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Burnout in the MNCs: Causes and HR Strategies to Reduce it in Bengaluru

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ABSTRACT

In today's corporate world, burnout has become a major issue, particularly in multinational companies (MNCs) operating in metropolitan cities like Bengaluru. This study goes in depth into the underlying causes of employee burnouts in MNCs, with a special focus on the role of Human Resource (HR) practices in addressing these challenges. Using a mixed-methods approach that includes employee surveys and organizational policy reviews, the research examines how strategic HR interventions impact employee morale, well-being, and productivity. Initiatives such as flexible work models, stress management programs, mental health support systems, and employee engagement strategies are evaluated for their effectiveness in building resilient and balanced workplaces. The findings reveal that proactive, employee-centric HR approaches not only alleviate stress but also foster long-term job satisfaction and retention. Additionally, the study highlights common hurdles such as intergenerational workforce expectations, high-performance pressures, and diverse employee needs in a rapidly evolving work environment. By emphasizing the importance of mental health, work-life balance, and inclusive communication, this research offers actionable insights for organizations aiming to create healthier more sustainable work cultures. In short, the study underscores the urgent need for adaptable HR strategies that align both employee well-being and organizational success in the unique context of Bengaluru's MNC landscape.

Key Words: Burnout, Multinational Companies (MNCs), Human Resource Strategies, Employee Well-being, Workplace Stress

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, burnout has emerged as a significant concern within multinational corporations (MNCs), especially in fast-growing urban centres like Bengaluru. As one of India's major tech and business hubs, the city hosts a large number of global companies where employees often face intense workloads, tight deadlines, and high-performance expectations. Burnout not only affects individual employees but also poses serious challenges to organizational effectiveness, including reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, and higher turnover rates. In a competitive landscape, the sustainability of any organization depends on its ability to support its workforce. Human Resource (HR) departments are increasingly being recognized as key players in managing and mitigating burnout by designing strategies that prioritize employee welfare alongside business goals.

This study explores the root causes of burnout in MNCs located in Bengaluru and investigates how HR practices can be leveraged to address and reduce its impact. Through a combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, the research aims to assess the effectiveness of HR-led initiatives such as flexible work arrangements, mental health programs, stress management training, and employee engagement activities. The goal is to understand what works, what doesn't, and how HR strategies can be tailored to meet the diverse and evolving needs of employees in MNCs.

Research Objectives

- To identify the primary causes of employee burnout in MNCs operating in Bengaluru.
- To examine the impact of burnout on employee performance, morale, and retention.
- To analyse the effectiveness of current HR strategies in managing stress and preventing burnout.
- To explore employee perceptions of mental health support and work-life balance initiatives.
- To recommend actionable HR practices for reducing burnout and fostering a healthier work environment in MNCs.

Review of literature

- Deloitte, Gallup & WHO (2019–2021) During and after crisis periods, large-scale industry research found that professional development and upskilling programs significantly contributed to employee engagement and psychological resilience. Workers who had access to continuous learning and growth initiatives reported a 25–37% reduction in burnout, driven by increased purpose and motivation.
- Psico-Smart Editorial (2021) Investigating unconventional HR approaches like teleconsulting, confidential check-ins, and mental health ambassadors, this study highlighted that burnout mitigation works best when support is personalized and led from the top. Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) also showed a decrease in absenteeism and mental fatigue when backed by leadership openness.
- Teo et al. (2021) Using structural equation modelling (SEM) on 257 service workers, this study explored how high-commitment HRM practices impacted burnout. Findings confirmed that when employees had higher autonomy and access to psychological resources like optimism and resilience (PsyCap), they showed lower stress and emotional exhaustion.
- Jourdain & Chenevert (2021) A quantitative study of 2,174 nurses revealed that high involvement HR practices led to psychological empowerment, which in turn lowered burnout levels. Moreover, support from coworkers significantly enhanced the buffering effect, emphasizing the value of peer environments alongside managerial interventions.
- Dollard & Bailey (2021–2024) Extensive reviews on psychosocial safety climate (PSC) demonstrated that even a modest 10% improvement in perceived organizational safety culture reduced employee burnout significantly. When workplaces prioritized mental safety, transparency, and fairness, employee well-being metrics increased substantially.
- Psico-Smart Editorial (2021) Additional evidence emphasized the value of flexible work arrangements, structured recognition programs, and stress recovery initiatives in reducing emotional exhaustion. Organizations that systematically implemented such models experienced a 31% decline in turnover and improved morale.
- Autonomy & Harper (2022–2023) A UK-wide four-day workweek trial across multiple industries proved effective in reducing employee burnout and enhancing satisfaction. Organizations reported maintained or improved productivity, while employee well-being showed sharp increases. These models showed promise even in performance-intensive industries.
- Salas-Vallina et al. (2023) Focusing on the healthcare sector, this study applied the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model and found that strategic HRM interventions improved care quality while reducing physician burnout. It highlighted the importance of balancing workloads and providing adequate support systems during crisis scenarios.
- Medina-Garrido et al. (2023) In the Spanish banking sector, work-family policies were evaluated for their real-life accessibility and impact. The research found that burnout significantly decreased only when employees had actual access to flexible scheduling and family support—not merely when such policies were listed on paper.
- American Heart Association (2023) Surveying over 5,000 employees, the AHA proposed nine actionable HR policies for preventing burnout, including clear role definitions, reasonable workloads, and enforcing off-hour boundaries. When adopted together, these measures had a high correlation with reported well-being and satisfaction.
- Brand (2024) A large-scale study of over 1,000 hybrid employees found that switching to a flexible model reduced burnout in 75% of cases. Employees cited lower commuting stress and better work-life balance as key factors. The hybrid system also enhanced autonomy and trust between teams and managers.
- Wróbel & Dzieńdziora (2024) This study, conducted in Poland's knowledge-intensive industries, explored the mediating role of organizational support and engagement. Innovative HR practices were shown to reduce burnout, but the effect was strongest when employees felt consistently supported and involved in decision-making.
- Martinez Montes & Leung (2024) An 8-week mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) program was trialed among IT professionals. While participants qualitatively reported improvements in self-awareness and focus, quantitative metrics showed mixed results, indicating a need for longer-term or more immersive interventions.
- Athamneh (2024) Focusing on public-sector healthcare workers, this cross-sectional study linked HRM to both job satisfaction and burnout. Satisfaction levels were highest where employees felt physically and psychologically safe, and where HR actively engaged in transparent communication and recognition.
- Martinez & Pen (2025) In a newer study targeting burnout among software engineers, a yoga-based wellness program was piloted. While participants expressed increased relaxation and community bonding, the study noted that statistical improvement in burnout metrics was limited—possibly due to short program duration or low frequency.

•Research Gap

S.No	Citation & Year	Research Design	Objective	Key Findings
1	Search6 synthesis (2019–2021)	Secondary reports	Role of development in urnout reduction	Career growth correlated with ~30–37% drop in burnout
2	Psico-smart (2021)	Case ex (Starbucks)	Evaluate EAP effectiveness	EAPs reduced absenteeism, increased morale
3	Teo et al. (2021)	SEM (257 service workers)	Role of HRM & Psy Cap in burnout	High-commitment HRM buffers burnout via autonomy + PsyCap
4	Canadian nurses (2021)	SEM (2,174 nurses)	HR practices → empowerment & burnout	Empowerment mediated burnout reduction; colleague support key
5	PSC evidence (2021–2024)	Mixed interventions & meta studies	PSC impact n burnout & health	Better psychosocial climate significantly reduces burnout
6	Recognition & flexibility (2021–2023)	Literature synthesis	Examine recognition, flexibility effects	Recognition & flexible work reduce turnover & burnout
7	Salas-Vallina et al. (2023)	SEM (499 physicians)	HRM impact during crisis	HRM reduces burnout & enhances performance via JD-R
8	Medina-Garrido et al. (2023)	SEM (1,511 banking employees)	Role of work-family policies	True access improved wellbeing, indirectly boosting performance
9	American Heart (2023)	Survey (5,055 US workers)	Evaluate 9 burnout policies	Comprehensive policy implementation improved well-being
10	Martinez Montes et al. (2024)	Mixed-method (8-week mindfulness)	Assess mindfulness in IT stress reduction	Mental well-being improved; quantitative gains untested
11	Poland BSS (2024)	SEM (1,000 knowledge workers)	IHRMP effect on burnout	Organizational support mediated burnout reduction
12	Brand (2024)	Survey (>1,000 hybrid workers)	Measure effect of hybrid on burnout	Hybrid working reduced burnout in 75%
13	Athamneh (2024)	Survey (600 healthcare)	Link HRM to burnout/satisfaction in public sector	HRM reduced burnout; satisfaction linked to safety/relations
14	News15 (2025)	Qualitative (tools analysis)	Evaluate wellness tools' impact	Pulse-surveys, apps helped engagement, reduced stress
15	Martinez & Pen. (2025)	Mixed-method (8-week yoga)	Evaluate yoga on engineer wellbeing	Positive subjective impact, no statistical improvement

Table 1: Research Gap

3. Problem Statement

In the competitive and fast moving corporate world of Bengaluru, employees in multinational companies (MNCs) are increasingly experiencing high levels of stress, emotional exhaustion, and symptoms commonly associated with burnout. Despite the presence of structured HR frameworks, many organizations struggle to effectively address the root causes of burnout, leading to decreased productivity, poor employee well-being, and high turnover rates. The lack of tailored, proactive HR strategies that prioritize mental health and work-life balance further worsen the issue. This research aims to investigate the core factors contributing to burnout in Bengaluru-based MNCs and evaluate the role and effectiveness of HR practices in mitigating its impact, with the ultimate goal of proposing sustainable, employee-focused solutions.

4. Research Methodology

To understand the causes of burnout in MNCs and assess the effectiveness of HR strategies in reducing it, this study adopts a mixed-method approach, combining both primary and secondary sources of data to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the issue in the context of Bengaluru.

- Primary Data

The primary data for this research was collected through an online survey, which became a direct channel to understand employee experiences and perceptions related to burnout. The survey was designed with a mix of the questions to gather measurable insights on stress levels, work-life balance, HR support systems, and mental well-being. The questionnaire was circulated digitally among professionals working in various MNCs across Bengaluru, and responses were limited to 50 participants to maintain depth and manageability in analysis. The target audience included employees from diverse departments and experience levels to capture varied perspectives on workplace stress and HR effectiveness.

- Secondary Data

The secondary data for this research was collected to complement and validate the primary findings, secondary data was taken from reputable Indian journals, research articles, government publications, and HR reports that focus on burnout, organizational behaviour, and mental health in the corporate sector. These sources helped establish a theoretical foundation for the study while also offering broader insights into trends and HR practices adopted by Indian MNCs.

5. Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used in this research paper to know about how burnout faced by employees is purposive sampling method. This non-probability sampling approach allowed the selection of participants who are directly relevant to the study where the individuals currently employed in multinational companies located in Bengaluru. The aim was to gain practical insights from professionals who actively experience the pressures and challenges of working in fast-paced corporate environments.

- Sample Size

The study was conducted with a sample size of 50 respondents. This number was chosen to strike a balance between obtaining diverse opinions and keeping the data manageable for meaningful analysis. The sample included employees from different job roles, departments, and experience levels, which helped capture a variety of perspectives on burnout and HR practices.

- Sample Location

The sampling location for this study was Bengaluru, known as the "Silicon Valley of India," is home to a large number of multinational corporations across various sectors including IT, finance, FMCG, and consulting. The city's intense work culture, long hours, and high expectations make it a relevant setting for studying employee burnout.

6. Analysis and Discussion

The primary data for this research was collected from 50 responders from various MNCs and companies. The data are as follows:

- Demographic Profile

The survey primarily drew responses from young professionals, with the majority falling in the below 25 age group. Most respondents identified as female and were located in Bangalore. The participants held roles across various domains, including service sector jobs, case workers, and account managers.

- Frequency of Exhaustion and Emotional Detachment

A key finding of the study is the high frequency of emotional and physical exhaustion among participants. Most individuals indicated that they often or always felt drained, suggesting ongoing stress and the presence of burnout symptoms. These emotional patterns were often tied to excessive workloads, unrealistic expectations, and minimal support from their superiors. When asked if they felt detached from their job responsibilities, a large portion

agreed or strongly agreed, reflecting not just fatigue but a loss of passion or engagement. This sense of emotional disconnection is dangerous it can affect both productivity and workplace morale.

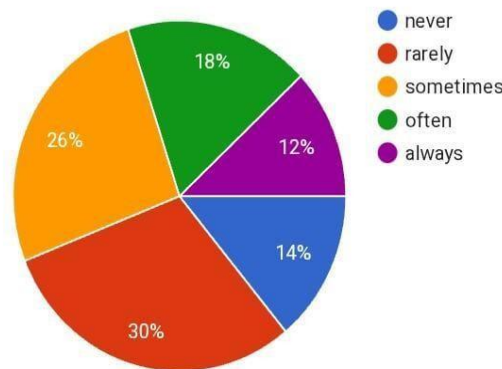


fig:6.1 Frequency of Exhaustion and Emotional Detachment

•Mental Health and Emotional State

The emotional and psychological toll of burnout was strongly evident in the participants' reflections. The most common feelings experienced at work were frustration, anxiety, and exhaustion. Many employees rated their mental well-being as "average" or even "very poor," and a considerable number shared that stress and fatigue often interfered with their ability to focus or be productive. This suggests that burnout in the IT sector is no longer just about long hours—it is about emotional sustainability, where constant stress has begun to overshadow personal well-being.

•Effectiveness of HR Strategies

When it came to evaluating HR's role in addressing burnout, responses were largely disappointing. A significant number of respondents stated that the existing HR strategies in their organizations had not helped them manage their stress or mental health. Many were unsure whether their organization even acknowledged burnout as a serious issue. This disconnect indicates that although some HR policies may exist on paper, they are either poorly communicated or fail to resonate with employees lived experiences. Moreover, the lack of recognition was another recurring theme. Most employees said they "rarely" or "never" felt appreciated for their work, which only deepens the emotional strain.

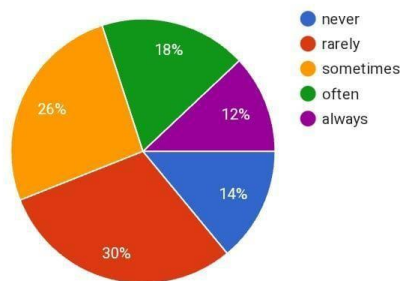


Fig :6.4Effectiveness of HR Strategies

•Contributors to Burnout

One of the strongest indicators of burnout lies in workplace culture. Respondents pointed out several cultural aspects that heightened their stress levels. These included poor communication within teams, lack of empathy from colleagues or superiors, absence of teamwork, and a generally high-pressure environment. The recurring mention of these issues underlines how deeply workplace culture influences mental health. Burnout isn't just the result of workload it's often about how the environment handles pressure, relationships, and human connection.

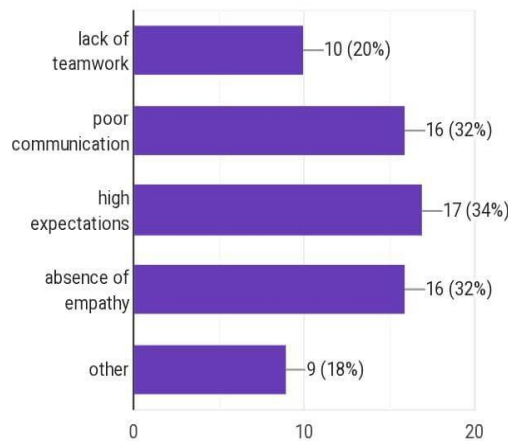


fig6.5 contributors to burnout

•Factors That Help Employees Stay Motivated

Despite the challenges, respondents also identified some positive influences that kept them going. These included encouragement from leadership, being recognized for their efforts, and having clear goals to work toward. While these may seem like simple practices, they serve as critical motivators. They show that employees are not necessarily demanding grand solutions— what they need is consistency, clarity, and appreciation. When these are present, even a high-pressure environment can become manageable.

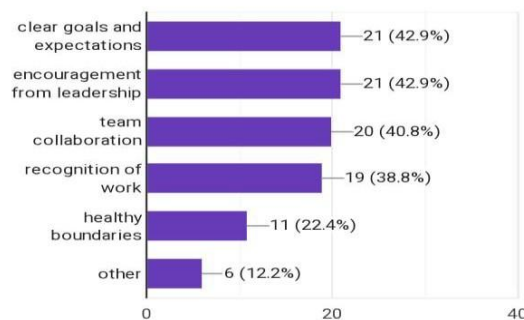


fig 6.6 Factors That Help Employees Stay Motivated

Conclusion, Limitations, Implications and Future Recommendations

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings reflect a sobering reality: the young workforce in the IT sector is overwhelmed, emotionally worn out, and feels unseen. Burnout is not just an abstract concept it's something deeply felt by those who show up to work every day with heavy hearts and tired minds but the solution doesn't need to be complex. What employees are asking for recognition, empathy, support, and better communication are entirely within reach. If HR departments and organizational leaders begin to genuinely listen and respond with intention, the gap between burnout and well-being can start to narrow.

Limitations

- Limited Sample Size where the responses are few and mainly from individuals below 25, limiting generalizability across age groups and genders.
- Location Bias where most respondents are from Bangalore, not representing the wider IT workforce across India.
- Self-Reported Data where the responses may reflect personal bias or temporary emotions.
- No Long-Term Insights The study captures only a moment in time and doesn't reflect how burnout develops over time.

Implications

- Need for Mental Health Support where high emotional exhaustion signals the urgency for counselling and support systems.
- Improve Recognition and Appreciation in which any employees feel undervalued, highlighting the need for stronger acknowledgment practices.
- Better Communication Culture where poor communication is a key stressor and must be addressed through training and open dialogue.
- Realign HR Strategies which must be reviewed and tailored to match actual employee needs and feedback.

Future Recommendations

- By widening the Participant Base by Including diverse roles, locations, and experience levels.
- Use Interviews Along with Surveys that could Combine qualitative and quantitative methods for deeper insights.
- Track Burnout Over Time which will help to conduct long-term studies to understand burnout patterns.
- Invest in Tailored HR Programs to create personalized wellness and recognition strategies.
- Monitor Well-being Regularly to make emotional health a regular part of performance tracking.

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