

## Understanding Burnout and Turnover Among Media and Communication Staff in Palestinian Universities

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### Abstract

**Objectives:** This study aims to understand Burnout and Turnover among Media and Communication Staff in Palestinian Universities. It examines the relationship between organizational communication and burnout and turnover phenomena among employees in media and communication departments. The study aims to examine psychological factors that contribute to burnout and turnover among sample. These factors included work-life balance and conflict, and organizational support as major issues.

**Methods:** Using a qualitative, purposive, and snowball approach, total of 14 interviewees participated in the study, providing in-depth data regarding burnout, turnover intentions, and behavior. Results show several themes that were drawn through Thematic Network Approach via MAXQDA.

**Results:** It found that burnout and turnover are influenced by factors such as work-life balance and conflict, loneliness, stress and anxiety, job autonomy. The presence of burnout and turnover in this workforce were both highly impacted by the weakened level of these aspects. Results indicate that media professionals face emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal success, which are characteristic of burnout. Building a stable and satisfying career in Palestinian universities is difficult for media professionals due to challenges of burnout and psychological transformation.

**Conclusions:** This study emphasizes significant impact of burnout and turnover on media and communication staff in Palestinian universities. It emphasizes the important role that organizational communication plays in long-term retention of employees. Findings have significant implications for improving working conditions and support systems, highlighting the need for programs aimed at reducing burnout and enhancing worker retention in this vital sector.

**Keywords:** Media Staff, Burnout, Turnover, Organizational Communication, Wellbeing.

### فهم الاحتراق الوظيفي والتحول النفسي بين موظفي الإعلام والاتصال في الجامعات الفلسطينية

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#### ملخص

الأهداف: تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فهم ظاهرة الاحتراق الوظيفي، والتحول النفسي بين موظفي الإعلام والاتصال في الجامعات الفلسطينية. على وجه التحديد، تتحقق الدراسة من العلاقة بين الاتصال المؤسسي، وظواهر الاحتراق الوظيفي والتحول النفسي بين الموظفين في أقسام الإعلام والاتصال في الجامعات الفلسطينية. كما تهدف الدراسة إلى فحص العوامل النفسية التي تسهم في الاحتراق الوظيفي والتحول النفسي بين العينة المستهدفة في الدراسة. وشملت هذه العوامل التوازن بين العمل والحياة، وحالة الصراع، والوحدة، والتوتر والقلق، والاستقلالية الوظيفية، والدعم المؤسسي كقضايا رئيسية في التحليل.

المنهجية: باستخدام المنهج الكيفي وعينة كرة الثلج، شارك ما مجموعه 14 شخصاً تمت مقابلتهم في الدراسة، وقدموا بيانات متعمقة بشأن الاحتراق الوظيفي والتحول النفسي والسلوك الفعلي. تظهر النتائج العديد من الموضوعات التي تم رسمها من خلال نهج الشبكة المواضيعية باستخدام MAXQDA.

النتائج: وجدت الدراسة أن الاحتراق الوظيفي والتحول النفسي بين موظفي الإعلام والاتصال في الجامعات الفلسطينية يتأثر بعوامل مثل: التوازن بين العمل والحياة، وحالة الصراع، والوحدة، والتوتر والقلق، والاستقلالية الوظيفية، والدعم المؤسسي. كما أن درجة تأثير الاحتراق الوظيفي والتحول النفسي بين هؤلاء الموظفين يرتبط بشكل كبير بغياب أو ضعف مستوى هذه العوامل. تشير النتائج أيضاً أن موظفي الإعلام والاتصال في الجامعات الفلسطينية يواجهون ظاهرة الاحتراق الوظيفي الذي يرتبط بالإرهاق العاطفي وفقدان الشخصية وتضاؤل النجاح الشخصي. لذلك فإن بناء مهنة مستقرة ومرضية في الجامعات الفلسطينية أمر صعب على العاملين في مجال الإعلام والاتصال، لأنهم يواجهون صعوبات من حيث الاحتراق الوظيفي، والتحول النفسي.

الخلاصة: تؤكد هذه الدراسة على الأثر الكبير للاحتراق الوظيفي، والتحول النفسي بين الموظفين في وسائط الإعلام والاتصال في الجامعات الفلسطينية. ويؤكد على الدور المهم الذي يؤديه الاتصال المؤسسي في رفاه هؤلاء الموظفين، والحفاظ عليهم على المدى البعيد. النتائج لها آثار كبيرة على تحسين ظروف العمل ونظم الدعم، مما يسלט الضوء على الحاجة إلى برامج تهدف إلى الحد من الإرهاق وتعزيز الاحتفاظ بالموظفين في هذا القطاع الحيوي.

الكلمات الدالة: موظفو الإعلام والاتصال، الاحتراق الوظيفي، التحول النفسي، الاتصال المؤسسي، الرفاهية

## Introduction

Staff members have a crucial role in influencing public discourse, distributing information, and promoting social understanding in the changing world of media and communication. The future generation of journalists, broadcasters, and communicators should be nurtured by the media and communication faculty and staff of Palestinian universities. Burnout and turnover, however, are serious challenges that demand attention in this crucial area.

Burnout and turnover have been a rising issue in recent years across many professions, impacting the physical, emotional, and psychological health of individuals. The strain that its staff faces is not an anomaly in the media and communication business, which faces constant demands, strict deadlines, and a constantly changing digital environment. This paper introduces a thorough investigation of the causes of burnout and staff turnover among media and communication faculty at Palestinian universities.

We explore the interaction of numerous key factors that affect these people's psychological well-being and capacity to maintain successful careers using a multidimensional perspective. Every aspect, from work-life balance and conflict to emotions of loneliness, stress, and anxiety, interacts to create a clear picture of the difficulties experienced in this fast-paced sector. The degree of work autonomy and organizational support will also be closely examined to determine how they affect employee resilience and retention. This study is important because it sheds insight into potential treatments and remedies as well as the underlying reasons for burnout and turnover. We intend to develop customized tactics that empower and support media professionals in their quest for excellence by taking into account the particular environment of Palestinian universities and the complexities of the media and communication profession.

As we set out on this study, we hope to not only bring attention to the crucial problem of burnout and turnover but also to offer a forum for discussion, teamwork, and constructive change within the media and communication departments of Palestinian universities. We hope to develop a strong and thriving staff that will be better able to meet industry demands and make a meaningful contribution to Palestine's media landscape via group efforts and a greater awareness of these difficulties.

A wide range of businesses and sectors were impacted by the worldwide COVID-19 epidemic, placing tremendous strain on the higher education sector in terms of risk management (Card, 2021), social services and assistance, crisis management, public health, and many other issues. These impacts are specifically looked at from psychological perspectives because of the pandemic's implications on lockdowns, forced remote work, social isolation, and conflicts between different domains of life (Khawand & Zargar, 2022). In this regard, it has been demonstrated that psychological factors such as motivation, job satisfaction, work-life balance, stress, and anxiety are negatively impacted (Chi et al., 2021; White et al., 2021). It is noteworthy that a new body of research on this topic has explored several industries in the existing literature (such as tourism, education, SMEs, healthcare, and entrepreneurs) (Torres et al., 2022; Zakhem et al., 2022; Sousan et al., 2022; Telyani et al., 2021). The vast majority of research concentrates on different employees and industries, therefore the current study focuses on a relatively understudied group—the media and communication staff at Palestinian universities. In this sense, several theories that include the present research's arguments into their premises are integrated. Notably, the goal of this study is to qualitatively explore the significant psychological components in a very demanding area of government public services to contribute to the literature on burnout and turnover. Furthermore, given the lack of research focused on the Middle East, and specifically Palestine, the current findings can offer comparative and in-depth data that can scale the theoretical and geographic boundaries of existing literature.

## Problem Statement

The search problem revolves around understanding the experiences of burnout and turnover among media and communication staff in Palestinian universities, with a specific focus on the impact of organizational communication practices on their psychological well-being and long-term professional sustainability. Therefore, this research suggests that for Media and Communication Staff in Palestinian Universities specifically, working in the higher education sector has become a source of negative psychological outcomes. The Job Demand-Resource model (JD-R) is crucially integrated to

address the theoretical foundations, goals, and current research objectives. Indicating its relevance and appropriateness for the setting of this research, this model has been often employed by academics from many fields and disciplines (e.g., Sousan et al., 2022; Zakhem et al., 2022; Chi et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2020; Scanlan & Still, 2019; Soto-Rubio et al., 2020). This model takes into account a variety of workplace circumstances (such as changes in educational services) as well as psychological effects (i.e. burnout and turnover intentions) as a result of stress and working conditions (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Because it focuses on psychological factors that contributed to the aforementioned negative emotions and behaviors, its premises complement the scope of this research. This study adds to the existing knowledge of burnout and turnover via the experiences of Media and Communication Staff at Palestinian Universities by utilizing several semi-structured interviews.

### **Objectives Of The Study**

1. To explore the psychological factors that contribute to burnout and employee turnover among media and communication staff in Palestinian universities.
2. To identify the impact of organizational communication practices on the well-being and long-term sustainability of media employees in Palestinian academic institutions.
3. To examine the importance of job autonomy and organizational support in preventing burnout and turnover among media and communication staff.
4. To highlight the challenges faced by media and communication staff in Palestinian universities, including stress and anxiety, work-life conflict, loneliness, and lack of motivation.

### **Significance Of The Study**

#### ***Theoretical Significance***

The study contributes to the existing literature by identifying crucial psychological aspects thematically incorporated into the experiences of media and communication staff at Palestinian universities, thereby adding to the pertinent body of current literature. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of psychological components in the context of burnout and turnover, aligning with theoretical frameworks such as the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) models. The study also sheds light on the impact of organizational communication practices on the psychological well-being and long-term professional sustainability of media employees, providing insights into the complex subject of behavioral outcomes.

#### ***Practical Significance***

The findings offer valuable insights for decision-makers and organizations to improve the welfare of their employees, emphasizing the need for programs that focus on motivation, engagement, and employee well-being, as well as the role of leaders in creating a supportive work environment. The findings of the study could also lead to the development of policies and treatments aimed at reducing burnout and improving retention in the media and communications professions, particularly in Palestinian universities, thus helping to improve working conditions and support systems in this important sector.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The office environment and the harmony between the several life domains (i.e., work and life) are crucial to note in the context of the JD-R model as examples of both tangible and intangible factors that are taken into account in this research. The participants in this study are interviewed about the physical and psychological areas that are covered by this model (Chi et al., 2021). Work and personal life frequently collide when Media and Communication Staff carry out their duties in their workplaces, leading to conflicts that further deplete the resources of the individual.

According to Telyani et al. (2021); Khawand & Zargar (2022); Adil & Baig (2018); Huang & Wang (2022) they might result in more noticeable negative consequences including burnout, poor engagement and motivation, discontent, and

intention to leave the organization. This has serious effects on the general wellness of these people, This has dire impacts on the overall wellbeing of these individuals, and arguably, needs to be emphasized by Palestinian universities to provide support, guidance, and training for its employees. Media and communication staff have important duties in terms of operations, reporting, compliance, and processes in the public sector (i.e., education, media outlets, and information support/policy making). While reports on small enterprises, healthcare, tourism, hospitality, and other public sectors are presented in the literature (e.g., Kim, 2018; Ma et al., 2021; Sciepora, B., & Linos, 2022; Rasdi et al., 2021).

The JD-R model can be used to assess both the demands and the resources of an organizational environment (Sousan et al., 2021; Deremouti et al., 2001), which further supports its suitability in the current conceptual investigation. According to this study, Media and Communication Staff in educational public services are heavily expected by the community and their organizations to uphold a specific standard while carrying out their duties (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). In turn, this depletes both physical and mental resources, which can result in conflicts, stress, and anxiety as well as lower job satisfaction and work-life balance (Ninaus et al., 2021; Khawand & Zargar, 2022; Kanwar et al., 2009). lowered engagement (Rasool et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2020), increased stress (Bakker et., 2004; Rasool et al., 2020; Bakker & Demereouti, 2007; Bakker & de Vries, 2021), emotional exhaustion (i.e. burnout) (Syrek et al., 2013; Sokal et al., 2020), and turnover intentions/behaviors (Chênevert et al., 2021; Schaufeli, 2017; Madigan & Kim, 2021). These different contexts, settings, and fields of study show that the JD-R model is highly beneficial for the context of current research. Furthermore, this framework justifies the included narrative and theme of the study.

In addition to what was previously discussed, social cognitive theory (SCT) is also included in the present study since it concerns reciprocity, connections among individuals in a society, and the process of learning via actions. This includes both cognitive and emotional elements that define how individuals behave in social settings and how they feel (Salzmann et al., 2022; Deng et al., 2022; Telyani et al., 2021; Bandura, 1989). According to the same literature (Salzmann et al., 2022; Deng et al., 2022; Bresó et al., 2011), burnout is characterized as a type of exhaustion that may be related to a variety of elements, including but not limited to social, emotional, and occupational domains. SCT connects domain-specific resources of an individual and their life to work-related aspects like satisfaction (Shirom, 2005). When the environment, rules, and social norms unexpectedly change as a result of a crisis (such as the COVID-19 pandemic), this can result in a variety of ways (Ed-Valsania et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2021; Shakeel et al., 2022). This idea is also utilized to deal with uncomfortable feelings that might come up at work, in work-life conflicts, and in health or psychiatric crises. The lack of social support throughout the epidemic was significant because it can lead to negative feelings like burnout (e.g., Liu and Aungsuroch, 2019; Hall et al., 2019; Shakeel et al., 2022) and subsequently intentions to turnover (Warden et al., 2021; Pu et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2021).

The theoretical frameworks indicated above support and justify the context of our study, which intends to add to the pertinent body of current literature. The researchers were able to identify many crucial psychological aspects that are thematically incorporated into the data-gathering procedure thanks to the combined premises of the JD-R and SCT models. To accomplish the goal of this research, interviews with media and communication staff at Palestinian universities were conducted to gather detailed information on their experiences. The following section explains the research's methodology, procedures, and criteria. This study is motivated by several factors, including the following: the significance of understanding burnout and turnover of media and communication faculties in Palestinian universities; the absence of studies addressing educational sectors; the small number of studies looking at Palestine; and the need to better understand the psychological factors that need to be emphasized to improve the wellbeing of employees in media and communication faculties in Palestinian universities.

## **Methodology**

### ***Design***

To achieve an in-depth understanding of the perspectives, experiences, and difficulties encountered by media and communication staff at Palestinian universities, this study utilizes a qualitative research design. Qualitative research offers

a thorough examination of the phenomena of burnout and turnover and enables a nuanced comprehension of participants' actual experiences.

A thorough analysis of the body of research on burnout and turnover, as well as the unique context of media and communication staff at Palestinian universities, served as the foundation for the interview protocol's development. The protocol asked questions about loneliness, stress and anxiety, work-life conflict, job autonomy, and organizational support. To get participants to expound on their answers and offer more detailed information, probing questions were employed.

It is deemed appropriate that a qualitative approach be used by using Thematic Network analysis to enable the researcher to accomplish the aforementioned goal because the purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of Media and Communication Staff in Palestine regarding their emotions (i.e. burnout and turnover intentions) (Khawand & Zargar, 2022; Willig, 2013; Borcsa & Willig, 2021). In this method, semi-structured interview questions (such as "How can you describe your feelings related to your job; and how did the pandemic affect your decision-making for job or family") are designed using principles from the JD-R model's emotional and cognitive components. Similar concerns involved self-efficacy, outcomes expectancies, self-evaluation, and goals within the SCT concept (Rolling & Hong, 2016; Schunk & Usher, 2012; Schunk, 2003; Stewart et al., 2020; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Examples of questions are "Can you describe your experiences about your goals and your capabilities and skills in the higher education sector" and "How were your expectations met regarding your job and how you feel about it". By employing this strategy, the researcher made sure that the environment of the interviews was appropriate for the study to encourage participants to provide accurate data.

### ***Interview Procedures***

An inclusion criterion was established for participant selection by the aforementioned setting. In this regard, the researchers made several connections with their network and connected with several possible subjects using purposive and snowball tactics. Participants were chosen based on their level and sector of employment, years of experience, availability, and participation intentions. Verbal consent was obtained from the interviewees and documented within the digital recordings by the national legislation and the institutional requirements. Then, to acquire further data, they were requested to offer information on other staff members and peers. No personal information was obtained throughout the data-gathering procedure since participants were given data anonymity and confidentiality. This was done following ethical standards. Each interview lasted around 40 minutes and was performed by the researchers either over Zoom or in-person meetings (May and June 2023). All interviews were recorded for transcription. The participants were then presented with the transcription of the data to validate its correctness and suitability for capturing their replies. At this stage, interviewees were also encouraged to add to their data by sharing more of their experiences.

During the coding procedure, which was carried out by the researchers with the aid of expert coder services provided by a freelancer, original records were erased and the data was scrambled. This made it possible for the researchers to assess the validity and coding process based on key study themes, and the resulting 0.89 intercoder agreement coefficient is sufficient for summarizing the available data (Lases et al., 2018). This criterion improved the research's framework by enhancing the ability to analyze and understand the data based on sample characteristics, the theoretical context, the quality of the interviews, and the analysis technique (Khawand & Zargar, 2020; Malterud et al., 2016; Lases et al., 2018). The sample size of 14 interviewees represents different levels of management and professional academic positions in Palestinian universities. The participants include individuals from various universities such as Hebron University, Bethlehem University, Al-Quds Open University, An-Najah National University, and others. The sample encompasses both male and female staff members with varying years of experience, ranging from 5+ years to 20+ years, representing a mix of mid-level and senior professionals within the media and communication departments. This diversity in the sample allows for a comprehensive exploration of the experiences and challenges faced by media and communication staff across different professional levels and administrative centers within Palestinian universities within Palestinian universities. Hence, a total of 14 interviewees participated in the research, whose characteristics are shown in table 1 below:

Table 1 Interviewee Characteristics

Age	Gender	Experience	Occupation
40-45	Male	10 + years	Hebron University
50-55	Female	15+ years	Hebron University
50-55	Male	15+ years	Bethlehem University
40-45	Female	15+ years	AlQuds Open University
55-60	Male	20+ years	An-Najah National University
40-45	Male	10+ years	Bethlehem University
35-40	Male	5+ years	Birzeit University
50-55	Female	20+ years	An-Najah National University
40-45	Male	10+ years	AlQuds Open University
50-55	Female	15+ years	Al-Quds University
40-45	Male	10+ years	Arab American University
40-45	Male	10+ years	Birzeit University
35-40	Male	5+ years	Al-Quds University
40-45	Female	10+ years	Arab American University

The interview procedures for this study involved conducting in-depth interviews with media and communication staff at Palestinian universities. The interviews began with an introduction that outlined the purpose of the study and provided an overview of the research objectives. The participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses to ensure their comfort and openness during the interview process. This encouraged them to share their experiences and insights into the challenges they faced in their professional roles. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach, with questions designed to explore the themes of work-life balance, work-life conflict, loneliness, stress and anxiety, job autonomy, and organizational support. The probing questions encouraged participants to provide detailed and contextual information about their experiences, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of burnout and turnover in this professional context. During the interview procedures, the authors identified six interview themes to explore the experiences of media and communication staff at Palestinian universities regarding burnout and turnover. The interview themes are as follows:

**1. Work-Life Balance:** The authors explored the participants' experiences with balancing work responsibilities and personal life. They inquired about the challenges they faced in maintaining a healthy work-life balance and the impact on their well-being.

**2. Work-Life Conflict:** The authors discussed instances where work-related demands conflicted with personal or family commitments. They probed into the effects of work-life conflict on their job satisfaction and psychological well-being.

**3. Loneliness:** The authors investigated feelings of isolation or loneliness within the work environment. They sought to understand how social support and interpersonal relationships influenced their experiences at work.

**4. Stress and Anxiety:** The authors delved into the sources of stress and anxiety related to their roles and responsibilities. They explored coping mechanisms and the impact of stress on their overall job satisfaction.

**5. Job Autonomy:** The authors discussed the level of autonomy and decision-making authority they had in their roles. They examined the influence of job autonomy on their motivation and engagement at work.

**6. Organizational Support:** The authors explored the support provided by the organization in addressing employee well-being and professional development. They sought to understand the significance of organizational support in mitigating burnout and turnover intentions.

## Results and Discussion

The current study explores the significant effects of burnout and turnover on media and communication staff at Palestinian universities, illuminating the many difficulties this crucial workforce in higher education encounters. The debate

emphasizes the connection between burnout and turnover and their detrimental impact on academic institutions' overall efficiency as well as the well-being of the media staff.

The results revealed a variety of psychological elements that have led to the development of themes for the current research. Each component includes an example of a response and an explanation of it. Significantly, the narrative and core concept of this study revolve around burnout and turnover as the primary research topics. As a result, this was determined through the interviews, and participants were informed of the interconnectedness of psychological components in this setting. The following aspects have been derived from the obtained data based on the aforementioned approach and technique:

- **Stress and Anxiety:** It was noted that a high level of stress and anxiety threatened these individuals which was felt and experienced in both physical and psychological aspects (*"We did not have a clear plan. We were all worried about what can happen tomorrow....a lot of us had a lot of stress and fear.....we talked about it together"*).

- **Health-related risks due to age:** Interviewees noted the importance of the relatively elderly age group as Media and Communication Staff and their health, which was specifically discussed in several meetings with authorities (*"Many of us are not young and not everyone lives a healthy life so we were concerned with the risks and took it to upstairs"*).

- **Health-related risks due to work environment:** The workplace of many Media and Communication Staff consists of numerous interactions with students or peers on a routine basis, which increases the expectations of these individuals regarding their work setting *"Not everything can be done online.....students need signatures, forms, approvals, and many other things...you cannot avoid everyone when you are there"*. This was noted among the important psychological elements.

- **Lack of motivation** was observed among teams and departments *"It was not strange, there were many important things that our jobs did not feel like first anymore.....we had to be sure we and our families are fine"*. Another interviewee mentioned, *"I did not care about work because what if something goes wrong in my family....I was motivated for survival you can say"*. This was observed among the participants as well as their work environment based on their experiences.

- **Lack of familiarity with virtual settings** had a major role in terms of frustration, tiring, and ineffective at points. Participants noted that many of the Media and Communication Staff were not tech-savvy and thus, had problems with the online systems, and training *"...yes we had an online system but many of us did not how to really use everything it has....some even had problems with anything outside the existing platform"*. This was also linked to performance-related stress *"I was not comfortable with the system, and I did not learn at first how to do everything....I was always stressed that I will do something wrong or worse"*.

- **Inadequacy in the online system** was repeatedly noted due to its recency *"the new systems were not tested, servers were not ready, content wad errors, networks were not prepared and many more issues"*. This further was noted as reducing job satisfaction and motivation, while increasing fatigue, frustration, and stress as tasks were not done in time. However, it was further noted that after several trial versions, the online systems eventually performed reasonably.

- **Decreased job satisfaction;** *"we did not like anything....salaries were not paid on time, there was no real support, I was not satisfied with anything at my work"* and *"If they gave us a questionnaire, I would answer everything zero [very unsatisfied]"*. These show that the extent of job satisfaction was low among Media and Communication Staff, which is an important element in the determination of negative attitudes and behaviors (i.e. burnout and turnover).

Media staff face decreased job performance and productivity as turnover and burnout set in. The institution's credibility and reputation could be damaged by diminished innovation and creativity as well as by a failure to maintain quality content. Therefore, turnover rates could increase as disgruntled employees look for different career choices or more encouraging work settings, exacerbating the difficulties with staff retention at Palestinian educational facilities.

- **Low engagement** was observed among Media and Communication Staff in the higher education sector based on the experiences of participants in the current research. They noted that *"we were working...but just to get it done...there was no feeling during those times"* and *"I saw that people mostly did not connect with their work....we all had bigger problems and in the big picture nothing helped"*. This is regarded as an important element that has contributed to burnout and turnover of Media and Communication Staff in the current context.

- **Work-life conflict**; was noted Several interviewees that their work had vividly affected their lives as they had to "*do things at home that I never did before*" or "*it was terrible to do my work at home...these two did not match*". In this research, it is interpreted that such conflicts alongside the aforementioned aspects can have dire impacts on the psychological well-being of individuals particularly those in the higher education sector.

According to our findings, burnout and turnover are significantly influenced by work-life conflict and loneliness. Media staff frequently experience increased stress and dissatisfaction as a result of their inability to maintain a balance between their personal and professional life. Staff members' sentiments of isolation and disengagement may be exacerbated by a lack of social support programs and chances for meaningful interactions, which can feed the burnout cycle.

- **Burnout** as the major theme of the interview was noted several times and in different terminologies such as frustration, lack of resources (drained), loneliness at work, doubt, and hesitations about work and self, procrastination, and overloaded in the review session with participants were noted as 'burnout' in terms of meaning. For instance, it was noted that "*I knew a certain department that majority was not working almost at all*" and "*I did not have enough power to deal with work many times, my life was not at its best days*" and "*I had so many things to do that I wanted to just shut the door and sleep*".

Media and communication staff members at Palestinian colleges suffer greatly from burnout, which is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal success. The constant pressure of the job, short deadlines, and exposure to stressful or sensitive matters all lead to emotional exhaustion and a decline in resilience. Long-term exposure to these stresses can lower work satisfaction and erode the enthusiasm and passion that motivated many to choose professions in media and communication in the first place.

- **Turnover** also was clear in the experience of interviewees as they mentioned specific keywords (or synonyms or concepts) such as compensation plan, supervisor relationship and support, exhaustion, lack of training and professional development, and low levels of autonomy and flexibility in tasks and processes. These are influential aspects that pertain to turnover, and its subsequent effects (e.g. "*I saw many colleagues leaving the job because of different reasons...some wanted more money, some more control on their job, and some just could not handle the stress and everything*", and "*In my department, we had some who left...one is my friend outside work, who had issues with the work and its effects on their life, [they] decided to leave to keep family intact*" and "*our supervisors sometimes are not the easiest people to talk with*").

- **Importance of Job Autonomy and Organizational Support**: The value of job autonomy and organizational support in preventing burnout and turnover is highlighted by the findings. Giving staff members in media the ability to make decisions and manage their work might increase their sense of satisfaction and well-being. Similarly, organizational support can contribute to work satisfaction and general well-being. Examples include mentoring programs, wellness programs, and efforts that recognize employees' achievements. Palestinian universities need to actively address these issues given the significant effects of burnout and turnover on staff members working in media and communication. Staff retention, productivity, and institutional performance may all be improved by putting into practice evidence-based interventions that emphasized employee well-being and create supportive work environments. Additionally, building a climate of open communication, honesty, and empathy is essential for removing obstacles to discussing burnout and fostering a healthy workplace.

The current research demonstrates that both burnout and turnover are sophisticated psychological concepts connected to a variety of different factors. Within the boundaries of this study, it was discovered that organizational support is crucial for media and communication staff at Palestinian universities to support them with work-life balance, stress management, and providing information and training. Additionally, the research highlights the importance of loneliness, stress, anxiety, and a lack of autonomy in the higher education sector as key psychological factors that affect both turnover and burnout. Officials at the management level who were responsible for providing information not just to their direct reports but also to their peers in positions of power and decision-making noted this. The current results indicate that the well-being of media and communication staff in Palestinian universities is similar to other findings from various settings and areas (e.g., Evangelista et al., 2021; Said et al., 2021; Bajrami et al., 2021; Khawand & Zargar, 2022; Merlo et al., 2021; Stone et al., 2021; Zakhem et al., 2022; Zhang). This study encourages other academics to investigate this issue in more detail in other



states to get a clearer grasp of the detrimental psychological effects that continue to exist across nations. While the current findings are in agreement with the body of knowledge (e.g., Ed-Valsania et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2021; Shakeel et al., 2022; Collie, 2022), they also advance the theoretical understanding, implications, and geographic scope of the topic at hand.

## **Implications**

### ***Theoretical***

In the context of JD-R, the current study suggests theoretical implications based on its findings. Regarding this, the resources that people have to carry out their responsibilities, particularly when environments are disrupted (i.e. Burnout and Turnover as they have to adjust to the new circumstances). The recent findings in this respect highlight the significance of organizations managing job demands in a way that considers both the physical and psychological well-being of employees (Chi et al., 2021; Adil & Baig, 2018; Huang & Wang, 2022). Similar to how the findings in the preceding section demonstrate, the JD-R model, which is embedded in the theoretical context of this research, reflects both explicit and implicit factors in terms of factors related to the work environment, processes of work, health-related and risk management aspects of the organization, effects on work-life balance, flexibility in terms of virtual or traditional offices, and relationship with managers. (Zakhem et al., 2022). SCT is also used in the current findings since it addresses the emotional and cognitive factors that were identified. In this regard, it was noticed that conflicts between work and life influenced employees' emotional states and that stress and anxiety were felt more acutely owing to the absence of social connections. This, along with the challenges they encountered at work and in their professional positions, resulted in a generalized sense of tiredness, burnout, and turnover (whether intentional or actual behavior). This is also noted in several studies in the extant literature that examined the notion of well-being in different contexts (e.g. Salzmann et al., 2022; Deng et al., 2022; Telyani et al., 2021).

### ***Practical***

Referring to the aforementioned theoretical implications, a variety of useful strategies can be derived that can help decision-makers and organizations improve the welfare of their employees. This research recommends that governmental and non-governmental organizations create programs that center on the motivation, engagement, and welfare of their employees in a way that helps both lower and higher levels of management and services. This could be done by improving the HR departments and on giving employees organizational support. In this regard, training in the use of computers, social media, websites, and other online platforms might have beneficial effects. Therefore, the focus of this research is on fostering an environment where leaders (top managers) are concerned with the opinions of the staff and their overall quality of life. As noted in the results, organizational setting and the role of leaders are highly influential in forming a workplace, where employees feel protected, safe, valued, and provided with developmental programs (personal or professional).

## **Limitations and Recommendations**

This study has certain limitations that could be seen as gaps for further research on the subject of burnout, turnover, and other effects of living and working environments on employees. This study was constrained in this regard by the availability of prior findings, particularly those that were related to the context of media and communication staff at Palestinian universities. Future researchers can address this by looking at persons who work in public sectors and in decision-making processes to emphasize their challenges and overall well-being. Furthermore, the theoretical framework—JD-R and SCT—used in this study has limitations. Despite the suitability of these models, more theories need to be investigated in this context to help us better grasp the complicated subject of behavioral outcomes. These theories include self-determination, action regulation, role, and resource conservation. Furthermore, the lack of research in the Middle East, and particularly Palestine, hindered our study. Future research might therefore give insight into the cultural, political, and economic domains that are significant in this area. Last but not least, because this study employed a qualitative approach, the sample may not be perfectly representative of the population, and accurate measurements are not the best option. As a consequence, future research can employ quantitative and/or longitudinal approaches to come up with results that complement those of the present research.

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