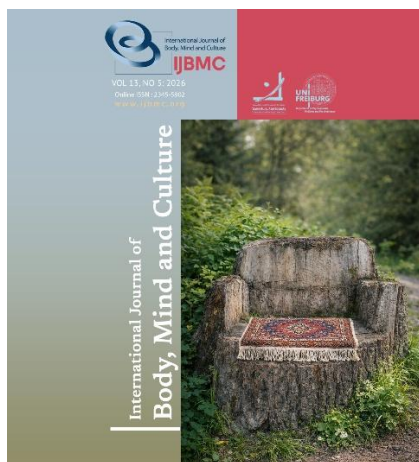


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Burnout in the Service Industry: A Systematic Review of Conceptualization, Measurement, Theoretical Frameworks, and Empirical Patterns

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This systematic review examined how burnout has been conceptualized, measured, and theoretically explained in service-oriented organizational contexts, and identified its main antecedents, mediators, moderators, and consequences.

Methods and Materials: Following PRISMA 2020 guidelines, studies were identified through searches in Scopus, Web of Science, and EBSCO. Peer-reviewed English-language journal articles published between 2001 and 2023 were included if they examined burnout in the service industry or service-oriented work contexts. From 241 initial records, duplicates and irrelevant records were removed, 87 full texts were assessed, and 20 studies met the final inclusion criteria. Data were extracted on definitions, measurement dimensions, theoretical frameworks, research contexts, methods, antecedents, mediators, moderators, and outcomes. Findings were synthesized thematically.

Findings: Burnout was most often conceptualized using the Maslach multidimensional model, which includes emotional exhaustion, depersonalization or cynicism, and reduced personal accomplishment. Alternative models included the two-dimensional exhaustion–disengagement model and a five-dimensional burnout model. Nineteen studies used quantitative designs, and one used a qualitative design. The most frequent theoretical frameworks were the Conservation of Resources Theory and the Job Demands–Resources Model. Key antecedents included job demands and resources, role stress, emotional labor, personality traits, relational factors, workplace bullying, abusive supervision, and customer injustice. Burnout was associated with turnover intention, absenteeism, disengagement, employee silence, reduced performance, lower productivity, interpersonal deviance, and poorer psychological well-being.

Conclusion: Burnout in the service industry is a multidimensional and theoretically fragmented phenomenon. Future studies should strengthen conceptual clarity, measurement consistency, longitudinal evidence, and cross-sector comparisons.

Keywords: Burnout, Occupational Stress, Personnel Turnover, Job Satisfaction, Workplace, Systematic Review.

Introduction

Burnout is a multidimensional psychological syndrome that can be caused by chronic work-related stress that is prolonged and not managed well (Abubakar et al., 2022; Parveen & Adeinat, 2019), and it has become a major concern due to the significant organizational costs it generates as well as its recognition as one of the most widely discussed mental health issues in modern society (Gonçalves & Gaudêncio, 2023). Contemporary studies indicate that burnout can occur across various professions and industries. However, this study specifically focuses on the service industry within organizational (company-based) settings, particularly those involving direct service interactions with customers or clients. In customer-oriented sectors such as banking and hospitality, employees are particularly vulnerable to burnout due to high interpersonal demands, continuous client interactions, and intense workloads that may disrupt both individual functioning and organizational performance (Packirisamy et al., 2017).

Based on literature reviews conducted over the past decade, burnout is generally understood as a syndrome resulting from prolonged work-related stress, characterized by three primary dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Busireddy et al., 2017; Chan et al., 2019; Cooper et al., 2016; Dewa et al., 2017; Galanakis & Tsitouri, 2022; MacDonald et al., 2016; Mäkikangas & Kinnunen, 2016; McFadden et al., 2019; Ribeiro et al., 2018; Van Mol et al., 2015; Westphal et al., 2022; Whitehead et al., 2023).

Most studies adopt the conceptualization introduced by Maslach & Jackson (1981). Nevertheless, this dominant conceptualization does not eliminate ongoing inconsistencies, as variations in definitions and the absence of explicit conceptual clarity in some studies indicate persistent conceptual fragmentation.

The understanding of burnout has also evolved in terms of measurement dimensions. Since its early development, the assessment of burnout has been subject to ongoing debate (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 2020). Most studies continue to apply the three-dimensional model consisting of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Busireddy et al., 2017; Chan et al.,

2019; Cooper et al., 2016; Dewa et al., 2017; Galanakis & Tsitouri, 2022; MacDonald et al., 2016; Mäkikangas & Kinnunen, 2016; Ribeiro et al., 2018; Van Mol et al., 2015; Westphal et al., 2022; Whitehead et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, several studies do not explicitly explain which burnout dimensions were employed (Clayton & Marczak, 2023; Costin et al., 2023; Whitehead et al., 2023). This lack of clarity reflects not only reporting limitations but also raises concerns about the comparability and validity of findings across studies. Moreover, the three-dimensional model introduced by Maslach & Jackson (1981) has received criticism for conceptual limitations, psychometric concerns (Demerouti et al., 2001), and limited practical applicability (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 2020). Despite these criticisms, prior reviews have tended to remain descriptive and have not sufficiently examined the implications of these limitations for advancing burnout measurement.

From a research context perspective, most studies have been conducted within the healthcare sector or among medical professionals (Clayton & Marczak, 2023; Cooper et al., 2016; Dewa et al., 2017; Ribeiro et al., 2018; Van Mol et al., 2015; Whitehead et al., 2023). Other studies have explored burnout within educational settings (Busireddy et al., 2017; Chan et al., 2019; Westphal et al., 2022), journalism (MacDonald et al., 2016), and social work (McFadden et al., 2015). It is important to note that these sectors largely fall within the broader service domain, particularly those involving human-centered service delivery. Meanwhile, some studies include diverse occupations without focusing on a specific sector (Costin et al., 2023; Galanakis & Tsitouri, 2022; Mäkikangas & Kinnunen, 2016). However, existing reviews remain limited in their explicit focus on service-based organizational settings (i.e., companies that provide services directly to customers), which represent a more specific and underexplored scope.

Furthermore, from a theoretical perspective, existing literature reviews indicate the use of a wide range of theoretical approaches. Several studies adopt the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Galanakis & Tsitouri, 2022; Westphal et al., 2022), the Conservation of Resources Cordes & Dougherty theory (MacDonald et al., 2016), the Cognitive Appraisal Model of Stress (Cooper et al., 2016), the modern person-oriented

approach Mäkikangas & Kinnunen (2016), and the biomedical model (Whitehead et al., 2023). In addition, Chan et al. (2019) integrate three theoretical frameworks simultaneously. Despite the prominence of certain dominant models such as JD-R and COR, the overall theoretical landscape remains highly fragmented, with many studies applying isolated or inconsistently defined frameworks. On the other hand, eight studies do not clearly specify the theoretical framework employed (Busireddy et al., 2017; Chan et al., 2019; Cooper et al., 2016; Dewa et al., 2017; Galanakis & Tsitouri, 2022; Mäkikangas & Kinnunen, 2016; divergence in the McFadden et al., 2019; MacDonald et al., 2016; Mäkikangas & Kinnunen, 2016; McFadden et al., 2019; Ribeiro et al., 2018; Van Mol et al., 2015; Westphal et al., 2022; Whitehead et al., 2023). This pattern indicates not only diverse development of cumulative knowledge integration, which may limit cumulative knowledge development in burnout research.

Although previous studies have provided valuable insights into advancing the burnout literature, they present several limitations. In particular, the persistence of conceptual, measurement, and theoretical fragmentation has not been sufficiently synthesized in terms of its implications for research consistency and practical application. In particular, prior research has predominantly focused on social service workers (Bhowmick & Mulla, 2021) and has applied various theoretical perspectives on the occurrence, conceptualization, and measurement dimensions of burnout. As a result, the definition of burnout has varied considerably across the literature over time (Giao et al., 2020).

Therefore, this study aims to provide a more focused and systematic understanding of burnout research, specifically within service-based organizational settings, defined as companies that deliver services directly to human users or clients. To achieve this objective, a systematic literature review is conducted to identify, classify, and analyze existing studies according to their theoretical frameworks, conceptualizations, measurement dimensions, and key empirical contributions to the burnout literature. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1. How do existing studies conceptualize burnout, and what measurement dimensions are used to assess it?

RQ2. What factors have been identified in prior research as antecedents, consequences, mediators, or moderators of burnout?

By clearly delimiting the scope to service-oriented organizational contexts, this study seeks to reduce ambiguity in sectoral coverage and improve alignment between the review focus and its analytical contributions. This study can guide future research by identifying existing knowledge gaps in the burnout literature, particularly in the context of the growing global mental health challenges, with a specific focus on the service industry. In addition, this study provides several key contributions. First, it offers a more comprehensive understanding of the fragmented definitions of burnout, the underlying theoretical frameworks, and the measurement approaches used to assess burnout within service industry contexts. Second, while the initial search identified 241 articles, the final inclusion of fewer studies reflects the application of strict selection criteria and highlights the limited and selective nature of the existing evidence base. Third, this study provides a potential roadmap for future research by highlighting opportunities for methodological, empirical, and theoretical advancements in the burnout literature.

Methods and Materials

Study Design

Identification of Information Sources and Search Strategy

This study employs a systematic literature review (SLR) following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines to ensure a transparent, systematic, and reproducible review process. The procedure includes structured stages of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and synthesis of relevant studies. The systematic search was conducted across three major academic databases: Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), and EBSCO to identify relevant peer-reviewed journal articles. These databases were selected due to their broad coverage of high-quality publications and are considered sufficient to capture relevant studies within the defined scope of this review. The search strategy used a combination of keywords, including “burnout” OR “exhaustion” and “service industry” OR “service company” OR “service business,” as well as terms related to service-oriented

sectors such as banking, hospitality, and customer-oriented services. The search was conducted in June 2024. The selection of keywords was carefully considered to represent various service-related contexts and minimize the risk of omitting relevant studies. These keywords were applied to the title, abstract, and keyword fields of the databases. To enhance transparency, the search was conducted within the 2001–2023 publication period, with database-specific search procedures adjusted accordingly.

Study Selection and Eligibility Assessment

The initial database search yielded 241 articles, including 136 from Scopus, 87 from Web of Science (WoS), and 18 from EBSCO. Articles from these three sources were subsequently merged into an Excel spreadsheet, followed by the removal of duplicate records. The remaining metadata were then screened based on predetermined eligibility criteria. Studies were included if they met the following conditions: (1) peer-reviewed journal articles, (2) published in English between 2001 and 2023, and (3) examined burnout within the service industry context. In this study, the service industry is defined as organizational settings (including companies) in which employees provide direct services to clients or customers, thereby justifying the inclusion of studies with mixed-sector labels as long as the work context involves service interactions.

Studies were excluded if they were book chapters, conference proceedings, or other non-peer-reviewed publications, or if they did not directly address burnout-related constructs. Subsequently, three independent reviewers manually screened potentially relevant studies by examining their titles, abstracts, and keywords to determine their suitability for inclusion in the review. To strengthen the reliability of the screening process, agreement among reviewers was achieved through iterative discussion and consensus-building.

After the selected articles were finalized, three independent reviewers extracted data by carefully reading each article's full text. Agreed-upon key information was systematically extracted, including the authors, publication year, article title, journal, theoretical framework, research context, research method, and main findings. In addition, information

related to the conceptualization of burnout and other substantive data, such as antecedents, consequences, mediating variables, and moderating variables, was also included as extracted data items. The collected data were cross-checked for accuracy and consistency before being organized into a structured worksheet that served as the final dataset for synthesis.

Quality Assessment and Risk of Bias Evaluation

To assess the methodological quality and risk of bias of the included studies, a quality assessment process was conducted in accordance with best practices for systematic literature reviews. The assessment employed a structured checklist adapted from established systematic review guidelines (Higgins et al., 2019). The checklist included criteria such as clarity of research objectives, appropriateness of the study design, transparency of data collection procedures, and alignment between the analysis and the conclusions. Each criterion was assessed qualitatively to ensure consistency across studies. The assessment was conducted independently by three reviewers, followed by cross-validation to ensure consistency. Any discrepancies were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached, ensuring that all included studies met acceptable methodological quality standards. The results of the quality assessment were used to support the interpretation of findings, rather than as strict exclusion criteria, given the exploratory nature of this review.

Data Extraction and Synthesis

Following the quality assessment, data extraction was conducted systematically to minimize potential human error and bias, in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 recommendations. Key information extracted from each study included the authors, publication year, theoretical framework, research design, data characteristics, and main findings. All extracted data were organized and recorded using a structured Excel spreadsheet. A thematic synthesis approach was employed to integrate findings across the included studies. Themes were generated through an iterative process involving coding of key concepts, grouping similar findings, and comparing patterns across studies to ensure consistency and coherence. This process involved identifying recurring concepts, dominant theoretical frameworks, and methodological trends related to burnout in service-based industries. To

address potential conceptual overlap, variables such as antecedents, mediators, moderators, and consequences were categorized by their functional roles in each study, enabling clearer differentiation during synthesis. The synthesized findings were then analyzed and presented narratively, supported by summary tables to enhance clarity and transparency.

Findings and Results

Publication Trends and Journal Quality

The initial database search yielded 241 records, consisting of 136 articles from Scopus, 87 from Web of Science (WoS), and 18 from EBSCO. After removing duplicates and screening titles and abstracts, 119 articles published between 2001 and 2023 were

identified as potentially eligible. Following a full-text assessment based on the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, 20 articles were considered relevant and included in the final review. The detailed study selection process is illustrated in Figure 1 using the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram. The extracted data were then transferred into an Excel spreadsheet, recording information such as authors, year of publication, theoretical framework, research methods, research context, and a summary of the research findings (see Table 1). Among the reviewed studies, the article by [Demerouti et al. \(2001\)](#) is the most highly cited, with 7,254 citations, making 2001 the publication year with the highest citation count among the 20 articles included in this review. With the highest citation count among the 20 articles included in this review.

Table 1*Summary of the studies*

Author	Theory	Method	Research context	Finding
(Demerouti et al., 2001)	JD-R	Quantitative	Human service, industry, and transport	The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) confirmed a two-factor structure of burnout (exhaustion and disengagement) that is invariant across occupational groups.
(Hsieh & Hsieh, 2003)	Organization theory	Quantitative	Manufacturing and service industry	Job standardization indirectly reduces burnout by reducing role stress; however, its direct relationship with burnout appears spurious.
(Sharma, 2007)	Veninga and Spradley's Stage Model, Leiter-Maslach Process Model, Cherniss' Transactional Process Model, Pines' and Aronson's Existential Model, Meier's Model of Burnout, Smith's Cognitive-Affective Stress Model, Moore's Attributional Model of Work Exhaustion Consequences, Golembiewsky's Phase Model of Burnout	Quantitative	Manufacturing and service industry	Stress personality is the strongest predictor of burnout; various forms of role stress increase burnout, while emotional intelligence mediates, and personal effectiveness moderates the relationship between experienced stress and burnout.
(Snyder, 2009)	ECM theory	Quantitative	Human service organization	Social support reduces burnout: coworker support enhances communicative responsiveness, supervisor support reduces depersonalization, and emotional exhaustion increases turnover intention.
(Snyder, 2012)	ECM theory	Quantitative	Service industry	The ability to regulate emotions and maintain optimism helps caregivers respond more effectively to clients and resist burnout.
(Castanheira & Chambel, 2013)	JD-C	Quantitative	Service industry	Emotional dissonance and quantitative demands increase exhaustion and cynicism, while autonomy reduces them; no significant moderation effects were found.
(Dylag et al., 2013)	The Schwartz value model	Quantitative	Service industry	A perceived value discrepancy between the individual and the organization increases burnout and decreases work engagement.
(Xu et al., 2015)	COR	Quantitative	Service industry	Abusive supervision increases emotional exhaustion, which leads to employee silence; high LMX further exacerbates this negative effect.
(Tian et al., 2015)	COR	Quantitative	Service industry	Resilience and psychological empowerment (PE) reduce burnout; resilience remains a significant predictor, with the effect partially mediated by PE.
(Hines, 2017)	JD-R	Qualitative	Service providers (libraries)	Burnout can be addressed at institutional and personal levels; neuroticism is a strong predictor, and burnout leads to disengagement in both work and personal life.
(Neto et al., 2017)	Recovery theory	Quantitative	Service company	Workplace bullying increases emotional exhaustion and reduces psychological well-being; exhaustion and well-being mediate the effect on concentration.
(Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2018)	Transactional model of coping	Quantitative	Service company	Ostracism leads to interpersonal deviance through defensive silence; deviance is used as a coping response in collectivist cultural contexts.
(Cheung et al., 2018)	COR	Quantitative	Construction industry, manufacturing industry, and service industry	Workaholism is positively associated with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization across industries and countries.
(Nawaz & Sandhu, 2018)	COR	Quantitative	Service industry	Job stress decreases job satisfaction and increases burnout and turnover intention (hospitality sector in Pakistan).
(Jacobs & Roodt, 2019)	JD-R	Explanatory	Industry sector	The combination of job resources, HRM practices, competence, and engagement reduces burnout and turnover intention while enhancing performance.
(Enkhjav et al., 2020)	Challenge and hindrance stressors	Quantitative	Banking sector	Challenge stressors significantly predict burnout among female banking employees.
(Giao et al., 2020)	COR	Quantitative	Banking industry	Emotional intelligence reduces turnover intention through the partial mediation of work-family conflict and burnout; perceived organizational support plays both protective and moderating roles.
(McFadden et al., 2019)	JD-R, COR, and Boarden & build theory	Quantitative	Civil aviation industry	Work engagement, burnout, and job satisfaction are significant indicators of employee well-being; employees may remain engaged despite experiencing burnout.
(Bhowmick & Mulla, 2021)	Multidimensional theory of burnout	Quantitative	Service industry	Conscientiousness and agreeableness serve as protective factors against burnout; job control reduces exhaustion, and organizational identification increases personal accomplishment.
(Kim & Leach, 2021)	The multifoci model of organizational justice	Quantitative	Customer service industry	Customer injustice increases emotional labor, which exacerbates disengagement and exhaustion; interpersonal and procedural justice from supervisors mitigates burnout.

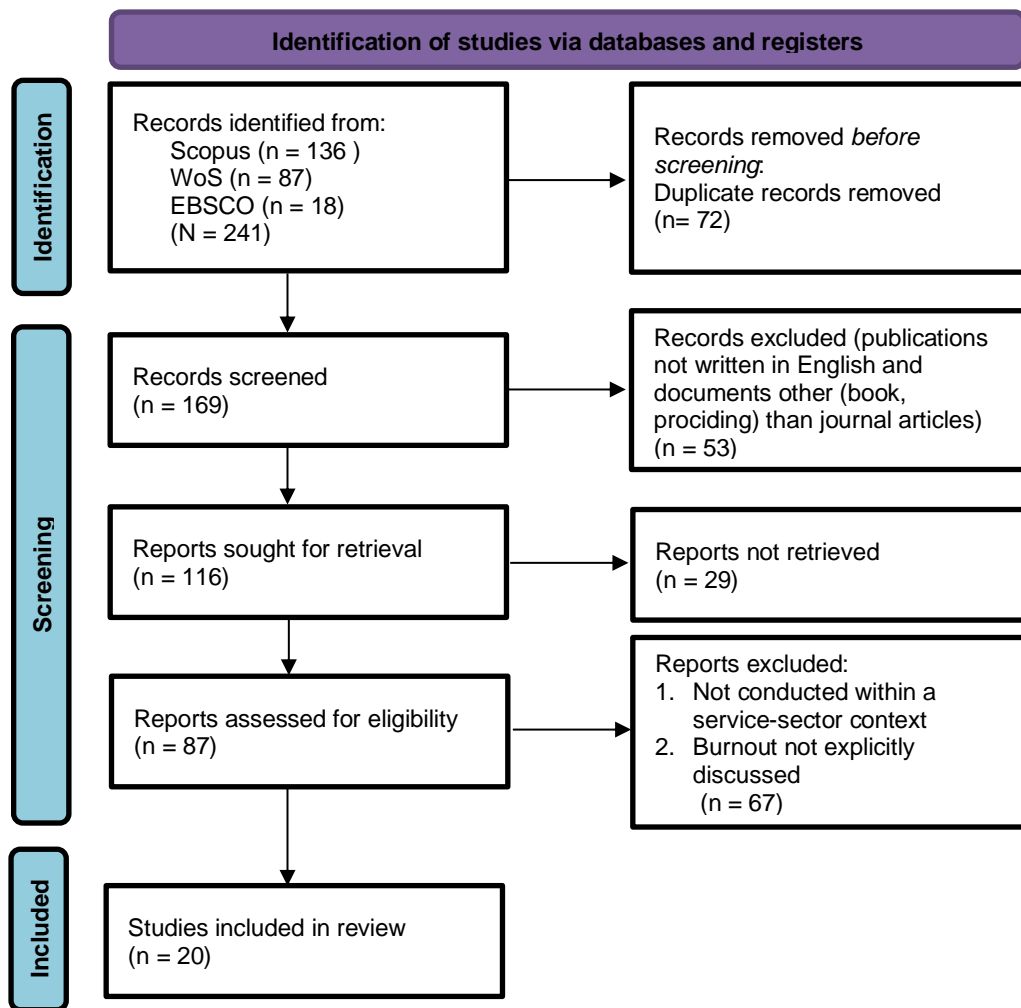


Figure 1

PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram

Research Characteristics

The selected studies predominantly employed quantitative methods, with 19 studies (95%) using quantitative approaches and one study (5%) using a qualitative method. This strong dominance of quantitative designs suggests a potential limitation in capturing in-depth contextual dynamics of burnout across service settings. In terms of geographical distribution, the majority of the selected studies were conducted in Asia, comprising 12 studies (India: 3; China: 2; Pakistan: 2; and one each in Taiwan, Singapore, Mongolia, Vietnam, and South Korea). Five studies were conducted in Europe (Germany, the United Kingdom, Portugal, and Poland), two in America, and one in Africa.

The majority of studies focus on the service sector, with variations across specific contexts such as banking (Castanheira & Chambel, 2013; Enkhjav et al., 2020; Giao et al., 2020) and customer service (Kim & Leach, 2021; McFadden et al., 2015; Snyder, 2009; Snyder, 2012; Tian et al., 2015). Meanwhile, the manufacturing and construction sectors appear less frequently in the literature and are often examined alongside the service sector (Cheung et al., 2018; Hsieh & Hsieh, 2003; Sharma, 2007). In line with the study's scope, these mixed-sector studies are included where the primary work characteristics involve direct service interactions with clients or customers.

Definition, Measurement Dimensions, and Theoretical Lenses of Burnout

This section presents the findings addressing the first research question (RQ1) by reviewing prior studies on the theoretical conceptualization and measurement dimensions of burnout.

Definition of Burnout

Several key scholars have shaped the conceptualization of burnout, including Maslach & Jackson (1981), Maslach et al. (1997), Freudenberger (1974), and Schaufeli (1996). Based on a review of the 20 selected articles, the most frequently cited definition of burnout originates from Maslach et al. (2001), accounting for 23.81%, followed by Maslach & Jackson (1981) at 19.05%, and Freudenberger (1974) at 9.52%, while the remaining articles refer to eight alternative conceptualizations. While these definitions are widely adopted, their dominance in the literature should not be taken as evidence of conceptual completeness, as variations in definitions across studies indicate that conceptual fragmentation persists. The earliest conceptualization of burnout, proposed by Freudenberger (1974), describes it as a state of physical and emotional exhaustion resulting from prolonged stress and excessive demands, particularly among professionals in human service occupations. Two studies adopted this definition, namely Sharma (2007).

Meanwhile, another study by Snyder (2009) and Snyder (2012) adopts the definition proposed by Golembiewski (1986), which reframes burnout as a response to chronic work-related stress that may occur across a wide range of occupations, rather than being limited to human service professions. The most widely used definition in the reviewed studies originates from Maslach & Jackson (1981) and was later refined by Maslach et al. (2001). They conceptualize burnout as a multidimensional psychological syndrome comprising three core dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (or cynicism), and diminished personal accomplishment. The definition proposed by Maslach et al. (2001) is cited in several studies, including

Cheung et al. (2018), Hines (2017), and Tian et al. (2015). These differing perspectives reflect an evolution of the construct and highlight the absence of a fully unified conceptual framework.

Measurement Dimensions of Burnout

The results of the systematic review indicate that the conceptualization of burnout dimensions has developed through two main approaches and one extended model. The first is the three-dimensional model pioneered by Cordes & Dougherty (1993), Maslach & Jackson (1981), and Schaufeli (1996). The second is the two-dimensional model introduced by Demerouti et al. (2001). In addition, Sharma (2007) proposed a five-dimensional developmental model. Although these models share overlapping elements, they differ in how burnout is operationalized, which may lead to inconsistencies in measurement and comparability across studies.

Most of the reviewed studies, such as Enkhjav et al. (2020), Gao et al. (2020), Hsieh & Hsieh (2003), Jahanzeb & Fatima (2018), and Snyder (2009), demonstrate a consistent view that exhaustion represents the core dimension of burnout, while depersonalization, cynicism, or disengagement reflect a form of psychological withdrawal from work. The dimension of reduced personal accomplishment is typically interpreted as a negative self-evaluation of one's competence and work effectiveness.

On the other hand, propose treating personal accomplishment as a separate dimension from burnout. This perspective has been adopted in several of the reviewed studies, including Byrne et al. (2014) and Demerouti et al. (2001). This divergence suggests that measurement approaches are not fully interchangeable and may influence how burnout is identified and interpreted in different research contexts. Furthermore, Sharma's (2007) conceptual development expands the scope of burnout by incorporating additional dimensions, including ambiguity, dissatisfaction, powerlessness, inadequacy, depersonalization, and physical and emotional exhaustion.

Tabel 2

Dimensions of Burnout

Model	Count	Dimensions
(Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach et al., 1997; Maslach et al., 2001)	3	Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, Reduced Personal Accomplishment
(Schaufeli, 1996)	3	Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, Lack of Personal Accomplishment
(Cordes & Dougherty, 1993)	3	Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, Diminished Personal Accomplishment
(Demerouti et al., 2001)	2	Exhaustion, Disengagement
(Sharma, 2007)	5	Ambiguity, Dissatisfaction & Powerlessness, Inadequacy, Depersonalization, Physical & Emotional Exhaustion

Source: Author's own compilation

Applied Theoretical Lenses

To broaden understanding of the theoretical frameworks used to explain burnout, several were synthesized. The findings of this systematic literature review indicate that the Conservation of Resources (Cordes & Dougherty) theory accounts for 20.69% of the studies and has emerged as the most dominant grand theory in contemporary burnout research. Six studies, Gao et al. (2020), McFadden et al. (2019), Tian et al. (2015), and Xu et al. (2015), apply the COR framework proposed by Hobfoll (1989). Consistent with COR, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model by Bakker & Demerouti (2007) is also frequently applied, accounting for 13.79% of the studies. This model is used in four studies, including those of Demerouti et al. (2001), Jacobs & Roodt (2019), and McFadden et al. (2019).

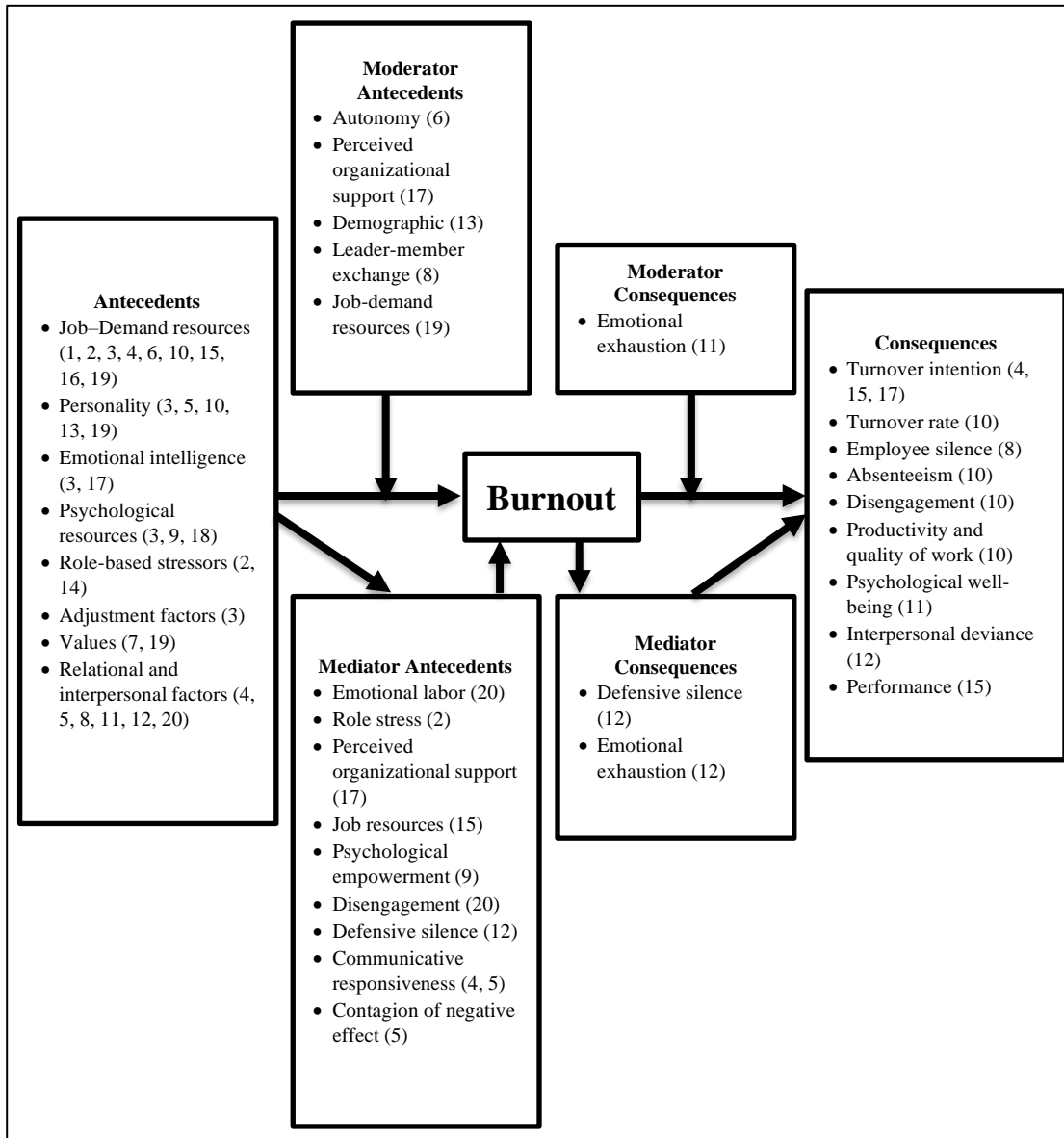
The findings indicate that the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model are the most frequently applied frameworks. Their prominence may be attributed to their flexibility in explaining how job demands interact with available resources across various service contexts. However, the dominance of these frameworks does not necessarily imply theoretical superiority, as other models provide complementary perspectives that are less frequently integrated.

Other theoretical perspectives are also considered. For instance, the Empathic Communication Model (ECM) of burnout, proposed by Miller et al. (1995), appears in 6.90% of the reviewed studies, specifically in Snyder (2009) and Snyder (2012). In addition, several other

theoretical frameworks are identified across the reviewed studies. In total, 26 additional theories are used, each representing approximately 3.45% of the reviewed literature. These include the Schwartz Value Model, Recovery Theory, Transactional Model of Coping, Challenge and Hindrance Stressors Framework, Broaden-and-Build Theory, Multidimensional Theory of Burnout, Multifoci Model of Organizational Justice, Organizational Theory, Veninga and Spradley's Stage Model, the Leiter-Maslach Process Model, Cherniss' Transactional Process Model, Pines and Aronson's Existential Model, Meier's Model of Burnout, Smith's Cognitive-Affective Stress Model, Moore's Attributional Model of Work Exhaustion Consequences, and Golembiewski's Phase Model of Burnout. This diversity reflects the richness of the field but also indicates a lack of theoretical integration, as many studies apply frameworks in isolation rather than synthesizing them across theories.

Antecedents, Consequences, Mediating, and Moderating Factors of Burnout.

This section addresses the second research question (RQ2). The study synthesizes 20 empirical articles examining the factors influencing burnout and its consequences in the service industry. Furthermore, this study analyzes the mediating and moderating variables that shape the mechanisms and contextual conditions under which burnout affects various outcomes. The overview of this analytical framework is illustrated in Figure 2.



Source: Author's own compilation

Figure 2

Antecedents, Consequences, Mediating and Moderating Factors of Burnout

Antecedents

The results of the systematic review indicate that several groups of variables function as antecedents of burnout. Based on the data, the job demands–resources (JD–R) category is the most frequently identified factor, appearing in nine articles. Variables within this category include job demands and job resources (Demerouti et al., 2001; Jacobs & Roodt, 2019), job standardization (Hsieh & Hsieh, 2003), organizational role stress (Sharma, 2007), supervisor and coworker emotional support support (Snyder, 2009), job and role characteristics as well as organizational characteristics (Hines, 2017), challenge

stressors (Bhowmick & Mulla, 2021), and work engagement (Dyląg et al., 2013).

Variables related to relational and interpersonal factors are also relatively prominent, appearing in six articles, including empathic concern (Snyder, 2009), workplace bullying (Neto et al., 2017), and client injustice (Kim & Leach, 2021). Furthermore, personality-related variables are identified in five studies, encompassing personality characteristics such as stress personality (Sharma, 2007), mood management (optimism) (Snyder, 2012), personal characteristics based on the Big Five personality traits (Hines, 2017), and workaholism

(Cheung et al., 2018). In addition, several other groups of variables appear less frequently in the reviewed literature. These include emotional intelligence (2 articles: Sharma (2007)), psychological resources (3 articles: Sharma (2007) and Tian et al. (2015)), role-based stressors (2 articles: Hsieh & Hsieh (2003)), adjustment factors Sharma (2007), and values (2 articles: Dyląg et al. (2013)).

Consequences

The results of the systematic review indicate that burnout has a wide range of consequences at both the individual and organizational levels. Based on the reviewed studies, the most frequently reported consequence is turnover intention, identified in three articles (Jacobs & Roodt, 2019; Snyder, 2009). This finding suggests that burnout increases employees' intention to leave their organizations. In addition, Hines (2017) identifies several other consequences, including higher turnover rates, absenteeism, disengagement, and decreased productivity and work quality. Employee silence has also been reported as a consequence of burnout (Xu et al., 2015). At the individual well-being level, burnout has been shown to affect psychological well-being, interpersonal deviance, and job performance. Among these, turnover intention appears relatively consistent across multiple studies, whereas other outcomes are more context-dependent and less uniformly observed (Jacobs & Roodt, 2019; Neto et al., 2017).

Moderator

The results of the systematic review indicate that several variables function as moderators within burnout models, both in the relationship between antecedents and burnout and in the relationship between burnout and its consequences. In the relationship between antecedents and burnout, the identified moderating variables include autonomy (Castanheira & Chambel, 2013), perceived organizational support (Giao et al., 2020), demographic factors (Cheung et al., 2018), leader-member exchange (LMX) (Xu et al., 2015), and job demands-resources (Bhowmick & Mulla, 2021). Meanwhile, in the relationship between burnout and its consequences, one moderating variable was identified, namely emotional exhaustion (Neto et al., 2017).

Mediator

The systematic review also identified several variables that function as mediators in the relationships

between antecedents, burnout, and its consequences. Within the category of antecedent mediators, several variables were found to bridge the relationship between antecedent factors and burnout. These include emotional labor and disengagement (Kim & Leach, 2021), role stress (Hsieh & Hsieh, 2003), perceived organizational support, job resources, psychological empowerment, defensive silence, communicative responsiveness, and the contagion of negative affect. Meanwhile, within the category of consequence mediators, defensive silence and emotional exhaustion were identified as mediating variables in the relationship between burnout and its resulting outcomes (Jacobs & Roodt, 2019; Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2018; Snyder, 2009).

Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the systematic review conducted in this study, research on burnout within service-oriented organizational contexts has shown notable development over the past two decades. However, to date, no systematic literature review has specifically mapped the conceptual evolution, measurement dimensions, and theoretical lenses of burnout in the service industry in an integrated manner. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by providing a comprehensive synthesis of the development of burnout literature, with a particular focus on the service industry context. In its early stages of development, burnout was understood as a phenomenon that occurred primarily within human service professions, such as healthcare workers, counselors, and social workers (Freudenberger, 1974).

The synthesis results indicate that the framework developed by Maslach & Jackson (1981) and later refined by Maslach et al. (2001) dominates the burnout literature identified in this review. This dominance suggests a common reference point rather than full conceptual consensus across studies. The three-dimensional model of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization/cynicism, and reduced personal accomplishment is widely used as the conceptual foundation of burnout. This shift reflects a transformation in how burnout is understood from a profession-specific phenomenon to a multidimensional psychological syndrome that may occur across diverse organizational contexts. Burnout is no longer viewed merely as a consequence of interpersonal service interactions; rather, it is increasingly conceptualized as a

response to chronic, structural, and systemic work-related stress. Accordingly, contemporary literature acknowledges that burnout is relevant not only in direct human service sectors but also in corporate organizations, public sector institutions, and various forms of modern work environments.

Regarding the measurement dimensions of burnout, this review identifies an interesting conceptual dynamic within the literature. Most of the studies examined continue to adopt the three-dimensional model introduced by Maslach & Jackson (1981), consisting of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, which was later elaborated by Cordes & Dougherty (1993) and Schaufeli (1996). This consistency indicates the dominance of the Maslach paradigm in the operationalization of burnout, particularly within the service industry context. However, the most highly cited study identified in this review, conducted by Demerouti et al. (2001), proposes an alternative two-dimensional model, consisting of exhaustion and disengagement, explicitly excluding reduced personal accomplishment as a core dimension of burnout. Unlike the Maslach approach, which originated from phenomenological observations of human service professions, the conceptualization of burnout within the Job Demands – Resources Model offers a more structural explanation of burnout as a function of job demands and resources.

Recent studies have begun to question the conceptual and structural validity of the three-dimensional model proposed by Maslach & Jackson (1981). The primary criticism centers on the weak conceptual position of reduced personal accomplishment as a core dimension, which, empirically, often shows weaker relationships with work-stress variables than the other dimensions (Demerouti et al., 2001). In their work, they present comprehensive critiques of the development of the burnout dimensions proposed by Maslach & Jackson (1981), including evidence from a meta-analysis showing that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization exhibit stronger correlations than personal accomplishment. Moreover, personal accomplishment has been identified as the weakest burnout dimension in terms of its significant relationships with other variables (Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Schaufeli, 1996).

Furthermore, the development of more recent measurement instruments has also highlighted the

conceptual limitations of the Maslach Burnout Inventory in capturing the broader spectrum of burnout symptoms, including cognitive impairment, emotional dysfunction, and various forms of psychological distress that frequently accompany burnout experiences (Schaufeli et al., 2020). These conceptual differences indicate theoretical fragmentation that remains unresolved in the burnout literature. Such fragmentation has implications for measurement comparability and may influence how burnout is interpreted across different studies and contexts. In particular, there is still ongoing debate regarding the ontological status of reduced personal accomplishment—whether it should be considered a constitutive dimension of burnout or rather a secondary outcome arising from the other two core dimensions.

This review indicates that the issue has not yet reached a strong consensus, thereby opening opportunities for future research to empirically examine the factor structure of burnout across different contexts and work cultures. In addition, the study by Sharma (2007) offers a conceptual extension by proposing a five-dimensional model of burnout, consisting of ambiguity, dissatisfaction and powerlessness, inadequacy, depersonalization, and physical and emotional exhaustion. This model broadens the scope of burnout by incorporating elements that more explicitly reflect structural dynamics and organizational roles. Such a contribution is important because it enriches the understanding of burnout not merely as an individual psychological syndrome, but also as a phenomenon embedded within organizational structures and practices. Accordingly, the findings of this review suggest that burnout research is currently undergoing a conceptual transition, with the classical paradigm remaining empirically dominant. However, an increasing number of studies are attempting to expand and revise the dimensional structure of burnout to better align with empirical evidence and developments in modern organizational theory.

Regarding the application of theoretical lenses to explain burnout, the findings of this review indicate that Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources Theory is the dominant framework used in the service industry context. The Conservation of Resources Theory provides a comprehensive explanation of how stress emerges when individuals experience threats of resource loss, actual resource loss, or failure to regain resources after

investing in resources. Several studies included in this review adopt this theoretical framework to explain specific mechanisms underlying burnout. For instance, the Conservation of Resources Theory was used to examine the relationship between workaholism and burnout, emphasizing that excessive resource investment without adequate recovery increases the risk of resource depletion. Other studies, including those by [Tian et al. \(2015\)](#), also employ the Conservation of Resources Theory to explain that burnout occurs when individuals are no longer able to maintain, protect, or build valuable resources in the face of high job demands.

In addition to COR, the Job Demands–Resources Model developed by [Bakker & Demerouti \(2007\)](#) has become a widely used framework. The Job Demands–Resources Model conceptualizes burnout as a consequence of an imbalance between job demands and job resources. Job demands such as workload, role conflict, and emotional demands activate the health-impairment process, which primarily leads to exhaustion. Conversely, job resources such as autonomy, supervisor support, and feedback initiate a motivational process that can reduce the risk of burnout and enhance work engagement. Compared with the Conservation of Resources Theory, which focuses on the broader dynamics of resource gain and loss, the Job Demands – Resources Model provides a more operational framework for explaining how specific job characteristics directly influence the dimensions of burnout. Nevertheless, the prominence of these frameworks should not be interpreted as indicating full theoretical integration, as other perspectives continue to be used across studies.

Beyond these two dominant frameworks, this review also identifies the use of other, more contextual and specific theoretical perspectives, such as the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping proposed by [Lazarus & Folkman \(1984\)](#), which was applied by [Jahanzeb & Fatima \(2018\)](#). This model emphasizes that stress and, ultimately, burnout depend on individuals' appraisal processes, in which situations are evaluated as threatening or as exceeding their coping capacities. The inclusion of this theoretical perspective indicates that some studies conceptualize burnout as the outcome of cognitive and emotional processes mediated by individuals' subjective evaluations, rather than merely as a consequence of job structure or work conditions.

Overall, although the Conservation of Resources Theory and the Job Demands–Resources Model dominate the literature, the findings of this review reveal a plurality of theoretical perspectives in explaining burnout. On the one hand, the dominance of these two theories reflects a paradigmatic consolidation around resource-based explanations. On the other hand, the diversity of theories employed, including those from stress theory, communication, and organizational behavior, demonstrates that burnout is a multidimensional phenomenon that can be understood from multiple analytical perspectives. This diversity reflects the multidimensional nature of burnout, but also indicates that the literature has not yet converged into a single unified theoretical explanation.

Based on the results of the systematic review, burnout in the service industry context can be understood as a phenomenon that arises from the complex interaction among job-related factors, relational factors, and individual characteristics. The findings indicate that antecedent variables categorized within the Job Demands–Resources Model framework constitute the most widely used conceptual foundation for explaining these dynamics. The results confirm that high levels of job demands such as role stress [Hsieh & Hsieh \(2003\)](#), challenge stressors [Enkhjav et al. \(2020\)](#), workplace bullying ([Neto et al., 2017](#)), client injustice [Kim & Leach \(2021\)](#) that are not balanced by adequate job resources such as supervisor support [Snyder \(2009\)](#), autonomy [Castanheira & Chambel \(2013\)](#), psychological empowerment [Tian et al. \(2015\)](#) significantly increase the risk of burnout. In addition, personality-related variables ([Hines, 2017](#)) also influence how individuals respond to stress and select appropriate coping strategies. Relational and interpersonal factors shape the development of burnout, particularly in the service industry, where interactions with clients, colleagues, and supervisors are central to daily work.

More specifically, the antecedents of burnout do not operate in a direct, linear manner but rather through various mediating mechanisms. Variables such as emotional labor and disengagement ([Kim & Leach, 2021](#)), role stress ([Hsieh & Hsieh, 2003](#)), psychological empowerment ([Tian et al., 2015](#)), and communicative responsiveness ([Snyder, 2009](#)) serve as psychological mechanisms that mediate the relationship between work-related pressures and the emergence of burnout.

This finding suggests that individual cognitive and emotional processes constitute the primary pathway by which work stress leads to emotional exhaustion and disengagement. In several studies, burnout has also been shown to trigger subsequent mediators, such as defensive silence and emotional exhaustion, before leading to organizational consequences, indicating sequential processes (serial mediation) in the development of burnout outcomes. While these patterns are observed across several studies, their consistency remains context-dependent.

In addition, the strength of the relationships among these variables is influenced by several moderating factors. Variables such as autonomy, perceived organizational support, and leader-member exchange (LMX) have been shown to attenuate the impact of job demands on burnout, thereby functioning as protective factors. Conversely, demographic factors or certain configurations of job demands and job resources may strengthen this relationship. On the outcomes side, emotional exhaustion has also been found to amplify the effect of burnout on the decline of psychological well-being.

From the outcomes perspective, burnout has been shown to have serious implications at both the individual and organizational levels. Burnout consistently increases turnover intention, which, in the long term, contributes to higher turnover rates and absenteeism. Furthermore, burnout is associated with declines in performance, productivity, and work quality, as well as increases in interpersonal deviance and employee silence. Among these outcomes, turnover intention appears relatively consistent, whereas other outcomes vary across studies and contexts. These findings underscore that burnout is not merely an issue of individual well-being but also a strategic phenomenon with implications for organizational effectiveness.

Conceptually and empirically, this review identifies several key gaps in the burnout literature within the service industry context. Existing studies have not provided a systematic mapping that integrates the evolution of burnout definitions, measurement dimensions, and theoretical lenses within a unified analytical framework. The review also reveals fragmentation in the specification of burnout measurement models, indicating a lack of conceptual harmonization in the dimensional structure of burnout.

This study addresses this gap by systematically mapping the differences among measurement models and highlighting the need for comparative validity testing across dimensions and industry contexts. Furthermore, the review identifies a lack of theoretical integration. Although the Conservation of Resources Theory remains the most dominant framework, the literature simultaneously employs various other theories without strong conceptual synthesis, potentially leading to theoretical fragmentation. This study contributes by emphasizing the need for cross-theoretical models that integrate work resource dynamics, cognitive - affective processes (e.g., emotional labor and disengagement), and relational factors into a more comprehensive explanatory framework.

This review also identifies a gap in process modeling. Many studies examine direct relationships between antecedents and consequences, but have not consistently integrated the roles of mediators and moderators within a comprehensive model. The findings indicate that burnout develops through specific psychological mechanisms and is influenced by contextual factors such as autonomy, perceived organizational support, and relational quality. This suggests that burnout should not be understood as a simple linear relationship, but rather as a dynamic process involving multi-level interactions. Finally, the review highlights a contextual expansion of burnout research. Although burnout historically originated in human service professions, the findings reveal a significant shift toward its recognition as a cross-professional and cross-sector construct. This study underscores this transformation and reinforces the position of burnout as a complex organizational phenomenon within contemporary work dynamics.

Overall, this study contributes by (1) providing a comprehensive mapping of the conceptual and dimensional development of burnout, (2) integrating antecedents, mediators, moderators, and consequences within a single process-based framework, and (3) emphasizing the need for conceptual harmonization and theoretical integration in future burnout research. These findings also suggest important practical implications, indicating that organizational interventions should focus not only on reducing job demands but also on strengthening job resources and relational support to disrupt the burnout process before it leads to adverse outcomes.

Although this study provides a conceptual and integrative mapping of burnout in the service industry context, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, there is a limitation in study coverage. The number and distribution of articles that met the inclusion criteria were relatively limited; therefore, the frequency of the identified variables (antecedents, mediators, moderators, and consequences) largely reflects existing research trends rather than their intrinsic importance alone. Second, there are methodological limitations in the primary studies. Most of the studies reviewed employed cross-sectional designs, meaning that the causal relationships proposed in burnout models remain largely inferential and do not fully capture the longitudinal dynamics of burnout as an evolving process. Third, there is a potential for selection and publication bias. This review included only English-language journal articles and excluded books, conference proceedings, and other forms of grey literature. Such criteria may have excluded relevant findings from non-English publications or alternative scholarly sources, thereby limiting the breadth of perspectives represented in this systematic literature review.

This systematic review indicates that burnout in the service industry context is a multidimensional phenomenon arising from an imbalance between job demands and job resources, mediated by specific psychological and relational mechanisms, and leading to individual and organizational consequences. Although the three-dimensional model proposed by Maslach & Jackson (1981) remains dominant, the literature demonstrates conceptual and theoretical variation, indicating a degree of fragmentation in the understanding of burnout. Alternative conceptualizations include the two-dimensional model proposed by Demerouti et al. (2001) and the five-dimensional model developed by Sharma (2007). Although the Maslach framework remains widely used, the literature reflects ongoing conceptual variation, indicating that full consensus has not yet been achieved.

This study highlights the importance of conceptual and theoretical integration by comprehensively mapping antecedents, mediators, moderators, and consequences within a single process-based framework. The findings reinforce the position of burnout as a complex, cross-sector organizational phenomenon and underscore the urgency of harmonizing measurement models and

developing cross-theoretical approaches in future burnout research.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Ethical considerations in this study were that participation was entirely optional.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contribute to this study.

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