

Mediating Role of Work Exhaustion: The Missing Linchpin to Address Employee's Turnover

***Irfan Saleem, PhD**

School of Business, University of Central Punjab Lahore, Pakistan

Rizwan Ahmed, PhD

Lahore School of Economics Lahore, Pakistan

Noshina Saleem, PhD

Institute of Communication Studies, University of Punjab Lahore, Pakistan

The aim of research was to explore the antecedents of work exhaustion and missing linchpin to address employee's turnover among small and medium firms in service sector of Pakistan. For stated objective data was collected from 281 employees of five travelling agencies using self-reported questionnaire comprised of 37 items including six latent variables i.e. fairness of rewards, job autonomy, perceived work overload, work family conflict, work exhaustion and turnover intentions. Study used rigorous statistical techniques for measurement models and mediation analysis. Research revealed that two of theoretical assumptions were true concerning mediating role of work exhaustion. Investigation suggested that work overload and work-family conflict needed to be addressed in order to reduce work exhaustion accumulating in terms of employee's turnover for Pakistani service sector. Our study has theoretical and empirical contributions. For example, theoretically, it has contribution in the area of organizational behavior and industrial psychology, while practically our scholarship enlightens firms' managers by asking them to develop sustainable HR policies leading towards better staff retention by controlling work exhaustion among workforce.

*Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Irfan Saleem, PhD, Assistant Professor and Director, School of Business, University of Central Punjab Lahore, Pakistan. He has completed his PhD from University of Sorbonne, Paris, France as HEC Scholar. Email: irfan.saleem@ucp.edu.pk

Rizwan Ahmed, PhD, Assistant Professor, Lahore School of Economics Lahore, Pakistan. Email: rizwan.ahmed@lahoreschool.edu.pk

Noshina Saleem, PhD, Assistant Professor and Incharge, Institute of Communication Studies, University of Punjab Lahore, Pakistan. Email: noshina2001@hotmail.com

Keywords. Turnover intentions, work exhaustion, structural equation modeling, mediation, sobel test.

Pakistani scholars have been exploring the areas of organizational behavior, industrial psychology and human resource management, mostly in banking and telecommunication sector (Saleem & Khurshid, 2014). Nevertheless poor quality of service in public sector firms such as Pakistan Railways and Pakistan International Airlines has resulted in development of private service sector e.g. bus services demand new evidence to reconcile old debate (Saleem & Saleem, 2014). The bus services like Daewoo Pakistan has emerged as market leader within private sector of Pakistani transport industry since last decade or so. The agency is continuously gaining market share by launching its services around Pakistan and thus winning customers by providing quality of services through its well trained workforce. To follow market trend with other bus services, e.g. Faisal mover, Bilal Dawoo, Ali Express and Skyways have also launched competitive bus services to create a competitive environment to share profit (Siddique, Saleem & Abbas, 2016). Nonetheless, the private bus-sector jobs are fully loaded with responsibilities and customer demands to deal with customer related issues, which is causing work exhaustion (Saleem & Khurshid, 2014). Firms' employees including bus hostesses, drivers and bus terminal staff are key player to run a complete bus service. The motivated and trained employees are needed by all new bus services to decrease HR cost in terms of hiring and training employees (Saleem, 2014). Therefore, this research is significant for three reasons. First to fill the empirical gap in service sector of developing economy (Saleem & Khurshid, 2014; Siddique, et al., 2016). Second, normally the studies in the areas of organizational behavior, industrial psychology and human resource management address the direct cause-effect relationship without exploring the intervening variables (e.g. Fujimoto, Ferdous, Sekiguchi & Sugianto, 2016; Noor & Maad, 2008; Moore, 2000). Third, this study encounters the recent calls for further research in the integrated areas of organizational behavior, industrial psychology and human resource management (Mauno et al., 2015; Whitman et al., 2014). In this study we evaluated the antecedents of work-exhaustion and its impact on turnover intentions in Pakistani context by exporting new evidence from the bus services as proxy of emerging service sector in Pakistan. This research work addressed the significant the research question i.e. How turnover

intentions of employee are indirectly affected through employee's work exhaustion?

Work exhaustion (WE) is considered to be the biggest consequence of occupational stress that negatively impacts the organizational and individual productivity (Sondhi et. al., 2008). The work exhaustion can also be termed as a state arising from a boring, stressful and frustrating work environment (Fujimoto, et al., 2016). WE can be considered as a condition of physical, mental and emotional distress and exhaustion, which is the result of excessive pressures on individuals. Job burnout is also related to emotional exhaustion, to tedium, to the dimension of frustration caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It is also observed by scholars that perceived work overload, job autonomy, unfairness of rewards and work-family conflict as the main causes of work exhaustion leading to turnover intention (Shantz, Arevshatian, Alfes, & Bailey, 2016). The possible antecedents of work exhaustion are varying from job autonomy (Jackson et al., 1986) through the role clashes, role confusion (Burke & Greenglass, 1995) to work overload and lack of rewards (Jackson et al., 1986). Morgeson et al. (2005) stated that job autonomy increases work ownership, confidence, and motivation among employees. Moreover, work-family conflicts can also increase the stress level among professionals, thus becoming an obstacle in the job performance (Ahuja et. al, 2006; Shantz, et al., 2016).

The increasing interest among employers to reduce work-family conflicts also reflects the importance of stated issues related to work exhaustion and turnover intentions (Noor & Maad, 2008). Some other scholars highlighted that impact of work exhaustion should be recognized and tackled by providing better working conditions in order to sustain and grow organizational performance (see e.g. Shantz et al., 2016). This is because work exhaustion is a key factor leading to the turnover intentions among employees (Mauno et al., 2015). So firm needs to understand the role of work-family conflicts, job autonomy and fairness of rewards as key factors causing work exhaustion which indirectly drives to the turnover intention (Mauno et al., 2015; Sondhi, et, al., 2008). According to another research work exhaustion also plays an intervening role between the turnover intention and the key factors, including work-family conflicts, job autonomy and fairness of rewards (Saleem, 2014). Generally work exhaustion reasons include reduced job satisfaction (Burke & Greenglass, 1995, low self-esteem, reduced organizational commitment (Lee & Ashworth, 1996), high turnover and higher turnover intention (Jackson et. al, 1986), role conflict (Mauno et

al., 2015), work overload (Shantz et al., 2016) and lack of job autonomy (Siddique et al., 2016) as the antecedents of increased turnover intention (Lee & Ashworth, 1996). Consistent with above, Moore (2000) claimed key factors like job autonomy, work overload, work-family conflict, fairness of rewards to be the antecedents of work exhaustion, to be directly linked to work exhaustion, and to have an impact (through work exhaustion) on turnover intentions. Various research studies have provided significant insights into the causes of work exhaustion termed as Antecedents of work exhaustion for this study. However, subsequent section will highlight the classical underlying theories, concepts and relationships.

Theoretical Underpinning

Stress is considered to be a significant aspect of the human life and its antecedents can be tracked to the evolution of mankind (Kanner et al., 1978). Studies are further needed to explore causes of stress among employees of service sector and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to address the turnover issue at workplace in the developing economies like Pakistan (Mauno et al., 2015; Siddique et al., 2016). In 1975, Selye developed a model, known as General Adaptive Syndrome (GAS), in his extensive work to understand stress phenomena. The GAS model suggested that when a person faces a challenging or stressful situation. This usually results in a very general physiological response, which occurs in three stages i.e. alarm, resistance and exhaustion. Most of the stress literature revolves around these three stages identified by Selye in 1975. Then in 1986, Jackson and his colleagues found that chronic stress has a number of adverse effects on the psychological processes and physical being of an individual. It may also have an adverse effect on earning potentials of an individual. Chronic job stress is also known to effect physical health (e.g. insomnia) and psychological health (e.g., depression), behavioral condition (e.g., alcoholism, drug abuse) and may also be a cause of interpersonal conflicts. Employee's physical and mental issues may indirectly affect organizational overall productivity adversely. For example, rise in absentee rate, low productivity, and ultimately forcing worker to leave the firm which is the loss of well-trained human capital.

According to scholars, antecedents of work exhaustion include work burden, role clash, stress, few rewards, success, (Kanner et al., 1978) and depletion of emotional and mental energy with the job demands (Mauno et al., 2015). Once the employee is overloaded with

work, this usually results in a decision to leave the organization on permanent basis (Jackson et al., 1986). Causes of such burnout include emotional exhaustion aspect of tedium (Kanner et al., 1978) and repeated or constant emotional pressure related (Moore, 2000). Stoner and Kim (2008) observed that burnout of employee has three major elements i.e. emotional exhaustion, de-personalization exhaustion and decreased personal accomplishment. Some attitudinal reactions are the direct outcomes of work exhaustion, whereas other attitudinal reactions may be the result of individual's informal contribution to the work exhaustion (Moore, 2000). Better work environment and greater involvement in the job may decrease work exhaustion. While stressful work environment and lower job involvement may influence the quality of work negatively and cause exhaustion (Mauno et al., 2015).

In older studies turnover is described as employee's propensity to leave the job that employee is currently pursuing (Sondhi et al, 2008), usually caused by mental or psychological strain (Moore, 2000). Strain may result in unwillingness to go to work or willingness to leave the job, which can be defined as turnover intention (Rehman 2012). Harris, et al. (2005) defined strain as a psychological response created by a stressor, which may show as depressed feelings, frustration, nervousness and other symptoms of physical or psychological disturbance. This situation may lead to the disappointment among employees. It is important for the upper management to realize the significance of employee's satisfaction level with job and identify the possible problems within the organization (Shantz et al., 2016). This is because the employee's willingness to leave firm increases both direct and indirect costs which reduce workplace productivity, and leads to loss of human capital (Whitman etl al., 2014). Staff commitment to the organization basically ensures the employee's loyalty (Saleem & Saleem, 2014), as this loyalty leads to lower turnover intentions (Mauno et al., 2015). Researchers have found a positive relation between the work exhaustion and the employee turnover intention (Sondhi et al., 2008). So, if an employee feels exhausted at workplace, then there is a greater probability that the employee may be willing to leave job in order to avoid exhaustion.

Family and work are interlinked and are bread and butters for each other (Noor & Maad, 2008). But work-family is source of conflict and work as one of the major factors influencing the behavioral shifts of employee at workplace (Li, Bagger & Cropanzano, 2016). Work and family conflict may emerge due to opposing demands put by either of the role to the other (Moore, 2000). Therefore, some scholars found work-

family conflict to be strongly related to exhaustion, low morale and organizational commitment (Saleem & Saleem, 2014), and job dissatisfaction (Ahuja et al., 2007; Li, et al., 2016). Scholars also claimed that Work-family conflicts may result in dissatisfaction in family life, increases turnover intentions, usage of alcohol, and signs toward depression (Karatepe & Kilic, 2015). Moreover, nature of work-family conflicts with more than one dimension, where the demands of family and work are in a direct and equal competition. Specifically, the work-family conflicts exist when the working demands create an interference with the individual's ability to carry out family tasks, while the family-work conflicts exist when the family matters interfere with the individual's working tasks (Noor & Maad, 2008; Li, et al., 2016). Work-family conflict can be used to predict work exhaustion along role conflict and role ambiguity (Ahuja et al., 2007). If the work-family conflict appears to be high, work exhaustion would usually be high as well, leading to turnover intention (Ahuja et al., 2007; Mauno et al., 2015). A study in the public and private sector revealed that the work-family conflict leads to absenteeism and turnover intentions among employees (Burke & Greenglass, 1995). Thus employers should provide a conducive and friendly work environment that creates a healthy balance between work and family demands in order to retain valuable employees in the organization.

The job autonomy of any worker reflects the extent to which a job allows the discretion, freedom and independence in decision making at workplace (Morgeson et al., 2005). Researchers have found that increased job autonomy leads reduction in exhaustion even if an employee has a heavy workload (Kirmeyer & Shirom, 1986). Job autonomy also increases self-esteem, job satisfaction, and motivation among employees (Stoner & Kim, 2008). Job autonomy is also beneficial for employees' psychological well-being. Employee generally appreciates autonomy at workplace, as it shows that employer trusts and provides confidence to the employee (Mauno et al., 2015). An environment of freedom motivates workers to try new methods and be creative in their work domain (Morgeson et al., 2005). Moreover, a higher degree of job autonomy degree also reduces work exhaustion, which in turn leads to lower turnover intentions among employees (Schwalbe, 1985). Low level of job autonomy has also seen to be related with job pressure, mental, emotional, physical or working discomfort, poor performance, and turnover intentions (Mauno et al., 2015; Moore, 2000).

Perceived work overload refers to the situation when a job overstretches one's mental or physical capabilities (Karatepe & Kilic, 2015). In some organizations, employees are expected to meet unachievable or unrealistic workloads and deadlines. Researchers identify work overload as the main cause of exhaustion (Selye, 1975; Stoner & Kim, 2008). It has been advised that exhaustion originates in the working environment containing too many pressures and conflicts and work overload raises the work strain of the employees leading to turnover intentions (Karatepe & Kilic, 2015; Schwalbe, 1985).

Rewards strongly affect the employees' attitude towards job and the organization: the intangible rewards e.g. autonomy, variety, challenge and the tangible rewards e.g. fringe benefits, pay, promotion, (Ahuja et al., 2007). Reward can be presented as bonus, when its size and amount is related to such success indicators like profit rate and value of output (Stoner & Kim, 2008). The employees basically do not focus on the subject of distributive fairness if case of high level rewards prevails (Moore, 2000). Studies show that fairness of reward has a direct impact on work exhaustion which also affects turnover intentions. In case of fair rewards, the work exhaustion automatically reduces turnover intentions (Burke & Greenglass, 1995; Karatepe & Kilic, 2015). The conceptual definitions and relationship among variables in preceding section are helpful to define our theoretical framework presented in subsequent section.

Research Objectives and Framework

Study objective is to explore the mediating role of work exhaustion. Subsequently research is dedicated to explore direct and indirect effect of work exhaustion in relation with employee's intention termed as turnover intentions. Figure 1.0 presents theoretical model for the current study, showing assumed impact of the antecedents as Fairness of Rewards (FOR), Job Autonomy (JA), Perceived Work Overload (PWO) and Work-Family Conflict on the Work Exhaustion (WE). Furthermore it draws up not only the assumed subsequent effect on the Turnover Intentions (TOI), but also its mediating role of WE between the antecedents and the TOI. This means that the once four factors cause work exhaustion, resultantly work exhaustion influences turnover.

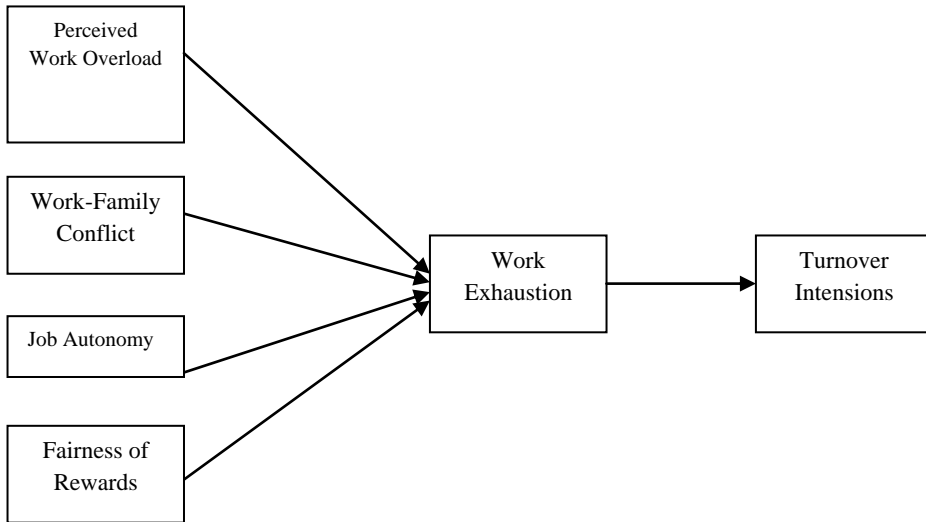


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Hypotheses

Four hypotheses were formulated for the study.

1. Work exhaustion mediates between perceived work overload and turnover intentions
2. Work exhaustion mediates between work-family conflict and turnover intentions.
3. Work exhaustion mediates between job autonomy and turnover intentions.
4. Work exhaustion mediates between fairness of rewards and turnover intentions.

Method

Sample

Data was collected from employees of the five bus services using survey method. The justification of collecting the sample from these five bus services is that these companies hire educated employees including drivers, bus hostesses, and customer service agents using simple random technique.

Company's managers reported number of employees ranging from 15 to 86 including female staff working as bus-hostesses. Diverse response rate 42.86% to 62.50% with the average of 60.26% from five bus services was found to be reasonable for further analysis. More

specifically, survey was filled by 198 males and 83 females. Majority of employees were undergraduates ($n = 103$, 37%), graduates ($n = 99$, 35%) and post graduates ($n = 79$, 28%). Monthly income of Pakistani rupee 10,000 to 20,000 was reported by majority of respondents ($n = 199$, 71%). However, in some cases income was found 21,000 to 40,000 ($n = 51$, 18%) and above 41,000 ($n = 31$, 11%). Employees spent about 2 to 3 years with current bus services ($n = 151$, 54%), nonetheless some employees ($n = 49$, 17%) reported employment period with current bus services less than two year and more than four years ($n = 81$, 29%). In addition to this, we found some information useful from annual report of companies to be reported in this study e.g. bus fare, frequency of bus service between Lahore-Multan (city names), and cost of a trip, economies of scales and monthly business till June 2014. This is because terminal managers of Lahore and Multan stations were agreed to provide data and employees were willing to participate. The gender of the employees was not reported due to privacy and cultural reasons of female staff working at various terminals as per instruction of terminal managers. It is identified that frequency of bus service per day from Lahore-Multan routes for Sammi Daewoo Express is running 12 routes per day, Rajput Travels & Services is operating 28 routes per day, Rahbar Travels also called Ali express is operating 30 routes per day, Faisal Movers is operating 40 routes per day and Bilal Travels renowned as Bilal Daewoo is operating 10 routes per day. Other useful information by terminal managers reported includes bus fare ranging from rupee 550 to 950, round trip cost ranging from rupee 34,500/- to maximum 37,500/- across various bus services. Based on cost of a trip figures, it is identified that if 31 seats are filled from Lahore to Multan covers the cost of Rajput Travels & Services, whereas this implies that cost of a trip ranges from 18 seats in case of Sami Daewoo bus service to 31 seats in case of Rajput travels.

Assessment Measures

The questionnaire adopted for this study was reported by Sondhi et al. (2008) and Ahuja et al. (2007). Study instrument consisted of seven-point likert scale with 37 items to measure variables of interest. The demographic variables were captured using single line items. The measure for perceived work over load consists of seven items and construct for work-family conflict consists of eight items. Both measures were adopted from Moore (2000). The measure for job autonomy was adopted from Beehr, 1976 which comprised of four items. The tool to

quantify fairness of reward has six items. This measure was originally developed by Moore (2000), revised by Ahuja et al. (2007) and tested by Sondhi et al. (2008). The mediating variable i.e. work exhaustion and dependent variable turnover intentions were also developed by Moore (2000), revised by Ahuja et al. (2007) and tested by Sondhi et al. (2008). Although Ahuja et al. (2007) and Sondhi et al. (2008) tested the constructs in western and Indian context respectively, but revalidation was required in local settings of Pakistan. Therefore factor analysis was conducted and presented in subsequent section.

Procedure

Self-reported measure is chosen for primary data collection from employees using field survey from various bus services. As stated earlier, data is collected from five bus services agreed to participate. Types of employees reported by the terminal managers of Lahore bus operational on the Lahore to Multan route include drivers, bus hostesses, customer service agents and security guards. However, study excluded security guards from data collection as the terminal managers reported that illiterate employees were staffed as guards and thus may not be able to understand the theme of the survey.

Results

This section constituted of three parts. First part presents psychometric properties of the instrument revalidated in local setting. Second part gives correlation and reliability analysis, whereas third part presents the mediation analysis.

Psychometric Properties of Scale. This section elaborates the psychometric properties of scale. Factor analysis, validity analysis and procedural remedies were carried out in order to deal with common method bias (CMB) and other measurement related biases. Classical studies have identified issues for self-reported measures (Podsakoff et al., 2003) with cross-sectional designed studies. The study has dealt with procedural remedies of common method bias using two different points of times were chosen in order to collect primary data. Data for independent variables i.e. PWO, WFC, JA and FOR is collected on the start of travel of particular bus-route by employees of bus services, whilst on return bus trip, the same participant is asked to fill the survey of mediator (WE) and dependent (TI) variables.

Harman's single factor (HSF) test is most common to identify CMB (Podsakoff et al., 2003). HSF test result depicted 23% shared variance among all items of research tool, which falls in acceptable range. Therefore CBM was not reported. Confirmatory factor analysis was employed to revalidate the instrument. The tables consisting of psychometric analysis have been combined with respect to number of factors loaded. Statistical studies reports that if for a particular measure, chi-square value was statically significant at 95% confidence level, Eigen value (EV) was above 1.0 and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy is above 0.60 then the measure adopted for study inherits construct validity, thus can be used for further analysis. Refer to Table 1, principle component analysis (PCA) was applied for each construct. First PCA was applied on seven items of the work exhaustion. Factor loading of seven items was between 0.57 and 0.73 under one factor. KMO (0.85) falls within acceptable range whereas EV exceeding 1 (i.e. 3.48) explained about 50% variance in WE construct. Similarly KMO value of 0.87 for the turnover intention (TI) is also acceptable. Single component with EV 3.51 explained about 80% of the variance. Eight items of the Work-Family Conflict were subjected to PCA. The KMO value of 0.86 was accepted for further analysis. The PCA revealed that the presence of two components but single factor with EV exceeding 1 (4.11, 1.01) explaining about 64% of the variance in WFC construct. The interpretation of both components was very much consistent with older study (see e.g. Sondhi et al., 2008).

The factor loading of items was between 0.80 and 0.86 under single factor for WFC construct. We also found two components for perceived work overload (PWO) with EV exceeding 1 (3.12, 1.12) explaining about 60% of the variance. The interpretation of both components for PWO was consistent with previous research study (see e.g. Ahuja et al., 2007). Factor loading of items was between 0.65 and 0.81 for first factor and for second factor the loading was between 0.61 and 0.82. When, PCA was applied on four items of the job autonomy (JA). Factor loading of items was between 0.67 and 0.72 under one factor. The KMO value of 0.71 was accepted with one factor having EV (1.9) explaining 57% variance in job autonomy construct. Likewise KMO value of 0.81 for the construct entitled fairness of reward, also falls in acceptable range with a single component explaining about 57% of the variance with six items. Factor loading of items was between 0.68 and 0.81 under single factor. Refer to Table 1, presented the reliability analysis of the research tool. The Cronbach's alpha values of constructs

JA, WFC, PWO, FOR, WE and TOI were reported within acceptable range above 0.60 to 0.70 (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Although value of JA can be easily achieved up to 0.70 but none of item was dropped to ensure construct validity and capture the complete variation of construct.

Table 1
Factor Analysis

Concept Name	Items	Factor(s)	KMO test	X ²	Variation	α
Work Exhaustion	7	1	0.85	645.74*	49.84%	.82
Turnover Intention	5	1	0.87	776.60*	79.84%	.89
Work Family Conflict	8	1	0.86	902.15*	64.08%	.86
Perceived Work Overload	7	1	0.80	507.24*	60.34%	.78
Job Autonomy	4	1	0.71	168.51*	57.56%	.63
Fairness of Reward	6	1	0.81	687.76*	56.90%	.84

Notes. $n=281$. KMO: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy.

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

The correlation analysis was used to test the association among variables (see Table 2). Statistical tests were performed to avoid violation of any statistical assumptions including normality, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity to run mediation, correlation and regression analyses. To test normality, we used normal probability plot of regression standardized residual (Pallant, 2010:p159). The data points were falling in a reasonably straight diagonal line from bottom left to top right. Moreover Standardized were in the acceptable range (3.3 to -3.3). We test multicollinearity and found that tolerance values were less than 0.10, which falls in acceptable range (p158). Similar to test homoscedasticity, we used Fmax-test. The test value ($\alpha=0.02$) was well under acceptable range (p160).

Table 2
Correlation Analysis

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. JA	4.75	1.26	1					
2. WFC	4.71	1.32	.005	1				
3. FOR	4.91	1.34	.36**	.05	1			
4. PWO	4.48	1.03	.026	.46**	.21**	1		
5. WE	4.40	1.27	-.05	.64**	-.036	.42**	1	
6. TOI	4.23	1.67	.014	.44**	-.17**	.31**	.56**	1

Note. Fairness of Rewards (FOR), Job Autonomy (JA), Perceived Work Overload (PWO), Work-Family Conflict (WFC), Work Exhaustion (WE), Turnover Intentions (TOI). $N=281$. ** $p < .01$.

The statistical output revealed a statistically significant and positive relation between perceived work overload and work exhaustion, i.e. high level of perceived work overload associated with high level of WE among Pakistani employees working at private sector bus services. Analysis shows a positive association between work-family conflict and work exhaustion i.e. with high level of work-family conflict the employee will be exhausted from work at workplace. Moreover results depicted negative but statistically insignificant correlation between job autonomy and work exhaustion. This means high level of job autonomy was associated with low level of work exhaustion. Result also depicted negative, but insignificant correlation between fairness of rewards and work exhaustion. So, higher the fairness of rewards within the firm, lower was work exhaustion among employees. Although the inverse direction showed that the hypothesis was substantial, nevertheless it was statistical insignificant.

Mediation Analysis. We used mediation analysis to test as recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986). Usually three conditions need to be met to prove mediating path (Baron & Kenny, 1986). First, independents (WFC and PWO) are related with mediator (WE). Second, mediator (WE) and dependent (TOI) variables are related with each other. Thirdly, according if direct significance level of relationship between independent and depend variables drops substantially in the presence of mediator then mediating path exists. Study used two alternative methods to prove mediation i.e. structured equation modeling and Sobel (1982) test. Two hypotheses were rejected i.e. 'WE mediates between JA' and TOI and 'WE mediates between FOR and TOI' as these hypotheses do not fulfill the first mediation condition. To find mediating path, the standardized beta coefficient of independent (perceived work overload) and mediating (work exhaustion) and dependent variables (Turnover intentions) were calculated to estimate the direct effect. The regression coefficients between PWO and WE ($\beta = .18, p < .01$), between PWO and TOI ($\beta = .10, p < .01$) and between WE and TOI ($\beta = .32, p < .01$) were found statistically significant to meet the first two conditions. The standardized indirect effect was $(.18) \times (.32) = .06$. Additionally, indirect effect was tested using bootstrapping procedures recommend by Hayes (2009) through Sobel test (1982). This statistic is also used to quantify the intervening effect of independent variables on dependents through mediating variable. The p-values were acquired from unit normal distribution under the assumption of two tailed test. The test assumes that

mediation effect is zero. Sobel test results at two levels were tested to explore mediating path of WE between PWO and TOI. The bootstrapped indirect effect through mediator varied from ($z=.10, p=.03$) to ($z=1.10, p=.02$) depending upon 5000 to 10,000 iterations. The Sobel test was found statically significant ($z=.61, p=.02$). Thus, the indirect effect was statistically significant and substantiated the mediating path of WE between PWO and TOI (see Table 3). To test second mediating hypothesis i.e. WE as mediator between WFC and TOI, the statistical procedure was repeated. The standardized regression coefficients between WFC and WE ($\beta =.41, p=.01$), between WFC and TOI ($\beta =.19, p=.01$) and between WE and TOI ($\beta =.32, p=.01$) were found statistically significant to meet the first two conditions. The standardized indirect effect was $(.41) (.32) = 0.13$. Sobel test was also repeated. The bootstrapped indirect effect through mediator varied from ($z=.21, p=.02$) to ($z=1.11, p=.02$) depending upon 5000 to 10,000 sample iterations. The Sobel test was statically significant ($z=.81, p=.03$). Thus, the indirect effect was found and hypothesis was substantiated the mediating path through work exhaustion between perceived work overload and turnover intentions.

Table 3
Sobel Test Results

Mediation Paths	Sobel Test Statistic	Results
1. PWO → WE → TI	0.61*	Hypothesis accepted
2. WFC → WE → TI	0.81*	Hypothesis accepted
4. JA → WE → TI	0.11	Hypothesis rejected
5. FOR → WE → TI	0.31	Hypothesis rejected

Note. Fairness of Rewards (FOR), Job Autonomy (JA), Perceived Work Overload (PWO), Work-Family Conflict (WFC), Work Exhaustion (WE), Turnover Intentions (TOI). $N= 281$. ** $p \leq .01$. * $p \leq .05$.

Discussion

We can safely conclude that on-the-job stressors are the major contributors to the work exhaustion leading to turnover among employees working at various bus services. Our theory suggested that factors like job autonomy, fairness of rewards, work-family conflict, work overload contribute to work exhaustion which further leads to turnover intentions. However our analysis suggested two significant factors i.e. work overload and work family conflict as important indicator of work exhaustion for employees working in Paksitnai bus services. In correlation analysis, we found that work exhaustion among the employees of bus services has two

reasons i.e. work-family conflict because usually the night timings of the bus routes demands employees to spend more time with organization, while employees feel sleepy and irritated during the day rest at home causing work family conflict. Similarly perceived work overload is also causing work exhaustion among employees of bus services. This is because due to demanding nature of job to stay active during 6-10 hours bus-run, both for bus drivers and hostesses were required to be active. Nonetheless two causes of work exhaustion i.e. job autonomy and fairness of rewards were rejected due to insignificant statistical results.

These findings were seemed to be logical as bus driver and hostess were bound to perform duty with changing shifts during month this have lesser job autonomy. Similarly no difference in monetary rewards for employees was found, however the bus terminal environment was important for female staff in Pakistan. Results also proved that work exhaustion mediates the relationship between independent variables (work family conflicts and perceived workoverload) and turnover intention. Our results are partially consistent with earlier studies (see for example Ahuja et al., 2007; Karatepe & Kilic 2015; Mauno et al, 2015; Moore, 2000; Sondhi et al., 2008). Job autonomy and fairness of rewards did not have any significant impact on the intensity of the work exhaustion in Pakistani firms. Sondhi et al. (2008) study found a negative but statistically significant linkage between within Indian firms, while in the Pakistani firms these two causes were found to be insignificant.

In view of mediation analysis, it is recommended that work exhaustion of employee needed to be addressed through perceived work overload. Furthermore work family conflicts needs to be addressed in order to reduce employee's turnover. The study is not without limitations. For example the respondents working in city areas might have different opinion from that of suburban areas. Another limitation was that our study neglected the supervisory effect on managing the stress of employees and motivating them. The supervisor can lead the behaviour of the employees and transform firm's values in order to manage the on-the-job and off-the-job stressors and role conflicts. Finally study missed the comparison based on gender as it was not the scope of our work but this future comparison may be helpful to explore additional role for employee's work exhaustion causing turnover among firm's employees.

On the basis of these limitations the future research can direct to the moderating role of the supervisors, gender and their influence on work exhaustion and turnover intention (Karatepe & Kilic 2015; Whitman et al., 2014). Another future research can be suggested

exploring the transformational role of a leader in eliminating the factors of work exhaustion and to increase the loyalty of the employees to the organization (Mauno et al, 2015; Noor & Maad, 2008). Additionally this research can be extended to public sector employees working in Pakistan international airlines and railway department to present the comparison among employees behavior in public and private sectors. The results of exhaustion among employees working in smaller cities like Bahawalpur, Multan, Faisalabad, Abbotabad can provide a reasonable direction for further examinations. Such cross-comparison can add the potential insights for Pakistani managers. Furthermore, the gender difference in the experience and management of work exhaustion help to assess whether men and women demonstrate similar theoretical frameworks. In this case the organizations will have to look at certain mechanisms for enhancing the work-life balance for labour force regardless of gender (Mauno et al, 2015).

The implications of this study are pretty certain for the organizations and policy makers. As work overload and work-family conflict are the major contributors to stress at work place. So to tackle these constraints organizations need to align the personal goals of the employees with the organizational goals by taking care of few factors stated in this research. This can decrease on-the-job and off-the-job stressors to reshape the behaviour of the employees, increase the performance of the employees and get reduced turnover by controlling for work exhaustion at workplace.

References

- Ahuja, M. K., Chudoba, K. M., Kacmar, C. J., McKnight, D. H., & George, J. F. (2007). IT road warriors: Balancing work-family conflict, job autonomy, and work overload to mitigate turnover intentions, *MIS Quarterly*, 31(1), 1-17.
- Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator–mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 51(6), 1173.
- Beehr, T. (1976). Perceived situational moderators of the relationship between subjective role ambiguity and role strain. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 61(1), 35-40.
- Burke, M. J., & Greenglass, E. (1995). A longitudinal study of psychological burnout in teachers. *Human Relations*, 48(2), 187-202.

- Fujimoto, Y., Ferdous, A. S., Sekiguchi, T., & Sugianto, L. F. (2016). The effect of mobile technology usage on work engagement and emotional exhaustion in Japan. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(9), 3315-3323.
- Hayes, A. F. (2009). Beyond Baron and Kenny: Statistical mediation analysis in the new millennium. *Communication Monographs*, 76(4), 408-420.
- Jackson, S. E., Schwab, R. L., & Schuler, R. S. (1986). Towards an understanding of the burnout phenomenon. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71(4), 630-640.
- Kanner, A. D., Kafry, D., & Pines, A. (1978). Conspicuous in its absence: The Lack of positive conditions as a source of stress. *Journal of Human Stress*, 4(4), 33-39.
- Li, A., Bagger, J., & Cropanzano, R. (2016). The impact of stereotypes and supervisor perceptions of employee work-family conflict on job performance ratings. *Human Relations*, 69(11), 1-18.
- Karatepe, O. M., & Kilic, H. (2015). Does manager support reduce the effect of work-family conflict on emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions?. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, 14(3), 267-289.
- Mauno, S., De Cuyper, N., Kinnunen, U., Ruokolainen, M., Rantanen, J., & Mäkikangas, A. (2015). The prospective effects of work-family conflict and enrichment on job exhaustion and turnover intentions: comparing long-term temporary vs. permanent workers across three waves. *Work & Stress*, 29(1), 75-94.
- Moore, J.E. (2000). One road to turnover: An examination of work exhaustion in technology professionals. *MIS Quarterly*, 24(1), 141-168.
- Morgeson, F. P., Delaney-Klinger, K., & Hemingway, M. A. (2005). The importance of job autonomy, cognitive ability, and job-related skill for predicting role breadth and job performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(2), 399-406.
- Noor, S., & Maad, N. (2008). Examining the relationship between work life conflict, stress and turnover intentions among marketing executives in Pakistan. *Journal of Business and Management*, 3(11), 93-102.
- Pallant, J. (2010). *SPSS Survival Manual 4th Edition: A step by step guide to data analysis using the SPSS program*. Österreich: Allen & Unwin Book Publisher.

- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: a critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 88*(5), 879-890.
- Saleem, I. (2014). Strategic management research: The missing linchpin in developing economy's context. *Business Review, 9*(2), 97-105
- Saleem, I. & Khurshid, A. (2014). Do human resource practices affect employee performance? *Pakistan business review, 15*(4), 669-688.
- Saleem, I. & Saleem, N. (2014). Mediating role of job satisfaction: Using new evidence to reconcile an old debate, *Journal of Behavioural Sciences, 24*(1), 130-149.
- Schwalbe, M. L. (1985). Autonomy in work and self-esteem. *The Sociological Quarterly, 26*(4), 519-535.
- Selye, H. (1975). Confusion and controversy in the stress field. *Journal of human stress, 1*(2), 37-44.
- Shantz, A., Arevshatian, L., Alfes, K., & Bailey, C. (2016). The effect of HRM attributions on emotional exhaustion and the mediating roles of job involvement and work overload. *Human Resource Management Journal, 26*(2), 172-191.
- Siddique I., Saleem I., & Abbas S. A. (2016). SMEs business growth model and mediating role of market orientation. *Pakistan Business Review, 17*(4), 845-862.
- Sobel, M.E. (1982). Asymptomatic intervals for indirect effects in structural equation models. In Steinhart (Ed.) *Sociological Methodology* (pp 290-312). San Francisco: Jassy-Bass
- Sondhi, N., Chawla, D., Jain, P., & Kashyap, M. (2008). Work-exhaustion - a consequential framework: validating the model in the Indian context. *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations, 43*(4), 547-573.
- Stoner, M. P., & Kim, H. P. (2008). Burnout and turnover intention among social workers: effects of role stress, job autonomy and social support. *Administration in Social Work, 32*(3), 5-25.
- Whitman, M. V., Halbesleben, J. R., & Holmes, O. (2014). Abusive supervision and feedback avoidance: The mediating role of emotional exhaustion. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 35*(1), 38-53.

Received September 26, 2014
Revisions received October 03, 2016