
Exploring Program Directors' and Faculty's Perception and Factors Leading to Burnout in Higher Education Institutions in Azerbaijan

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What is Burnout?

Emotional tiredness, depression, and decreased personal achievement (Maslach & Jackson, 1986)

Feeling depressed, hopeless and exhausted (Akbaba, 2014)

According to World Health Organization (WHO), it is a syndrome caused by chronic workplace stress which has not been reduced on time (Montgomery et al., 2019).



Problem Statement

- Though the concept of burnout was introduced in 1974, it has not been explored in Azerbaijan so far.
- Burnout may impact not only instructors but also other stakeholders in higher education (HE) in Azerbaijan.
- The senior administration in higher education institutions (HEIs) need to understand this concept and find ways to support both program directors and faculty.

Research Purpose

to provide a foundation to the concept of burnout in Azerbaijan

to explore how program directors and faculty perceived the concept of burnout

to identify the factors contributed to burnout among program directors and instructors in three HEIs in Baku

Research Questions

1. How do program directors working in three higher education institutions (HEIs) in Baku perceive the concept of burnout?
2. How do faculty working in three HEIs in Baku perceive the concept of burnout?
3. What factors contribute to burnout among program directors and faculty in three HEIs in Baku?



Theoretical Framework



**Multidimensional
Theory**



Three core components:

Emotional Exhaustion

Depersonalization

*Reduced Personal
Accomplishment*



**The Maslach Burnout
Inventory (MBI)**

Research Methodology



AN EXPLORATORY
QUALITATIVE
RESEARCH
DESIGN



PARTICIPANTS
3 EFL
INSTRUCTORS
AND 3 PROGRAM
DIRECTORS



RESEARCH
INSTRUMENTS:

1. SEMI –STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS
2. OBSERVATION
3. DOCUMENT REVIEW

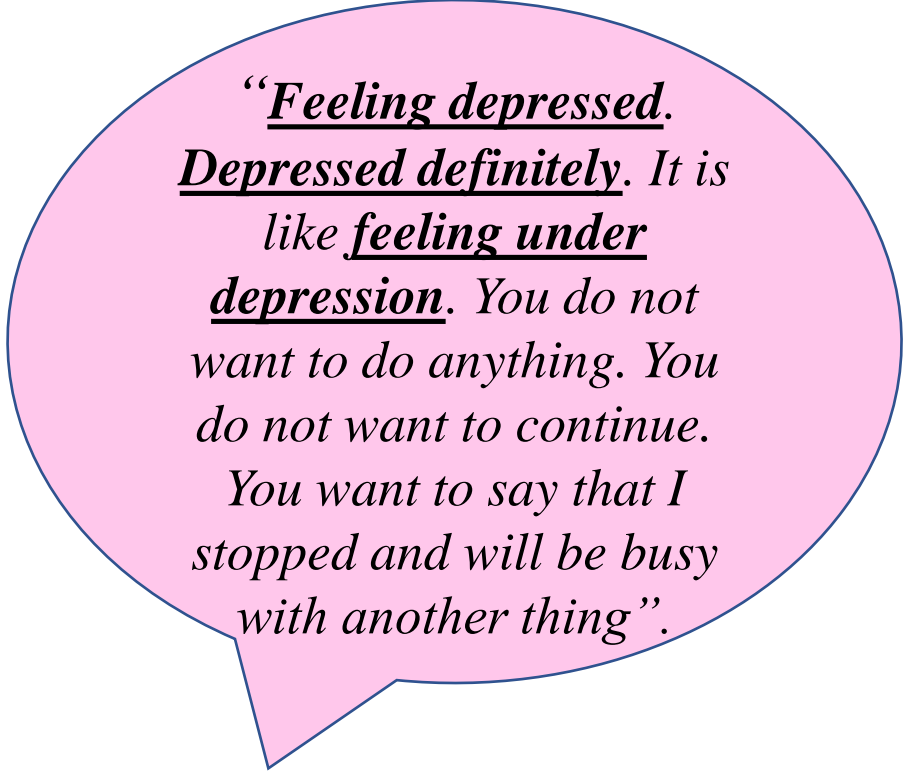
Findings:

Research Question 1:

How do program directors working in three higher education institutions (HEIs) in Baku perceive the concept of burnout?

All three program directors defined burnout as feeling:
depressed, trying to control feelings, and being involved in other activities.

A program director, Fidan,
strongly supported this definition.



“Feeling depressed. Depressed definitely. It is like feeling under depression. You do not want to do anything. You do not want to continue. You want to say that I stopped and will be busy with another thing”.

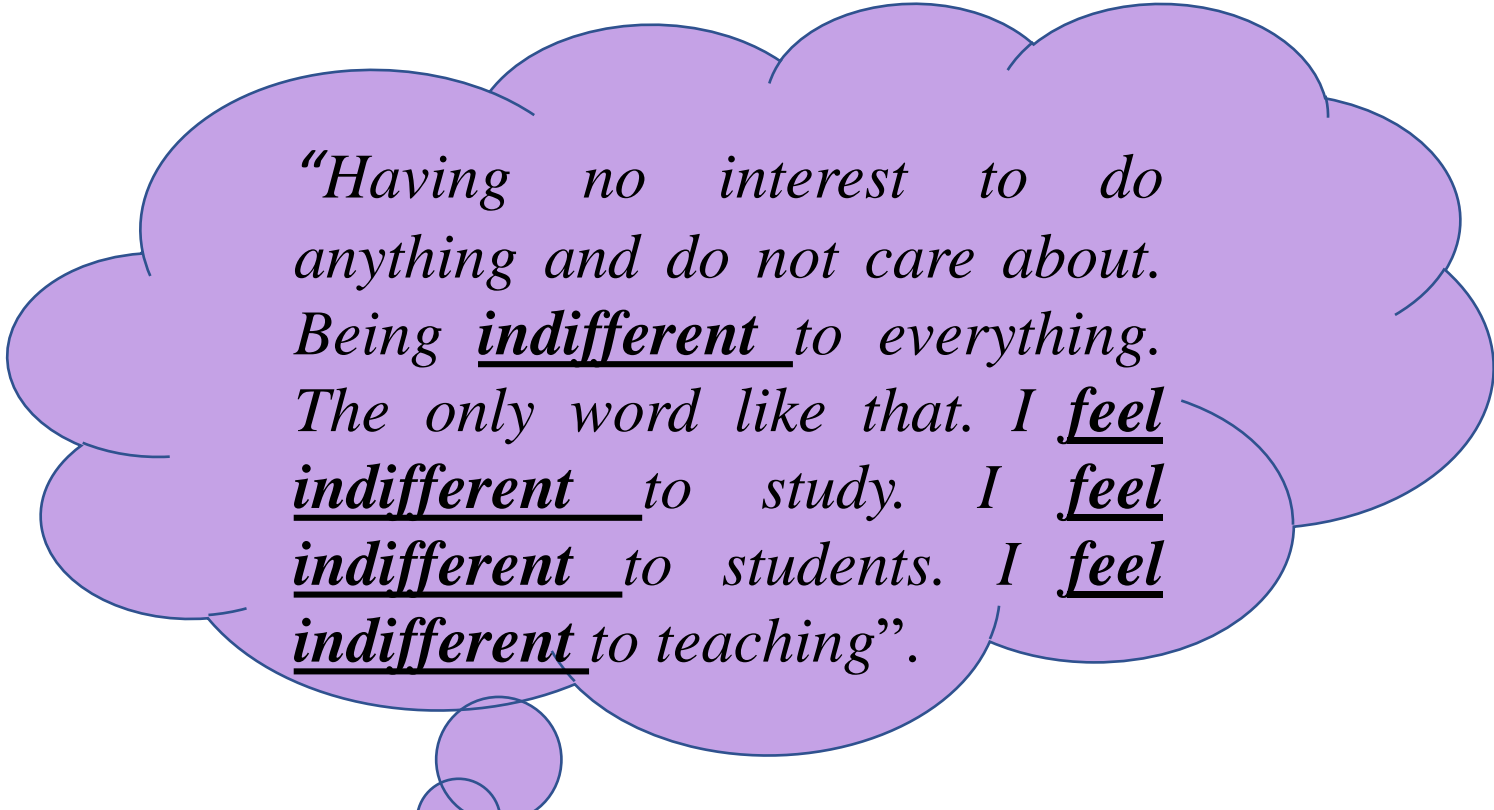
Research Question 2:

How do instructors working in three higher education institutions (HEIs) in Baku perceive the concept of burnout?

Burnout was defined as being:

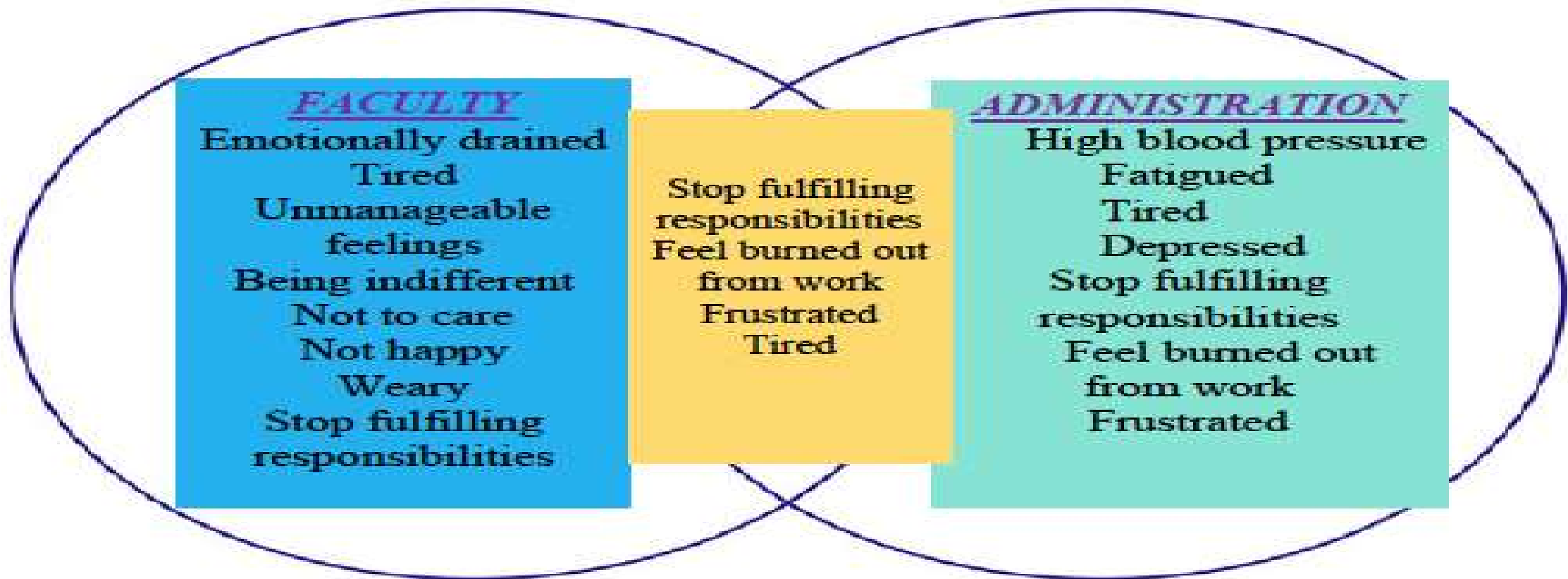
indifferent, tired, unmotivated, and unable to perform desired activities.

Aysu, an instructor, said:



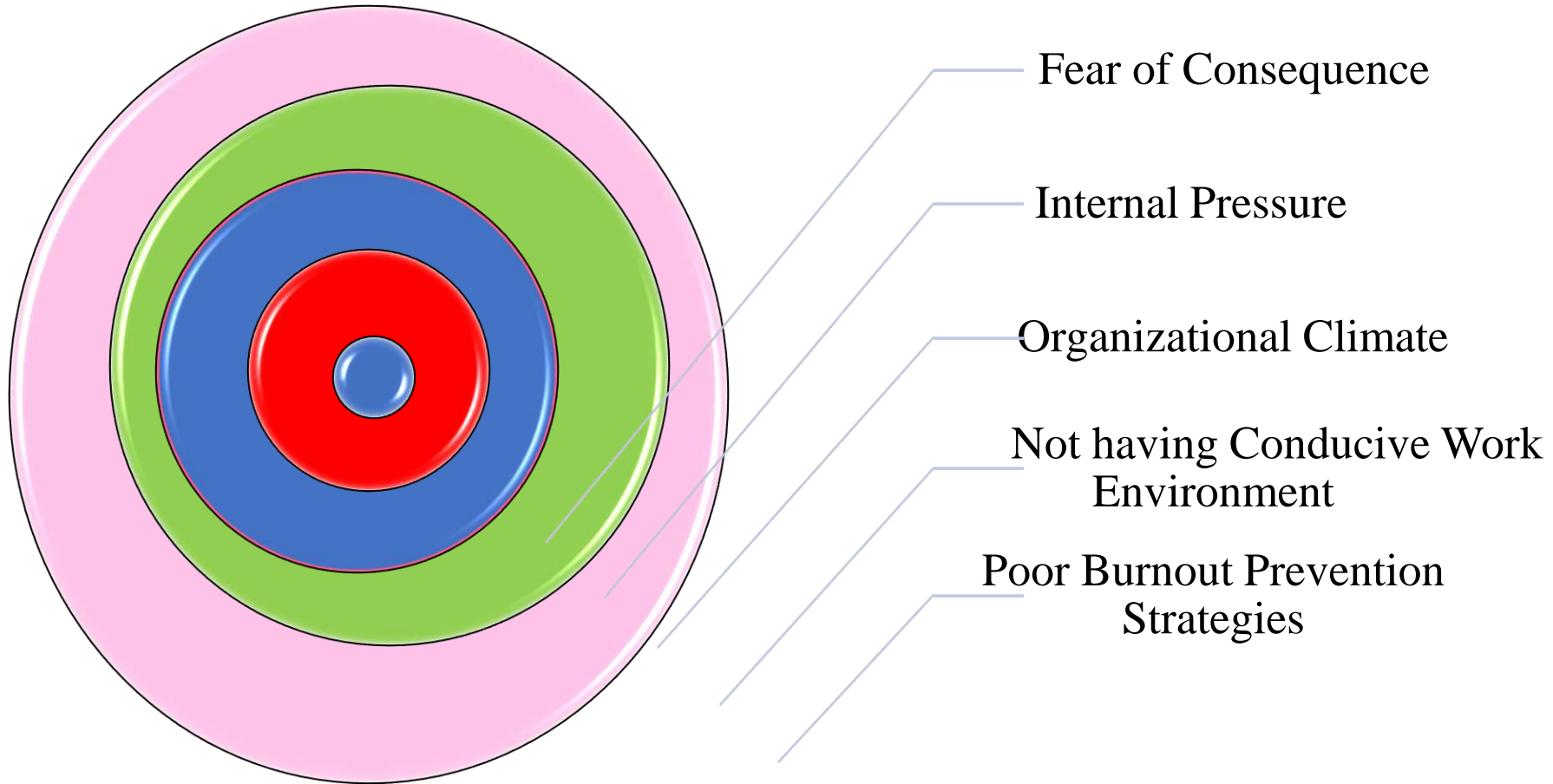
“Having no interest to do anything and do not care about. Being indifferent to everything. The only word like that. I feel indifferent to study. I feel indifferent to students. I feel indifferent to teaching”.

Diagram 1. Examples of words used to describe burnout



Research Question 3:

What factors contribute to burnout among program directors and faculty in three HEIs in Baku?



▪ ***Theme 1. Fear of Consequences***

not confident or even afraid to express their feelings and thoughts

▪ ***Theme 2. Internal Pressure***

factors causing internal pressure:

deadlines, grading, workload, overload, bureaucratic rules, worrying what others will say about them, and trying to keep everything under control

▪ ***Theme 3. Organizational Climate***

a lack of autonomy, too much observation, deadlines, and extra work which was not related to their job responsibilities

- ***Theme 4. Not Having a Conducive Work Environment***

lower sense of belonging to their organization where they worked

- ***Theme 5: Poor Burnout Prevention Strategies***

- Strategies to Overcome Burnout:

- *Taking Medicine* ▪

- *Trying to Rest*

- *Not Complaining*

- *Watching Movies*

- *Hoping for a better Future*

Summary of the Factors Leading to Burnout

Fear of

Consequence:

not being able to express thoughts openly;
hiding one's feelings;
not to be sure in the correctness of her decision;
being misunderstood

Internal

Pressure:

deadlines;
grading;
workload;
overload;
bureaucratic rules;
worrying what others will say about;
trying to keep everything under control

Organizational

Climate:

lack of autonomy;
too much observation;
had to keep deadlines;
complete extra work which was not related to their job responsibilities

Not having a

Conducive

Work

Environment.

feeling judged;
being obliged to grade extra papers;
blaming each other;
not valuing employees' autonomy and ideas

Poor

Burnout

Prevention

Strategies.

taking a medicine;
not getting out of control at the workplace;
closing the door

Summary of Major Findings

Both program directors and faculty had burnout;
did not know how to deal with burnout.

High feeling of Emotional Exhaustion & Depersonalization;
Low feeling of Personal Accomplishment.

Qualified program directors & instructors;
love their profession and care about their students;
burned out.

Discussion and Implications

Emotional overload is the foundation of burnout syndrome (Maslach et al.,1996).

Finding: program directors and instructors were mostly suffering from Emotional Exhaustion.

Insufficient support from administration leads to job dissatisfaction and frustration (Billingsley and Mcleskey, 2004).

Finding: Instructors' opinions were underestimated by the administration

Workload and stress is a source of burnout (Dillon and Tanner, 1995).

Finding: Program Directors: teaching & fulfilling administrative responsibilities & completing extra work was difficult.

Instructors: Because of grading and deadlines, did not get enough sleep and had to hurry all the time.



- **Finding:**

- Participants loved teaching; however, because of internal pressure, they were stressed and demotivated.

- **Finding:**

- Even though participants were suffering from burnout, they were able to teach with passion.

- **Finding:**

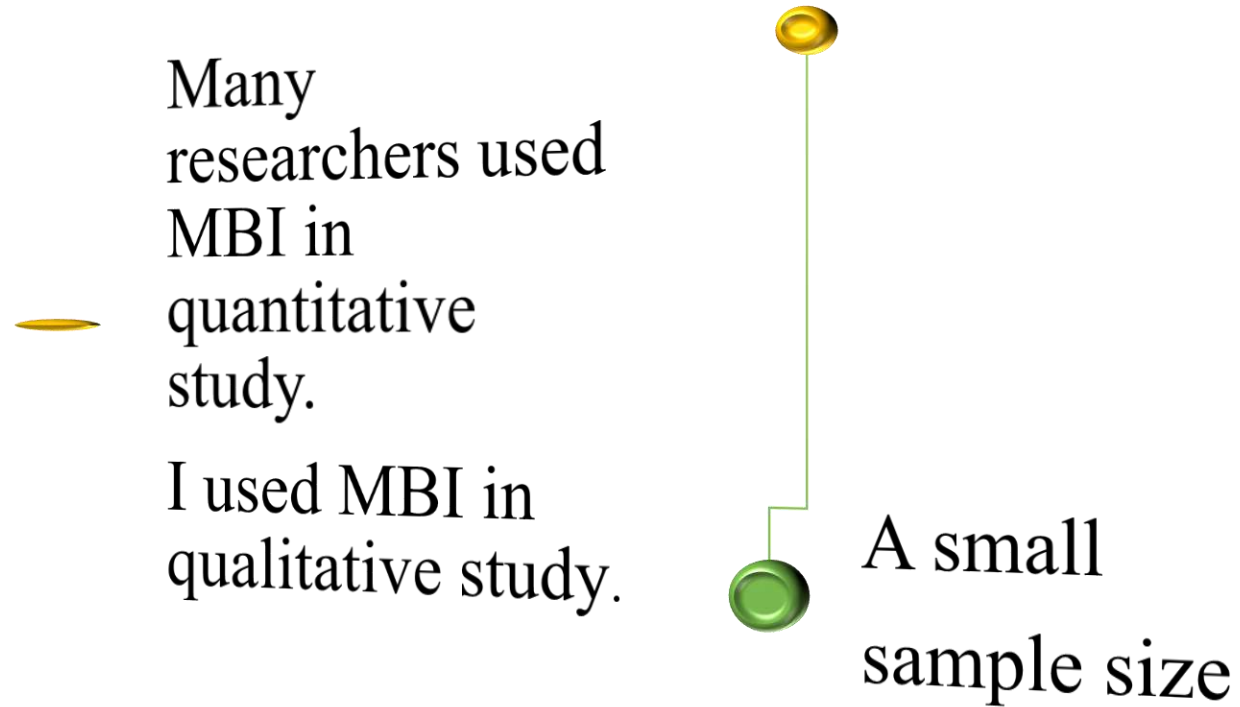
- Participants had minimum 12 years of experience.

Internal pressure is mentioned as a main source of burnout (Procter & Procter, 2013).

Burned out instructor could not teach effectively (Farber, 1991; Weiskopf, 1980).

Burnout mostly appears after 15 years of working in the field (Vandenberghe et al., 1999)

Limitations and Gaps in the Research



Significance of the Research



to understand burnout at deeper levels



to understand the importance of
leadership support.



to provide enough information



to find the ways of support.

Suggested Two Actions Programs:

Direct action programs

Palliatives action programs
(Kyriacou (1987), Dunham (1983), and Gmelch (1983)).

Palliative techniques are grouped into:

Mental techniques

Physical techniques
(Vandenberghé et al., 1999).

Summary and Recommendation

**Promote a
conducive work
environment for all
program directors
and faculty**

**Invest in
Professional
development
training**

Acknowledge that burnout exists though it is a new concept in Azerbaijan & It has negative effects on program directors' and faculty's personal and professional lives.

Thank you!

