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Burnout Across Generations: Examining Differences Among Generation Z, Millennials, and Generation X

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Abstract

The present study examined differences in burnout levels among Generation Z, Millennials, and Generation X in Pakistan. It was hypothesized that burnout levels would significantly differ across these three generational cohorts. A total of 300 participants (100 from each generation) were recruited from the general population of Pakistan using convenience sampling. Data were collected through an online survey utilizing the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT) developed by Wilmar Schaufeli and colleagues (2020). The study employed a quantitative cross-sectional research design, and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare burnout levels among the groups. The results supported the proposed hypothesis, indicating a statistically significant difference in burnout scores across the three generations, $F(2, 297) = 6.04$, $p = .003$. Generation Z reported the highest level of burnout ($M = 91.20$, $SD = 20.31$), followed by Generation X ($M = 86.96$, $SD = 21.11$), whereas Millennials demonstrated the lowest burnout scores ($M = 80.83$, $SD = 22.04$). Post hoc comparisons revealed that Generation Z had significantly higher burnout levels than Millennials (mean difference = 10.37, $p = .002$). However, no statistically significant differences were observed between Generation Z and Generation X or between Millennials and Generation X. These findings suggest that younger adults, particularly those belonging to Generation Z, may be more vulnerable to burnout compared to older generations. The study highlights the importance of developing generation-specific mental health interventions and workplace well-being initiatives to address burnout within the Pakistani population. Keywords: burnout, Generation Z, Millennials, Generation X, mental health, Pakistan, Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT).

Keywords: *Burnout, Generation Z, Millennials, Generation X, Generational difference, Pakistan.*

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Introduction

Burnout has become a critical psychological concern globally due to its negative impact on emotional well-being, productivity, and overall quality of life. While extensive research has examined burnout in occupational settings, less attention has been paid to how burnout varies across different generational cohorts, particularly within the Pakistani context. The present study investigates generational variation in burnout among gen z, millennial, and gen x. Three generational groups are defined for the purposes of this study: Gen X (born 1965-1980), Millennials (born 1981-1996), and Gen Z (born 1997-2012). Gen X emphasizes flexibility and independence, Millennials' priority purpose, inclusivity, and work-life integration, favoring fluid schedules and value-driven environments. Gen Z, as digital natives, seeks ethical workplaces, diversity, and clearly defined personal-professional boundaries. (Molwitz et al., 2026). Gen x, millennial, and gen z represent three distinct generations shaped by different technological and historical contexts. Gen-X has a step-by-step work style. They are organized and want a secure career path. They give importance to both work and family matters. Gen-Y likes freedom of work. They were born in the era of technological development hence they are highly adaptive and flexible. While Gen-Z focuses on work that they are satisfied with. They are quick learners and good at technology. They are also self-acceptance. It is clear that each generation has different behaviors. (Meechan and Wonglorsaichon, 2024). Burnout is increasingly considered an erosion of a positive psychological state. Although burnout seems to be a global phenomenon, the meaning of the concept differs between countries. For instance, in some country's burnout is used as a medical diagnosis, whereas in other countries it is a non-medical, socially accepted label that carries a minimum stigma in terms of a psychiatric diagnosis. (Schaufeli et al., 2020). Burnout manifests through three core dimensions: exhaustion, which refers to a severe and persistent lack of energy; cynicism or depersonalization, which involves emotional detachment and withdrawal from one's responsibilities and surroundings; and reduced personal accomplishment, which reflects a diminished sense of effectiveness, competence, and meaningful achievement. Burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do 'people-work' of some kind. A key aspect of burnout syndrome is increased feelings of emotional exhaustion. (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). Burnout is critically important to understand and address because it affects a number of people across all areas of life, not just work. We are facing a mental health crisis affecting the entire generation; many individuals suffer from chronic exhaustion, reduced effectiveness, and physical symptoms like headaches and digestive issues. Untreated burnout can lead to long-term mental health struggles, including depression and anxiety and affects physical health, relationships, and overall quality of life. Evidence-based interventions are urgently needed to address this growing crisis that threatens economic productivity, workforce stability, and the well-being of future generations. Burnout is a state of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion that occurs when a person experiences long-term stress and feels under constant pressure, and while it is caused by stress, it is not the same as stress. Each of the three generations under study is experiencing burnout, but through entirely different circumstances, at different intensities, and with different consequences. The central problem motivating this study is a fundamental mismatch between how burnout is understood in research and how it is lived across

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generational lines. Three generations currently share workplace and academic environments while carrying profoundly different psychological histories, stressor profiles, and thresholds for seeking help. Despite this, burnout interventions and wellness frameworks have largely been designed without differentiating among them.

Rationale of the study:

Firstly, this study is critically important and timely for addressing one of the most pressing mental health challenges of our time, burnout affecting multiple generations across society. Much of the existing research either focuses on a single generation, most commonly millennials, or treats generational differences as a secondary variable rather than a central focus. This study addresses that gap directly by positioning generation as the primary analytical lens. Secondly, burnout is no longer a private struggle, it has become a public health concern and cultural conversation. The viral discourse around "quiet quitting", "hustle culture fatigue", and generational work ethic debates reflects a deeper, unresolved tension in how different generations relate to labor, purpose and personal limits. This study contributes scholarly grounding to a conversation that is too often driven by stereotypes rather than evidence. Finally, this generational inheritance of burnout is not a workplace issue. It is a civilization. It shapes how people from relationships, parent children pursue education, use technology, manage money, and conceive of their own futures. Yet research continues to treat burnout as an occupational variable, something measured in job satisfaction surveys and addressed in employee wellness programs, rather than as the whole-life, whole-person phenomenon it has clearly become. This study exists to correct that framing

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of burnout has been explored in 1970's by Herbert Freudenberger as he defined burnout as the loss of motivation or incentive, that occurs when sustained commitment to a cause, goal or relationship does not lead to the desired outcome (Freudenberger, 1974). Later, this phenomenon expended and explained that burnout consist of three different dimensions; emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). This tripartite model became the dominant framework in burnout research for decades and remains highly influential. Recently, the concept of burnout is redefined as a prolong response to interpersonal stressor at work (Schaufeli, Leiter, and Maslach 2009) . Now, burnout is recognized as a syndrome, caused by chronic workplace stress which has not been managed successfully (WHO, 2019). In past few years, a burnout measurement tool called the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT) is developed, which conceptualizes burnout through four dimensions: exhaustion, mental distance, emotional impairment, and cognitive impairment. This updated tool provides more comprehensive understanding of burnout across diverse populations. (Schaufeli et al. 2020).

According to the theoretical perspective, burnout develops when the individual an the important aspect of their environment does not match. These mismatch can be occur in community, values, work-life, reward and fairness and their prolong exposure can lead to emotional exhaustion and psychological disengagement (Maslach's theory of Burnout, 1981). According to the job demand- resources model (JD-R), job demands are related to the exhaustion component of

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burnout and the lack of job resources are primarily related to disengagement (E Demerouti et al. , 2001). The Conservation of resource (COR) theory suggests that individuals aim to acquire, protect, and maximize resources to reduce psychological distress and prevent burnout. Continuous resource threat eventually leads to emotional exhaustion and reduced well-being (Hobfoll , 1989).

The generational theory defined generation as the group of individual that shares the similar birth period and historical changes and events (Mannheim, 1928). These changes, economical conditions, technological advancement, political events and other social changes significantly effect and shape the characteristics and behaviour of each generation. There are three generations which are focused in this study which are Gen Z, Millennials and Gen X.

Generation Z, the youngest generation that entered in the academic and occupational settings, has show the increasing research attention in relation to burnout. As this generation is called digital natives who have grown up in an era of constant connectivity, social comparison, and high academic expectations, Generation Z faces burnout risk factors differently. A study found that younger generation reports significantly higher rates of anxiety, depression, and psychological distress as compared to previous generations at the same age, shows major negative influence of social media, reduced social interactions and sleep disturbance by increased digital device used. These factors collectively create conditions that are highly vulnerable to burnout.(Twenge et al. 2018) A survey reported that Generation Z is the most stressed generation in the United States, with poor mental health and that they struggle to manage the demands of school, work, and daily life. (American Psychological Associaton, 2019). A Research study on work place management noted that Gen Z tends to prefer frequent feedback, clear structure, and a sense of purpose in their roles. When these conditions are absent, Generation Z employees experience accelerated disengagement and emotional exhaustion, both of which are the main components of burnout (Schroth, 2019) .

Millennials, are the individuals who entered in adulthood during the global financial crisis of 2008 and faces rising educational cost, competitive work environment and job crisis and rapid digital advancement, represent a generation with a particularly complex relationship with burnout. In a widely cited essay " How Millennials Became the Burnout Generation" ,author argued that Millennials have been raised with the expectation that relentless self-optimization and productivity are moral imperatives. This cultural conditioning which she terms "errand paralysis" creates a state of chronic low-grade burnout in which ordinary tasks feel overwhelming because they exist within an endless framework of optimization and performance (Petersen, 2019). In the article "The Burnout Generation", author explained that the physicians belongs to Millennials experience high level of burnout due to the generational challenges and realities of modern health care (Casey et al., 2021)

Generation X is often referred as the "forgotten middle" generation and has received very less research attention in the burnout literature. Despite occupying a position of considerable occupational and familial responsibility. This cohort grew up during periods of significant economic volatility, witnessed the early transformation of the digital age, and entered careers before flexible work arrangements became common. Research on midlife challenges highlighted that individuals in the age range typical of Generation X often experience peak career demands,

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parenting responsibilities, and emerging health concerns. These factors can lead the individuals towards burnout if not managed properly. (Lachman, 2015).

Researches suggest that generational experiences directly influence how individuals perceive stress and and how they respond and cope with the psychological challenges. A conducted study examined mental health and burnout among Millennials and Gen Z. The findings revealed that Gen Z participants reported slightly higher burnout levels than Millenials (Deloitte, 2022). The study examined differences in work motivation and burnout between Generation X and Generation Y (Millenials). Results showed that the two generations differ significantly in their motivation and burnout levels. Generation X demonstrated greater variation in motivational preferences, while the Generation Y (Millenials) experienced significantly higher burnout levels, which may be linked to their strong achievement orientation, technology-driven work style, and ambition (Sinha, J., & Sahai, A., 2020). Research exploring generational perspectives on burnout and work-life balance revealed significant differences among Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. Generation X shows independence, stability and flexibility, Millennials valued meaningful work and being comprehensive, whereas Generation Z placed greater importance towards mental health, ethical workplaces environment, and clear personal boundaries (Molwitz et al., 2026).

There are number of studies conducted in Pakistan which shows the prevalence of burnout in the different sectors of Pakistani society. A comparative research studied sick leave due to burnout among 476 university teachers in Pakistan and Finland . Sick leave due to burnout was significantly more frequent in Pakistan, with an alarming finding that 19.2% of Pakistani teachers aged 26–35 had been on sick leave due to burnout (Malik et al., 2023). A study examined occupational stress and burnout among 237 bank employees (74.3% male, 25.7% female) from different commercial banks in Pakistan. Results revealed that workload, working hours, technological problems at work, inadequate salary, insufficient time for family, and job worries at home were the significant sources of stress. The significant symptoms of burnout revealed included back pain, extreme tiredness, headache, and sleep disturbance (Khattak et al. 2011). A cross-sectional study focused on burnout among health-care professionals during the fourth wave of COVID-19 in Pakistan. Only those workers are targeted who was in direct contact with COVID-19 patients across all specialties. The results of the study showed a remarkable burnout level of 61.8% among health-care workers (Asghar, M. S., et al., 2022).

As represented in the above mentioned research studies shows that the aspect of burnout is primarily focused and studied in occupational and generational settings rather than generational cohort. Moreover, most of the researches that focus on the generational variation in burnout have been conducted in the western population. The population of Pakistan experience burnout differently due to critical social, cultural, economical and political circumstances. Despite the increasing awareness about burnout and mental health in Pakistan, very low amount of researches focuses on the variation of burnout in Gen Z, Millennial and Gen X simultaneously.

Therefore, this present study address this gap by investigating whether the significant difference in the burnout level exist among these three generations within the Pakistani population which would be helpful to understand the generational difference and also helps to resolve the health related concerns regarding burnout.

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HYPOTHESIS

H1-There would be a significant difference in the burnout levels among Generation Z, Millennials and Generation X.

Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology employed to investigate Burnout among Gen Z, Millennials and Gen X. It includes details about the participants, research design, sample, instruments, data collection, procedure, ethical consideration and operational definition of the variable.

Participants

In this study 300 participants were selected from 3 different generations (100 from Gen Z, 100 from Millennials and 100 from Gen X). The participants were selected from the general population of Pakistan including both genders (Male and Female). The participants were from different age groups (14-29 years (Gen Z) 30-45 years (Millennials) and 46-61 years (Gen X) included). They also had different ethnicity and family system. Likewise, participants also had different socioeconomic status, occupation, employment status, marital status and mother language.

Research design

A quantitative cross-sectional research design was employed in the present study to examine differences in burnout levels among Generation Z, Millennials, and Generation X. This design enabled the collection of data from participants at a single point in time and facilitated the comparison of burnout across the three generational cohorts.

Sampling technique

Participants were recruited using a convenience sampling technique. Individuals who met the study's eligibility criteria and were willing to participate were invited to complete an online survey. A total of 300 participants were selected from the general population of Pakistan, with 100 participants representing each generational cohort (Generation Z, Millennials, and Generation X). Convenience sampling was considered appropriate due to its practicality, accessibility, and efficiency in reaching participants from diverse regions of the country through online platforms.

Measures

Consent Form

In the present study, participants were first provided with an informed consent form. The form included the objective of the study, estimated time required for participation, and the voluntary nature of participation. Participants were assured that their information would remain confidential and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. Additionally, participants were informed that the results of the study may be

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published in the future without revealing any personal information. Only those participants who agreed to participate were included in the study.

Demographic Form

A demographic information form was used to collect background details of the participants. This form included information such as age, gender, marital status, socioeconomic status, family system, educational qualification, employment status, ethnicity and mother tongue. The demographic form is provided in Appendix B.

Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT) by Wilmar B Schaufeli, Steffie Desart & Hans De Witte, 2020

The Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT) is a 23 items questionnaire, developed by Wilmar B. Schaufeli, Steffie Desart, and Hans De Witte as a standardized self- report instrument to assess burnout and its core components such as exhaustion, mental distance, emotional impairment, and cognitive impairment. It provides a reliable result with an overall Omega reliability coefficient of 0.95. Furthermore, it exhibits strong validity with the Maslach Burnout Inventory (r = .904) and valid measure of burnout symptoms suitable for use in occupational and research contexts. The permission for the scale was granted by the author via email.

Ethical Considerations

Before beginning the study, careful attention was given to ethical standards. Each participant was informed about the purpose of the research and the nature of the questionnaire. They were clearly told that participation was completely voluntary and that they could choose not to answer any question or leave the study at any point. The privacy of participants was fully respected. No names, phone numbers, or identifying details were recorded. All responses were kept confidential and were used strictly for academic research purposes only. The collected data were stored securely and were not shared with anyone outside the research process. Participants were treated with respect throughout the data collection process. Any confusion regarding the questionnaire was clarified in a neutral and unbiased manner. The study ensured that no psychological or emotional harm was caused to any participant.

Inclusion Criteria

The following conditions were set for selecting participants:

- Individuals who belonged to Generation Z, Millennials, or Generation X.
- Participants who were 18 years of age or older.
- Individuals who agreed to participate voluntarily
- Participants who were able to understand and respond to the questionnaire properly.
- These criteria ensured that the participants were suitable for the purpose of the study.

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Exclusion Criteria

- The following participants were excluded:
  - Individuals who did not fall into the defined generational age ranges
  - Participants below 18 years of age
  - Questionnaires that were incomplete or filled without seriousness
  - This helped in maintaining the quality and accuracy of the data.

Procedure

The total sample included 300 participants, with 100 individuals from each generation: Generation Z, Millennials, and Generation X. Participants were approached in educational institutions, workplaces, and community areas. The purpose of the study was explained in simple terms. After taking their consent, the questionnaire was given to them. They were asked to answer honestly based on their recent experiences. It was clearly mentioned that there were no right or wrong answers. Each participant filled out the questionnaire individually. No names or personal details were collected to keep the information private. After collecting all 300 questionnaires, the responses were reviewed and then entered into statistical software to compare burnout levels among the three generations.

Statistical Analysis

The Burnout Assessment Tool (23-item version) was scored according to the recommended guidelines. Each item was rated on a Likert-type scale. The scores of all items were summed and averaged to calculate the overall burnout score. Higher scores indicated higher levels of burnout. For data analysis, the responses were entered into statistical software (SPSS). First, descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were calculated to understand the overall burnout levels in each generation. To compare burnout among Generation Z, Millennials, and Generation X, One way ANOVA was applied. This test helped determine whether there was a significant difference in burnout levels between the three groups. If a significant difference was found, further analysis was conducted to see which groups differed from each other.

Operational Definitions of Variables/Terms

Burnout

Burnout is a work-related psychological syndrome characterized by exhaustion, mental distance (or cynicism) from work, and reduced professional efficacy. In the present study, burnout is operationally defined as the total score obtained on the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT-23), where higher scores indicate higher levels of burnout (Schaufeli, W. B., De Witte, H., & Desart, S, 2020).

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Generation Z

Generation Z refers to individuals born between 1997 and 2012. In the present study, participants born during these years are classified as Generation Z. (Dimock 2019)

Millennials (Generation Y)

Millennials refer to individuals born between 1981 and 1996. In the present study, participants born during these years are classified as Millennials. (Dimock, 2019)

Generation X

Generation X refers to individuals born between 1965 and 1980. In the present study, participants born during these years are classified as Generation X. (Dimock, 2019)

RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on data collected from 300 respondents equally distributed across three generational cohorts: Gen Z (14–29 years), Millennials (30–45 years), and Gen X (46–61 years), with 100 participants per group. The analyses include descriptive statistics, reliability assessment, and a one-way ANOVA with post hoc comparisons.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Age Group

Age Group	f	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Gen Z (14–29)	100	33.3	33.3	33.3
Millennials (30–45)	100	33.3	33.3	66.7
Gen X (46–61)	100	33.3	33.3	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

Note. n = 300.

Table 2

Reliability Statistics for the Full Scale

Scale	Cronbach's α	Number of Items
Burnout Assessment Tool(All Variables)	.922	32

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Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for SUM Scores by Generational Group

Group	n	M	SD	Min	Max	95% CI	
						LL	UL
Gen Z (14–29)	100	91.20	20.31	47.00	144.00	87.15	95.25
Millennials (30–45)	100	80.83	22.04	32.00	157.00	76.46	85.20
Gen X (46–61)	100	86.96	21.11	32.00	147.00	82.79	91.13
Total	300	86.32	21.52	32.00	157.00	83.87	88.76

Note. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

Table 4

One-Way ANOVA Summary for SUM Scores by Generational Group

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	5415.01	2	2707.50	6.04	.003
Within Groups	133087.91	297	448.11		
Total	138502.92	299			

Table 5

Tukey HSD Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons for SUM Burnout Scores

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Diff.	SE	p
		(I–J)		
Gen Z (14–29)	Millennials (30–45)	10.37*	3.00	.002
	Gen X (46–61)	4.24	2.99	.334
Millennials (30–45)	Gen Z (14–29)	–10.37*	3.00	.002
	Gen X (46–61)	–6.13	2.99	.102

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(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Diff. (I–J)	SE	p
Gen X (46–61)	Gen Z (14–29)	−4.24	2.99	.334
	Millennials (30–45)	6.13	2.99	.102

Note. * p < .05.

DISCUSSION

The hypothesis of the current study proposed that there would be a statistically significant difference in burnout levels among three generational cohorts: Gen Z, Millennials, and Gen X. To examine this hypothesis, a series of statistical analyses were conducted, beginning with the demographic profile of the sample, followed by reliability assessment, descriptive statistics, a one-way ANOVA, and post hoc comparisons. Each of these analyses is discussed in detail below. Table 1 presented the frequency distribution of respondents across the three generational cohorts. The sample comprised 300 participants distributed equally, with 100 respondents from each of the three groups: Gen Z (14–29 years), Millennials (30–45 years), and Gen X (46–61 years), each representing 33.3% of the total sample. This perfectly balanced design is a notable methodological strength of the current study. Equal group sizes ensure that the statistical analyses, particularly the one-way ANOVA, are not disproportionately influenced by any single generational cohort, thereby enhancing the internal validity of between-group comparisons.

Table 2 reported the internal consistency of the 32-item Burnout Assessment Tool using Cronbach's alpha. The scale demonstrated excellent reliability (α = .922), which according to the widely adopted benchmarks proposed by George and Mallery (2003), indicates that values at or above .90 reflect excellent internal consistency. This finding confirms that the items within the BAT cohesively and consistently measured the underlying construct of burnout, with minimal measurement error across respondents. Table 3 presented the means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum scores, and 95% confidence intervals for composite burnout scores across the three generational groups. Gen Z reported the highest mean burnout score (M = 91.20, SD = 20.31), followed by Gen X (M = 86.96, SD = 21.11) and Millennials (M = 80.83, SD = 22.04). The overall sample mean was 86.32 (SD = 21.52). The descriptive pattern observed across the three groups is theoretically informative. Gen Z's elevated burnout scores are consistent with emerging evidence documenting heightened psychological distress among the youngest working cohort, attributed to early career uncertainty, academic pressure, financial precarity, and excessive digital media exposure (Twenge, 2019). The non-overlapping 95% confidence intervals between Gen Z [87.15, 95.25] and Millennials [76.46, 85.20] provide early descriptive indication that the mean difference between these two groups is unlikely to be attributable to sampling error alone, lending preliminary support to the study's hypothesis. In contrast, the confidence interval for Gen X [82.79, 91.13] overlaps with both other groups, suggesting that Gen X occupies an intermediate position. The relatively wide standard deviations across all three groups indicate substantial within-cohort

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variability, which underscores the importance of not treating generational membership as a deterministic predictor of burnout while still recognizing its statistical significance at the group level. Table 4 reported the results of the one-way ANOVA examining differences in composite burnout scores across the three generational groups. The analysis revealed a statistically significant main effect of generational group, $F(2, 297) = 6.04$, $p = .003$. This finding provides direct and unambiguous empirical support for Hypothesis 1, confirming that burnout levels differ significantly as a function of generational membership. The between-groups sum of squares (SS = 5415.01, MS = 2707.50) relative to the within-groups sum of squares (SS = 133087.91, MS = 448.11) indicates that, while considerable individual variation exists within each cohort, the proportion of variance in burnout scores explained by generational group is statistically meaningful. Hypothesis 1 is therefore accepted. These results align with a growing body of theoretical and empirical literature proposing that generational cohort membership, shaped by the shared sociohistorical, technological, and economic contexts of individuals' formative years, constitutes a meaningful predictor of occupational health outcomes. In the Pakistani context, generational differences in burnout may be further amplified by structural factors such as economic inequality, limited mental health infrastructure, and cultural norms around work and productivity that are specific to the local environment. The significant ANOVA result suggests that these generational dynamics manifest empirically in ways that are detectable through quantitative measurement, even within a relatively modest sample size of 300 participants.

Table 5 reported the results of the Tukey HSD post hoc test, which was conducted to identify the specific pairs of generational groups that differed significantly from one another. The analysis revealed that Gen Z scored significantly higher on burnout than Millennials, with a mean difference of 10.37 points (SE = 3.00, $p = .002$). No statistically significant differences were found between Gen Z and Gen X (mean difference = 4.24, $p = .334$) or between Millennials and Gen X (mean difference = 6.13, $p = .102$). The significant Gen Z–Millennial difference is the most theoretically substantive finding of this study. Gen Z's markedly higher burnout scores relative to Millennials may reflect this cohort's heightened exposure to early-career stressors, including role ambiguity, financial insecurity, and the psychological toll of extensive social media use, all of which have been documented as predictors of burnout in young adults (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Many Gen Z participants in the present study would have entered the workforce or educational settings during or immediately following the COVID-19 pandemic, a period associated with disrupted developmental transitions and increased burnout risk. Millennials, by contrast, are more likely to have achieved greater occupational stability, role clarity, and access to supportive workplace resources, which the Job Demands-Resources model (Demerouti, 2001) identifies as key protective factors against burnout. The non-significant difference between Gen Z and Gen X ($p = .334$) is also noteworthy. Despite a nearly 30-year age gap between these cohorts, their burnout scores were statistically comparable, suggesting that early-career burnout in Gen Z mirrors the burnout experienced by Gen X, who are simultaneously navigating peak-career pressures and caregiving responsibilities. Gen X's intermediate score pattern, overlapping with both other groups in the homogeneous subsets analysis, reflects the well-documented "sandwich generation" phenomenon in which mid-to-late career individuals bear compounding demands from multiple life domains (Schaufeli & Leiter, 2000). The non-significant Millennials–Gen X contrast ($p = .102$), while falling short of the conventional threshold, may indicate a moderate practical difference that the current

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sample lacked sufficient statistical power to detect, or it may genuinely reflect similarity in burnout levels between these two cohorts under present occupational conditions. Future studies with larger samples should examine this comparison with greater precision. Tailored burnout prevention initiatives, designed specifically for Gen Z workers and students, are indicated, including structured mentorship programs connecting Gen Z with experienced Millennial or Gen X professionals, workload management policies sensitive to early-career vulnerabilities, and digital wellbeing interventions addressing the hyperconnectivity characteristic of Gen Z's occupational and social environments. Simultaneously, the comparable burnout levels observed between Gen Z and Gen X suggest that interventions targeting Gen X may also benefit the youngest cohort, pointing to shared risk profiles that could inform cross-generational wellness programming.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the current study has investigated differences in burnout levels of Generation Z, Millennials, and Generation X members. In general, it has been found that there are significant generational differences in relation to the phenomenon of burnout; more specifically, people belonging to Generation Z experience higher burnout than individuals from Generation X and Millennials. These findings have confirmed the research hypothesis and demonstrated the influence of generational characteristics on people's burnout.

Limitations of the study

A few restrictions must be taken into account while evaluating the results of the current investigation. Firstly, the use of cross-sectional research methods does not provide an opportunity to prove any causal links between the generation someone belongs to and his/her burnout condition. In future investigations, researchers may opt for longitudinal design and track changes in people's experience of burnout over time. Secondly, the sample size included only 300 respondents who did not necessarily reflect the population consisting of Generation Z, Millennials, and Generation X individuals. Thus, the findings' generalizability should be regarded critically. Thirdly, the study relied on self-reports, and response bias may have impacted the results because of over- or underreporting of burnout. Fourth, the research was concerned mainly with generations and neglected other variables which could affect the incidence of burnout, including occupation, organizational culture, type of employment, socio-economic class, experience at work, or personal traits. Lastly, the subjects of the study were drawn from one particular socio-cultural and geographic setting. Consequently, the results cannot necessarily be generalized to people of other countries or organizations.

Future Implementations

The outcomes of the current study provide new knowledge about the problem of burnout as they focus on the impact of different generations on burnout experience. The hypotheses of the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory have been confirmed as the current findings indicate that burnout is formed in cases when demands at work exceed the resources available to people. In addition, the high level of burnout experienced by Generation Z members may point out that young people have difficulties coping with job demands and personal demands at the early stage of their professional life.

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