



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE JOB MAIN DIMENSIONS AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES STAFF BURNOUT

Farshad Yeganeh, Shahram Salavatiⁱ

¹Department of Education Management, Tonekabon Branch,
Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon, Iran

²Department of Business Administration, Tonekabon Branch,
Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon, Iran

Abstract:

This study examined how job main dimensions associated with the governmental agencies staffs' burnout. The Pearson correlation and the Multiple Regression employed to analyze the collected data from 241 governmental agency employees in Iran. Two sets of questionnaires, Job Main Dimensions and Maslach Burnout Inventory, helped gathering the data related to job main dimensions and employee burnout. The findings indicated that the five job main dimensions negatively associate with employees' burnout. In addition, the outcome of the Multiple Regression analysis indicated that *skill variety* has the most powerful impact in anticipating of job burnout. This can be argued that managers should attention improving the job dimensions in order to reduce the employee burnout. The findings suggest the decision maker considering the employee's knowledge and skills and the need for the intensity of promoting.

Keywords: job dimensions, job exhaustion, job burnout

1. Introduction

Issues related to Human resources have been broadly scrutinized in recent years since it is generally to enhance an organization's performance. Human resources recognized as the most valuable source of any organization that help the use of other sources in a productive way and assist the organization to meet its goals and objectives (Mohammady, Mirzaei and Sadeghi, 2013; Koc, Kiliçlar & Yazicioglu, 2013).

Skilled staff, who are consistent with organizational values and goals, and who have strong motivation and tend to retain and keep on their membership within the organization, are focal and critical needs of any organization (Savabi Esfahani, et al., 2012; Rahimaghaee, et al, 2016). Conversely, the employees who do not have required motivations and who are slow in movement within the organization could be the cause of sluggish movement of the organization, and even this could be the cause of faltering the organization (Salavati and Rahimaghaee, 2009). Managers desire to motivate employees in order to deliver their duties productively (Rahimaghaee et al, 2015). Motivation is expected to have effect on quality performance; employees who are characterized by a low level of motivation show a lower work and life satisfaction (Osabiya, 2015). Therefore, managers spend a plenty of time to find new ways in motivating their employees and to overcome likely obstacle of motivation.

One of the elements that can intensify the sluggishness and lack of motivation among employees of an organization is burnout due to the job condition (Torfi, Alam, and Nikbakhsh, 2014). Job burnout has been known as one of the effective elements for reducing organizational performance, employees' satisfaction and the loss of human forces (Lee, and Ok, 2012; Demerouti, 2012; Harder, Gouldthorpe & Goodwin, 2015). During the past decades, scholar reported the negative effects of employees' job burnout on organizational productivity, and it has been at the center of interests and attentions of both the researchers and managers (Hampton, 2007; Sangwan, 2015). Previous studies stated when the adverse effects of burnout on employees have been identified; researchers and particularly managers have shown considerable interests to the employee job burnout. Research has shown that the increase in the intensity of work resulted in rising organizational job burnout (Torfi, Alam, and Nikbakhsh, 2014).

The greater the inconsistency between the employees and their job demands, the greater the risk of burnout among them. Despite the common stress factors in the organizations, employees tend to show different reactions of burnout due to their different personal traits such as personality and attitudes. This would make more or less facilitate to the employees adapting to the workplace (Torfi, Alam, and Nikbakhsh, 2014; Leiter, Maslach, 2004).

The job burnout is defined as psychological disorders related to a job, which is the cause of emotional problems, reducing the individual success and personality disintegration. Imbalance between job demands and job skills, differences between resources, expectations and job realities, and job stress take account as prominent elements of the job burnout (Demerouti, 2012). Consequence of the job burnout consists of absence of work, recess, change of the job, and injuries (Mohammady, et al., 2013; Demir, Ulusoy, and Ulusoy, 2003). In addition, if organizations do not consider burnout

at the right time, it may lead to the worsening of employees' psychological and physical health. It also can lead to insomnia, anxiety, depression, stroke, heart diseases, and addiction to alcohol and substance abuse. In fact, it not only affects the employees' organizational life, but also it adversely affects their personal life. In this situation, organizations may lose their best employees due to burnout (Sangwan, 2015). The job burnout is seen as one of the main occupational issues that imposes significant costs on organizations. In the European Union, annually 20 million € has been allocated to expenses induced by job stress and burnout. In the United States, the expenses had been up to 350 million dollars each year. Although there is no obvious statistic about the costs that are caused by the job burnout in other parts of the world, particularly the developing countries, research on organizations and employees representing the presence of high stresses and related issues in organizations (Savabi Esfahani, et al., 2012; Lee, and Ok, 2012; Leiter, Maslach, 2004; Demerouti et al., 2005). Thus, considering the job burnout by managers induce the progress of psychic wellbeing, interpersonal relationship improvements, increasing the quality of service providing, and reducing the costs that caused pre-retiring, and leaving the job.

Many studies showed that several elements could play the role in emerging the job burnout and employees stress such as, age and work experience (Perera et al., 2015; Mohammady, et al., 2013; Bargellini et al., 2000), the leadership style of managers (Savabi Esfahani, et al., 2012), organizational atmosphere (Lee, and Ok, 2012), job sentimental and job environmental elements (Torfi, Alam, and Nikbakhsh, 2014), job demands and resources (Demerouti et al., 2005), supportive job environment and job-family repugnancy, organizational attitudes of turnover intentions, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, (Harder, et al., 2015). However, the emphasis on the main aspects of the job is still required to be investigated. In this regard, this study evaluates the relationship between main aspects of the job (variety of duties, meaningful duties, importance of duties, independent and authority in duties and feedback) and job burnout of employees. Specialy this study was interested to answer that; Is there any relationship between employees' job burnout and the main job dimensions? Are the main job dimensions are a good predictor of employees' job burnout? And, are there any differences between employees' job burnout and their work experience, age, marriage status and educational level?

Accordingly, based on the literature, the following hypotheses were developed and tested:

H₁: There is a positive relationship between employee job burnout and the main job dimensions.

H₂: The main job dimensions are a good predictor of employees' job burnout.

H₃: There are differences between employees' job burnout and their work experience, age, marriage status and educational level.

2. Method

This descriptive correlational study included all employees working in governmental agencies of Mazandaranⁱⁱ in 2014. A total number of 241 employees were selected through stratified random sampling method. The inclusion criteria were having at least one year of working experience.

Two sets of questionnaires helped gathering the data; Job Main Dimensions (JMD) questionnaire and Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). JMD questionnaire designed based on Hackman and Oldham (1980) Job Characteristics Model (Hackman, and Oldham 2005), and it includes 15 questions based on a five-item Likert scale – strongly agree=5 to strongly disagree=1 – to determine five job dimensions. MBI questionnaire includes 22 questions on three components of emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, and depersonalization. After translation, the two questionnaires were validated using content validity and were confirmed by experts and scholars. The reliability of the both questionnaires tested by Cronbach's Alpha coefficient; (JMD = 0.86 and MBI = 0.84).

The collected data were analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistical tests (Pearson's correlation test and Multiple Regression), after testing the normality of the distribution.

3. Findings

With the mean age of 36.65 years (SD=6.14), and the mean work experiences of 13.75 years (SD=5.68), most of the participants were married (88%) and hold a bachelor degree (54.8%). The results also showed lower rates of education among higher educated participants – master or Ph.D. holder (12%).

An analysis of variance showed that there was a significant difference between the participants' job burnout in terms level of education of, $F(2,239) = 4.853, p = 0.007$. The result of T-test also showed low rates of job burnout among not-married participants. In addition, the findings indicate higher rates of job burnout among participants with ages between 30 and 35, and with work experiences between 10 and 15 years. As shown in Table 1, the mean value of job burnout was 3.74 (out of 5). This figure can be argued that the targeted samples are relatively involved with job burnout.

ⁱⁱ Mazandaran province is located in the north of Iran.

In addition, all dimensions of job among participants are around the medium; however, although the dimension “Feedback” with the mean value of 3.49 (SD=0.80) had the highest rate, other dimensions fall into lower part of medium.

As shown in Table 1, Pearson's correlation test revealed a strong significant inverse association among Job main dimensions and employees' job burnout (r is near to 0.75 or above). The strongest association was found between the variety of duties and job burnout ($r_p = -0.97$, $n = 241$, $p = 0.001$), and the lowest one found between duties meaningful and employees' job burnout ($r_p = -0.68$, $n = 241$, $p = 0.001$).

Table 1: Job main dimensions and job burnout description and correlations (n=241)

Job dimension/burnout	Mean	SD	Correlations					
			1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Variety of duties	2.91	0.48	--	0.70	0.89	0.85	0.88	-0.97
2 Duties meaningful	2.96	0.49		--	0.61	0.58	0.61	-0.68
3 Importance of duties	2.81	0.55			--	0.77	0.83	-0.88
4 Independent and authority in duties	2.96	0.65				--	0.80	-0.82
5 Feedback	3.49	0.80					--	-0.85
6 Job burnout	3.74	0.83						--

*All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

An analysis of variance confirmed the meaningfulness of regression test, ($F_{(5,236)}=1019.719$, $P=0.001$). Table 2 presents the outcome of the regression test. As shown in this table, Variety of duties ($P<0.001$) and Importance of duties ($P<0.05$) have significant share in predicting participants' job burnout.

Therefore:

$$\text{Job burnout} = 104.035 - (6.902) \text{ Variety of duties} - (0.301) \text{ Importance of duties}$$

Table 2: Regression analysis

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	t	P-value
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	104.035	0.636	--	163.650	0.001
Variety of duties	-6.902	0.293	-0.982	-23.552	0.001
Duties meaningful	0.052	0.125	0.008	0.415	0.679
Importance of duties	-0.301	0.197	-0.047	-1.532	0.027
Independent and authority in duties	0.125	0.176	0.019	0.709	0.479
Feedback	0.191	0.203	0.028	0.941	0.348

4. Discussion

The present study tested the existence of the relationship between the five main dimensions of job (variety of duties, duties meaningful, importance of duties, independent and authority in duties and feedback) and the employees' job burnout. To the authors' knowledge, this is the first study to examine job burnout associations with job main dimensions. The results suggested negative and strong relationship between the tested variables. According to the findings, the higher rates of the five examined job dimensions results in the lower rates job burnout. This suggests that, for example, the increase of the job duty varieties help reduce employees' stress and their job burnout. As well, the more feeling of an employee about, the more effects on decreasing the job burnout. If the feedback and the consequence of the daily performance of employees were comprehended, their job stress, which could be accompanied by the job burnout, will be decreased, definitely.

As noted above, the review of previous studies shows that the relationship between the overall job dimensions and burnout has not been tested. However, studies examined the relationship between a few aspects of job and burnout. Rafferty, Friend and Landbergies (2001) and Sangwan (2015) realized that low rates of authority in organizational individual decision-making have a direct relation with job burnout. In addition, Jesse, Abouljoud, and Eshelman (2015) in a study on physician burnout found that decreasing in the physicians' authority and low rate of workplace supports lead to increase job burnout. In line with the findigs of this study, Chen, Chen, Zhu, Qi and Long (2015) found a significant but negative association between job burnout and the tasks of a job. In another study on the workplaces, related issues such as employees' dissatisfaction and absence and leaving the job Kaderali, Wilson, Yazmin (2015) realized that job enrichment though job diversification is one of the main strategies to manage the job turnover, dissatisfaction and job burnout. Moreover, Harder et al., (2015) identified some organizational factors in the incidence of burnout that were related to the valuation and consideration of employees and their needs. In line with the findings of this study, Sangwan (2015) also found that weak job feedback is a reason of the incidence of job burnout.

Considering the results of the present study, in order to reinforce and to improve the main aspects of the job, and to reduce the job burnout, the following suggestions are presented:

- Managers are suggested using new and up to date organizational and job systems to make diversify of the jobs. To attain this goal, passing in-service

training courses and participating in related workshops, seminars, and meetings could be helpful.

- To specify the roles of the personnel to meet the departments and organizational objectives and goal by:
 1. Offering the organizational perspective, the importance and value of duties.
 2. Evaluating the jobs and improving them as more useful, beneficial, and meaningful.
- The managers should share required information with the employees. They might specify and distinguish their jobs to realizing their job identity.
- To increase the independence of jobs, managers can give authority to their employees, and allow them to coordinate in organizational decision making, and let them use innovative ideas.
- Managers can reduce employees' job burnout by involving them to the feedback and evaluating system. Self-evaluation of employees makes the opportunity to create corrective actions by covering the weak points of the tasks, and by improving the strength points. This provides a better insight about the jobs identity Rahimaghaee et al., (2012).

5. Limitations and Future Studies

This study has several limitations. Using cross-sectional method has limited this study to provide more clear interpretation and explanation of the association between job burnout and job main aspects. However, a longitudinal method can help the future studies to endorse the assumptions of this study. Secondly, the population in this study includes only employees of governmental agency. Future studies can develop the investigation to other type of organizations, private and non-profit, and compare the results. Thirdly, testing the job burnout is a relatively novel field of study in Iran. This study only examined the association between job burnout and job main aspects; however, further studies are required to find out factors related to employee burnout. Future studies are suggested to examine the effects of both the individual and organizational factors on job burnout.

6. Conclusions

In summary, this study found a strong negative correlation between job main aspects and job burnout. The findings from this study suggest that improvement of job aspects and involvement of employees in the organizational activities through participating

them in decision-making to reduce burnout by involving of the employees in the organizational decision-making process and suggestion system help to improve the job characteristics that in turn, it will result in reducing employees' stress and job burnout.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to appreciate Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon branch to provide such a great opportunity to accomplish this study.

About the authors



Shahram Salavati is an assistant professor in the department of business administration. He teaches different courses related to business and marketing to both post-graduate and undergraduate students. He earned his PhD. from The Universiti

Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), and his research and consultation interests include effective Internet use in organizations, and innovation and IT adoption. He believes that learning goes beyond the classroom. He holds currently a position as Administrative and Financial Deputy Dean at the Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon Branch, Iran.



Farshad Yeganeh is at the beginning of the research highway who recently earned his master in Educational Administration at Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon

Branch, Iran. He is working as a manager at the Islamic Azad University, Arak Branch. He is a talented and enthusiastic researcher who is preparing himself for PhD course

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