

BURNOUT OF THE EDUCATORS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: ANALYSIS OF INFLUENCING FACTORS

Julija Mironova¹, Mg.sc.admin./ doctoral student;

Biruta Sloka², Dr.oec./ professor and leading researcher and **Elita Jermolajeva**³, Dr.oec.

^{1, 2}University of Latvia;

³Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies

Abstract. Since the concept of burnout emerged in 1970's, the scientific discussion on it is still continuing. Educators follow medical workers in the list of the professions most affected by the burnout. Social nature of the work of the educators of higher education institutions, high workload and additional duties generate stress, which may become a burnout, if not properly managed.

The problem statement – there are many factors in the scientific discussion stated by authors as the ones influencing burnout.

The aim of the research is to analyse different factors mentioned in the scientific literature in order to determine their relation to the symptoms of burnout and compare with real situation of academic staff in higher education institutions.

In the research, the following methods were used: the analysis of scientific publications and previous conducted research and a survey on the aspects related to burnout of educators in higher education institutions.

Main results indicate that COVID-19 pandemic has influenced the situation of academic staff in higher education institutions.

The main findings of the paper reveal that burnout aspects are influencing members of academic staff in many higher education institutions, especially there where information about different support aspects is less available.

Key words: burnout, higher education, educators, stress.

JEL code: A23; C83; I23; I25; O15

Introduction

Since the concept of burnout emerged in 1970s, scientific discussion on it continues in different fields and world-wide. Most of the professions are influenced by burnout and educators follow medical workers in the list of the professions most affected by the burnout. Social nature of the work of the educators of higher education institutions, high load and additional duties generate stress, which may become a burnout, if not properly managed.

The Problem statement – there are many factors in the scientific discussion stated by authors of academic research as the ones influencing burnout.

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In the research, the following methods were used: analysis of scientific publication and previous conducted research and survey on the aspects related to burnout of educators in higher education institutions. For most of the analysed aspects, the authors applied evaluation scale 1-10 to get a deeper analysis of evaluations assigned by educators. Survey results are analysed by main indicators of descriptive statistics: indicators of central tendency or location (arithmetic mean, mode, median) and indicators of dispersion or variability (range, standard deviation, standard error of mean), cross-tabulations, testing of statistical hypotheses by t – test and analysis of variance – ANOVA, as well as correlation analysis.

Researchers have found several factors influencing burnout, among which many researchers have indicated support of the institution and supervisor as very important factor (Singh et al., 2021; Shahzad et al., 2022; Lau et al., 2023) to feel well at a workplace and not be influenced so much by the

¹ E-mail: Julija.Mironova@gmail.com

² E-mail: Biruta.Sloka@lu.lv

³ E-mail: Elita.Jermolajeva@gmail.com

burnout. This aspect is considered as important in many countries around the globe, including the USA (Carrell et al., 2022). Several other aspects are considered as important, too (Braslina et al., 2021; Batraga et al., 2019; Seimuskane et al., 2017; Mironova & Sloka, 2022). Namely, engagement is one of the most important aspects to lower or avoid burnout (Raina & Khatri, 2015; Paul & Jena, 2022) as moral support from the supervisors and the motivating academic staff (Lau et al., 2022) in their involvement and satisfaction of the work as factors reducing the feelings of burnout. Researchers have found that university staff affiliation of respective institution is an important aspect for burnout lowering (Pemberton & Kisamore, 2023; Mula-Falcón et al., 2022; Mohammed et al., 2020; Pyhältö et al., 2023). Technologies and their successful application are important (Abu Farha et al., 2022; Chan, et al., 2018) as well as performance management has a big influence (Kairuz et al., 2022) on academic staff burnout level. Also, eating habits (Chui et al., 2020) have a significant influence on burnout. Furthermore, ethical aspects are considered as very important (Julmi et al, 2022) as well as contract time (Kovaleski & Arghode, 2021), which can lower the level of burnout. Several activities are suggested to recover (Semeijn et al., 2019) as well as prevent (Stuckey, et al., 2019) burnout. Students are also influenced (Kuittinen & Meriläinen, 2011), and there are suggested activities to prevent burnout for them. Also, online studies' influence on burnout have been evaluated in some researchers' works (Wu et al., 2022; Dixit & Upadhyay, 2021). Several professions have alike aspects for burnout (Byrne, et al., 2013).

Researchers have indicated that males and females are reacting differently on burnout and have different views (Gardiner & Finn 2023) on burnout influencing factors.

Research results and discussion

Taking into account the findings of the researchers reflected in their publications, the authors performed an empirical study by asking university academic staff for evaluations on the questions: "How supportive your organization is for your professional development?" and "How fair your workload and reward are in HEI in comparison with other industries?". Main statistical indicators of descriptive statistics on evaluations of analysed aspects assigned by the members of academic staff are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

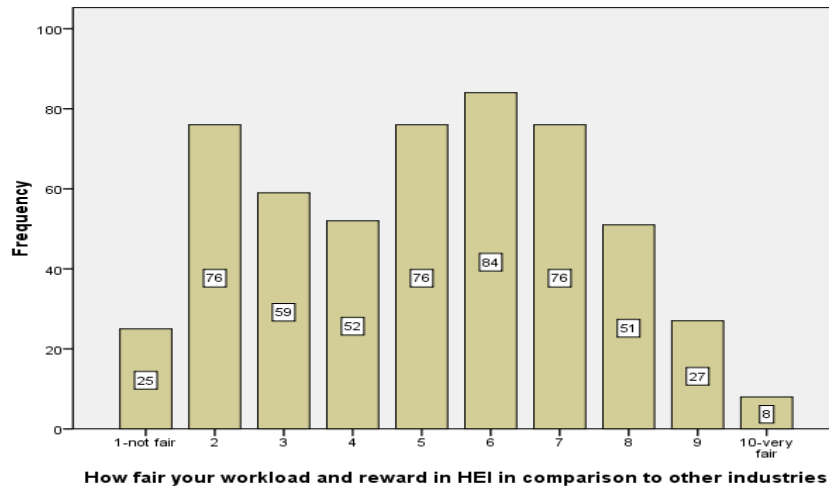
Main statistical indicators of descriptive statistics of academic staff evaluations

Statistical indicators		How fair your workload and reward are in HEI in comparison with other industries?	How supportive your organization is for your professional development?
N	Valid	534	551
	Missing	21	4
Mean		5.07	6.49
Standard Error of Mean		0.100	0.099
Median		5	7
Mode		6	8
Standard Deviation		2.312	2.317
Range		9	9
Minimum		1	1
Maximum		10	10

Source: author's calculations based on Julija Mironova created and conducted survey in 2023, evaluation scale 1-10, where 1- lowest evaluation; 10 – highest evaluation, n=555

The data indicate that arithmetic mean of the evaluations provided by the members of academic staff on "How fair your workload and reward in HEI in comparison to other industries" is just 5.07, which means

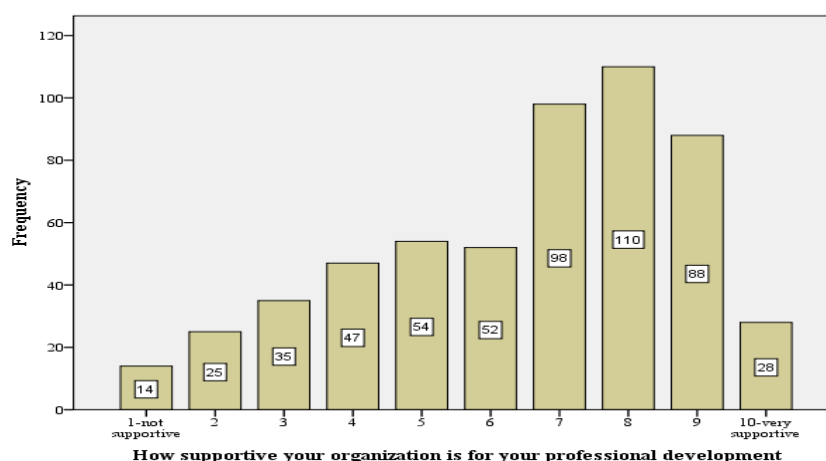
that representatives of higher education institutions think that the workload and remuneration are not very high in comparison with other industries. Half of the respondents have assigned evaluation 5 or lower and half of the respondents have evaluated this factor by 5 or higher, which is characterised by median. The data indicate that most often assigned evaluation was 6 (characterised by mode). Respondents have used all evaluation scale – distribution of evaluations is presented in Figure 1.



Source: author's calculations based on Julija Mironova conducted survey, n=555

Fig. 1. Distribution of evaluations on the question "How fair your workload in HEI is in comparison with other industries?"

The data indicate that the evaluations on the analysed question "How fair your workload and reward are in HEI in comparison with other industries?" were very different. Main indicators of descriptive statistics on the question "How supportive your organization is for your professional development?" indicate that the arithmetic mean of the evaluations was 6.49 with most often given evaluation 8 on this analysed aspect (characterised by mode); half of the respondents assigned evaluation 7 or less and half of respondents assigned evaluation 7 or more – characterised by median. In the evaluations, all evaluation scale was covered. Distribution of evaluations by respondents on this statement is revealed in Figure 2.



Source: author's calculations based on Julija Mironova conducted survey, n=555

Fig. 2. Distribution of evaluations on the question "How supportive your organisation is for your professional development?"

As it was indicated in several scientific publications that male and female members of academic staff have different views on the aspects related to burnout in higher education. We have tested the differences

of arithmetic means of the evaluations by gender by t-test. Main indicators of descriptive statistics by gender as group statistics are included in Table 2.

Table 2

Main statistical indicators of descriptive statistics of academic staff evaluations by gender

Evaluated aspect	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean
How fair your workload and reward in HEI are in comparison with other industries?	male	231	5.21	2.299	0.151
	female	269	4.93	2.333	0.142
How supportive your organization is for your professional development?	male	234	6.42	2.406	0.157
	female	281	6.62	2.224	0.133

Source: author's calculations based on Julija Mironova created and conducted survey in 2023, evaluation scale 1-10, where 1- lowest evaluation; 10 – highest evaluation, n=555

Arithmetic means of the evaluations are different for male and female evaluations, but whether they differ statistically significant was tested by t-test on arithmetic means of independent samples. Results of t-test on testing statistical hypotheses on differences of arithmetic means on evaluations of the analysed aspects by gender are revealed in Table 3.

Table 3

Main statistical indicators of t-test of independent samples on academic staff evaluations by gender

Evaluated aspects	Variances	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
How fair your workload and reward in HEI are in comparison with other industries	Equal variances assumed	0.,256	0.613	1.321	498	0.187	0.275	0.208
	Equal variances not assumed			1.323	488.7	0.186	0.275	0.208
How supportive your organization is for your professional development	Equal variances assumed	1.563	0.212	-0.964	513	0.336	-0.197	0.204
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.957	480.2	0.339	-0.197	0.206

Source: author's calculations based on Julija Mironova created and conducted survey in 2023, evaluation scale 1-10, where 1- lowest evaluation; 10 – highest evaluation, n=555

The data indicate that arithmetic means of the evaluations by academic staff by gender on both analysed aspects differ, but the differences in evaluations do not differ statistically significantly by high probability.

Academic publications have indicated that the age group has also influence on different aspects related to academic work, therefore there were made calculations using different statistical indicators of descriptive statistics for evaluations on "How supportive your organization is for your professional development?" and "How fair your workload and reward are in HEI in comparison with other industries?" by age group, and the results are reflected in Table 4.

Table 4

Main statistical indicators of descriptive statistics of academic staff evaluations by the age group

Age group	Statistical indicator	Analysed aspects	
		How fair your workload and reward in HEI are in comparison with other industries	How supportive your organization is for your professional development
less than 30	Mean	5.35	7.33
	N	17	18
	Standard Deviation	2.422	2.000
31-40	Mean	5.06	6.62
	N	131	134
	Standard Deviation	2.42	2.155
41-50	Mean	5.18	6.59
	N	154	160
	Standard Deviation	2.343	2.286
51-60	Mean	4.78	6.09
	N	136	139
	Standard Deviation	2.283	2.490
61-70	Mean	5.45	6.62
	N	77	79
	Standard Deviation	2.326	2.249
71-80	Mean	4.56	6.39
	N	16	18
	Standard Deviation	2.366	2.615
more than 80	Mean	5.00	8.00
	N	1	1
	Standard Deviation	.	.
Total	Mean	5.07	6.50
	N	532	549
	Standard Deviation	2.303	2.310

Source: author's calculations based on Julija Mironova created and conducted survey in 2023, evaluation scale 1-10, where 1- lowest evaluation; 10 – highest evaluation, n=555

The data indicate that the evaluations by age group are different but whether they differ statistically significantly is tested by analysis of variance ANOVA, and the results are revealed in Table 5.

Table 5

Main statistical indicators of ANOVA of independent samples on academic staff evaluations by the age group

Analysed aspect	Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
How fair your workload and reward in HEI are in comparison with other industries	Between Groups	30.070	6	5.012	0.944	0.463
	Within Groups	2786.071	525	5.307		
	Total	2816.141	531			
How supportive your organization is for your professional development	Between Groups	42.205	6	7.034	1.322	0.245
	Within Groups	2883.034	542	5.319		
	Total	2925.239	548			

Source: author's calculations based on Julija Mironova created and conducted survey in 2023, evaluation scale 1-10, where 1- lowest evaluation; 10 – highest evaluation, n=555

The results of the analysis of variance ANOVA indicate that differences of evaluations by age group are not statistically significant.

The authors performed analysis of evaluations by both analysed aspects in relation to teaching experience, for which the main results are included in Table 6.

Table 6

Main statistical indicators of descriptive statistics of academic staff evaluations by teaching experience in years group

Teaching experience in years	Statistical indicators	Analysed aspect	
		How fair your workload and reward in HEI are in comparison with other industries	How supportive your organization is for your professional development
less than 1	Mean	5.88	7.60
	N	8	10
	Standard Deviation	2.949	2.119
1-3	Mean	4.64	6.73
	N	25	26
	Standard Deviation	1.934	2.523
4-6	Mean	5.44	6.69
	N	48	48
	Standard Deviation	2.192	2.344
7-10	Mean	4.83	6.11
	N	53	54
	Standard Deviation	2.268	2.345
11-15	Mean	5.44	6.90
	N	79	81
	Standard Deviation	2.469	2.160
16-20	Mean	4.86	6.62
	N	86	89
	Standard Deviation	2.208	1.963
21-25	Mean	5.06	6.21
	N	94	95
	Standard Deviation	2.233	2.352
26-30	Mean	5.02	6.37
	N	52	54
	Standard Deviation	2.586	2.797
31-35	Mean	5.20	6.40
	N	45	47
	Standard Deviation	2.138	2.071
more than 35	Mean	4.77	6.20
	N	43	46
	Standard Deviation	2.534	2.613
Total	Mean	5.07	6.49
	N	533	550
	Standard Deviation	2.314	2.319

Source: author's calculations based on Julija Mironova created and conducted survey in 2023, evaluation scale 1-10, where 1- lowest evaluation; 10 – highest evaluation, n=555

The data indicate that the evaluations by teaching experience in age group are different but whether they differ statistically significantly is tested by analysis of variance ANOVA, the results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Main statistical indicators of ANOVA of independent samples on academic staff evaluations by teaching experience group

Analysed aspect	Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
How fair your workload and reward in HEI are in comparison with other industries	Between Groups	38.936	9	4.326	0.805	0.611
	Within Groups	2809.211	523	5.371		
	Total	2848.146	532			
How supportive your organization is for your professional development	Between Groups	51.132	9	5.681	1.058	0.393
	Within Groups	2900.323	540	5.371		
	Total	2951.455	549			

Source: author's calculations based on Julija Mironova created and conducted survey in 2023, evaluation scale 1-10, where 1- lowest evaluation; 10 – highest evaluation, n=555

The results of analysis of variance ANOVA indicate that differences of evaluations by teaching experience in age group are not statistically significant.

Table 8

Main statistical indicators of correlation analysis on academic staff evaluations, gender, age group and teaching experience group

Analysed aspect	Statistical indicator	How fair your workload and reward in HEI in comparison to other industries	How supportive your organization is for your professional development	Gender	Age group	Teaching experience in years
How fair your workload and reward in HEI in comparison to other industries	Pearson Correlation	1	0.498**	-0.059	-0.010	-0.031
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.187	0.824	0.473
	N	534	532	500	532	533
How supportive your organization is for your professional development	Pearson Correlation	0.498**	1	0.043	-0.055	-0.071
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.336	0.200	0.095
	N	532	551	515	549	550
Gender	Pearson Correlation	-0.059	0.043	1	-0.087*	-0.066
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.187	0,336		0.048	0.132
	N	500	515	517	516	517
Age group	Pearson Correlation	-0.010	-0.055	-0.087*	1	0.769**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.824	0.200	0.048		0.000
	N	532	549	516	551	550
Teaching experience in years	Pearson Correlation	-0.031	-0.071	-0.066	0.769**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.473	0.095	0.132	0.000	
	N	533	550	517	550	552

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

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: author's calculations based on Julija Mironova created and conducted survey in 2023, evaluation scale 1-10, where 1- lower evaluation; 10 – highest evaluation, n=555

Main statistical indicators of correlation analysis on evaluations "How supportive your organization is for your professional development" and "How fair your workload and reward in HEI are in comparison with other industries", gender, age group and teaching experience time are presented in Table 8.

The results of correlation analysis indicate that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between evaluations "How supportive your organization is for your professional development" and "How fair your workload and reward in HEI in comparison to other industries" and there is no correlation of those evaluations and gender, no correlation of those evaluations and age group and no correlation of those evaluations and teaching experience time.

Conclusions, proposals, recommendations

- 1) Burnout issues in higher education institutions are of special interest for researchers world-wide with attention to different aspects influencing burnout and how it is evaluated by academic staff by gender, by age group and by teaching experience as well as by other factors.
- 2) Main results indicate that COVID-19 pandemic has influenced the situation of academic staff in higher education institutions, and the factors influencing burn-out differ.
- 3) Burnout aspects are influencing members of academic staff in many higher education institutions, especially there where information about different support aspects is less available.
- 4) The evaluations of academic staff on the question "How supportive your organization is for your professional development" are relatively low, but they significantly differ by gender, by age group and by teaching experience; however, those differences are not statistically significant.
- 5) The evaluations of academic staff on "How fair your workload and reward in HEI are in comparison with other industries" are relatively high, but they significantly differ by gender, by age group and by teaching experience; however, those differences are not statistically significant.
- 6) There is a statistically significant positive correlation between evaluations "How supportive your organization is for your professional development" and "How fair your workload and reward in HEI in comparison to other industries", and there is no correlation of those evaluations and gender, no correlation of those evaluations and age group and no correlation of those evaluations and teaching experience time.
- 7) Authors' recommendation for higher education establishments is to note the current research results and support academic staff to avoid burn-out and involve them more in decision-making.

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