

The Role of Passion for Work and Psychological Capital in Burnout Among Public Sector Bank Managers

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Employees working in different workplaces across the country are dealing with unabated stress, amounting to burnout. Certain personal resources have begun to gain recognition as potential buffers against burnout. The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of passion for work (harmonious and obsessive) and psychological capital (self-efficacy, hope, resiliency, and optimism) in burnout (exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy). The sample comprised of 200 male, middle level managers, from branches and offices of Public Sector banks in the tri-city of Chandigarh, Mohali, and Panchkula. Passion for work was measured using the Passion Scale by Vallerand and colleagues. Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PsyCap-24) by Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio was used to assess psychological capital. Burnout was measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS) by Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach & Jackson. The results revealed that both types of passion for work – harmonious and obsessive emerged as significant predictors of all three components of burnout. However, out of the four components of psychological capital, only self-efficacy predicted exhaustion and professional efficacy; and hope predicted cynicism.

Keywords: passion for work, psychological capital, burnout, public sector banks

According to Pattazhy (as cited in Praveen, 2021), the recent death of a public sector bank manager by suicide due to stressful working conditions is not an isolated incident. In the past two years, there have been more such instances, which have led bank unions to once again highlight the stressors faced by public sector bank managers. The recent mergers of public sector banks, move to privatize, expanding responsibilities, lesser satisfaction with performance appraisal system, and career-related uncertainties, have together, led to increased working hours, a skewed work-life balance, dissatisfaction, and low morale (Kang & Sandhu, 2012; Praveen, 2021; Shrivastava & Purang, 2011). Literature published during the last 35 years has underscored how work-related stress coupled with dissatisfaction and low morale over a period of time can result in work-related strain, and burnout is

one major form of work-related strain (Singh & Kanupriya, 2011). According to Maslach & Leiter (2016), "Burnout is a psychological syndrome emerging as a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job."

Maslach (1982a) has described emotional exhaustion as the first stage of burnout, where stress arises because of the interaction between the service provider and the recipient. Emotional exhaustion is characterized by lack of enthusiasm and vigour towards work, feelings of chronic fatigue and stress resulting from excessive work demands (Koutsimani et al., 2019; Peng et al., 2013). Maslach (1982b) posited that, in response to the emotional exhaustion, the individual adopts a self-protective stance of detachment, wherein he avoids having to get to know others and becoming emotionally involved. This is the second stage of burnout

called cynicism. The last stage of burnout – lack of professional efficacy, is marked by reduced feelings of efficiency, negative evaluation of work, inability to experience satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment both in one's job (Koutsimani et al., 2019; Peng et al., 2013). An interesting question then, which captures the attention of researchers, is that why in the same work environment one individual burns out, while the other thrives. A plausible explanation for this could be difference in personal resources. In an attempt to transcend thinking about what might be wrong with people, the recent Positive Psychology movement has emphasized the need to focus on personal resources of individuals. In line with this movement, the present study shall focus on two constructs – passion for work and psychological capital, which have the potential to act as antidote to burnout.

The Dualistic Model of Passion (Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand & Houlfort, 2003) defines passion for as a strong inclination or desire towards work that one likes/loves, finds important, and in which one invests a significant amount of time and energy. Passion for work, in relation to burnout, has been explored across countries like Australia, Canada, China, Norway, Taiwan, and USA with samples ranging from educators, frontline restaurant employees, health professionals to technical workers. Empirical research demonstrates that harmonious passion for work was associated negatively with burnout and obsessive passion for work was associated positively with burnout (Birkeland et al., 2018; Castillo et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2018; Horwood et al., 2021; Trepanier et al., 2014; Vergauwe et al., 2022). However, research evidence has also exhibited that while harmonious passion for work was negatively related to burnout; obsessive passion for work was unrelated to burnout (Donahue et al., 2012; Landay et al., 2022; Slemp et al., 2020). In one study

on young workers from the public service association in Canada, Lavigne et al. (2012) found that harmonious passion for work was negatively associated with cynicism and professional inefficacy but unrelated to exhaustion; and, obsessive passion for work was positively associated with exhaustion, but, unrelated to cynicism and professional inefficacy. Findings of another research on firefighters in Indonesia by Sulistiawan et al. (2022) revealed that both types of passion for work – harmonious and obsessive were negatively related to burnout.

Psychological capital is comprised of self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency. A body of research has examined the relationship of psychological capital and its components viz. self-efficacy, hope, resiliency, and optimism with burnout among administrative staff, educators, engineers, health professionals, social workers, and tax consultants in Finland, Germany, Iran, Korea, Norwa, South Africa, Spain, and Sweden. Results from some of these investigations, exploring the relationship of psychological capital with burnout, revealed that psychological capital was negatively related to burnout (Khalid et al., 2020; Kim & Kweon, 2020; Razaq et al., 2020). Additional research literature, looking into the relationship of all components of psychological capital – self-efficacy, hope, resiliency, and optimism with burnout, found that all the components of psychological capital were negatively associated with burnout (Ferradas et al., 2019; Lopes-Nunez et al., 2020; Virga et al., 2020). A few other studies, probing any one of the four components of psychological capital, arrived at similar results as before – the component was negatively correlated with burnout (Gustafsson et al., 2010; Mashhady et al., 2012; Salmela-Aro et al., 2009; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Okros & Virga (2022) analyzed components of psychological capital and burnout among correctional

officers in Romania and found that self-efficacy, hope, and resiliency were negatively related to exhaustion and cynicism; but optimism was unrelated to exhaustion and cynicism.

Although, passion for work has received reasonable attention (Sulistiawan et al., 2022), yet certain aspects related to passion for work remain unclear. Firstly, some of the prior studies suffered limitations because these considered passion as a unidimensional construct, hence being unable to explain how two employees could have same levels of passion for work but differing outcomes (Chen et al., 2018). Secondly, always equating harmonious passion for work with favorable and obsessive passion for work with unfavorable outcomes seems unreasonable, particularly when there is contradictory evidence (Sulistiawan et al., 2022). Further, in order to gain a nuanced understanding of psychological capital, it is necessary to illuminate the contribution of self-efficacy, hope, resiliency, and optimism in the Indian context, because the expression and development of each of these component states vary according to culture – individualistic versus collectivistic (Rowe, 2013). Additional enquiry is, therefore necessary to examine the role of passion for work and psychological capital in burnout, especially among public sector bank managers in the Indian context.

Objectives

The following objectives were formulated for the study:

1. To analyze how the two types of passion for work relate to the three components of burnout.
2. To analyze how the four components of psychological capital relate to the three components of burnout.

3. To determine if the two types of passion for work can predict burnout.
4. To determine if the four components of psychological capital can predict burnout.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were developed:

- H1: Harmonious passion for work is expected to be associated negatively with two components of burnout (exhaustion and cynicism) and associated positively with one component of burnout (professional efficacy).
- H2: Obsessive passion for work is expected to be associated positively with two components of burnout (exhaustion and cynicism) and associated negatively with one component of burnout (professional efficacy).
- H3: All components of psychological capital (self-efficacy, hope, resiliency, and optimism) are expected to be associated negatively with two components of burnout (exhaustion and cynicism) and associated positively with one component of burnout (professional efficacy).
- H4: Harmonious passion for work is expected to negatively predict two components of burnout (exhaustion and cynicism) and positively predict one component of burnout (professional efficacy).
- H5: Obsessive passion for work is expected to positively predict two components of burnout (exhaustion and cynicism) and negatively predict one component of burnout (professional efficacy).
- H6: All components of psychological capital (self-efficacy, hope, resiliency,

and optimism) are expected to negatively predict two components of burnout (exhaustion and cynicism) and positively predict one component of burnout (professional efficacy).

Method

Participants

The sample comprised of 200 middle level managers, selected by quota sampling method from various branches and offices of Public Sector banks in the tri-city of Chandigarh, Mohali, and Panchkula. The sample included only male middle level managers within the age range of 35-45 years. The branch/office/Human Resource Department heads were contacted, and permission was procured to meet and administer the tests to male middle level managers. Thereafter, managers willing to participate in the study were briefed about the aim of the research and their rights as participants in the study. They were then asked to respond to the questionnaire booklet.

Tools

Passion Scale (Vallerand et al., 2003): It is a 17-item scale consisting of three subscales. Two subscales of six items each, assess harmonious passion and obsessive passion. The third 5-item passion criteria subscale measures the extent to which participants were passionate about their work. The participants had to respond on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (do not agree at all) to 7 (completely agree). Internal consistency of scores derived from the Passion Scale have typically yielded Cronbach's alpha levels in the range of .70 and .85 for both the harmonious passion and obsessive passion subscales (Vallerand et al., 2003; Carbonneau et al., 2008; Vallerand et al., 2010; Caudroit et al., 2011; Forest et al., 2011).

Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-24: Luthans, Youssef et al., 2007): The 24-item PCQ comprised of 6 items for each subscale of hope, self-efficacy, optimism, and resilience. The participants had to respond on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The Cronbach's alpha levels of internal consistency for self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism subscales were found to be above .77 in the research carried out by Singh & Khan (2013).

Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS: Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach & Jackson, 1996): The total number of items in the inventory is 16. 5 items are related to exhaustion, 5 pertaining to cynicism, and 6 related to professional efficacy. The participants had to respond on a Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (daily). Exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy subscales have exhibited reliability co-efficients ranging from .71 to .90 and the validity of the scale is well established (Kotze & Lamb, 2012).

Results and Discussion

Correlational Analysis

As indicated in Table 1, both types of passion for work, and all components of psychological capital were found to be significantly correlated with the three components of burnout. These findings support the first (H1) and second (H2) hypotheses. Harmonious passion for work seems to prevent managers from burning out because while at work, harmonious passion for work facilitates an amalgamated approach to work and family, and, a more compartmentalized approach when not at work, wherein disengagement from work at the end of the day, and engaging in other life activities becomes possible (Caudroit et al., 2011; Thorgren et al., 2013).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlations between the variables used in the study

Variables	Burnout			Passion for Work		Psychological Capital			
	Exhaustion	Cynicism	Professional Efficacy	Harmonious Passion	Obsessive Passion	Self-Efficacy	Hope	Resiliency	Optimism
Burnout									
Exhaustion	1								
Cynicism	.65**	1							
Professional Efficacy	-.34**	-.38**	1						
Passion for Work									
Harmonious Passion	-.21**	-.27**	.42**	1					
Obsessive Passion	.28**	.34**	-.20**		1				
Psychological Capital									
Self-Efficacy	-.32**	-.26	.53**	.37**	-.09	1			
Hope	-.24**	-.28**	.44**	.48**	-.05	.65**	1	1	
Resiliency	-.13*	-.12*	.27**	.39**	.02	.56**	.57**	.51**	1
Optimism	-.23**	-.17**	.33**	.41**			.43**		
N	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Mean	1.79	1.61	4.76	5.09	3.43	4.80	4.86	4.48	4.70
S.D.	0.95	0.92	0.77	0.93	1.11	0.59	0.58	0.52	0.46

** p < .01, * p < .05

This in turn allows managers to further replenish themselves, to come to work with a keen spirit, and execute tasks effectively, thereby, ensuring satisfaction with past and present accomplishments and expectations of continued effectiveness at work, which then reduces the risk of emotional exhaustion, prevents cynicism from developing – protecting against burnout.

On the flip side, managers who experience higher levels of obsessive passion for work seem to indulge in work or work-related thoughts after usual work hours and even during weekends. The positive relationship between obsessive passion for work and on-task thoughts off work is unfavorable for work satisfaction (Thorgren et al., 2013). This dissatisfaction with work

overtime may adversely affect the confidence and expectations of continued effectiveness at work, consequently leading to a decline in professional efficacy. Further, rigid engagement in work does not just result in work-family conflict, but, also impedes recovery after rigorous and continuous work. Gradually, managers tend to return to work every morning with less energy and consequently symptoms of burnout – exhaustion and cynicism are likely to appear. The results of this study are in line with the research by Trepanier et al. (2014), Castillo et al. (2017), Birkeland et al. (2018), Chen et al. (2018), and Horwood et al. (2021) who found that as harmonious passion for work increased, burnout significantly decreased; and as obsessive passion for work increased, burnout significantly increased.

Providing support to the third hypothesis (H3), all components of psychological capital were found to be associated negatively with two components of burnout (exhaustion and cynicism) and associated positively with one component of burnout (professional efficacy). Self-efficacious managers are not only well-equipped to cope with negative emotions generated by work (Consiglio et al., 2013), but, they view stressors as challenges and persevere to overcome the stressors. This approach tends to prevent managers from feeling emotionally depleted and developing a distant attitude towards work. Further, they feel energized and remain in touch with their past and present accomplishments at work. Managers who are more hopeful than others tend to have more clarity about their work objectives, and usually don't just plan a pathway to their goals but also have alternate pathways as backup plans for meeting their objectives. This forethought prevents managers from the frustration of reaching an impasse, thereby preventing them from emotional depletion.

Hope plays another pertinent role of a buffering agent against psychological distress (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and further averts the development of cynicism. On successful goal attainment, hopeful managers feel revitalized, which enhances their belief in their own ability, thereby boosting their professional efficacy.

Resiliency bestows managers with the adaptive capability to recover more easily from setbacks which in turn acts as a buffer against emotional exhaustion and also prevents a distant attitude towards work from developing. After overcoming challenges at work managers continue to work with renewed confidence and with an expectation of continued and often improved effectiveness at work, thus, improving their professional efficacy. Managers high on optimism experience lower levels of burnout because they can more easily recognize when their efforts will not result in the desired outcome, thus, protecting them from striving for unrealistic goals (Gallavan & Newman, 2013; Luthans & Youssef, 2007). Such optimism reduces guilt that may arise when goals are not attained or responsibilities are unmet, thereby preventing emotional depletion. Moreover, optimistic managers make more attributions for positive events, are able to propose positive explanations for work events, possess positive attitudes, and are able to cope more easily in the face of different types of work stress (Rioli & Savicki, 2006). Such managers feel no need to distance themselves from customers, people at work, their work or work environment, are also able to efficiently make an evaluation of what they can or cannot accomplish in a particular situation, which in turn reinforces their sense of competence at work. The negative relationship between the components of psychological capital and burnout has also been reported in studies

conducted by Salmela-Aro et al. (2009), Gustafsson et al. (2010), Mostafa et al. (2010), Skaalvik & Skaalvik (2010), Mashhady et al., (2012), Ferradas et al., (2019), Lopes-Nunez et al. (2020), and Virga et al. (2020).

Predictive Analysis

Additionally, stepwise multiple regressions were carried out to examine if both the types of passion for work and all the components of psychological capital were significant predictors of the three components of burnout – exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy.

Predictors of Exhaustion

Table 2. Stepwise multiple regression analysis showing prediction of exhaustion component of burnout by both types of passion for work and all components of psychological capital

Variables	Standard Error	β	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	R ² Change	F
Step 1							
Self-Efficacy	.11	-.23	.32	.10	.10	.10	21.82**
Step 2							
Self-Efficacy	.11	-.23	.40	.16	.15	.15	14.26**
Obsessive Passion for Work	.06	.27					
Step 3							
Self-Efficacy	.11	-.23	.43	.18	.17	.02	5.28*
Obsessive Passion for Work	.06	.27					
Harmonious Passion for Work	.07	-.16					

** p < .01, * p < .05

According to Table 2, along with self-efficacy and obsessive passion for work, harmonious passion for work explained 18% variance (R² = .18, Adjusted R² = .17, F = 5.28, p < .05) in predicting exhaustion. The

standardized beta-coefficients revealed that self-efficacy (β = -.23) and harmonious passion for work (β = -.16) were negative predictors, while obsessive passion for work (β = .27) was a positive predictor of exhaustion.

Predictors of Cynicism

Table 3. Stepwise multiple regression analysis showing prediction of cynicism component of burnout by both types of passion for work and all components of psychological capital

Variables	Standard Error	B	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	R ² Change	F
Step 1							
Obsessive Passion for Work	.05	.36	.34	.12	.11	.12	25.85**
Step 2							
Obsessive Passion for Work	.05	.36	.13	.21	.20	.09	23.98**

Harmonious Passion for Work	.11	-.24	.48	.23	.22	.02	4.19*
Step 3							
Obsessive Passion for Work	.05	.36					
Harmonious Passion for Work	.07	-.24					
Hope	.11	-.15					

** p < .01, * p < .05

As is evident in Table 3, a conjoint variance of 23% ($R^2 = 0.23$, $p < .05$) in predicting cynicism among middle level Public Sector Bank managers was explained by the three predictors – obsessive passion for

work, harmonious passion for work, and hope. Additionally, the standardized beta-coefficients revealed that harmonious passion for work ($\beta = -.24$) and hope ($\beta = -.15$) were negative predictors, while obsessive passion for work ($\beta = .36$) was a positive predictor of cynicism.

Predictors of Professional Efficacy

Table 4. Stepwise multiple regression analysis showing prediction of professional efficacy component of burnout by both types of passion for work and all components of psychological capital

Variables	Standard Error	β	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	R^2 Change	F
Step 1							
Self-Efficacy	.08	.40	.53	.28	.27	.28	76.08**
Step 2							
Self-Efficacy	.05	.30	.58	.34	.33	.06	17.81**
Harmonious Passion for Work	.04	-.20					
Step 3							
Self-Efficacy	.08	.40	.61	.38	.37	.04	12.17**
Harmonious Passion for Work	.05	.30					
Obsessive Passion for Work	.04	-.20					

** p < .01

According to Table 4, along with self-efficacy and harmonious passion for work, obsessive passion for work explained 38% variance ($R^2 = .38$, Adjusted $R^2 = .37$, $F = 12.17$, $p < .01$) in predicting professional efficacy. The standardized beta-coefficients revealed that obsessive passion for work ($\beta = -.20$) was a negative predictor, while self-efficacy ($\beta = .40$) and harmonious passion for work ($\beta = .30$) were positive predictors of

professional efficacy. The findings of this study completely support the fourth (H4) and fifth hypotheses (H5) but partially support the sixth hypothesis (H6).

Research conclusions by Carbonneau et al., (2008), Fernet et al. (2014), Vallerand et al., (2010), Donahue et al. (2012), that, both harmonious and obsessive passion for work are significant predictors of burnout provide support to the present study. The results of the study are also in accordance with the

findings by Mashaddy et al. (2012) and Peng et al. (2013), who found that, self-efficacy and hope are significant predictors of burnout.

Conclusion

The present study empirically analyzed the role of passion for work and psychological capital in burnout among middle level managers in Indian Public Sector Banks. Results indicated that, while, harmonious passion for work protected from managers from burnout, obsessive passion for work was conducive to burnout. All components of psychological capital acted as buffer against the syndrome of burnout. Further, self-efficacy, hope, harmonious, and obsessive passion emerged as predictors of exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy. Therefore, instead of recruiting managers with typical skill sets which may become obsolete within five years (Deloitte, 2013), it is in the best interest of organizations such as the bank, to not only recruit managers who bring the personal resources of passion for work and psychological capital to their jobs but to also create a work environment that nurtures these personal resources. Further, awareness about these personal resources and the possible affective, behavioural, and cognitive outcomes can be created during trainings for managers. Such training would enable them to be aware of their personal resources and the necessary requisites to help them perform more effectively.

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