Effect of Emotional Exhaustion and Knowledge Sharing on Depersonalization, Work Accomplishment, and Organizational Performance

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the present study is to empirically investigate the relationship between emotional exhaustion and knowledge sharing of individual and organizational outcomes. Data was collected from 672 respondents from the information technology (IT) sector. The results from path analysis revealed that emotional exhaustion is (1) positively related to depersonalization and (2) negatively related to work accomplishment and organizational performance. The results also reveal that knowledge sharing is (1) negatively related to depersonalization and (2) positively related to work accomplishment and organizational performance. However, depersonalization is not negatively related to organizational performance. As predicted, work accomplishment is positively related to organizational performance. The diametrically opposite results of emotional exhaustion and knowledge sharing are particularly interesting. The implications for management and practicing managers are discussed.

KEYWORDS
Depersonalization, Emotional Exhaustion, Knowledge Transfer, Organizational Performance, Work Accomplishment

1. INTRODUCTION

Emotional exhaustion is a form of work-related stress that many employees experience. Emotional exhaustion, a component of burnout, is a condition in which employees feel exhausted, overextended, and overburdened by work. Extensive research has been conducted on emotional exhaustion’s impact on job performance and organizational functioning (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Jackson et al., 1986; Lam et al., 2010; Maslach, 1982; Zhang et al., 2018). In fact, Maslach and Leiter (2008) assert that “in the research literature on burnout, exhaustion is the most widely reported and the most thoroughly analyzed dimension of this syndrome” (pp. 499). Extant research supports the finding that emotional exhaustion is negatively related to performance (Brady et al., 2020; Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007; Zhao et al., 2019). This research uses the emotional component of burnout because of its consistency in predicting outcomes such as commitment and turnover (Demerouti et al., 2001; Kong & Jeon,
2018; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). We, however, take a different but complementary approach of studying the inter-relationships among burnout components, specifically depersonalization and work accomplishment.

The crux of the paper is that emotional exhaustion is shown to have a negative effect on organizational performance, both directly and through interactions with depersonalization. Knowledge sharing has been shown to have a positive effect on organizational performance and mitigate some of the negative effects of emotional exhaustion. This topic is especially relevant given the stresses caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

The pioneering work of Maslach (1982) has created a vast platform for research on emotional exhaustion. Researchers focused on a three-component model of burnout advocated by Maslach and Jackson (1986), which consists of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment and their impacts on job performance and employee health. For example, some researchers have studied the relationship between emotional exhaustion to find positive effects on emotional display (Lam et al., 2010), and negative effects on service quality, performance and affective delivery (Grandey, 2003; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998).

Because emotional exhaustion has deleterious consequences, it is important to study what organizations do to minimize, if not eliminate, these negative consequences. We argue that one of the ways of managing emotional exhaustion is to focus on ‘knowledge sharing’ so that employees become aware of the organizational climate and recognize the nature of work that may induce fatigue. Researchers in the area of information and systems management documented the importance of knowledge management (KM) in educating employees (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). The concept of KM has been widely researched, and organizations tend to focus on identifying, capturing and leveraging knowledge to bring efficiency and effectiveness (Andreeva & Kianto, 2012; Bukowitz & Williams, 1999; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Von Krogh, 1998). Researchers have identified five dimensions of KM, viz., knowledge creation, knowledge storing, knowledge sharing, knowledge accessibility, and knowledge application. In the present research, our focus is on knowledge sharing, which helps employees in organizations become aware of the organizational climate, procedures, protocols, behaviors of peers, behaviors of supervisors and so forth. While the previous research has demonstrated negative consequences of emotional exhaustion and positive consequences of knowledge sharing, there exists gap in research which empirically examines the combined effect of knowledge sharing and emotional exhaustion. The primary objective of the present study is to see how knowledge sharing acts counter to the negative outcomes of emotional exhaustion. This would be a significant contribution to both the literatures on knowledge management and organizational behavior.

As previous researchers documented, job-related emotional exhaustion has negative consequences on organizational performance, and knowledge sharing has been positively associated with organizational performance. The potential for knowledge sharing to mitigate the ill-effects of emotional exhaustion is more likely. Especially considering the present world situation of the COVID-19 global pandemic, more and more employees feel emotionally exhausted at work though working from their homes. However, knowledge sharing over virtual meetings would help them mitigate the ill-effects of emotional exhaustion. The importance of the present study is highlighted given the present situation. Even after the pandemic period, it is likely that emotional exhaustion will still exist as companies work to recover. The present research will be helpful and timely. In addition to the IT sector during the global pandemic, the frontline workers in healthcare industry experience high levels of emotional exhaustion and it is hoped that knowledge sharing by healthcare professionals such as surgeons and nurses would benefit though work accomplishment and organizational performance.

1.1 Rationale of Present Research

The present study will examine the effects that emotional exhaustion and knowledge sharing have on depersonalization, work accomplishment and organizational performance. While emotional exhaustion is expected to have negative consequences, knowledge sharing is expected to have positive outcomes.
We argue that knowledge sharing acts work to counter emotional exhaustion and help organizations in mitigating the ill-effects of emotional exhaustion. In fact, emotional exhaustion is an inescapable fact of organizational life. Emotional exhaustion, from an employee’s point of view, is concerned with physical fatigue and personal ‘drain’ of energy. Some scholars contend that depersonalization occurs in which employees feel burned out at work and therefore tend to leave the organization (Write & Cropanzano, 1998). One study on employees in information technology found that in the media and advertising industry, quantitative overload and unreasonable tasks fostered emotional exhaustion (Koch & Adler, 2018). Another study shows emotional exhaustion positively related to intention to leave, negatively related to job satisfaction, and positively related to performance (Prajogo, 2019). Emotional exhaustion experienced by supervisors may also influence the emotional exhaustion of subordinates. Lam et al. (2010) found that emotionally exhausted supervisors cannot give compensatory resources to their subordinates. Consequently, emotionally exhausted employees will often not display positive emotions at work. Sometimes, as some previous researchers documented, even when employees are emotionally exhausted they tend to display positive emotions towards customers and coworkers (Schneider et al., 1998).

Though prior researchers examined the relationship between emotional exhaustion and work-related outcomes, research showing how to avoid the negative effects of emotional exhaustion is lacking. Thus, our research is exploratory in introducing knowledge sharing as an important variable that acts counter to the negative effects of emotional exhaustion. Fewer research studies have been able to combine knowledge sharing and emotional exhaustion in influencing the outcomes (Lee et al., 2017).

1.2 Knowledge Sharing

The seminal work of Nonaka (1994) has stirred researchers to focus on knowledge management (KM) and, as mentioned previously, five dimensions have been identified viz., knowledge creating, knowledge storing, knowledge sharing, knowledge accessibility, and knowledge application (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). While each of these five dimensions are important, our focus in this research is ‘knowledge sharing’ that might act counter to the ill-effects of emotional exhaustion.

Park and Kim (2015) define knowledge sharing as “the provision or receipt of task information, feedback and know-how to help others and to collaborate with others to solve problems or develop new ideas, products or procedures” (Park & Kim, 2015, pp. 773). In organizations, individuals and groups share the knowledge that is created (Vorbeck & Finke, 2001). If knowledge is not shared, purposes of knowledge creation and knowledge storing, knowledge accessibility and knowledge application are not fulfilled. Sometimes, knowledge is created solely for the purpose of sharing, so that individuals and groups know the organizational culture. Organizational culture is transmitted from one generation to another through knowledge sharing. When employees are inducted into the organization, they are briefed about the organization and its culture. Knowledge is shared between the members of the organization so that it progresses in a knowledge spiral into higher levels (Nonaka, 1994). Sharing of one’s knowledge implies its accessibility to other knowledge agents for which it is intended.

While knowledge is defined as ideas, facts, and judgments that influence individuals, teams, and organizations, knowledge sharing is a critical component that brings competitive advantage (Bartol & Srivastava, 2002; Davenport & Prusak, 2000; Zhang et al., 2018). Knowledge sharing helps individuals to exploit knowledge-based resources, especially in the IT sector, and benefits organizations. The employees in the IT sector face different types of problems which require creativity to solve them and knowledge sharing helps the transfer of knowledge, skills, and information (Andreeva & Kianto, 2012; Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005).
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESES

The theoretical framework for the present study stems from the (i) conservation of resources (COR) model, and (ii) knowledge economy theory. According to COR, employees use resources to complete tasks. The resources include the “objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by an individual or that serve as a means for attaining of these objects” (Hobfall, 1989, p.516). Following COR, employees need to possess emotional resources to complete given tasks. Emotional exhaustion is a state when employees perceive a threat to the loss of emotional energy and feel that they will no longer be able to meet work demands. COR theory predicts that when individuals feel emotionally exhausted, they tend to minimize losses and shy away from work. Some of the serious consequences of emotional exhaustion include job dissatisfaction, decreased work performance, and even resignation from the organization (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). Alternatively, according to knowledge economy theory, employees may expend little effort at work to conserve their emotional resources and look to other sources such as social support or recognition through human resource policies and practices to experience an emotional recharge (Lam et al., 2010; Muraven et al., 1998). In the knowledge economy theory, knowledge is the most powerful resource, and knowledge sharing helps the organizational participants to help regain the emotional resources being lost. Thus, we also consider the knowledge-economy theory that ties up the constructs we developed in the present research.

Another theory that is applicable to the present research is intellectual capital theory. This theory considers organizational knowledge as a strategic asset that brings maximum return on investment (Wiig, 1995). The literature on KM uses intellectual capital as a theoretical base for explaining the relationship between knowledge sharing, knowledge storing, and knowledge application. Managers are concerned with identifying professional knowledge that must be shared to educate employees. The present research utilizes COR theory to illuminate the effects of emotional exhaustion, and intellectual capital theory to explain the consequences of knowledge sharing.

Using these constructs (emotional exhaustion, knowledge sharing, depersonalization, work accomplishment, and organizational performance), we present a hypothesized model. In the following section we explain the relationships between emotional exhaustion and de-personalization, work accomplishment and organizational performance. We also explain how knowledge sharing is related to de-personalization, work accomplishment and organizational performance. Finally, the effect of de-personalization and work accomplishment on organizational performance will be explained.

2.1 Hypotheses Development

2.1.1 Effect of Emotional Exhaustion on Depersonalization

Emotional exhaustion is defined as “the basic individual strain dimension of burnout” which refers to feelings of being overextended and depleted of one’s emotional and physical resources (Maslach & Leiter, 2008; pp. 498). When employees feel the burden of excessive workload and perform work in adverse conditions, it is more likely that they experience emotional exhaustion. The three-component framework propagated by Maslach and Jackson (1986) has been used by researchers to determine the effects of each of the components on outcome variables such as job dissatisfaction, employee turnover, and workplace performance. To the best of our knowledge, the inter-relationships between these three components viz., emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced work accomplishment has not been studied. We argue that emotional exhaustion leads to depersonalization. Intuitively, emotionally exhausted employees tend to depersonalize themselves. Depersonalization is a clinical syndrome which represents “disembodiment and strangeness of surrounding world”; people experiencing emotional exhaustion tend to shy away from those surrounding them, including colleagues, peers, and supervisors (Graux et al., 2012; pp. 43). Unfortunately, little research is available that documents the relationship between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Prior researchers considered both as components of burnout and studied the impact of these two on outcomes. However, researchers, as discussed previously, noted inter-correlation between these two components (Maslach & Leiter,
We thus hypothesize that emotional exhaustion is positively related to depersonalization. Based on the above, we hypothesize:

H1. Emotional exhaustion is positively related to depersonalization

2.1.2 Effect of Emotional Exhaustion on Organizational Performance

Emotional exhaustion results in a lack of emotional resources to complete given tasks, which negatively affects job performance, which in turn, adversely effects organizational performance (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). In one of the latest studies on healthcare professionals, it was documented that emotionally drained employees who felt “used up” had negative impacts on their performance (Brady et al., 2020). In the event of crisis times such as the COVID-19 global pandemic, the employees feel emotionally exhausted given the added demands of working from their homes. Anecdotal evidences reveal that IT (information technology) professionals are the worst hit people during the pandemic, second only to the frontline healthcare professionals throughout the globe. Thau and Mitchell (2010) found that when employees experience emotional exhaustion and get their resources depleted, they tend to ignore organizational rules and standards and break their normative behaviors, which adversely affect the organizational performance. Based on these we hypothesize:

H2: Emotional exhaustion is negatively related to organizational performance

2.1.3 Effect of Emotional Exhaustion on Work Accomplishment

Regarding work accomplishment, there is unanimity among researchers about the negative effect of emotional exhaustion on work accomplishment (Pehlivanoglu & Civelek, 2019). In a recent study involving 6682 multi-specialty US physicians it was revealed the average US physician was likely to express the feeling of emotional exhaustion, but unlikely to endorse the feeling of depersonalization (Brady et al., 2020). Zhang et al. (2018) in their study explained that emotionally exhausted employees tend to engage in aggressive harmful behaviors which would reduce work accomplishment. Earlier, Bechtoldt et al. (2011) documented that employee exhaustion is negatively related to work engagement, which would adversely affect work accomplishment. Based on these we hypothesize:

H3: Emotional exhaustion is negatively related to work accomplishment

2.1.4 Effect of Knowledge Sharing on Depersonalization

In organizations, knowledge sharing is quite common as employees seek knowledge from others (e.g. peers or supervisors) to solve problems (Yang, 2007). Knowledge sharing is possible only when the organizational climate is conducive such that employees are willing to share their knowledge. Knowledge sharing results in developing competencies to solve complex problems (Davenport & Prusak, 2000). These days employees find the web as a convenient mode for knowledge sharing. In medical science research, for example, it is quite common for surgeons to share information about complicated cases. Networking with experts in their field would enable surgeons to share knowledge for the benefit of both patients and healthcare units. Some scholars contend that a knowledge sharing climate is conducive for organizational learning (Park & Kim, 2018). Because knowledge sharing allows employees to interact, one could intuitively assume a negative relationship between knowledge sharing and depersonalization. Unfortunately, there has been little research investigating this negative relationship. However, based on these arguments and intuitive logic, we hypothesize:

H4: Knowledge sharing is negatively related to depersonalization
2.1.5 Effect of Knowledge Sharing on Organizational Performance

Earlier researchers found support for the positive relationship between knowledge sharing and work accomplishment and organizational performance, through organizational learning (Park & Kim 2018). Some researchers contend that knowledge sharing generates new ideas to solve complex problems, thus increasing productivity and performance. When individual productivity increases, it will have a snowballing effect on organizational performance (Vorbeck & Finke, 2001). During the times of crisis such as the COVID-19 global pandemic, knowledge sharing helps individuals to exploit available knowledge-based resources which will have positive effect on organizational performance. For example, in the IT sector employees face different types of problems which require creativity to solve them and knowledge sharing helps transfer of knowledge, skills, and information which is necessary to meet the targeted goals and achieve performance (Andreeva & Kianto, 2012; Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005). Based on these we hypothesize:

H5: Knowledge sharing is positively related to organizational performance

2.1.6 Effect of Knowledge Sharing on Work Accomplishment

Since knowledge management is concerned with integrating people, process, and technology, knowledge sharing plays a vital role in ensuring that employee productivity is enhanced. Earlier researchers documented that knowledge sharing has several positive benefits including work accomplishment (Yang, 2007; Park & Kim, 2018). Intuitively speaking, employees in the IT sector frequently engage in knowledge sharing when they come across new software or a new method of analyzing the data which will have a positive effect on work accomplishment. In a recent study conducted in India, Payal et al. (2019) found that knowledge sharing is positively related to work accomplishment of employees and organizational performance. Based on these, we hypothesize:

H6: Knowledge sharing is positively related to work accomplishment

2.1.7 Effects of Depersonalization on Organizational Performance

Extant research documents the negative relationship between depersonalization and organizational performance (Wright & Bonett, 1997; Sleddens & Becker, 2018). Moreover, in one study conducted in India, researchers found that depersonalization has negative effects on job satisfaction and commitment (Totawar & Nambudiri, 2012). A recent study reported that depersonalization of the sales employees working in pharmaceutical companies in Turkey resulted in a decrease in work accomplishment (Pehlivanoglu & Civelek, 2019). Based on these, we hypothesize:

H7: Depersonalization is negatively related to organizational performance

2.1.8 Effects of Work Accomplishment on Organizational Performance

Research reporting a positive relationship between work accomplishment and organizational performance is perhaps self-explanatory. Earlier researchers found a positive correlation between these two constructs and argue that work accomplishment results in organizational performance (Bonache & Noethen, 2014; Vosloban, 2012). The labor market is changing during the current times of coronavirus crisis situation restrictions, organizational performance largely depends on how effectively the employees perform. Though there is a global problem, some companies are able to pull out of the crisis by seeing that employees contribute to the success of organizations by meeting the changing customer demands. In a recent study conducted in Romania, it was found that work flexibility, job satisfaction and organizational performance are positively related. The crisis situations resulted in
flexible working conditions (such as working from home) and work accomplishment by employees was a significant factor (Davidescu et al., 2020). Based on these we hypothesize:

H8: Work accomplishment is positively related to organizational performance

The conceptual model is presented in Figure 1

3. METHOD

3.1 Sample

In today’s competitive world, organizations compete with each other to secure a sustained competitive advantage. Often, employees feel pressured to do extra work and show their productivity in this process. In India, the workload of employees in the Information Technology (IT) sector, in particular, are undergoing pressure at work. We selected employees from the IT sector from India because of the heavy work-pressures the employees are undergoing. As global companies have adopted the concept of ‘outsourcing’, the employees from IT have to meet demands by adjusting their time-schedules due to time zone differences. The emotional exhaustion employees experience is significant, and anecdotal evidence reveals that too much work-pressure results in several dysfunctional consequences. Though there are some cultural differences, we argue that work demands in India would be similar to other countries such as the US and thus be a representative sample.

The focus of the present study was on examining the effect of emotional exhaustion on various outcomes. In the present-day competitive world, Information Technology (IT) employees are hard
pressed to complete the goals set by organizations and experience emotional exhaustion. In India, in particular, the competition is very vigorous. Our sample is IT employees from the southern part of India. The employees are from reputed IT companies such as: Tata Consultancy Services Ltd, Infosys Ltd, Cognizant Technology Solutions India Pvt Ltd, Wipro Ltd, Capgemini India Pvt Ltd, and HCL Technologies Ltd. The data was collected at the time when pandemic was about to hit during 2020. We sent a structured instrument to 750 employees and received 695 back (92% response rate). We have a high response rate because employees in IT find it convenient to respond to our call of surveys. Though we do not have any connection with the employees in these organizations, the respondents were very helpful in providing us competed surveys. Out of the surveys received 19 were not included in the final analysis because they were either incomplete or left blank. The final sample consisted of surveys from 676 respondents.

### 3.2 Demographic profile of respondents

The demographic profile of respondents is presented in Table 1a.

### 3.3 Measures

We selected the measures from literature. On Likert-type 5-point scale (‘1’ representing ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘5’ representing ‘strongly agree’), we measured the constructs using established indicators. All the survey items were presented in Table 1b.

- **Burnout** is a syndrome of (i) emotional exhaustion, (ii) depersonalization, and (iii) reduced personal accomplishment, experienced by employees who feel stress at work (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Diminished personal accomplishment refers to an individual’s feeling of incompetence and lack of achievement of work (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). The self-perception of negativity and feeling of failure results in diminished personal accomplishment. The construct ‘Work Accomplishment’ is an inverse representation of Reduced Work Accomplishment. Maslach & Jackson used the term ‘Personal Accomplishment’ which represents employees feelings and successful achievement in one’s work with people. We substituted Work Accomplishment for ‘Personal Accomplishment’ in this study.

- **Emotional exhaustion** was measured using seven items from Maslach and Jackson (1981) and used by previous researchers (Write & Cropanzano, 1998). The sample items read as: “I feel burned out from my work” and “I feel frustrated by my job”. The reliability coefficient Cronbach alpha for emotional exhaustion was 0.83.

- **Knowledge sharing** was measured using four items from Muhammad (2006). The sample item read as: “I have shared new insights that I have gained” and the reliability coefficient for knowledge sharing was 0.72.

- **Depersonalization** was measured using two items from Maslach and Jackson (1981) and the sample item read as: “I feel I treat some Clients as if they were impersonal objects”. The reliability coefficient for depersonalization was 0.65.

- **Work accomplishment** was measured using four items from Maslach and Jackson (1981) and the sample item read as: “I deal very effectively with the problems of my Clients”. The reliability coefficient for work accomplishment was 0.74.

- **Organizational performance** was measured using four items from Santos et al. (2014), and the sample item reads as: “The company manages to maintain the satisfaction level of its customers in the various markets where it acts”. The reliability coefficient for organizational performance was 0.67.

### 3.4 Measurement model

#### 3.4.1 Measurement Properties, Discriminant Validity and Reliability

We used structural equation modeling (Lisrel package) to verify the measurement model. Table 1b shows the measurement properties of the survey instrument. The factor loadings for most of the indicators were over 0.7, except for five of the indicators they ranged between 0.62 and 0.7. Hair et al. (2011) suggests that the value at the threshold of 0.60 or above is acceptable. Since we used established measures, we retained these five indicators though they are less than 0.7, but over 0.6. We further tested for discriminant validity by following the procedures outlined by Fornell and Larcker (1981)
and Netemeyer et al. (1990), through a comparison of the variance extracted estimates of the measures with the square of the correlation between constructs. In this study, the variance extracted estimates for all variables exceeded the suggested level of .50 and hence satisfied the condition for discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981, pp. 46). The variance extracted estimates depersonalization and work accomplishment 0.74 and 0.56, respectively, and both exceeded the squared correlation between them ($\Phi_{21} = -.16$, $\Phi_{21}^2 = .25$; SE of $\Phi_{21} = .04$; $p < .05$). Moreover, the squared correlation between knowledge sharing and organizational performance was lower than the variance extracted estimates of 0.50 and 0.50 ($\Phi_{21} = .21$, $\Phi_{21}^2 = .04$; SE of $\Phi_{21} = .05$; $p < .05$); and the squared correlation between work performance and emotional exhaustion was lower than the variance extracted estimates of 0.47

Table 1. (a) Demographic Profile of The Respondents

| Category                        | Profile                          | Total Number | Percentage |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| Gender                          | Male                             | 470          | 69.5       |
|                                 | Female                           | 206          | 30.5       |
| Age                             | 22-30                            | 514          | 76         |
|                                 | 31-40                            | 152          | 22.5       |
|                                 | 40 and over                      | 10           | 1.5        |
| Marital Status                  | Single                           | 379          | 56.1       |
|                                 | Married                          | 297          | 43.9       |
| Educational Qualification       | Undergraduate (Bachelors’ degree)| 100          | 14.8       |
|                                 | Engineering Degree               | 221          | 32.7       |
|                                 | Post-graduate (Masters’ Degree)  | 204          | 30.2       |
|                                 | Professional Degrees (Chartered Accountant, Law, Cost Accountant etc.) | 151          | 22.3       |
| Annual Income                   | Below 200,000 ($3000)            | 70           | 10.4       |
|                                 | Rs. 200,000 – Rs. 400,000 ($3000 - $4500) | 219          | 32.4       |
|                                 | Rs. 400,000 – Rs. 800,000 ($4500 - $6000) | 313          | 46.3       |
|                                 | Rs. 800,000 – Rs. 1,500,000 ($6000 - $11,000) | 64           | 9.5        |
|                                 | Over Rs. 1,500,000 ($11,000).    | 10           | 1.4        |
| Occupation                      | Soft Engineers                   | 382          | 56.5       |
|                                 | Project Managers                 | 142          | 21         |
|                                 | Team Leaders                     | 36           | 5.3        |
|                                 | Executives                       | 36           | 5.3        |
|                                 | Human Resources and other Administrative Departments | 80           | 11.9       |
and 0.43 ($\Phi_{21} = -0.22, \Phi_{21}^2 = 0.048$; SE of $\Phi_{21} = 0.05; p < .05$). These statistics, together with the CFA results, offer support for discriminant validity between these five variables.

Correlations, standard deviations, and discriminant validity were provided in Table 1c. Construct reliability and validity were provided in Table 1d.

3.4.2 Multicollinearity

To check multicollinearity, it is suggested to check Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and the suggested values should be 5.0 or less (Hair et al., 2011). We verified both outer VIF values and inner VIF values and these values were less than 5 and hence multicollinearity is not a problem with the data. The outer and inner VIF values were mentioned in Table 1e and 1f.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Structural Model and Testing Hypotheses

After checking the measurement properties, discriminant and convergent validity, and reliability, we tested hypotheses.

The effect of emotional exhaustion on depersonalization was negative and significant ($\beta = .59, p < .001$) thus supporting H1. The path coefficient of the relationship between emotional exhaustion and organizational performance was negative and significant ($\beta = -.153, p < .001$), thus supporting H2. The relationship between emotional exhaustion and work accomplishment was predicted to be negative and the path coefficient was ($\beta = -.101, p < .001$), thus supporting H3. We hypothesized a negative relationship between knowledge sharing and depersonalization. The path coefficient between knowledge sharing and depersonalization was negative and significant ($\beta = -.129, p < .001$), thus supporting H4.

Hypothesis 5 predicts a positive relationship between knowledge sharing and organizational performance. The path coefficient was positive and significant ($\beta = .114, p < .001$), thus supporting H5. The path coefficient for the relationship between knowledge sharing and work accomplishment was positive and significant ($\beta = .232, p < .001$), thus supporting H6.

The path coefficient of the relationship between depersonalization and organizational performance was negative but not significant ($\beta = -.055, p = .167$), thus H7 was not supported.

Finally, the path coefficient of the relationship between work accomplishment and organizational performance was positive and significant ($\beta = .376, p < .001$), thus supporting H8.

The path coefficients were mentioned in Table 2.

The path diagram was presented in Figure 2.

4.2 Predictive values and Effect Size

We tested the predictive relevance of the sample by using a blindfolding technique which allows us to omit a part of the data matrix and use the results for predicting the omitted part. Smart PLS has the inherent capability of calculating $Q^2$ values. Higher $Q^2$ values represent less deviation in the estimated values from actual values. It is recommended that predictive indices of 0.02 show small effect, 0.15 show medium effect and values of over 0.35 show large effect (Hair et al., 2016). The $Q^2$ values for depersonalization (0.236), organizational performance (0.178), and work accomplishment (0.281) show medium effect size.

4.3 $R^2$ of exogenous variables

We also checked the predictive accuracy of the model by calculating the $R^2$ for exogenous variables. According to Hair et al. (2014), the $R^2$ values of over 0.75 are considered ‘good’, values of 0.50 are considered as ‘moderate’ and values of less than 0.25 less are considered weak in predictive
accuracy. The $R^2$ values of depersonalization (0.361), organizational performance (0.228), and work accomplishment (0.063) show weak predictive accuracy.

The $R^2$ and $Q^2$ values were shown in Table 3.

### 4.4 Post-hoc Analysis

As previous researchers have documented that depersonalization is negatively related to work accomplishment, we did not hypothesize the relationship in our model. However, we did a post-hoc

#### Table 1. (b) Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Measurement Properties

| Variable                  | Alpha | Standardized Loadings ($\lambda_{yi}$) | Reliability ($\lambda_{2yi}$) | Variance ($\text{Var}(\varepsilon_i)$) | Variance-Extracted Estimate $\Sigma(\lambda_{yi}^2)/[\Sigma(\lambda_{yi}^2) + \text{Var}(\varepsilon_i)]$ |
|---------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Work Accomplishment       | 0.74  | 0.62                                  | 0.38                         | 0.62                                 | 0.56                                                                                               |
| I can easily understand how my Clients feel about things. | 0.62  | 0.38                                  | 0.62                         |                                                     |                                                                                                   |
| I deal very effectively with the problems of my Clients. | 0.77  | 0.59                                  | 0.41                         |                                                     |                                                                                                   |
| I feel I’m positively influencing other people’s lives through my work. | 0.82  | 0.67                                  | 0.33                         |                                                     |                                                                                                   |
| I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my clients. | 0.77  | 0.59                                  | 0.41                         |                                                     |                                                                                                   |
| Performance               | 0.67  | 0.56                                  | 0.38                         | 0.50                                 | 0.50                                                                                               |
| Most of the company’s customers are loyal. | 0.65  | 0.42                                  | 0.58                         |                                                     |                                                                                                   |
| The company manages to attract new customers. | 0.72  | 0.52                                  | 0.48                         |                                                     |                                                                                                   |
| The company is competitive in terms of sales and market share in its segments. | 0.79  | 0.62                                  | 0.38                         |                                                     |                                                                                                   |
| The company manages to maintain the satisfaction level of its customers in the various markets where it acts. | 0.67  | 0.45                                  | 0.55                         |                                                     |                                                                                                   |
| Depersonalization         | 0.65  | 0.83                                  | 0.69                         | 0.31                                 | 0.74                                                                                               |
| I feel I treat some Clients as if they were impersonal objects. | 0.83  | 0.69                                  | 0.31                         |                                                     |                                                                                                   |
| I don’t really care what happens to some Clients. | 0.89  | 0.79                                  | 0.21                         |                                                     |                                                                                                   |
| Knowledge Sharing         | 0.72  | 0.73                                  | 0.53                         | 0.47                                 | 0.54                                                                                               |
| I have shared new insights that I have gained. | 0.73  | 0.53                                  | 0.47                         |                                                     |                                                                                                   |
| I have shared my best practices. | 0.82  | 0.67                                  | 0.33                         |                                                     |                                                                                                   |
| I have shared the information that I stored for my own purposes. | 0.68  | 0.46                                  | 0.54                         |                                                     |                                                                                                   |
| I have shared the information at others request. | 0.71  | 0.50                                  | 0.50                         |                                                     |                                                                                                   |
| Emotional Exhaustion      | 0.83  | 0.61                                  | 0.37                         | 0.63                                 | 0.50                                                                                               |
| I feel emotionally drained from my work. | 0.61  | 0.37                                  | 0.63                         |                                                     |                                                                                                   |
| I feel used up at the end of my workday. | 0.71  | 0.50                                  | 0.50                         |                                                     |                                                                                                   |
| I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job. | 0.75  | 0.56                                  | 0.44                         |                                                     |                                                                                                   |
| I feel burned out from my work. | 0.81  | 0.66                                  | 0.34                         |                                                     |                                                                                                   |
| I feel frustrated by my job. | 0.62  | 0.38                                  | 0.62                         |                                                     |                                                                                                   |
| I feel I’m working too hard on my job | 0.76  | 0.58                                  | 0.42                         |                                                     |                                                                                                   |
| Working with people directly puts too much stress on me. | 0.69  | 0.48                                  | 0.52                         |                                                     |                                                                                                   |
### Table 1. (c) Descriptive Statistics: Means, standard deviations, correlations and discriminant validity

| Variables                      | Mean  | S.D  | 1      | 2      | 3      | 4      | 5          |
|--------------------------------|-------|------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------------|
| 1. Depersonalization           | 2.84  | .89  |        |        |        |        | **0.862**  |
| 2. Emotional Exhaustion        | 3.16  | .73  | 0.58** |        |        |        | **0.711**  |
| 3. Knowledge Sharing           | 3.97  | .57  | -0.11**| 0.03   |        |        | **0.738**  |
| 4. Organizational Performance  | 3.83  | .53  | -0.22**| -0.22**| 0.21** |        | **0.707**  |
| 5. Work Accomplishment         | 3.65  | .62  | -0.16**| -0.09* | 0.23** |        | **0.43**  **0.749** |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
(a) Numbers in diagonal (in bold) are ‘square root of Average Variance Extracted’.

### Table 1. (d) Construct reliability and validity

| Variable                        | Cronbach's Alpha | rho_A | Composite Reliability | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) |
|---------------------------------|------------------|-------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Depersonalization               | 0.656            | 0.674 | 0.852                  | 0.742                            |
| Emotional Exhaustion            | 0.836            | 0.852 | 0.876                  | 0.505                            |
| Knowledge Sharing               | 0.725            | 0.738 | 0.826                  | 0.544                            |
| Organizational Performance      | 0.664            | 0.665 | 0.799                  | 0.5                               |
| Work Accomplishment             | 0.74             | 0.763 | 0.835                  | 0.561                            |

### Table 1. (e) Outer VIF Values

| Indicators | VIF  | Indicator | VIF  |
|------------|------|-----------|------|
| dp1        | 1.313| ks2       | 1.575|
| dp2        | 1.313| ks3       | 1.575|
| ee1        | 1.692| ks4       | 1.516|
| ee2        | 1.774| op1       | 1.143|
| ee3        | 1.926| op2       | 1.27 |
| ee4        | 2.156| op3       | 1.547|
| ee5        | 1.438| op4       | 1.361|
| ee6        | 1.69 | wa1       | 1.315|
| ee7        | 1.677| wa2       | 1.595|
| ks1        | 1.34 | wa3       | 1.649|
|           |     | wa4       | 1.404|
analysis to see if the negative relationship between depersonalization and work accomplishment holds. The post-hoc analysis revealed that, consistent with the existing research, the path coefficient of depersonalization ® work accomplishment is -0.115 (p < .001). Because of space constraint we did not include a second path diagram (incorporating the link between depersonalization and work accomplishment).
5. DISCUSSION

The objective of the present study is to empirically investigate the relationship between emotional exhaustion and knowledge sharing on depersonalization, work accomplishment and organizational performance. As predicted, our findings reveal a positive relationship between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and a negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and work accomplishment and organizational performance. The positive relationship between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization is reported in this study because increased feeling of emotional exhaustion is more likely to leave less energy for the individuals to focus on personal relationships. Emotionally exhausted individuals tend to shy away from others and this finding is consistent with the literature. Further, emotionally drained individuals are more likely to concentrate less on work, which adversely affects their work accomplishment and organizational performance.
The hypothesis that knowledge sharing is negatively related to depersonalization is supported because knowledge sharing enables the employees to engage in communication with one another promoting teamwork. In addition, knowledge sharing has a positive relationship with work accomplishment and organizational performance.

Contrary to what is hypothesized, we found that depersonalization is not related significantly to organizational performance. One of the plausible reasons could be the flexibility in work schedules of employees in the IT sector which allows them to work from home. Though the regression coefficient was negative, it is not significant. This explains the fact that depersonalization is negatively related to organizational performance, but it did not adversely affect the performance. The findings corroborate the existing studies in the areas of both organizational behavior and knowledge management. In India, particularly in the IT sector, employees encounter emotional exhaustion in the process of meeting goals, and the present study depicts the negative outcomes associated with emotional exhaustion. At the same time, knowledge sharing helps the employees mitigate the ill-effects of emotional exhaustion and benefit from knowledge management.

Our results strengthen the application of COR theory that when employees feel threatened to lose emotional energy, they look for alternative sources to prevent them from job satisfaction and decreased work performance. Knowledge sharing acts counter to the depletion of emotional energy and enables employees to engage in work and remain productive. The findings from the present research thus supports the importance of COR and highlights the effects of emotional exhaustion which can be countered by intellectual capital theory which explains the consequences of knowledge sharing.

5.1 Contributions
The present study contributes to both literature and practicing managers. To the organizational behavior literature, this research adds the importance of managing emotional exhaustion which would otherwise lessen organizational performance. The study also reiterates the significance of knowledge sharing, one of the important dimensions of knowledge management, in combating the negative effects of emotional exhaustion. Practicing managers and employees need to be open in their discussions of problems associated with emotional exhaustion instead of reacting towards customers negatively. Support from management helps employees to avoid the negative effects of emotional exhaustion and eventual burnout. Neglect on the part of management may result in hostile reactions of emotional exhaustion and also cause health-related problems due to excessive stress. That being said, how the knowledge sharing interacts with other elements of burnout requires additional study.

5.2 Limitations
We acknowledge some of the limitations inherent in the present study. First, as with any social science research, common method variance is a potential problem. However, to address this problem we followed the procedures outlined by Podsakoff et al. (2003) and did Harman’s one-factor test. The total variance explained by a single factor was less than 30% and hence common method bias is a not a problem with the data (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Secondly, social desirability bias is another problem with self-report survey instruments. Though it is not possible to eliminate the social desirability bias, it is suggested by researchers that by maintaining anonymity about the results from the survey, this bias is minimized (Latif, 2000). Finally, generalizability of the findings is a potential problem. However, to the extent the work environment is similar in other organizations and other countries, the results are expected to be generalizable.

Further, we did not discuss the role of supervisors and organizational culture in influencing the relationships. Another limitation of the present study is that the depersonalization measure captures the employee attitude towards customers, and a more nuanced measure may include self, co-workers, supervisors, and subordinates. Future researches may focus on these limitations.
5.3. Implications for Future Research and Practice
This study offers several avenues for future research. First, the role of social support in managing emotional exhaustion can be investigated. Second, Big-Five personality traits may play a role in explaining differences in which employees experience and manage stress. For example, employees who are high in ‘openness to experience’ may engage in activities that will reduce the ill-effects of emotional exhaustion. Further, employees who are high in ‘emotional stability’ may manage the exhaustion more effectively than those who are low in this trait. Finally, cross country comparisons may help explain differences in which the employees in different countries manage the burnout. More particularly, in developing countries facing enormous work pressure because of competing demands from employers, a thorough investigation of effects of emotional exhaustion on organizational outcomes would be warranted. Some researchers documented that the relationship between emotional exhaustion and job performance can be mediated by the level of motivation (Halbesleben and Bowler, 2007). Similarly, future researchers may study the effect of leadership style on emotional exhaustion, as well as the level of knowledge sharing in influencing the individual and organizational outcomes.

6. CONCLUSION
This article advances the researcher’s understanding of the inter-relationship between three components of burnout viz., emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. To date, researchers have studied the impact of these two components separately on individual and organizational outcomes. Researchers, to our knowledge, have not previously studied the causal relationship between these three components; thus, our analysis represents an exploratory study. Our positioning of the variables in the study and combination of knowledge sharing and emotional exhaustion provide important advances contributing to the literature. Future researchers on knowledge management and organizational behavior may probe into some additional variables such as leadership style and motivational techniques in providing mechanisms for increased individual and organizational performance.
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