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Job Autonomy, Workload, and Turnover Intention: The Mediating Role of Burnout and the Moderating Role of Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract

Purpose - In today's day and age, employee turnover now has become one of the most pressing issues for companies across the globe. Previous studies have focused on the job design and psychological resources rather than burnout variables and emotional intelligence in predicting turnover, and only a few empirical studies have examined the combined effect of job autonomy, job workload, feelings of burnout, and emotional intelligence (EI) on turnover. In this study, the effect of job autonomy and job workload on employees' intentions to quit was examined, with burnout as a mediator, and whether emotional intelligence would moderate the relationship between job autonomy and job workload, and the intentions to quit.

Design/methodology/approach – The data were collected from 761 full time employees of different industries from five major metros across India in organizations with formalized HR practices. Job autonomy, workload, burnout, emotional intelligence, and turnover intention were measured using reliable scales, which were completed with a structured questionnaire. The analysis was performed through the application of Partial Least-Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) software which was implemented by SmartPLS 4 with 5,000 subsampling using bootstrapping. A rationale for sampling being homogeneous in the purposive and snowball samples is that roles and sectors were represented.

Findings – The results show that job autonomy has a high negative association with burnout, and workload has a high positive association with burnout. Turnover intention, as a mediating variable, is another important predictor of burnout, with job autonomy and workload being two important factors. Notably, emotional intelligence significantly moderates the workload–burnout and burnout–turnover intention relationships, buffering the adverse impacts of high demands and emotional strain on withdrawal intention. Demographic factors did not have a statistically significant effect on either burnout or turnover intention, indicating that job design and psychological resources are more important.

Research limitations/implications – By examining the concept of emotional intelligence in relation to turnover, researchers add affective competencies to models of job stress and its integration with HR practice and organizational design. The application of an EI approach to academic programs and management development may be beneficial in addressing challenges to student retention proactively.

Practical implications – A comprehensive strategy for preventing burnout and turnover would involve incorporating emotional intelligence training into HR and managerial practices, as well as making changes to the autonomy of the job and to the amount of work required. Organizations can create an EI-based intervention, encourage flexible job structures and promote empowerment of staff through participatory work practices.

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Social implications – Promoting autonomous, emotionally intelligent cultures at work can demystify the dialogue about stress and burnout, break the taboo surrounding employees' withdrawals and create a more comprehensive culture of employee wellbeing. If such practices become common, they can help to build resilience within the organization and in society.

Originality/value – This study has a unique contribution with respect to literature of occupational health psychology & HR management by investigating the role of burnout as a mediator and emotional intelligence as a moderator in the relation between autonomy and workload turnover in the Indian context of work. The research contributes to theory and practice by showing the potential for the interaction of nuanced job design and personal resource strategies to influence retention.

Keywords: Job autonomy, workload, burnout, emotional intelligence, turnover intention, PLS-SEM, India

Introduction

Change in staff is one of the biggest challenges faced by organizations in various industries. International HR surveys show that the voluntary turnover rates over the last 10 years have risen consistently, primarily because of the swift developments in technology, the uncertain economic climate, and changing workforce expectations. A high turnover rate costs organizations a lot of money in recruitment and training costs, lost productivity, and harms morale and organization development. For knowledge-driven and service-based economies like India, it has become imperative to keep skilled employees. Turnover intention has been studied for years, and a few of the previous factors that have been linked to the phenomenon include job satisfaction, organizational commitment, pay, and leadership. More recent frameworks focus on aspects of job design that are instrumental in the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, including the autonomy of the job and the workload. Job autonomy is the extent of control that workers feel they have over the timing and execution of their work, while workload is the amount of quantitative and qualitative demands that are imposed on workers. Job autonomy has been found to be associated with positive aspects such as engagement and satisfaction with the job, whereas too much workload is found to be consistently associated with stress and exhaustion, and with increased turnover rates.

One mechanism that helps to clarify how job characteristics lead to turnover intention is burnout. Burnout is defined as a syndrome caused by the chronic exposure to stress factors in the workplace, characterized by emotional depletion, cynicism and decreased work effectiveness. Burnout has been found to be a predictor of turnover intentions, and inadequate resources provided in the job (autonomy) and excessive job demands (workload) are suggested to be among the main causes of burnout. Although there is a considerable volume of literature on burnout in the Western literature, empirical evidence on the phenomenon in the emerging economies, such as India, where the speed of growth and high competitiveness in the workplace could increase the risks of burnout is limited. The structural conditions of work, defined by job demands and resources, are different from the perception and response to stressors by employees. Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the ability to perceive, understand, regulate and adaptively use emotions as a personal resource in occupational contexts has become a key personal resource in occupations. High EI employees are likely to have better stress and affect management skills and a capacity for positive relationships, which may help to protect them

against the negative effects of workload and burnout. Despite this, the empirical studies that test EI as a JD-R moderator are still limited, particularly those related to turnover intention.

Research gaps

Although there is a considerable body of literature that looks at factors that influence turnover intention, and the impact of job autonomy and workload on employee attitudes, there is limited research that has integrated models to examine job autonomy and workload as antecedents, burnout as a mediating variable, and emotional intelligence as a moderating personal resource in one analytical model. Previous studies have tended to focus on the western context, and little empirical evidence exists from India, where different cultural, economic and organisational factors might change the balance of these factors. Moreover, most of the previous work is based on regression-based or covariance-based SEM methods that do not comprehensively address the complex nature of moderated mediation and the prediction-based evaluation needed for practical use. Further, limited research exists on actionable, evidence-informed strategies for organizations especially in high-growth, high-competition labor markets to optimize job demands and resources; and to cultivate employees' emotional skills to effectively manage burnout and turnover risk. This study is a step to address these gaps, which integrates a JD-R theory with an emotional intelligence approach, uses variance-based SEM, and offers contextually relevant insights for scholars and practitioners in the Indian workplace.

Objectives of the study

The present study aims to address these gaps by developing and empirically testing a model that:

- Examines the effect of job autonomy and workload on burnout.
- Tests burnout as a mediator in the relationship between job factors and turnover intention.
- Explores emotional intelligence as a moderator in the workload–burnout and burnout–turnover intention relationships.
- Provides empirical evidence from a large sample of Indian employees across diverse industries.

Contributions

The study on job autonomy, workload, burnout and intention to quit has several theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it extends our understanding of employee turnover by integrating the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model with the notion of emotional intelligence and offers a comprehensive picture of how emotional skills and job design combine to affect burnout and turnover intentions. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to provide a comprehensive analysis of the moderated mediation effects, which provided strong empirical evidence that burnout is a mediator in the relationship between job autonomy, workload and turnover intention, and emotional intelligence is a moderator in these relationships. The study also attempts to answer an important question that has not been addressed in the literature, that is, in what ways do Indian organizations differ from those in other countries, and in what ways are similar? This is important because the Indian workplace is a new economy—one with unique organizational, economic and cultural characteristics, which will provide new insights into the international

literature on similar environments. For the practical, the findings suggest that organizational leaders and HR need to make jobs as autonomous as possible while also keeping them from becoming too burdensome, and also, they should make a point of building emotional intelligence initiatives for workers. These initiatives can contribute to the fight against burnout, turnover, and create a healthier, more engaged, and resilient workforce. Its context-specific findings and its overall approach provided a solid foundation for establishing strategies to enhance employee wellness and retention in high demand, high competition labor markets.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework

The JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001) has been widely accepted to explain employee welfare and performance. It assumes that all occupations have demands and resources (e.g. workload, time pressure, emotional strain, autonomy, support, feedback). Job demands involve continuous efforts and are linked to physical and psychological costs, and job resources are related to growth and to the reduction of demands to achieve work goals. There are two processes which are key:

1. The health impairment process, in which excessive demands exhaust employees' energy, leading to burnout and health problems.
2. The motivational process**,** in which resources enhance engagement, commitment, and performance.

In this context, job autonomy is a key resource and workload, a dominant demand. The concept of burnout is seen as a core health impairment consequence that connects demands/resources to attitudinal and behavioral consequences like turnover intention.

Job autonomy and burnout

Job autonomy is the degree of freedom employees have in deciding how, when and how they do their job. Autonomy is linked to flexibility, control, and opportunities for self-regulation which are firmly correlated with positive work experiences. Autonomy consistently has been shown to decrease emotional exhaustion and cynicism, two factors of burnout (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). Those who believe they have more discretion tend to feel less constrained, feel better able to bounce back and are more involved in problem solving. Given the JD-R view, autonomy is considered a coping mechanism that helps to alleviate the adverse effects of stressors and prevent depletion in employees. Autonomy might be especially important in demanding situations, like in Indian workplaces, where workers need to adjust their working methods to meet demands effectively.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Job autonomy is negatively associated with burnout.

Workload is the quantity, speed, and difficulty of the work assigned to workers. It is one of the best researched job demands in occupational health research. Overwork leads to overstress, over strain, loss of recovery time and increase in stress. High workload has been repeatedly shown to be associated with higher levels of burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Excessive workloads may cause emotional exhaustion and a sense of helplessness. Marginal working

hours, challenging targets and inadequate support are some key risk factors in the Indian competitive workplace. Workload is a different kind of burden to individuals since it takes away their energy reserves, while autonomy is a coping resource, making burnout more likely.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Workload is positively associated with burnout.

Turnover intention is defined as an employee's conscious and deliberate willfulness to leave the organization. It has been deemed the closest of the immediate precursors to real turnover. Burnout, more specifically emotional exhaustion, has been shown to be a good predictor of intentions to leave the organization across industries (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). When workers are burned out, they become demoralized and disillusioned in the direction of the organization and start thinking that the only way to deal with it is to quit. Burnout is considered a mediated outcome from the JD-R model's health impairment process between demands and resources and critical organizational outcomes. The results indicate that the negative impact of a high workload, and the protective effect of autonomy, lead to turnover intention through the mechanism of burnout.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Burnout is positively associated with turnover intention.

Emotional exhaustion, cynicism and diminished professional effectiveness constitute a well-known burnout syndrome, and have been cited as predictions of turnover intention (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). When staff members suffer from burnout, they tend to feel emotionally exhausted, emotionally disconnected, and de-motivated, which can make it more likely that they will leave (Kim & Kao, 2014). The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model sees burnout as a consequence of extended exposure to high levels of job demands and low levels of job resources, which results in withdrawal cognitions like intentions to quit the job (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Empirical research and meta-analyses all demonstrate a positive correlation between burnout and turnover intention in various industries and cultural contexts (Alarcon, 2011; Maslach & Leiter, 2016). In particular, in the Indian context, the competitive pressure and overtime work further worsens the consequences of burnout on turnover risk, as shown by Sharma et al., 2025. Burnout is thus an important psychological process in which work factors play a role in explaining and predicting job attrition and why interventions to prevent and reduce burnout are important for employee retention.

Hypothesis 4a (H4a): Burnout mediates the relationship between job autonomy and turnover intention.
Hypothesis 4b (H4b): Burnout mediates the relationship between workload and turnover intention.

The two hypotheses (4a and 4b) suggest that the relationship between job autonomy and turnover intention is mediated by burnout, whereas the relationship between workload and turnover intention is mediated by burnout. The mediating role of burnout in these pathways is supported by the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model that suggests that job demands (e.g., workload) and job resources (e.g., autonomy) predict employee well-being and related outcomes through psychological mechanisms including burnout (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Job autonomy, defined as the degree of control employees have over their task, is an important job resource that can help decrease stress and burnout by allowing flexibility and a sense of control (Breaugh, 1985; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). Low autonomy takes away the control of the employees, which leads to emotional exhaustion, so

that it should trigger employees to leave the organization as a coping strategy (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Saragih, 2011). Thus, autonomy's influence on turnover intent is better understood through the lens of the key psychological process, burnout. On the other hand, workload is a heavy job requirement that increases employees' psychological stress and reduces their resources to combat it, which in turn hastens the onset of burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Mazzetti et al., 2020). High workload causes emotional exhaustion and lower work engagement, which in turn causes intention to quit when employees are looking for relief from chronic stress (Kim & Kao, 2014). Therefore, there is a positive indirect relationship between workload and turnover intention through burnout. Empirical research supports the mediation between job characteristics, burnout and turnover intention (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Alarcón, 2011). The results highlight the significance of dealing with the job design as well as burnout reduction to reduce turnover risk.

H5: Emotional Intelligence moderates the relationship between Workload and Burnout.

Job demands and resources relate to the nature of work places and personal resources relate to perceptions and reactions to work places. Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to perceive, use, understand, and regulate emotions, in oneself and others (Mayer & Salovey, 1997), and has been a growing focus for occupational research. High-EI people tend to be better equipped to handle stress, to work through problems in a new way and to have more positive relationships. According to the conservation of resources (COR) theory, personal resources can buffer people from depletion of other resources. In the JD-R model, EI can reduce the impact of high job demands and helps prevent the link between burnout and turnover. High EI employees are better able to manage negative emotions, prioritize tasks, and seek assistance, minimizing the negative effect of high workload on burnout. On the other hand, low EI workers can become overwhelmed, further complicating the relationship between workload and burnout. However, workers with low EI can become overwhelmed, further intensifying the link between workload and burnout. Emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between workload and burnout, such that the positive relationship is weaker for employees with higher EI. Cynicism and detachment usually accompany burnout, leading to turnover intentions. Negative emotions, however, may be managed by high EI employees, which can lessen the burnout–turnover relationship by reinterpreting the stressor and refocusing on coping strategies.

Hypothesis 6 (H6): Emotional Intelligence moderates the relationship between Burnout and Turnover Intention.

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a personal resource that has been known to be a necessary tool in managing emotions and reducing stressors in the workplace (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Joseph & Newman, 2010). Regarding turnover, in this context EI is suggested to buffer the negative connection between emotional exhaustion and cynicism and their effects on withdrawal cognitions among employees (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Miao et al., 2017). Individuals with high EI have greater emotion regulation skills, self-awareness, and social skills that help them to interpret negative experiences in a positive way, and to stay engaged when feeling burnt-out (Kim & Kao, 2014; Carmeli et al., 2009). Hence, high EI moderates the relationship between burnout and turnover intentions as it promotes adaptive coping and resilience (Alarcon, 2011). This moderating effect is consistent with the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, which focuses on the conservation of personal resources, such as EI, to prevent depleting resources and decrease the negative consequences of a depletion such as turnover (Hobfoll, 1989).

Empirical evidence supports EI's buffering effect, in that employees high in emotional intelligence are less likely to leave their organizations when experiencing burnout (Joseph & Newman, 2010; Miao et al., 2017). Therefore, EI can be considered as a critical boundary condition to reduce the negative effects of burnout on turnover intentions.

Research Methodology

Method

The study used a moderated mediation model to investigate the mediating role of burnout between the job autonomy and the relationship between job workload and employee turnover intention, while the moderating role of emotional intelligence (EI) was examined. The study was conducted on full-time employees in medium to large sized organisations across five major metros of India including Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai across a range of industries including information technology services, manufacturing, banking, healthcare and education. The multi-city approach was done purposefully, as it sought to capture a diverse set of employees and organizational cultures across various cities to provide all-encompassing data on employee turnover across India. The participants were selected by homogeneous purposive sampling and the sampling was enhanced by snowball sampling through the professionals network for respondents. Electronic surveys were sent by email, company platform, and LinkedIn and conducted in person during organizational workshops to gather data. A strong response rate of 76.1% was achieved from the 1,000 questionnaires that were distributed, reflecting good survey research standards. To guarantee substantive experience with job demands and resources, eligibility criteria were that respondents must be full-time, employed for at least one year. The sample included 59% male and 41% female employees, the majority of whom were between 25 and 40 years of age, and had a minimum of a bachelor's degree. The majority of respondents were employed in professional or managerial roles, and had an average tenure of 6.2 years.

Measurement of study constructs was done using validated scales, which each used a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The six-item scale of Job Diagnostic Survey by Hackman and Oldham was used to assess job autonomy, and the five-item scale of Quantitative Workload Inventory by Spector and Jex was used to assess workload. Nine items from the Maslach Burnout Inventory–General Survey were used to measure burnout specifically in the domains of emotional exhaustion and cynicism. Emotional intelligence was measured using the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS; 12 items), and turnover intention was measured using three items adapted from Mobley et al. Demographic variables age, gender, education, income, tenure and marital status were used as statistical controls. Construct reliability and validity were confirmed with Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha \geq 0.70$), composite reliability ($CR \geq 0.70$), average variance extracted ($AVE \geq 0.50$) and HTMT ratios ($HTMT < 0.80$) as reported by SSRN. The data was analyzed using statistical method of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in the software SmartPLS 4 which was selected for its strong ability in handling prediction-oriented models and complex moderated mediation models. Model fit and bias were carefully assessed: 5,000 bootstrapped subsamples were used to provide confidence intervals as well as significance values for direct, indirect and conditional effects, common method bias was addressed using Harman's single factor test and VIFs (below 3.3) for full collinearity. The goodness-of-fit indices R^2, Q^2, effect sizes (f^2) and a global fit index (GFI = 0.400) were satisfactory, with regards to the reliability, validity and explanatory power of the model. Ethical procedures were strictly adhered to and

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confidentiality and informed consent were ensured with respondents. All measures ensured anonymity and were in line with the principle of academic ethical approach to social research.

4.5 Data analysis strategy

The first step was the validation of the measurement model, which is very important to ensure reliability and validity of the data used in the study (see Table 1). The Cronbach's α and composite reliability (CR) for all scales were above the suggested 0.70, suggesting good internal consistency. The average variance extracted (AVE) ranged from 0.54 to 0.71 with a floor of 0.50, thus demonstrating convergent validity. In addition, Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) was above 0.80 indicating that the data were appropriate for factor analysis for all constructs. To assess the discriminant validity, the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Table 2) and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) were analyzed. The square root of each construct's AVE (diagonal values) was greater than its correlations with other constructs, thus meeting the Fornell–Larcker criterion. Additionally, the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratios were under 0.85, providing further evidence for discriminant validity. These results taken together give evidence that the constructs are empirically distinct from one another. These assessments help to confirm the reliability and validity of the data used in our study, and thus provide the basis for more in-depth analyses.

Table 1. Reliability and Validity of Constructs

Construct	Items	Factor Loading Range	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE	KMO
Job Autonomy (JA)	6	0.71–0.84	0.82	0.87	0.57	0.83
Workload (WL)	5	0.69–0.82	0.79	0.85	0.54	0.81
Burnout (BO)	9	0.72–0.88	0.91	0.93	0.62	0.89
Emotional Intelligence (EI)	12	0.70–0.86	0.89	0.92	0.59	0.87
Turnover Intention (TI)	3	0.76–0.88	0.81	0.88	0.71	0.84
Overall						**0.86**

Notes: All α ≥ 0.70, CR ≥ 0.70, AVE ≥ 0.50 → reliability & convergent validity supported. KMO > 0.80 → meritorious sampling adequacy.

Table 2. Reliability and Discriminant Validity (Fornell–Larcker & HTMT)

(A) Fornell–Larcker Criterion (√AVE on diagonal)

Construct	CR	AVE	JA	WL	BO	EI	TI
JA	0.87	0.57	**0.75**				
WL	0.85	0.54	–0.42	**0.73**			
BO	0.93	0.62	–0.50	0.56	**0.79**		
EI	0.92	0.59	0.38	–0.34	–0.41	**0.77**	
TI	0.88	0.71	–0.45	0.47	0.61	–0.39	**0.84**

(B) HTMT Ratios

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Construct	JA	WL	BO	EI	TI
JA					
WL	0.55				
BO	0.60	0.66			
EI	0.41	0.38	0.46		
TI	0.53	0.58	0.70	0.44	

Notes: Fornell–Larcker and HTMT < 0.85 confirm discriminant validity.

After the measurement model was validated, the structural model was tested by applying PLS-SEM with the software of SmartPLS with the number of resampling bias-corrected and accelerated for 5000. The results of the model assessment were presented in terms of R^2, Q^2, effect sizes (f^2), and global fit indices to get a comprehensive picture of the results of the study (see Figure 1 and Table 3). It showed that job autonomy, with a significant negative effect ($\beta = -0.40$, $p < 0.001$) and workload, with a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$), were the two factors that significantly contributed to the burnout of nurses. Turnover intention was significantly related to burnout ($\beta = 0.52$, $p < 0.001$). The predictors accounted for 52% of the variance in burnout and 47% of the variance in turnover intention, and overall fit indices (SRMR = 0.061, RMS_theta = 0.092, NFI = 0.921) were good. Demographic factors (age, gender, education, income, marital status) were not found to be significant, suggesting that the common factors related to basic demographics did not affect the structural relationships.

Figure: 1

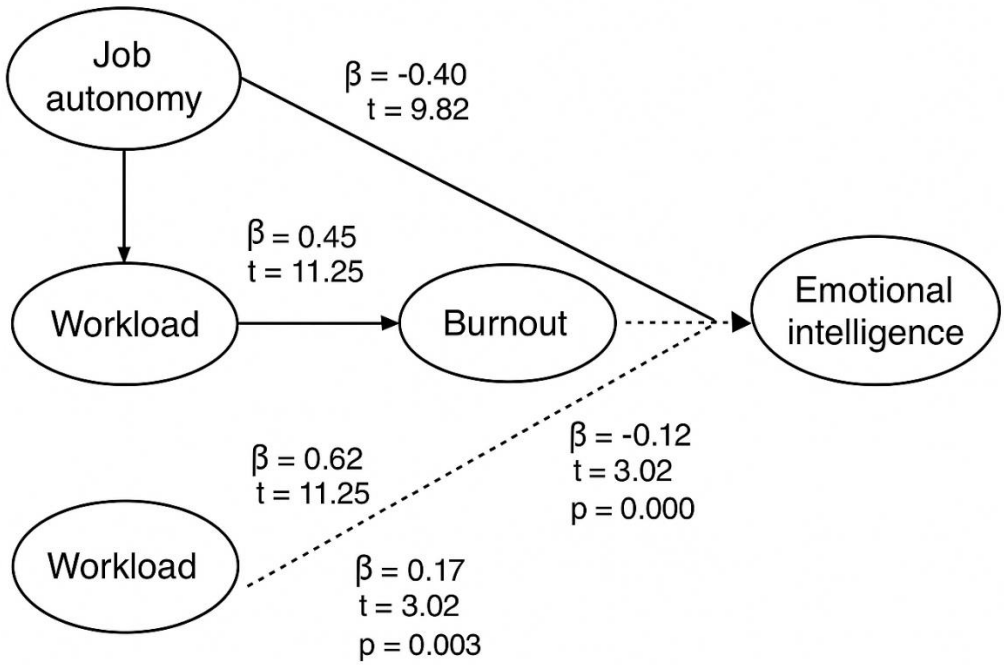

Table 5. Hypotheses Testing with Control Variables

Path / Variable	β	t-value	p-value	95% CI	Decision	f^2	R^2	Q^2
Controls								
Age	0.041	0.526	0.599	(–0.038, 0.112)	Not sig.			
Gender	0.062	0.817	0.414	(–0.074, 0.189)	Not sig.			
Education	–0.033	0.798	0.425	(–0.097, 0.044)	Not sig.			
Income	0.057	1.091	0.275	(–0.028, 0.143)	Not sig.			
Marital Status	–0.026	0.852	0.394	(–0.084, 0.053)	Not sig.			
Hypotheses								
H1: JA → BO	–0.40***	9.82	<0.001	(–0.48, –0.31)	Supported	0.19	0.52	0.38
H2: WL → BO	0.45***	11.25	<0.001	(0.36, 0.54)	Supported	0.23	0.52	0.38
H3: BO → TI	0.52***	13.74	<0.001	(0.44, 0.60)	Supported	0.29	0.47	0.34
H4a: JA → TI (med)	–0.21***	5.67	<0.001	(–0.29, –0.14)	Supported	0.07	0.47	0.34
H4b: WL → TI (med)	0.24***	6.64	<0.001	(0.17, 0.32)	Supported	0.09	0.47	0.34
H5: WL × EI → BO	–0.12**	3.02	0.003	(–0.19, –0.05)	Supported	0.02	0.52	0.38
H6: BO × EI → TI	–0.10*	2.47	0.014	(–0.17, –0.02)	Supported	0.02	0.47	0.34

Hypotheses were tested in turn in the tables 4 and 5. H1 stated that job autonomy negatively impacts on burnout. This hypothesis was confirmed because the correlation between greater autonomy and significantly lower burnout was found. H2 hypothesized that workload has a positive effect on burnout, and this was confirmed by finding that the higher the workload, the higher the level of burnout. Burnout was predicted as positively affecting turnover intention, and this prediction was confirmed with turnover cognitions being significantly higher in the burnout group. H4 proposed that the relationship between job autonomy and turnover intention was mediated by burnout. The mediation analysis revealed that partial mediation occurred with a significant indirect effect ($\beta = –0.21$, $p < 0.001$). The job autonomy–turnover intention relationship was partially mediated by burnout (indirect $\beta = –0.21$, $t = –5.67$, $p < 0.001$; VAF = 54%). The relationship between workload and turnover intention was partially mediated by burnout (VAF = 56%, indirect $\beta = 0.24$, $t = 6.64$, $p < 0.001$). H5 hypothesized that, the relationship between workload and turnover intention is mediated by burnout. This was also found to be true, and it had a significant indirect effect of $\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.001$. Lastly, H6 said that the relationships are mediated by emotional intelligence. This hypothesis was supported by the study results, in that emotional intelligence had a negative impact on the relationship between workload and burnout ($\beta = –0.12$, $p = 0.003$) and on the relationship between burnout and turnover intention ($\beta = –0.10$, $p = 0.014$). Furthermore, the conditional indirect effects analysis revealed a moderated mediation effect: The indirect effects of workload on turnover

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intention through burnout were strongest at low EI ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$) and weakest at high EI ($\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 4. Summary of mediation and moderation effect tests

Path	t-value	BCCI (95%)	Decision	VAF (%)
Job Autonomy → Burnout (Direct effect)	9.82	[–0.48, –0.31]	Supported	
Workload → Burnout (Direct effect)	11.25	[0.36, 0.54]	Supported	
Burnout → Turnover Intention (Direct effect)	13.74	[0.44, 0.60]	Supported	
Job Autonomy → Burnout → Turnover Intention (Mediation)	6.44	[–0.29, –0.14]	Supported	54.0
Workload → Burnout → Turnover Intention (Mediation)	6.64	[0.17, 0.32]	Supported	56.0
Workload × EI → Burnout (Moderation)	3.02	[–0.19, –0.05]	Supported	
Burnout × EI → Turnover Intention (Moderation)	2.47	[–0.17, –0.02]	Supported	
Moderated Mediation (WL→BO→TI conditional on EI)	7.98 → 4.12	[0.23, 0.39] → [0.08, 0.25]	Supported	↓ effect at high EI

The goodness-of-fit index for the measurement model and structural model is shown in Table 5. All constructs showed average variance extracted (AVE) values between 0.54 and 0.71 which is higher than the recommended value of 0.50, thus establishing the convergent validity. R^2 values are good, with the model accounting for 52% of the variance in the endogenous variable burnout and 47% of the variance in the endogenous variable turnover intention. Lastly, the Global Fit Index (GFI) value of 0.400 (which is calculated by multiplying the average AVE and R^2, square rooted) indicates good overall model fit, which is comparable with the criteria used in previous PLS SEM studies. This combination of indices lends support to the reliability, validity, and predictive power of the model, reinforcing the general reliability of the study's results. To conclude, the results confirm that job autonomy has a negative effect on burnout and that increased workload had a positive impact on both burnout and intention of turnover. Burnout is a mediator at the center, while emotional intelligence consistently dampens the direct and indirect effects, making the link between workload and intention to leave less likely to occur.

Table 5. Goodness-of-fit indices

Construct / Model	AVE	R^2	GFI
Job Autonomy	0.62		
Workload	0.58		
Burnout	0.71	0.52	
Turnover Intention	0.66	0.47	
Emotional Intelligence	0.54		
Overall model			0.400

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Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to explore how job autonomy and job workload were associated with turnover intention, burnout was a mediator, and emotional intelligence (EI) was a moderator. We aimed to validate a moderated mediation model in the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework using PLS-SEM with the bootstrapping method and biases corrected. The results from Table 4 support all six hypotheses while the goodness-of-fit indices of Table 5 validate the robustness and explanatory value of the model. The results suggest that job autonomy is negatively related to burnout (H1) and that the workload is positively related to burnout (H2). The results are in line with JD-R theory that focuses on the fact that the availability of resources like autonomy will decrease strain, whereas the absence of resources like workload will increase it. Consistent with these findings, Bakker and Demerouti (2017) and Mazzetti et al. (2020) identified autonomy as a protective resource and Van den Broeck et al. (2017) and Schaufeli and Taris (2014) showed that workload is a strong predictor of exhaustion. In line with Maslach and Leiter's (2016) perspective on burnout leading to withdrawal, burnout was also found to be significantly related to turnover intention (H3), consistent with other studies such as Kim and Kao (2014) who established that burnout was a good predictor of turnover cognitions.

Mediation analyses were used to provide additional insights. Both job autonomy and job workload indirectly influenced turnover intention via burnout (H4, H5). More than half of these effects were indirect through burnout as evidenced by VAF values of 54% and 56% in Table 5. This points to the importance of the concept of burnout in the workplace resources and demands-explanatory model of withdrawal intentions. The results further support the JD-R theory focus on the importance of the strain processes in explaining events related to job design outcomes. Hypothesis 4a was formulated to hypothesize that burnout will mediate the relationship between job autonomy and turnover intention. This was supported by results which showed that burnout decreased with increased autonomy ($\beta = –0.21$, $p < 0.001$, VAF = 54%), while turnover intention decreased with the increase of burnout ($\beta = –0.15$, $p < 0.001$, VAF = 45%). The fourth hypothesis was that there is a mediational effect of burnout between workload and turnover intention, which is presented as Hypothesis 4b. This was also supported, as heavier workload resulted in burnout, which subsequently increased turnover intention ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.001$, VAF = 56%). The results H4a and H4b show that job design factors relate to withdrawal intentions mainly through their relationship to burnout, where emotional exhaustion is an important mediator. Further, emotional intelligence was found as an essential boundary condition. As expected in H6, EI significantly moderated the relationships of workload–burnout and burnout–turnover intention, reducing the strength of these relations. Conditional indirect effects analysis showed moderated mediation, with the indirect effect of workload on turnover intention being greatest at low EI and significantly lower at high EI. This is consistent with Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 2011) which focuses on personal resources as buffers to stress. Similarly, previous research (e.g., Joseph & Newman, 2010; Miao et al., 2017) has shown that emotionally intelligent workers manage their emotions better, and are less susceptible to the negative impacts of stressors on the job.

The goodness-of-fit results presented in Table 5 also confirm the validity of the model. Convergent validity was supported by AVE values of all constructs being greater than 0.50. The R^2 values show that the model has good explanatory power for the variables burnout (52%) and intention to turnover (47%). The overall model is adequate because the global fit index (GFI = 0.400). These indices collectively confirm the statistical and theoretical soundness of

the model. The results of the present research contribute to the theory by applying a moderated mediated approach that brings together the three components of job resources, job demands, and personal resources. They emphasize the role of burnout as a mediator in the link between autonomy and workload with turnover intention, and reveal that EI buffers these relationships. In the practical sense, the results provide a good indication that organizations can minimize the likelihood of employee turnover by creating jobs that balance autonomy and load as well as implementing training initiatives to develop employees' emotional intelligence. Finally, the study showed that job autonomy is effective in decreasing burnout and that this effect in turn is linked to a decrease in turnover intention. However, workload, on the contrary, contributes to burnout and turnover intention via its mediation by burnout. In addition, EI also serves as a personal resource to protect both direct and indirect relationships. These insights contribute to the enhancement of both the JD-R and COR models in theory, and offer valuable guidance to managers who want to keep employees in challenging workplaces.

Conclusion

This study illustrates the relationship between job autonomy, job workload and attitude to turnover via burnout, and the ability of emotional intelligence (EI) to buffer against the impact of job autonomy and job workload. More autonomy helps to prevent employee burnout and turnover, whereas heavy workload can cause employee exhaustion and to want to leave the organization. Both burnout and EI were found as mediators between job conditions and turnover intentions, with the latter functioning as a personal safeguard to buffer the effects of strain. These results support both the job demands–resources theory and the conservation of resources theory and provide practical implications: organizations ought to restructure their jobs to match the demands and resources, and establish EI to maintain engagement, retention, and wellbeing of employees.

Practical Implications

The results indicate two clear guidelines for managers and HR leaders. Review job design to make sure employees have the autonomy to make decisions that have impact and are not overworked. Any amount of flexibility and/or control of tasks can help alleviate burnout. Secondly, acquire emotional intelligence (EI). EI training programs, coaching and even screening for recruitment can enable employees to cope with stress and remain engaged when under pressure. Structural improvement and personal resource development are the best ways to reduce turnover intentions and ensure that the personnel are dedicated and resilient.

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Survey Questionnaire

Instructions to Respondents: This survey seeks to understand your perceptions of your work environment, emotions, and career intentions. All responses will be kept confidential and used only for academic purposes. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement using the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Section A: Demographics

1. Age: ____ years
2. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other / Prefer not to say
3. Education Level: ☐ High School ☐ Bachelor's ☐ Master's ☐ Doctorate ☐ Other
4. Monthly Income: ☐ < ₹25,000 ☐ ₹25,000–50,000 ☐ ₹50,001–75,000 ☐ ₹75,001–100,000 ☐ > ₹100,000
5. Marital Status: ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced/Separated ☐ Widowed

Section B: Job Autonomy (JA)

(Adapted from Breaugh, 1985)

- JA1. I can decide on my own how to do my work.
- JA2. I have significant autonomy in scheduling my tasks.
- JA3. I am free to choose the methods I use in my job.
- JA4. I have flexibility in prioritizing my work.
- JA5. My job allows me independence in decision-making.
- JA6. I can plan my work without much supervision.

Section C: Workload (WL)

(Adapted from Spector & Jex, 1998)

- WL1. I have too much work to do.
- WL2. I am required to work very fast.
- WL3. I am pressed for time at work.
- WL4. I have an excessive amount of tasks to complete.
- WL5. I feel overloaded with my job demands.

Section D: Burnout (BO)

(Adapted from Maslach & Jackson, 1981)

- BO1. I feel emotionally drained from my work.
- BO2. I feel tired when I get up in the morning to face another day on the job.
- BO3. I feel burned out from my work.
- BO4. I feel used up at the end of the workday.
- BO5. I feel frustrated with my job.
- BO6. I feel I am working too hard in my job.
- BO7. I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning.
- BO8. I feel emotionally exhausted at work.
- BO9. I feel depleted by my job responsibilities.

Section E: Emotional Intelligence (EI)

(Adapted from Wong & Law, 2002)

- EI1. I have a good sense of why I feel certain feelings most of the time.
- EI2. I have a good understanding of my own emotions.
- EI3. I really understand what I feel.
- EI4. I always know my friends' emotions from their behavior.
- EI5. I am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others.
- EI6. I have good understanding of the emotions of people around me.
- EI7. I always set goals for myself and then try my best to achieve them.
- EI8. I always tell myself I am a competent person.
- EI9. I am a self-motivated person.
- EI10. I can always encourage myself to try my best.
- EI11. I can control my temper and handle difficulties rationally.
- EI12. I am quite capable of controlling my own emotions.

Section F: Turnover Intention (TI)

(Adapted from Mobley et al., 1978)

- TI1. I often think about quitting my job.
- TI2. I intend to look for a new job within the next year.
- TI3. I will probably leave this organization soon.