CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, SUGGESTIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH AVENUES
The present study aims to find out the impact of personal and work characteristics, antecedents of occupational stress and burnout and the levels of occupational stress and burnout among salespeople. It also focuses on finding out the impact of stress and burnout on job satisfaction, job performance, organizational commitment, shifting of personal resources and intention to leave among salespeople. The study investigated the antecedents and consequences of burnout. To achieve the research objectives, statistical analysis has been performed wherein demographic and descriptive analysis were conducted and relationships between the variables were tested.

5.1 Summary of Findings

First of all, the demographic analysis was conducted to assess the characteristics of the respondents such as their age, education, experience and organizational hierarchy. The demographic analysis suggests that majority of the respondents were single males, in the age group of less than 30 years, highly educated, with the work experience of 5-15 years and with the annual income of less than 7 lakhs per annum. Majority of them are sales executive.

The findings of the analysis suggest that the data collected was highly reliable and sound. This was assessed with the help of reliability analysis using Cronbach Alpha.

The descriptive analysis conducted suggests that respondents agree with organizational commitment, job satisfaction and intention to leave as crucial components in order to increase productivity. It was observed that respondents strongly agree with salesperson performance organizational commitment and job satisfaction as the most important parameters. It was computed that the respondents agree with empowerment, transformational leadership and social support as the most vital parameters. It was observed that the respondents strongly agree with intrinsic motivation and personal characteristics as the most crucial components. Consideration, work characteristics, autonomy and feedback were observed to be the most important criteria.
Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between antecedents of job stress and dimensions of job stress and burnout. The relationship between dimensions of burnout and its consequences was also observed. Also, the relationship between personal and work characteristics and antecedents of burnout was also assessed.

It was observed that role conflict has a significant relationship with role ambiguity, role overload, intrinsic motivation, type A person and personal characteristics.

Role ambiguity shares a significant relationship with role conflict, role overload, occupational stress, type A person, locus of control. Similarly, role overload has a significant relationship with role conflict, role ambiguity, occupational stress, intrinsic motivation, locus of control.

Locus of Control was observed to have a significant relationship with role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, occupational stress, intrinsic motivation, type A person. Personal characteristics has a significant relationship with role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, occupational stress, intrinsic motivation, type A person and locus of control.

It was observed that role conflict has a significant relationship with work characteristics such as feedback, autonomy and consideration. Further, role ambiguity shares a significant relationship with role conflict, role overload, occupational stress, autonomy, consideration.

Occupational stress shares a significant relationship with role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, feedback, autonomy, and work characteristics.

Feedback shares a significant relationship with role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, occupational stress, autonomy, consideration and work characteristics. Autonomy shares a significant relationship with role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, occupational stress, feedback, consideration and work characteristics. Consideration has a significant relationship with role conflict, role ambiguity, role
overload, occupational stress, feedback, autonomy and work characteristics. Work characteristics has a significant relationship with role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, feedback, autonomy, autonomy and consideration.

Also, it was found that emotional exhaustion shares a significant relationship with depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishments, burnout dimensions, empowerment, transformational leadership, social support.

A significant relationship was observed between depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, reduced personal accomplishments, burnout dimensions, empowerment, transformational leadership, social support.

Burnout dimensions have a significant relationship with emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishments, empowerment, transformational leadership, social support.

Intrinsic motivation shares a significant relationship with role ambiguity and personal characteristics.

Type A person shares a significant relationship with role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, occupational stress, intrinsic motivation, locus of control and personal characteristics. Locus of Control has a significant relationship with role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, occupational stress, intrinsic motivation, type A person, and personal characteristics.

A significant relationship was found between organizational commitment, Job satisfaction, sales person performance, Shifting Personal Resources, Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, Reduced Personal Accomplishments and Burnout Dimensions.

For Job Satisfaction, it was determined that it has a significant relationship with Organizational Commitment, salesperson performance, Shifting Personal Resources,
Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, Reduced Personal Accomplishments and Burnout Dimensions.

In context to salesperson performance it was found that Organizational Commitment, Job satisfaction, Shifting Personal Resource, Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, Reduced Personal Accomplishments and Burnout Dimensions have a significant relationship with it.

For Shifting Personal resources, it was observed that there exists a significant relationship with Organizational Commitment, Job satisfaction, salesperson performance, Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, Reduced Personal Accomplishments and Burnout Dimensions.

It was observed that there exists a significant relationship among all the three parameters namely, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and intention to leave, wherein either entity shares a strong relationship with each other.

Regression analysis was also conducted to analyze the impact of personal and work characteristics, antecedents of job stress and burnout on job stress and burnout and the impact of job stress and burnout on job satisfaction, job performance, organizational commitment, shifting of personal resources and intention to leave.

It was observed that there exists a significant impact of job satisfaction and organizational commitment on the intention to leave. It helps us to understand that there exists a significant impact of organizational commitment on job performance. It was determined that there exists a significant impact of job satisfaction on the intention to leave.

It was observed that there exists a significant impact on organizational commitment due to emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishments. Also, there exists a significant impact on job satisfaction due to reduced personal accomplishments. Depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishments showcase a significant impact on salesperson performance.
It was found that there exists a significant impact on shifting personal resources due to emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishments.

Burnout dimensions have a significant impact on organizational commitment and shifting personal resources. There exists a significant impact on job satisfaction due to burnout dimensions. It was determined that there exists a significant impact on salesperson performance due to burnout dimensions.

A significant impact of role conflict and role ambiguity on burnout dimensions. It was observed that there exists a significant impact of occupational stress on burnout dimension. It was determined that role ambiguity has a significant impact on emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishments. Also, it was observed that occupational stress has a significant impact on emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishments.

It was observed that empowerment and social support have a significant impact on burnout dimensions. It was observed that empowerment and social support have a significant impact on emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishments. Depersonalization has significant impact of empowerment and social support. Type A person and locus of control tend to exhibit a significant impact on occupational stress, role ambiguity, role overload and role conflict.

Role ambiguity witnessed a significant impact by feedback, autonomy and consideration. It was observed that feedback, autonomy and consideration have no significant impact on role overload.

ANOVA analysis was conducted to analyze the statistical difference among burnout variables based on demographic characteristics of the respondents. With the help of ANOVA analysis, it could be determined that there exists a statistical difference on the basis of gender for three different parameters such as empowerment, burnout dimensions and organizational commitment.
However, the other remaining parameters viz. intrinsic motivation, type A person, locus of control, personality and work characteristics1, feedback, autonomy, consideration, personality and work characteristics2, transformational leadership, social support, personality and work characteristics 3, role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, occupational stress, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishments, salesperson performance, shifting personal resources, intention to leave have exhibited an insignificant statistical difference.

ANOVA performed on the basis of marital status of the respondents helped us to zero down the following results.

There exists a significant statistical difference for the different parameters namely, type A person, locus of control, personality and work characteristics1, feedback, autonomy, consideration, work characteristics, empowerment, transformational leadership, social support, personality and work characteristics 3, role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, occupational stress, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishments, burnout dimensions, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, salesperson performance and shifting personal resources.

Also, it was observed that there exists no statistical difference on the basis of different educational qualification of respondents.

The ANOVA analysis performed on the basis of work tenure helped us to retrieve the following results. A significant statistical difference was observed for the different parameters namely, type A person, locus of control, personality and work characteristics1, feedback, autonomy, consideration, work characteristics, empowerment, transformational leadership, social support, personality and work characteristics 3, role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, occupational stress, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishments, burnout dimensions, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, salesperson performance, shifting personal resources and intention to leave.
On the basis of work tenure, the ANOVA analysis helped us to retrieve the following results. A significant statistical difference was observed for the different parameters namely, type A person, locus of control, personal characteristics, feedback, autonomy, consideration, work characteristics, empowerment, transformational leadership, social support, personality and work characteristics, role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, occupational stress, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishments, burnout dimensions, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, salesperson performance, shifting personal resources, and intention to leave.

Lastly, it was observed that there significant statistical difference on the basis of organizational hierarchy for the different variables such as type A person, personality and work characteristics, autonomy, personality and work characteristics, empowerment, transformational leadership, social support, personality and work characteristics, role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, occupational stress, emotional exhaustion, reduced personal accomplishments, burnout dimensions, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, salesperson performance.

5.2 Discussion

Objective 1 - To identify the antecedents and outcomes of occupational stress and examine their relationships contributing to sales people burnout

The various antecedents of occupational stress were found to be role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload. Apart from these, personal and work characteristics also impact the job stress and burnout among salespeople. The literature also revealed that transformational leadership, empowerment and social support are also antecedents of job burnout.

The outcomes of job stress and burnout were revealed to be job satisfaction, job performance, organizational commitment, shifting of personal resources directly and intention to leave among salespeople, indirectly.
Personal and work characteristics were found to have a positive significant relationship with antecedents of burnout, that is, role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload.

Antecedents of burnout such as role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload have a significant relationship with dimension of burnout.

Burnout dimensions have a significant relationship with variables like Empowerment Transformational leadership and social support. Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Reduced Personal Accomplishments exhibited the most significant relationship with Burnout Dimensions.

Also, the burnout dimensions are significantly related to job satisfaction, job performance, organizational commitment, shifting of personal resources and intention to leave.

Various researchers in the literature have reported that role ambiguity and role conflict have a significant contribution to job burnout (Schaufeli and Buunk, 2003; Schwab and Iwanicki 1982; Jackson et al., 1986). Brookings and colleagues (1985) established that role ambiguity has a relationship with all three burnout dimensions - emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment and depersonalization.

On the same lines of the findings of the present study, many studies have found that occupational stress has an impact on the job satisfaction of employees (Um and Harrison, 1998; Vinokur-Kaplan, 1991). A negative relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction was reported by many studies (Miles, 1976; Miles and Petty, 1976; Hollon and Chessor, 1976).

Similarly, in line with the results of the study, many studies have portrayed a negative relationship between organizational commitment and job stress (Lee 2007, Lambert and Paoline, 2009; Omolara, 2008; Boyasand Wind, 2009). Studies have also reported a positive relationship between organizational commitment and job stress, in contrast to the results of the present study (Wells et al., 2009; Jaramillo et al., 2005).
Some studies in the literature have found that performance of employees is adversely affected due to acute stressors while others have depicted enhanced performance (Cumming and Harris, 2001; LeBlanc et al., 2005; LeBlanc et al., 2008; Macan et al., 1990).

Studies have found that satisfaction is inversely related to intent to leave and turnover (Arnold and Feldman, 1982; Bluedom, 1982; Williams, 1986) and that organizational commitment and congruence of goals improves the likelihood of employees to stay in the organization (Mowday, Steers, and Porter, 1979; Joo, 2010). These results completely support the findings of the current study.

**Objective 2 - To determine the level of burnout experienced by sales people and examine how personal and work related factors contribute to burnout, and how burnout results in the shifting of personal resources.**

The level of burnout experienced by salespeople was found to be very low in a way that the dimensions of burnout, that is, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishments had low mean values.

The personal factors such as intrinsic motivation, Type A personality, locus of control and demographics were found to have a significant impact on the antecedents of burnout, that is, role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload.

The work characteristics such as feedback, autonomy and consideration also have a significant impact on the antecedents of burnout, that is, role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload.

Studies in the literature also support the findings that personal and work related characteristics have a significant impact on job burnout. A study by Hackman and Oldham (1980) portrayed that work characteristics like skill variety, task significance, task identification, autonomy and feedback contribute to job burnout.
Personal characteristics of people also affect burnout as portrayed in the literature. Keaveney and Nelson (1993) and Low et al., (2001) found that intrinsic motivation has a negative impact on burnout. Many researchers have found an inverse relationship between intrinsic motivation and burnout (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Fernet et al., 2008).


Similar to the results of the study, literature also suggests that burnout leads to a situation when a person does not have sufficient resources to fulfill the job demands (Demerouti et al., 2001; Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).

**Objective 3 - To assess the role of empowerment, transformational-leadership and social support in influencing sales people burnout and the impact of burnout on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, performance and intention to leave.**

It was observed that empowerment, transformational leadership and social support have a significant impact on burnout dimensions. It was observed that there exists a significant impact of empowerment and social support on reduced depersonalization, personal accomplishments and emotional exhaustion but transformational leadership has an insignificant impact on depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishments and emotional exhaustion.

It was observed that burnout dimensions have a significant impact on organizational commitment. There exists a significant impact on job satisfaction due to burnout dimensions. A significant impact was observed on salesperson performance due to burnout dimensions (Depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishments). Organizational commitment was impacted due to emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishments. It was determined that there exists a significant impact on job satisfaction due to reduced personal accomplishments.
It was found that there exists a significant impact on shifting personal resources due to emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishments.

Many studies have found that supervisors support to the subordinates can result in controlling stress among employees (Perlman and Hartman 1982, Golembiewski et al., 1986, Numerof 1983; Kirmeyer and Dougherty 1988). It was found in the literature that high level of support from the supervisors may reduce emotional exhaustion and improve performance of the employees (Kirmeyer and Dougherty 1988, Schmieder and Smith 1996; Nissly, Mor Barak, and Levin, 2005; Burke et al., 1996; Burke and Greenglass, 1993; Greenglass et al., 1994).

Studies have reported transformational leadership contributes in reducing the stress (Bass, 1998; Shamir et al., 1993; George, 2000; Seltzer, Numerof, and Bass, 1989). Transformational leadership has been found to reduce emotional exhaustion (Sargent and Terry, 2000). Similar to the results of the present study, various studies in the literature have found that transformational leadership reduces frustration among employees and improves their performance at work (Bass, 1985; Krishnan, 2004; Sujan et al., 1994; MacKenzie et al., 2001).

Empowerment of employees has been found to reduce stress (Savery, and Luks, 2001; Johnson, 1997; Ripley and Ripley, 1993). A negative relationship between empowerment and burnout was found in the literature (Laschinger et al., 2003; Hochwälder and Bergsten-Brucefors, 2005). The results in the literature match the results of the study.

The test results reveal that the burnout levels of depersonalization, reduced accomplishments and emotional exhaustion are low among salespeople while the level of job satisfaction, job performance and organizational commitment are high. Majority of the salespeople have high intrinsic motivation, locus of control, autonomy, feedback and consideration. Transformational leadership, social support and empowerment were also observed to be high in majority of the salespeople.
It was found that burnout dimensions differ based on gender. It is found to be higher in females than in males. Organizational commitment is higher in females while males lead in job performance.

Personal and work characteristics differ based on marital status. It was found that single salespeople have higher locus of control as compared to married ones. Feedback, autonomy and consideration are found to be higher in married salespeople.

Also, transformational leadership, empowerment and social support were found to be high in married salespeople than single salespeople. Occupational stress and burnout levels measured by role ambiguity, role overload and role conflict were found to be higher in singles than in married salespeople.

Married salespeople were found to have higher job performance, job satisfaction and organizational commitment than their single counterparts. However, intention to leave was higher in single salespeople.

Salespeople of age more than 45 years have highest locus of control, feedback, autonomy and consideration. Empowerment, transformational leadership and social support was also found to be highest for this age group. Organizational commitment, job satisfaction and job performance are high in people of this age group.

Occupational stress and burnout dimensions such as depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishments and emotional exhaustion was found to be highest was younger salespeople who belong to the age group of less than 30 years. Role ambiguity, role overload and role conflict was also highest for people in this age group. Intention to leave is highest for the younger age group, that is, less than 30 years.

Personal characteristics such as intrinsic motivation, locus of control, type of personality and work characteristics such as autonomy, feedback and consideration is highest among salespeople having work experience of more than 15 years. Empowerment, transformational leadership and social support was also found to be
highest for this group. The same group was found to have higher job performance, job satisfaction and organizational commitment than their counterparts.

Role ambiguity, role overload and role conflict and Occupational stress and burnout dimensions such as depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishments and emotional exhaustion was highest for people having work experience of less than 5 years. These people also have the highest intention to leave.

Personal characteristics such as locus of control, type of personality and work characteristics such as autonomy, feedback and consideration is highest among salespeople having annual income of more than 15 lakhs per annum. Empowerment, transformational leadership and social support was also found to be highest for this group. Role ambiguity, role overload and role conflict and Occupational stress and burnout dimensions such as depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishments and emotional exhaustion was highest for people having an annual income of less than 7 lakhs per annum. These people also have the highest intention to leave. Organizational commitment, job satisfaction and job performance was highest for people with the income of 7-15 lakhs per annum.

Personal characteristics such as intrinsic motivation, locus of control, type of personality and work characteristics such as autonomy, feedback and consideration is highest among sales executive. Empowerment, transformational leadership and social support was also found to be highest for this group. The same group was found to have higher job performance, job satisfaction and organizational commitment than their counterparts.

Role ambiguity, role overload and role conflict and Occupational stress and burnout dimensions such as depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishments and emotional exhaustion was highest for sales managers. These people also have the highest intention to leave.
5.3 Conclusion

The study analyzed the antecedents and consequences of job stress and burnout. The level of burnout experienced by sales people was assessed and it was found that sales people under consideration experience a low level of burnout. The job satisfaction, job performance and organizational commitment were found to be high among salespeople.

The personal and work related factors have been found to contribute to burnout which results in the shifting of personal resources. The role of empowerment, transformational-leadership and social support in influencing sales people burnout was assessed and a significant impact was found. The outcomes of burnout in the form of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance and intention to leave were examined. It was revealed that job stress and burnout has a negative impact on job satisfaction, job performance, organizational commitment and it leads to intention to turnover among salespeople.

Married senior managers, in the age group of more than 45 years, with work experience of more than 15 years and income between 7-15 lakhs per annum have been found to be intrinsically motivated, have high locus of control, have high autonomy, consideration, empowerment, transformational leadership and social support which results in low job stress and burnout and high level of job satisfaction, job performance and organizational commitment. Also, they have low intention to leave.

5.4 Implications

The findings of the study have certain important implications for the organizations and researchers. The results of the study indicate the importance of social support from supervisors and peers. To improve the job satisfaction, job performance, organizational commitment and reduce turnover intention among employees, their burnout levels must be controlled by the managers. The results of the study provide sales companies with a better understanding of the impact of individual characteristics
of the salesperson on job stress and burnout. Moreover, the managers, especially the sales managers, can develop a better understanding of job burnout and manage it to allow the salesperson to perform better and avoid negative consequences of burnout such as low job satisfaction, job performance and organizational commitment. The managers get an understanding that single and younger people are more prone to burnout. In order to avoid burnout, the sales companies are required to invest on additional trainings, seminars and workshops for their salespeople to reduce their burnout levels.

5 Suggestions

The positive effect of social support on the employee enhances the quality of work, improves the work environment and reduces stress levels among the employees. Therefore, the senior managers and HRs must make sure that a level of social support is maintained in the organization to encourage employees and reduce their burnout levels.

Transformational leadership has been found to have a significant impact on the reduction of stress levels that implies that managers should adopt this approach to reduce the burnout levels of the employees. Intrinsic motivation, type A personality and locus of control also have a significant impact on the burnout levels among employees implying that managers should employ salespeople with this kind of personality to improve the sales since these kind of employees are self-motivated and can deal with stress.

Salespeople must be given proper feedback, autonomy and consideration to reduce their stress levels. Role conflict, role ambiguity and overload must be minimized to reduce the burnout levels since these are positively associated.

Moreover, married senior managers, in the age group of more than 45 years, with work experience of more than 15 years are the people with less job stress and burnout. This demographic group must be focused upon since they experience less burnout and are self-encouraged.
The sales companies should invest on additional trainings, seminars and workshops for their salespeople to reduce their burnout levels.

5.6 Limitations

The study focuses on the stress and burnout level among only one professional group, that is, salespeople. The salespeople in this study were taken from single industry, so there is a possibility that the questionnaire was predominantly filled in by salespersons from one or few larger firms. Although burnout is considered to be high in human service organizations, it would be worth conducting similar research among other professional groups such as nurses, teachers etc. to see whether our findings still hold. The representative sample could have been increased to enhance the understanding of the burnout phenomenon. The study only considers single geographical area, that is, Delhi-NCR. Other regions and industries needs to be explored.

5.7 Future Scope of Work

The antecedents and consequences of job stress and burnout among salespeople were assessed. This can be done for other professionals and in other fields. Other geographical areas and industries can also be considered to expand the scope of the study. More antecedents and outcome variables can be considered from literature and more demographic characteristics can also be included.