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COPING WITH BURNOUT? MEASURING THE LINKS BETWEEN WORKPLACE CONFLICTS, WORK-RELATED STRESS, AND BURNOUT

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Abstract. *Purpose.* The aim of the paper is to investigate the relationship between workplace conflicts and employee burnout.
Design/methodology/approach. The survey method was chosen, and the questionnaire was posted online to share among Lithuanian employees. Finally, 495 employees completed the questionnaire, which included four parts: questions about workplace conflicts, burnout, burnout due to conflicts, and consequences of burnout. Statistical analysis was used to process the research data.
Findings. The study revealed that the more conflicts employees have with clients, colleagues, or managers, the more burnout they experience as a consequence. Furthermore, conflicts with colleagues have the strongest relationship with consequences of burnout which are not as unambiguous as they may also be the outcome of burnout.
Research limitations/implications. The study was conducted in Lithuania and revealed the conflict-induced burnout of employees and the consequences of the burnout they face.
Practical implications. Understanding the links between conflict at work and burnout let organizational leaders prioritize conflict resolution, pay more attention to the mental health of employees, and protect the organization from the costly consequences of burnout.
Originality/Value. This study reveals the consequences of labour conflicts not only in the context of burnout but also in its consequences which allow to understand the real threat of disputes.

Keywords: burnout, workplace conflicts, consequences of burnout, burnout due to conflicts, conflicts with co-workers.

JEL Classification: O15, D74, I00.

Introduction

According to the International Labour Organization, the European Union spends up to 4% of its gross national product (GNP) on mental health of people. Burnout syndrome affects a large part of the working population and has both social and economic consequences (Schnaider-Levi et al., 2020). In 2019, after including burnout syndrome as a professional phenomenon in the 11th edition of the International Classification of Diseases by the World Health Organization, it became recognized as a psychological disorder in a general sense (World Health Organization, 2019).

Several studies revealed that a hostile work environment causes stress and that social relationships at work can either enhance or hinder individual's well-being (Wu et al., 2021a; Nappo, 2020; Leon-Perez et al., 2016; Salanova et al., 2005). According to Nappo (2020), there is a strong correlation between the nature of interpersonal contacts at work and work-related stress. Therefore, the role of managers in supporting and helping employees significantly reduces the likelihood of employees experiencing stress (Haryanto et al., 2022) and burnout. On the contrary, the lack of interpersonal social support at work from both co-workers and managers, as well as internal conflicts among co-workers, are considered to be important burnout stimulators (Edú-Valsania et al., 2022).

Oh (2022) suggested that ambivalent emotions can cause burnout. For instance, when employees are involved in disputes, even when they are satisfied that the truth is winning and feel the support of managers and colleagues, at the same time, they can feel frustration, fatigue, guilt,

and consequently get burned out. Mixed emotions create a sense of discomfort, even a sense of conflict, and influence employee burnout (Vaccaro et al., 2020). Bates et al. (2022) assert that a dispute has the characteristics of conflict and causes similar consequences for the well-being of the opponents. The dispute should be considered a conflict when it can end positively only with the participation of a third party. Brummans et al. (2022) claim that mediation is an effective method to restore cooperation between parties. Mediation helps to improve the relationships and create a safe environment, which is important aiming to avoid stress, conflict, and employee burnout (Palancı et al., 2021). The study conducted by Edú-Valsania et al. (2022) revealed, that tensions and conflicts between colleagues are emotionally contagious. Therefore, it is important to to better know stressful relationship-related experiences of employees for timely assessment of situation and prediction and management of possible negative consequences for a wider scale in organization.

The studies reveal that work overload leads to tension and subsequently to stress, and stress leads to interpersonal conflicts (e.g., Jaramillo et al., 2011; Palancı et al., 2021). However, the literature does not suggest a clear answer if conflicts are the main reason, affecting stress and, subsequently, burnout. Hence, the paper aims to explore the relationship between workplace conflicts, work-related stress, and employee burnout. A quantitative survey was used for this purpose. The data obtained were investigated using statistical analysis.

The results of the research are useful for organizational managers, aiming to understand the sources of emotional stress of employees, which ultimately lead to burnout. Thus, the study attempts to provide insight into the consequences of burnout syndrome and the links with workplace conflicts and to encourage leadership to pay more attention to the psychological environment in the workplace.

The paper is structured as follows. The first part presents theoretical background on the links between workplace conflict, work-related stress, and employees' burnout. The next sections present the research methodology and the research results. The last section provides conclusions.

1. Theoretical background

Links between workplace conflict, work-related stress, and employee burnout

The causes of conflicts in organizations have been investigated by various scholars. The scientists argue that the sources of conflict are related to the differences in individuals' personalities, unfair behavior at work (Lafta, 2016), limited resources (Lafta, 2016; Deep et al., 2016), poor communication (Lafta, 2016; Deep et al., 2016; Khan et al., 2016), harmful competition in the workplace, conflict management skills and lack of conflict management training (Deep et al., 2016), negative opinion about

colleagues and managers (Khan et al., 2016). The conflicts have also been fueled by the issues of the mordern world such as globalization and internationalization, which have led to the increase of international business relations, cultural differences and constant change in organizations (Mačiulis & Sondaitė, 2017). Some studies suggest that globalization has led to conflicting cultural attitudes (Okech et al., 2016). Notably, conflicts have been found to be less prevalent in organizations with clearly defined roles. Meanwhile, the conflicts are more common in the presence of several different managers, a stressful environment, and the rapid spread of technology (Khalid et al., 2016). Furthermore, some studies demonstrate that the roots of conflict are multifaceted and that all variables of different magnitudes interact with each other in different ways simultaneously and thus each conflict has unique sources (Watson et al., 2018).

In the literature, the impact of job-related characteristics on professional burnout is treated differently depending on whether those are internal (depends on the person), external (depends on other), or organizational factors. For example, the factors such as management style, type of organization, employee position are considered to have no initial impact on employee well-being (Veiga & Cortez, 2020) including burnout (Cortez et al., 2019; Edú-Valsania et al., 2022). Meanwhile, factors related to employee interaction, such as non-collaborative leadership, conflicting or poor communication, lack of support, are significant for employee burnout (Shoman et al., 2021; Aronsson et al., 2017; Edú-Valsania et al., 2022).

An employee's emotional exhaustion, manifested in cynicism, signals a person's burnout. Therefore, the ability to recognize and manage emotions can help prevent burnout. According to the researchers, managing conflict reduces the likelihood of burnout (Michinov, 2022). Meanwhile, the conflicts increase the probability of negative outcomes for a person (Leon-Perez et al., 2016).

The scholars assert that workplace conflicts ultimately lead to exhaustion, cynicism, and burnout (Salanova et al., 2005; Edú-Valsania et al., 2022). Moreover, the conflicts appear in different, also latent forms. For example, bullying and gossip can be assigned to the type of conflict (e.g., Spector & Jex, 1998). Thus, conflicts can be both prerequisite and consequence of work-related stress. The reason lies in adverse events and environments, which create emotional dissonance in employees, and thus perceive organizational support as insufficient. Finally, the psychological stress experienced by employees leads to the burnout (Naseer & Raja, 2022).

However, not only are relationship conflicts harmful to employees' well-being. The studies demonstrate that employees dispute over how to complete tasks tend to escalate into relationship conflicts. In contrast, relational conflicts lead to task conflicts when the workloads of employees are very high (Somaraju et al., 2022). Considering the fact that high workload is a presumption of stress and burnout (Edú-Valsania et al., 2022), the rise of

unregulated conflicts increases the likelihood of employee burnout and turnover.

Notably, the managers risk falling into the trap of burnout even more than other employees. The explanation resides in the fact that the work of managers is related to emotions and the constant demonstration of emotions at work. The research has revealed that emotional work causes emotional dissonance, which in turn causes stress, and is one of the factors in burnout (Jeung et al., 2018; Edú-Valsania et al., 2022). Since managers have a duty to support employees, regulate their relationships, solve problems, and conflicts, they fall into an increased risk of burnout.

The link between burnout and work conflicts has been confirmed by the study of 22,213 physicians from 144 public hospitals in China and revealed that 31.28% of them suffer from burnout and 33.48% experienced disputes in their work, moreover, these factors were significantly associated with each other (Wu et al., 2021b). The study of hotel managers in Egypt also revealed a positive relationship between workplace conflict and workplace burnout. Furthermore, it was found that the change in workplace conflict alone without the rest of the variables can reduce burnout cases by about 55.9% (Ghanem, 2021). Another study disclosed that workplace bullying is related to burnout. Furthermore, victims of bullying have an increased level of burnout and a reduced level of affective well-being (Ribeiro et al., 2021). This implies that workplace conflict could make a long-term damage. Other studies also confirmed the relationship between conflict and burnout (Zheng et al., 2022; Pavlidou et al., 2022; Benitez et al., 2021). Workplace conflicts are associated with the risk of burnout (Kanios & Bocheńska-Brandt, 2021). However, it is necessary to determine how conflicts relate to the consequences of burnout.

Consequences of burnout

Although burnout is most often defined by three aspects: emotional and physical exhaustion, depersonalization, and a low sense of personal achievement (Velando-Soriano et al., 2020; Zheng et al., 2022; Schnaider-Levi et al., 2020, Fuente-Solana et al., 2021; Edú-Valsania et al., 2022), Aukštikalnytė (2021) proposed that burnout be distinguished by exhaustion, apathy, inefficiency, and cynicism. This distribution suggests that exhaustion is the primary and central dimension of burnout. Meanwhile, emotional insensitivity is the main symptom of depersonalization, which can be observed in the initial stages of burnout. The secondary symptoms of burnout are ineffectiveness and cynicism.

The studies reveal that burnout has a major impact on employee health and quality of life, as well as the organization (Schnaider-Levi et al., 2020). The analysis of the consequences of burnout for an individual reveals the association between exhaustion and a number of physical symptoms: headaches, gastrointestinal disorders, muscle tension, hypertension, colds and flu, and sleep disorders

(Salvagioni et al., 2017, Lin et al., 2021). Therefore, burnout is associated with depression, and some researchers suggest that both of these disorders are caused by similar risk factors (Schonfeld et al., 2018) and their effects (Schonfeld et al., 2019). Other studies suggest that burnout syndrome is different from stress and depression and is an intermediate option, i.e., constant stress in the workplace causes burnout, which in turn can lead to depression that affects all areas of life (Salvagioni et al., 2017; Kalani et al., 2018; Misiolek-Marn et al., 2020). The research has disclosed that employees with difficulties of burnout may start using different types of drugs (Misiolek-Marín et al., 2020). Furthermore, the consequences of burnout for an individual include not only personal condition and the effects of health, but also social dysfunction and the spread of the problem to other areas of life: a person who feels exhausted, depersonalized and unhappy with the performance of work is angry, dissatisfied, frustrated and as a consequence experience conflicts in the family and the immediate environment (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Maslach, 2018; Demirel & Erdirençelebi, 2019). The recent evidence suggests that the number of suicides among employees who are more likely to experience symptoms of burnout is higher. Therefore, concerns have been raised that burnout may be linked to various forms of self-harm, including suicide (Moukaddam et al., 2020; Tateno et al., 2018).

The analysis of burnout consequences from the perspective of organization revealed that employees who suffer from burnout demonstrate lower productivity and work quality (Koo et al., 2020; Akca & Küçükoğlu, 2020). In particular, burnout causes cognitive impairment, which also affects the quality of work (Ellbin et al., 2018). Furthermore, burnout is associated with various negative attitudes to work: dissatisfaction in the workplace, loss of loyalty to organization, absenteeism and retirement (Salvagioni et al., 2017; Maslach, 2018; Koo et al., 2020). Another important consequence of burnout is related to the negative impact on colleagues, customers, and the organizational environment. The employees can distance themselves from the team members and may become cynical, leading to conflicts in work places and an increase in employee turnover ratio (Maslach, 2018).

The phenomenon of burnout causes a variety of physical ailments, and although scientists have different views toward the link between burnout and depression, this syndrome has a significant negative impact on the physical and mental health of the individual, and some researchers, who observe the relation to suicide rates, even see a life-threatening threat. In addition, the spreading effects of burnout have a negative impact on personal life. Moreover, it is important to consider that both employees and organizations suffer from burnout. The employees with burnout perform tasks less efficiently, make mistakes, their motivation and creativity decrease, and the overall quality of work is affected. In addition, the negative impact of depersonalization and cynicism is observed on other employees and the entire organizational environment. The

above discussed consequences of burnout demonstrate the importance of monitoring the well-being of employees and the necessity to take the appropriate organizational and personal measures.

2. Materials and methods

The survey was used to collect empirical research data to determine the relationship between conflict and burnout. The study was carried out according to the research model developed during the theoretical analysis (Figure 1). The relationships between the following constructs were examined: workplace conflicts and burnout due to conflicts, burnout due to conflicts and general burnout, burnout due to conflicts, and the consequences of burnout. These links were investigated in order to determine how conflicts are related to burnout, how conflicts due to burnout are associated with general burnout, and what are the links between conflicts due to burnout and the consequences of burnout.
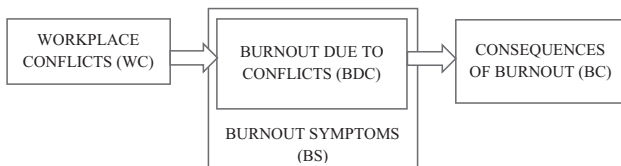

Figure 1. Theoretical model of research

A questionnaire was developed and considered previous studies (Aukštikalnytė, 2021) with additional construct of consequences of burnout. The questionnaire consisted of the following parts: the part related to conflicts consisted of eight statements (marked WC 1-8), the part related to the symptoms of burnout consisted of nine statements (marked BS 1-9), the part of burnout due to conflicts consisted of nine statements (marked BDC 1-9), the part of consequences of burnout consisted of eight questions (marked BC 1-8). Notably, the part of consequences of burnout assessed organizational consequences and the impact on the employee. Finally, questions related to the demographics of the respondents, such as gender, age, education, and number of children, were included. The 7-point Likert scale was adopted ranging from "very strongly agree" to "very strongly disagree" (Datagame, 2021). Table 1 presents information on the constructs included in the questionnaire.

The survey data were collected in December 2021–January 2022. According to the Lithuanian Department of Statistics, the number of people who had a job in 2021 was 1 million 280.2 thousand (Oficialiosios statistikos portalas, 2021). The questionnaire was distributed through the survey platform www.apklausa.lt and social networks (e.g., Facebook) and thus was shared among various groups with the aim of accessing different people. 495 questionnaires were collected from respondents who have a job in Lithuania and thus, the sample is representative. The selection of respondents was based on a non-probabilistic sampling method. The representativeness of the survey was ensured by the quota method, in which the questionnaire was filled in only by the persons who have a job. The demographic data of the respondents is presented in Table 2.

Table 1. Theoretical background of the research instrument

Construct	Purpose	Factor	Variable	Source
Workplace conflicts	How do conflicts with clients, colleagues, and managers occur at work, and how do managers resolve those conflicts?	Conflicts with clients and colleagues	At work, I have to resolve conflicts with clients. WC-1	Cortez et al. (2019), Looff et al. (2018), Kanios and Bocheńska-Brandt (2021), Aukštikalnytė (2021)
			At work, I face disputes with colleagues. WC-2	
			At work, I have to deal with customers who start to shout and insult employees. WC-3	
			Conflicts between co-workers at my work turn into bullying. WC-4	
		Conflict management	My work is characterized by strained relationships between employees and managers. WC-5	
			My manager tends to offend employees in times of disagreement. WC-6	
			In my work, conflicts are managed efficiently. WC-7	
			My company rationally resolves conflicts at work. WC-8	
Burnout symptoms	What symptoms of burnout do employees experience?	Exhaustion and apathy	I feel physically and emotionally exhausted while doing my job. BS-1	Maslach (2018), Maslach et al. (2001), Looff et al. (2018), Velando-Soriano et al. (2020), Schnaider-Levi et al. (2020), Edú-Valsania et al. (2022), Fuente-Solana et al. (2021), Aukštikalnytė (2021)
			When I wake up in the morning, I already feel tired. BS-2	
			I feel burned out from the stress at work. BS-3	
			I feel as if I no longer have the strength and patience to work. BS-4	
			I noticed that my job makes me emotionally insensitive. BS-5	
		Inefficiency and cynicism	I do not care how my colleagues feel. BS-6	
			I do not perform my tasks at work efficiently. BS-7	
			I do not feel energetic and motivated in my work. BS-8	
			I do not feel self-fulfilling at work. BS-9	

Const-ruct	Purpose	Factor	Variable	Source
Burn-out due to conf-licts	What symptoms of burnout do workers experience due to conflicts with clients, colleagues, and the manager?	Burnout due to conflicts with clients	I feel emotionally exhausted due to conflicts with clients at work. BDC-1	Maslach (2018), Kanios and Bocheńska-Brandt (2021), Pavlidou et al. (2020), Aukštikalnytė (2021)
			Disputes with clients force me to distance myself and ignore their needs. BDC-2	
			My motivation has decreased due to working with conflicting clients. BDC-3	
		Burnout due to conflicts with collea-gues and manager	I am tired of communicating with conflicting colleagues. BDC-4	
			I feel more and more emotionally insensitive due to conflicts with colleagues. BDC-5	
			Disagreements with co-workers negatively affect the quality of my work. BDC-6	
			Disagreements with the manager cause me emotional and physical exhaustion. BDC-7	
			Disagreements with the supervisor increase the distance from work. BDC-8	
			I feel lost in my desire to work due to disagreements with the manager. BDC-9	
Consequences of burnout			I feel overwhelmed, so I am considering quitting my current job. BC-1	Maslach and Leiter (2016), Maslach (2018), Salvagioni et al. (2017), Kalani et al. (2018), Misiolek-Marín et al. (2020), Demirel and Erdirençelebi (2019), Moukaddam et al. (2020), Tateno et al. (2018), Koo et al. (2020), Akca and Küçükoğlu (2020), Ellbin et al. (2018), Aukštikalnytė (2021)
			The pace of my work has slowed down due to physical and emotional fatigue. BC-2	
			I face conflicts in the family due to apathy and delimitation. BC-3	
			I feel that burnout at work can lead me to depression. BC-4	
			Exhaustion at work has led to an increase in disagreements with co-workers. BC-5	
			I make more mistakes at work due to physical and emotional exhaustion. BC-6	
			I am tormented by destructive thoughts due to exhaustion at work. BC-7	
			I started (more often) using alcohol due to burnout at work. BC-8	

Table 2. Demographic data

Demographic characteristics	Variables	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents in the sample (%)
Gender	Male	161	32.5
	Female	334	67.5
Age	18–24	57	11.5
	25–39	272	54.9
	40–54	125	25.3
	55–64	34	56.9
	65 or more	7	1.4
Education	Primary Education	1	0.2
	Secondary education	16	3.2
	Professional qualification	15	3.0
	Incomplete higher education	29	5.9
	Higher college education	61	12.3
	Bachelor's degree	182	36.8
	Master's degree	179	36.2
	Ph.D. degree	12	2.4
Number of children	0	262	52.9
	1	86	17.4
	2	111	22.4
	3 or more	36	7.3
Total respondents		495	100

The data analysis was performed by using statistical analysis software "SPSS Statistics 17.0".

The reliability of the constructs was measured by *Cronbach alpha*. The following coefficients were obtained: workplace conflicts – 0.715, burnout symptoms – 0.831, burnout due to conflicts – 0.920, burnout consequences – 0.912. The structure of the constructs was confirmed in the previous study conducted by Aukštikalnytė (2021). The relationships between constructs and demographic characteristics were examined by applying the *Mann-Whitney* test and the *Kruskal-Wallis* criterion (Bekešienė, 2015, p. 147). To determine the relationships between the variables, correlation analysis was used and the Spearman correlation coefficient was calculated. During the analysis of the study, it was assumed that the correlation is strong when $1 \leq r > 0.7$, medium when $0.7 < r > 0.4$, weak when $0.4 < r > 0$ (r – correlation coefficient) (Akoglu, 2018).

The principles of scientific ethics were followed throughout the study. First, respondents voluntarily participated in the survey and were informed that the data would be depersonalised and presented in the generalised form. Second, the answers were collected anonymously and all questions were related to individual experiences.

3. Results

Relationships between demographics and study variables.

The relationship between study variables and gender was calculated by applying the *Mann-Whitney* test and disclosed that men were more likely to start (more often) using alcohol due to burnout at work (Table 3).

Table 3. Relationships of study variables with gender

Variable	Average rank by gender		p-value
	Male	Female	
Consequences of Burnout			
I started (more often) using alcohol due to burnout at work.	267.72	238.49	0.021

The relationship between study variables and age was calculated by applying the *Kruskal-Walli*s criterion and showed that younger people (18–35 years old) are more often do not feel self-fulfilling at their job (Table 4).

Table 4. Relationships of study variables with age.

Variable	Average rank by age				p value
	18–24	25–39	40–54	55–64	
Burnout syndrome					
Inefficiency and cynicism					
I do not feel self-fulfilling at my work.	230.70	201.92	162.17	154.40	0.001

The relationship between study variables and the number of children disclosed that employees who do not have children and those who have two or more are statistically more likely to experience burnout symptoms and statistically more often have to resolve conflicts with clients compared to those who have only one child (Table 5).

Table 5. Relationships between study variables and number of children

Variable	Average rank by number of children				p value
	0	1	2	3+	
Burnout syndrome					
Exhaustion and apathy					
When I wake up in the morning, I already feel tired.	258.78	217.78	243.30	256.21	0.039
I feel burned out from the stress at work.	257.92	209.76	250.35	259.90	0.046
I feel like I no longer have the strength and patience to work.	262.47	224.98	226.58	263.75	0.042
Inefficiency and cynicism					
I do not feel energetic and motivated in my work.	197.69	147.33	172.67	209.28	0.002
I do not feel self-fulfilling at my work.	217.19	159.47	172.42	204.44	0.000
Workplace conflicts					
Conflicts with clients and colleagues					
At work, I have to resolve conflicts with clients.	257.89	208.89	255.07	247.63	0.43

Notably, the study did not disclose the significant relationships between the study variables and the level of education.

Correlation analysis of research variables

A correlation analysis of all study variables was performed using the *Spearman* correlation method. The analysis of the relationship between the variables of workplace conflicts and burnout constructs revealed that there is a statistically significant low or medium level relationship ($0.169 \leq r \geq 0.482$) between client conflict and burnout (Table 6).

This connection is stronger when conflicts are intense and/or become offensive ($r = 0.482$; $p = 0.000$) which means that the more employees experience conflicts with clients, the more they experience burnout symptoms especially when conflicts are rough. In addition, disputes with clients have been shown to have an association not only

Table 6. Results of correlation analysis of workplace conflict and burnout due to them

		Conflicts with clients and colleagues				Conflict management			
		WC-1	WC-2	WC-3	WC-4	WC-5	WC-6	WC-7	WC-8
Burnout due to conflicts with clients									
BDC-1	r value	.337**	.198**	.482**	.229**	.227**	.183**	−.128**	−.151**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.004	.001
BDC-2	r value	.218**	.193**	.353**	.271**	.239**	.238**	−.130**	−.168**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.004	.000
BDC-3	r value	.232**	.169**	.346**	.286**	.191**	.228**	−.156**	−.196**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000
Burnout due to conflicts with colleagues and the manager									
BDC-4	r value	.193**	.332**	.274**	.379**	.363**	.272**	−.185**	−.255**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
BDC-5	r value	.162**	.342**	.277**	.390**	.351**	.352**	−.230**	−.265**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
BDC-6	r value	.177**	.325**	.201**	.329**	.288**	.249**	−.113*	−.164**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.012	.000
BDC-7	r value	.122**	.269**	.219**	.288**	.416**	.364**	−.267**	−.258**
	p value	.007	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
BDC-8	r value	.153**	.303**	.221**	.307**	.384**	.397**	−.244**	−.242**
	p value	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
BDC-9	r value	.160**	.276**	.239**	.313**	.407**	.405**	−.247**	−.246**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

with exhaustion, depersonalization, and lower motivation to work due to these disagreements, but also with fatigue, decreased emotional sensitivity, and poorer quality of work due to conflicts with colleagues and emotional and physical exhaustion, and decreased willingness to work due to disagreements with the manager. This shows the link between conflict and burnout symptoms, and it reveals the relationship between disagreements with clients, colleagues, and managers in the context of burnout. Similar associations have been found between conflicts with co-workers and burnout, only all relationships are low ($0.201 \leq r\ 0.390$). The research results showed that there is a low or medium association between disagreements with manager and burnout syndrome ($0.364 \leq r \geq 0.416$) which means that conflicts with manager have a stronger relationship with burnout compared to other disputes. The effective conflict management and conflict resolution proved to be weakly related to all burnout variables.

Spearman correlation analysis of the burnout and burnout due to conflicts has shown that all burnout due to conflicts variables have statistically significant but weak correlations ($0.205 \leq r \geq 0.385$) with all burnout variables of exhaustion and apathy and with few variables of inefficiency and cynicism expressing energy and motivation to work ($0.198 \leq r \geq 0.250$) and sense of self-fulfilling ($0.135 \leq r \geq 0.235$) (Table 7).

Further, *Spearman* correlation analysis was performed in order to reveal the relationships between conflict burnout and burnout consequences, and it was found that there are statistically significant weak or medium correlations ($0.216 \leq r \geq 0.472$) between all of variables of these constructs (Table 8).

Medium-level correlation links exhaustion due to conflicts with clients and depression ($r = 0.419$, $p = 0.000$), fatigue due to communicating with conflicting colleagues with depression ($r = 0.413$, $p = 0.000$), increased disagreements with co-workers ($r = 0.472$, $p = 0.000$) and destructive thoughts ($r = 0.412$, $p = 0.000$) as well as emotional insensitivity due to conflicts with colleagues with increased disagreements with co-workers ($r = 0.447$, $p = 0.000$) and destructive thoughts ($r = 0.403$, $p = 0.000$). Surprisingly, medium relationships were found between increased disagreements with co-workers due to burnout and all variables of burnout due to conflicts within the organization ($0.409 \leq r \geq 0.472$), suggesting that conflicts with colleagues may not only be a cause of burnout but also a consequence.

The examination of the relationship between variables of the study and demographics revealed that employees aged 18 to 35 years do not feel self-fulfilling at their job more often than others. However, this group did not appear to be significant in the analysis of the remaining variables of burnout. Meanwhile, workers without children and those who have two or more of them are more vulnerable to burnout and more often state that they experience conflicts with clients. Such results could be explained by the fact that childless employees are mostly young people who tend to work hard, to achieve high performance,

Table 7. Results of the correlation analysis of the variables of burnout and burnout due to conflicts

		Exhaustion and apathy					Inefficiency and cynicism			
		BS-1	BS-2	BS-3	BS-4	BS-5	BS-6	BS-7	BS-8	BS-9
Burnout due to conflicts with clients										
BDC-1	r value	.385**	.295**	.356**	.353**	.299**			.231**	.172**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000			.000	.001
BDC-2	r value	.313**	.269**	.293**	.341**	.313**			.240**	.188**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000			.000	.000
BDC-3	r value	.336**	.279**	.299**	.352**	.320**			.245**	.165**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000			.000	.001
Burnout due to conflicts with colleagues and the manager										
BDC-4	r value	.339**	.300**	.309**	.358**	.274**			.228**	.235**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000			.000	.000
BDC-5	r value	.311**	.269**	.293**	.334**	.347**			.207**	.171**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000			.000	.001
BDC-6	r value	.306**	.290**	.262**	.327**	.263**			.250**	.135**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000			.000	.008
BDC-7	r value	.289**	.292**	.295**	.322**	.225**			.224**	.173**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000			.000	.001
BDC-8	r value	.267**	.296**	.309**	.316**	.220**			.208**	.163**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000			.000	.001
BDC-9	r value	.317**	.282**	.307**	.345**	.205**			.198**	.185**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000			.000	.000

Table 8. Results of the correlation analysis of the variables of burnout due to conflicts and burnout consequences

		Burnout due to conflicts with clients			Burnout due to conflicts with colleagues and the manager					
		BDC-1	BDC-2	BDC-3	BDC-4	BDC-5	BDC-6	BDC-7	BDC-8	BDC-9
Consequences of burnout										
BC-1	r value	.291**	.320**	.292**	.349**	.324**	.264**	.352**	.377**	.396**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
BC-2	r value	.349**	.292**	.301**	.358**	.380**	.355**	.377**	.363**	.364**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
BC-3	r value	.364**	.288**	.325**	.377**	.357**	.344**	.351**	.342**	.341**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
BC-4	r value	.419**	.340**	.338**	.413**	.389**	.353**	.384**	.379**	.393**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
BC-5	r value	.385**	.337**	.338**	.472**	.447**	.429**	.416**	.439**	.409**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
BC-6	r value	.370**	.326**	.324**	.353**	.347**	.392**	.338**	.374**	.342**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
BC-7	r value	.386**	.333**	.358**	.412**	.403**	.357**	.375**	.396**	.395**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
BC-8	r value	.265**	.280**	.270**	.236**	.242**	.216**	.224**	.249**	.252**
	p value	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

which leads to many stressors. Meanwhile, employees with two or more children face more challenges not only at work but also at home. No significant relationships were found between education and the constructs of the survey.

After performing a correlation analysis of the study variables, we could state that the more conflicts with clients, colleagues, or manager employees have, the more burnout they experience as a result. Though some studies (Palancı et al., 2021) confirmed that a lack of safety in the workplace contribute to stress and subsequently to the conflicts with colleagues, our study disclosed that conflicts have a direct relationships with burnout. The relationships between different conflict groups and burnout were also observed, and the correlation was found between:

– Employees, who deal with difficult customers and experience emotional exhaustion due to these conflicts.
– Employees, who define their work by strained employee-manager relationships and experience emotional and physical exhaustion, as well as desire to work.
– Employees, who feel that manager are tended to offend in disagreement and experience the desire to work.

In addition, conflict management has only a small effect on burnout. Burnout due to workplace conflicts is mostly associated with exhaustion and apathy. The study revealed that burnout due to conflicts within the organization has a medium-level relationship with the

consequences of burnout compared to conflicts with clients, and the most consequential were conflicts with colleagues, which paradoxically, can be not only a cause of burnout but also a consequence. Moreover, the most common consequences of burnout due to conflicts are depression and destructive thoughts which demonstrate that the consequences of workplace conflicts could be extremely severe (Figure 2).

Conclusions

The study let us reveal that conflicts are one of the particularly important causes of burnout. Additionally, the relationships between the variables suggest that the factors, which are highlighted could potentially result in burnout. Therefore, each case where conflicts between employees and their groups are frequent or prolonged should be considered and evaluated separately by departments or organizational managers.

The study found that employees without children and with two or more children were more likely to experience burnout. Therefore, the study could serve as a guide for organizational leaders who plan employee development directions, feedback sessions, and couching of team members.

Furthermore, conflicts with the manager appear to have the strongest link with burnout symptoms such as physical and emotional exhaustion and loss of desire to work. On the other hand, disputes with clients, colleagues,
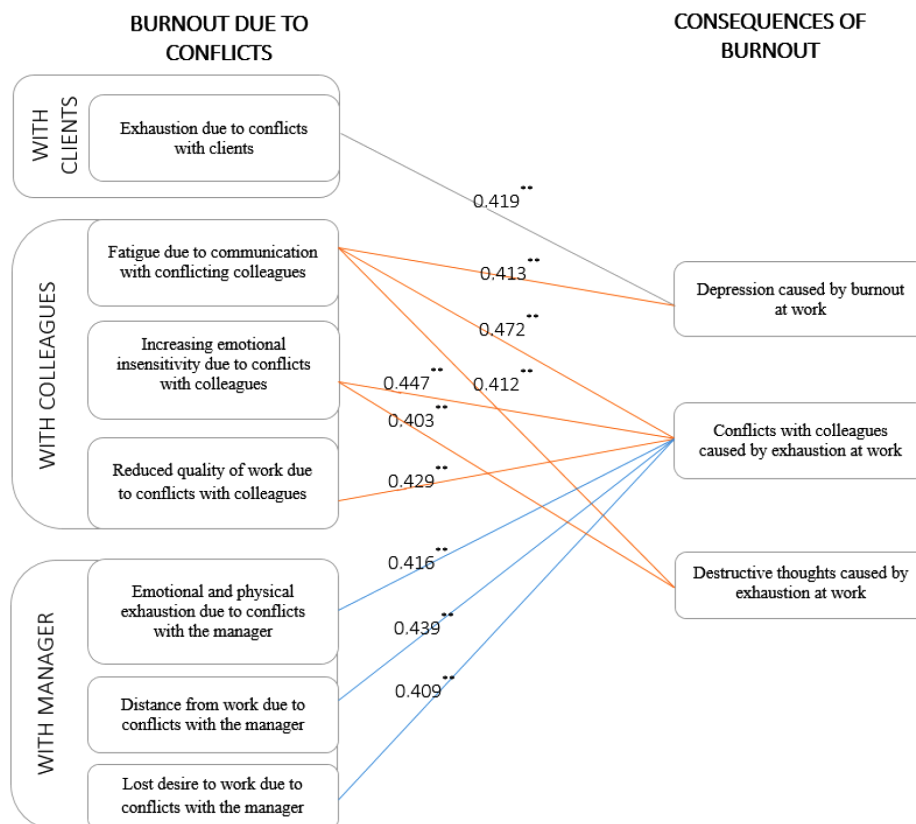

Figure 2. Relationships between burnout caused by conflicts and its consequences

and manager affect each other. Therefore, when resolving disagreements and looking for their causes, it is important to understand that conflicts with colleagues could be related to disagreements with management or clients and vice versa, which requires a holistic approach to the conflicts in organization.

Disagreements with colleagues turned out to be the most damaging group of conflicts with greater consequenses in the context of burnout leading employees to depression, destructive thoughts and paradoxically more conflicts with colleagues. Therefore, it is important to note that conflicts with colleagues can signal preexisting problems with burnout, so resolving them will not necessarily reduce the problem.

Depression and destructive thoughts as two of three of the most conflict-related consequences of burnout show the impact of workplace conflicts on the emotional well-being of employees and the significant issues employees may face due to burnout if it is not monitored by organizational management.

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