

Use of the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory to Assess Thai Librarians' Burnout During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract. This study aims to gather respondents' feedback about the survey instrument developed to assess Thai librarians' burnout level, and to prepare survey administration before launching the main study. 20 Thai librarians from public and special libraries in the government sector were asked to join a rehearsal of using and answering the 46-item questionnaire: 12 items of demographic information, 15 items of working situations during the COVID-19 pandemic, and 19 items of personal, work-related, and client-related burnout measures based on the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory. Findings indicated that majority of the survey questions could be feasible in a full data collection effort.

Keywords: Burnout, Thai librarians, Copenhagen burnout inventory, library management.

1 Introduction

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has become impacted on people in various professions around the world. Because of this pandemic, a serious occupational health issue called "Burnout" is emerging and raising more concern. Burnout is a condition of mental, emotional, and physical exhaustion that can cause a worker to have chronic stress, depression, health problems and lower effectiveness. (Mayer, 2021). There are three characteristics when recognizing burnout announced by World Health Organization (WHO) including, "feeling of energy depletion or exhaustion; increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and reduced professional efficacy" (World Health Organization, 2019). Burnout has negatively impacted on both organizations and employees especially in human service professions such as medicine and nursing (Cheaplamp & Dangdomyouth, 2020), veterinary medicine (Ketitanabumrong, 2017), psychiatry (Maslach & Leiter, 2016), emergency healthcare (Sahin, Aslaner, Eker, Gokcek, & Dogan, 2020), teaching (Oatcharearnchai, 2018), academic supporting (Jaronghnu, 2019), municipality (Chansin, 2014), and even librarianship (Wood, Guimaraes, Holm, & Hayes, 2020).

There are plenty of studies about burnout in various groups of professionals such as, teachers, social workers, nurses, doctors, managers, dentists, firefighters, and librarians (Schaufeli & Buunk, 1999), therefore burnout has been very concerned and serious for staff, clients, and institutions.

For example, medical professionals working long hours especially for emergency care can extend the stress. Their continued stresses can regularly cause burnout and the prevalence of burnout varies from 10% to 50%. (Bhatia & Saha, 2018). Job stress, performance-based self-esteem, and work-family conflict could also predict job burnout in teaching professionals with 47.7 percent of the variance of job burnout (Oatcharearnchai, 2018).

For librarians, they are exhausted, scared, and worried about themselves continuing down the path of librarianship, nonetheless they do not even know that

they are on the road to burnout and cannot cope with it (Corsillo, 2020). There are many occupational factors causing librarians' burnout such as less resources and budget cuts (Cardina & Wicks, 2004). Lacking motivation, unclear duties and roles, no facilities, no opportunity to give suggestions, not enough time to do a task, and toxic working environments are also occupational factors affecting librarians' burnout (Siamian, Shahrabi, Vahedi, Rad, & Cherati, 2006). Moreover, many problems are combined to produce burnout including ever-increasing demands for service, constant interruptions, understaffing, budget cuts, heavy workloads, low pay, and others. These problems can cause many librarians facing constant stress on the job, getting lost of enjoyment, and being on the road to burnout (Bartlett, 2018).

Burnout not only comes from occupational factors, but also comes from personal factors such as illness, frustration, family, finance reduction and early retirement (Siamian et al., 2006). as well as external factors such as poor work organization, inadequate preparation, lack of concrete organization, lack of organization support, professional isolation, etc. (Ogresta, Rusac, & Zorec, 2008). There are some other external factors coming from disasters such as earthquakes and nuclear radiation that impact people's burnout with high or moderate levels (Fujitani, Carroll, Yanagisawa, & Katz, 2016). The COVID-19 pandemic is also one of external factors that individuals who work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic have more stress and burnout (Hayes, Priestley, Ishmakhametov, & Ray, 2020)

The COVID-19 pandemic has seriously affected libraries. For example, finance has been reduced, many libraries lay off their librarians or library staff to save their budgets and this problem can cause the rest of librarians working longer hours than usual. After the COVID-19 pandemic decreased, the library has started reopening and librarians must come back to work again. However, they are worried about sanitizing, wearing masks, and it becomes depressing regularly over a long period of time until they are on the road of burnout (Corsillo, 2020)

Few studies are alternatively using Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) as an assessment tool to overcome MBI limitations and satisfy the necessary of burnout measurement. For example, there is a study examining psychometric properties of Copenhagen Burnout Inventory in Thai version among Thai nurses and includes three subscales: personal burnout, work-related burnout, and client-related burnout. The T-CBI can demonstrate good reliability and validity and has potential benefits for assessing burnout among Thai nurses (Phuekphan, Aunguroch, Yunibhand, & Chan, 2016). Another study using Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) test is the study of existential individual counseling on burnout of patient assistants and the findings shown that the patient assistants have lower burnout score in post-test after receiving existential individual counseling program (Songsakul, Wisetsuwan, & Suthithatip, 2013).

There is a study revealed that librarians perceived their emotional dissonance and exhaustion, which are the characteristics of burnout at an above-average level in the COVID-19 pandemic (Baba, 2021). Library administrators must take an active role in protecting the librarians in both physical and mental problems and take into consideration delegation and share workloads to minimize burnout. Moreover, librarians themselves must be aware of this issue because it does not only affect the quality of their life, but also causes negative attitudes towards work in the future (Corsillo, 2020).

Consequently, the objective of this pilot study was to obtain preliminary data regarding burnout in Thai librarians working at public and special libraries, examine the data by the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory and identify risk factors associated with Thai librarians' burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic. For the future main study, it is expected that we can raise awareness of burnout among Thai librarians and can help the library administrators to foresee the importance of decreasing burnout identifying the burnout level of Thai academic librarians that leads to the development of preventive measures to protect the mental health of Thai librarians during the COVID-19 pandemic and providing adequate support both at home and at workplace for reducing risks of personal, work-related, and client-related burnout among them.

2 Literature Review

Nowadays, burnout issues have been generally studied around the world especially during the pandemic situation. There were many researchers giving various definition of burnout. For example, Freudenberger (1974) describes the term "burnout" as a social problem, reducing emotion, and losing motivation in an alternative care setting which did not mention about work at all. However, Maslach & Jackson (1981) explain that burnout is feelings of emotional exhausting, depersonalization and decreased individual achievement happening in doing work, and World Health Organization (2019) refers that burnout should be related to occupation which is not encountering in other part of people's life.

Some studies of librarians' burnout have been increasing worldwide, and burnout level seems to be higher among library professionals. Casucci, Locke, Henson, and Qeadan (2020) measured health sciences librarians' burnout to improve staff's well-being and workplace by using a serious game intervention and found that the game intervention cannot reduce burnout. Library staff still experience burnout about 62% and some of them have a lot of stress because of their job about 38%. However, Nardine (2019) mentioned that the study will be able to provide better round picture of burnout if the study includes academic librarians from each department and duty types.

Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) is an interesting instrument used for assessing burnout in several areas of study because The CBI covers all domains of burnout (Phuekphan et al., 2016). There are some burnout studies in library professionals undertaken before the COVID-19 pandemic situation. For example, Wood, Guimaraes, Holm, Ayes and Brooks (2018) conducted a survey using Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) to academic librarians. Its survey data was analyzed by using SPSS 25 for Macintosh and Total Work-Related Burnout Score (TWRBS) was used to measure burnout levels. The findings showed that academic librarians had 49.6 out of 100 on TWRBS score which indicated that almost 50% of academic librarians were experiencing work-related burnout. They also analyzed rates of burnout by age, gender, and years in the profession to present the work-related CBI scores of academic librarians and found that women and non-binary/third gender individuals, participants with the ages of 35-44, and librarians with 11-20 years of experience in the profession had the highest TWRBS score.

Burnout among professionals may come from three key factors. They consist of (1) Personal factor: illness, frustration, family, finance reduction and early retirement (Siamian et al., 2006), (2) Occupational factor: less resources and budget cuts (Cardina & Wicks, 2004), lack of motivation, unclear duties and roles, no facilities, no opportunity to give suggestions, not enough time to do a task, and toxic working environments are also occupational factors affecting librarians' burnout (Siamian et al., 2006), and (3) External factor: poor work organization, inadequate preparation, lack of organization concrete work, lack of organization support, professional isolation, etc. (Ogresta et al., 2008). External factors coming from disasters such as earthquakes and nuclear radiation that impact people's burnout with high or moderate levels (Fujitani et al., 2016). The COVID-19 pandemic is also one of the external factors recently that individuals working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic have more stress and burnout (Hayes et al., 2020).

Hayes, Priestley, Lishmakhametov and Ray (2020) found that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the overall Perceived Stress Scores (PSS) of female is higher than male, however, Total Work-Related Burnout Score (TWRBS) of male is higher than female as well as full-time workers have higher impact on both the overall Perceived Stress Scores (PSS) and Total Work-Related Burnout (TWRB) than part-time workers. Moreover, the study reveals that the person who experiences working from home also has higher impact on both the overall Perceived Stress Scores (PSS) and Total Work-Related Burnout (TWRB). Consequently, the person who works from home can gain more stress and burnout. Khasne, Dhakulkar, Mahajan & Kulkarni (2020) also found that more than half of healthcare workers in India had experienced pandemic-related burnout (52.8%), while less than half of healthcare workers had personal burnout (44.6%) and work-relate burnout (26.9%), and younger healthcare workers had higher

personal and work-related burnout. This seems to be a prevalence of burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic among them.

International Labour Organization (2020) identified that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many workers are having psychosocial risks at their workplace such as increased heavy workloads, lay-offs, unemployment, budget cuts, pay cuts and longer working periods. Furthermore, they may be also worried about getting infected the COVID-19 at their workplace and spread it to their family, friends, and others. Nevertheless, employees working from home may have specific psychosocial risks such as lonesomeness, work and family gap, and domestic argument. Meyer, Zill, Dilba, Gerlach & Schumann (2021) study about demands, resources, and exhaustion of employee during the COVID-19 pandemic and the findings show that women working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic increase more exhaustion than men because of pandemic-related restrictions such as lockdown, caring for their children, social distancing, wearing mask, closing of childcare facilities, and lack of job autonomy and support. Moreover, Sriharan, Ratnapalan, Tricco & Lupea (2021) identified that the causes of burnout in women in health professions during the COVID-19 pandemic were concerned with safety, staff and resource adequacy, workload and compensation, and job roles and security. Therefore, administrators in organizations should consider burnout level of female professionals to improve their wellness, listen to their concerns, and design policy to suit their needs.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it does affect to the burnout of librarians as well. Boba (2021) revealed that library professionals perceived their emotional dissonance and exhaustion at an above-average level and are facing high levels of stress and anxiety which are also the characteristics of burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, Corsillo (2020) identified side effects of librarians in public libraries from the COVID-19 pandemic that librarians must focus on sanitizing, change their workflows, work from home and preserve their budgets, therefore they gain more stress and anxiety.

There are some studies of burnout in Thailand. Phuekphan, Aunguroch, Yunibhand & Chan (2016) examines nurses by developing the instrument for assessing burnout called Thai-Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (T-CBI) and has three various subscales as the following: (1) Personal burnout corresponding to the general exhaustion concept that related to everybody; (2) Work-related burnout described on feelings of exhaustion related to work; (3) Client-related burnout which is appropriate to individuals who work with clients. Another study by College of Management Mahidol University in connection with burnout among employees working in Bangkok, Thailand reveals that 57% of working-age employees in the capital city got burnout at a high level and there were three main causes of burnout consisting of heavy and unbalanced workload, no supported system, and inflexible organizational structure (Department of Mental Health, 2020). In Thailand, there are some studies of burnout among professionals in many sectors. Thai librarians, therefore, become one of professional groups certainly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic both in their working conditions and mentality.

3 Methodology

This is the pilot study of the prevalence of burnout among Thai librarians during the COVID-19 pandemic. A pilot survey instrument was sent as a hyperlink by emails to a pilot sample who has been working in public and special libraries. Prior to a recruitment, the researcher sent messages to obtain permission, provided clear instructions, and mitigated possible concerns about the overall research project itself. After that, 20 respondents from 8 public and special libraries opened their e-mails, clicked a working hyperlink and did the questionnaire used in the study via Google Forms.

This pilot study was conducted in an ethical manner by respecting the respondents' right to confidentiality and requirements on personal data protection. They were fully informed about the aims of the pilot survey, and their consent to participate in the survey must be obtained and recorded. The respondents chose

whether to fully take part in this study. Any participation in the research study was completely voluntary. They were also free to decline to participate for any reason.

Data were collected using a 46-item online structured questionnaire. It comprised three sections. Section one included 12-item demographic information e.g., age, gender, job title, educational level, year of working experience, marital status, number of children, and availability of childcare at home. Section two included their 15-item working situations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Section three was based on the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory to measure occupational burnout level among Thai librarians. The CBI has three domains together with 19 items in total that include personal burnout (6 items), work-related burnout (7 items), and client-related burnout (6 items). Each item will be rated on a scale of always/to a very high degree (100), often/to a high degree (75), sometimes/somewhat (50), seldom/to a low degree (25), and never/to a very low degree (0).

In fact, Thai version was already validated and translated from the original version of the CBI (Phuekphan et al., 2016) so that the online survey sent to the pilot respondents would be the Thai translated CBI (T-CBI). The data received from Google forms were analyzed by using IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows. Frequency, percentage, and mean were used for descriptive analysis of the quantitative data derived from Section one and Section two of the questionnaire. Meanwhile, the quantitative data from Section three of the questionnaire were analyzed according to the CBI scale guidelines and be undertaken using the scoring metric outlined in the original CBI. This study was approved by the Research Ethics Review Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.

4 Findings

The pilot study included a total of 20 Thai librarians from 8 libraries. All the respondents were over the age of 30 years. Most participant's (50%) age ranged between 31 years and 40 years. There were 15% of males and 85% of females. Majority of them (70%) held the position of librarian. Most respondents (70%) had been working in both from home and at the library (February-March 2022). Demographic information is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Information (N=20)

Variables	Frequency (%)
Age (years)	
21-30	-
31-40	50%
41-50	40%
51-60	10%
>60	-
Gender	
Female	85%
Male	15%
Marital status	
Single	80%
Married	20%
Number of family members	
1-5	90%
6-10	10%
>10	-
Availability of childcare at home	
Yes	5%

No	95%
Education level	
Bachelor	65%
Master	30%
Doctoral	5%
Others	-
Position Title	
Librarian	70%
Information officer	5%
Others	25%
Position level	
Practitioner level	60%
Professional level	15%
Senior professional level	5%
Expert level	20%
Advisory level	-
Professional experience (years)	
<5	5%
5-10	40%
11-20	40%
21-30	15%
>30	-
Department/ Division	
Information service	35%
Acquisition	10%
Cataloging	-
Others	55%
Working location	
Working from home	20%
Working at the library	10%
Both	70%

Meanwhile, Table 2 shows that most pilot respondents (90%) had a fear of family members catching infection during the COVID-19 pandemic, but they still believed that they could handle a condition of working from home quite well.

According to Table 3, mean burnout score of Thai librarians working at library (60.92) was higher than the librarians working from home (50.40) and also higher than the others working both at library and from home (41.1). Moreover, mean burnout score of the librarians working from home more than 30 hours per week (50.40) would have higher burnout scores than the others working both at library and from home with shorter hours (41.1).

Table 2. Librarians' working situation during the COVID-19 pandemic (N=20)

Variables	Frequency (%)	
	Yes	No
Do you get sick easier than other people during the COVID-19 pandemic?	15%	85%
Do you have work overload during the COVID-19 pandemic?	45%	55%
Do you have enough time to finish your work during the COVID-19 pandemic?	65%	35%
Do you feel anxious about becoming unemployed during the COVID-19 pandemic?	35%	65%
Do you hesitate to work with clients during the COVID-19 pandemic?	60%	40%
Do you feel that your clients is infected to COVID-19 while working during the COVID-19 pandemic?	35%	65%
Do you feel that you will gain more stress due to lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic?	65%	35%
Do you have a fear to catch COVID-19 infection while working in the	70%	30%

COVID-19 pandemic?		
Do you have a fear of family members catching infection during the COVID-19 pandemic?	90%	10%
Can you handle working from home well?	90%	10%
Do you work from home as if you were working in a library?	45%	55%
Is working from home more difficult than working in the library?	70%	30%
Has your library's performance deteriorated while working from home during the COVID-19 outbreak?	65%	35%
Did you have a colleague who tested positive for COVID-19?	30%	70%
Have you thought about quitting during the COVID-19 pandemic?	15%	85%

Table 3. Mean burnout scores* of Thai librarians working from home, at library, or both

	Personal Burnout	Work-related Burnout	Client-related Burnout	Overall Burnout
Work from home (n=4)	42.71	61.61	46.88	50.40
Work at library (n=2)	68.75	66.07	47.92	60.92
Both (n=14)	44.05	42.35	36.90	41.1

* Score of ≥ 50 on the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory indicates a high level of burnout.

5 Findings

There was a feedback informed by a respondent that some CBI questions should be skipped in accordance with his/her personal needs. However, the researcher decided not to change anything in the actual questionnaire based on this suggestion, because it is the psycho-metrics or standardized inventory and each CBI question cannot be omitted. Therefore, it is possible to use a 46-item questionnaire to determine the burnout level and identify risk factors associated with Thai academic librarians' burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic by using the Thai-CBI when the main study starts in June 2022. It should be noticed that Thai librarians, whose employers did not provide opportunities to work from home, had mean burnout score obviously highest. Overall Burnout score of Thai academic librarians who work from home which can be working more than 30 hours per week will have higher burnout scores than Thai academic librarians who work from both library and home which can be working shorter hours. Work-related burnout score of all librarians is the highest and their client-related burnout score is lowest during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, further analyses of the scale on larger samples of librarians in other types of libraries, such as academic/university libraries, should be conducted to adequately examine the scale, inform suggestions for library management during the health crisis, and find solutions for this matter.

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