

Job Burnout among Employees of Thailand's Public Warehouse Organization, Ministry of Commerce

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Abstract: This study examines the job Burnout level among the employees of Thailand's Public Warehouse Organization (PWO), a state enterprise under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and compares the Burnout levels experienced by the PWO employees of different genders, ages, marital statuses, educational levels, employment types, employment durations and monthly earnings. The sample of 187 PWO employees is surveyed by means of questionnaire. Frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, t-statistics are analyzed and methodologies Include the one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Tukey's multiple comparison test. Results show that the job Burnout level among the PWO employees is moderate with the mean level stands at 2.91 in the scale of 5. When multiple aspects of job Burnout are considered, it is found that the feeling of reduced personal accomplishment is averaged at 3.48, emotional exhaustion at 2.91 and depersonalization at 2.34. It is also found that the difference in the overall job Burnout level among the PWO employees with different personal attributes as listed above is not statistically significant. The feeling of reduced personal accomplishment is however, different among the PWO employees of different ages as well as different employment statuses with the difference being statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level. Similarly at the 0.05 significance level, emotional exhaustion is experienced differently between the PWO employees of different educational levels.

Key words: Job Burnout, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishment, Thailand's Public Warehouse Organization, analysis

INTRODUCTION

A Burnout refers to a feeling of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion which is born out of being in a situation whereby emotional needs are present for a long period of time (Lerthattasilp, 2011). Affecting the person who is feeling as such both physically and mentally, a Burnout may lead to health deterioration, frequent anger, rage and isolation from the society (Lerthattasilp, 2011).

Academically, a job Burnout has been mentioned in the literature since the 1970's (Dharasak, 2014). The initial interest was originated in industrial and organizational research which showed interests towards studies on job Burnout among employees since the end of 1970's. Chuenprayot (2011) as it was a symptom arising from spending energy as well as emotional and mental resources to a job until they turn into feelings of tiredness, exhaustion, discouragement and eventually too much frustration to continue working. All these feelings are the basis of personal stress with regards to job Burnout (Nguandecha and Buatong, 2016). The feelings may also lead to attitudinal and behavioral changes as

well as undesirable work ethics (Kijjanon *et al.*, 2009). Employees experiencing job Burnouts may lack enthusiasm and interest in their jobs, become less participatory at work and fail to initiate or develop new ideas. They may also be absent from work more often and even resign from their jobs (Lerthattasilp, 2011). This results in an overall decrease in efficiency at work for the organization and an inability to achieve its intended objective or goal (Tongyuyen, 2005).

Aside from external pressures such as the boundary transcending global competition and the ever-changing world situation, the Public warehouse organization, ministry of commerce internally has to design and undergo reforms so that it keeps up with the competition in the current global market. Specifically, the organization should instill among its employees good attitudes, willingness to unify and participate and good conscience as well as stimulate the employees such that they are always alert and ready for development. The Public Warehouse Organization has a broad range of responsibility according to the Royal Decree on Public Warehouse Organization Establishment (7th Edition), BE

2540 whereby it may conduct activities and businesses with regards to agricultural products and consumer goods. With the responsibility to trade agricultural products in the government storage including rice, cassava, corn and palm, the Organization itself and its employees are subject to high risks (WCL, 2016a-c). This responsibility leads to a public distrust on the Organization, especially with regards to its honesty (WCL, 2015) and even brings about several charges and prosecutions up on the Organization itself (WCL, 2013, 2015a-c, 2016).

Objectives: This study aims to examine job Burnouts among the personnel of the Public Warehouse Organization, Ministry of Commerce and to compare the job Burnout levels among different personal attributes such as gender, age, marital status, educational level, employment status, tenure length and average monthly income.

Literature review

Components of job Burnout: Studies on failure to adapt in response to stress (Muldary, 1983; Glubwong *et al.*, 2009) or on job Burnouts usually break down the job Burnout into three components (Maslach and Jackson, 1981; Xiaoming *et al.*, 2014) as follows:

- Emotional exhaustion refers to a feeling of boredom, a lack of energy, a feeling of frustration and a stress from work. A long period of feeling as such may negatively affect the job performance
- Depersonalization means a feeling where an employee looks upon his or her client as an object rather than a person. The employee with this feeling may be harsh towards the clients and avoid approaching or attending to the client's needs
- Reduced personal or occupational accomplishment refers to a feeling that one is less able, fails to achieve as much as one desires and fails to progress professionally thereby one may reduce his or her effort in the job

Symptoms of job Burnout: Muldary (1983) explains that job Burnouts may be reflected in three aspects. Physically, an individual who experiences a job Burnout tends to show fatigue weariness and insomnia or if able to sleep, he or she does not want to get up. The individual may experience other physical problems such as problems with the gastrointestinal system, nausea, dizziness, migraine, back pain, diarrhea, abnormal weight gain or loss and a change in eating habits. Mentally an individual who experiences a job Burnout may see changes as

follows. His or her feelings such as worry, depression, indifference, inertness, anger, dissatisfaction, mood fluctuation, moodiness, difficulty to control his or her moods, frustration, conflicting thoughts, reduced ability to solve problems or make decisions, lack of concentration or interest in working, pessimism, unawareness of surroundings, lack of empathy, lack of self-esteem, guilt, doubt in oneself, finding oneself easily crying, boredom, desperation and feeling like escaping from reality

His or her attitudes such as having negative feelings towards oneself, work and other people and feelings that all human behaviors are rooted in their selfishness. Behaviorally an individual who experiences a job Burnout often sees less values in oneself as a person, finds faults and blames others, tries to protect oneself, easily forgets things, regularly commits minor misdeeds, avoids working, sees reduced efficiency at work, tries to show humor to cover up stress and comes up with alternative behaviors such as talking too much, eating too much, daydreaming, wasting time, having conflicts with colleagues and using drugs for mental rehabilitation including sleeping pills, alcohol and cigarettes.

Causes of job Burnout: The causes of job Burnout as summarized by Maslach (1982) include several factors both personal factors and occupational factors. Personal factors include the followings.

Age: The younger tends to experience more Burnout than the older ones. As age may reflect work experience and the older individuals may be more experienced at work and in life, more composed and more adaptive to reality they tend to feel less burned out at work.

Marital status: The single tends to experience more Burnout than the married ones, especially the emotional Burnout, possibly because family is an important social institution, especially among those with a good spousal relationship. Moreover, married individuals tends not to take work too seriously as it is not their only priority in life and they want to also be successful in their family life. Relative to the single individuals, the married ones therefore, tend to seek professional promotion less which implies less chance for failure and disappointment.

Employment duration or tenure length: In many professions involving social services, workers tend to experience job Burnout in the first 1-5 years of work but after 5-10 years of work they tend to develop maturity and experience which helps them become more visionary and more composed; hence, experience less

Burnout. Occupational factors include the followings. Too much work or too much work for one's own capacity is an important occupational factor that contributes to a job Burnout. Inability to control the situations or the administrative assignments currently undertaken as the individual may be assigned more work than one could manage may have no right or no participatory role in the policy-making process and may be unable to escape from stressful situations could contribute to a job Burnout.

Relationship problems among colleagues, executives and personnel could emerge from the situation where competitiveness takes place over cooperative work atmosphere and colleagues fail to help one another. This could create conflicts, undermine one's ability to work and eventually result in exhaustion. Assistance or lack thereof as well as obstacles caused by the executives are the factors that could lead to a job Burnout among employees, especially if the interaction at work creates stress, dissatisfaction or confrontation. Plans, policies and work processes within an organization have an important role in building a job Burnout as these usually impact the details and patterns of services provided by the organization. As a result, the employees may be forced to do what they do not feel like doing and to follow rules and regulations that they do not agree with.

The study of job Burnout among the employees of the Government Pharmaceutical Organization by Sasipat Nilsa-nguandecha and Napakkawat Buatong indicates that the factor relating to the overall job Burnout under the context of the Thai society is the position at work. If considering each aspect of job Burnout, gender, educational level, income, job characteristics, work hours and the department to which one belongs are correlated with emotional exhaustion. Age, marital status and tenure length are also correlated with depersonalization.

Along the same line, the study of professional nurses of Nakornsithammarat's Maharat Hospital by Boontida Tuegsuban, Remual Nunsupawat and On-anong Wichaikum indicates that age is correlated with the overall job Burnout. In case of nurses in intensive care units, the study by Narumol Kijjanon, Atchara Chongcharoen kumchoke and Pornpimol Masnarakorn establishes relationships between such personal attributes as age and tenure length and such aspects of job Burnout as emotional exhaustion and reduced personal achievement. As for the psychiatrists, the study by Lerthattasilp (2011) stresses the importance of personal attributes in determining the job Burnout of employees in an organization. Gender is correlated with depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment marital status with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and tenure length with emotional exhaustion. However, the study by

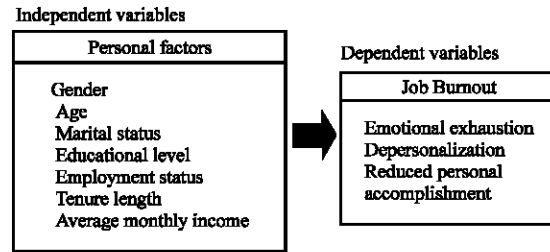


Fig. 1: Conceptual framework

Chow (2010) reports a different result where personal attributes such as age, educational level, marital status and tenure length have no relationship with the overall job Burnout experienced by profession nurses at the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration Medical College and Vajira Hospital. This is consistent with the study by Saengthong (2012) which indicates that neither age nor marital status has any relationship with the overall job Burnout experienced by professional nurses in the fifth inspection area of the Ministry of Public Health (covering the provinces of Ratchaburi, Supanburi, Nakornpathom, Kanchanaburi, Samutsongkram, Samutsakorn, Petchburi and Prachuapkirikan) (Fig. 1).

Research hypothesis: The personnel of the Public Warehouse Organization, Ministry of Commerce of Thailand with different genders, ages, marital statuses, education levels, employment statuses, tenure lengths and average monthly incomes should experience job Burnout differently.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Population and sample: The population of this research comprises 457 employees of Thailand's Public warehouse organization, ministry of commerce. With the formula to find a suitable sample size from the population size suggested by Rattachatanond (2013) the sample size for this population at the 95% confidence level and the 5% significance level is 187 samples.

Data collection: The researcher has collected data from the sample during the month of March 2015, using the questionnaire constructed based on the literature review. The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part, consisting of seven questions asks about personal factors including gender, age, marital status, educational level, employment status, tenure length and average monthly income. The second part of the questionnaire, adapted from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) asks about the job Burnout in 22 questions including nine

questions on emotional exhaustion, five questions on depersonalization and eight questions on reduced personal accomplishment. The confidence level as computed using the Cronbach method for finding the alpha coefficient is 0.92.

Data analysis: The data are analyzed using statistical Software. Statistics considered are the descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation and the test statistics including the one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Tukey’s Multiple Comparison Test where the statistical significance is set at 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personal factors: Most samples are females (77%) 31-40 year of age (43.3%) and single (63.1%). Most of them also have a bachelor’s degree (82.9%) are employed as contract employees (51.9%) have tenure lengths of 1-6 years (52.9%) and earn a monthly average income from 10,001-20,000 bahts (75.9%).

Job Burnout: The overall job Burnout experienced by the personnel of Thailand’s Public Warehouse Organization, Ministry of Commerce is moderate ($\bar{X}=2.91$). When considering each aspect of job Burnout, it is found that reduced personal accomplishment ($\bar{X}=3.48$) and emotional exhaustion ($\bar{X}=2.291$) are also moderate Depersonalization is however, reported at a low level ($\bar{X} = 2.34$) (Table 1).

Comparison of job Burnout levels across personal factors: The comparison of job Burnout levels among the personnel of the Public Warehouse Organization, Ministry of Commerce across different personal attributes finds that the employees differing in the seven personal attributes experience job Burnout at a similar level. In other words, the difference in job Burnout levels among between personnel with different personal attributes is not statistically significant which rejects the study’s hypothesis.

When considering separately each aspect of job Burnout among the personnel of the Public Warehouse Organization, Ministry of Commerce, it is found that the employees with different educational levels do experience different levels of emotional exhaustion with a significance level of 0.05 (hypothesis accepted). Meanwhile, the employees with different ages and different employment statuses also experience different levels of reduced personal accomplishment with the significance level of 0.05 (hypothesis accepted) (Table 2).

Table 1: Means and standard deviations of job Burnout among the personnel of the public warehouse organization, ministry of commerce

Burnout level	\bar{X}	SD	Level
Emotional exhaustion	2.9133	0.70226	Moderate
Depersonalization	2.3412	0.75560	Low
Reduced personal accomplishment	3.4799	0.54233	Moderate
Total	2.9115	0.41030	Moderate

The multiple comparison test further shows that the employees who have earned a lower vocational certificate or graduated from high school have a lower level of emotional exhaustion ($\bar{X}=2.37$) than those who have a master’s degree ($\bar{X}=3.25$). The difference is statistically significant with a p-value of 0.023. The employees aged between 21 and 30 years ($\bar{X}=3.38$) and those hired as contract workers ($\bar{X}=3.40$) have reduced personal accomplishment at a lower level than those aged between 41 and 50 and those hired as officers ($\bar{X}=3.56$) with a statistical significance at the p-values of 0.042 and 0.041, respectively.

While Maslach (1982) concludes that such personal factors as age (consistent with findings by Tuegsuban *et al.* (2008) marital status and tenure length are related to the job Burnout felt by the personnel, this study finds a different result among the personnel of the public warehouse organization, ministry of commerce. Among the personnel of the public warehouse organization, none of the personal factors such as gender, age, marital status, educational level, employment status, tenure length and average monthly income are correlated with the overall job Burnout level. This is consistent with Chow (2010) in terms of age, marital status, educational level and tenure length and consistent with Saengthong (2012) in terms of age and marital status. Moreover, this study also indicates that the overall job Burnout among the personnel of the Public Warehouse Organization, Ministry of Commerce does not have an inverse relationship with age or with tenure length as suggested by Maslach (1982) who establishes that younger personnel or personnel with shorter tenure tend to have a higher job Burnout level whereas older personnel or personnel with longer tenure tend to have a lower job Burnout level. On the contrary, this study finds that the relationships of the overall job Burnout with age as well as younger personnel of the Public Warehouse Organization, Ministry of Commerce and those with shorter tenure tend with tenure length are bell shaped. In other words, to have a lower job Burnout level.

Then, the job Burnout level tends to increase with age and tenure length before later decreasing as

Table 2: Comparison of job Burnout levels among personnel of the public warehouse organization, ministry of commerce by personal attributes

Personal factors	Emotional exhaustion	Depersonalization	Reduced personal accomplishment	Job Burnout
Gender	0.879	0.603	0.092	0.330
Age	0.423	0.462	0.026*	0.585
Marital status	0.399	0.865	0.322	0.498
Educational level	0.016*	0.104	0.305	0.219
Employment status	0.507	0.476	0.041*	0.402
Tenure length	0.094	0.487	0.368	0.132
Average monthly income	0.106	0.209	0.157	0.201

*p<0.05

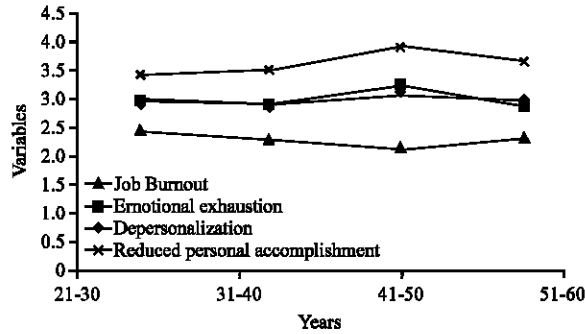


Fig. 2: Trend of job Burnout by age

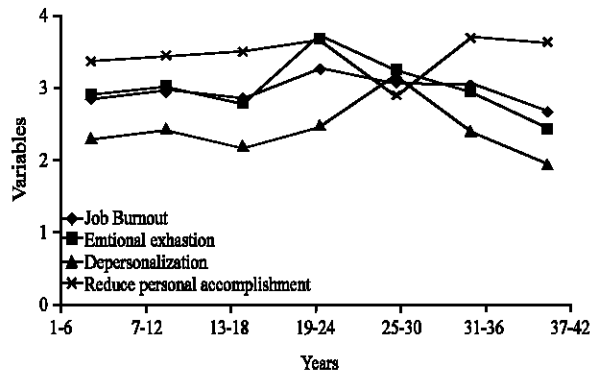


Fig. 3: Trend of job Burnout by tenure length

respectively shown in Fig. 2 and 3. When considering each aspect of job Burnout, it is also found that age is correlated with reduced personal accomplishment. Although, this is not consistent with Saengthong (2012), it is consistent with Kijjanon *et al.* (2009). This study's finding that the educational level is correlated with emotional exhaustion is also consistent with Nguandecha and Buatong (2016).

CONCLUSION

Results show that the job Burnout level among the PWO employees is moderate with the mean level stands at 2.91 in the scale of 5. When multiple aspects of job Burnout are considered, it is found that the feeling of reduced personal accomplishment is averaged at 3.48, emotional exhaustion at 2.91 and depersonalization at

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