The Influence of Gender and Marital Status on Job Burnout

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Abstract: Burnout is the state of physical and mental fatigue and exhaustion caused by an individual under the pressure of work. It was first proposed by Freudenberger in 1974. He believed that job burnout is one of the symptoms of emotional exhaustion. Subsequently, Maslach and others called the psychological syndrome caused by responding to long-term emotional and interpersonal stressors at work as job burnout. Generally speaking, job burnout is an extreme reaction when an individual fails to cope with work pressure. It is a state of exhaustion of emotions, attitudes, and behaviors that an individual produces under long-term stress experience. Nowadays, job burn-out is attracting widespread attention worldwide. Just at the end of May, the World Health Organization (WHO) has listed job burn-out/overwork (job burn-out) as an international disease. Classification (ICD-11) list and describe it as: long-term pressure from the workplace that has not been successfully handled. This study mainly deals with the relationship between the democratic party, including age and gender, and burnout dimensions among people in all kinds of occupations in mainland China. A questionnaire-based study was carried out from 282 out of 400, with a response rate of 70.5%. By statistical techniques like descriptive analysis and ANOVA, the result showed that there is no difference found regarding gender on the level of burnout but the difference of burnout level between single and married people is statistically significant. It also proposed implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

1. Introduction

Work takes up a large part of people's daily life, therefore, job burnout cannot be ignored in the present-day world. Job burnout has a lot of negative effects on people, it influences people's body health and mental health. At the same time, much of the existing literature on job burnout has shown that many factors contribute to people's job burnout, such as work-to-family conflict (Liu, Cao, Zhang, & Wu, 2020), workplace bullying and hardiness which are seperatively positively and negatively related to job burnout (Srivastava & Dey, 2020). There is also a wide literature on the relationship of gender and marital status with job burnout, but these researches have yielded mixed results.

Some studies have shown that both gender and marital status are significantly correlated with job burnout (Lnnqvist, 2006), including the teachers of English study in Malaysia, which shows that male teachers have higher job burnout than those female teachers, and married teachers have higher job burnout than unmarried teachers (Farshi & Omranzadeh, 2014a). A meta-analysis conducted by Ortega et al. on the nursing industry shows that single or divorced male nurses is the easiest group to have the strongest job burnout (Ortega et al., 2018). The research on music teachers in urban primary and secondary schools in China shows that male teachers' job burnout is higher than female teachers, the job burnout of married teachers is lower than that of unmarried teachers (Yang, 2020).

At the same time, some studies have proved that gender and marital status have no significant impact on job burnout. For example, studies in Universities in Pakistan (Khan, Faisal, Rasli, Yusoff, & Ahmad, 2015) and on Iranian EFL teachers (Farshi & Omranzadeh, 2014b), a meta-analysis of job burnout among Turkish teachers (Yorulmaz & Altinkurt, 2018), a study of Anaesthetists in Pakistan (Khan, Fauzia A., Shamim, Ali, & Taqi, 2019) and a study of Turkish doctors during the COVID-19 outbreak (Dinibutun, 2020).

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Some literature suggests that gender affects job burnout, for example, studies that were carried on miners in Xinjiang, China (Sun, Zhang, Zhang, Liu, & Ge, 2020), and on healthcare workers at six university-affiliated hospitals during COVID-19 outbreaks (Jalili, Niroomand, Hadavand, Zeinali, & Fotouhi, 2021), while research carried on bankers (Haque & Aslam, 2011) and healthcare workers providing HIV care in Malawi (Kim et al., 2019) showed that marriage does not affect job burnout.

Marital status is another factor that affects job burnout. For instance, unmarried single nurses had lower emotional exhaustion, and divorced nurses had higher level (Zhang et al., 2020). A study of professionals in neurorehabilitation who care for patients with chronic consciousness disorders found that unmarried workers reported higher levels of job burnout than married workers (Wang, Wang, Laureys, & Di, 2020). A study of members of the French-speaking Society of Pediatric and Adolescent Urology found that job burnout levels were not related to gender, but to marital status, The degree of job burnout of married members is lower than that of unmarried members (Harper, Alshammari, Ferdynus, & Kalfa, 2020).

2. Method

A self-administered questionnaire was used in the cross-sectional survey. The demographic data of the interviewees are shown in Table 1. The research questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part consists of demographics with gender and marital status. The second part of the study tool was Maslach burnout inventory (MBI) for a human general survey. Respondents were voluntary and anonymity was assured. In the present study, All personal information was confidential. In addition, the researchers only analyzed de-identified data. The questionnaire concludes 18 items and each item can be answered on a seven-point Likert scale. Burnout is expressed as the score of the scale. The higher the score is, the higher the degree of burnout is.

At the end of the study period, the data was downloaded and anonymized. Then, researchers used SPSS to analyze the data. A descriptive analysis was conducted of all baseline characteristics and outcome variables of the participants. Mean and standard deviation (SDs) were calculated for continuous variables, and frequency and percentage were calculated for categorical variables. All reported P values were double-tailed, and P ^ 0.05 was considered statistically significant. A total of 400 people were invited to complete the questionnaire, of which 282 completed the survey (response rate:70.5%).

Table 1 shows the baseline characteristics of each subscale and the overall MBI score. The interaction between marital status and gender is not significant. However, there is a significant correlation between marital status and job burnout. However, gender did not contribute to the results.

Table 1 Baseline Characteristics Of Participants (n=282)

Variable	Value
Gender, n (%)	
Female	164 (58.16%)
Male	118 (41.84%)
Marital status, n (%)	
Married	166 (58.87%)
Single	116 (41.13%)
Maslach Burnout Inventory Score, Mean ± SD	46.94 ± 18.01

n number, SD standard deviation

3. Results

As shown in table 2, marital status (F=21.572, df=1, p<0.001) has a significant main effect on burnout while gender (F=0.664, df=1, p=0.416) does not. It is also noted that their interaction effect (F=0.149, df=1, p=0.700) was not significant.

Table 2 The level of burnout dimensions according to gender and marital status

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	7082.819[a]	3	2360.940	7.811	.000
Intercept	607600.274	1	607600.274	2010.197	.000
Gender	200.623	1	200.623	.664	.416
Marital Status	6520.464	1	6520.464	21.572	.000
Gender * Marital Status	44.894	1	44.894	.149	.700
Error	84028.032	278	302.259		
Total	712358.000	282			
Corrected Total	91110.851	281			

a. R Squared = .078 (Adjusted R Squared = .068)

As shown in table 3, unmarried people experience higher levels of job burnout than married people, contrary to some existing studies(Zhang et al., 2020).

Table 3 The level of burnout dimensions according to marital status

Marital Status	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
married	42.81	166	18.124
unmarried	52.84	116	16.165
Total	46.94	282	18.007

4. Discussion

The results of the cross-sectional survey showed that being single (both unmarried and divorced) was a contributing factor to job burnout.

This study has two main limitations. First, it is based on a cross-sectional setup. Therefore, cohort effects and actual progression in working life as we can with longitudinal data cannot be distinguished. Second, our study focused on job burnout, excluding the unemployed and those without stable jobs, the method used in this study, named MBI-GS, is limited to job relation. Some of the unemployed may have withdrawn from working life through burnout. Therefore, the burnout may be more deeply involved in people's life than our findings suggest.

Contrary to what has been reported in some of the literature to date (Zhang et al., 2020), burnout seems to be lower among married people than among unmarried people. In the study, married people reported fewer burnout symptoms than single, divorced, or widowed people. Social support is a widely reported health resource (Broadhead et al., 1983). There are signs that the protective effect of marital status is also linked to happiness at work (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). There is an assumption that women have more social connections than men and can be supported in times of recession or unemployment (Bebbington, 1987) (Leana & Feldman, 1991). Under pressure at work, men may be more dependent on their families. This result suggests that family is a resource factor for people.

Some factors associated with burnout, such as marital status and education, have also been linked to depression (Kendler, Gardner, & Prescott, 2002). In recent years, there have been many reports of suicides among highly educated and high-ranking officials. There is some overlap between burnout and depression, but they are not identical concepts (Ahola et al., 2005). Therefore, the implication of this study is to remind people to value social support and actively seek and provide social support to reduce burnout.

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5. Conclusion

The results showed that there was no significant difference in burnout degree with demographic variables except marital status. Therefore, it is concluded that the marital status of workers in mainland China significantly affects their job burnout level.

In a study involving workers in a wide range of industries across the country, there was no significant difference in the incidence of burnout between demographic subgroups. Overall, the overall burnout level in the health study was not very high. At the same time, divorce, widowhood, or being single may pose risk factors.

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