

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MANAGERS' BURNOUT AND COMPONENTS OF LOCUS OF CONTROL IN PAYAM-E-NOOR UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT: Due to its wide range of functionality, burnout has a significant importance in educational institutions. The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between locus of control and burnout among managers in Urmia Payam-e-Noor University (PNU). The research method was descriptive-survey. In this research, the variable of burnout included components of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment and the variable of locus of control included components of internal locus of control, powerful others locus of control, and chance locus of control. Research instruments were Maslach's Burnout Inventory and Levenson's Locus of Control Questionnaire. A sample of 80 participants was selected through applying census method. To analyze the data, descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used. The main findings indicated that the increase in managers' internal locus of control decreased burnout. Moreover, the increase in the external locus of control (powerful others locus of control and chance locus of control) resulted in an increase in burnout. Accordingly, it can be suggested that on equal terms, people who feature internal characteristics are especially appropriate for management positions.

Keywords: Burnout, Locus of Control, Components of Burnout and Locus of Control.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, education is the key to development of societies. The education system is a highly complex social system that is composed of several elements, each playing an important role in achieving its goals. However, in the meantime, the role of the human factor, especially the manager, is salient. Because of their critical role, managers are under pressure by superior managers, on one hand, and by the community on the other hand. In addition, inside the organization, many problems regarding the university, professors and students should be considered. Due to these multiple pressures, managers are constantly exposed to stress and suffer from burnout in the long term. Therefore, individuals who have all the capabilities to bear these pressures should be selected for this sensitive position.

One of the factors that should be considered is managers' personality traits. Appropriate and relevant personality traits should be recognized in order to select individuals with such traits as more efficient future managers. Managers' personality traits is the matter that has rarely been

considered. In the current study, this will be scientifically examined. The study examines the relationship between locus of control and burnout in university managers in Urmia.

In this study, locus of control and its three dimensions including internal, others' powerfulness, and chance and their effect on burnout with three dimensions including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment were investigated. In this regard, other variables such as age, gender, work experience and educational level are among other factors affecting managers' locus of control and burnout. One of the important characteristics of personality that has attracted psychologists and researchers in recent years is the locus of control personality trait which was first mentioned by Julian Rotter (1966).

According to his theory, people are divided into two internal and external categories (Hunter, 2002). Individuals with an internal locus of control believe that positive events in life is a result of their accurate planning and attempts; therefore, they take the responsibility for their own actions, behaviors and

their consequences. On the other hand, those with external locus of control does not see any cause and effect relationship between their behaviors and events, and they consider luck, accident, or other people as responsible for the results of their own behaviors and, consequently, does not take the responsibility for their own behaviors. These individuals believe that their behaviors and skills do not affect the supports they receive and do not value their efforts (Seif, 1994). During his investigations, Levenson found that locus of control is a multidimensional concept. He categorized the external dimension to two distinct categories: Others' powerfulness and chance. Research on the relationship between locus of control and burnout has been mainly conducted based on Julian Rotter's theory rather than Levenson's.

Today, workplace mental health promotion is one of the most important aspects in development and optimization of human resources in organizations. For the growth of any society, in the first place, healthy, inventive and creative workforce should be used. Since managers have an important role in achieving the goals of the education and higher education, and also are under pressure from the external and internal environments of the organization, they are exposed to stress, mental pressure and tension. As burnout occurs, an increase in absence of realism, a decrease in the energy following useful activities, loss of final duty of life and lack of sympathy, and mental and physical disorders emerge (Badri Gergory, 1995; Garcia, et al., 2005).

Managers' job stress and tension decrease the efficiency and effectiveness of organizations. If it is not controlled, this syndrome will cause irreversible effects on the society and its negative effects on managers' performance and ultimately the organization will quickly appear. Therefore, teachers and managers' occupational tension should be prevented. Officials should highly attempt to prevent the stress that leads to burnout. The most important measure to prevent occupational stress and mental stress is the exploration and recognition of factors related to this phenomenon. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the fundamental question that whether there is any relationship between the locus of control, as an important personality variables, and burnout.

Burnout is defined as the reduction of one's adaptability due to the effects of stressful factors. It is a syndrome consisting of emotional and physical exhaustion which leads to a negative self-

concept, a negative attitude toward the job and the lack of feeling a connection with clients (Duartepe, et al., 2004). This syndrome may lead individuals to a variety of mental and physical diseases (Sa'atchi, 1996). Dimensions of burnout are defined as follows:

Emotional Exhaustion: Feelings associated with loss of emotional power and loss of the ability to communicate emotionally with others (Sa'atchi, 1996).

Depersonalization: A negative attitude toward others. The category is associated with non-emotional and aggressive responses towards clients and colleagues (Sa'atchi, 1996).

Lack of Personal Accomplishment: A state when people have negative perceptions of their professional efforts and feel that they do not advance in their careers (Sa'atchi, 1996).

According to Farber, the following individuals are prone to burnout: male teachers with forty years old who teach in secondary schools or higher (Neill, 2006), people who are passionate and idealistic about their jobs, those who have an external locus of control, and those who self-doubt their own ability and think they have a weak capacity. Since locus of control is one of the factors affecting the emergence of burnout, it is discussed below. Locus of control is a belief that people have about themselves, about the fact that they have control over their fate and/or that what happens to them in life is due to luck (Duartepe, et al., 2004). Locus of control with both internal and external dimensions is defined as follows:

Internal Locus of Control: A belief based on which people attribute the cause of events and issues to their own ability, effort, or weaknesses (Duartepe, et al., 2004).

Powerful Others External Locus of Control: A belief based on which people attribute the cause of events and issues to superior powerful others.

Chance External Locus of Control: A belief based on which people attribute the cause of events and issues to chance (Kashtidar, 2002).

One of the major questions that has preoccupied the human mind is that to what extent man dominates his life and destiny, and to what extent forces outside of himself can determine his destiny or control his life. Naturally, people are eager to know whether a definite destiny, violation of which is impossible, directs his/her life and he/she is devoid of choice in this path. Whether as a chaff wandering in a windstorm he/she is the captive of a determined destiny (Soltani & Rohani, 2001). To answer the above mentioned questions, the locus of control is discussed. The term "locus

of control” refers to a structure that is derived from Rotter’s social learning theory (Friedman, 1995).

Julian Rotter for the first time introduced the concept of locus of control to the field of psychology (Rezaeei Ghand Shekan, 2001). Research on differences between extroverts and introverts show that people who obtain a high score regarding extroversion, have a lower job satisfaction, higher rates of absenteeism, higher feelings of alienation of their work environment and lower levels of engagement/involvement in comparison to introverts. Introverts believe that observinghygienic principles can help ensure their health. Thus, they take more responsibility in relation to their health and care most for their own health. This will cause less accidents and illness and therefore their absence rate is lowered. The results of previously conducted studiesindicate that when performing tasks, introverts are typically more responsive and do the job more effectively;however, according to the type of job and different tasks, these conclusions cannot be generalized. Before making a decision, introverts actively seek further information. They havestronger motivations to achieve success and secure goals. They attempt to control their own environment more than extroverts. Extraverts are more willing to compromiseand are inclined to implement the instructions. Thus, in relation to professional tasks (i.e., those that require high management skills and ability and their performance needs more complex methods and in-depth data collection and processing), extraverts are more successful. Besides, introverts are more suitable for jobs that require initiative and independence. Conversely, introverts excellently perform tasks which are repetitive and systematic. Their success depends on compliance and agreement with other colleagues (Duatepe, et al., 2004).

Several studies have been conducted, a part of which is discussed below.Kens (1992) reviewed the relationship of locus of control with job satisfaction and six demographic variables in international organizations and found that there was a significant relationship between the locus of control and job satisfaction. Boustan (2003) investigated the relationship between locus of control and creativity among students of Sharif University of Industrial Engineeringand indicated that there was a positive relationship between internal locus of control and creativity. Kashtidar (2002) examined the relationship between

burnout and locus of control and comparedcollege managers of physical education departments and otherdepartments of higher education and found no relationship between managers’ age, service background, andexperience andlocus of control center (Ross & Altmaier, 2006). Azizi-Moghaddam (2004),investigating the organizational health of schools that have managers with different locus of control, reported that there was a significant difference between managers’ internal and external locus of control and organizational health. Soltan-Hosseini (2003), in his doctoral thesis,reported there was a significant difference between college and department managers’ leadership styles and their locus of control and organizational commitment among the faculty ofthe physical education major (Brouwers, et al., 1999). Galla et al. (1993) found that the etiology of burnout syndrome consisted of individual, organizational, social, and cultural factors. Friedman (1995) concluded that educational administrators’burnout is influenced by factors such as expectations, communication, motivation, satisfaction, and social status (Soltani & Rohani, 2001).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method of the present study was correlational-survey. The population included all university managers of Urmia PNU. The number of managers serving at the time the studywas carried out was 80 individuals. Thus, the sample of this study consisted of 80 managers. Two instruments were used. To measure burnout,Maslech’s (1985) Burnout Inventory, containing 22 Likert-type items was performed. Maslech and Jackson’s Burnout Inventory has been used in numerous studies conducted both in and out of Iran. These studies have confirmed itsparamount validity and reliability. To measure managers’ locus of control, Levenson’s Standardized Questionnaire, consisting of 24 Likert-type items,was applied. In this questionnaire, the locus of control is the variable that is determined based on the scores which subjects obtain from the questionnaire. The types of locus of control in the questionnaire areinternal locus of control, powerful otherexternal locus of control and chance external. The scale of locus of control was developed in 1973 by Levenson. Since then, it has been used in numerous studies and its validity and reliability was confirmed by professionals.

RESULTS

In this section, hypotheses are tested using Pearson correlation coefficient.

H1: There is a statistically significant relationship between university managers' locus of control and burnout.

According to Table 1, there is an inverse linear correlation between internal locus of control and burnout ($r=-0.51$). The regression equation to

predict burnout based on internal locus of control is as follows:

$$\text{Prediction of burnout} = -1.68 \times (\text{internal locus of control}) + 91.93$$

The accuracy of prediction of burnout is $\beta=0.51$; $r^2=0.26$ ($t(82)=7.44$, $p=0.01$) ($r^2=0.259=0.26$) Approximately 26% of burnout variations were calculated through a linear relationship with internal locus of control.

Table 1. Pearson correlation coefficients between variables

Independent variable \ dependent variable		External locus of control	Internal locus of control	chance
		Burnout	Pearson coefficient	0.235
	Significance	0.034	0.000	0.045

There is a positive linear correlation between external locus of control and burnout ($r=0.235$). According to the results demonstrated in Table 1, the relationship between these two variables is significant at the 95% confidence level. Using the following regression equation, the variable of burnout can be predicted based on internal locus of control.

$$\text{Prediction of burnout} = 0.57 \times (\text{external locus of control}) + 10.57$$

The accuracy of prediction of burnout is $\beta = 0.23$; ($t(82)=1.31$, $p=0.05$) ($r^2=0.055$). Approximately 5% of burnout variations were calculated through a linear relationship with external locus of control.

There is a positive linear correlation between chance locus of control and burnout ($r=0.22$). Approximately 5% ($r^2=0.055$) of burnout variations is associated with personality traits of chance locus of control. Using the following regression equation, the variable of burnout can be predicted based on chance locus of control.

The accuracy of prediction of burnout is $B=0.22$; ($t(82)=2.07$, $p=0.05$) ($r^2=0.05$). Approximately 5% of burnout variations were calculated through a linear relationship with chance locus of control.

$$\text{Prediction of burnout} = 0.49 \times (\text{chance locus of control}) + 14.31$$

Table 2. Pearson correlation coefficient between locus of control (internal, powerful others, chance) and three dimensions of burnout

Independent variable \ Dependent variable		Emotional exhaustion	Depersonalization	Lack of personal accomplishment
Powerful others Locus of Control	Pearson coefficient	0.07	0.073	0.31
	sig	0.001	0.001	0.000
Internal locus of control	Pearson coefficient	-0.348	-0.371	-0.457
	sig	0.001	0.001	0.000
Chance locus of control	Pearson coefficient	0.036	0.134	0.34
	sig	0.75	0.23	0.002

As shown in Table 2, external locus of control (powerful others and chance locus of control) has a positive significant relationship with dimensions of burnout. Moreover, internal locus of control has a negative significant relationship with dimensions of burnout. This confirms that if external locus of control increases, dimensions of burnout also increase. However, if internal locus of control increases, burnout decreases.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Considering the effect of burnout on individuals and organizations and given the identification and connection of the effective factors and most importantly personality traits with this syndrome, the relationships of these variables were investigated. The results can help authorities in their pursuit of prevention and treatment of burnout. The internal locus of control is a belief based on which people attribute events and issues to their own ability, effort, and weaknesses. This feature is negatively correlated with all three dimensions of burnout (exhaustion, depersonalization, the lack of personal accomplishment). If managers' internal locus of control increases, burnout and each of its dimensions decrease. In addition, through applying regression equations, burnout can be predicted by internal locus of control. Hughbner and Mills (1994), Beigi-fard (1999) and Mohajer (2003) suggest that burnout is associated with personality traits. This corroborates the results of the present study. Jenner (1986), Spector (1988) and Broushut (1994) indicated that introverts are less prone to stress and if become stressed, they will actively solve it. Therefore, in the long term, introverts are less exposed to burnout which is consistent with our results. Penn and Romanov (1988), Randall and Scart (1988) and Azadgalleh (1994) demonstrated that since introverts have higher job satisfaction, they are not prone as much as extroverts to burnout, which confirms the results of the present study.

Arches (1991) concluded that the lack of autonomy has negative effects on the reduction of burnout. Therefore, since introverts have a greater sense of independence compared to extroverts, they are less prone to burnout. Broushut (1994) found that introverts show high

performance in power mastery, self-esteem, and social competence. These features make the individual less prone to stress, negative concepts and consequently burnout. Zeinali (2006) and Kirkaldy (1999) concluded that since introverts have higher organizational commitment, they are less prone to burnout.

These results can be summarized as follows. There was a negative linear correlation between internal locus of control and burnout, i.e., with an increase in managers' internal locus of control, their burnout decreased. In addition, there was a negative significant relationship between internal locus of control and all aspects of burnout (exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment), i.e., with an increase in managers' internal locus of control, burnout and each of the dimensions dropped. According to the results of conducted studies on burnout and locus of control, this important personality trait should be considered when employing management students and managers. On equal terms, those individuals who have pronounced salient internal characteristics should be selected. Given the possibility of attribution retraining, after identifying competent managers with external locus of control (powerful others and chance), attribution retraining should be performed.

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