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PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND BURNOUT AS PREDICTORS OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONG MALAYSIAN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

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Ahmad Zamir Che Daud*, Rohaiza Azreen Saaid,
Nurhanim Mahadi, Syamsul Hardy Mazlan

Centre for Occupational Therapy Studies, Faculty of Health Sciences,
Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia



Background/Introduction

Occupational Therapy in Malaysia: A Workforce Overview

Workforce Landscape & Impact



2,700

Registered Professionals

Total occupational therapists registered under the Allied Health Professions Act (AHP 774).

(MAHPC, 2026)



Why Job Satisfaction Matters

High satisfaction levels directly drive therapist motivation, work performance, and long-term retention.

(Kamaraj et al., 2019)

The Three Pillars of Professional Well-being



Professional Identity

How therapists perceive their roles, values, behaviors, and opportunities for professional growth.

(Kunrath et al., 2020)

Job Satisfaction

Positive feelings regarding the work environment, compensation, and workplace relationships.

(Kamaraj et al., 2019)

Burnout

Emotional exhaustion and detachment resulting from long-term work stress.

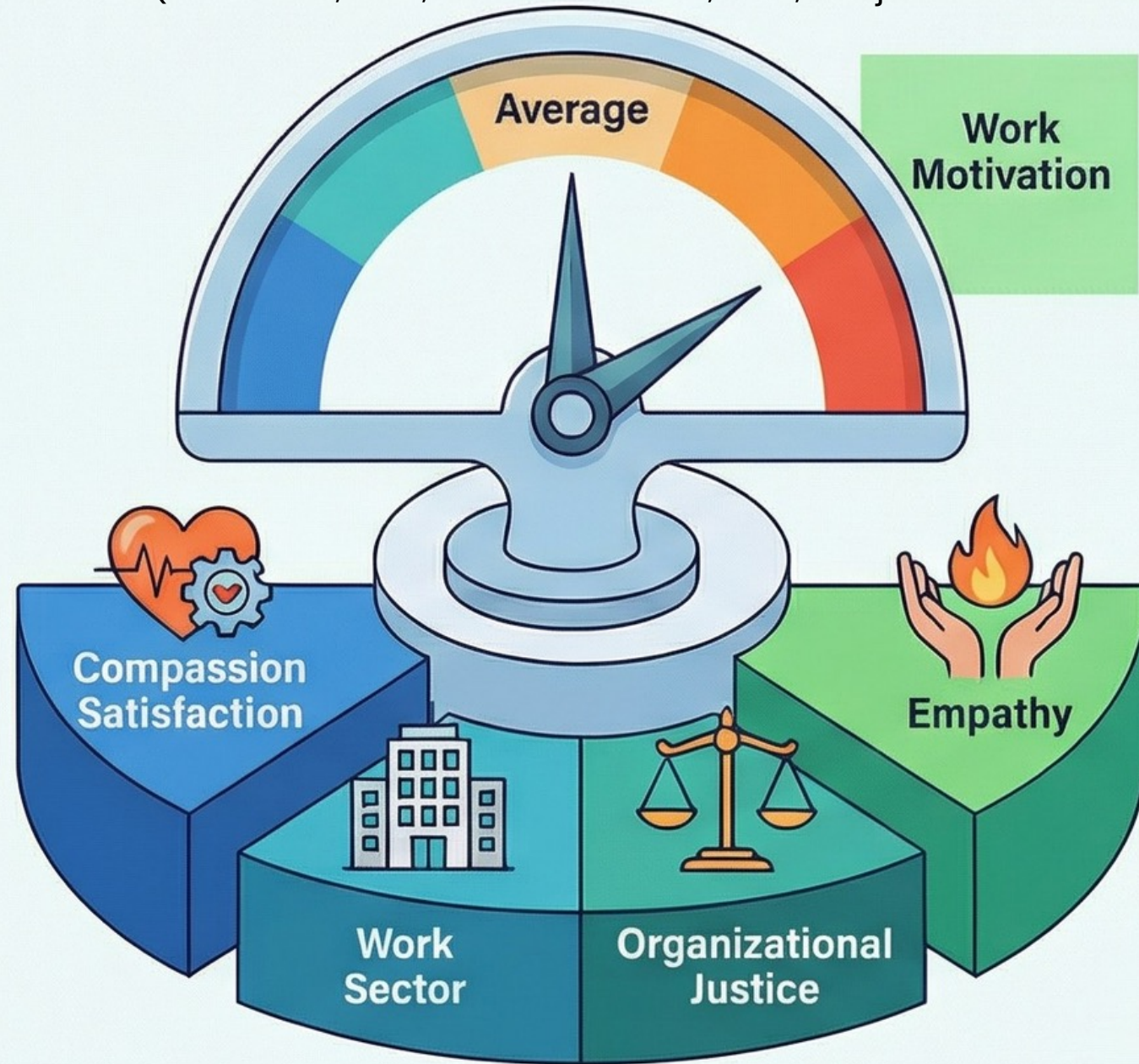
(Hesbesleven & Buckley, 2004)

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Current Landscape

Average Job Satisfaction Levels

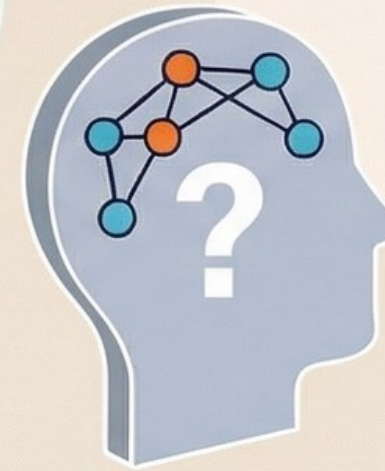
Malaysian occupational therapists generally report average satisfaction, with work motivation acting as a positive factor. (Chai et al., 2017; Mohd Poot et al., 2021; Benjamin & Rahman, 2025)



Established Predictors

(Aznan et al., 2024; Mohd Poot et al., 2021; Benjamin & Rahman, 2025)

Identifying the Research Gap



Professional Identity



Burnout

The Missing Predictors

Evidence is limited on how professional identity and burnout predict satisfaction in the local context.



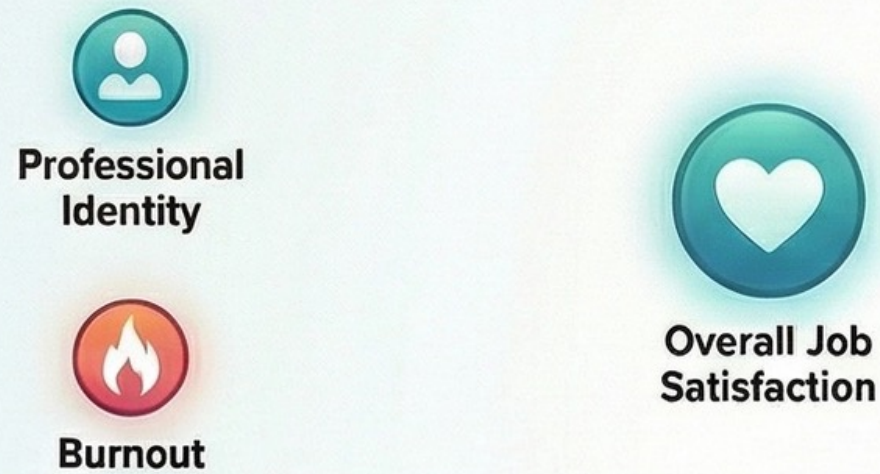
Addressing the Knowledge Gap

This study examines the specific predictive roles of professional identity and burnout on therapist satisfaction.

OBJECTIVE AND STUDY SIGNIFICANCE

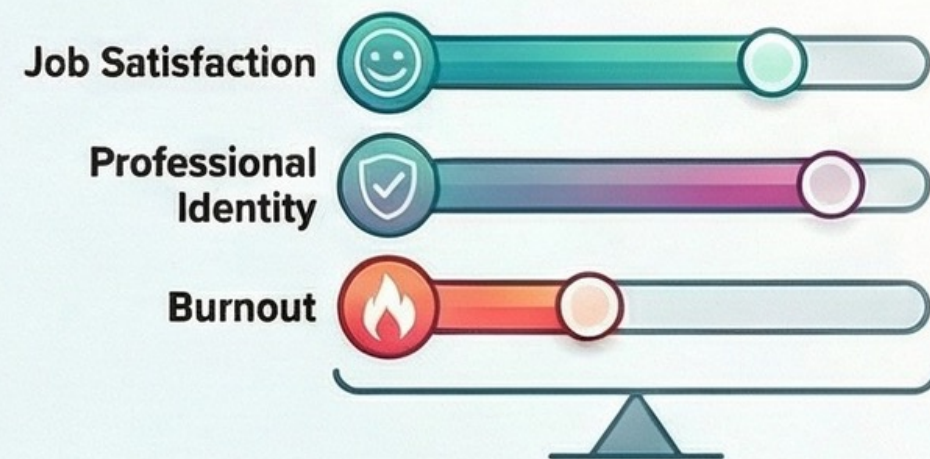
Research Objectives

Identifying Key Predictors



Determining if professional identity and burnout significantly predict overall job satisfaction.

Assessing Professional Levels



Measuring current levels of job satisfaction, professional identity, and burnout across the workforce.



Significance & Impact

Workforce Sustainability



Using findings to improve long-term retention and professional health for Malaysian therapists.

Targeted Interventions



Informing programs focused on burnout prevention and strengthening professional identity.

MATERIALS AND METHODS



Nationwide Survey (2023–2024)

A cross-sectional online study conducted via purposive sampling across Malaysia.

Inclusive Participant Profile

Focused on full-time Malaysian occupational therapists across all practice areas and settings.



Job Satisfaction Survey (Specto, 1985)

Professional Identity Questionnaire (Brown et al., 1986)

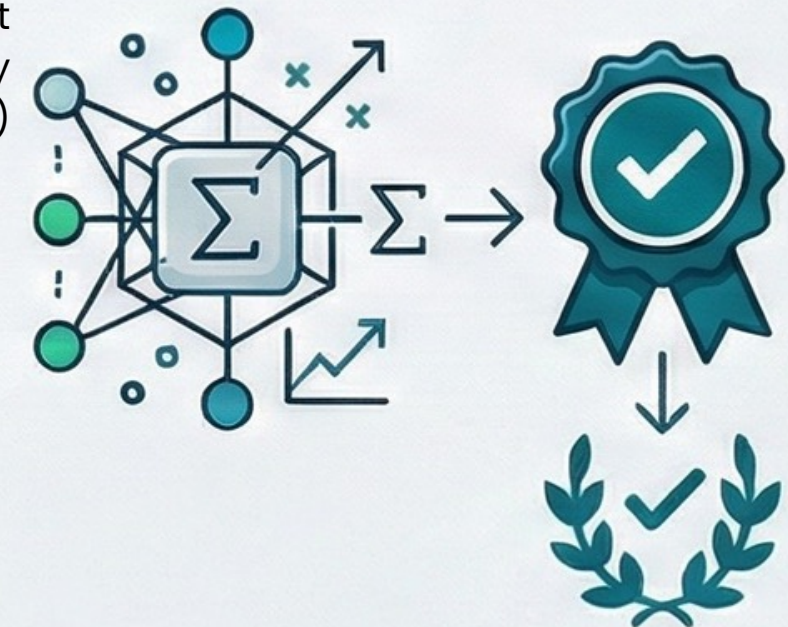
Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (Demerouti, 1999)

Validated Assessment Scales

Utilizes standardized instruments including JSS-36, PIQ, and the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory.

Regression Analysis & Ethics

Data processed via multiple linear regression with formal ethical approval from UiTM.



UiTM Ethical Approval

RESULTS

Table 1 Description of Participants (N=301)

Variable	Percentage (%)	Frequency (n)
Age (Years)		
<25	3.70	11
25-35	82.10	247
36-45	14.00	42
>45	0.30	1
Gender		
Male	31.90	96
Female	68.0	205
Educational level		
Diploma	70.10	211
Bachelor	27.90	84
Master/PhD	2.00	6
Employment Sector		
Government/Public	71.8	216
Private/Centre	25.50	78
NGO	2.3	7
Job Position		
Junior	78.77	237
Senior	21.26	64
Working Experience (years)		
<5	33.20	100
6-10	45.80	138
11-20	19.90	60
21-30	1.0	3
Area of practice		
Medical/Neurology	19.60	59
Orthopaedic/MSDs	11.00	33
Mental Health/Psychosocial	6.30	19
Paediatric	38.9	117
Surgical	4.00	12
Geriatric	4.00	12
Others	16.30	49

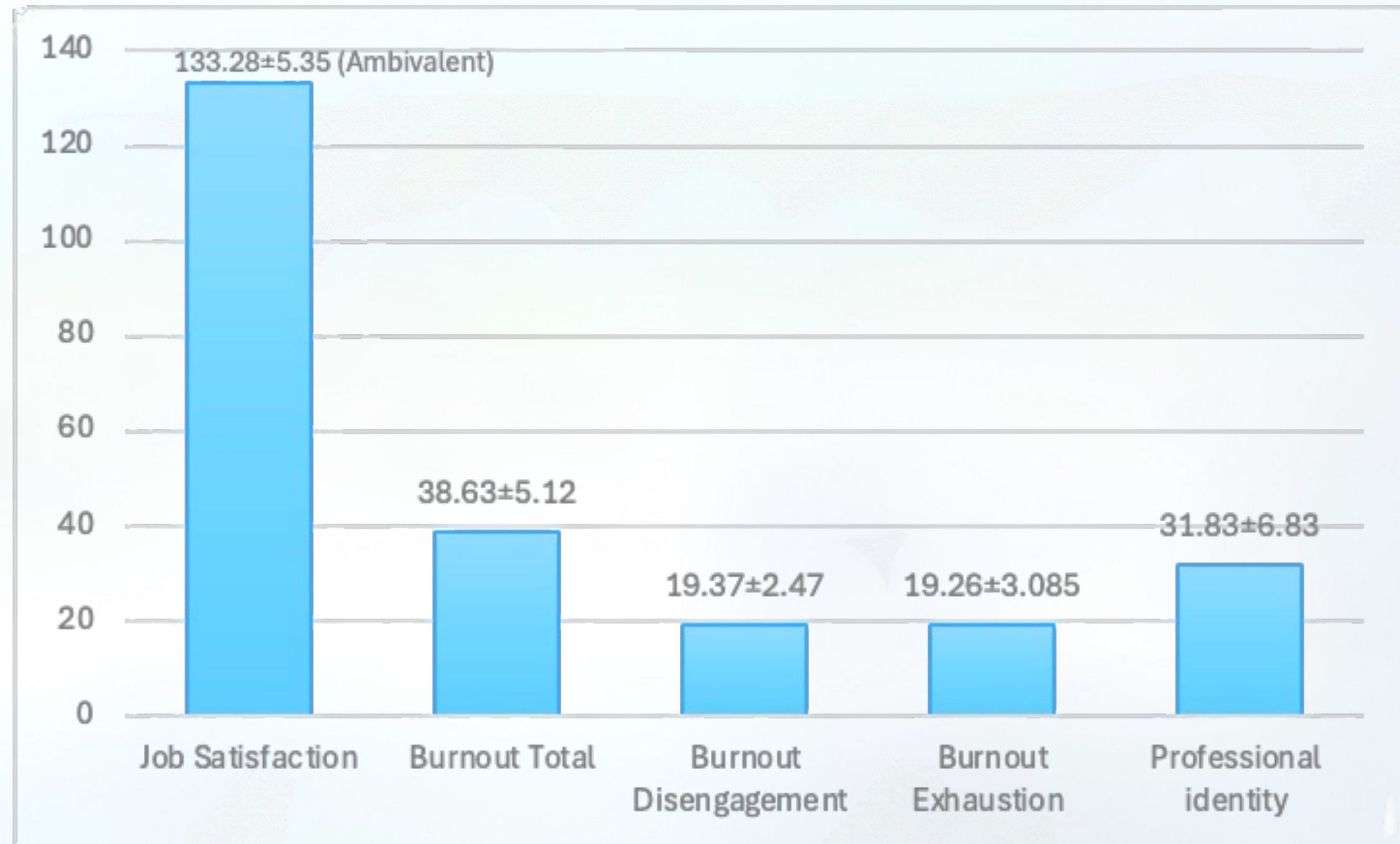


Figure 1 Level of job satisfaction, burnout and professional identity.

- Job satisfaction: ambivalent
- Burnout: Exceeded commonly used thresholds.
- Professional identity: slightly above the scale midpoint.

RESULTS

Table 2 Regression analysis of job satisfaction among Malaysian occupational therapists.

Model	B	SE	β	t	p	b (95% CI)
Constant	244.91	10.04	-	24.40	<0.001	225.15 to 264.66
Burnout (OLBI)	-3.26	0.21	-0.665	-15.61	<0.001	-3.67 to -2.84
Area of practice	1.53	0.54	0.118	2.81	0.005	0.46 to 2.60
Job position	2.22	0.62	0.235	3.57	<0.001	3.43 to 1.00
Employment sector	6.26	2.27	0.181	2.76	0.006	1.79 to 10.73
Educational level	4.89	2.11	0.095	1.28	0.023	0.66 to 8.94

Dependent: Job Satisfaction, $R^2 = 0.716$

- Burnout, area of practice, job position, employment sector, and educational level explained 71.6% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.716$).
- Burnout was the strongest predictor and was negatively associated with job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.665$, $p < 0.001$).
- Area of practice ($\beta = 0.118$, $p = 0.005$), employment sector ($\beta = 0.181$, $p = 0.006$) and job position ($\beta = -0.235$, $p < 0.001$) and educational level ($\beta = 0.095$, $p = 0.023$) were positively associated with job satisfaction.
- Notably, professional identity did not significantly predict job satisfaction.

DISCUSSION

THE STRONGEST PREDICTORS

BURNOUT IS THE #1 PREDICTOR

Higher levels of burnout are consistently linked to lower job satisfaction.
(Athamneh, 2024; Tarcan et al., 2017)



SENIORITY BOOSTS SATISFACTION

Professionals in higher or more senior positions report greater job satisfaction.
(Athamneh, 2024)



THE COMPLEX FACTORS (MIXED EVIDENCE)



Findings are mixed, but pediatrics and neurology often report higher satisfaction.
(Dupre & Salehi, 2025)

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IS UNCLEAR

Studies show conflicting links between higher education and job satisfaction.
(Cavosuglu et al., 2021; Yeo et al., 2021)



PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE SECTOR FINDINGS CONFLICT

This study found private sector satisfaction higher, contradicting other literature.
(Almazooqi et al., 2025)

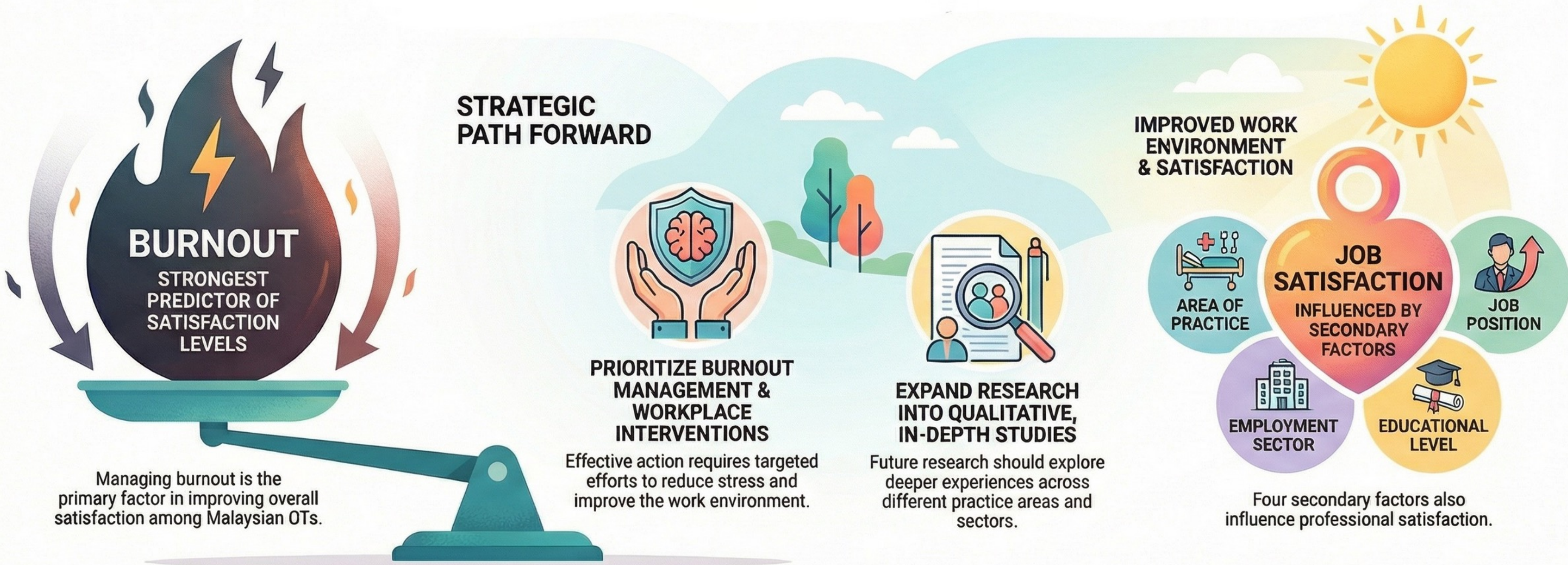


Public



Private

CONCLUSION



STUDY LIMITATIONS & IMPACT

LIMITATION



SMALL SAMPLE SIZE



SKEWED DEMOGRAPHICS

IMPACT ON FINDINGS

Limits the generalizability of the findings.

Results primarily reflect younger and junior-level occupational therapists.

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Thank
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