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## A STUDY ON THE EFFECT OF JOB BURNOUT AND STRESS ON JOB SATISFACTION AMONG TEACHERS OF EXCEPTIONAL SCHOOLS

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** This is a cross-sectional and analytic study on the relationship between burnout, job satisfaction, and job stress among teachers in exceptional schools of Qazvin Province in northwestern Iran.

**Methodology:** This was done based on Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Management Standards for Work-related Stress, Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), and Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory. Descriptive statistical tests of frequency and mean were used to analyze the obtained data statistically. Also, t-test, ANOVA, and regression tests were used to investigate the difference between the average values and the relationship between the variables.

**Results:** Demographic analysis showed that women and men include respectively 68% and 32% of the group under study. Statistical test results showed a significant and direct relationship between mean scores of the severity of job burnout and job satisfaction and between the frequency and severity of job burnout and job dissatisfaction. Job satisfaction and burnout negatively correlated with the dimensions of stress ( $p$ -value<0.05). Demographic analysis results revealed a significant relationship between job burnout with the variables of overtime and participants' gender. Among the studied demographic variables, job satisfaction significantly correlated with housing status, overtime, underlying disease, sex of students, and participants. There was also found a significant relationship between job stress with job experience, over time, support from family, the tendency of people to this job, and lack of recruitment opportunity, and interest in the job.

**Conclusion:** Failure to satisfy the motivational needs of teachers over time causes their dissatisfaction with the working process and organizational environment, which lead to job burnout and stress. Interventions to reduce stressors and strengthen the resources to deal with job burnout would be a factor for job satisfaction among the teachers.

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## **Introduction**

Job burnout is a psychological syndrome that usually occurs when a person spend many hours in close contact with other humans (Maslach and Jackson, 1993). Although burnout syndrome is not a mental disorder, but it can slowly progress over time and may become a disability [2]. Human, in the today's modern life, witness the incidence of stress and its complications, more than any other time. When a person in his working or living environment is faced with a situation that does not fit with his current capacities and facilities, he will become involved in internal conflict, which is called "stress" [3]. Job satisfaction is one of the major occupational issues occupied the minds of professionals [4].

Having a sense of job satisfaction is essential for all business owners, but vital for teachers [5]. The importance of teaching job is undeniable. Teaching is one of the most important jobs in every community. Since teachers are responsible for guiding and nurturing the next generation, so, correspondingly, their job satisfaction will be of utmost importance [6]. More specifically, teaching is considered a specialized and difficult job in the exceptional education and training system.

Factors such as multiple needs of students, their individual differences and limitations, the need to meet the parents' expectations, and rapid changes in beliefs and expectations about the role of teachers make it very complex and difficult to teach exceptional students. Accordingly, teachers in the exceptional education system are under stressful working conditions. The level and nature of the experienced mental pressure by teachers differ in terms of demographic characteristics such as age, gender, educational status, length of teaching experience, and the existing status of school [7]. It should be noted that the effects of job stress among exceptional teachers is manifested in the lower levels of job satisfaction [8]. Sari in 2004 studied job satisfaction and burnout among teachers and supervisors of exceptional schools in Turkey.

They explored to find any relationship between burnout and job satisfaction of teachers and supervisors in terms of work status, gender, as well as work experiences, and to analyze the influential factors on job satisfaction and burnout. The subjects were 295 people; 33 supervisors and 262 teachers in exceptional schools. The results showed no significant difference between burnout and job satisfaction of the two groups. The gender positively correlated job satisfaction so that females had a higher job satisfaction compared to the male counterparts (Sari, 2004). Platsidou and Agaliotis in 2008 examined burnout, job satisfaction, and instructional assignment-related sources of stress among teachers in Greek exceptional training and education system. For this purpose, a total number of 127 Greek exceptional education teachers at the level of primary school were asked to fill out the questionnaires of Maslach Burnout Inventory, the Employee Satisfaction Inventory, and the Inventory of Job-related Stress Factors. The teachers declared average levels of satisfaction with work conditions and low satisfaction with prospects of promotion and pay. The variables of age, gender, and family status had relatively low significant effects on job stress. Overall, job satisfaction of the teachers in exceptional and ordinary schools did not differ, significantly. Eichinger in 2000 investigated the effects of gender and social role orientation on job stress and satisfaction among teacher of exceptional schools. There were involved 39 female teachers and 43 male teachers of exceptional schools in the study to study their social role orientation, including expressive, instrumental, balanced, and undifferentiated, using Bem Sex Role Inventory. The inventory contained 60 items to which a score of 1 to 7 was given by the teachers. The results revealed balanced orientation of female teachers with lower levels of stress and higher levels of satisfaction, while the males had an undifferentiated orientation with lower levels of satisfaction and higher levels of stress. According to the foregoing, the present study was performed to assess satisfaction of teachers at exceptional schools of one of the major provinces of Iran. The study also investigated the relationship between burnout and job satisfactions and stress.

## **Material and methods**

This is a cross-sectional, descriptive - analytical study conducted in 2012-2013. The study population included male and female teachers in exceptional schools of Qazvin Province, in Iran. A questionnaire including demographic information, Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Management Standards for Work-related Stress, Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), and validated Herzberg's job satisfaction was distributed among the teachers of all exceptional schools in the Province of Qazvin. The samples were selected by census method. When visiting the schools of all educational levels (elementary, secondary, and high schools), a number of briefing sessions were held for teachers to provide explanations regarding the questionnaire and to train them how to fill out the questionnaire. The filled out questionnaires were gathered at the next visit. The data of the questionnaires were analyzed by t-test, ANOVA, and correlation tests using SPSS software, version 18. The significance level was set at 0.05.

## **Demographic information questionnaire**

The questionnaire included questions regarding the subjects' gender, age, place of work, education level, pension and benefits, housing status, marital status, type of employment, work experience, exercise status, position, gender of students undergoing training, teaching level of education, type of disability of students undergoing training, status of underlying disease, support from family and friends, relevance of field of study with organizational post, reason for choosing the job, blended-learning teacher, and overtime status.

## **Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory**

Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory was developed by Dawlt and colleagues in 1996 in the form of two-factor Herzberg theory containing 72 expressions. There is a 7-point scale in front of each expression. The respondents were asked to carefully read the expressions and declare their degree of agreement with each statement with crosshairs in grades 1 to 7. Grade 1 shows their lowest agreement and grade 7 indicates their lowest agreement. The questionnaire consists of two parts; 36 expressions on personal satisfaction and 36 expressions on job dissatisfaction, each of which includes motivational and health factors. According to the previous literature, the validity is 93.7% for the first questionnaire and 92% for the second questionnaire [12].

### Maslach Burnout Inventory

The questionnaire consists of three independent measurement scales with 22 separate articles on feelings and attitudes that measures various aspects of burnout syndrome. Out of the 22 articles, 9 articles deal with the burnout or emotional exhaustion, 5 articles with depersonalization, and 8 articles with job adequacy. The frequency of these feelings is measured with scores of zero (never) to six (every day). The severity of these feelings is measured with scores of zero (never) to seven (very high). Total scores related to the statements of each dimension of burnout are calculated separately. In the dimension of emotional exhaustion, scores of 27 or more indicate high levels of burnout, in the dimension of depersonalization, scores of 13 or more indicate high levels of burnout, and in the dimension of job adequacy, scores of 31 or less indicate low levels of burnout.

According to the previous studies, internal cohesion in all three dimensions of the original Burnout Inventory (with a sample size of 11,000 people) with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient between 0.71 and 0.9 is within an acceptable range. Test-retest coefficients in short periods up to a month varies from 0.6 to 0.8. Two studies evaluated test-retest reliability within a one-year period. Reliability coefficient varied from 0.33 to 0.67 in a sample of 700 teachers, and from 0.34 to 0.62 in another sample with 46 human service workers (1, 13-14). Momeni, in a study on the staff of a hospital in Isfahan, achieved the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.88 for emotional exhaustion, 0.76 for personal adequacy, 0.79 for depersonalization, and 0.79 for the entire test [15].

### Health & Safety Executive

This questionnaire has been designed to measure work-related stress. The questionnaire examines the role and changes of job stress in the form of seven sub-scales, including demand, control, managerial support, poor support, and communication. Job stress questionnaire contains 35 expressions and 7 sub-scales, including 1- demand, 2- control, 3- managerial support, 4- peer support, 5- communication, 6- role, and 7- changes. For scoring the questionnaire, a score from the five-point scoring scale of 5=never, 4=rarely, 3=sometimes, 2=often, and 1= always is awarded to the phrases of each sub-scale. Scoring of the demand sub-scale is done inversely as never = 1, rarely = 2, sometimes = 3, often = 4, and constantly = 5. Average scores of expressions of each sub-scale represents the measured value of each scale, which ranges from 1 (ideal state) to 5 (stressful and undesirable state) [16-17]. The correlation coefficient of HSE and GHQ questionnaires were estimated at  $r=-0.48$ . The results indicated a strong correlation between the factors extracted from factor analysis and the items of HSE questionnaire. According to which, the coefficients of 0.92, 0.73, 0.75, 0.63, 0.87, 0.85, and 0.22 were obtained respectively for the role, communication, managerial support, peer support, control, demand, and changes. The validity of the questionnaire was calculated as 0.78 by Cronbach's alpha and 0.65 by split-half method [18].

## Results

### Demographic information

According to the demographic data, females included 68% of the total number of 153 teachers under study and the rest (32%) were male. The findings also showed that 2.6% of the teachers in the exceptional schools had a high school diploma. Teachers with B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees included 67.3% and 7.2% of the subjects. About 59.9% of the teachers were teaching at elementary education level, 11.8% at secondary teaching level, and 24.4% at high school teaching level. Approximately, 2.6% of the subjects were employed in an educational complex. Majority of the subjects (91.5%) were in-service teachers while 3.3% of whom were contractual. Teachers with a limited contract included 3.9% of the total study population. In terms of marital status, 90.2% were married, 9.2% were single, and 7% were categorized as "other". In terms of the housing status, 62.7% lived at private houses, 27.6% in mortgaged or rental houses, and 2.6% in institutional houses. The housing status of the 7.2% was unknown. The sex of the students undergoing training was 38.6% female and 38.6% male and 22.9% of the teachers gave lessons to both sexes. About 52.3% of the teachers did exercise and 5.2% had underlying disease. The results also showed that 66.7% of the teachers enjoyed the support from family, relatives, and friends and 19% worked overtime. According to the demographic data, 9.2% of the teachers had a work experience of 1-5 years, 30.1% with a work experience of 6-10 years, 24.5% with a work experience of 11-15 years, 16.9% with a work experience of 16-20 years, 10.4% with a work experience of 21-25 years, and 9.2% with a work experience of 25-30 years. The reason of 10.5% of the subjects for choosing the exceptional teaching job was earning revenue, 60.1% was personal interest, 8.5% was insistence of friends and acquaintances. The rest (15.7%) had other reasons for choosing this job.

### Job satisfaction

The mean scores of satisfaction and dissatisfaction were 160.72 and 108.69, respectively (maximum attainable score = 252) and the average total score of job satisfaction was obtained as 346.14 (Table 1).

**Table 1:** average scores of job satisfaction

	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation	Maximum attainable score
<b>Overall job satisfaction score</b>	210	478	346.14	50.55	504
<b>job satisfaction score</b>	78	227	160.72	27.63	252
<b>job dissatisfaction score</b>	45	191	108.69	27.31	252

Table 2 shows the results of some demographic variables that have a statistically significant correlation with job satisfaction. The results showed that female teachers are more satisfied with their jobs rather than male teachers. Personal housing causes more job satisfaction among teachers. Teachers who are responsible for education of girls or both sexes are more satisfied with their jobs, compared to the teachers of male students. Teachers who work overtime are more satisfied with their job.

**Table 2:** Correlation between job satisfaction and demographic variables

Variable		Average	Standard deviation	P-value
Gender of participants	Female	359.75	50.05	0.00
	Male	317.24	38.22	
Housing status	Owner	352.03	48.18	0.01
	Mortgaged/rental	335.07	50.12	
	institutional	283.50	60.16	
	Other	359.81	52.65	
sex of students undergoing training	Girl	331.61	51.34	0.01
	Boy	353.81	50.05	
	Girls and boys	357.71	45.23	
Overtime working	Yes	321.24	41.05	0.02
	No	352.55	50.71	

### Job burnout

Average and standard deviation of frequency and severity of job burnout were 52.59 () and 63.84 (13.96), respectively. It should be noted that maximum attainable score was 132 for frequency of job burnout and 154 for its severity. Table 3 gives the level of job burnout dimensions.

**Table 3:** level of burnout syndrome dimensions

	Frequency/number (%)			Severity/number (%)		
	Low	Moderate	High	Low	Moderate	High
Emotional exhaustion	(34) 52	(54/2) 83	(11/8) 18	(47/7) 73	(44/4) 68	(7/8) 12
Depersonalization	(16/3) 25	(43/1) 66	(40/5) 62	(5/9) 9	(74/5) 114	(19/6) 30
Personal adequacy	(96/7) 148	3 (2)	(1/3) 2	(96/1) 147	(2/6) 4	(1/3) 2

As Table 3 suggests, the highest frequency of emotional exhaustion was at moderate level, and severity of the emotional exhaustion was within the level of very low. Maximum frequency and severity were at moderate level and for depersonalization and at low level for personal adequacy. Table 4 presents the results of some variables that have a statistically significant relationship with job burnout. The results in Table 4 reveal a significant relationship between the severity of burnout and gender of participants and the burnout is more severe in men. Also, frequency of job burnout was significantly related to overtime. This means that people with higher income are less feel lack of personal success. In other words, with rising income, personal accomplishment will be even more. Overtime is a factor to increase revenue. It also enhances the feeling of personal accomplishment.

**Table 4:** relationship between frequency and severity of job burnout and demographic variables

Variable		Average		Standard deviation		P-value	
		Frequency	Severity	Frequency	Severity	Frequency	Severity
Gender of participants	Female	62.14	51.33	12.71	10.57	0.26	0.03
	Male	67.44	55.26	18.41	15.83		
Overtime working	Yes	53.55	62.72	16.42	15.96	0.02	0.15
	No	48.06	64.39	12.75	13.32		

### Job stress

The average total score of job stress was 92.95 (13.10). Table 5 shows the average value of the sub-scales of job stress. Table 6 shows the results of some demographic variables that have a statistically significant relationship with job stress. The results showed that in stressful situations, those who received more support from family and friends, experienced less stress. According to the findings, job stress has a significant negative relationship with the tendency of people to the teaching job. It seems that teachers' job stress is a factor that they do not advise teaching jobs to their relatives, friends, and acquaintances. The results also showed that job stress is inversely related to the overtime working.

**Table 5:** average scores of job stress subscales

	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation	Maximum attainable score
Average score of job stress	61	126	92.95	13.10	
Total score of job stress	1	5	2.68	0.71	
Demand	1	5	2.87	0.53	
Control	1	5	2.54	0.61	
Managerial support	1	5	2.5	0.76	
Peer support	1	5	2.6	0.76	
Communication	1	5	3.77	0.83	
Role	1	5	1.86	0.63	
Change	1	5	2.4	0.82	

**Table 6:** relationship between job stress and demographic variables

Variable		Average	Standard deviation	P-value
Support from family	Yes	2.77	0.36	0.04
	No	2.64	0.41	
Reason for choosing the job	Revenue	2.37	0.4	0.04
	Lack of recruitment opportunity	2.68	0.33	
	insistence of friends and acquaintances	2.83	0.47	
	Others	2.74	0.47	
Tendency of friends and acquaintances to the teaching job	Yes	2.67	0.37	0.03
	No	2.8	0.39	
Overtime working	Yes	2.85	0.31	0.02
	No	2.69	0.39	

### Discussion and conclusion

This research studied burnout, stress, and job satisfaction of teachers in the exceptional schools of Qazvin Province in Iran in 2011. Research findings showed that the difference between the mean difference of scores of job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction from the maximum attainable score (-91.27 and -147.66, respectively) was significant. The difference was much more pronounced for the score of job dissatisfaction. Job satisfaction score by the participants' gender was different and their relationship was statistically significant. According to this relationship, women gained more scores than men. In conclusion, women had more job satisfaction than men, which is in line with the findings by Qarahkhani (2004), Nourbakhsh (2008), Sari (2004), and Eichinger (2000).

The housing status and job satisfaction were significantly correlated. In other words, personal housing caused more job satisfaction in teachers. The results also showed that "the gender of students undergoing training" associated with job satisfaction. According to this result, teachers of girl students and both genders were more satisfied than teachers of male students. This indicates that conflict of female students is lower than male students. Research findings indicated that the mean and standard deviation of the frequency and severity of job burnout were 52.59 (13.64) and 63.84 (13.96), respectively. It should be mentioned that maximum attainable score was 132 for frequency and 154 for severity of job burnout.

The results also showed that the highest frequency of emotional exhaustion was moderate. Its severity was evaluated at low level. The highest frequency and severity for depersonalization was moderate and for personal adequacy was relatively low. Results also showed a significant relationship between the severity of burnout and gender of the participant (p-value= 0.03). According to the data, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization are a good criterion for prediction. Findings revealed higher scores of male teachers than females. The results are consistent with the findings by Badri Gargouri in 1995.

Job burnout showed a significant correlation with working overtime (p-value= 0.02) as the most important factor in socioeconomic status of the teachers. According to which, it is concluded that overtime working is associated with the teachers' income. So, the income of the teachers would be a good predictor for the loss of personal success. This means that people with higher income are less feel lack of personal success. In other words, with rising income, the personal accomplishment will be even more. Overtime is also a factor to increase revenue and increase the feeling of personal accomplishment. This is approved by Bonab (2005) and Qadimi Moqadam (2005).

The frequency and severity of burnout showed no significant relationship with the place of work, wages and benefits, education, housing status, marital status, type of employment, work experience, exercise status, gender of students undergoing training, teachers' educational position, type of disability of the students, supported by family and friends, relevance of field of study with the institutional post, reason for choosing the occupation, the attitude of others towards the job, and blended-learning teacher. Mean and standard deviation of total score of job stress was 92.95 (13.10). Mean and standard deviation of job stress subscales were as 2.87 (0.53) for demand, 2.54 (0.61) for control, 2.5 (0.76) for support from authorities, 2.6 (0.76) for peer support, 3.77 (0.83) for communication, 1.86 (0.63) for role, and 2.4 (0.82) for change. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between job stress and support from family and friends (p-value= 0.04). This study showed that in stressful situations, those who have the support of family and friends have higher job satisfaction

than those who do not. Therefore, the support of family and friends protect individuals against the potentially adverse effects of stressors. This is confirmed by Aghili Nejad (2010) and Qasemi Nejad (2004).

There was also found a significant relationship between job stress and the reason for choosing teaching job ( $p$ -value= 0.04). Furthermore, job stress reversely correlated with the tendency of others to the job ( $p$ -value=0.03). Teachers' job dissatisfaction seems to be an influential factor that they do not recommend it to others. Job stress is inversely related to overtime ( $p$ -value = 0.02). With increasing work experience, due to increased working skills as well as increase the amount of control over working conditions, many job stresses are relieved. Poor economic situation necessarily leads to forced overwork and increases job stress. This finding is in line with the results of Qola Nejad (2009), Bahrami (2009), and LeSergen (2005). There is a negative relationship between job satisfaction and burnout among teachers ( $p$ -value = 0.028). According to Herzberg's theory, labors (teachers) have two sets of needs, including health needs and motivational needs. Satisfying the needs of motivation (such challenging task, increasing responsibility, possibility of achieving success, appreciation for work, and growth and development at work) make personal growth and integrity and increase workers' ability to engage in creative work and enhance their commitment to being responsive at workplace. In contrast, non-satisfaction of the teachers' motivational needs over time makes them dissatisfied with the working process and organizational environment. It also gradually causes depersonalization (feeling of suspicion, cynicism, and disenchantment with the work and managers), and emotional exhaustion (difficulty in coping with the stressful working conditions, increased workload, and poor working position), which are all the symptoms of job burnout.

A significant negative relationship was found between job satisfaction and job stress among the teachers ( $p$ -value=0.000). With increasing job stress, job satisfaction decreases. This means that people with high job stress face problems in carrying out their duties and will have poor performance. As a result, their job satisfaction will come down and they will not be satisfied with their performance. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between job burnout and various dimensions of job stress.

According to research data, increased conflict in the workplace and between partners, lack of support from manager and partners, lack of encouragement from the organization, poor of communication between colleagues, unconventional expectations and the pointlessness towards work and managers, and sense of mistrust make "personality disorder" among the workers and cause they cannot well-advance their work during the day. These finding is consistent with the results by Abdi in 2001).

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