



# Introversion and Workplace Factors in Burnout

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## Introduction

Almost half of society is considered introverted, yet most individuals must work in environments that fail to provide the quiet and privacy they need to thrive. The use of open-concept sharing models (e.g. cubicles) in the workplace are rampant with distractions and drop-in social interactions that lead introverts to higher rates of burnout.



Figure 1. Spectrum of personality introversion/extraversion

## Literature Review

**Introversion** is a personality trait characterized by being quiet, reserved, and less sociable (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007;2012). On the opposite end of this personality dimension there is extraversion, which can be observed as outgoing, more talkative, and having many social connections. Personality traits are biologically based and consistent over a lifetime, which means that individuals cannot simply train themselves to have different traits when it is convenient.

When introverts choose to *act* like extraverts, it is called **counter-dispositional behavior** (Zelenski et al., 2013). It is theorized that this behavior leads to long-term impacts to one's life, such as emotional strain or **burnout** (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Burnout has several impacts to workplace behavior, most notably poor performance and increased turnover.

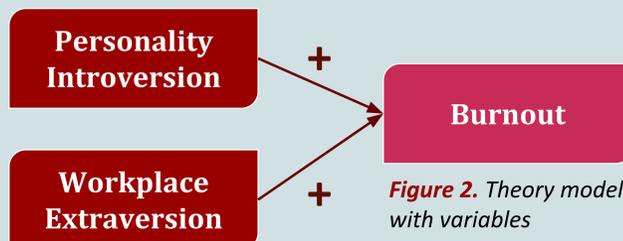


Figure 2. Theory model with variables

## Methodology

This study tested undergraduates from UNR through the SONA systems and evaluated participants' introversion, workplace environment, and burnout. The scales for these variables included the **IPIP Extraversion Scale**, a **self-designed** scale, and the **Maslach Burnout Inventory**. Statistical analysis included correlations and hierarchical regressions.

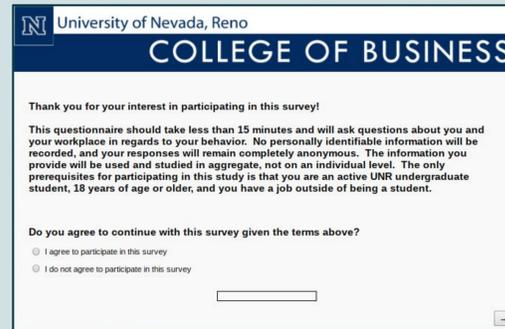


Figure 3. Consent and summary page of the online survey

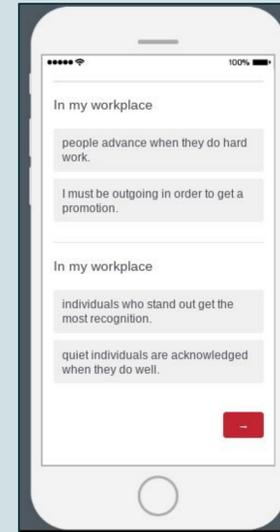


Figure 4. Sample of self-design questionnaire about the workplace

## Results

This study found there to be a **moderate positive correlation** between extraverted workplaces and burnout, as well as a **weak positive correlation** between personality introversion and burnout. This indicates that both variables lead to burnout.

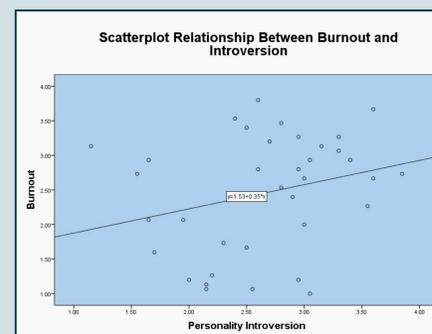


Figure 5. Correlation between Personality Introversion and Burnout

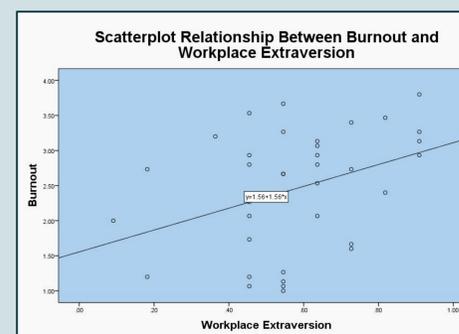


Figure 6. Correlation between Workplace Extraversion and Burnout

## Conclusions

Introversion and workplace extraversion both lead to higher rates of burnout in employees. While more research is needed to confirm these findings, both theory and study results indicate that these factors are a problem for managers. Employers should consider redesigning office spaces and changing the social environments to cater more towards introverts to avoid the effects of burnout.



Figure 7. A visualization of shared workspaces.

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