

The Influence of Job Burnout on Intention to Stay in the Organization: Mediating Role of Affective Commitment

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ABSTRACT

The study is conducted with the aim to investigate the effects of job burnout on employees' intentions to stay with the current organization. Mediating role of affective commitment between the relationship of all dimensions of job burnout and intention to stay in the organization is also explored in this study. The research was conducted in banking sector of Pakistan and data was collected from banking sector employees working in different local private, local nationalized and foreign banks located in Lahore city. The study found emotional exhaustion to have significant effects on employees' intent to stay in the organization directly and through the mediation of affective commitment. Whereas lack of accomplishment have only indirect effects on intention to stay through the mediation of affective commitment. Findings of the study provide strong implications for banking management to have careful insight about the attitudinal and behavioral problems of the employees. The limitations and future area of research are also discussed in the study.

KEYWORDS: Pakistan, Job Burnout, Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, Lack of Accomplishment, Affective Commitment, Intention to Stay in the Organization, Banking Sector.

INTRODUCTION

Behavioral issues regarding job burnout, affective commitment and employees' intention to stay in the organization have received ample attention by the social scientists in the areas of industrial psychology, human resource management and organizational behavior during last few decades. Most of the studies on the impact of job burnout on employees' behaviors have been conducted in western context. Such studies explored the influence of job burnout on turnover intention [1-5], effects of job burnout on organizational commitment [6]; and effects of emotional exhaustion on organizational commitment and turnover intention [7]. Researchers in Pakistan paid good amount of attention towards organizational behaviors during last two decades, yet some key dimensions of this topic have largely been over looked. For instance, no study measured the influence of job burnout on employees' attitudes and behaviors with respect to the Pakistani cultural context.

Hofstede, [8] stated that attitudinal and behavioral issues should be explored with respect to the local cultural context in order to have clear understanding. Though behavioral outcomes in all job providing sectors do matter a lot for an organization to grow, but their importance in banking sector is much higher because there are more than 80% banking employees who interact with customers. Customer is found to be a key component of an organization for continuous growth. A dissatisfied employee cannot be expected to interact with the customer effectively resulting in the loss of customers. So banking management needs to be much conscious to improve the behavioral outcomes of employees. Secondly, employment in banking sector is not as much attractive as it was before mid 1990. Due to entrance of different new local and foreign banks in this sector has made it very much competitive for a bank to gain and sustain its competitive advantage. The one change is long working hours and low amount of rewards for employees as compare to the banking profession before mid 1990s. Increasing competition forced banking sector to allocate major amount to retain current customers and attract new ones result in decrease in profitability. Such situation leads banking management to cut down employees' rewards and benefits. In turn long working hours and low amount of reward lead employees to suffer from stress. As a result they do not feel strong attachment with their employers and think for a better job opportunity.

In such an unfavorable situation, there is need to find ways how employees' behavioral outcomes can be improved so that employees may exhibit positive and favorable attitudes towards the organization. To fill this literature gap and to provide a clear understanding about employees' job burnout and its impact on their attitudes with respect to the Pakistani culture, the present study is aimed at examining this issue by investigating the relationship of job burnout and staying intentions directly and through the mediating role of affective

commitment. The study is expected to contribute a better understanding about the topic that will help banking management to look into and formulate some policies to improve the behavioral outcomes of employees. The remainder of the study is organized as follows: the next section reviews some significant studies, research methodology is discussed in the third section, fourth part consists of results and discussion following the conclusion part that includes implications and limitations of the study and some future areas of research to be explored further.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section consists of definitions of the variables studied in this research. Hypotheses are also developed in this part on the basis of their theoretical relationship and empirical studies previously conducted to investigate the relationship of the studied variables.

Job Burnout

Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter, [9] defined the concept of burnout as “a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with people in some capacity” (pp. 4). This definition includes three concepts: a) emotional exhaustion refer to as the sense of being tired and exhausted emotionally due to one’s employment; b) depersonalization is defined as the employee’s frosty and feeling-less response to his/her recipients of care, service, treatment or supervision) personal accomplishment is characterized as feeling of competitiveness and successful achievement in his/her work. The intensity of burnout will be higher if the magnitude of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization will be higher while personal accomplishment will be lower. Lack of necessary resources, responsibility with no or less authority, lack of recognition for one’s achievement are consider as the indications of job burnout [10]. In contrast, Daley, [11] argued that symptoms of burnout are emotional detachment from one’s job, taking clients as cases instead of humans and less involvement in clients’ issues.

Affective Commitment

Most of the social scientist defined the construct of organizational commitment in terms of the degree to which an individual identifies with and involves in an organization [12]. For instance, Becker, [13] defined commitment as the propensity to involve in “consistent lines of activity” (pp. 33). Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian, [14] described commitment as “the strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization.” (pp. 604). According to Steers, [15], organizational commitment is the individual’s strength with and engagement in an organization.

In the literature of organizational commitment, the work of Meyer and Allen gained considerable attention of researchers and industrialist. Meyer and Allen, [16] and dimensions: affective, continuance and normative commitment. Affective commitment is defined as an employee’s personal affiliation and identification with the employing organization which lead to his/her strong faith in organizational goals and values. Continuance commitment is defined as employees’ tendency to employ in consistent activities based upon their identification of the costs attached with the discontinuing the activity. Normative commitment proposes that individuals display behaviors solely based upon their belief of doing the right and ethical things. However, in order to have a more precise view of organizational commitment and to avoid similarity context of continuance commitment with intent to stay in the organization, only affective commitment has been included in this study.

Intention to Stay in the Organization

Intention to stay is defined as employees’ intention to stay in the organization on long term basis. Turnover intention refer to as when individual thinks, plan and wish to leave the job (Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, and Meglino, [17]. Theoretical and empirical studies on turnover reveal that intention to quit is one of the strongest determinants and an immediate predecessor of turnover [18-22]. Intention is conceptualized as statements about the particular behavior and exhibit stronger effect on turnover than other employees’ attitudes such as commitment with the organization and job satisfaction. As we are taking employee intentions to stay in the present organization, the scale of turnover intentions has been used and items are inversely coded in this study.

Job Burnout and Affective Commitment

A variety of conceptual models were discussed to understand the consequences of job burnout [23-25]. Such theoretical models shed considered light on the issue of job burnout and its consequences related to the individual and his/her family [24, 26]. To understand the consequences of job burnout in work setting, we use social exchange theory [27]. Social exchange relationship between employees and employer tend to have the reciprocation of socio-emotional benefits. Both of them are closely attached with each other to accomplish their personal goals. The relationship between job burnout and affective commitment based upon the logic that the employees establish reciprocal relationship that yield satisfactory amount of benefits and those benefits are allocated fairly [28]. Thus, two conceptions have been explained to understand the effects of job burnout on its attitudinal outcomes. Firstly, job burnout might be considered as unjustified price for the benefits offered to

employee under employment contract. Secondly, employees are more likely to be offended by the organization in which extra workload drives them to job burnout. In sum, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of accomplishment are considered as unjustified and costly in most of the cases, and have potential to affect affective commitment significantly.

Hypothesis 1a: Emotional Exhaustion has negative significant relationship with affective commitment.

Hypothesis 1b: Depersonalization has negative significant relationship with affective commitment.

Hypothesis 1c: Lack of accomplishment has negative significant relationship with affective commitment.

Job Burnout and Intention to Stay in the Organization

Moreover, Maslach [29] explained the outcomes of burnout and postulated that burnout is expected to be strong predictor of employees' attitudinal outcomes. It has also been noted by Maslach [29] that chronic burnout has also been proved to lead an employee to withdrawal intention. Primarily, such withdrawal might be in form of long breaks, absenteeism, and physical isolation as the employee with higher level of burnout are not likely to interact with his/her recipients. If burnout prolongs for a long period, individual will be more likely to evade eternally by leaving the position, organization or even the career. Various studies have been conducted in different work setting to explore the relation of job burnout and different attitudinal outcomes. Such studies explored the effects of emotional exhaustion on organizational commitment and turnover intention [7]; effects of job burnout on turnover intention [1-5]; and effects of job burnout on organizational commitment [6]. Keeping in view the literature discussed above, it is assumed that employees experiencing burnout will demonstrate decreased level of intent to stay in the present organization. Hence, the following hypothesis is developed:

Hypothesis 2a: Emotional Exhaustion has negative significant relationship with employees' intentions to stay in the organization.

Hypothesis 2b: Depersonalization has negative significant relationship with employees' intentions to stay in the organization.

Hypothesis 2c: Lack of accomplishment has negative significant relationship with employees' intentions to stay in the organization.

Affective commitment and Intention to stay in the Organization

Affective commitment, also termed as emotional attachment, involvement and identification with the employing organization has key role in predicting turnover intentions in the literature of behavioral psychology. A long variety of research can be found in predicting employee's turnover intention. Griffeth, et al., [20] and Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnysky, [30] reported in their meta-analysis studies that affective commitment is a significant determinant of turnover intentions. A study conducted by [31] in Chinese cultural context and found the same findings. X. P. Chen, Hui, and Sego, [32] found that affective and continuance commitment has strong influence on employees' turnover intention. They further reported that affective commitment has stronger affects on turnover intention as compare to that of continuance commitment. Paré and Tremblay, [33] investigated this relationship in Canadian culture and also revealed that affective commitment has stronger impact on turnover intention as compare to that of continuance commitment. Ali and Baloch, [34] explored this relationship in pharmaceutical sector of Pakistan and found significant support for the relationship of affective commitment and turnover intention. Ahmad and Omar, [35] conducted study in Malaysian cultural context and reported that affective commitment has strong effects on turnover intentions. In the light of above discussion, the study hypothesizes that:

Hypothesis 3: Affective commitment has positive significant relationship with employees' intentions to stay in the organization.

Mediation of Affective Commitment between Job Burnout and Intention to Stay in the Organization

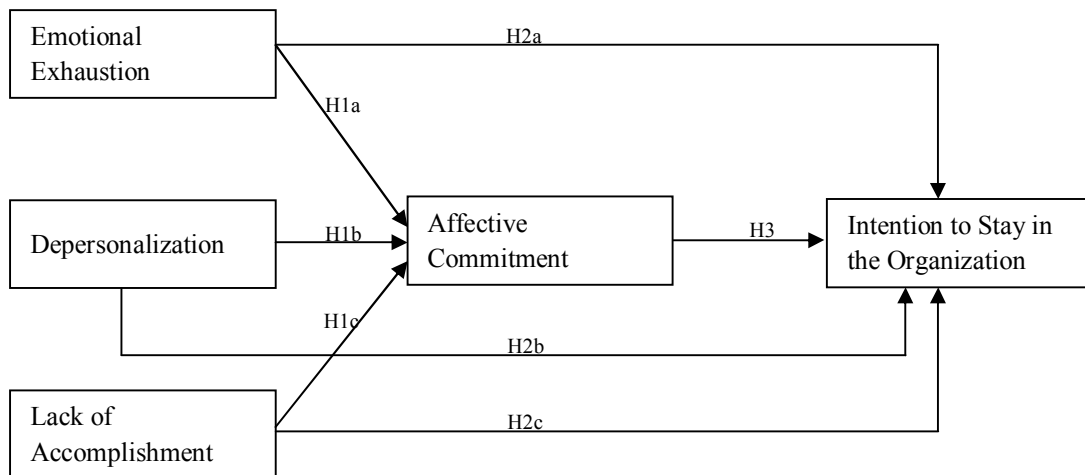
As discussed above, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of accomplishment have negative impact on affective commitment and then affective commitment has influence on employees' intentions to stay in the organization, it is thus, expected that affective commitment has mediating role between the relationship of all dimensions of job burnout and intentions to stay in the organization. So, the following hypotheses of mediation are developed to be tested in this study.

Hypothesis 4a: Affective commitment has significant mediating role between emotional exhaustion and intentions to stay in the organization.

Hypothesis 4b: Affective commitment has significant mediating role between depersonalization and intentions to stay in the organization.

Hypothesis 4c: Affective commitment has significant mediating role between lack of accomplishment and intentions to stay in the organization.

In the light of above discussion about theoretical and empirical relationship between the studied variables, the following research model is developed to test the hypotheses.

Figure 1: Hypothesized Research Model

Note: Hypotheses 4a, 4b and 4c are related to the mediation which is tested through the significance level of path from independent to mediating variable and then mediating to dependent variable. Therefore, this hypothesis is not shown in the research model.

Research Design

Sample and Sampling Plan

Target population of the study is employees of all banks working in Lahore city. Middle level managers are the target respondents. Banks are classified using simple cluster sampling into three different groups i.e. local private, local nationalized and foreign banks. There are 21 local private banks having largest number of branches i.e. 732; 4 local nationalized banks having 136 branches and foreign banks are 6 in number and having 34 branches in Lahore region. Out of total, 146, 34 and 7 branches of local private, local nationalized and foreign banks have been selected to be visited for data collection. In selected branches, target respondents were selected using convenient sampling technique and 4 to 6 questionnaires were distributed in each selected branch to collect the data.

Measurement and Instrumentation

Emotional exhaustion was measured using four items adopted from burnout literature. The questions emphasize the ways how individual get exhausted at their job place. **Depersonalization** was measured through four items scale adopted from job burnout literature. The items focus on how respondent become careless toward his/her recipients at workplace. **Lack of Accomplishment** was measured using five items scale adopted from literature of job burnout. The items focus on employee's feelings about lack of his/her goal accomplishment at job place. All dimensions of job burnout were measured on five-point Likert-type scale i.e. 1 = Never, 2 = Yearly, 3 = Monthly, 4 = Weekly, and 5 = Daily).

Affective Commitment was measured using five items scale developed by [36]. The items focus on employees' attachment and affiliation with the organization. All commitment items were measured using five point Likert type scale i.e. 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. **Intention to stay in the Organization** was measured using four items scale developed by Sager, Griffeth, and Hom, [37]. The scale was developed on the basis of turnover intention theory introduced by Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, and Meglino, [17] that emphasized four attitudinal parts of individuals' intent to quit from the organization i.e. thinking to leave, making plan to leave the organization, seeking other jobs, and a desire to leave the current job. In order to calculate employees' intentions to stay in the organization, all of four items were inversely coded and measured on five point-Likert type scale i.e. 1 = Never, 2 = Often, 3 = Rarely, 4 = Mostly, and 5 = Always.

Data Collection Procedure

A well-structured questionnaire using all stated above measurement scale was administered to collect the data. First of all, branch managers were briefed about the purpose and procedure of the study and they were requested to accord approval to collect the data from their respective branches' employees. After getting the approval, target respondents were approached personally and they were educated about the research objective and its usefulness. Then they are requested to provide information about their level of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, lack of accomplishment, affective commitment with the organization and their intentions to stay in current organization. Any question about the questionnaire was addressed on the spot. Total 800 questionnaires were distributed among which 406 questionnaires were returned completed in all respect yielded a response rate of 50.75%.

Data Analysis

After collection of data, it was entered into Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS 17). Different statistical techniques using SPSS 17 and AMOS 16 were applied to analyze the data. First of all, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was applied to validate the item statement used in different scales. Cronbach Alpha scores of the scales were computed using reliability analysis. Correlation analysis was also applied to check the association between the variables. Finally, Structure Equation Model (SEM) was applied to test the hypotheses.

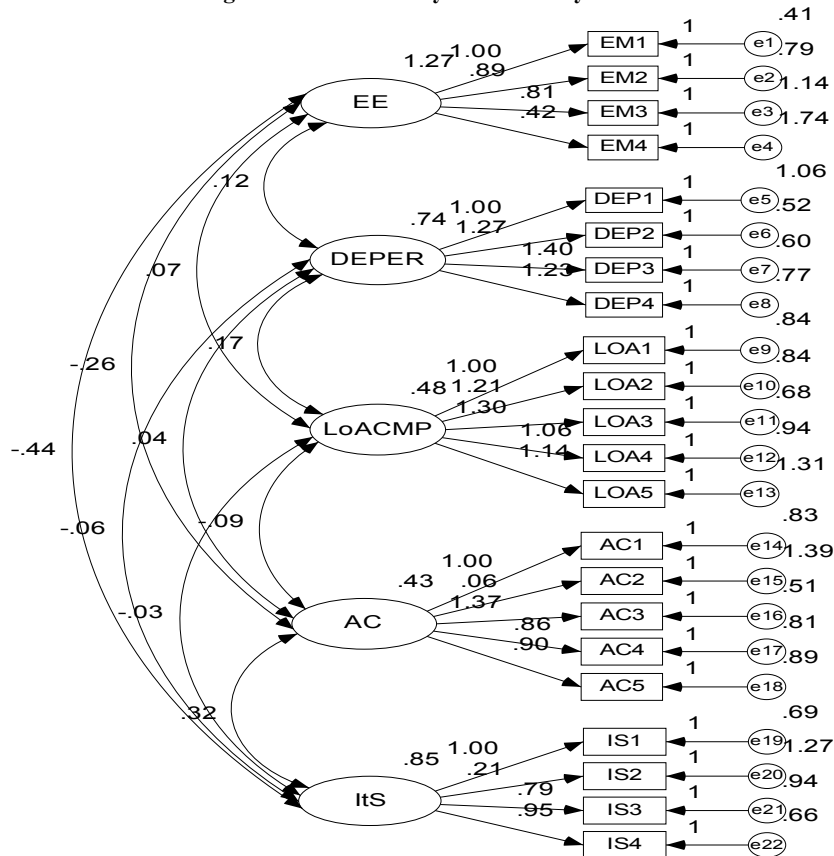
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Validity and Reliability Testing

Following Tsui, Pearce, Porter, and Tripoli, [38] and Karriker and Williams, (2009), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to check the validity of all measurement scales used in this study. CFA has been used in previous studies in the area of behavioral sciences such as [33, 39]. Furthermore Cronbach alpha scores of each scale were calculated using reliability analysis. Factor loading of each item are mentioned in **Figure 2**. Items having insignificant factor loading have been removed from their respective scale while significantly contributing items have been retained in their respective scale for data analysis.

CFA revealed good model fitness as CMIN is 623.708, Degree of Freedom (DF) is 199 so CMIN/DF is 3.134 which is found to be good fit. Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) of the model is .881, Normative Fit Index (NFI) is .790, Comparative Fit Index is .845 and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is .073. All of these ratios reflected good model fitness. CFA revealed that all items of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, lack of accomplishment and intention to stay in the organization are found to be significant contributor in development of their respective scales. Whereas one item of affective commitment i.e. “I feel a strong sense of attachment with my organization” found to be insignificant, do not contribute in development of affective commitment scale and removed from the scale.

Figure 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis



Note: EE = Emotional Exhaustion, DEPER = Depersonalization, LoACMP = Lack of Accomplishment, AC = Affective Commitment, ItS = Intention to Stay in the Organization

Remaining four items found to be significant and used in the scale to measure affective commitment among employees. Reliability was also measured using reliability analysis using SPSS 17 and found Cronbach

alpha .74, .86, .77, .70, .64 of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, lack of accomplishment, affective commitment and employees' intent to stay in the organization respectively.

Correlation Analysis

Association between variables was measured using correlation analysis through SPSS 17 as reflected in **Table 1**. Means of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, lack of accomplishment, affective commitment and intention to stay are 2.88, 2.72, 2.66, 3.48 and 3.72 respectively. Association of emotional exhaustion with affective commitment and employees' staying intention found to be negatively significant while insignificant association with rest of two burnout dimensions. Depersonalization is found to have positive signification correlation with lack of accomplishment while insignificant association with affective commitment and intent to stay in the organization. Lack of accomplishment have negative significant association with affective commitment while insignificant association with intention to stay in the organization. Affective commitment is positively significantly correlated with intention to stay in the organization.

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviation and Correlation Matrix

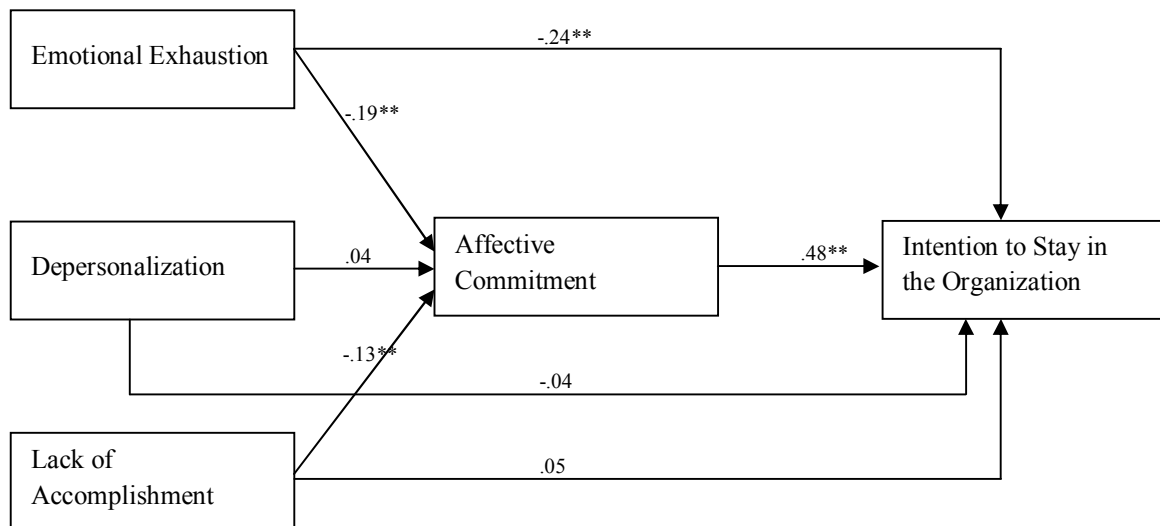
Sr. No.	Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1	Emotional Exhaustion	2.88	1.02	-				
2	Depersonalization	2.72	1.14	.06	-			
3	Lack of Accomplishment	2.66	.90	.06	.24**	-		
4	Affective Commitment	3.48	.81	-.28**	.01	-.17**	-	
5	Intention to Stay in the Organization	3.72	.98	-.35**	-.05	-.03	.40**	-

** . Significant at the 0.01 level.
 * . Significant at the 0.05 level.

Hypotheses Testing

Structural Equation Model (SEM) was applied using AMOS 16 and shown in **Figure 3**. SEM Model revealed the good model fitness as CMIN of the model is 15.463, DF is 4 so CMIN/DF is 3.865. Other model fitness ratios included GFI, NFI, CFI and RMSEA which are .865, .891, .911 and .09 respectively. All of these ratios show that model is good fit and can be used for prediction. SEM model revealed that emotional exhaustion found to have -.19% significant variance; depersonalization have .04 insignificant variance; and lack of accomplishment have -.13 significant variance in affective commitment. It means that emotional exhaustion and lack of accomplishment have negative significant effects on affective commitment while depersonalization found to have insignificant influence on employees' affective commitment. Thus, it is reported that hypotheses 1a and 1c are supported while 1 b is rejected.

Figure 3: Structural Equation Model



** . Significant at 0.01 level
 * . Significant at 0.05 level

It is found that emotional exhaustion has -.24 significant whereas depersonalization and lack of accomplishment are found to have insignificant impact on intention to stay in the organization. Thus, hypothesis

2a is supported while 2b and 2c are rejected. Effects of affective commitment on employees’ intentions to stay in the organization are found to be positive significant as affective commitment has .48 significant positive variance in development of employees’ intention to stay in the organization. Thus, hypothesis 3 is also supported.

As far as mediation of affective commitment between all dimensions of burnout and intention to stay is concerned, Karriker and Williams, [40] reported that for mediation of a mediating variable to be proved, both paths in SEM model i.e. path from independent variable to mediating variable and from mediating to dependent variable must be significant. As the path from emotional exhaustion to affective commitment and path from affective commitment to intention to stay in the organization are significant, thus mediation of affective commitment between the relationship of emotional exhaustion and intention to stay in the organization was proved and hypothesis 4a is supported. It is further reported that emotional exhaustion is found to have direct and indirect (through mediation of affective commitment) effects on employees’ intention to stay in the organization. In case of mediating role of affective commitment between depersonalization and intent to stay is concerned, it is noted that depersonalization neither has direct nor indirect impact on employee’s intent to stay in the organization, so hypothesis 4b is rejected.

Affective commitment is found to have significant mediating role between lack of accomplishment and intent to stay as both paths (from lack of accomplishment to affective commitment and from affective commitment to intent to stay in the organization) are significant, therefore we accept hypothesis 4c. It is further mentioned that lack of accomplishment do not have direct effects on employee’s intention to stay in the organization, however it affects indirectly through the mediation of affective commitment. Decisions about all hypotheses are also shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Decisions of Hypotheses

Hypothesis No.	Independent Variable	Mediating Variable	Dependent Variable	Regression Co-efficient	Decision
1a	Emotional Exhaustion	-	Affective Commitment	-.19**	Accepted
1b	Depersonalization	-	Affective Commitment	.04	Rejected
1c	Lack of Accomplishment	-	Affective Commitment	-.13**	Accepted
2a	Emotional Exhaustion	-	Intention to Stay in Org.	-.24**	Accepted
2b	Depersonalization	-	Intention to Stay in Org.	-.04	Rejected
2c	Lack of Accomplishment	-	Intention to Stay in Org.	.05	Rejected
3	Affective Commitment	-	Intention to Stay in Org.	.48**	Accepted
4a	Emotional Exhaustion	Affective Commitment	Intention to Stay in Org.	-.19** .48**	Accepted
4b	Depersonalization	Affective Commitment	Intention to Stay in Org.	.04 .48**	Rejected
4c	Lack of Accomplishment	Affective Commitment	Intention to Stay in Org.	-.13** .48**	Accepted

** . Significant at 0.01 level

* . Significant at 0.05 level

Conclusion and Recommendations

The present research throws some light on the issue of job burnout and its consequences. The influence of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of accomplishment on affective commitment and intention to stay in the organization is measured in the study. Moreover, the impact of affective commitment on intention to stay in the organization and mediation of affective commitment between burnout dimensions and intention to stay in the organization were also measured. It is found that employees who are exhausted emotionally and feel that they are lacking in accomplishing the goals are likely to reduce their commitment level. It means that employees who are exhausted and frustrated, and perceive that there is no achievement in their credit, do not fell in love with their organization and do not have strong attachment with their organization. While employees who detach themselves from their organization and do not take care of their recipients at workplace, have the same level of affective commitment as of the employees who are highly committed with the organization. The plausible justification for this relationship is the social desirability bias [41] as it was noted during data collection method that respondents are reluctant in providing information about their level of depersonalization.

Affective commitment is also found as a strong predictor of intent to stay in the organization as the significant relations was noted between these two variables. It means that employees who are highly affectionate with their organization demonstrate that they are intended to work with current organization for a long period of time in contrast to the individuals not being attached with their employing organization. While other two dimensions of burnout i.e. depersonalization and lack of accomplishment have no relationship with employees' intention to stay in the organization. Moreover, affective commitment found to have mediating role between the relationship of emotional exhaustion and lack of accomplishment with intention to stay in the organization. Lack of accomplishment is found to have no capacity to explain variance in intent to stay directly but this relationship is operationalized through the mediating role of affective commitment. In addition, it is noted that depersonalization have neither direct nor indirect (through the mediation of affective commitment) effects on intentions to stay in the organization. It is also noted in the study that affective commitment plays significant role in developing employees' intentions to stay in the organization for a long period of time.

The findings of the study put stress on banking management to have careful approach towards job burnout among employees. As it is noted in the study that emotional exhaustion and lack of accomplishment are the potential predictors of affective commitment and intention to stay in the organization directly and/or indirectly, so banking management needs to formulate policies in order to allocate balanced workload to employees so that they may be safe from job burnout and exhibit positive and constructive attitude at workplace. Apart from the implications, the study has some limitation as well. Firstly, the study is based upon the cross-sectional data. As this relationship is first time explored with respect to the Pakistani culture, there is need of longitudinal or experimental study to validate these findings. Secondly, the findings may not be generalized over other regions and other industries of Pakistan as the data was collected only from the banking sector located in Lahore city. Lastly, job burnout has been measured through self-response, respondents were not willing to provide accurate data on depersonalization and lack of accomplishment. The study highlights some future area to be studied in this connection. Firstly, remaining two dimensions of organizational commitment i.e. continuance and normative commitment should be included in the model. Secondly, potential antecedents of job burnout should also be explored in order to have understanding about the reasons due to which employees feel themselves as burned out. Thirdly, data on job burnout should be collected from respondents and his/her colleagues or supervisor as well to avoid social desirability bias (Grimm, 2010) especially in case of depersonalization and lack of accomplishment. Lastly, the study can also be conducted in other sectors and other regions of Pakistan and South Asia to provide the findings that can be applied and generalized over all other regions and industries of Pakistan and South Asia.

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