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A STUDY ON EMPLOYEE BURNOUT IN AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

Employee burnout has emerged as a critical workplace issue in the automobile industry, where long shifts, high pressure, repetitive tasks, and job insecurity are common. Burnout negatively affects both employees and organizations by reducing productivity, increasing absenteeism, and deteriorating overall well-being. This study examines the causes, dimensions, and consequences of burnout, with a special focus on Bellary Motors, a Mahindra & Mahindra dealership. Using survey responses from 110 employees, findings reveal that nearly one-third report fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and sleep disturbances linked to work demands. Literature analysis highlights that burnout in the automobile industry is driven by overwork, lack of recognition, and technological disruptions like automation. The study identifies gaps in stress management training and employee support systems. Recommendations include fair shift scheduling, recognition programs, wellness activities, and enhanced training to build resilience. Addressing burnout is vital not only for employee welfare but also for sustaining organizational growth in a highly competitive industry.

Keywords: *Employee Burnout, Automobile Industry, Work Stress, Productivity, Work-Life Balance, Employee Well-being, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Performance.*

Introduction: -

The automobile industry is one of India's fastest-growing sectors, projected to be the world's third-largest market by 2026. With its expansion, however, come challenges for employees who face long hours, repetitive tasks, and increasing pressure to meet sales and production targets. Burnout, described by Maslach and Jackson (1981) as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced accomplishment, has become an urgent issue in this sector.

This study is motivated by the rising concern of burnout among automobile employees, particularly in Indian dealerships such as Bellary Motors. The focus is to understand its causes, effects, and coping strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

1. Kumar & Singh 2020 **"**OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND BURNOUT AMONG AUTOMOTIVE ASSEMBLY LINE WORKERS**"** Examined assembly line workers in India and identified key burnout contributors such as repetitive manual tasks, long working hours, and lack of decision-making power. The study recommended job rotation and ergonomic improvements to alleviate physical and psychological strain.

2. Johnson & Hill 2019 "BURNOUT IN BLUE-COLLAR JOBS: A STUDY OF AUTO FACTORY WORKERS" Studied emotional exhaustion among American blue-collar workers. Key issues were poor supervisor support and lack of job recognition, which led to diminished personal accomplishment and chronic fatigue.

3. Zhao, Chen & Wang 2021 "MENTAL HEALTH AND BURNOUT AMONG AUTO INDUSTRY WORKERS DURING TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE" Focused on the impact of technological changes on Chinese auto industry workers. Automation and digitization created job insecurity and anxiety. Many workers were not offered retraining, exacerbating burnout levels.

4. Schneider 2018 "WORKLOAD AND BURNOUT IN GERMAN AUTO MANUFACTURING" Analysed the German auto manufacturing sector, showing that its high-pressure, high-precision work culture contributes to both mental and physical burnout symptoms. Suggested workplace wellness programs as a buffer.

5. Gupta & Mehta 2017 "A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF BURNOUT IN PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE SECTOR AUTO PLANTS" Compared burnout in public vs. private sector auto plants in India. Private sector workers reported higher burnout due to more intense productivity expectations, while public sector employees benefited from job security and unionization.

6. Kim & Lee 2022 "PREDICTORS OF BURNOUT AMONG AUTO PLANT MAINTENANCE EMPLOYEES" Surveyed maintenance staff and identified overtime, unsafe working conditions, and communication breakdowns as top predictors of burnout. The study highlighted physical strain inadequate supervisory support, and limited autonomy were

major contributors to burnout in maintenance roles, which are often overlooked compared to production line positions.

7. Martinez 2021 “WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND BURNOUT IN THE AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR” Explored the work-life balance dilemma in Mexico's automotive industry. Workers experienced emotional exhaustion from long shifts and family pressure. The study advocated flexible scheduling and mental health leave.

8. Bergman, Lopez & Chan 2020 “EXPLORING EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION IN AUTO ASSEMBLY PLANTS” Used the Maslach Burnout Inventory in Detroit auto plants. Results showed high levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, particularly among repetitive-task workers. Their research emphasized how burnout is not just a result of excessive workload but also stems from organizational culture, leadership behaviour, and lack of psychological safety.

9. Patel 2016 “BURNOUT AND PRODUCTIVITY DECLINE IN AUTO INDUSTRY EMPLOYEES” Quantified the relationship between burnout and productivity. Demonstrated that burnout significantly lowered work quality and quantity in both production and quality control units. Study concludes that organizations has to focus not only on reducing job demands but also on enhancing workplace relationships and trust.

10. Takahashi 2019 “SHIFT WORK AND CIRCADIAN DISRUPTION IN AUTOMOTIVE WORKERS” Investigated the effects of shift work in Japan. Circadian rhythm disruption from rotating shifts led to sleep disorders and increased psychological stress. To examine effects from shift work on the circadian rhythms and wellbeing of automotive workers, particularly those on rotating and night shifts.

11. Khan & Farooqi 2018 “ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND BURNOUT IN THE AUTO INDUSTRY” Found that organizational commitment—through alignment with company values and culture—served as a protective factor against emotional exhaustion. The study revealed that repetitive tasks, monotonous work, and pressure to meet targets were the major sources of occupational stress.

12. Santos & Oliveira 2021 “BURNOUT SYNDROME IN BRAZILIAN AUTO FACTORY WORKERS” Case study of São Paulo factory workers. Workers experienced moderate-to-

severe burnout due to poor management and extensive commuting times. Objective is to assess the prevalence of burnout syndrome among workers in automotive manufacturing and evaluate impact of psychosocial risk factors on their mental health and job satisfaction.

13. Rivera & Collins 2020 "JOB STRESS AND BURNOUT IN THE AUTOMOTIVE AFTERMARKET" Focused on aftermarket employees like mechanics and parts sellers. Fast-paced environments and lack of managerial support led to significant emotional fatigue. Shows how a combination of poor working conditions and repetitive mechanical work contributes to emotional and physical exhaustion.

14. Müller 2017 "LEAN MANUFACTURING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS IN AUTO PLANTS" Critiqued lean manufacturing practices in Europe. While efficient, they increased psychological stress by imposing tight performance targets without rest periods. Lean manufacturing has complex effects and well-being leading to both positive outcomes when implemented properly and negative effects when pressures are excessive.

15. Okoro & Adewale 2023 "HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES AND BURNOUT IN CAR ASSEMBLY LINES" Tied positive HR practices to reduced burnout. Fairness, transparency, and employee recognition were key in promoting well-being on car assembly lines. It was found that structured training along with alignment to organization vision, enhances skills.

16. Ahmed 2020 "PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF JOB INSECURITY IN AUTO INDUSTRY" Emphasized job insecurity during economic downturns as key stressor. Workers fearing layoffs were most likely to disengage and report burnout symptoms.

17. Liu & Chan 2018 "WORK ENVIRONMENT AND MENTAL HEALTH OF AUTO MECHANICS" Looked into environmental factors in mechanic workshops. Poor lighting and air quality were strongly linked to anxiety and irritability. Highlights how extended hours and elevated stress can trigger emotional exhaustion and serves as a precursor to mental health issues.

18. Sharma & Desai 2022 "IMPACT OF AUTOMATION ON WORKER STRESS IN AUTOMOTIVE PLANTS" Reported stress related to automation, especially among older

employees who feared redundancy and lacked upskilling opportunities. Identified key factors causing occupational stress including leadership style, work environment and task monotony.

19. Thomas 2021 "GENDER DIFFERENCES IN BURNOUT AMONG AUTO SECTOR EMPLOYEES" Identified gender-specific burnout patterns. Female workers faced dual burdens of workplace stress and domestic responsibilities, with higher emotional fatigue. Noted higher depersonalization in male workers under high stress conditions, especially in quality assurance teams. A gender aware approach to employee well being can improve mental health, productivity and retention in the automotive workforce.

20. Novak 2019 "COPING STRATEGIES AGAINST BURNOUT IN THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY" Outlined effective coping strategies, including mindfulness, social support networks, and designated recovery periods. Novak's focus on recognition, boundary setting and recovery through passions aligns well with evidence based tools like mindfulness, reframing, structured breaks.

RESEARCH GAP:

There is limited research on employee's burnout specifically in the automobile industry. Most studies focus on general stress or other sectors, ignoring unique challenges like long shifts, repetitive tasks, and physical strain faced by auto industry workers. This study aims to fill that gap.

NEED FOR THE STUDY:

Burnout among employees in the automobile industry leads to stress, health problems and reduced productivity. There is limited research on this issue in this sector. This study is needed to identify the main causes of burnout, understand its impact and suggest measures to improve employee's wellbeing and organizational performance.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

1. To understand the concept and dimensions of employee burnout.
2. To identify the key causes of burnout in the automobile industry.
3. To examine the effects of burnout on employee performance and job satisfaction.

4. To suggest practical measures for preventing and managing employee burnout in automobile industry.

HYPOTHESIS:

- H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis):
  There is a statistically significant negative relationship between employee burnout and job satisfaction/performance.
- H_0 (Null Hypothesis):
  There is no statistically significant relationship between employee burnout and job satisfaction/performance.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

1. Limited Sample Size: All findings are based on a small group of participants that does not represent all employees in the automobile industry.
2. Geographical Constraints: The study was conducted only in selected regions/companies, so results may not apply to other locations with different work cultures.
3. Self-Reported Data: Responses or opinions are collected through questionnaires which may be affected by bias or inaccurate self- reporting.

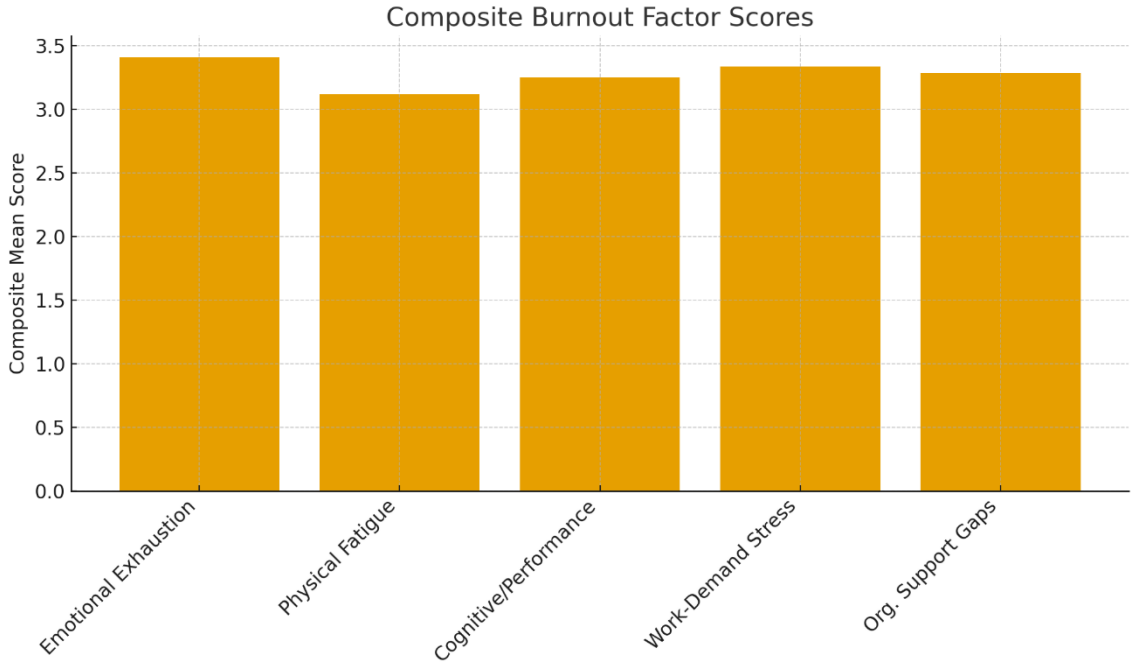
METHODOLOGY

A structured questionnaire was administered to 110 employees. Responses were grouped into five burnout dimensions: emotional exhaustion, physical fatigue, cognitive strain, work-demand stressors, and organizational support gaps. Each item was scored on a 5-point Likert scale, and Composite Mean Scores (CMS) were calculated for factor-wise analysis. The analytical method applied included Composite Index Scoring, Factor Categorization, and Cross-Factor Interpretation.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

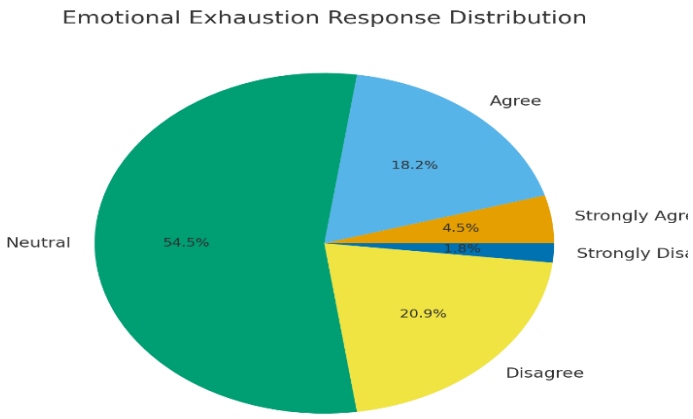
Composite Burnout Factor Scores

The chart below represents the Composite Mean Scores across the five major burnout dimensions.



Emotional Exhaustion Distribution

This diagram illustrates how employees responded to emotional exhaustion-related questions.



1. Emotional Exhaustion

The Composite Mean Score (CMS) for Emotional Exhaustion is 3.41, indicating moderate emotional fatigue among employees. About one-third of respondents reported feeling emotionally drained or struggling with concentration. This suggests that employees experience psychological strain that fluctuates depending on workload intensity.

2. Physical Fatigue

The CMS for Physical Fatigue is 3.12. A significant number of employees reported feeling tired even at the start of the day. This implies inadequate recovery periods between shifts and physically demanding job roles contributing to accumulated fatigue.

3. Cognitive and Performance Strain

With a CMS of 3.25, Cognitive and Performance Strain is moderately prevalent. Around 30% of employees reported making more errors or facing performance decline due to stress. Health issues such as sleep problems and irritability further indicate cognitive overload.

4. Work-Demand Stressors

This factor shows the second-highest CMS of 3.34. Irregular shifts, overtime, and skipped breaks contribute to workload pressure. Many employees reported that shift timings negatively affect their work-life balance.

5. Organizational Support Gaps

The CMS of 3.29 reflects moderate dissatisfaction with organizational support systems. Employees expressed concerns about insufficient recognition, inadequate stress-management training, and unmanageable responsibilities.

Overall Interpretation

The analysis shows that burnout in the automobile dealership sector is moderate but consistently present across emotional, physical, and cognitive dimensions. Workload intensity and irregular schedules are the strongest contributors. Although not severe, the burnout trend indicates growing vulnerability if organizational interventions are not introduced.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• Implement structured break policies to avoid fatigue accumulation.

• Optimize shift schedules using rotational patterns to reduce work-life imbalance.

• Introduce employee recognition programs to enhance morale.

• Conduct stress-management and emotional resilience training sessions.

• Organize wellness initiatives such as yoga, meditation, and fitness programs.

• Ensure performance support systems that balance workload across teams.

FINDINGS:

A comprehensive view of burnout among employees emerges, covering emotional, physical, and mental aspects. The data clearly shows that moderate to high levels of burnout symptoms are widespread, affecting staff in multiple ways. Employees are reporting fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and mental strain, which not only undermine their well-being but also pose risks to organizational effectiveness. The presence of these symptoms highlights the urgency of recognizing burnout as a critical workplace issue that require immediate attention and sustained intervention.

A central driver of burnout appears to be excessive work pressure, manifested through long working hours frequent overtime and limited opportunities for rest or breaks. Many employees find themselves facing relentless demands, leading to heightened stress levels and difficulty maintaining work-life balance. Shift work further exacerbates these challenges, especially for the people whose personal lives are disrupted by irregular work schedules.

Another contributing factor is the perceived lack of recognition and management support. Staff who feel undervalued or ignored by supervisors are most likely to experience disengagement, reduced motivation, and dissatisfaction with their work environment. This deficit in managerial acknowledgment not only hinders individual morale but can also ripple through teams, negatively affecting workplace culture and cooperation. Addressing

recognition gaps and establishing clear, supportive communication channels between leadership and staff are thus essential for mitigating burnout.

Burnout is having a tangible impact on employee performance, particularly in areas such as concentration, error rates, and overall health status. Many employees' report difficulty focusing on tasks, increased anxiety, and health problems such as sleep disturbances or frequent illnesses. These symptoms not only detrimental to individuals experiencing them but can also compromise organizational productivity, increase absenteeism, and elevate turnover rates. Such effects underscore the importance of proactive measures to safeguard employee wellness and maintain operational stability.

Finally, the findings highlight a significant gap in existing training and support programs. Current intervention is not sufficient to prepare employees to manage stress effectively or build resilience in face of workplace challenges. There is pressing need for more comprehensive evidence-based training that addresses practical coping strategies, stress reduction techniques, and avenues for seeking support. Investing in robust employee wellness programs and developing tailored resources can empower staff to navigate workplace pressures more successfully and reduce the prevalence of burnout across the organization.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Schedule quarterly check-ins to monitor stress levels and intervene early.
- Review and optimize shift schedules and rotate shifts to reduce disruption to personal life.
- Track overtime hours and create policies to cap excessive workload.
- Make short breaks mandatory after set working hours and provide comfortable break areas.
- Launch recognition programs like Employee of the month awards and peer to peer appreciation boards.
- Regularly acknowledge contributions during team meetings and share positive feedback in writings.
- Offer development plans to improve motivation.
- Enhance training for stress resilience.

- Promote the use of vacation days and mental health days without stigma.
- Host wellness activities like yoga, fitness challenges and nutrition seminars.

CONCLUSION:

The analysis of employee responses reveals that moderate to high levels of burnout symptoms are prevalent across emotional, physical, and mental dimensions. Major contributing factors include work pressure, overtime, shift work, and insufficient management support which significantly increase the burden on employees. Burnout is adversely affecting employee performance, ability to concentrate, and their overall health. Furthermore, data indicates that existing training programs are not effectively preparing employees to cope with workplace stress, leaving many staff members vulnerable to the ongoing demands of their roles. These insights underscore an urgent need for the organization to enhance workplace support systems & implement targeted intervention which address both the causes and consequences of burnout.

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burnout risk. High turnover (about 40% in sales roles), long working hours, and poor work–life balance were key contributors to stress in dealership staff.

24. Grant Thornton (2024) – The State of Work in America survey found that 51% of workers experienced burnout in the past year. The leading causes were mental/emotional stress (63%) and long working hours (54%).
25. SHRM (2024) – Research noted that employees who are burned out are nearly three times more likely to be actively seeking a new job (45% vs. 16%), emphasizing how burnout drives turnover.
26. Forbes (April 2024) – According to Mercer's Global Talent Trends report, over 80% of the workforce is at risk of burnout, with main drivers being excessive workload (37%), exhaustion (40%), and financial pressures (43%).
27. HR Brew (January 2025) – Burnout hit an all-time high in 2024: around 82% of knowledge workers (white-collar, desk-based) across North America, Asia, and Europe reported being "slightly" to "extremely" burned out.
28. MDPI Study – Tire Manufacturing, South Korea (2025) – Among South Korean tire manufacturing workers (part of the broader automobile supply chain), high burnout levels—emotional exhaustion, cynicism, lower professional efficacy—were found especially in repetitive-task roles.
29. E3S Web of Conferences (February 2024) – A study in the car dealership industry in India reported that excessive workload (30%), management conflict (24%), and job insecurity (14%) are key stressors, with many employees emphasizing the need for mental health training and flexible hours as remedial measures.
30. Forbes (February 2025) – A new study pegged job burnout at an all-time high of 66% among workers, suggesting return-to-office mandates may have exacerbated workplace stress.