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Original Article

Job-Burnout among medical librarians

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Abstract
Introduction: Job-burnout is a psychological expression for describing the experiment of negative attitude, morale and behavior when people face work-related stressors. It affects the physical, emotional and mental exhaustion, associate with suspicions about individuals' competence and the value of their work.
Methods: A total number of 40 librarians working in the libraries of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, Iran, were chosen as the population of study. Two types of questionnaires were distributed among participants. First, the factors affecting the job-burnout; second the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) for measuring the job-burnout scales among librarians.
Results: The study showed that the highest frequencies of job-burnout dimensions among librarians were from the high level of emotional-exhaustion and depersonalization and low level of personal-performance and involvement.
Conclusion: Analysis of data concluded that the university librarians believe, the low level of wages and benefits, the low status of librarians' profession in the society, the deficiency of promotion and occupation advancement, and incorrect assessment of the librarians' job performance, has the most influence on the job-burnout among librarians.

Introduction

Libraries play an important role in providing the scientific collections and resources of knowledge and scientific information for students and teachers. It would be very hard to achieve the educational aims of scholarly institutes, without providing the suitable information materials and necessary modern equipment in the university libraries. Librarians should be trained and skilled to answer the queries of patrons, who are referring to the libraries. Accomplishment and implementation of new technology in the libraries, cause the librarians to feel more stress. The stressful job environment may lead to job-burnout.

Job-burnout is a psychological expression for describing the experiment of negative attitude, morale and behavior when people face work-related stressors.[1] It affects the physical, emotional and mental exhaustion, combined with doubts about individuals' competence and the value of their works.[1]

Motivating the employees is an important aspect of management. Making the employee motived is an operative method for correct application of human resources. Accepting the fact that the employees' motivation establishes the fundamental of productivity and efficiency of enterprise for reaching the success of organization and institution goals, we should make efforts to detect the factors that create highly motivated employees.[2]

Stress is a widespread factor which

everyone may face it in his/her daily life. The occupational stress that is identified as psychological and physical response to workplace stress is called job-burnout.[2]

There are various theories about job-burnout, and many scientists have engaged themselves with burnout syndrome. Freudenberger was the first who defined the concept of job-burnout in 1970 in his article entitled "Staff Burn-Out as a specific psychological condition". Job-burnout is a wide-ranging phenomenon which interacts between employee's character and working atmosphere and may lead to loss of motivation and energy in one hand and reduction of performance in the other hands. According to Freudenberger's consideration, any occupation has more or few tension, but some professions may cause higher tensions especially the jobs dealing directly with human beings.[3]

The job-burnout syndrome is directly associated to the degree of individual's involvement in her/his occupation and the experience of frustration from failures to prevent the achievement. The lack of enough feedback may cause job-burnout in staff.[4,5]

Maslach and Jackson explained the job-burnout syndrome as an emotional tiredness, depersonalization, and decreased personal achievement.[6] The three dimensions of job-burnout which were explained by Maslach and Jackson are:

1. Emotional exhaustion
2. Depersonalization
3. Reduced personal accomplishment[7]

Emotional exhaustion is the phenomenon of a person's feeling emotionally exhausted and "tired" because of his/her daily interaction with people. It is a job-related stress which appears in staff who interconnect with other persons in challenging situations. Consequently, such individuals feel ineffective and incompetent to accomplish the needs of their patrons, as they were able to do it before, and recognize their job as a torture, that makes it problematic.[8] The exhaustion is the result of a continuous and repetitive work, which

makes the unpleasant sense through the time. It is noticeable that the symptoms of job-burnout are various and it should not be mistaken with common and transient exhaustions.[9]

Depersonalization: Stating the interpersonal aspect of burnout, depersonalization comprises harsh, negative and uninterested behaviors toward others.[10] People may show some actions like losing business aims and passion as a consequence of getting away from one's self and work, and being uninterested to the people who are served, and presenting negative, unfriendly responses.[11]

Low personal accomplishment: Low personal accomplishment is when the individual starts to feel inadequate and ineffective. In other words, individual tends to assess him/herself disadvantageous.[12] Person who experience this tendency may consider themselves as if they are not able to progress in their job; inversely, they think they are ineffective in their job and they are not able to make any changes in their environment.[13,14]

Maslach et al. restructured the description of burnout; stating that burnout is "a condition of emotional tiredness, depersonalization, and reduced individual achievement which may happen among those who work with people in some capacity".[15]

All people feel some degree of stress in their job's environment and this fact is a noticeable and unavoidable. The final result of stress which affects the persons is job burnout. The word of job-burnout is referred to the pressures that present in the place of work, and the symptoms including atrophy, frustration and isolation in workforces.[16]

Maslach and Leiter explained the term of job-burnout as decreasing the psychological and physical energy of employees that expose them to exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion may happen when, "a worker's resources are exhausted and the workers feel, they are not able to keep themselves in a psychological level".[13]

Potter believes that the symptoms of burnout syndrome are: interactive problems, health problems, decreased effectiveness, substance abuse, feeling of weakness, family stress, rejection of making relations, degeneration of relationships in job environment.[17]

Internal and/or external factors can possibly affect the job-burnout. The internal factors consist of one's features, characteristic property, values and approaches, efficacy, self-control, professional expectations, the length of services, the public support, family construction and the passionate permanency. The external issues include the extreme workload, the burden of work, the absence of fairness, the absence of work safety, and the lack of chances for promotion.[18]

The results of various studies indicate that the job-burnout appears in different populations such as educators, social workers, medical and mental health-related personnel, child-care workers, police officers, lawyers, and librarians.[15]

Although the academic libraries are located in the noiselessness environment of research and education centers, they are not immune from job-burnout. The librarians and staff who are working in the library environment are vulnerable to suffering from job-burnout. The pressure of providing services to the university students, repeated technological modifications, the stress of promotion and new library requirements expose the academic librarians toward job-burnout. This current study aims to investigate the major factors that lead to the job-burnout among academic librarians.

Methods

The questionnaires were administered among all librarians working in the libraries of the Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, Iran, 2016. Only 40 of 51 agreed to participate in the study; therefore, a total number of 40 questionnaires were completed and analyzed.

In this study, two different types of questionnaire were used for gathering data.

First, the factors that affect job-burnout. Second, we used the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) for measurement of job-burnout. The MBI consisted of 25 items which divided into four sub-scales evaluating each of the scopes related to the job-burnout (emotional exhaustion = 9, personal performance = 8, depersonalization = 5, involvement = 3). After scoring the questions for every subject, the total scores of dimensions were summed up and classified as low, moderate, and high.

Results

Analysis of gathered data showed that the majority of the interviewed librarians (30 out of 40, 75%) were females and 25% of the participants were male. Of all the participants, 33.3% were in the age group of 31-40. The average age of participants was 37.9 years. More than half of all participants (57.5%) had bachelor degree and the rest (42.5%) had master's degree. The work experience of most participants was more than 20 years.

Table 1 shows the answers to the 20 questions regarding the factors that affect job-burnout in order of the importance among participants.

To answer the third question (the rate of job-burnout among medical librarians), the job-burnout was measured in four dimensions of personal-performance, emotional-exhaustion, depersonalization, and involvement. The range of scores for job-burnout from high to low levels for each subscale is presented in table 2. Greater scores of depersonalization and emotional exhaustion show the higher level of job-burnout. The lower scores of personal performance and involvement represented the upper level of job-burnout. As shown in table 2, the high level of job-burnout was associated to emotional exhaustion (38.7 ± 1.70), as well as depersonalization (30.0 ± 6.24).

The table specified the low levels of job-burnout for personal performance (10.5 ± 0.70) and low level of job-burnout in involvement (3.25 ± 2.19).

Table 1. Factors affecting the job-burnout

Factors	N (%)
Low wages and benefits	37 (92.5)
Low status of profession in society	36 (90.0)
Lack of promotion and career advancement	33 (82.5)
Incorrect assessment of the librarians' job performance	32 (80.0)
Discrimination in the workplace	32 (80.0)
Exposure damage related to professional	32 (82.1)
Lack of support for new ideas	30 (75.0)
Lack of utilization of talented people	26 (65.0)
Vague job description	20 (50.0)
Lack of amenities	19 (47.5)
Unfavorable work environment work	18 (45.0)
Long working hours	14 (35.0)
Conflict with officials	13 (32.5)
Incompatibility of work with expertise	13 (32.5)
High workload	13 (33.3)
Absence of in-service training program	12 (30.8)
Conflict with colleagues	9 (22.5)
Job insecurity	9 (22.5)
Responsibilities beyond the capacity of individual	9 (23.1)
No matching shift work with living condition	8 (20.0)

Discussion

This study aimed to explore the levels of job-burnout among librarians working in medical university. We are aware that the cut-off points of job-burnout may differ from institute to institute and from country to country. Since there is not a systematic study to determine the specific cut-off points for Iranian librarians; we should be careful to interpret the exhaustion level of Iranian librarians.

The results of this current study revealed that the majority of librarians (92.5%) working in different libraries were displeased from the economic compensation of their wages as well as the low status of their profession in the society (90.0%). These results are in agreement with the prior study of Biglu et al.[19]

The frequency and intensity of emotional exhaustion were the two measures with the highest level contributing to job-burnout. The personal performance was in both measures at low level, depersonalization was in both scales at high level. The involvement showed high frequency (3.25 ± 2.19) and low intensity (4.15 ± 2.88). Regarding high levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and low level of personal performance and involvement, the participants in this study were vulnerable to the job-burnout. Likewise, the study of Zahiri et al. showed that the majority of nurses working in the surgery wards of Ahwaz hospitals, Iran, were affected by the high levels of personal inefficacy, depersonalization, and emotional fatigue.[20]

Individuals were affected by high levels of emotional fatigue, depersonalization, and personal inefficacy, and the level of personal inefficacy was higher than emotional fatigue and depersonalization. The presence of stress, heavy workload, and difficult working conditions, make them vulnerable and in need of receiving special support and attention from managers at all levels. The results of study conducted by Taee et al. which showed high frequency (70%) for low levels of emotional exhaustion and personal performance (54%), and high levels of depersonalization (94.7%) for physicians is in consistence with the result of our study.[21]

Table 2. Job-burnout and its dimensions on the scale of frequency and severity

Items	Scale	High Mean ± SD	Moderate Mean ± SD	Low Mean ± SD
Emotional exhaustion	Frequency	38.7 ± 1.70	26.5 ± 6.35	6.0 ± 4.42
	Severity	53.5 ± 13.40	28.2 ± 6.31	8.0 ± 5.77
Personal performance	Frequency	10.5 ± 0.70	27.6 ± 3.58	40.6 ± 5.27
	Severity	13.5 ± 0.70	31.0 ± 4.16	44.0 ± 4.72
Depersonalization	Frequency	30.0 ± 6.24	7.2 ± 8.18	1.2 ± 1.65
	Severity	33.5 ± 2.12	7.2 ± 8.18	1.2 ± 1.64
Involvement	Frequency	3.2 ± 2.19	9.7 ± 2.09	14.2 ± 1.25
	Severity	17.5 ± 3.00	11.1 ± 1.85	4.1 ± 2.88

SD: Standard deviation

Conclusion

Analysis of data concluded that the university librarians believe the low level of wages and benefits, the low status of librarians' profession in the society, the deficiency of promotion and occupation advancement, and incorrect assessment of the librarians' job performance, have the major impact on the librarians' job-burnout.

Limitations

This study focused on the current status of librarians. For comprehensive analysis we need to follow up the participants and compare their status in different situations. In addition, the study focused only on the librarians working in one university, therefore another study should be done by complete population from all universities located in the region.

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Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed to this work.

Conflict of Interest

Authors have no conflict of interest.

Ethic Approval

The ethical committee of research affairs of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences has approved the current study.

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