

Study of the Relationship between Organizational Commitment and Job Burnout among Physical Education Teachers of Golestan Province, Iran

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Abstract: The purpose of the present research was to study the relationship between organizational commitment and job burnout among physical education teachers of Golestan Province. The research method is descriptive-correlational and research data were collected via questionnaires. The statistical population of this research includes all physical education teachers of Golestan Province. The sample of the research consists of 216 teachers, 159 of which are official and the rest are tutorial. In this research, Organizational Commitment Scale (Allen and Meyer, 1990) and Maslach Burnout Inventory have been used. The results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that the distribution of variables within the two groups was not normal ($p < 0.05$). Moreover, the results of Spearman's rank correlation coefficient test revealed that in the official teachers group, there was a significant relationship between the frequency and intensity of the depersonalization subscale and normative commitment. Also in the tutorial teachers, there was a significant relationship between the frequency of depersonalization and continuance and normative commitments and there was a significant relationship between depersonalization and affective commitment. No significant relationship was observed between other organizational commitment components and job burnout ($p < 0.05$). Furthermore, the results of Mann-Whitney test revealed that organizational commitment of official teachers is significantly higher, while there was no significant difference in job burnout between the two groups ($p < 0.05$). These results will be discussed in more detail with respect to the negative relationship between burnout and organizational commitment as well as better conditions of official teachers and their greater commitment.

Key words: job burnout, organizational commitment, physical education teachers.

INTRODUCTION

In any society, the higher the educational and cultural level in terms of quality, the more will be the development and growth of that society. Education - from elementary levels to higher education - shapes the individual, the family and from a broader perspective, the society. Since younger generation constitute a large percent of the population of our country and considering their involvement in schools, definitely the role of educational organizations is very critical. The success of any organization depends on its management and since organizations - including schools - deal with different individuals with various natures, it is of utmost importance to pay attention to the determinants of the efficiency of these centers. Of the characteristics of school one can mention vitality, creative spirit and zest for knowledge of students and this is feasible only when teachers and officials themselves are creative and are not physically and emotionally exhausted and providing that they are committed to the school and their critical responsibility (Sabaqian, Rad, L., 2005).

In Leiter's view burnout refers to the emergence of a state in personnel as a result of prolonged stress due to the nature, type or inappropriate condition of their jobs. Various studies have shown that personnel who are in direct contact with people face more stress and sooner than personnel of other occupations become emotionally and physically exhausted. Educational organizations too are encountering job burnout among their personnel. The burnt-out individual cannot maintain their mental balance and most often quarrels and argues without any specific reason. It is believed that burnout is prevalently contagious. The burnt-out individual soon afflicts many of their colleagues with this problem. Burnout disturbs the individual's balance first and then the organizational balance, disrupting efficiency and productivity and as a result, effectiveness; thus, immediate diagnosis of this phenomenon and its indicators is of utmost importance in preventing its prevalence (Leiter. MP., 2003).

In 1980's, when the development of research tools, research findings and various articles provided an all-embracing support for this subject, the concept of burnout turned into a completely independent scientific field. Freudenberg (1998) states that burnout is diminution and in the end becoming void of energy. Burnout is rejection and exhaustion in face of an excessive demand which can be imposed on individuals by themselves or

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from an external source; it deprives the individual of their energies, coping mechanisms, resources and powers. This phenomenon is an emotional state caused due to excessive stress which ultimately affects the individual's motivation, attitude and behavior (Freudenberger, HJ., 1983).

Seon-Hwa Kwag and Mi-Hee Kim (2008) studied the effect of job burnout on job performance. These researchers pursued three purposes in their research. First, they assessed factors influencing job burnout of the organization's personnel; then the effect of job burnout on their performance and finally the moderating effect of supervisor's support, job discretion and self-esteem on the relationship between role overload and role conflict and members' job burnout. In this research, 100 questionnaires were distributed among Korean workers in Busan and Gyeongnam. The results of this research revealed that role overload and role conflict can be considered the main determinants of job burnout and of the two factors mentioned, the dimensions of disengagement and exhaustion can have a greater effect. Moreover, the disengagement of job burnout is related to the lower levels of job performance and that the moderating effect of supervisor's support on the relationship between role overload and the members of exhaustion was statistically significant. But the moderating effect of job performance and self-esteem was not significant (Kwag, SH and Kim, MH., 2008).

Schepman and Zarate, (2005) studied the relationship between job burnout, negative affectivity and organizational citizenship behavior among human services personnel. The results of this research revealed that job burnout is emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment which can occur in individuals working in such professions as consultation, social services and nursing (Schepman,SB, and, Zarate, MA., 2005).

There are many definitions for organizational commitment but in a study carried out by two experts - that is Meyer and Allen - in 1987, their definition of organizational commitment referred to three general concepts: affective dependence, understanding costs of losing membership and sense of obligation. The most common way of dealing with the issue of organizational commitment is to consider it as a kind of emotional attachment to the organization. The definitions discussed below refer to this aspect of commitment. Generally, higher levels of organizational commitment indicate more positive results with respect to negative consequences. The desired (positive) consequences for personnel are: progress in the job and receiving more salary, organization rewarding committed employees, and an avid pursuit of organization's goals; while the negative consequences include decline of creativity, growth, innovation, movement opportunities, resistance against change, stress and tension in family and social relations, and limitation of the time and energy of the individual to the organization. At the organizational level, the desired consequences consist of security and constancy of the work force, complying with organization's demand for more production, higher level of competition, better job performance and achieving organization's objectives; while the negative consequences are lack of flexibility and innovation among the personnel, and performing immoral and illegal activities for the organization (Miller, KL, Ellis,BH, Look, EG and Lyles. JS,1990).

Vahidian M (2002) studied the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment among male physical education teachers. In this research, he reported a significant relationship between satisfaction with the superior and the personnel and organizational commitment. But no significant relationship was reported between satisfaction with salary and advantages and organizational commitment (Vahidian, M., 2002).

Randall (2002) in his PhD dissertation in philosophy, stated that job satisfaction and organizational commitment are two important factors that can be effective in maintaining the specialized and expert personnel, increasing motivation of the personnel, better interaction with clientele, better job performance, and decreasing burnout and other deleterious organizational behaviors (Randall. DM., 1990).

Halbesleben (2004) carried out a research on human services personnel such as nurses, low-income employees, police force staff, and office secretaries and studied the consequences of high burnout and low organizational commitment and concluded that high burnout and low organizational commitment lead to low spirit of the personnel, their poor performance, exhaustion, absenteeism, high rate of leaving or changing their jobs, disturbance in providing office services and other administrative and service-related problems and issues. The worst impact of burnout at the organizational level is destroying and diminishing organizational commitment among personnel and experts of the job. Therefore, organizational commitment has been a subject of much interest in the area of organizational development. One of the important findings in the theoretical literature of burnout is that organizational commitment is negatively related to burnout. The organizational commitment level of an individual increases with their contribution to and involvement in the issues related to the organization and this matter per se decreases their chances of affliction with burnout (Halbesleben, JRB and, Buckley, MR., 2004).

In her PhD dissertation, Shirley Chuo (2001) studied the relationship between organizational commitment and job burnout as well as the predictors of these two variables for a better understanding of productive working environments. She studied three distinct subscales of organizational commitment (affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment) using Allen and Meyer's questionnaire and three distinct subscales of job burnout (emotional exhaustion, reduced personal accomplishment and depersonalization) using Maslach Burnout Inventory and presented the results using stepwise regression analysis. The results showed that

normative commitment is a better predictor of depersonalization in comparison with affective and continuance commitments. Also the results suggest that based on measurement of organizational commitment using responsibility and obligation, normative commitment plays an important role in contributing to burnout. Regarding various attributes and definitions of burnout, she concluded that despite differences, there are three major similarities between the studies. First, burnout is a response to emotional and situational stress. Second, burnout is physically, psychologically and emotionally destructive and since it diminishes enthusiasm and performance ability of the personnel, it hinders organization's progress. And third, burnout can become worse and worse unless there is an effective intervention in this regard (Chuo, 2003).

Knoop (2005), in his PhD dissertation, studied the relationship between burnout and organizational commitment among carcinology experts. While stating that Leiter and Maslach studied the effect of three subscales of burnout on organizational commitment of nurses in a small private hospital and observed that there is a significant relationship between the increase of burnout and decrease organizational commitment pattern, and by assuming bureaucracy in sanitary and infirmary environments, Knoop extended the work of these two researchers to specialized doctors and studied the foresaid relationship in this group of specialists. The results showed that there is a significant inverse relationship between personal achievement and organizational commitment and that a large number of specialists are afflicted with depersonalization and reduced personal achievement. In this research, significant relationships were observed between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, between emotional exhaustion and reduced personal achievement and between depersonalization and reduced personal achievement (Knoop, R., 2005).

Meanwhile, teachers are the cornerstones of education of any country and play the chief role in forming and fostering the thought and culture of the younger generation and in case of vulnerability and exhaustion, their performance will be disrupted which will reduce organizational commitment and will finally lead to crises and terrible consequences such as educational decline of students and lack of intellectual and cultural fostering and cultivation; especially physical education teachers who are in constant contact with students and there is a deep affective relation between these two groups. In the present research, we deal with the issue whether physical education teachers - considering their demanding job - will be afflicted with burnout and whether organizational commitment plays a role in the level of burnout among physical education teachers. Is there a relationship between organizational commitment and burnout among physical education teachers?

Methodology:

The present research is descriptive-correlational trying to examine the presence or absence of a relationship between organizational commitment as a predictor variable and job burnout as a criterion variable.

Statistical Population and Sample:

The population of this research includes all male physical education teachers of Golestan Province, Iran, in 2009 who were 433 individuals according to the statistics provided by the Research Department of the Head Office of Physical Education. Moreover, of the 433 teachers, 312 were official members and 121 were tuitional. Of this number, 159 official teachers and 57 tuitional teachers were selected as research sample.

Material:

All research variables were measured using Meyer and Allen's Organizational Commitment Scale (1990) and Maslach Burnout Inventory (1996). These questionnaires were dispatched to the educational groups of the selected towns in the sample and after they were filled out, the researcher himself proceeded to the educational groups and collected the questionnaires.

Statistical analysis Methods:

Descriptive statistics have been used in this research to summarize and classify raw scores and to describe data (including frequencies, means, percentages, standard deviations, and drawing diagrams and tables). Kolmogorov-Smirnov test has been applied to examine the normality of distribution. Difference of means was analyzed using non-parametric statistical methods and Mann-Whitney test. Moreover, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient test was used to evaluate the relationship between the means of organizational commitment and job burnout.

Results and Findings:

The results of the present research showed that:

1. The frequency and intensity of emotional exhaustion among official teachers is respectively 8.55% and 3.11% more than tuitional teachers ($p \leq 0001\%$).
2. The frequency and intensity of reduced personal achievement among official teachers is respectively 13.22% and 19.68% less than tuitional teachers ($p \leq 0001\%$).

3. The frequency and intensity of depersonalization among official teachers is respectively 22.86% and 11.33% less than tuitional teachers ($p \leq 0001\%$).
4. Affective commitment among official teachers is 19.66% more than tuitional teachers ($p \leq 0001\%$).
5. Normative commitment among official teachers is 39.68% more than tuitional teachers ($p \leq 0001\%$).
6. Continuance commitment among official teachers is 25.13% more than tuitional teachers ($p \leq 0001\%$).
7. In official teachers, except for two cases, the frequency and intensity of depersonalization have significant relationship with normative commitment ($r = 156\%$, $p \leq 004\%$ and $r = 187\%$, $p \leq 004\%$ respectively). None of the other subscales of burnout have a significant relationship with any subscale of organizational commitment.
8. In tuitional teachers, except for the significant relationships between the frequency of depersonalization and continuance commitment ($r = 254\%$, $p \leq 005\%$), normative commitment ($r = -296\%$, $p \leq 004\%$) and its intensity with affective commitment ($r = 169\%$, $p \leq 007\%$), none of the other subscales of burnout have a significant relationship with any subscale of organizational commitment.
9. Moreover, except for a significant relationship observed between affective commitment and the frequency of emotional exhaustion (-6.33) and the relationship between affective commitment and depersonalization (-4.66), no other significant difference was observed between official teachers and tuitional teachers.

The means of research groups for organizational commitment, job burnout and their subscales are presented in Graphs 1 and 2.

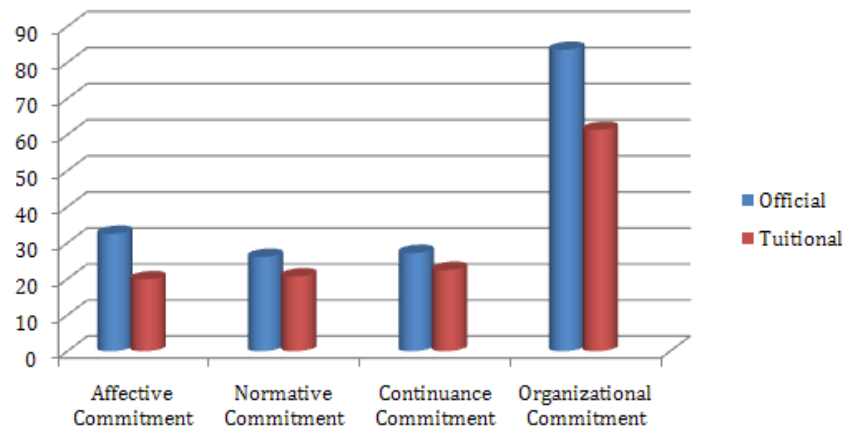


Fig. 1: The means of research groups for organizational commitment and its subscales.

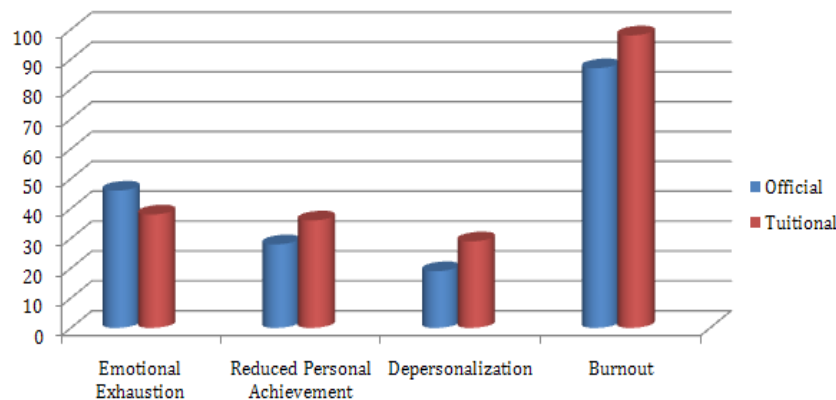


Fig. 2: The means of research groups for the frequency of job burnout and its subscales.

Discussion and Conclusion:

The purpose of the present research was to study the relationship between organizational commitment and job burnout among physical education teachers of Golestan Province. The findings of the present research reveal that only 11% of official teachers hold an MSc or higher degree and this number was 0.5% in tuitional teachers. This result might be due to the lack of teachers with high level of education in the field of physical education or the low salary and poor advantages that the education system provides. Teachers may also think that they do not

need to promote their educational level, since teachers holding an associate's degree and those having an MSc or a higher degree are teaching the same courses.

The results of the research revealed that there are relatively high degrees of burnout and its three subscales in both groups of teachers. When we compared the means obtained from the two groups for each of the subscales of burnout, we observed that tuitional teachers - based on their account - experience emotional exhaustion and depersonalization several times each week and their personal achievement decreases every month; while the emotional exhaustion of tuitional teacher has been less in comparison with official teachers. However, the two other subscales, i.e. reduced personal achievement and depersonalization, have been higher in official teachers. The reports suggested that this group considerably experience emotional exhaustion and depersonalization every month, and their personal achievement substantially decreases.

Richardsen (2004), regarding the literature of burnout, reported similar results of burnout in social service workers such as nurses, social workers and hotel personnel. The reason for such a consistency between our results and the results of previous studies may be due to similarity in professions. Social services personnel - nurses, social workers, hotel personnel, and university and school teacher - all deal with a large number of clients and with various types of people. Our results did not show a significant difference when comparing burnout in official and tuitional teachers and no such research has been carried out in our country. However, the absence of a significant difference between these two groups of teachers could be due to the similar nature of the jobs and that tuitional teachers who answered the questionnaires in the schools are not full-time and they do not have attachment to that school; rather most of them work in other educational centers. Furthermore, since the results of the present research indicate that burnout is a contagious issue, it is possible that they too have been inflicted with burnout as a result of contact with their colleagues (Richardsen, A. and Martinussen, M., 2004).

Although the difference of burnout between tuitional and official teachers has not been significant at the significance level determined for this research, the level of burnout in official teachers is more than tuitional ones. The reason could be due to the greater competition of official teachers and at times the feeling of inability to achieve the desired performance which leads to more emotional exhaustion in comparison with the tuitional group. On the other hand, greater obligation to observe the rules and regulations in order to receive more bonuses and to continue their jobs, routine jobs, various obstacles, and less interaction with other teachers can be the reasons why the level of reduced personal achievement and depersonalization is higher in tuitional teachers in comparison with official teachers. In any case, considering the substantial level of burnout and its subscales among this group of teachers, it seems necessary for officials to analyze factors leading to burnout in order to reduce this factor which interferes with productivity (Kashtidar, M., 2002).

Studies have shown that emergence of burnout is, at some levels, associated with negative consequences. For instance, at the individual level, burnout has various negative physical and psychological consequences for the burnt-out individual; at the organizational level, it can lead to an increase in absenteeism and resignation as well as decrease in organizational commitment, and at the service level, it can negatively affect the services provided for clientele (Kwag, SH. and Kim, MH., 2008).

Burnout has also been attributed to some other negative organizational consequences like lower level of organizational commitment. Moreover, studies have revealed that nurses who have less commitment to their organization and jobs have greater tendency for absenteeism and resignation or that these nurses, while reducing the quality and quantity of their, repel duties, reject patients, and spend more time resting. Seon-Hwa Kwag and Mi-Hee Kim (2008) showed that the worst impact of burnout at the organizational level is destruction and diminution of organizational commitment among professional personnel. One of the important findings in the literature of burnout was that organizational commitment is negatively related to job burnout. In the present research, it was observed that both groups of teachers have a rather high level of commitment. For instance, when the mean scores of the three subscales of organizational commitment (affective, normative and continuance commitment) are analyzed in a quarterly fashion, it is observed that all three subscales of organizational commitment are at the fourth quartile for official teachers and at the third quartile for tuitional teachers. As it was observed, official teachers have a higher level of organizational commitment in comparison with tuitional teachers (Kwag, SH and Kim, MH., 2008).

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