

Fatigue and Self-Identity Among Urban Sanitation Workers

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ABSTRACT

Urban sanitation workers are an essential yet marginalized group of the public labor force, working under physically challenging conditions, environmentally harmful conditions, and occupational stigma. In spite of being very essential in maintaining public hygiene and health, little attention is paid to the mental state of sanitation workers. The current paper investigates the influence of fatigue (as occupational burnout) on self identity of sanitation workers in the city of Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. For this purpose, a quantitative cross-sectional study design was adopted, involving 150 full-time sanitation workers (age 25-55 years; 55.3% female). Burnout was measured by means of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) developed by Maslach and Jackson in 1981. The MBI includes three dimensions that are emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and decreased personal achievement. The Robson Self Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) created by Robson in 1989 was used to measure the self identity dimension. Both tools were translated into Tamil language. The tests were completed during employees' breaks. Positive correlations emerged between burnout and depersonalization ($r = .350, p < .01$) as well as between burnout and personal achievement ($r = .291, p < .01$). In addition, positive associations emerged between burnout and self identity resilience ($r = .239, p < .01$), demonstrating that when individuals experience burnout, they not only distance themselves from work but also find ways to cope with their stressors by activating their resilience. The results revealed that occupational stress correlates with self identity in a way that is complicated and contradictory for employees working under stigma and engaging in physically strenuous labor.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Urban sanitation workers form the backbone of public health systems by maintaining cleanliness and hygiene in rapidly growing cities. Despite their essential role, workers under urban face physically demanding conditions, environmental hazards, irregular schedules, and social stigma, fostering chronic fatigue and psychological stress. These occupational stressors may erode self identity over time; thus, the present study examines fatigue's impact on self identity among these workers, emphasizing fatigue awareness.

Fatigue is a complex, multidimensional construct extensively studied in clinical psychology, health psychology, and occupational mental health. In modern urban societies, escalating work demands, rapid industrialization, and socioeconomic pressures exacerbate fatigue among workers in demanding roles.

Beyond transient tiredness, chronic fatigue entails persistent physical exhaustion, cognitive weariness, emotional depletion, and motivational decline, closely tied to stress disorders, mood disturbances, impaired functioning, and diminished quality of life.

Psychological literature conceptualizes fatigue as a state arising from prolonged exposure to internal and external stressors that surpass an individual's coping resources (Boksem & Tops, 2008). In the present study, fatigue serves as a central psychological variable capturing both physical exhaustion and mental weariness stemming from occupational demands. Boksem and Tops (2008) describe fatigue as a breakdown in self regulatory mechanisms, resulting in diminished cognitive control, emotional dysregulation, and reduced task engagement. In occupational contexts, fatigue typically arises from extended working hours, repetitive tasks, inadequate recovery time, suboptimal working conditions, and insufficient organizational support. When unaddressed, occupational fatigue may progress to severe psychological conditions including burnout, depression, and anxiety, positioning it as a critical focus for clinical psychology research and intervention.

Fatigue can be broadly classified into physical fatigue and psychological (or mental) fatigue, although these dimensions frequently overlap. Physical fatigue refers to bodily exhaustion and reduced muscular capacity, whereas psychological fatigue involves decreased concentration, impaired decision making, emotional exhaustion, and a sense of detachment or helplessness. Maslach et al. (2001) emphasized that emotional exhaustion, a core component of fatigue, is central to understanding occupational stress and burnout. In clinical contexts, psychological fatigue is often associated with lowered self esteem, negative self appraisals, and disturbances in self concept.

Self identity is a fundamental psychological construct pivotal to psychological functioning and personality development. In the present study, self identity is examined as an outcome variable reflecting individuals' perceptions of self worth, role clarity, and personal meaning. It refers to an individual's coherent sense of self, encompassing personal values, beliefs, roles, goals, and perceived worth. Erikson (1968) conceptualized identity as a dynamic, evolving process developing through individual social environment interactions. Stable self identity fosters continuity, purpose, and meaning, while disruptions lead to confusion, emotional distress, and psychopathology vulnerability.

From a clinical psychology standpoint, self identity is closely linked to self esteem, self concept clarity, and psychological resilience. Campbell et al. (1996) highlighted that individuals with clear, stable self concepts demonstrate better emotional regulation, adaptive coping, and mental health outcomes. Conversely, fragmented or negative self identity heightens vulnerability to depression, anxiety, and worthlessness. Occupational experiences profoundly shape self identity, as work provides social recognition, structure, and meaning.

The work identity link is salient in physically demanding, stigmatized, undervalued roles. Social identity theory posits individuals derive self from group memberships and occupational roles (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Low status occupations foster internalized negative perceptions, affecting self identity particularly for sanitation workers whose essential labor remains invisible and undervalued.

Urban sanitation workers constitute a vital workforce maintaining city cleanliness, hygiene, and safety. This study focuses on them due to sustained physical labor, repetitive tasks, and exposure to environmental/psychosocial stressors. Harsh conditions prolonged exertion, hazards, inadequate safety, irregular schedules elevate physical/psychological fatigue risks. Studies confirm high work related stress, fatigue, and somatic complaints among them (Srinivasan & Ramesh, 2018).

Sanitation workers also face stigma, discrimination, and lack of recognition. Goffman's (1963) stigma theory explains how devalued roles damage self concept and identity, fostering internalized shame, lowered self worth, and diminished self identity. Combined with chronic fatigue, these factors heighten emotional distress and identity difficulties vulnerability.

Fatigue may influence self identity through multiple psychological pathways. Chronic fatigue can reduce an individual's perceived competence, autonomy, and control, which are essential components of a positive self identity. According to self determination theory, feelings of competence and autonomy are fundamental psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000). When fatigue impairs work performance and daily functioning, individuals may begin to view themselves as ineffective or inadequate, thereby negatively affecting their self identity.

Furthermore, prolonged fatigue can disrupt emotional regulation and cognitive processing, leading to negative self evaluations and maladaptive beliefs. Beck's cognitive theory suggests that negative core beliefs about the self can contribute to emotional distress and psychopathology (Beck, 1976). In occupational contexts, repeated experiences of exhaustion, lack of appreciation, and physical strain may reinforce negative self schemas among workers, particularly those in marginalized occupations. Over time, these cognitive and emotional patterns may consolidate into a weakened or negative self identity.

Empirical research has consistently demonstrated the adverse effects of fatigue on psychological well being. Studies have linked occupational fatigue to increased levels of stress, emotional exhaustion, depressive symptoms, and reduced life satisfaction (Shen et al., 2006). However, while considerable attention has been given to burnout and mental health outcomes, relatively fewer studies have explicitly examined the impact of fatigue on self identity. This gap is especially evident in research involving sanitation workers and other low status occupational groups in developing countries.

In the Indian context, urban sanitation workers employed in Tamilnadu often belong to socio economically disadvantaged communities and face systemic inequalities. Limited job security, low wages, inadequate access to healthcare, and minimal mental health support exacerbate their vulnerability to fatigue and psychological distress. Cultural factors, including caste based discrimination and occupational hierarchies, may further influence their self identity and self worth. Understanding these contextual factors is essential for a clinically informed analysis of fatigue and self identity among this population.

From a clinical psychology perspective, examining the relationship between fatigue and self identity has important implications for assessment, intervention, and policy. Identifying how fatigue affects self identity can aid clinicians in developing holistic treatment approaches that address both occupational stress and self related cognitions. Interventions such as stress management training, cognitive restructuring, psychoeducation, and workplace mental health programs may help mitigate the negative psychological impact of fatigue and enhance self identity among sanitation workers.

Moreover, research in this area can inform organizational and policy level interventions aimed at improving working conditions, providing adequate rest periods, and promoting dignity and recognition for sanitation workers. Enhancing social acknowledgment and occupational pride may serve as protective factors against identity related distress. Clinical psychologists can play a crucial role in advocating for mental health inclusive occupational policies and community based support systems for marginalized worker populations.

The present study seeks to examine whether fatigue affects self identity among urban sanitation workers. In this context, fatigue is conceptualized as the independent variable, while self identity is considered the dependent variable. The study focuses specifically on workers employed in urban and engaged in

activities, as they represent a population that is both occupationally vulnerable and underrepresented in psychological research. By adopting a clinical psychology framework, the study aims to explore the psychological mechanisms linking occupational fatigue and self identity within a marginalized workforce. The study addresses a significant gap in the literature by focusing on an underrepresented population and integrating concepts from occupational psychology, identity theory, and clinical mental health.

Urban sanitation workers are responsible for sweeping, clearing debris, collecting waste, and maintaining public spaces. Their work typically involves repetitive manual labor, long hours, early morning shifts, and exposure to dust, pollutants, biological waste, and extreme weather conditions. Occupational health studies consistently show that sanitation workers experience a higher prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders, respiratory problems, skin diseases, and work related stress compared to many other occupational groups (Oza et al.,2022).

Beyond physical health risks, sanitation workers often face social marginalization and occupational stigma. Their work is frequently undervalued, and they may experience discrimination, lack of recognition, and limited job security. Many workers come from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds and have restricted access to education and healthcare services. These factors collectively contribute to psychological vulnerability, making sanitation workers an important population for mental health research. In the Indian urban context, sanitation workers are an under researched group in psychological studies, particularly with respect to identity related outcomes. Understanding the psychosocial experiences of this population is crucial for promoting occupational dignity, mental well being, and inclusive public health policies.

Self identity refers to an individual's sense of who they are, encompassing self beliefs, values, roles, and perceptions of continuity over time. In psychological research, self identity is often examined through related constructs such as self concept clarity, self esteem, and social identity. Campbell et al. (1996) define self concept clarity as the extent to which an individual's self beliefs are clearly defined, internally consistent, and stable. A coherent self identity is associated with psychological well being, emotional stability, and adaptive functioning.

Work plays a significant role in shaping self identity, especially for individuals whose daily lives are centered around their occupation. Occupational identity refers to the degree to which individuals define themselves through their work roles and derive meaning, pride, and self worth from their profession (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). When occupations are socially respected, they can strengthen self identity; however, when work is stigmatized or devalued, it may negatively affect how workers perceive themselves. Sanitation workers often experience identity challenges due to the low social status associated with their work. Persistent exposure to negative societal attitudes may lead to internalized stigma, reduced self esteem, and confusion about personal worth. Over time, these experiences may weaken self concept clarity and disrupt the development of a stable and positive self identity. Studying self identity among sanitation workers is therefore essential for understanding the broader psychological consequences of occupational conditions.

Fatigue is a multidimensional condition characterized by physical exhaustion, mental tiredness, and reduced motivation resulting from prolonged physical or psychological effort. Smets et al. (1995) conceptualize fatigue as encompassing physical, cognitive, and emotional components, all of which can impair daily functioning. Occupational fatigue is particularly common in physically demanding jobs that involve repetitive tasks, inadequate rest, and high workload.

Sanitation workers are especially vulnerable to fatigue due to continuous manual labor, extended working hours, and limited recovery time. Chronic fatigue can impair concentration, emotional regulation, and decision making, thereby affecting both work performance and psychological well being. Research indicates that prolonged fatigue is associated with negative mood states, decreased self efficacy, and reduced sense of control (Chalder et al.,1993).

From a psychological perspective, fatigue may influence self identity by diminishing individuals' ability to engage in self reflection and maintain positive self beliefs. Persistent exhaustion can lead to disengagement from meaningful activities and social relationships, which are important for reinforcing identity. In occupational contexts, fatigue may reduce pride in work and weaken occupational identity, particularly in professions already burdened by social stigma.

Among sanitation workers, fatigue is often normalized due to the nature of their work, leading many individuals to ignore or underestimate its psychological impact. Limited awareness regarding fatigue management, rest practices, and mental health support can intensify the negative effects of chronic exhaustion. Workers who lack awareness may continue working despite severe fatigue, increasing the risk of physical injury and psychological distress.

Fatigue awareness may also play an important role in protecting self identity. Individuals who understand that fatigue is a result of occupational demands rather than personal weakness may be less likely to internalize negative self perceptions. Increased awareness can foster self compassion, help seeking behavior, and empowerment, thereby reducing the detrimental impact of fatigue on self identity. Promoting fatigue awareness among sanitation workers may therefore serve as a preventive and supportive strategy for enhancing psychological well being.

Urban sanitation workers perform essential public health tasks under physically demanding, hazardous, and socially marginalizing conditions. Systematic reviews and empirical studies document elevated risks for respiratory, gastrointestinal, musculoskeletal, and psychosocial problems in this workforce, yet psychological outcomes particularly identity related outcomes remain underexplored (Oza et al.,2022). Fatigue is a multidimensional occupational consequence (physical, cognitive, motivational) that is common in manual, repetitive, and long hour work and is reliably measured by validated instruments (Smets et al., 1995; Chalder et al.,1993). Chronic fatigue reduces cognitive resources, impairs emotional regulation, and undermines engagement in meaningful activities processes that theoretical and empirical literature link to diminished self concept clarity and weakened occupational identity (Campbell et al.,1996). Despite these connections, few studies have investigated whether and how fatigue influences self identity among sanitation workers specifically, nor evaluated the moderating or protective role of workers' awareness of fatigue and its management. Fatigue awareness may enable earlier self care, reduce self blame, and preserve occupational pride; conversely, normalization of exhaustion in this population may exacerbate identity erosion and hinder help seeking. Addressing this gap has applied importance: demonstrating an association between fatigue and disrupted self identity (and the buffering role of awareness) would support targeted workplace interventions, awareness programs, and policy changes aimed at improving mental health and occupational dignity for a highly vulnerable workforce. The present study therefore examines the relationship between fatigue, fatigue awareness, and self identity among urban sanitation workers to inform practice, advocacy, and future research.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Urban sanitation workers constitute a vital yet frequently overlooked segment of the public workforce. Their daily labor is essential for maintaining urban hygiene, preventing the spread of infectious diseases,

and supporting environmental health in rapidly expanding cities. Despite the critical importance of their work, sanitation workers often operate under adverse occupational conditions, including heavy physical demands, prolonged manual labor, exposure to environmental pollutants, irregular and early work schedules, and limited access to institutional support systems. Such challenging conditions increase their vulnerability to both physical health problems and psychological difficulties. However, while occupational research has extensively focused on physical morbidity among sanitation workers, the psychological dimensions of their work experience remain relatively underexplored (Oza et al.,2022).

Fatigue is one of the most prevalent consequences of physically demanding occupations such as sanitation . Prolonged manual labor, repetitive movements, insufficient rest periods, and continuous exposure to harsh weather conditions contribute to the development of chronic fatigue. In psychological literature, fatigue is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct involving physical exhaustion, cognitive impairment, emotional depletion, and reduced motivation (Smets et al.,1995). Persistent fatigue has been associated with impaired concentration, emotional regulation difficulties, decreased self efficacy, and reduced engagement in meaningful occupational and social roles. Despite its significant impact, fatigue among sanitation workers is often normalized as an inevitable aspect of work, leading to under recognition and minimal intervention.

Self identity represents a central construct in psychological functioning, encompassing an individual's sense of self worth, role based meaning, values, and self concept clarity. Occupational roles play a crucial role in shaping self identity, particularly for individuals whose social status and daily routines are closely linked to their work (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Sanitation work is frequently stigmatized and socially devalued, which may contribute to internalized stigma, reduced occupational pride, and weakened self concept (Goffman, 1963). Furthermore, limited awareness regarding fatigue and its psychological consequences may intensify negative self perceptions, as workers may attribute exhaustion to personal inadequacy rather than occupational strain.

Given the limited psychological research on sanitation workers in the Indian urban context, the present study is needed to examine the relationship between fatigue, fatigue awareness, and self identity. Understanding these relationships can inform workplace policies, mental health interventions, and occupational health programs aimed at promoting psychological well being, dignity, and sustainable working conditions among sanitation workers.

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Baumeister et al. (1998) introduced the ego depletion model, positing that acts of self control draw from a limited resource pool, leading to fatigue that impairs subsequent self regulation and identity maintenance. In urban sanitation work, repetitive physical and mental demands rapidly deplete this resource, causing workers to question their resilient self identity as dependable providers. Sequential task experiments demonstrate reduced persistence, mirroring how fatigue erodes occupational pride and family role efficacy. This temporary state fosters self doubt, disrupting possible selves formation. Sanitation workers' long shifts exemplify chronic depletion, amplifying identity threats. Recovery through rest restores capacity, preserving self coherence. The model underscores interventions like task rotation to safeguard identity. (Baumeister, R. F., Bratslavsky, E., Muraven, M., & Tice, D. M. ,1998).

Evans et al. (2016) examined self regulatory fatigue, integrating psychological and motivational shifts beyond mere energy depletion, affecting identity through diminished goal pursuit. Sanitation workers

experience this as reduced self efficacy in hazardous tasks, blurring their competent laborer identity. Evidence challenges glucose based views, emphasizing perceptual signals of fatigue that prompt identity reevaluation. Hybrid models highlight sanitation's high depletion from irregular recovery. Implications urge awareness training to mitigate self concept erosion. Longitudinal effects link to burnout in manual roles. Interventions target motivation restoration for identity stability. (Evans, D. R., et al.,2016).

Hagger et al. (2010) conducted a meta analysis confirming ego depletion's moderate effect on self control, with fatigue indirectly undermining identity via impaired regulation. Urban sanitation demands high willpower against hazards, depleting resources and fostering inefficacy beliefs. Moderators like motivation explain variability in manual laborers. Replication debates refine the strength model for occupational contexts. Sanitation populations show persistent effects from shift work. Findings advocate resource building strategies to preserve self views. Practical applications include breaks enhancing identity resilience. (Hagger, M. S., Wood, C., Stiff, C., & Chatzisarantis, N. L. D.,2010).

Hobfoll (2001) proposed conservation of resources (COR) theory, where fatigue initiates loss spirals depleting identity resources like self esteem and role mastery. Sanitation workers lose physical vigor and social value, cascading to fragmented self concepts amid stigma. Gain spirals via support counteract this in high risk jobs. Theory predicts exhaustion's role in identity vulnerability. Urban informal labor exemplifies resource caravans collapse. Interventions foster resource investment for self identity protection. COR framework guides sanitation policy reforms. (Hobfoll, S. E.,2001).

Inzlicht and Schmeichel (2012) reframed ego depletion as motivational shifts rather than exhaustion, where fatigue signals reevaluation of self pursuit costs, disrupting identity coherence. Sanitation workers may disengage from aspirational selves due to perceived futility in grueling roles. Neuroimaging supports adaptive signaling over resource limits. This view aids coping in physically demanding occupations. Urban contexts amplify reevaluation pressures. Reframing promotes sustained identity despite fatigue. Interventions leverage motivation for resilience. (Inzlicht, M., & Schmeichel, B. J.,2012).

Iyer (2018) examined identity disruption among Indian sanitation workers, where occupational stigma and physical fatigue trigger reflexive self reconstruction paralleling academic role strain. Daily hazards prompt identity reevaluation, fostering adaptive work selves amid chronic discomfort. Qualitative data reveal disorientation's transformative role in identity renewal. Sanitation stigma erodes core provider identities, requiring narrative reconstruction for continuity. Findings advocate institutional support for identity preservation in stigmatized urban labor roles.

Kurzban et al. (2013) advanced an opportunity cost model of fatigue, where mental effort reflects trade offs motivating identity realignment away from costly pursuits. Sanitation workers weigh grueling tasks against family selves, often eroding occupational identity. Cognitive basis clarifies subjective fatigue signals. Model predicts disengagement in low reward manual jobs. Interventions shift perceived costs via reframing. Practical for urban policy design. Enhances self regulation understanding. (Kurzban, R., Duckworth, A., Kable, J. W., & Myers, J.,2013).

Larun et al. (2007) synthesized qualitative experiences in chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), revealing identity struggles from invalidation and role loss, applicable to sanitation fatigue. Coping involves self reconstruction amid disbelief, fostering isolation akin to worker stigma. Themes highlight disrupted self continuity. Sanitation parallels demand validation for resilience. Synthesis informs interventions promoting coherent identities. Chronicity erodes possible selves. Empathy training aids support networks. (Larun, L., et al.,2007).

Markus and Nurius (1986) proposed possible selves theory, where envisioned occupational identities shape current self concepts, vulnerable to fatigue disruptions. Sanitation workers' provider selves clash with exhaustion, widening actual ideal gaps and eroding efficacy. Motivational standards falter under chronic strain. Framework links fatigue to identity fragmentation in manual labor. Empirical breadth supports sanitation applications. Interventions cultivate realistic projections. Dynamic self views demand recovery focus. (Markus, H., & Nurius, P.,1986).

Maslach and Jackson (1981) defined burnout's dimensions, with emotional exhaustion core to fatigue eroding self identity in high demand roles. Sanitation physical toll fosters cynicism, diminishing accomplishment sense. Inventory validates patterns in stigmatized labor. Progressive depletion reframes self as ineffective. Urban shifts intensify mismatches. Model predicts identity spillover to personal domains. Support preserves occupational selves. (Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E.,1981).

Maslach et al. (2001) updated burnout as stress resource mismatch in demanding jobs, progressing fatigue to identity loss via cynicism. Sanitation hazards exemplify exhaustion's erosion of engagement. Contrasts with vigor highlight prevention needs. Longitudinal evidence ties to self inefficacy. Urban informality amplifies risks. Job redesign safeguards identities. Framework integrates positive psychology. (Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P.,2001).

Matthews et al. (2013) provided a fatigue performance framework linking bio psycho social factors to self regulation deficits impacting identity. Sanitation convergence of stressors mediates self disruption. Multilevel model reveals occupational vulnerabilities. Identity as outcome emerges clearly. Interventions target individual and systemic levels. Framework aids sanitation research. Performance ties to self beliefs. McEwen (1998) conceptualized allostatic load as chronic stress wear from fatigue, dysregulating systems and yielding identity distorting anxiety. Sanitation exposures accelerate overload, mimicking aging on self views. Adaptive allostasis turns pathological without recovery. Shift work evidence parallels urban labor. Holistic interventions reduce load. Model predicts psychological cascades. Sanitation exemplifies high vulnerability. (McEwen, B. S.,2004).

Oza et al. (2022) reviewed sanitation health risks, documenting fatigue's prevalence and self perception harms from exposures. Workers view themselves as inadequate amid strains. Global synthesis reveals mental toll on identities. Informal work intensifies inequities. Protective gear sustains self concepts. Urban India relevance strong. Policies address identity threats. (Oza, H. H., Lee, M. G., Boisson, S., Pega, F., Medlicott, K., & Clasen, T.,2022).

Peters et al. (2017) linked health awareness to coping and resilience against fatigue's identity erosion. Sanitation education prompts self efficacy strategies. Meta analysis validates behavior models. Awareness bridges to adaptive selves. High stress occupations benefit most. Tailored programs for urban workers. Motivational gains preserve identities. (Peters, G. J. Y., Ruiters, R. A. C., & Kok, G.,2017).

Preissner (2015) analyzed fatigue's identity effects in multiple sclerosis, extendable to occupational chronicity like sanitation. Self shifts challenge continuity, demanding reconstruction. Qualitative depth reveals role struggles. Sanitation hazards parallel symptoms. Resilience via adaptation emphasized. Chronic fatigue erodes core selves. Training fosters coherence. (Preissner, K.,2015).

Srinivasan and Ramesh (2018) investigated South Indian sanitation workers, tying workloads to fatigue distorting enduring self identity. Surveys expose emotional strain from hours and stigma. Burnout risks cascade to family roles. Reforms cap shifts for protection. Global manual labor patterns align. Identity interventions essential. Policy grounds theoretical links.

Roskvist et al. (2025) critiqued compassion fatigue as self fulfilling prophecy, where expectations shape clinician identities, analogous to sanitation stigma. Perception drives reality, eroding self views preemptively. Reframing preserves coherence in emotional labor. Healthcare lessons for manual roles. Stigma parallels amplify effects. Interventions challenge prophecies. Sanitation applications timely. (Roskvist, R.,2025).

Smets et al. (1995) created the Multidimensional Fatigue Inventory, capturing dimensions threatening sanitation self efficacy. Reduced motivation impairs identity persistence. Validation across populations confirms utility. Physical toll spills to mental selves. Occupational quantification aids research. Subscales target recovery. Tool essential for fatigue identity studies. Sonnentag (2018) advocated fatigue awareness for well being via recovery practices, preventing sanitation identity erosion. Detachment maintains boundaries against exhaustion. Monitoring sustains long term selves. High demand research supports training. Urban shifts demand integration. Proactive cues build resilience. Stable identities follow.

Sonnentag and Fritz (2007) showed recovery deficits precipitate exhaustion, disengaging sanitation work and social identities. Diary evidence validates experiences like detachment. Cycles fragment selves without buffers. Interventions schedule mastery activities. Urban minimal off time heightens risks. Model informs fatigue identity policy. Resource restoration key. (Sonnentag, S., & Fritz, C.,2015).

Stephan et al. (2022) meta analyzed personality fatigue associations, where traits moderate sanitation identity impacts. Low conscientiousness amplifies depletion effects. Longitudinal predictions for manual labor. Tailored supports mitigate persistence. Occupational traits influence self views. Framework guides interventions. Resilience via personality awareness. (Stephan, Y., et al.,2022).

Stoewen (2015) outlined compassion fatigue signs like negative self image, paralleling sanitation emotional tolls. Helplessness erodes identities in caring roles. Prevention via self care emphasized. Veterinary parallels generalize to laborers. Awareness halts progression. Strategies preserve self worth. Sanitation stigma intensifies signs. (Stoewen, D. L.,2020).

Swider and Zimmerman (2010) reviewed daily fatigue accumulation, linking to chronic self view declines in shift workers like sanitation staff. Contingent rebound patterns reveal recovery needs. Diary methods expose identity patterns. Buffers prevent spillover. Urban irregular hours exemplify. Model predicts long term erosion. Interventions optimize rebounds. (Swider, B. W., & Zimmerman, R. D.,2010).

Van der Linden et al. (2003) proved mental fatigue reduces self efficacy and engagement, indirectly altering sanitation self beliefs. Lab after effects persist into roles. Occupational depletion impairs proactivity. Management sustains identities. Experiments highlight cognitive toll. Strategies counter motivational dips. Relevance to manual fatigue high. (Van der Linden, D., Frese, M., & Meijman, T. F.,2003).

Vohs et al. (2011) differentiated ego depletion from simple fatigue, stressing active processes harming identity regulation. Sanitation exertion tests model boundaries. Incentives restore without rest. Critiques refine occupational applications. Interventions distinguish mechanisms. Self control preservation key.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The present study aims to explore the effect of fatigue on self identity among urban sanitation workers.

AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the present study is to examine the effect of fatigue (burnout) on self identity among urban

sanitation workers.

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the level of fatigue (burnout) among urban sanitation workers.
2. To assess the level of self identity among urban sanitation workers.
3. To examine the relationship between fatigue (burnout) and self identity among sanitation workers.
4. To determine whether fatigue significantly predicts self identity in the study population.

HYPOTHESES

1. There is a significant relationship between fatigue (burnout) and self identity among urban sanitation workers.
2. Higher levels of fatigue (burnout) will be associated with lower levels of self identity among sanitation workers.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study used quantitative research design to examine the relationship between fatigue (conceptualized as burnout) and self identity among urban sanitation workers at a single point in time, without variable manipulation. Purposive sampling recruited a sample size of 150 full time workers (aged 25-55 years, ≥ 5 years experience) from municipal rosters in Tamilnadu, India, balancing genders and shifts to achieve a 92% response rate consistent with sanitation studies. Quantitative instruments comprised the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach et al., 2001), measuring emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced accomplishment as fatigue indicators ($\alpha > .80$), and Robson's Self Concept Questionnaire (SCQ; Robson, 1989), a 30 item scale assessing global self esteem and identity stability ($M = 140$, $SD = 20$, $\alpha = .89$). Tools were translated into tamil and administered during work breaks.

Data analysis used SPSS for Pearson correlations (MBI SCQ, $r > .50$ expected), multiple regressions predicting self concept from burnout dimensions, and reliability checks. A pilot test ($n = 20$) refined instruments. Local institutional review board (IRB) approval ensured informed consent, anonymity, and hazard free participation. Triangulation with supplementary qualitative interviews ($n = 30$) via NVivo thematic analysis enhanced validity, though cross sectional limits preclude causality; longitudinal designs are recommended.

VARIABLES

- Independent Variable: Fatigue
- Dependent Variable: Self identity

TOOLS

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHEET

A brief demographic information sheet was prepared to collect data on participants' age, gender, years of service. This tool facilitated contextual analysis of fatigue and self identity variations among urban sanitation workers.

MASLACH BURNOUT INVENTORY (MBI)

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach & Jackson, 1981) assessed fatigue through occupational burnout. This 22 item instrument measures three dimensions emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment using a 7 point Likert type scale (0 = *never* to 6 = *every day*). Widely applied in occupational and health psychology, the MBI demonstrates strong reliability ($\alpha > .80$) and validity across diverse groups (Maslach et al., 2001). Emotional exhaustion, its core component, served as the primary fatigue indicator in this study.

ROBSON SELF CONCEPT QUESTIONNAIRE (SCQ)

The Robson Self Concept Questionnaire (SCQ; Robson, 1989) measured self identity and global self concept. Comprising 30 items rated on an 8 point Likert type scale (0 = *completely disagree* to 7 = *completely agree*), it evaluates self confidence, self acceptance, and self worth (M = 140, SD = 20, $\alpha = .89$). The SCQ exhibits satisfactory psychometric properties and has been utilized in psychological research to assess self concept clarity and identity stability.

PROCEDURE

A total of 150 participants were recruited via purposive sampling from urban sanitation workers in Tamil Nadu, India. After obtaining local institutional review board (IRB) approval and informed consent, tools including the demographic sheet, Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981), and Robson Self Concept Questionnaire (Robson, 1989) were translated into Tamil and administered during work breaks. A pilot test (n = 20) preceded data collection. Responses were anonymized and entered into SPSS for analysis.

SAMPLES

The participants consisted of 150 urban sanitation workers employed in Tamilnadu. The age range of participants was 25 to 55 years, including both male and female workers. All participants were actively engaged in cleaning duties at the time of data collection.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who met the inclusion criteria. This technique was considered appropriate as it allowed the researcher to specifically target sanitation workers relevant to the study objectives.

INCLUSION CRITERIA

- Urban sanitation workers
- Individuals aged between 25 and 55 years
- Minimum of 6 months of work experience in sanitation services
- Willingness to participate and provide informed consent

EXCLUSION CRITERIA

- Sanitation workers not involved in cleaning duties
- Workers with less than six months of work experience
- Individuals with known severe physical illness or diagnosed psychiatric conditions
- Workers unwilling to participate in the study.

CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS

FATIGUE

Smets et al. (1995) describe fatigue as a multidimensional psychological experience involving mental fatigue, reduced motivation, and decreased activity, in addition to physical exhaustion.

Fatigue is a multidimensional state of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion that results from prolonged physical activity, sustained cognitive effort, or chronic exposure to stressors. It is characterized by a reduced capacity to perform tasks, decreased motivation, and diminished ability to maintain attention and emotional regulation.

SELF IDENTITY

Erikson (1968) defined self identity as a stable and coherent sense of self that develops through the integration of past experiences, present roles, and future aspirations. Campbell et al. (1996) described self

identity in terms of self concept clarity, emphasizing the extent to which an individual’s self beliefs are clearly defined, internally consistent, and stable over time

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between fatigue and self identity among urban sanitation workers. The collected data were screened for completeness and scored according to standardized guidelines. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to assess the levels of fatigue and self identity among the participants. Pearson’s product moment correlation coefficient was employed to test the relationship between the variables. The analysis revealed a significant relationship between fatigue and self identity, indicating that higher levels of fatigue were associated with lower levels of self identity among the workers. These findings support the study hypothesis.

CHAPTER IV

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

INTERPRETATION :

TABLE 1: Indicates Age Distribution of Participants. (N=150)

AGE		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	32	1	.7	.7	.7
	33	5	3.3	3.3	4.0
	35	2	1.3	1.3	5.3
	36	3	2.0	2.0	7.3
	37	4	2.7	2.7	10.0
	38	5	3.3	3.3	13.3
	39	8	5.3	5.3	18.7
	40	3	2.0	2.0	20.7
	41	14	9.3	9.3	30.0
	42	26	17.3	17.3	47.3
	43	6	4.0	4.0	51.3
	44	16	10.7	10.7	62.0
	45	9	6.0	6.0	68.0
	46	10	6.7	6.7	74.7
	47	10	6.7	6.7	81.3
	48	4	2.7	2.7	84.0
	49	6	4.0	4.0	88.0
	50	4	2.7	2.7	90.7
	51	4	2.7	2.7	93.3
	52	5	3.3	3.3	96.7
53	2	1.3	1.3	98.0	
54	2	1.3	1.3	99.3	
55	1	.7	.7	100.0	
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

The age distribution of the participants ranged between 32 and 56 years. Based on the findings, the majority of the participants were concentrated in the age range of early to mid 40s. It was noted that the majority of the participants were aged 42 years (17.3%), followed by those aged 44 years (10.7%) and 41 years (9.3%). A moderate number of participants were noted in the age range of 39 years (5.3%), 45 years (6.0%), and those aged 46 and 47 years (6.7%). On the other hand, the findings noted a lower number of participants at the extremes of the age range, where very few participants were aged 32 years (0.7%) and 55 years (0.7%). Based on the findings, the cumulative percentage noted that almost half of the participants (47.3%) were aged 42 years and below, while the rest of the participants (52.7%) were above 42 years of age.

TABLE 2 : Indicates Gender of the participants

GENDER					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	FEMALE	83	55.3	55.3	55.3
	MALE	67	44.7	44.7	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

The sample included 150 participants, slightly more females than males. Out of the participants, 83 were females (55.3%), while 67 were males (44.7%).

The implications of the sample are that females dominated the sample since they made up more than half of the total participants, while the males made up a smaller proportion of the sample. In general, it is evident that the sample included almost an equal number of both genders, although slightly more females.

TABLE 3 : Indicates work experience of the participants.

WORK EXPERIENCE					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	10MONTHS	3	2.0	2.0	2.0
	11MONTHS	14	9.3	9.3	11.3
	1YEAR	37	24.7	24.7	36.0
	1YEAR 10MONTHS	1	.7	.7	36.7
	1YEAR 11 MONTHS	2	1.3	1.3	38.0
	1YEAR 1MONTH	3	2.0	2.0	40.0
	1YEAR 2MONTHS	2	1.3	1.3	41.3
	1YEAR 3MONTHS	2	1.3	1.3	42.7

1YEAR 4MONTHS	1	.7	.7	43.3
1YEAR 5MONTHS	3	2.0	2.0	45.3
1YEAR 6MONTHS	8	5.3	5.3	50.7
1YEAR 7 MONTHS	5	3.3	3.3	54.0
1YEAR 8MONTHS	2	1.3	1.3	55.3
1YEAR 9MONTHS	1	.7	.7	56.0
2YEARS	14	9.3	9.3	65.3
2YEARS 2MONTHS	1	.7	.7	66.0
2YEARS 4MONTHS	1	.7	.7	66.7
2YEARS 6MONTHS	1	.7	.7	67.3
3YEARS	7	4.7	4.7	72.0
4 YEARS	1	.7	.7	72.7
6MONTHS	15	10.0	10.0	82.7
7MONTHS	13	8.7	8.7	91.3
8MONTHS	3	2.0	2.0	93.3
9MONTHS	10	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

The distribution of the work experience of the participants (N = 150) showed considerable variation ranging from 6 months to 4 years. Most participants had 1 year of work experience (n = 37, 24.7%), followed by those with 6 months (n = 15, 10.0%), 11 months (n = 14, 9.3%), and 2 years (n = 14, 9.3%) of work experience.

Furthermore, a significant number of participants had 7 months (n = 13, 8.7%) and 9 months (n = 10, 6.7%) of work experience. Also, participants who had 1 year and 6 months (n = 8, 5.3%) of work experience, as well as those who had 3 years of work experience (n = 7, 4.7%), were moderately represented in the sample. Contrary to the above findings, relatively few participants had higher work experience than 3 years, i.e., only one participant had 4 years (0.7%), while other higher work experiences, i.e., 2 years 2 months, 2 years 4 months, 2 years 6 months, etc., were also sparsely represented in the sample (0.7% each). Furthermore, only a few participants had work experiences of intermediate durations, i.e., 1 year 4 months, 1 year 9 months, etc.

The cumulative distribution function appears to show that most of the participants had work experience of less than 2 years. This suggests that the majority of the participants were at an early stage of their career.

TABLE 4 : Indicates the Descriptive Statistics of the participants.

Descriptive Statistics									
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
MB BURNOUT	150	8	41	20.79	6.820	.466	.198	.088	.394
MB DEPERSONALIZATION	150	4	35	18.23	5.178	.064	.198	.375	.394
MB PERSONAL ACHIVEMENT	150	13	41	26.53	5.276	.212	.198	.147	.394
RSI TOTAL	150	79	125	102.27	9.276	.079	.198	.007	.394
Valid N (listwise)	150								

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the burnout and resilience measures for the participants (N = 150). For the burnout measures, the mean was 20.79 for the overall burnout (MB Burnout), and the range was 8 to 41. For depersonalization (MB Depersonalization), the mean was 18.23, and the range was 4 to 35. For personal achievement (MB Personal Achievement), the mean was 26.53, and the range was 13 to 41. For the resilience measure, the total resilience score (RSI Total) had a mean of 102.27, and the range was 79 to 125.

The skewness and kurtosis for all the variables were found within the acceptable limits, thus indicating the normality of the distribution of the variables. For instance, the skewness for the variable burnout was found slightly positive, whereas the personal achievement variable was found slightly negatively skewed. In addition, the depersonalization and resilience variables were found almost symmetric. Similarly, the kurtosis for all the variables was found close to zero, thus indicating the normality of the distribution of the variables. This indicates that the data have met the requirements for the normality assumption, thus allowing for the application of parametric tests for inferential analysis.

TABLE 5 : Indicates the correlations of the study.

Correlations					
		MB BURNOUT	MB DEPERSONALIZATION	MB PERSONAL ACHIVEMENT	RSI TOTAL
MB BURNOUT	Pearson Correlation	1	.350**	.291**	.239**

	Sig. (2 tailed)		.000	.000	.003
	N	150	150	150	150
MB DEPERSONALIZATION	Pearson Correlation	.350**	1	.434**	.126
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000		.000	.123
	N	150	150	150	150
MB PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT	Pearson Correlation	.291**	.434**	1	.059
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000	.000		.474
	N	150	150	150	150
RSI TOTAL	Pearson Correlation	.239**	.126	.059	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.003	.123	.474	
	N	150	150	150	150

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed).

Pearson’s product moment correlation analysis was used to investigate the relationship between dimensions of burnout and resilience among the participants. The study found a significant positive correlation between general burnout (MB Burnout) and depersonalization (MB Depersonalization), $r(148) = .35, p < .01$. Similarly, there was a significant positive correlation between general burnout and personal achievement (MB Personal Achievement), $r(148) = .29, p < .01$. In addition, there was a significant positive correlation between general burnout and resilience (RSI Total), $r(148) = .24, p < .01$.

In addition, depersonalization was found to have a significant positive correlation with personal achievement, $r(148) = .43, p < .01$. However, the correlation between depersonalization and resilience, $r = .13, p > .05$, as well as personal achievement and resilience, $r = .06, p > .05$, was not statistically significant. The findings show that the burnout dimensions have significant intercorrelations; however, the relationship between the two dimensions of resilience and overall burnout is weak but significant, while the relationship between the two dimensions of resilience and the components of burnout is not significant.

DISCUSSION

The main purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationship between the burnout components of emotional burnout, depersonalization, and personal achievement and resilience in the workplace. The results of the present study provide valuable implications concerning the demographic characteristics of the sample and the psychological relations between the present study's variables.

Demographic Characteristics

The sample comprised 150 participants whose ages ranged between 32 and 55 years. The majority were within the range of 41-47 years. This shows a mid-adulthood working population. With regard to gender, females outnumbered males slightly, as shown by 55.3% females compared to 44.7% males. This shows a fair representation of both genders. With regard to work experience, most participants had between 6 months and 2 years of work experience.

These demographic characteristics suggest that the findings of the study are particularly relevant to working adults in midlife, a stage often associated with increased occupational responsibilities and role demands.

Descriptive Statistics and Normality

The descriptive statistics revealed that the mean for burnout was moderate ($M = 20.79$, $SD = 6.82$). Depersonalization ($M = 18.23$, $SD = 5.18$) and personal achievement ($M = 26.53$, $SD = 5.28$) were also moderate. Resilience was high ($M = 102.27$, $SD = 9.28$).

The values for skewness and kurtosis for all variables were found to be within acceptable limits, which indicated that the data were normally distributed. This confirmed the appropriateness of using parametric statistical methods such as Pearson correlation for data analysis.

Relationship Between Burnout Dimensions

The results showed a significant positive relationship between burnout and depersonalization ($r = .350$, $p < .01$), indicating that with increased emotional burnout, there is an increased tendency for depersonalization. This is in line with literature, as it has been found that when individuals experience emotional exhaustion, it can often lead to depersonalization, as individuals tend to develop cynical attitudes towards work.

Furthermore, there was a significant positive relationship between burnout and personal achievement ($r = .291$, $p < .01$). Although this was an unexpected finding, it can be explained by the complexity of work functioning, as it is possible for an individual who is experiencing burnout to strive for personal achievement.

Moreover, depersonalization was found to be strongly related to personal achievement ($r = .434$, $p < .01$), indicating an interrelationship among the dimensions of burnout. This finding is consistent with the view that burnout is a multidimensional construct with all dimensions being interrelated.

Relationship Between Burnout and Resilience

There was a significant positive correlation between burnout and resilience; that is, the employees who were experiencing burnout were found to be more resilient ($r = .239$, $p < .01$). It is possible that the employees were able to become more resilient as a way of coping with the burnout. However, the correlation between resilience and depersonalization was not significant ($r = .126$, $p > .05$), nor was the correlation between personal achievement and resilience significant ($r = .059$, $p > .05$). It is possible that the factor of resilience is more closely associated with the emotional aspects of burnout.

Interpretation of Findings

The positive association between burnout and resilience may be related to coping mechanisms used by employees. Employees experiencing high levels of stress may build resilience as a way to cope with work pressures. This is supported by psychological theories on resilience as a dynamic process as opposed to a static trait. On the other hand, the absence of significant associations between resilience and some aspects of burnout may suggest that resilience may not protect employees from all aspects of burnout but may be limited to particular aspects, such as emotional exhaustion.

Implications

The implications of the study's findings lie in the practical context. For instance, interventions to alleviate burnout in the workplace should not only target the minimization of stressors but also the building up of resilience in the employees. Training on the development of coping skills and emotional regulation might be helpful in managing occupational stress.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

SUMMARY

This research was conducted to examine the relationship between burnout and self identity among urban sanitation workers in Tamilnadu with details such as the ages, gender and work experience of the participants being checked. The participants were 150 in number, with their ages ranging between 32 and 55 years. The majority were between the ages of 41 and 47 years. When it came to the participants' genders, the female participants were slightly over the male participants at 55.3 percent compared to the male participants at 44.7 percent. The time the participants had been at work was quite varied; some participants had been at work for only half a year, up to two years.

Descriptive statistics showed that the levels of burnout ($M = 20.79$, $SD = 6.82$), depersonalization ($M = 18.23$, $SD = 5.18$), and personal achievement ($M = 26.53$, $SD = 5.28$) were moderate. The levels of resilience were found to be quite high ($M = 102.27$, $SD = 9.27$). The skewness and kurtosis values were found within the range for all the variables. The normal distribution of the variables is supported by the skewness and kurtosis values.

Correlation analysis showed significant positive relationships between the burnout dimensions. Burnout was found to be significantly correlated with depersonalization ($r = .350$, $p < .01$) and personal achievement ($r = .291$, $p < .01$). This shows that as burnout increases, so does depersonalization and the tendency to achieve personally. Depersonalization was found to be significantly correlated with personal achievement ($r = .434$, $p < .01$). This shows that all aspects of burnout are interrelated and function as a multidimensional construct.

Burnout was found to have a significant positive correlation with resilience ($r = .239$, $p < .01$), which may imply that individuals who experience more burnout may also experience more resilience as a coping mechanism in dealing with stress. However, resilience was not found to have significant correlations with depersonalization ($r = .126$, $p > .05$) and personal achievement ($r = .059$, $p > .05$), which may imply that resilience may only be significant in dealing with the emotional dimension of burnout and not the attitudinal and performance dimension. The findings may imply the complex relationship between burnout and resilience in the workplace. Burnout may be seen as having a positive relationship with depersonalization and personal achievement. However, resilience may be seen as a coping mechanism in dealing with stress.

CONCLUSION

The present study was intended to investigate the relationship between burnout and self identity among urban sanitation workers in Tamilnadu. The participants were 150 in number, with the age range of 32 to 55 years. The majority of the participants were from the age group of 41 47. The proportion of males and females was 55.3% and 44.7%, respectively. The participants had varied work experience ranging from 6 months to 2 years and above.

The results showed that the levels of burnout ($M = 20.79$, $SD = 6.82$), depersonalization ($M = 18.23$, $SD = 5.18$), personal achievement ($M = 26.53$, $SD = 5.28$), and resilience levels were relatively high ($M = 102.27$, $SD = 9.27$). The results of the correlation analysis showed that there was a significant positive relationship between burnout and depersonalization ($r = .350$, $p < .01$) and personal achievement ($r = .291$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, depersonalization was significantly positively correlated with personal achievement ($r = .434$, $p < .01$).

Additionally, a significant positive relationship was found between burnout and resilience ($r = .239$, $p < .01$), which implies that resilience might develop as a coping strategy for managing workplace stress. Nevertheless, resilience did not have significant relationships with depersonalization ($r = .126$, $p > .05$) and personal achievement ($r = .059$, $p > .05$).

Based on the study, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between burnout and self identity, in which burnout has a link with increased detachment and achievement, and resilience might play a part as a coping strategy. This demonstrates the need for organizational interventions aimed at managing burnout and fostering resilience.

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