

## Relationship between Job Demands and Burnout among Lawyers: A Case Study of Yangon Justice Central Law Firm

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### Abstract

This research investigated the impact of job demands on burnout at the Yangon Justice Centre (YJC) Law Firm in Myanmar. Surveys and questionnaires were used to collect data from 72 participants, addressing job demands, and burnout levels. The study found that job demands, including role overload, work-family conflicts, and role conflicts, significantly contributed to burnout among lawyers. Organizations are advised to create a supportive work environment, provide resources for coping with job demands promote communication and mental health awareness, monitor and address burnout, and advocate for work-life balance policies. These strategies can help alleviate the negative effects of job demands and enhance the well-being of lawyers at the YJC Law Firm in Myanmar, offering practical insights for organizations to develop interventions and support systems.

**Keywords:** Job Demands, Burnout, Role Overload, Work-family Conflicts, Role Conflicts

### Introduction

This research investigates the psychological distress experienced by lawyers due to the multitude of job demands they face. The demanding nature of their profession exposes them to high levels of stress, which can negatively impact their physical and mental health. Physically, stress can lead to issues like headaches and muscle pain, while mentally, it can result in insomnia, burnout and anxiety. The specific job demands explored in this study include role overload, work-family conflict and role conflict. By understanding these factors, the research aims to contribute to the development of interventions and support systems that promote the well-being of lawyers and create healthier work environments.

The concept of role overload is a struggle between the requirements of the job and the time available to complete these duties. Role overload is described as the amount of pressure felt to perform more work, a sense that one cannot complete a typical day's worth of work in a single day, and the perception that the amount of work interferes with the quality of the job (Bamberger, 2017). That is, when the pressure on the worker to do more work, the feeling of not being able to get the job done and the feeling that it interferes with the ability to work. Role overload is the conflict that workers define themselves, between time and quantity of work to be done by the feeling.

Work-Family conflict is described as psychological and brought on by competing role pressure. These role pressures are incompatible with one another. Work-family conflict can be caused by conduct, time, or strains (Greenhaus, Jeffrey & Beutell, 2016). Humans can only use a limited amount of energy and time, therefore neither a work nor a family will ever be completely satisfying. Their capacity to manage their job and family life may be impacted by this, as women are more likely than men to be involved in household chores, resulting in a greater burden on their time and energy in this conflict.

Role conflict is possible for numerous reasons. Challenges in life exert pressure on dreams and demands, which are at conflict with one another. Personality and interpersonal

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relational conduct are key factors in establishing the primary effects of role conflict. Role conflicts can occur in a variety of ways, including when one's responsibilities conflict with requirements from senders, when expectations are incompatible with one another when carrying out one's duties and when numerous roles often overlap (Jayasudha, 2016). However, many young people lack the information which they need to be better prepared to prevent adverse sexual and reproductive health outcomes such as early marriage, sexual coercion and violence, unintended pregnancy, unsafe abortion, and sexually transmitted infections. The introduction of sexual education in school curriculum will partly reduce the unwanted pregnancies, illegal abortions, child sexual abuses and sexually transmitted diseases.

Burnout is real and it's more serious than just being tired at the end of a hectic day. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), burnout is an occupational hazard - "a syndrome that is thought to be caused by continuous worry at work that has not been handled well (Miki, 2023)." Burnout caused on by a profession is "a state of physical or emotional exhaustion that also involves a sense of reduced accomplishment and loss of personal identity." It has a connection to and could be a sign of other diseases involving depression. Based on Bloomberg Law's Attorney Workload and Hours study, 52% of lawyer respondents reported feeling burned out at work in the fourth quarter of 2021. Due to the long hours, high-profile clients, and 'up or out' business model that favors the longevity of the handful over the many, big law burnout can be even more frequent (Martinez, 2023). The aim of the current study was the psychological anguish experienced by lawyers at the Yangon Justice Center law firm in Myanmar.

### **Research Objective**

The main objective of the study is to analyze the relationship between job demands and the burnout among lawyers with regarding at the Yangon Justice Center Law firm

### **Scope and Method of the Study**

This study aims to investigate the effects of lawyers' job demands on burnout with a specific focus on the context of the Yangon Justice Center. The study is employing the Job Demand-Resource (JD-R) theory as a theoretical framework, focusing specifically on examining the effects of job demands. The primary focus of this research examines the impact of job demands on burnout among lawyers. Other factors or outcomes are not considered within the scope of this study. The Yangon Justice Center, located in Yangon, Myanmar is a business dedicated to providing legal assistance and services to individuals in accordance with the law. The organization employs a total of 76 respondents of the Yangon Justice Center, and collected as completed answers from 72 respondents among those total respondents of YJC.

## **Literature Review**

### **(a) Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory**

JD-R theory is a united theory of work organization that incorporates various perspectives on job stress and motivation. In short, the theory explains how job demands and resources influence job performance through employee well-being and how employees use proactive as well as reactive work behaviors to influence job demands and resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). The physical, psychological, social or organizational components of work that require constant physical, cognitive and emotional effort and are consequently linked to specific physiological and psychological costs are referred to as job demands and the physical, psychological, social or organizational components of a job that have the ability to motivate employees, have a role in achieving work objectives, control how pressures on the workplace

affect employees and promote learning and personal development are referred to as job resources (Bakker, Demerouti & Sanz-Vergel, 2022). The JD-R theory is a comprehensive framework that incorporates different perspectives on job stress, motivation and employee well-being. It explains how job demands and resources influence job performance through employee well-being and how proactive and reactive work behaviors are used to manage job demands and resources. By understanding and addressing these factors, organizations can enhance employee well-being and improve job performance.

**Role overload** refers to a situation where an individual face an excessive amount of responsibilities, tasks, or expectations within a particular role or position. It occurs when the demands placed on an individual exceed their available time, resources or capacity to effectively fulfill those demands. Role overload can occur in various areas of life, including work, family and personal commitments. In the context of work, role overload typically arises when an individual is assigned an overwhelming number of tasks or responsibilities that surpass their ability to manage them within the given time frame. This can happen due to factors such as increased workload, tight deadlines, insufficient resources or inadequate support. Role overload can lead to feelings of stress, burnout, decreased job satisfaction and compromised performance. Role overload can be a potential issue that may arise when communicating role-related information to employees. The position encompasses a multitude of duties that may exceed an employee's capacity to manage within an acceptable timeframe. Role overload may arise due to various factors. Role overload is a commonly observed phenomenon in certain professions (Jex, 2011).

**Work-family conflict** has been linked to negative work results in organizations, so it is very important for organizations to reduce the work-family problems of their workers. Work-family conflicts have been reduced in many ways such as through job liberty, a helpful work-family culture, telecommuting, flexible work hours and places, and so on. Work-family balance practices are meant to reduce friction between work and family by giving workers helpful resources. But these practices often have mixed effects on work-family conflicts, which are often affected by cultural or individual differences such as family support, the amount or age of children, and individual differences like extraversion (Chang , Zhou , Wang & Heredero, 2017). Work-family conflict is a kind of inter-role conflict that happens when the needs of work and family are not appropriate. Work-family conflict happens when a person's work roles make it impossible for them to do their family jobs well (Iresearchnet, 2023).

Employees who deal with incompatible job expectations are more likely to experience role conflict. It has received a lot of attention as a potential stressor in the study that has been conducted on occupational stress, where it is classified as a variable. A factor in the working environment that calls for an adjustment or reaction from workers and has the potential to negatively affect their health is referred to as a stressor. In addition to role conflict, additional things that might be stressful include unclear roles, being mistreated at work and having an excessive amount of work to do (Iresearchnet, 2023).

There are two different kinds of role conflict; Intra-role Conflict-Differing expectations throughout the same role cause this conflict. For instance, a supervisor must satisfy both his subordinates and the company's board of directors. If workers request higher compensation and fewer hours, the company's directors may not approve, putting the supervisor in the center of an intra-role dispute. Role strain is similar yet distinct. Inter-role Conflict -When a person serves many roles, they have conflicting expectations. For instance, job pressure may cause someone to spend more time at work, while family may desire them to spend more time with them. Thus, their conflicting responsibilities as manager and father/ husband/ mother/ wife cause inter-role conflict (Drew, 2022).

## (b) Burnout

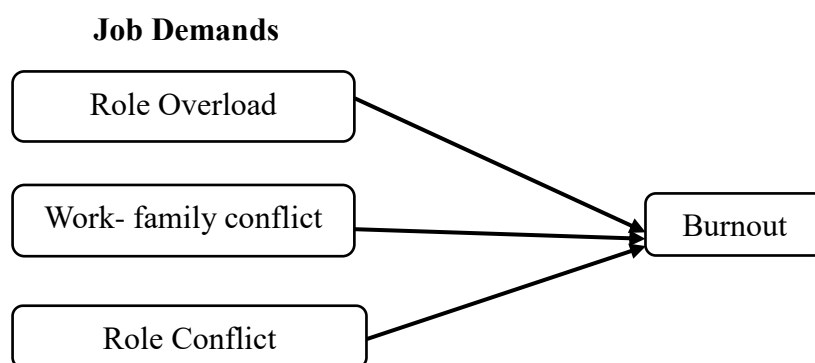
Burnout is a condition characterized by a state of emotional, physical and mental depletion that arises from extended and excessive exposure to stress. Burnout is a psychological state characterized by feelings of being emotionally exhausted, overwhelmed and unable to cope with persistent demands. Long-term exposure to stress can result in a decline in individual's enthusiasm and drive, which initially prompted them to undertake a particular responsibility. The process of burnout has been found to have a negative impact on an individual's productivity and energy levels, resulting in a sense of helplessness, hopelessness, cynicism and resentment. At some stage, among may experience a sense of depletion in their resources. Burnout has been found to have adverse consequences that extend beyond the workplace and permeate various aspects of an individual's life, such as their domestic, professional and social domains. Burnout may lead to enduring alterations in the body, rendering it susceptible to ailments such as influenza and common colds. Quickly attention to burnout is essential due to its many implications (Smith, Segal & Robinson, 2023).

Individuals who lead a stressful lifestyle may experience significant pressure, resulting in feelings of exhaustion, emptiness, burnout and an inability to manage their circumstances. The experience of stress in the workplace has been found to elicit both physical and mental manifestations. Potential factors that may contribute to this phenomenon encompass experiencing a perpetual sense of being overburdened or under-stimulated, in time constraints or encountering interpersonal disagreements with co-workers. Excessive dedication leading to self-neglect could potentially be the underlying cause. The incidence of sick leave due to stress-related issues in the workplace is a prevalent occurrence. In the event of workplace difficulties, changes to the work environment could produce positive results (John, 2020).

## (c) Conceptual Framework of the Study

According to the JD-R theory, increased job demands in the form of physical and emotional stressors such as role conflicts, work-family conflicts and role overload may lead to emotional damage (burnout) for employees. In the nature of legal professional is a challenging area of work, the presence of role conflicts, work-family conflicts and role overloads within a law firm may contribute to an increased risk of burnout among legal professionals. In this current study was constructed with those variables to examine the influenced independent variables how to impact on the dependent variables as well.

**Figure (1): Conceptual Frame Work of the Study**



Source: Adapted From Previous Studies (2023)

## Findings and Discussion

### (a) Demographic Profile of the Respondents

In this section, demographic information of respondents is presented. The data are collected with structured questionnaires and results are discussed at the Table (1).

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

No.	Demographic Factors	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
	<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100</b>
1	<b>Gender</b>		
	Male	32	44
	Female	40	56
2	<b>Age (Years)</b>		
	Under 30	16	22
	31-40	42	58
	41-50	5	7
	51 Above	9	13
3	<b>Marital Status</b>		
	Single	36	50
	Married	33	46
	Divorce	3	4
4	<b>Family Dependent</b>		
	Stand Alone	12	17
	2-4	39	54
	5-7	18	25
	7 above	3	4
5	<b>Work Experience (Years)</b>		
	1-3	20	28
	4-6	15	21
	6 above	37	51
6	<b>Position</b>		
	Higher Grade Pleadershship	29	40
	Advocate	43	60
7	<b>Monthly Income (kyats)</b>		
	300000-500000	25	35
	500001-1000000	38	53
	1000001 above	9	12

Source: Survey Data (2023)

This table provides a breakdown of the respondents' characteristics in various demographic categories such as the gender distribution, age groups, marital status, family dependent status, work experience, positions, and monthly income ranges of the respondents.

### (b) Correlation Analysis

Table (2) shows that Pearson correlations between job demands and burnout. The correlations are measured on a scale from -1 to 1, where: A correlation of 1 indicates a perfect positive relationship. A correlation of -1 indicates a perfect negative relationship. A correlation of 0 indicates no linear relationship.

Table 2. Correlation between Job Demands and Burnout

		Mean Role Overload	Mean Work Family Conflict	Mean Role Conflict	Mean Burnout
Role Overload	Pearson Correlation	1	.663**	.633**	.614**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	72	72	72	72
Work Family Conflict	Pearson Correlation	.663**	1	.597**	.669**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	72	72	72	72
Role Conflict	Pearson Correlation	.633**	.597**	1	.703**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	72	72	72	72
Burnout	Pearson Correlation	.614**	.669**	.703**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	72	72	72	72

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

The correlation between mean role overload and burnout is 0.614\*\* (significant at the 0.01 level). This shows a strong positive relationship between these two variables as well. The correlation between work family conflict and burnout is 0.669\*\* (significant at the 0.01 level), indicating a strong positive relationship. The correlation between role conflict and burnout is 0.703\*\* (significant at the 0.01 level), demonstrating a strong positive relationship.

**(c) Regression Analysis**

Regression analysis is a statistical method used to examine the relationship between one or more independent variables and a dependent variable. It helps to understand how changes in the independent variables are associated with changes in the dependent variable.

Table 3. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.773	.598	.580	.35076	2.213

Predictors: (Constant), Role Conflict, Work Family Conflict, Role Overload

**Dependent Variable: Burnout**

The coefficient of determination is 0.598, which means that approximately 59.8% of the variance in the dependent variable (Burnout) can be explained by the independent variables (Role Conflict, Work Family Conflict, and Role Overload).

Table 4. ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.448	3	4.149	33.724	.000
	Residual	8.366	68	.123		
	Total	20.814	71			

Dependent Variable: Burnout

Predictors: (Constant), Role Conflict, Work Family Conflict, Role Overload

ANOVA tests the overall significant of the regression model. The p-value is very low (0.000), indicating the regression model is statistically significant.

Table 5. Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.149	.407		.367	.715
	Role Overload	.147	.133	.124	1.107	.272
	Work Family Conflict	.341	.111	.333	3.082	.003
	Role Conflict	.452	.111	.426	4.086	.000

Dependent Variable: Burnout

Role overload has a coefficient of 0.147 with a p-value of 0.272, which suggests it may not be a significant predictor of burnout. Work family conflict has a coefficient of 0.341 with a p-value of 0.003, indicating it is a significant predictor. Role conflict has a coefficient of 0.452 with a p-value of 0.000, showing it is a highly significant predictor.

### Conclusion

The study on burnout among lawyers found that work-family conflict and role conflict significantly contribute to burnout, while role overload did not show a significant relationship. Work-family conflict, which involves balancing work and personal life, and role conflict, arising from conflicting work expectations, were associated with higher burnout levels. To mitigate burnout, organizations should promote work-life balance, clarify roles, and create a supportive work environment. Although role overload didn't show a significant link, it may still affect burnout in specific contexts. Organizations should manage excessive job demands to prevent burnout effectively. Addressing work-family and role conflicts is crucial for reducing burnout and fostering well-being in professionals.

Regularly assessing and addressing job demands is crucial for managing burnout and promoting well-being among lawyers. Implementing regular surveys or assessments to gather feedback from lawyers regarding job demands, burnout, and psychological distress can provide valuable insights. Use the results to inform decision-making and develop strategies to address specific job demands. Offer resources and support systems for stress management, time

management, and work-life balance. Develop targeted interventions based on the identified job demands, such as flexible working arrangements or training programs to clarify roles and enhance communication. Regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and make adjustments as necessary. Prioritize continuous improvement in managing job demands to reduce burnout and enhance well-being among lawyers.

To prevent burnout, it is essential to create a positive work environment that promotes employee well-being. This can be achieved by fostering a culture that values work-life balance and encourages employees to take regular breaks and engage in activities that promote self-care. Providing resources for stress management, such as mindfulness programs or relaxation techniques, can help individuals effectively manage and cope with work-related stressors. Clarifying roles and expectations within the organization can minimize ambiguity and reduce the likelihood of role conflict, which can contribute to burnout. Encouraging the formation of support networks or mentorship programs can provide employees with a sense of belonging and support, allowing them to share experiences and seek guidance from their peers. Offering employee assistance programs (EAPs) can provide confidential support and counseling services for employees experiencing burnout. Training managers on burnout prevention strategies can help them identify signs of burnout and provide appropriate support to their team members. Regularly evaluating and distributing workloads equitably, considering individual capacity and resources, can prevent excessive stress and overwhelm. Finally, promoting self-care and well-being practices such as promoting physical activity, healthy eating, and work-life integration can further contribute to burnout prevention.

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