

Determination of The Relationship between Job Burnout and Conflict Management Styles in Employees of Health Administration and Assessment of Medical Documents Office of Golestan Province Branch of Social Security Organization of Islamic Republic of Iran

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Abstract

Conflict management is one of the most difficult and important tasks of managers. The ability to solve conflict can be defined as the technic of managing conflict effectively by choosing the most suitable strategy of conflict management in each condition. Job burnout may lead to a severe fall in job fulfillment and administrative faith. Besides, job burnout brings about lower levels of well-being. Employees might abandon their personal duties and thus, their family relations may experience some confusion. The present study was formulated in order to determine the relationship between conflict management styles and job burnout in Employees of Health Administration and Assessment of Medical Documents Office of Golestan Province Branch of Social Security Organization of Islamic Republic of Iran. The sample volume was decided using Kukran formula. The data were collected via Maslach Job Burnout Inventory (MBI) and Standard Questionnaire for Conflict Management Styles. Validity and reliability of the tools were verified through Experts' ideas and Cronbach's alpha, respectively. The hypotheses were tested by use of Pearson's Correlation in SPSS Software (Version 22). The results indicated that there is a negative and significant correlation between non-confrontation style and severity of reduced personal accomplishment feeling ($p < 0.05$). However, no significant difference was detected between conflict management styles and job burnout variables ($p > 0.05$).

Keywords: conflict management, job burnout, Social security, Golestan Province.

1. Introduction

Conflict is inevitable among humans. When two or more independent entities (e.g. people, groups, organizations, or countries) come into relationships with each other to achieve their goals, conflict may appear. As Thompson (1998) stated, conflict can be regarded as perceiving differences in interests among people. Bisno (1998) considers conflict as a social interaction consisting of struggles in order to take possession of resources, authority, status, beliefs, and other priorities and preferences [1]. There are three approaches as to conflict. Conventional approach considers conflict as a negative phenomenon reducing performance and efficiency and therefore, it always must be prevented. Behavioral approach considers conflict as a neutral and inevitable phenomenon for all organizations which may exert neither positive nor negative influence on organizations. Modern approach points to conflict as a vital phenomenon to boost organizations' performance [2].

Conflict management has variety of styles and technics grown and developed in years. Blake and Mouton (1964) stated that people present two conflicting behaviors: tendency to reach individual goals and self-satisfaction (definiteness) and tendency to keep interpersonal relationships and others' satisfaction (cooperation). Based upon this approach, five strategies of conflict management were proposed: avoidance, adaptation, compatibility, competition (control), and cooperation. Putnam and Wilson (1982) classified these five strategies into three groups, namely non-confrontation (adaptation and avoidance), solution-orientation (compatibility and cooperation), and control (competition) [3].

Conflict management is one of the most difficult and important tasks of managers. The ability to solve conflict can be defined as the technic of managing conflict effectively by choosing the most suitable strategy of conflict management in each condition [4,5,6]. Solution orientation strategy consists of compromise and collaboration; in non-confrontation strategy, people try to avoid conflict and neglects his/her requests and prioritizes others' demands; control strategy is competition [6,7]. In the research model presented above, effects of these three strategies on organizational silence were

mentioned. Job burnout is a process in which behaviors and attitudes of employees become negative in response to occupational stressors. It is also defined as a long-term reaction toward repetitive stressors [8]. Job burnout may lead to anxiety, depression, lower self-esteem, inclination toward use of drugs, lower job performance, and more health problems in employees. It has also been shown to have adverse effect on individuals' personal lives [9]. In other words, job burnout is among vocational risk factors attracting a lot of attention in recent years. As mentioned above, there is a close correlation between occupational stressors and job burnout. Stress occurs when a considerable imbalance status exist between environmental demands and ability of personal response toward them. As environmental demands increase, stress may bring about more stress leading to job burnout. Job burnout is actually caused due to consistent stresses and it is inevitable in service-providing occupations [10]. Job burnout may lead to a severe fall in job fulfillment and administrative faith. Besides, job burnout brings about lower levels of well-being. Employees might abandon their personal duties and thus, their family relations may experience some confusion [11]. Moreover, the characteristics intangible of service include cannot be touched, cannot be felt, and cannot be seen. Then, it will difficult to the firm to set the charge for service [27] Social insurances commenced their activities in Iran by formation of Iranian Railway Employees Provident Fund in 1931. Inclusion of insurance supports resulted in passing "Employees' Insurances" as a law in 1943 and then, passing "Employees' Social Insurances" as a law in 1953 and onset of Employees' Social Insurances Organization. In 1963, its name turned in to "Social Insurances Organization" and finally in 1975, it got the name by which it is known today, i.e. "Social Security Organization". After Islamic Revolution of Iran, necessity of inclusion of all people to be able to use advantages of social security was considered and since then, prosperity in giving suitable services to all people of Iran has come within reach [12]. With regard to what mentioned above, the present study was formulated in order to determine the relationship between conflict management styles and job burnout in Employees of Health Administration and Assessment of Medical Documents Office of Golestan Province Branch of Social Security Organization of Islamic Republic of Iran. First, components of conflict management (non-confrontation, solution orientation, and control) were measured. Then, correlations of each style with job burnout' three sub-indices (i.e. emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, Reduced personal accomplishment feeling) in terms of frequency and severity were determined. Three hypotheses were considered as follows:

- H1: *There is a negative and significant correlation between non-confrontation style and frequency of emotional exhaustion.*
- H2: *There is a negative and significant correlation between non-confrontation style and severity of emotional exhaustion.*
- H3: *There is a negative and significant correlation between non-confrontation style and frequency of depersonalization.*
- H4: *There is a negative and significant correlation between non-confrontation style and severity of depersonalization.*
- H5: *There is a negative and significant correlation between non-confrontation style and frequency of reduced personal accomplishment feeling.*
- H6: *There is a negative and significant correlation between non-confrontation style and severity of reduced personal accomplishment feeling.*
- H7: *There is a negative and significant correlation between solution orientation style and frequency of emotional exhaustion.*
- H8: *There is a negative and significant correlation between solution orientation style and severity of emotional exhaustion.*
- H9: *There is a negative and significant correlation between solution orientation style and frequency of depersonalization.*
- H10: *There is a negative and significant correlation between solution orientation style and severity of depersonalization.*
- H11: *There is a negative and significant correlation between solution orientation style and frequency of reduced personal accomplishment feeling.*
- H12: *There is a negative and significant correlation between solution orientation style and severity of reduced personal accomplishment feeling.*
- H13: *There is a negative and significant correlation between control style and frequency of emotional exhaustion.*
- H14: *There is a negative and significant correlation between control style and severity of emotional exhaustion.*
- H15: *There is a negative and significant correlation between control style and frequency of depersonalization.*
- H16: *There is a negative and significant correlation between control style and severity of depersonalization.*
- H17: *There is a negative and significant correlation between control style and frequency of reduced personal*

accomplishment feeling.

H18: *There is a negative and significant correlation between control style and severity of reduced personal accomplishment feeling.*

2. Methodology

The present study is an applied work in terms of nature and goals and descriptive-surveying and correlational work in terms of method. The research community consisted of all employees working in Social Security Organization of Golestan Province. The samples were chosen according to not having physical and mental chronic ailments, drug use history, and severe disasters, e.g. loss of favorite individuals, separation, possessions loss, and so on during past 6 months on the basis of their own declaration. The sample volume was decided using Kukran formula. The data was collected via Maslach Job Burnout Inventory (MBI). The questionnaire is the most common tool for determining job burnout and comprises of 22 different parts covering three sub-indices (i.e. emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, Reduced personal accomplishment feeling) (Towshani&Sookhtehsarayee, 2014).

Another tool for data collection was Standard Questionnaire for Conflict Management Styles based upon Putnam and Wilson (1982) model. The tool consists of three parts: non-confrontation strategy (12 questions), solution orientation (11 questions), and control strategy (7 questions) with 7-choice Likert scale (Never, Once in a blue moon, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Very frequently, Always).

Validity and reliability of the tools were verified through Experts' ideas and Cronbach's alpha, respectively. Data normality was assured by Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The hypotheses were tested by use of Pearson's Correlation in SPSS Software (Version 22). All graphs were drawn in Excel (Microsoft Office, 2010).

3. Results

Demographic information of the samples is summarized in Table 1. The statistical community was composed of 70 persons (38 females and 32 males). Majority of the respondents (80%) were >36 years old and only 11.42% and 8.57% of them were 31-35 and <30 years old, respectively. Over 60% of the respondents had bachelor's degree and 22.85% of them had master's degree while only 5.71% and 7.14% of the respondents had high school diploma and PhD degree, respectively. Most of the respondents have been working in Social Security Organization of Gorgan for over 10 years while only 22.85% and 14.28% of the respondents have been working 5-9 and 1-4 years, respectively.

Table 1: Demographic information of the participants

Personal characteristics		Frequency (percent)	Mean	Standard deviation
Gender	Male	38 (54.28)		
	female	32 (45.71)		
Age	≤30	6 (8.57)	45.56	4.52
	35-31	8 (11.42)		
	≥36	56 (80)		
Education	High school diploma	4 (5.71)		
	Bachelor's degree	45 (64.28)		
	Master's degree	16 (22.85)		
	PhD	5 (7.14)		
Job history	1-4 years	10 (14.28)	19.38	6.72
	5-9 years	16 (22.85)		
	≥10 years	44 (62.85)		

3.1 Hypotheses 1-6

According to Table 2, non-confrontation style in employees of health administration and assessment of medical documents office of Golestan province branch of social security organization of Islamic republic of Iran resulted in reduction of frequency and severity of job burnout variables. However, the only significant difference was detected between non-confrontation style and severity of reduced personal accomplishment feeling ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the hypotheses 1-5 are rejected and only the hypothesis 6 is accepted; in other words, there is a negative and significant correlation between non-confrontation style and severity of reduced personal accomplishment feeling.

Table 2: Pearson's correlation coefficients for hypotheses 1-6

	frequency of emotional exhaustion			severity of emotional exhaustion			frequency of depersonalization			severity of depersonalization			frequency of reduced personal accomplishment feeling			severity of reduced personal accomplishment feeling		
	r	sig	N	r	sig	N	r	sig	N	r	sig	N	r	sig	N	r	sig	N
non-confrontation style attitudes	-0.091	0.590	70	-0.046	0.787	70	-0.061	0.721	70	-0.107	0.529	70	-0.214	0.203	70	-0.440	0.006	70

3.2 Hypotheses 7-12

According to Table 3, solution orientation style in employees of health administration and assessment of medical documents office of Golestan province branch of social security organization of Islamic republic of Iran resulted in reduction of frequency and severity of job burnout variables although no significant differences were detected ($p > 0.05$). So, the hypotheses 7-12 are rejected. In other words, there aren't any significant correlations between solution orientation style and frequency and severity of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment feeling.

Table 3: Pearson's correlation coefficients for hypotheses 7-12

	frequency of emotional exhaustion			severity of emotional exhaustion			frequency of depersonalization			severity of depersonalization			frequency of reduced personal accomplishment feeling			severity of reduced personal accomplishment feeling		
	r	sig	N	r	sig	N	r	sig	N	r	sig	N	r	sig	N	r	sig	N
solution orientation style attitudes	-0.009	0.959	70	-0.028	0.872	70	-0.122	0.470	70	-0.103	0.544	70	-0.112	0.509	70	-0.129	0.447	70

3.3 Hypotheses 13-18

According to Table 4, control style in employees of health administration and assessment of medical documents office of Golestan province branch of social security organization of Islamic republic of Iran resulted in reduction of frequency and severity of job burnout variables although no significant differences were found ($p > 0.05$). Consequently, the hypotheses 13-18 are rejected. In other words, there aren't any significant correlations between control style and frequency and severity of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment feeling.

Table 4: Pearson's correlation coefficients for hypotheses 13-18

	frequency of emotional exhaustion			severity of emotional exhaustion			frequency of depersonalization			severity of depersonalization			frequency of reduced personal accomplishment feeling			severity of reduced personal accomplishment feeling		
	r	sig	N	r	sig	N	r	sig	N	r	sig	N	r	sig	N	r	sig	N
control style attitudes	-0.079	0.644	70	-0.160	0.344	70	-0.268	0.108	70	-0.357	0.030	70	-0.143	0.400	70	-0.029	0.866	70

4. Discussion and Conclusion

It is very important for managers to be able to confront conflict and manage it. If conflicts are effective, they result in novel and creative thoughts and provide the basis of creative innovation in the organization [13]. As cited by Çınar and Kaban (2012), "If managed well, conflicts can result in creativity, changes, development, and the generation of comfortable and safe climates in organizations rather than being destructive. Thus, conflicts need to be analyzed well and the reasons for them need to be determined and a conflict management method to conform the organization interests needs to be adopted" [14].

Job burnout and its adverse consequences have been widely studied and it has been found that it causes several side effects in different occupational settings [8,11,15-24]. De Caroli&Sagone (2012) stated that burnout has been defined as a kind of interactive anxiety creating the departure by users and a response to a state of strain and discontent which is developed when people consider that the stress they are experiencing cannot be decreased with a positive solution [25]. Maslach and Jackson (1981) presented the most popular definition of burnout and interpreted it as a psychological syndrome with three dimensions: emotional exhaustion which refers to feelings of being emotionally weary by strong contact with other people, depersonalization referring to negative attitudes or uncaring responses toward people, and reduced personal accomplishment which refers to decrease in a person's sense of competence and of successful achievement in working with other people [26 as cited in 16]. Although except between non-confrontation style and severity of reduced personal accomplishment feeling, no other significant correlations were seen between the variables of conflict management and job burnout, taking variables of conflict management into practice resulted in reduction of adverse effects of job burnout. It shows that if employees in an organization try to avoid discussing on the topics which lead to conflict with others, they can have a more productive workplace and it can lead to lower level of job burnout among the employees. It should be noted that it is impossible to consider an organization without any conflict as it naturally exists wherever a few people are interacting with each other. However, it seems necessary to be able to take measures in order to control conflict. According to the results of the present study, when conflict is managed in an organization, it can reduce levels of job burnout; this effect might be through reducing job stress, increasing intimacy between the employees, and elevating productivity in the workplace by all staffs focusing on their responsibilities rather than trying to concentrate on their conflicts. It is recommended that future studies determine the relationship between conflict management styles and job burnout in other occupational settings. Also, it seems important to evaluate how conflict management can result in lower levels of job burnout. Finally, it is recommended to draw a framework to detect and manage conflicts in different organizations.

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