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Research Paper

Impact of Big Five Personality on Employee Burnout: A Mediated Analysis through Psychological Empowerment

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Abstract

Burnout has become a much-discussed mental health problem in modern society. Although burnout can occur in many professions, research in the industry sector is limited. This study aims to determine the mediating effect of Psychological Empowerment on the relationship between Big Five personality and burnout. This research combines explanatory research methods with quantitative methodology. The population of this study were all employees of PT Telkom Access, totalling 125 people. The measurements used in this study are the Big Five Inventory (BFI) scale, Burnout Assessment Scale (BAT), and Psychological Empowerment Scale. The results showed that the big five personality significantly affect burnout. Dimensions that affect burnout are conscientiousness and neuroticism, while extraversion, agreeableness, and openness to experience are not significant. The effects of extraversion, agreeableness, and openness to experience burnout were weak in this study, although many previous studies have supported the relationship between these two variables. The test results of the mediating role of Psychological Empowerment show that the dimensions of conscientiousness and openness to experience influence burnout most, followed by the dimensions of extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Thus, the mediation of psychological empowerment is proven effective in playing the big five personality relationship with burnout. This study has limitations that must be addressed. First, the model has limited work resource and demand variables as the study focuses on individual variations rather than job features. Secondly, as this study used self-reported surveys, shared method variance may be the cause of the relationship.

Keywords: *Big Five Personality, Burnout, Psychological Empowerment*

INTRODUCTION

Burnout has become one of the most talked about mental health problems in modern society. Burnout is caused by prolonged and excessive stress (Langelaan et al., 2006; Parveen & Adeinat, 2019; Abubakar et al., 2022). From a psychological perspective, the syndrome causes negative effects at the cognitive, emotional, and attitudinal levels. This negatively impacts work behavior, interactions with colleagues and superiors, and less professional work outcomes. Of course, this is not just an individual problem but part of the consequences of the job (Edú-Valsania et al., 2022). Burnout research is currently carried out in various professions, such as the study in the health context by Solms et al. (2021) in hospitals in the Netherlands. In the academic context, such as research by Boone et al. (2022) to identify burnout profiles and job resource demands. Only a few burnout studies in the industrial field, such as (Meng & Yang, 2023). Thus, burnout can occur in any profession, including services (Gonçalves & Gaudêncio, 2023). However, the focus of burnout literature remains within the service field (Leiter et al., 2014).

A literature review shows that research focuses on burnout but overlooks individual-level causes, such as personality (Kahill, 1988; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). In this topic area, the underemphasized nature of individual differences is evident regarding the relationship between demands and resources and dimensions of burnout, where personality is only briefly mentioned. However, burnout studies have provided insights into the development of burnout literature. The lack of attention from organizations to employees of service workers has not offered a solution to

preventing burnout, so action is needed to overcome burnout. Zhou and Chen (2021) study found that psychological empowerment can help avoid burnout in the workplace. However, research on personality traits associated with Psychological Empowerment is largely limited to traits of perceived self-worth (e.g., self-esteem, narcissism, and core self-evaluation). Meta-analysis studies on psychological empowerment influenced job satisfaction and organizational commitment outcomes. Although psychological empowerment has no direct relationship, other factors such as workload and culture can affect psychological empowerment (Llorente-Alonso et al., 2024).

Current research has provided insight into the burnout literature. The limitations of burnout research in the service industry triggered the author to conduct burnout research in the service industry in the telecommunications industry. This study explains the characteristics of employees who experience burnout and the role of psychological empowerment in reducing burnout. This research is precisely to answer three questions as follows:
1. Does the Big Five Personality affect burnout?
2. Does Psychological empowerment mediate the effect of Big Five personality on burnout?
3. Does psychological empowerment affect burnout?

LITERATURE REVIEW
Theory and Hypothesis Development
Resource Conservation Theory

Based on these principles, the COR theory states several consequences of resource changes: 1. Individuals with higher resources will be more likely to acquire resources. 2. The initial loss of resources will lead to the loss of resources in the future. 3. Getting the initial resource will lead to the acquisition of resources in the future. 4. Lack of resources leads to efforts to maintain remaining resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Burnout occurs when individuals experience a lack or loss of resources that are valuable to them.

Burnout

Burnout is a syndrome in employees caused by fatigue, decreased ability to regulate cognition and emotional processes, and mental distance, an ineffective coping strategy (Mazzetti et al., 2022). Maslach and Jackson (1981) state that burnout syndrome is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that often occurs in working people. Burnout syndrome responds to work-related interpersonal stressors (Leiter & Maslach, 1988). In general, the aspects that can cause burnout can be classified into two broad categories: (1) organizational factors and (2) individual factors such as individual characteristics and personality traits (Adriaenssens et al., 2015; Maslach & Leiter, 2017; Zhou & Chen, 2021), is the big five personality (Grigorescu et al., 2018).

Psychological empowerment

According to Spreitzer, psychological empowerment is the process of innate control over work and feeling capable of achieving desired goals. Psychological empowerment is a concept that includes four cognitive dimensions, namely competence, autonomy, significance, and support. Psychological empowerment is a process in which individuals feel in control of their work and capable of achieving their goals (Ding & Xie, 2021; Gong et al., 2021; Zhou & Chen, 2021; Llorente-Alonso et al., 2023).

Big Five Personality

Costa and McCrae (1992) describe human personality based on the big five personality factors: neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. This form of personality trait is also explained by McCrae and Costa Jr. (2003) in their theory,

namely the Big Five personality (Feist et al., 2017). Specific personality characteristics will be more prone to burnout in stressful working conditions (Angelini, 2023). The factor in the formation of burnout is a significant emotional involvement that creates considerable pressure on workers in the service sector (Aufa, 2014). So, the hypothesis in this study is as follows:

H.1. There is an influence of Big Five personality on burnout

H.1. (a-e) There is a positive influence of (neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness) personality on burnout.

The mediating role of Psychological Empowerment on Big Five Personality on burnout

Psychological empowerment, a factor of job demands that cause burnout, can mediate the big five personality and burnout. Psychological empowerment can reduce employees' depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and personal dissatisfaction (Permarupan et al., 2020). It is known that psychological empowerment can prevent burnout (Zhou & Chen, 2021). It is because psychological empowerment can give employees a sense of control, increase motivation, and help develop competence, so it has an important role against burnout (Zawadzka et al., 2023). Pitt et al. (2018) found a complex relationship in the dimensions of psychological empowerment that can affect burnout levels positively or negatively depending on employee characteristics. Thus, the hypothesis development in this study is as follows:

H.2 Big Five personality's effect on burnout is mediated by psychological empowerment in-service employees.

H.2.(a-e) There is an effect of (neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness) personality on burnout, which is mediated by psychological empowerment.

H.3. There is an effect of psychological empowerment on burnout.
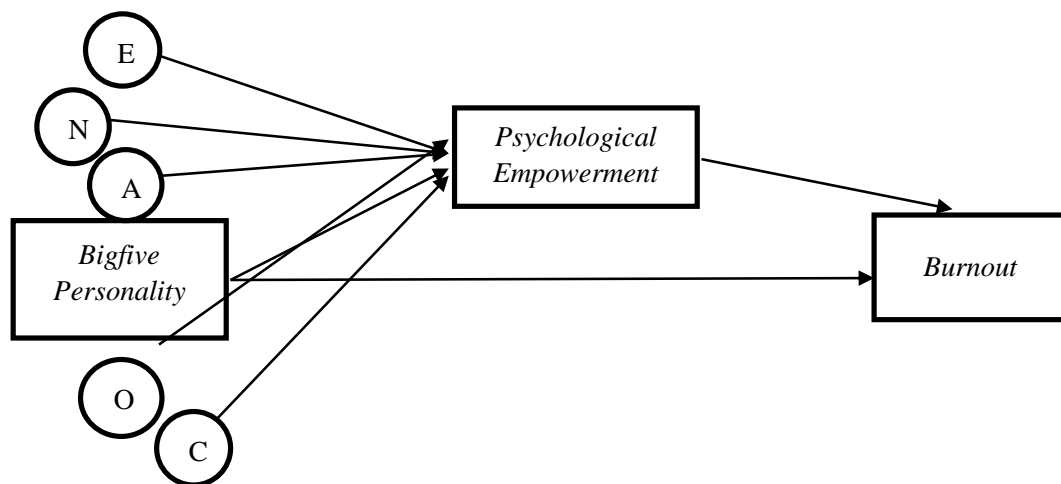

Figure 1. Research Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is explanatory. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), descriptive research methods can explain the relationship and hypothetical influence between independent and dependent variables. The Validity test uses Pearson's correlation coefficient and Cronbach's α coefficient reliability—data analysis using SPSS 27.

Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Technique

The population in this study consisted of 125 organic employees of the PT Telkom Access Semarang area. This study uses a saturated sample of all organic employees. The non-probability sampling technique was used in this study. The questionnaire in this study was measured using a Likert scale (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2017). The research location was conducted at the Telkom Access Office in Semarang for 30 days.

Research Instruments

1. The short version of the Big Five Inventory (BFI) (Costa Mastrascusa et al., 2023).
2. The BAT scale (Burnout Assessment Tools) consists of 12 items (Schaufeli & De Witte, 2023).
3. The psychological empowerment scale was developed by Spreitzer, totalling 12 items. Spreitzer in Ding (2023).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the validity test using the r table (r table = 0.176 (0.05) and r table = 0.230 (0.01). In burnout, the results obtained r = 0.453 - 0.691> r table with a value of $\alpha = 0.877$. On the big five personalities with the results of r = 0.470 - 0.702 > r table with a value of $\alpha = 0.877$, on psychological empowerment with r = 0.467 - 0.747 with a value of $\alpha = 0.899$. Thus, all scales in this study are valid and reliable. Classical assumption test with the results of all variables normally distributed ($p>0.05$), linear ($p<0.05$), no autocorrelation found (DB = 2.194 < 2.27587) multi colinear with a tolerance value value> 0.10, < 10 (1.943).

The results show a significant influence of the big five personalities on burnout. Big Five personality can explain personality types that are prone to burnout. Several approaches have been commonly used in the field of personality psychology (Asendorpf, 2002; Donnellan & Robins, 2010). One approach is to look at specific personality traits on perceived levels of burnout. The traits in the Big Five personality are a good description of the differences between individuals. Individuals have traits with a certain configuration and are inseparable. Therefore, it is necessary to complement this with an individual-centred approach to personality type (Asendorpf, 2002; Donnellan & Robins, 2010; Alessandri & Vecchione, 2017). In line with the study of Grigorescu et al. (2018), burnout was significantly correlated with the top five personality traits (Zawadzka et al., 2023).

Big five personality dimension, neuroticism on burnout, obtained the results of t = 2.234 p <0.05. (H1a is proven). Extraversion on burnout found t = 1.356 p>0.05 (H1b not proven). Agreeableness was found in t= 0.306 p>0.05 (H1c was not proven). Openness to experience was found to be t= 1.167 p>0.05 (H1d not proven), and conscientiousness was found to be t= 3.335 p<0.05 (H1e proven).

Psychological empowerment mediates the big five personality dimensions—neuroticism on burnout ($\beta=0.417$). Neuroticism is often impaired in work efficiency and easily distracted, usually associated with decreased self-confidence and failure (Khan et al., 2017). Neuroticism personality and psychological empowerment have a negative relationship (Khan et al., 2017). Psychological empowerment can mediate between extraversion and burnout ($\beta=0.111$). Extraversion is a form of high socialization that can cause burnout because exhausted and drained energy can cause burnout (Fatmawati & Doni, 2018). On the other hand, extraversion is associated with higher energy levels through the concept of self-efficiency, which has positive emotions (Khan et al., 2017). Extraversion will be more empowered because it positively affects cognition of competence and self (Yazdi & Mustamil, 2015).

Research has discovered that of the five personalities, there are two significant to burnout:

conscientiousness and neuroticism. The existence of psychological empowerment as mediation can reduce the influence of various personalities on burnout. These findings can contribute to future research considering the use of psychological empowerment to overcome burnout.

CONCLUSIONS

The big five personality has a significant effect on burnout. The dimensions that influence burnout are conscientiousness and neuroticism. Whereas extraversion, agreeableness, and openness to experience are not significant, so conscientiousness and neuroticism are the most prominent traits that predict burnout. The effects of extraversion, agreeableness, and openness to experience burnout were weak in this study, although many previous studies have supported the relationship between these two variables. Based on this, future research is recommended to concretely explore the relationship between the big five personality dimensions with burnout and psychological empowerment. In this study, it is necessary to pay attention to the magnitude of the effect of the variation of the mediation test. The results show conscientiousness and openness to experience are the most significant causes of burnout, followed by extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Thus, the mediation of psychological empowerment is proven effective in playing the big five personality relationship with burnout.

Given that the participants of this study were service workers in the telecommunications industry, the results of this study provide recommendations for future research to use psychological empowerment as an intervention in service work environments.

Theoretical Implications

This research contributes to knowledge about burnout, especially related to all individual characteristics and the important role of psychological empowerment seen from various aspects of personality characteristics (Big Five personality).

Managerial Implications

The results of this study provide recommendations for organizations in selecting, rotating, mapping employees, and managing human resources by considering the big five personality factors. It is important to apply psychological empowerment for all employees, especially service employees, to internalize values and meaning at work to reduce burnout in-service employees.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

Limitations to this study. First, the results of this study cannot be generalized due to the limited number of respondents from one industry or division only, thus lacking occupational heterogeneity. Second, the variables studied are limited to individual personality differences, so this study has not explored from the point of view of job characteristics. Third, to explain the relationship between variables in this study only focuses on the data obtained by themselves (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Fourth, future researchers need to consider using psychological empowerment as an intervention and consider leadership variables to overcome burnout in employees.

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