Understanding the Complexity of Managerial Burnout: Proposition for Empirical Research

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Abstract: This article highlights research investigating the potential causes of job burnout among human resources leaders that need significant attention, similar to other managers and professionals across the industry. The human resource leaders, who serve as the gatekeepers of the corporate organisation's staff, play a crucial role in balancing the potential of human capital; thus, their emotional and spiritual depths are vital. Emotions play a pivotal role, and failing to regulate them effectively can frequently result in different types of outbursts, which can impact the business and its stakeholders. We evaluate emotional and spiritual intelligence and emotional labour techniques from a paradigmatic perspective to understand how various emotions manifest in the workplace and may contribute to burnout. We propose a framework highlighting the incorporation of Emotional Contagion Theory in examining the factors leading to job burnout in business organisations. According to the emotional contagion theory, studying job burnout and its contributing factors provides valuable insights into mitigating burnout and bringing out people's best potential to achieve desirable outcomes. This article has mentioned the possibilities for researchers and human resource professionals to explore various aspects of job burnout and establish connections between different factors. We aim to support future research and enhance the adaptability of organisations in understanding the intricate yet influential concepts of emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, and emotional labour methods to reduce job-associated burnout.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, emotional labour strategies, human resources professional, job burnout, spiritual intelligence

1.0 Introduction

The business environment challenges recently brought about by the swift dissemination of COVID-19 can be attributed to an unforeseen shift in organisational work ecosystems, affecting enterprises of all sizes and industries. The human resource (HR) leaders' work cycle has become more challenging in ensuring balanced internal labour movements and smooth work systems despite uncountable business turmoils. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic has thrust organisations into unknown terrain and generated one of the most volatile work situations. Organisations abruptly shifted from addressing recruitment, selection, and retention difficulties to abandoned workstations and grim job loss predictions. Several firms halted their hiring processes or scaled back their recruitment efforts. They faced additional difficulties as employees, particularly those with pre-existing health issues, left their jobs sooner than expected due to challenges and concerns related to COVID-19. There has been a visible and substantial decline in the global labour force participation rate. The convergence of these elements presented an immediate and potentially enduring obstacle in implementing sustainable HR initiatives to bolster organisational functioning and maintain competitiveness amidst business challenges. HR leaders should provide increased assistance in response to the rise in workplace stressors, such as workplace alterations, business reorganisation, and changing job needs (Piwowar-Sulej, 2021). Scholars in the medical field have demonstrated that burnout has led to notable increases in attrition, counterproductive work behaviour, and a detrimental impact on organisational culture. A similar situation is experienced by other industries, too.

Furthermore, burnout prevention within business and service organisations lacks sufficient priority, as evidenced by previous studies (Gimenez Lozano et al.,2021; Sporer, 2021). Determining the impact of burnout on any level of employment is significant, and the research efforts present. Perhaps looking into potential job-specific burnout focusing on HR leaders is also undoubtedly crucial since this group of leaders are professionals who serve as gatekeepers of internal human potential. As part of servicing employees, HR leaders also need attention and monitoring that help identify problems and suggest prompt solutions (Campos et al., 2021; Edú-Valsania et al., 2022; Vignoli et al., 2021). Implementing programs that specifically target the reduction of burnout and provide training on skills to recognise and address burnout can have a positive impact on various aspects, including enhancing workplace culture, boosting satisfaction levels, reducing employee turnover, minimising the financial burden associated with workplace unwellness, and improving overall organisational satisfaction (Bianchi & Schonfeld, 2021). Studies on various manifestations of burnout among employees are accessible. However, there is a shortage of studies regarding emotional labour, individual characteristics such

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as emotional and spiritual intelligence, and burnout, particularly among HR leaders within organisations, sectors, or industries.

Research in individual psychology and literature on organisational behaviour highlights the significance of distinct qualities, such as emotional intelligence (EQ) and spiritual intelligence (SQ), in the workplace. These attributes directly impact employees' work-related behaviours and attitudes, including their ability to manage work stress, job satisfaction, career choices, and leadership. For example, Badu et al. (2020), Li and Xie (2020), Pietraszewski (2020), and Setiana et al. (2021) discussed the connectivity of relevant factors contributing to job burnout in their studies. In addition, some research has documented the correlation between emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, emotional labour, and burnout (Jeung & Chang, 2021; Ogunsola et al., 2020; Pishghadam et al., 2022; Silbaugh et al., 2021). However, the outcomes are inconclusive; studies conducted in many cultures and work environments still have a shortage of studies on forecasting individual characteristics (EQ and SQ) for HR leaders, which include their direct and indirect burnout. Unattended burnout among HR leaders may result in an imbalance in human potential management and development, leading to a decline in performance.

In line with this discussion, it is also essential to highlight the Emotional Contagion Theory (ECT), proposed by Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Rapson in 1994, which provides insight into the underlying mechanisms that facilitate the unconscious transmission of emotions from one person to another. ECT has been extensively employed as the conceptual framework to predict the transfusion of burnout from one partner to another within a team or workgroup at the individual level. Therefore, although emotional contagion processes are likely only implicit and automatic, the ultimate transmission of emotions may influenced by several circumstances, especially conscious ones. Cropanzano, Johnson, and Lambert (2020) emphasised the need to differentiate types of emotional contagion: the primitive, implied, and implicit means, which are mobilised by unconscious, instinctive motor mimicry, and the explicit techniques that go beyond these and regulate human interactions.

In addition, Bakker and Schaufeli (2000) argue that contagion can also occur through a rational cognitive process of adapting to or distancing oneself from the emotions of others. This scenario arises when an individual attempts to mentally perceive and experience the circumstance and the corresponding emotions. Furthermore, they contend that this phenomenon is more prevalent among HR leaders who uphold human services, typically characterised by a certain degree of empathy for others. The research framework presented in this article investigates how individual differences in aspects of spiritual and emotional intelligence impact emotional labour, which serves as a precursor to burnout. Additionally, it explores and provides directions on whether individual differences influence the contagion effect on spiritual and emotional intelligence. This scientific endeavour can potentially address the deficiencies in the ECT effectively and supports ECT's strengths in setting the research agenda. Efficiently addressing burnout and receiving exceptional support from the management team can restore business prosperity and facilitate a smoother transition for the workforce in the complex world of work. In the following sections, we discuss the potential causes of burnout and present the research hypothesis and framework for scientific investigation.

2.0 Proposed Hypotheses

The association between EQ and burnout is supported by theoretical foundations and empirical data across several dimensions and contexts (McCallum et al., 2022; Lucas-Mangas et al., 2022; Han et al., 2022; Silbaugh et al., 2021; Xie et al., 2021; Tesi, 2021). Following the significant empirical support, we suggest research identifying significant correlations between EQ characteristics and Burnout among HR leaders. The development of burnout condition may centre on the comprehension of emotional information. For instance, experiencing emotional fatigue can lead to emotional exhaustion, harbouring unfavourable thoughts towards vulnerable individuals, which can result in depersonalisation, and dissatisfaction with one's job as an HR gatekeeper might indicate a decline in personal accomplishment. Therefore, the presence or absence of burnout is determined by emotional and intellectual functioning, and there is a negative correlation between EQ and Burnout among HR leaders. Furthermore, the anticipated proposal aims to uncover higher scores on the dimensions of EQ that correspond to more substantial scores on work-related and client-related dimensions and higher scores on the personal component of burnout. Hence, the hypothesis posits that H1: There exists an inverse correlation between EQ that encapsulates four magnitudes: self-emotion evaluation, other's emotion appraisal, use of emotion, and management of emotion and burnout.

A limited number of empirical studies have examined the correlation between SQ and burnout (Pishghadam et al., 2022). Based on extensive literature analysis and empirical evidence, it has been established that there is a negative correlation between spirituality and burnout. Therefore, it can be inferred that there is an inverse association between SQ and the burnout condition. Studies related to burnout are not new, but they remain relevant, and now, burnout is associated with mental health. A few decades ago, according to Pines and Aronson (1988), the fundamental reason for burnout was our inherent desire to have a sense of purpose in life

and to feel that our actions were valuable, significant, and even heroic. Bulka (1984) posited that the self-transcendence feature of spirituality could serve as a crucial factor in mitigating the adverse effects of burnout. Personal meaning formation serves as a coping mechanism by helping individuals discover significance and purpose within a distressing situation, hence reducing the adverse impact of a stressor (King & DeCicco, 2009).

Regarding the extension of the conscious state, many adaptive applications have revealed connections through compressed physiological stress scales (Alexander et al., 1989). Nevertheless, due to the scarcity of previous empirical research that supports the associations between the variables of SQ and the dimensions of burnout, the specific impact of individual SQ subscales on the various magnitudes of burnout remains unresolved. Therefore, it is postulated that H2: There exists an inverse correlation between SQ (critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, transcendental consciousness, and conscious state extension) and burnout.

According to the experts, limited empirical research examines the relationship between SQ and EQ. On the other hand, theoretical hypotheses have identified SQ as a fundamental skill, a broad element that influences and directs other talents (Ling et al., 2020; Vasconcelos, 2020). More precisely, several researchers have claimed that SQ affects EQ, as indicated by studies conducted by Hosseini et al. (2010), Kaur et al. (2013), and Zohar & Marshall (2000). Due to the absence of previous empirical research supporting the connections between SQ and EQ dimensions, the question of which specific SQ subscales affect EQ dimensions remains unanswered. The third hypothesis offered is H3: A positive correlation exists between the measurements of SQ and EQ.

Based on Wong and Law's (2002) theoretical framework, persons with high EQ should possess the necessary skills to regulate emotion effectively. This enables them to adhere to organisational display norms more quickly and efficiently. Individuals who thrive in the initial two dimensions will possess a heightened awareness of their emotions and those of their clients or stakeholders. Consequently, they will acknowledge the need to participate in experiential learning to meet display rules and deliver a pleasant service experience for the customer or stakeholder. Cote (2005) identified initial findings that support the association between EQ and the practice of deep acting, one of the components of EL. He explained that individuals with high EQ anticipate engaging in profound emotional expression during interpersonal interactions. The EL techniques have a differential impact on individuals' performance and well-being. EQ enables an individual to adapt their attitude to the environment effectively (Bayighomog & Arasli, 2022). Hence, we propose to identify substantial relationships between EQ and EL.

According to Grandey (2000), variations in personal characteristics and the display of emotions affect whether individuals must actively regulate their feelings. Previous studies have demonstrated that individuals tend to experience a sense of connection, regardless of whether they mimic the emotions of others in the workplace. However, it remains unclear whether publicly modifying one's mood has the same effect (Cottingham, 2022; Hwang & Park, 2022). Skrzypińska (2021) concluded that individuals with high SQ tend to feel good emotions more frequently. As a result, they may have fewer needs to engage in surface acting and are more inclined to authentically express their instinctively perceived emotions, known as deep acting. In contrast, persons with high levels of neuroticism feel unpleasant emotions more frequently, which may lead them to engage in surface acting and reduce the likelihood of expressing instinctual feelings. At this juncture, we hypothesise the following:

H4: A direct correlation exists between the dimensions of EQ and EL, specifically regarding deep and surface acting.

H5: A direct correlation exists between the dimensions of SQ and EL

Wharton (1999) has found that engaging in EL increases the likelihood of experiencing burnout and contributes to negative associations in certain circumstances. According to Ha, Jae-Hwan, and Ha (2021), the impact of surface acting on burnout is more pronounced than that of deep acting. In their study, Silbaugh, Barker, and Arghode (2021) found a strong association between surface-acting and burnout. In contrast, deep-acting showed a practically negative correlation among a sample of school principals in experiential research. Research on EL suggests that surface-acting is more likely to result in adverse effects such as depersonalisation and emotional exhaustion, while deep-acting is associated with positive outcomes such as personal accomplishment and emotional well-being (Adams & Mastracci, 2020; Jeung & Chang, 2021; Lartey et al., 2020). In addition, studies on various categories of human support service professionals, such as promoters, frontline customer service representatives, flight attendants, teachers, medical staff, and security personnel, have yielded varied results regarding EL strategies, namely deep acting and surface acting, concerning burnout (Bodenheimer & Shuster, 2020).

Studies indicate a negative correlation between Burnout and EQ, as persons with more remarkable EQ have superior emotional regulation and adaptability in intricate social situations (Silbaugh et al., 2021; Sanchez-Gomez & Breso, 2020). A person with a significant level of EQ can effectively regulate their emotions, avoid

detachment, prevent depersonalisation, and benefit from difficult situations (Obeid et al., 2020; Fteiha & Awwad, 2020). The process of altering emotions to mitigate the symptoms of burnout is referred to as the deep-acting component of EL (Hochschild, 2003). Studies have found that deep acting positively correlates with professional efficacy, negatively correlates with cynicism, and not emotional tiredness (Brotheridge, 2006a; 2006b; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Hochschild, 2003). Nevertheless, surface acting relates to many burnout manifestations (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Hochschild, 2003). The specific sort of EL conducted directly affects the burnout level encountered. Research suggests that EQ impacts the type of EL employed (Brotheridge, 2006a; 2006b; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Hochschild, 2003). Hence, it is crucial to ascertain if the specific type of EL conducted influences the inverse relationship between EQ and the level of burnout encountered by HR leaders in any organisation. Individuals with high EQ tend to engage in deep acting, leading to lower perceived burnout. Conversely, those with lower EQ tend to engage in surface acting, leading to a greater likelihood of experiencing burnout.

SQ is a collection of cognitive talents that rely on shared principles and instincts to understand individuals and their social environment (Arnout, 2020; Vaughan, 2002). Some research suggests that coping skills might help mitigate the impact of EL values (Lartey et al., 2020). Jung and Yoon (2016) argue that SQ is not a form of misperception for service-based job professionals. SQ has been associated with the work environment to inspire employees' commitment and involvement (Sani & Ekowati, 2019; Osman-Gani & Hassan, 2018) and provides a non-religious framework for addressing organisational difficulties (Vasconcelos, 2020). SQ effectively addresses low self-esteem, emotional strain, and job dedication among employees (Ogunsola, 2018). By using this approach, it can effectively reduce or eliminate values that are associated with emotions. Alternatively, when some aspects of SQ are integrated into work, employees might experience notable benefits regarding emotional resilience, personal satisfaction, creativity, and overall organisational cohesion (Fontaine, 2018; Ogunsola, 2018; Osman-Gani & Hassan, 2018). These benefits are crucial values and vital for human development. From the perspective presented, (Emmons, 2000a) postulates that SQ has been linked to several forms of success in one's life, including physical health, psychological well-being, marital happiness, and stability. It can enhance the efficiency of guiding service personnel's cognition, moral principles, creativity, emotions, and prosocial behaviour. Therefore, the following are relevant to be hypothesised:

H6: A direct correlation exists between EL and burnout.

H7: EL plays a mediating role in the link between EQ and burnout

H8: EL plays a mediating role in the relationship between SQ and burnout

3.0 Approach

This article proposes research hypotheses and suggests future research paths by utilising HR leaders as a sample group while comprehensively evaluating the literature. The knowledge base on mitigating factors to burnout is extensive, yet the concepts are scattered and continuously developing to address complex issues. This article guides future empirical research approaches in both business and non-business contexts. The proposed hypothesis aims to expand upon prior studies on organisational behaviour by utilising pragmatic findings. The following are the robust, reliable and validated measurement tools helpful in preparing future surveys: 1) Copenhagen Burnout Inventory, 7-item scale (Kristensen, Borritz, Villadsen, & Christensen, 2005); 2) Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (Wong & Law, 2002); 3) Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory-24-item scale (King, 2008); and 4) Emotional labour scale, 6-item scale (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003). The research framework and associated hypotheses focus on the precise dimensions derived from the measurement variables of these instruments. The premises are recommended for testing using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). It is valuable and handy even when the sample sizes are small and when working with data that does not follow a normal distribution. The proposed instruments use multiple-item components that represent measurements rather than formative ones. The constructs exhibited strong inter-correlations, displayed a unidimensional nature, and demonstrated great internal consistency—a two-step process: assessing the measurement model and estimating the structural model.

4.0 Conclusion

Their EQ significantly influences the quality of work performed by HR leaders. Research has indicated EQ can favour reducing burnout among employees, including HR leaders. Researchers propose that individuals with high EQ possess a superior comprehension of their emotions and those of others. They also can regulate their own feelings and the emotions of others successfully and are adept at responding to job requirements. There is an inverse relationship between EQ and burnout syndrome. EQ can impact the performance of EL by affecting both surface acting and deep acting. Several empirical evidence and hypotheses substantiate the connection between EQ and EL. Spirituality has been associated with the internal fortitude of individuals and impacts their job behaviours. The correlation between SQ and EL and burnout has yet to be determined.

However, it is worth noting that there is anecdotal evidence suggesting that SQ may impact the burnout experienced by HR leaders. SQ has the potential to impact EL. Empirical data from the literature supports that EL mediates between the work environment and individual outcomes, such as burnout. EL can mediate between personal traits and the organisation's level of results.

Nevertheless, insufficient empirical evidence supports that EL is a mediator between individual differences, particularly SQ, and exhaustion. The suggested research is grounded in the principle of emotional contagion. HR leaders can manage their burnout, which may be the basis for substantial success for the organisation in the aftermath of business challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The diverse perspectives of employees' feelings and reflections on burnout in different firms have been discussed and observed to increase. These findings demonstrated the importance of the concepts and the necessity for repeated confirmations in many situations over a while. Simultaneously, it enhances the existing body of information regarding burnout and its related causes, difficulties, and remedies. Human beings possess emotions, disregarding this reality in the workplace is inappropriate when studying management and organisational systems intended for long-lasting effectiveness.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to do an empirical study to establish the generalizability of the prior research findings and theoretical arguments. The following are essential for a test:

1- The possible inverse relationship between burnout and the EQ components: self-emotion evaluation, other's emotion appraisal, use of emotion, and management of emotion.
2- The possible inverse relationship between burnout and SQ components: critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, transcendental consciousness, and conscious state extension.
3- The possible positive relationship between the components of SQ and EQ.
4- The direct relationship between the components of EQ and EL (deep and surface acting).
5- The direct relationship between the components of SQ and EL.
6- The direct relationship between EL and burnout.
7- The mediating role of EL in the link between EQ and burnout
8- The mediating role of EL in the relationship between SQ and burnout

5.0 References

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