

Chapter 10

A Descriptive Study About Burnout Syndrome and Obesity in Senior and Middle Managers: A Case Study of the Maquiladora Industry in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico

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ABSTRACT

Burnout syndrome (BS) and obesity have a high economic impact on different fields. This chapter presents a descriptive study of both conditions among middle and senior managers in the maquiladora industry of Ciudad Juarez. The Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey- was administered to six companies. A sample of 361 participants informed their weight and height. Five levels of Burnout were obtained. Obesity was studied according to the World Health Organization criteria. Results found that 29.8% is exempt from BS, 10.5% has low level, 12.9% has a middle level, 28.2% a fairly level and 18.5% an extreme level of BS. In addition, 34% of the sample suffers from some degree of obesity. Work psychosocial aspects and their effects on human capital development in the industrial sector are not sufficiently studied in developing countries so that to develop strategies for the prevention and effective handling of both BS and obesity.

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INTRODUCTION

According to Block, He, Zaslavsky, Ding, and Ayanian (2009) and Isasi et al. (2015), scientific research has lately emphasized on the fact that the increasing weight gain of workers is associated with greater levels of stress at work. Unfortunately, this problem has become a regular and costly issue in the Mexican industry, reaching 40% of the working population (Martínez, 2015) as the result of both physical and psychological exigencies demanded to remain competitive in this globalized world.

Work stress appears when demands in the work environment exceed individual resources. Prolonged exposure to stressors, therefore results in burnout syndrome (BS), which is an affective state presenting both emotional and physical exhaustion and mental fatigue, and it eventually reflects a gradual loss of energy (Shirom, 2003) and affects subjects in different aspects, especially their physical and psychological health. As a result, their performance is compromised, and so is the economy of companies.

Obesity may be considered one of the multiple adverse side effects of BS, and, from psycho-physiological and behaviorist perspectives, it is one of the major problems in public health worldwide due to its magnitude, rapid development, and the growing subsequent illnesses that it causes. The (World Health Organization [WHO], 2015) defines obesity as the abnormal or excessive accumulation of fat in the body. Mexico holds second place in the ranking of global prevalence of adult obesity, which is ten times greater than in countries like Japan or Korea (Dávila-Torres, González-Izquierdo, & Barrera-Cruz, 2015). Similarly, obesity is not an exclusive condition to work environment (Borak, 2011), but it is a risk factor for the development of chronic diseases. Moreover, according to the literature, it can be linked to BS (Ahola et al., 2012). Finally, studies on both obesity and BS agree on the fact that the work environment is a factor that favors their appearance. As a result, both conditions have become central subjects of research due to their economic and social impact on individuals, companies, and countries.

Mexico is a developing country, and great part of its industrial sector focuses on manufacturing. The manufacturing industry known as maquiladora is widely present in the country. For instance, it caters for 5,024 manufacturing establishments employing 2,280,504 workers and billing around 7,233.37 million US dollars. Particularly the state of Chihuahua, stands for 13.6% of the total income of the Mexican manufacturing transnational industry. In this region, the city of Juarez, occupies about 14.2% of the labor force in Mexico with 320 manufacturing companies approximately (National Institute of Statistics, Geography, and Informatics [INEGI], 2015). It offers the highest number of industrial job positions and production levels in exports.

In order to promote and achieve the human capital development of this region and increase its competitiveness, research on the psychosocial aspects of work must

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