, mother and father with robust efficacy ideals are extra confident of their ability to execute a behaviour pattern. Ideals approximately self- efficacy have a tremendous impact on our goals and emotional reactions. Higher self-efficacy is also related to greater persistence, a trait that permits one to gain corrective opinions that improve our sense of self-efficacy "Self-efficacy refers returned to the self-guarantee humans have in their capabilities that they will achieve success at a given project. Individuals who personal an immoderate diploma of self- efficacy are more likely to strive tough obligations, to persist longer at them, and to region more effort inside the method." self-efficacy in the long run determines how a character behaves, thinks and becomes inspired to be worried with unique roles. It additionally presents students' judgment of functionality to accomplish unique obligations. (Rashmi, 2018)

Self-Efficacy Potentials:

Truely "all people can understand desires they want to carry out; matters they would love to exchange; and topics they would like to attain. The majority additionally recognize that putting their plans into action isn't so easy. Bandura and others have located that an individual's self-efficacy performs a prime function in how dreams, obligations and demanding situations are "approached".

Four Types of Teacher's Self-Efficacy:

Regular with Gibbs (2000), "there are at least four forms of self-efficacy as a teacher, every of that is instrumental in explaining how instructors educate and their willingness to persist despite the fact that the probabilities look like

stacked in competition to them.” They are decided to be essential symptoms of instructor effectiveness.

- i. Behavioural self-efficacy: “as a trainer is the self-notion in a single's capability as an instructor to perform precise actions to cope with specific training conditions.”
- ii. Cognitive self-efficacy: “as an instructor is the self-belief in a single's functionality as an instructor to exercising manipulate over one's wondering especially education conditions.”
- iii. Emotional self-efficacy: “as a trainer is the self-perception in a single's functionality as a trainer to exercise control over one's feelings especially education situations.”
- iv. Cultural self-efficacy “as an instructor is the self-belief in a one's capability as a teacher to perform specific movements in culturally- appropriate approaches in particular teaching situations. This construct remains pretty unresearched.”

These four types of self-efficacy as an instructor interact. Those self- efficacy beliefs are neither constantly collectively distinct nor independent. A powerful instructor typically has a sturdy perception in her capability to exercise manage over her emotions, behaviour and wondering, and also cozy in her ideals approximately her ability to educate effectively in culturally suitable ways. The motive of instructor training is to assist pupil instructors recognize, provide an explanation for and use self- efficacy to mediate what they understand and can do, and how they train.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rashmi (2018) studied burnout among senior secondary school teachers in relation to occupational stress and self-efficacy. The findings showed that higher stress levels led to greater burnout, while higher self-efficacy reduced burnout and acted as a buffer against stress. The study highlights the need for strategies to manage stress and build teacher self-efficacy to improve well-being. Burnout among senior secondary school Teachers in relation to self-efficacy and occupational stress. (Rashmi, 2018)

Furqan (2014) explored how burnout affects role efficacy, professional commitment, teaching attitude, and self-concept among teachers in India. The study found that higher levels of burnout are associated with lower role efficacy (i.e. teachers feeling less effective in their roles), reduced professional commitment, more negative attitudes toward teaching, and poorer self-concept. These findings indicate that burnout doesn't only deplete emotional resources, but also undermines teachers' beliefs about themselves and their dedication to the profession, highlighting the need for interventions that address both psychological well-being and professional identity. (M, 2014)

Rani (2017) examined how burnout and psychological well-being among secondary school teachers are related to organizational commitment, occupational self-efficacy, and personal stress. The study found that teachers with higher personal stress experienced more burnout and poorer psychological well- being. Conversely, stronger organizational commitment and higher occupational self-efficacy were linked to lower burnout rates and better well-being. These findings highlight the importance of boosting self-efficacy and commitment while reducing personal stress among teachers to support their mental health and job satisfaction. (Rani, 2017)

Vasanth Kumar, V. (2020) conducted a study titled “A study on stress and job burnout among the college teachers in Dharmapuri District”. The research found that college teachers experiencing high levels of stress also report significant job burnout. Key stressors identified include work overload, lack of administrative support, and role ambiguity. The study underscores that reducing these stressors and improving institutional support mechanisms are essential to lower burnout among college faculty. (V, 2020)

Aggarwal, Ritu (2011) studied “Occupational Stress of Academic Faculty in Relation to Their Emotional Intelligence, Self-Efficacy, Organizational Commitment and Coping Strategies”. The thesis found that academic faculty who possess higher emotional intelligence and greater self-efficacy tend to experience lower levels of occupational stress. Strong organizational commitment was also linked with reduced stress, while effective coping strategies were important in managing stress. These findings suggest that enhancing emotional intelligence, boosting self-efficacy, reinforcing organizational commitment, and promoting adaptive coping can be key in reducing stress among faculty. (Ritu, 2011)

Tripathi, Vibha (2013) conducted “A study of role stress burnout and coping style of teacher educators”. The study found that teacher educators facing high levels of role stress (such as ambiguity, overload, and conflict in their roles) showed significantly higher burnout. It also revealed that the coping style adopted by teacher educators plays a key role in mediating the effect of role stress on burnout—those using more adaptive coping styles experienced less severe burnout (Tripathi, 2013).

Savneet (2012) conducted a study entitled “Study of burnout and work engagement in relation to occupational stress, ways of coping, teacher efficacy, spiritual well-being and emotional intelligence among college teachers”. She found that among college teachers, higher occupational stress was associated with more burnout, while teachers with greater

teacher efficacy, stronger spiritual well-being, higher emotional intelligence, and more effective coping strategies showed higher levels of work engagement and lower burnout. The study suggests that enhancing emotional intelligence, strengthening coping mechanisms, and fostering spiritual well-being are useful levers to reduce burnout and improve engagement in college faculty. (Savneet, 2012)

Poonam (2016) conducted a study titled “A Study on Occupational Stress With Reference to Self- Efficacy and Work Environment of Special School Teachers”. The findings showed that special school teachers who have lower self-efficacy experience higher occupational stress, especially when their work environment is poor (e.g. lack of resources, support, or conducive infrastructure). Conversely, a positive work environment and stronger self-efficacy are associated with lower stress levels. The study suggests that improving workplace conditions and enhancing teachers’ self-beliefs could help reduce stress among special school educators. (Poonam, 2016)

Existing studies have examined job stress and burnout separately, but there is limited research exploring how self-efficacy can act as a moderating factor that buffers the negative impact of stress. Moreover, few comparative studies have been conducted between government and private universities in the context of Gujarat, where organizational culture, workload distribution, and support systems can differ significantly. This gap in knowledge prompted the need for a focused investigation that not only studies the relationship between job stress and burnout but also evaluates how strengthening self-efficacy can mitigate these effects and improve faculty performance.

This research paper has been developed to examine the relationship between job stress and employee burnout among faculty members of government and private universities in Gujarat with random

faculties and understood that self-efficacy acting as important variable. Job stress is conceptualized through five dimensions: job security, role conflict, work–life balance, work overload, and role ambiguity. Employee burnout is defined using Maslach’s model and includes emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment. Self-efficacy, derived from Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory, is included as a moderator and measured across three dimensions: academic self-efficacy, research self-efficacy, and coping self-efficacy.

This framework explains how job stress contributes to burnout and how higher levels of self-efficacy can buffer this negative effect. By comparing faculty from government and private universities, the model highlights sector-wise differences and provides a foundation for strategies to enhance self- efficacy, reduce stress, and improve faculty well-being.

3. Primary Objectives:

- 1) To assess the level of job stress among faculty members of government and private universities of Gujarat.
- 2) To assess the level of employee burnout among faculty members of government and private universities of Gujarat.
- 3) To examine the relationship between job stress and employee burnout among faculty members of government and private universities of Gujarat.

4. Conceptual Results and Interpretation

The research has made personal and Telephonic talk randomly with faculty members of private university and Government university of Gujrat state and findings of this study with respondents reveal that self-efficacy plays a significant moderating role in the relationship between job stress and employee burnout among university faculty members. The comparative analysis between government and private university faculty indicates notable differences in the nature and strength of this relationship.

1. Job stress and Burnout Relationship, the study conceptually establishes that higher job stress leads to higher levels of burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Faculty members experiencing heavy workloads, time pressure, administrative demands, and lack of institutional support are more likely to feel drained and detached from their professional roles.
2. Role of Self-Efficacy as a Moderator Self-efficacy — defined as an individual’s belief in their ability to manage tasks and overcome challenges — is found to weaken the negative impact of job stress on burnout. Faculty members with high self-efficacy are more confident in handling academic responsibilities, adapting to institutional demands, and maintaining work-life balance. Consequently, they experience lower
3. Levels of burnout despite facing stress. Conversely, those with low self-efficacy tend to perceive stressors as overwhelming, which amplifies emotional exhaustion and feelings of inadequacy.
4. Comparison between government and Private universities Faculty: Faculty members in government institutions reported moderate stress levels but higher job security and institutional stability, which tend to buffer

burnout. Their self-efficacy often stems from longer tenure, experience, and perceived autonomy in academic decision-making. Therefore, the moderating role of self-efficacy is stronger in this group.

5. Private University Faculty: Faculty members in private universities experience higher job stress due to performance-based evaluations, job insecurity, competitive pressure, and frequent administrative monitoring. Even though some may possess high self-efficacy, organizational factors like workload intensity and limited autonomy weaken its buffering effect. Thus, self-efficacy moderates the stress-burnout link less effectively in private universities.

The findings suggest that self-efficacy acts as a psychological shield, influencing how stress is perceived and managed. Its presence fosters resilience, optimism, and effective coping strategies, leading to reduced burnout symptoms. This emphasizes the importance of institutional interventions such as faculty development programs, mentoring, and counseling sessions aimed at strengthening self-efficacy beliefs.

6. Integrated Conceptual Model

Job Stress → Burnout: Positive relationship (stress increases burnout).

Self-Efficacy → Burnout: Negative relationship (high self-efficacy reduces burnout).

Self-Efficacy × Job Stress → Burnout: Self-efficacy moderates (buffers) the relationship between job stress and burnout.

Institution Type: Acts as a contextual factor influencing the strength of moderation — stronger in government universities, weaker in private ones.

Conclusion:

The conceptual outcome of the study highlights that self-efficacy is a vital psychological resource that helps faculty members mitigate the adverse effects of job stress on burnout. While both government and private university faculty face occupational stress, those with stronger self-efficacy beliefs demonstrate better emotional regulation, adaptability, and job satisfaction. Enhancing self-efficacy through institutional support, professional development, and recognition can significantly reduce burnout and improve overall faculty well-being across Gujarat's higher education system.

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LINKS

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