BURNOUT ON CONTACT CENTER: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Background: The use of contact centers is considered the most effective way to love relationships with customers. Contact centers are proven to improve service to customers and reduce operational costs. On the other hand, high pressure causes contact center employees to be vulnerable to burnout.

Aim: This study aims to find out what factors can cause burnout. The method used is review literature.

Method: The researcher implemented a systematic review. The articles used in this study was obtained from the website of scientific database providers google scholar and ScienceDirect using keyword burnout, contact centers, contact centers, call centers, call centers. Article inclusion criteria are journals or fulltext open access articles published in 2016-2021 and produce 8 articles.

Findings: The results of this review obtained factors that can cause burnout in contact center employees in general consist of sociodemographic factors, internal factors and external factors such as age, gender, emotional intelligent, mindfulness, characteristics, responsibilities, and workload, as well as conflicts that employees have.

KEYWORDS

Burnout, Call/Contact Center, MBI

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of information technology impacts all aspects and leads to the emergence of new customer habits in purchasing decision making and service use. The transformation encourages companies to innovate in order to provide convenience and efficiency in providing services to their customers. In this case the use of contact centers is considered the most effective way to love relationships with customers (Saberi et al., 2017).

Representative studies show that in 2003 there were 29,000 contact centers in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. In 2008, the contact center sector is expected to grow by as many as
45,000 and include two million job positions (APCC, 2015). Research in Portugal shows that the revenue of 55,000 contact center agents, represents about 1% of Portuguese GNP (Cardoso, 2006), while in Indonesia there are more than 30 contact center service providers (ICCA, 2014).

Bakkar et al. (Bakker, et al., 2003) did research that mentions that the existence of contact centers can reduce operational costs and improve customer service.

Optimization of high competitive human resources in the contact center system is certainly a strategic resource for the sustainability and effectiveness of the organization. HR practices are a major factor for organizations to achieve goals and provide customer value. With such a large hr role, of course, it is very important for organizations to consider maximizing the role and potential of HR as a strategic step to increase the profitability of the company (Cummings & Worley, 2010).

For two decades the use of contact centers was reviewed from two different perspectives. From the business side, organizations benefit from improving customer service and reducing operating costs. However, on the other hand, contact centers have a negative impact on their workers because of high work pressure that is felt continuously and influenced by various stressors such as work activities that are always monitored, and often face customer complaints so they are prone to burnout (Geraldes et al., 2019).

Burnout can be interpreted as emotional fatigue that is felt continuously due to prolonged stress at work. Feeling tired both physically and emotionally, decreased performance, self-meaninglessness, and negative perceptions of his work will be experienced by employees affected by burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Subramaniam et al., 2017). Geraldes et al. (2019) explained that burnout in the cloud can be identified by the presence of fatigue and cynicism. Fatigue refers to reduced morale and energy both physically and emotionally, while cynicism refers to limiting self-involvement both cognitively and emotionally with their work.

In a study conducted in Korea by comparing burnout in various fields of profession, among medics and contact center employee counselors had the highest burnout rate (Lee et al., 2019). While research conducted in Italy proved as many as 20% of contact center employees are in a high burnout rate (D’Alleoa & Santangelo, 2011). Meanwhile, Sangadah (2020) conducting his research at one of the contact center service providers in Indonesia showed that bedara contact center workers at a moderate burnout rate of 66.3%.
Employees who experience burnout can have an impact on employee losses due to lack of maximum in doing their work so that they become less productive and decrease in achieving achievement (Leitão et al., 2021). This is reinforced by research showing that burnout negatively affects productivity (Leitão et al., 2021). In addition, burnout on employees will also increase turnover intentions in kartayawan and prove to be negatively affected by burnout (Eliyana, 2016).

Review the adverse impact and high level of burnout on contact center workers, so an in-depth review of the causes of burnout in contact centers is needed and it is important for management to know how appropriate to lower burnout rates in contact center employees. This is done by analyzing the literature review.

Contact Centers

Definition of Contact Center

The contact center was first developed by Rockwell Galaxy which was applied to continental airlines' 1973 airfare booking system. Initially this system was devoted to using computer media to receive incoming and outgoing calls in handling customers and is better known as "Call Center". With the new development in the development of communication and information technology, so that call centers develop into "Contact Centers" and the benefits of the application of Contact Centers have been felt in many industries and various countries such as in the health, pharmaceutical and medical fields, mobile telecommunications, and service industries (Saberi et al., 2017).

According to Saberi et al. (2017), a contact center is a workplace where staff interact with customers through various communication channels available such as: telephone, email, phone touch-point, fax, mail, web, online live chat, and social networking. This centralized service is equipped with specialized advanced tools that enable clean and integrated data centralization and are empowered with customized knowledge.

In general, contact centers are divided into four types, consisting of contact centers, call centers, help desks, and customer support. The differences are each described in the following table (Saberi et al., 2017).
Managerial Aspects of Contact Center

Candeias et al (2021) explained that despite contact center contributions to customer service and higher quality, they are particularly vulnerable to turnover intention, absence, work stress and fatigue. So that there are important managerial aspects that are the main consensual including CC performance, Representative Customer Service (CSR), and CCS outsourcing. Performance is a very important aspect for the organization. Performance measurement in complex systems is something that needs to be considered as better control, monitoring, and management of activities. Factors related to performance include: the dimension of customer relations management has an impact on the quality of service received, good planning in manpowering, employee turnover intention, outsourced employees (Saberi et al., 2017).

Representative Customer Service (CSR) is part of the employee contact center or contact center agent who has a role to maintain relationships with customers who are responsible for improving customer experience, and as a help center in accordance with customer needs to provide solutions to problems faced. Therefore CSR needs to be supported by skills, knowledge, and training. High turnover intentions are a challenge for management that is very important to note (Saberi et al., 2017).

At least labor cost needs account for 60-80% of operational costs in the implementation of contact centers. With these high costs make many companies who outsource their labor by using a 3rd party (Saberi et al., 2017)
In general, the structure of contact center implementation can be explained in the following image.

![Contact Center Work Environment](image)

**Figure 1. Contact Center Work Environment**

**Burnout**

**Definition of Burnout**

The term burnout was first known and came to attention in the 1970s. Today after 40 years, the burnout phenomenon has been recognized as a major problem in almost all workplaces around the world. Burnout can be interpreted as a psychological experience involving feelings, attitudes, motives, and expectations felt at work so that it causes negative experiences for individuals that cause problems, distress, discomfort, dysfunction, and/or negative consequences (Maslach & Leiter, 2017).

Burnout is the impact of stress at work due to the heavy workload, so employees will feel unsettled by their work, and cause physical and mental health problems, drained energy while
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working. Burnout symptoms can be characterized by physical fatigue and even insomnia and headaches, a negative perspective on work (cynicism), as well as decreased professionalism at work (Cole, et al., 2012).

**Measurement Burnout**

Burnout measurements in general can be measured based on three indicators, namely Emotional Exhaustion, Personal Accomplishment, and Depersonalization or cynicism. Emotional exhaustion can be interpreted as feeling drained of energy while doing his job and feeling an insurmountable void (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

Personal accomplishments of dissatisfaction with themselves, work or personal life can be an indication of a personal accomplishment caused by negative stigma and feelings of guilt experienced at work. Depersonalization or cynicism can be interpreted as a negative and sensitive attitude, irritability, loss of attention, attitude of resignation and a sense of loss of idealism. Or it can also be interpreted as a balancing process between the demands and the work environment to the ability of the individual (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

The three indicators are summarized in the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) questionnaire with a total of 22 questions based on the feelings and attitudes of the individual, consisting of 9 items to measure the Emotional Exhaustion indicator, 5 question items to measure the Depersonalization indicator, and 8 questions to measure the Personal Accomplishment indicator. Assessment is measured by a likert scale consisting of 7 points i.e. strongly disagree (STS) has a value weight of 1, does not correspond (TS) has a value weight of 2, somewhat disagrees (ATS) has a value weight of 3, simply agrees (CS) has a value weight of 4, somewhat agrees (AS) has a value weight of 5, agrees (S) has a value weight of 6, strongly agrees (SS) has a value weight of 7 (Khamisa, et al., 2017). It can generally be explained in the following schemes.
Burnout on Contact Center

Burnout arises from prolonged stress, so the factors that affect burnout are often associated with the appearance of stress. There are two factors that are seen to affect the appearance of burnout, namely: external factors and internal factors. Maslach & Leiter (1997), identifies six key domains causing burnout to external factors that include workload, control, rewards, community or work environment, and value. Workload and control are reflected in the demands of work or monotonous work models, while control can refer to work stress, reward refers to the provision of comparable rewards or appreciation. Community refers to social support and interpersonal conflict, while justice encompasses how to achieve equality and distributive and administrative justice, and value areas refer to cognitive and emotional aspects or concerns of work expectations and goals. Internal factors that cause burnout include age, gender, self-esteem, and personality characteristics (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

Research conducted by Shafira (2019), conducted on contact center employees of PT. Infomedia Solusi Humanika Telkom Blimbing Malang shows that high burnout levels in employees and high work stress result in low employee focus and productivity. This is in line with research conducted in Italy that 20% of call centers have high scores (D’Alleoa & Santangelo, 2011).
Mashlach & Leiter (2016), explained the process of burnout due to employee incompatibility with the team in his work as follows.

**Figure 3. Processes of Burnout**

While the cause and impact of burnout based on job characteristics are explained through the following schemes (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

**Figure 4. Model of Burnout**
Emphasis on Research

In the study conducted by Montalbo (2016) and Drissi et al. (2021) have the same main points in his research regarding factors that affect burnout rates in contact center employees based on employee demographics. However, the study conducted by Drissi et al. (2021) further exploring the causes of burnout in more depth and specifically because the study explained how the social impact of employee demographics on each burnout indicator consists of emotional fatigue, depersonalization, and reduced personal achievement and also how the effects of religiosity and sports activities.

Deniz and Kaya (2021) focused its research on how workload factors can affect burnout in employees, so it is necessary to conduct an analysis of how workload and burnout affect. While the research conducted by Gonçalves et al. (2020) emphasizing the causes of burnout caused by autonomous motivation through the role of relational job caracteristic mediation (RJC).

Charoensukmongkol and Puyod (2020), Harry (2021) and in his research has similarities that both emphasize how miningfullness factors can be the cause of emotional fatigue. Looking at research conducted by Harry (2021) making mindfulness a moderator variable in intelligent emotional influence and emotional exhaustion, while the research conducted by Charoensukmongkol and Puyod (2020), more emphasis on how the influence of miningfullness on emotional fatigue is moderated by factors of work characteristics and personal characteristics.

Dwi Lestari and Yuwono (2020) and Geraldes et al. (2019) have similarities, the two studies discuss how conflict plays into emotional exhaustion. This is reinforced in the research conducted by Dwi Lestari and Yuwono (2020) put more emphasis on how the role of work-family conflict and family-work conflict in mediating the relationship between person-job fit and emotional exhaustion, while the research conducted by Geraldes et al. (2019) more focused on how the influence of Work-personal life conflict and burnout is moderated by affective commitment.
METHOD

The method used in this study is the literature review approach. Literature review is the best way to synthesize research findings to show evidence at meta-levels and to uncover areas where more research is needed that are important components in creating theoretical frameworks and building conceptual models (Snyder, 2019). The article used in this study was obtained from the website of scientific database providers google scholar and sciencedirect using the keyword burnout, contact centers, contact centers, call centers, call centers. Article inclusion criteria are journals or fulltext open access articles published in 2016-2021 both in English and Indonesia. And the final results of the article in accordance with the inclusion criteria were obtained as many as 8 journals.

The entire study is a quantitative description study and uses sampling techniques of non-probabability sampling. The measuring instrument used in all studies used the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) questionnaire (Geraldes et al., 2019; Gonçalves et al., 2020; Dwi Lestari & Yuwono, 2020; Montalbo, 2016; Drissi et al., 2021; Charoensukmongkol & Puyod, 2020; Harry, 2021; Deniz & Kaya, 2021). In the study conducted by Charoensukmongkol & Puyod (2020), and Dwi Lestari & Yuwono (2020) only used indicators of emotional fatigue, while in the study conducted by Geraldes et al (2019), and Harry (2021) used two indicators of emotional fatigue and cynicism. While in the study conducted by Gonçalves et al (2020), Montalbo (2016), Drissi et al (2021), and Deniz & Kaya (2021) using three burnout indicators namely emotional fatigue, depersonalization or cynicism, and reduced self-achievement. Kuesione is distributed in person as well as online.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The perceived burnout in contact center employees is caused by many factors. One factor is the social demographic status of employees. It is age-related that younger employees tend to be more prone to burnout because in younger employees their lack of experience in handling excessive job requests or overcoming customer difficulties or anger (Montalbo, 2016). This has similarities with research conducted by Drissi et al. (2021), that age factor has a role in the occurrence of burnout. The study equally showed that younger employees were more susceptible to burnout, but in this study more broadly discussed emotional fatigue and cynicism decreased with age, while self-achievement increased with age from 31-40 to 51 years and
above. The difference is significant only for indicators of cynicism. These dehumanization results indicate a certain low in emotion among employees who will be less likely to like their clients over time. Burnout is less common in older age groups, which suggests that the experience of age will have a coping effect. Spirituality and exercise can also have a coping effect on employees. The same is also proven in research conducted by Charoensukmongkol & Puyod (2020), that contact center employees at a younger age, unmarried, occupying supervisory positions, and have high employment demands will be more susceptible to burnout.

This is also reinforced by the existence of research conducted by Deniz and Kaya (2021) emphasizing on focusing its research on how workload factors can affect burnout in employees. In this study it is proven that when the workload increases and the demands of work are high, employees tend to feel tired increases. While in research conducted by Montalbo (2016), it was found that there are differences in responsibility, in this case related to the level of management has a significant relationship. This means that the more an employee in an organization, it will be more susceptible to burnout. However, Charoensukmongkol & Puyod (2020) more broadly explained that mindfulness has a negative connection to burnout, especially in employees who have high job demands and employees who are full of supervision. This can be interpreted that contact center employees who have a high level of mindfulness will tend to have a low burnout risk. Likewise, burnout in employees with young and unmarried ages in the study proved effective in lowering burnout rates in contact center employees. This means that the higher the mindfulness owned by an employee, it will have a low burnout.

A review of the relationship of mindfulness to burnout was also conducted by Harry (2021), which showed that employee mindfulness feelings were shown to significantly reduce burnout rates in contact center employees. The study also more broadly explains that not only mindfulness, emotional intelligence is also significant in moderating burnout. The role of mindfulness and emotional intelligence that is considered the motivational aspect of a sense of coherence represents how beliefs and the extent to which individuals want to overcome them based on the belief that they have sufficient resources to successfully face guidance so that this motivation can give contact center employees encouragement to participate more in delivering results, thus creating a sense of mindfulness in their work. Gonçalves et al. (2020) emphasizes research on internal or intrinsic motivation on the aspects of autonomous motivation and relational job characteristic (RJC) to burnout. The results showed that the presence of certain RJC's in the contact center (i.e., perceived social values and perceived prosocial impacts)
negatively affects burnout through the role of autonomous motivational mediation. This means RJC can help reduce burnout, and autonomous motivation plays a role in that.

Conflict in the work environment is inevitable whether it is personal conflict or conflict in work. Geraldes et al (2019), in his research emphasized that in general work-personal life conflict (WPLC) either based on time or strain has a positive correlation of burnout in contact centers, especially in the emotional dimension of exhaustion and cynicism. Furthermore, the study also explained that affective commitment moderates the relationship between WPLC and burnout, but partially has a significant effect only on the dimension of cynicism. In line with research conducted by Dwi Lestari & Yuwono (2020) which discusses conflicts in employees and person job fit. The results revealed that person job fit was negatively associated with family work and work–family conflict, and emotional exhaustion. Contact center employees will feel emotionally exhausted when faced with the dilemma between work and family responsibilities but can be reduced if the employee feels fit with the work he is doing.

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<td>Peerayuth Charoensukmongkol</td>
<td>Mindfulness and emotional exhaustion in call center agent in the Philippines: the moderating roles of work and personal characteristics</td>
<td>Quantitative, non-probability samples at 412 call center agents from 5 companies in the Philippines. The data was collected using an MBI questionnaire distributed using google form.</td>
<td>1. The results of the role mindfulness plays in reducing emotional fatigue in call center agents provide support to job characteristics and personal characteristics. 2. Personal characteristics</td>
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<th>Drissi, E.Boulbaroud, S.Hami, H.Ahami, A.Azzaoui, F-Z., 2021</th>
<th>SEM with the help of PLS applications</th>
<th>moderate relationships of mindfulness and emotional exhaustion.</th>
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<td>Burnout among call center staff in the Rabat Sale Kenitra Region. The data was collected using an MBI questionnaire that was filled out directly. Data analysis using Anova, t test with the help of SPSS application</td>
<td>1. This study shows that age has a significant effect on burnout.</td>
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<td>2. The gender impact outcome is not significant. On the other hand, burnout is less common in older age groups, which suggests that age experiences will have a protective effect. Spirituality of exercise can also have a protective effect.</td>
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<th>Montalbo, Agnes F., 2016</th>
<th>The Burnout Level of Call Center Agents in Metro Manila, Philippines</th>
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<td>The results imply that working in a call center can cause employee fatigue especially for</td>
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<td>DENIZ, Ahmet KAYA, Cigdem</td>
<td>Effect of workload on burnout in call center</td>
<td>Quantitative cross-sectional survey approach. Non-probababiliy samples in 850 people working in the call center sector in Anatolia. The data was collected using an MBI questionnaire with an online survey for 6 months.</td>
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<td>Dwi Lestari, Elissa Yuwono, Miranti Kusuma</td>
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<td>Person–Job Fit as Antecedent</td>
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<td>Nisha Harriy, 2021</td>
<td>Quantitative cross-sectional survey approach, non-probability samples on 409 call center agents were employed as permanent employees in Lagos, Nigeria, and Johannesburg and Durban, South Africa. The data is collected using MBI questionnaires that are filled out directly and analyzed using the Hayes Process procedure. The results provide evidence of the importance of considering the sense of meaningfulness of call center agents, managing emotions towards others and emotional perception can significantly lower fatigue levels and increase professional efficacy.</td>
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<td>Catarina Gonçalves, Maria Jose’</td>
<td>Combating Burnout by Increasing Job</td>
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services institutions in Indonesia. The data is collected using MBI questionnaires that are filled out directly and analyzed using SEM.
Chambel, dan Vânia Sofia Carvalho, 2019 | Relational Characteristics | probability sample of 1,538 contact center workers in Portugal. The data was collected using MBI questionnaires filled out online using monkey surveys and analyzed using SEM.

Geraldes, Daniela Madeira, Ema Carvalho, Vânia Sofia Chambel, Maria José, 2019 | Work-personal life conflict and burnout in contact centers: The moderating role of affective commitment | Quantitative cross-sectional survey approach, non-probability sample in 2,055 employees of large call center companies in Portugal. The data was collected using an MBI questionnaire filled out online using a monkey survey and analyzed using Hayes with the help of the SPSS application.

The results of this study suggest that the presence of certain RJC in contact centers may help reduce fatigue, through the role of autonomous motivation as mediation.

WPLC has a positive effect on burnout, and affective commitment moderates the relationship between the two.
CONCLUSION

Based on the literature review conducted in eight articles that have been presented, it is found that in general the factors that can cause burnout in contact center employees consist of sociodemographic factors such as age, marital status and gender. In addition, there are internal factors that in this case include the level of intelligent emotional, mindfulness attitude, autonomous motivation, affective commitment and perception or value that employees have towards their work. Other factors that can affect burnout in contact centers are external factors such as job characteristics, job burdens and responsibilities, and conflicts that employees have both in the family and in work.

From the results of this literature review study recommends the importance of burnout management that pays attention to both sociodemographic aspects, internal factors and external factors of employees. Especially by paying more attention to employees who have a relatively young age, and with unmarried status. Burnout can also be managed by increasing mindfulness awareness, creating programs that can increase emotional intelligence, and autonomous motivation so as to create a positive view of employees to their work. In this case, the arrangement of responsibilities, workloads, and conflict management also needs to be a concern to lower the burnout rate in the contact center.
REFERENCES


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