



## The level of burnout of housekeeping personnel in accommodation facilities

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### Abstract

This study aimed to determine the level of burnout of the housekeeping personnel (cleaner, manager, crew chief) working in accommodation facilities and discovering if there was a relationship between their level of burnout and their personal features. In the study a cluster sampling method was used. 12 accommodation facilities in Antalya were handled as cluster and a total of 146 personnel working in these facilities comprised the sample group. A “Burnout Inventory” was used in the study. The study data were analyzed in the SPSS 14.01 program and t-test was used in the data analysis, while the Tukey test was used in the variance analysis and paired comparison. Significant relationships were detected between the level of burnout of the housekeeping personnel participating in the study and their level of education, income level, duties, working time in the facility, weekly working hours, daily working hours, level of satisfaction related to their jobs and their wish to change their jobs ( $p < 0.05$ ). A person experiencing burnout is exhausted and disappointed since he does not gain the things he expected from his way of life or relationships. That’s why it is necessary to approach a burnout event in a multi-dimensional way and deal with the factors causing burnout in different ways. In the literature review there was no study examining the level of burnout concerning individual housekeeping personnel working in accommodation facilities. this study was planned and carried out with this aim.

**Keywords:** Accommodation facility, housekeeping personnel, level of burnout.

### Introduction

Burnout is defined as people’ working in a profession who have become distanced from the unique meaning of the profession and its objectives. Furthermore, those experiencing burnout are not really interested in people to whom they are providing service or they psychologically withdraw from the profession as a response to excessive stress and dissatisfaction. This is mostly observed in industries where the human factor is very important in the quality level of the service (Kaçmaz,

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2005). The concept of burnout was first proposed by Freudenberger in 1974 who defined burnout as an individual being unsuccessful, worn down and becoming exhausted as a result of excessive demands on their energy, power and resources (Freudenberger, 1974). The mostly accepted definition today was present in 1981 by Maslach and Jackson. They defined burnout as a syndrome characterized by physical and emotional exhaustion occurring together with the development of the feelings of loss of self-esteem, chronic fatigue, desperation and hopelessness that result in negative situations in the relationships between the individual and others (Maslach and Jackson 1981). According to Maslach, burnout starts with emotional exhaustion that emerges with the feeling that a person has lost his emotional resources. People mention this dimension in order to express their own and other's exhaustion, energy loss, feeling of being worn-out or fatigue. The second dimension is defined as desensitization in which people withdraw and lose their enthusiasm and motivation for their job. Categorizing people, carrying out their work according to strict rules, assuming that other people will always behave in a negative way are the symptoms of desensitization. The third dimension is the lessening of a feeling of personal accomplishment which means the person in question tend to assess himself negatively (Ersoy and Utku Demirel, 2005; Gündüz, 2005).

Burnout in individuals occurs with the increase in emotional exhaustion and desensitization and the decrease in the feelings of personal accomplishment and achievement. Burnout is accepted as a social problem if it results in an individual lowered job performance; being absent from the work place and not carrying out his duties related to the job (Sünter et al., 2006). Particularly, for those working in accommodation facilities burnout is an important issue in terms of an individual's productivity, job satisfaction, delivery of a qualified service, professional success and alienation from their jobs (Kozak, 2001). Housekeeping which plays an important role in running of all institutions are services that no institution can abandon and neglect (Yertutan, 2000) since they are carried out to provide a healthy, clean, regular, safe, comfortable and pleasing environment at the highest level possible using the available resources of the institution. Accommodation facilities are dynamic and demanding with their intensive work tempo, complex running structures, intensive human relations in every step in the system. Long and demanding working hours; the necessity of working non-stop; unstable and, excessively, sensitive supply; and the obligation to carry out production and consumption simultaneously are elements of the pace of work which is necessary for the hotel employees to endure (Birdir and Tepeci 2003). For these reasons, and since the service provision is non-stop seven days in a week together with the continuous relationship between employees with their colleagues and the guests (Üngüren, 2010) people working in accommodation

facilities may be frequently subjected to burnout syndrome. A person having burnout thinks that his life lost its meaning and all his wishes are lost. His activities which were previously very meaningful for him now seem to be boring and do not promise any award. These people are seen as critical, angry, strict, closed to suggestions and behaving in a way that is offensive to other people. A person experiencing burnout is exhausted and disappointed since he does not gain the things he expected from his way of life or relationships (Barut and Kalkan 2002).

It is necessary to approach a burnout event in a multi-dimensional way and deal with the factors causing burnout in different ways. The studies to be carried out on burnout should also be directed towards determining the mediating variables that increase or reduce the intensity of burnout and should try to describe the roles of these variables on burnout. In the literature review there were limited number of studies about level of burnout of the people working in accommodation facilities (Bahar, 2006; Ersoy and Utku Demirel, 2005; Kaşlı, 2009; Kozak, 2001; Birdir and Tepeci 2003; Pelit & Türkmen 2008; Ünügür et al., 2010), and it was also observed that there was no study examining the level of burnout concerning individual housekeeping personnel working in accommodation facilities. Therefore, this study was planned and carried out with the aim of determining the level of burnout of the housekeeping personnel working in accommodation facilities and making a comparison between them according to their personal features.

## **Method**

The population of the study consisted of housekeeping personnel working in accommodation facilities with 4-5 stars in Antalya. In the study, a cluster sampling method was used. 12 accommodation facilities were handled as cluster and a total of 146 personnel working in these facilities comprised the sampling group.

In the study, a questionnaire consisting of two parts was used to collect the data. The first part of the questionnaire contained the following information relating to the individual gender, age, marital status, level of education, level of monthly income, their work responsibilities, duration of employment in the accommodation facility, number of days and hours worked in a week, level of job satisfaction and whether they wish to change their employment. The second part of the questionnaire consists of a 21 items "Burnout Scale" comprising 17 negative and 4 positive statements, developed by Pines and Aronson (1988) and adapted into Turkish. The validity and reliability was undertaken by Çapri (2006) in order to determine the level of burnout of the personnel. The 21 items in the scale were subjected to a 7 point Likert type grading and the views

of the personnel for each item were scored as “Never=1”, “Only once=2”, “Rarely=3”, “Sometimes=4”, “Frequently=5”, “Generally=6” and “Always=7”.

The data was analyzed via the SPSS 14.01 program, the distribution of the personnel in the sampling group according to their personal features was given together with frequency and percentage values. Each item in the scale to determine the level of burnout of each employee was described by measuring arithmetic mean and standard deviation values. To compare the level of burnout of the personnel within the scope of the study according to their personal features, t-test and (for three or more groups) variance analysis were used since parametric test assumptions were realized (for both groups). In the paired comparisons in the variance analysis, a Tukey test was used. In the comparisons aimed at the whole scale, the 4 positive items were scored reversely according to the scoring system mentioned above.

In this study, it was determined in the factor analysis applied in relation to the burnout scale that the scale was gathered under single factor (dimension), and Cronbach’s Alpha value related to reliability coefficient was calculated as 0.830.

## Results

### Results Related to the Personal Features of the Participants

The findings related to the personal features of the personnel within the scope of the study are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Distribution of the participants according to their personal features

Variable	Group	Number (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	78	53.4
	Male	68	46.6
Age	18-25	32	21.9
	26-33	55	37.7
	34-41	39	26.7
	42 and above	20	13.7
Marital Status	Married	91	62.3
	Single	55	37.7
Level of Education	Elementary Education and below	70	48.0
	Secondary education	51	34.9
	Higher education	25	17.1
Level of Income	400 \$ and below	27	18.5
	401-600 \$	61	41.8
	601-800 \$	29	19.9
	801-1000 \$	17	11.6
	1001\$ and above	12	8.2

Duty	Cleaning Personnel	86	58.9
	Manager	14	9.6
	Crew Chief	46	31.5
Length of service in the Facility	Less than 1 year	36	24.6
	1-3 years	54	37.0
	4-6 years	42	28.8
Daily Working Hours	7-10 years	14	9.6
	Less than 8 hours	37	25.3
	8-10 hours	96	65.8
Weekly Working Hours	11-13 hours	13	8.9
	6 days and less	135	92.5
Level of Satisfaction in Relation to the Job	7 days	11	7.5
	Satisfied	96	65.8
Wish to Change Jobs	Not satisfied	50	34.2
	Yes	66	45.2
Total	No	80	54.8
		<b>146</b>	<b>100.0</b>

According to the findings in Table 1, majority of the study participants had following characteristics: 53.4% of the sample group was female, while 46.6% of them were male. 37.7%, were aged between 26-33 62.3% were married, 48 % had an education level of elementary school education and below, 41.8% had an income level of 401-600 \$, 58.9% cleaning personnel, 37% had worked in the accommodation facility for 1 to 3 years 65.8% worked for 8-10 hours a day , 92.5% worked for 6 days or less a week, 65.8% were satisfied with their job and 54.8% did not want to change their job.

#### Results Related to the Level of Burnout of the Participants

The arithmetic mean and standard deviation values of the personnel working in accommodation facility comprising sampling group in relation to their burnout levels are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Descriptive statistics related to the levels of burnout of the participants (n=146)

Item No	Items	$\bar{X}$ (1-7)	s.d.	
Negative Items	1	Tired	4.00	1.56
	2	Physically tired (exhausted)	3.95	1.50
	3	Worn-out	3.82	6.16
	4	Disappointed with and offended by people	3.61	1.87
	5	Emotionally tired (exhausted)	3.48	1.71
	6	Anxious	3.32	1.63
	7	Confused, troubled	3.21	1.56
	8	Unhappy	3.09	1.47
	9	Tired	2.97	1.55
	10	Collapsed	2.88	1.68
	11	Exhausted	2.86	1.72
	12	Weak	2.81	1.81
	13	Unhealthy	2.62	1.49

	14	Hopeless	2.57	1.69
	15	Rejected	2.41	1.83
	16	Worthless	2.29	1.66
	17	Trapped	2.14	1.55
Positive Items	18	Cheerful, jolly	4.95	1.40
	19	Happy	5.07	1.64
	20	Energetic	5.25	1.46
	21	Optimistic	5.45	1.51
<b>GENERAL</b>			<b>3.26</b>	<b>0.87</b>

The average values in Table 2 are given respectively. The first three items in which the level (score) of burnout of the housekeeping personnel within the scope of the study is the highest among the negative items are; tiredness ( $\bar{X}=4.00$ ), physical tiredness (exhaustion) ( $\bar{X}=3.95$ ) and being worn-out ( $\bar{X}=3.82$ ), while the items with the lowest burnout scores in comparison to the others are; being trapped ( $\bar{X}=2.14$ ), worthlessness ( $\bar{X}=2.29$ ) and being rejected ( $\bar{X}=2.41$ ). In the positive items related to the level of burnout, the high scores showing that burnout is low are cheerful, jolly ( $\bar{X}=4.95$ ), happy ( $\bar{X}=5.07$ ), energetic ( $\bar{X}=5.25$ ) and optimistic ( $\bar{X}=5.45$ ). The score for the general burnout level of the housekeeping personnel within the scope of the study was calculated as (in the score interval between 1 and 7)  $\bar{X}=3.26$ . The results of t-test carried out to compare the level of burnout of the sample group of personnel (detected as having significant/important relationship) according to personal features are given in Table 3 and the results of variance analysis are given Table 4.

**Table 3:** T-test results related to comparing the levels of burnout of the participants according to their personal features

Variable	Group	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	t/F	p
Number of Working days in a Week	6 days and fewer	3.21	0.87	3.38	0.004**
	7 days	3.81	0.53		
Level of Satisfaction in Relation to the Job	Satisfied	3.00	0.73	5.25	0.000***
	Not Satisfied	3.73	0.92		
Wish to Change Jobs	Yes	3.60	0.89	4.70	0.000***

According to the findings in Table 3, significant (important) relationships were detected between the level of burnout of the personnel participating in the study and their weekly working hours, level of satisfaction in relation to the job and their wish to change jobs ( $p<0.05$ ). An examination of the arithmetic mean values, the level of burnout is higher in people working 7 days a week than those working 6 days a week; in people being satisfied with their jobs; and in people wanting to change their jobs.

**Table 4:** Comparing the levels of burnout of the participants according to their personal features

Variable	Group	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	t/F	p
Level of Education	Elementary school and below	3.65 a	0.82	21.68	0.000***
	Secondary education	3.05 b	0.79		
	Higher education	2.55 c	0.47		
Level of Income	400 \$ and below	3.78 a	1.06	14.61	0.000***
	401-600 \$	3.52 b	0.77		
	601-800 \$	2.97 c	0.57		
	801-1000 \$	2.47 d	0.36		
	1001\$ and above	2.45 d	0.32		
Duty	Cleaning Personnel	3.59 a	0.88	21.03	0.000***
	Manager	2.55 b	0.37		
	Crew Chief	2.83 c	0.60		
Length of service in the accommodation facility	Less than 1 year	3.62 a	1.04	3.09	0.029*
	1-3 years	3.18 b	0.62		
	4-6 years	3.11 b	0.91		
	7-10 years	3.01 b	0.86		
Daily working hours	Less than 8 hours	3.12 a	0.80	3.37	0.037*
	8-10 hours	3.47 b	0.99		
	11-13 hours	3.60 c	0.79		

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$  \*\* $p < 0.01$  \* $p < 0.05$  <sup>a,b,c,d</sup> The difference between the groups including different letters in the same column

According to the results presented in Table 4, significant relationships were detected in the level of burnout of the personnel participating in the study and their level of education, level of income, duties, length of service in the facility and daily working hours ( $p < 0.05$ ). The arithmetic mean values indicate that as the level of education decreased the level of burnout increased. Parallel to this, it was determined that as the monthly income level gradually reduced to 1001\$ and below, the level of burnout increased. Examining the statistics calculated according to the duties in which the personnel engaged, it was determined that the group whose level of burnout is the highest is cleaning personnel, while the group having the lowest level of burnout in comparison to the others is managers. On the other hand, it was determined that the personnel working in the facility for less than 1 year have a higher level of burnout in comparison to the other groups. In addition, it was detected that as daily working hours increased, the level of burnout increased, too.

## Discussion

In this study, a general assessment was made in relation to the level of burnout of the housekeeping personnel working in accommodation facilities.

Physical symptoms such as tiredness, loss of appetite and headache and emotional problems such as depression, anxiety and hopelessness are frequently seen in people being subjected to burnout (Torun 1995). In the study, the first three items in which the personnel's level of burnout is the highest are tiredness ( $\bar{X}=4.00$ ), physical tiredness (exhaustion) ( $\bar{X}=3.95$ ) and burnout ( $\bar{X}=3.82$ ); while the items in which personnel's level of burnout is the lowest are; feeling trapped ( $\bar{X}=2.14$ ), worthlessness ( $\bar{X}=2.29$ ) and being rejected ( $\bar{X}=2.41$ ). Housekeeping services carried out in institutions are generally processes that are dependent on human labour and this requires an amount of physical work (Yertutan 2000). In this study, the fact that the personnel determined tiredness, physical tiredness and being worn-out as the items in which the level of burnout is the highest can be based on the heaviness and intensity of the duties in which they engaged. In the study carried out by Üngüren et al. (2010), the scores obtained by the personnel working in the departments in which they have to come face to face with the customers (service, housekeeping) from the sub-scales (emotional exhaustion, desensitization) of the burnout scale were higher than those of the personnel working in supporting departments (kitchen etc.).

The score of the general burnout level of the personnel within the scope of this study was found (in the score interval between 1 and 7) to be  $\bar{X}=3.26$ . This value is below 4 points showing that the burnout in the medium level and indicates that general burnout level is not so great. In the study carried out by Üngüren et al. (2010) on the personnel working in a hotel, it was determined that the personnel did not face the burnout syndrome.

Hotels are the facilities providing service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days of a year. For this reason, the personnel are expected to work intensively (Batman 1999). In our study, it was determined that there are significant relationships between the level of burnout of the housekeeping personnel and weekly working hours, the level of satisfaction related to the job and wish to change the job. The level of burnout is higher in the personnel working 7 days a week; in personnel who are not satisfied with their jobs; and in the personnel wanting to change their jobs. This finding shows that the relationship between burnout is parallel with wanting to change their job and there is a necessity to implement measures that will reduce the level of burnout of the personnel in the facilities. Working in shifts in accommodation facilities, more personnel can be employed and thus, the personnel will be less tired. In Bahar's (2006) study, the level of emotional exhaustion of the front office personnel wanting to change their jobs was higher than those of the personnel not wanting to change their jobs. In Dinler's (2010) study, it was observed that both



emotional exhaustion and desensitization in the personnel wanting to change their jobs were higher than the personnel not wanting to change their jobs.

Statistically significant relationships were detected between the level of burnout of the personnel employed in accommodation facilities and their level of education, level of income, duty, length of service in the facility and daily working hours ( $p < 0.05$ ). The arithmetic mean values indicate that as the level of education decreased, the level of burnout increased. In the studies carried out by Bahar (2006) and Ersoy and Utku (2005), it was detected that there was no statistically significant difference between the level of education of the personnel and the means of their scores in the burnout sub-scales.

It was determined that as monthly income level gradually reduced to 800 \$ and below, the level of burnout increased. In Dinler's (2010) study, it was detected that there was no significant relationship between wages and burnout sub-scales.

In our study, after examining the statistics calculated according to the duties, it was determined that the group whose level of burnout is the highest is cleaning personnel, while the managers have the lowest level of burnout in comparison to the others.

On the other hand, it was determined that the personnel having worked in the facility for less than 1 year have a higher level of burnout in comparison to the other groups. While a higher level of burnout is expected in the personnel working in accommodation facilities, it is interesting that the personnel working in the facility for less than 1 year have a higher level of burnout. This may result from the new employees having difficulty in adapting to the job.

It was determined that with the increase in daily working hours of housekeeping personnel, their level of burnout also increased. This result may be connected to the fact that since the working hours of the personnel were long, they became exhausted and thus burnout levels increased. In Dinler's (2010) study, the mean of the emotional exhaustion of people working in hotel for 11 hours and above is higher than those of employees working 6-8 hours.

## Conclusion

On the completion of the study, it was determined that;

- The first three items in which the level of burnout (points) of the housekeeping personnel working in an accommodation facility is the highest in the categories of tiredness, physical tiredness (exhaustion) and feeling worn-out.
- Level of burnout is higher in people working 7 days a week in comparison to those working 6 days; in people satisfied with their job in comparison with those not satisfied with their job; and in people wishing to change their jobs in comparison to the people not wishing to change their jobs.
- There are significant relationships between personnel's level of burnout and their level of education, level of income, duties, length of service in the facility and daily working hours.

According to the findings obtained at the end of the study, the following suggestions are made;

- to evaluate the results by carrying out studies in the establishment in order to determine the level of burnout of the hotel personnel and realizing the applications that will eradicate the feeling of exhaustion by motivating the personnel,
- to make arrangements that will reduce the exhaustion and tiredness of the personnel to a lower level, and to apply a shift work system,
- to carry out a study on a much wider sample across Turkey.

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