Determining the Levels of Burnout in Physical Education Professors and Faculty Members

Asghar kianzadeh1, Ali Zarei-Bidsorkhi2, Yousef Parhooede3, Mehran Gahramani4, Farshad Emami5, Zahra Rajabi6

1 & 3. Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.
2. Member of Faculty, Sport Management, Payame Noor University
4. Department of Physical Education, Gilangharb Branch, Islamic Azad University, Gilangharb, Iran.
5. Department of Physical Education, Pune University, Pune, India
6. Department of Management, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran Iran

Abstract

Background: Job burnout (JB) is the risk that the affected the instructors and faculty members of university. The purpose of this study was to determine the frequency and intensity of JB of instructors and faculty members of physical education of academic units and centers at the Region 10 of Islamic Azad University.

Materials and Methods: The study was descriptive – survey. The population was formed of all the professors and faculty members of physical education of academic units and centers at the region 10 of Islamic Azad University in the year 90-89. The sample size was formed of 45 participants that samples were selected available. Data were measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Statistical analysis was performed using descriptive statistics.

Results: The results showed that instructors and faculty members of physical education were in poor conditions in frequency and intensity of Emotional Exhaustion, Decreased personal accomplishment and depersonalization and were in the low burnout of JB.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the rate of JB and dimensions of job burnout was desirable condition among instructors and faculty members of physical education of academic units and centers at the Region 10 of Islamic Azad University.

* Corresponding author at: Member of Faculty, Sport Management, Payame Noor University. E-mail: zareibeidsorkhi@gmail.com,

Introduction

Job burnout is a job-related risk that has recently received much attention and is used to describe human's responses to stresses (Farber, 1985). Individuals may experience burnout in jobs that are too emotionally demanding or stressful, or even in jobs where they feel that they are not being respected by others (Maslach, 2001). Nonetheless, burnout is most often found in professions in which the individual spends much time in contact with other people, like human service professions (Schaufeli, et al., 1993). These individuals exhibit physical symptoms (e.g. headaches and digestive discomforts), psychological symptoms (e.g. depression and anger), and behavioral symptoms (e.g. poor performance and absenteeism) (Russell, et al., 1987). Faculty members and professors are one group that can be subject to burnout, for they are simultaneously dealing with a large number of people with different expectations for a considerable period of time (Rush, 2003).
According to Maslach (1993), there are three components of burnout: Emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion refers to the depletion of psychic energy or the draining of emotional resources. Depersonalization refers to the development of negative, cynical attitudes toward the recipients of one's services. Reduced personal accomplishment is the tendency to evaluate one's own work with recipients negatively, an evaluation that is often accompanied by feelings of insufficiency (Karabiyik et al., 2008).

Several studies have been carried out on burnout among professors and faculty members (Sabaghian et al. 2006; Ahmadi and Abedi, 2007; Roghanizad, N., Vatanpour, M., et al. 2009; Safari and Goudarzi, 2009; Arefi et al. 2010; Hogan, & McKnight, 2007, Karabiyik et al. 2008; Toker, 2011). Sabaghian reported relatively high degrees of burnout among physical education educators. Tuitional instructors exhibited less emotional exhaustion than faculty members, but exhibited higher depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment (Sabaghian et al. 2006). Ahmadi and Abedi showed that the degree of burnout of the faculty members of Isfahan University was more than average in reduced personal accomplishment and average in depersonalization and emotional exhaustion (Ahmadi and Abedi, 2007). Roghanizad et al. (2008) reported that burnout amongst the dentist faculty members of Tehran Branch of IAU was lower than standard in frequency and intensity (Roghanizad, N., Vatanpour, M., et al. 2009). Safari and Goudarzi reported a mean burnout of 118.9 in the faculty members and professors of IAU, which shows that the subjects were not prone to burnout (Safari and Goudarzi, 2009). Arefi et al. reported lower than average emotional exhaustion and higher than average reduced personal accomplishment in faculty members (Arefi et al. 2010). Hogan and Hogan, & McKnight showed that online instructors possessed an average score on the emotional exhaustion subscale, high degree of depersonalization, and low degree of personal accomplishment (Hogan, & McKnight, 2007). Karabiyik et al. low levels of burnout and its dimensions in the universities of Turkey (Karabiyik et al. 2008). In the study of Toker (2011) on burnout among university academicians in Turkey, burnout levels of the academicians were found to be average. The results indicated that research assistants reported a higher level of emotional exhaustion than professors. Research assistants indicated a higher level of depersonalization than associate professors, and research assistants reported a lower level of personal accomplishments than other academicians (Toker, 2011).

A review of the literature on burnout reveals the contradictory results of the studies in this area (Sabaghian et al. 2006; Ahmadi and Abedi, 2007; Roghanizad, N., Vatanpour, M., et al. 2009; Safari and Goudarzi, 2009; Arefi et al. 2010; Hogan, & McKnight, 2007, Karabiyik et al. 2008; Toker, 2011), and burnout among physical education professors and faculty members has received little attention (Sabaghian et al. 2006). Therefore, the present research is important due to the sensitive and critical responsibilities of PE professors and faculty members and their constant dealing with students. Thus, the purpose of the present research was to determine the frequency and intensity of job burnout in the physical education professors and faculty members of IAU. The assumption was that job stress due to instructional-research responsibilities, and pressures caused by working in an environment where they need to be responsive and have close contact with students, leads to burnout in PE professors and faculty members.

Materials and Methods

The present research was descriptive, carried out as a survey. The population consisted of all the professors and faculty members of IAU departments in Region 10 of Iran during the period 2010-2011. The sample included 45 participants who were selected using systematic and convenience sampling.

The instruments included a demographic questionnaire (gender, age, marital status, academic degree, and experience) and Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). MBI has 22 items and 3 subscales: emotional exhaustion (9 items), reduced personal achievement (8 items), and depersonalization (5 items). Two procedures were used to measure the frequency and intensity of burnout among the sample.

A. Frequency procedure: This method measures the number of times the individual has experienced the dimensions of job burnout. The inventory is rated on a 7-point Likert scale: zero (never), 1 (several times a year), 2 (once every month), 3 (several times a month), 4 (once every week), 5 (several times a week), and 6 (everyday). The sum of the frequency scores for each dimension of burnout is separately calculated and the dimensions are divided into low, moderate, and high intensity. In emotional exhaustion, scores below 17 indicate low intensity, scores between 18 and 29 indicate moderate intensity, and scores above 30 indicate high intensity. In reduced personal achievement,
scores below 34 indicate low intensity, scores between 34 and 39 indicate moderate intensity, and scores above 40 indicate high intensity. In depersonalization, scores below 6 indicate low intensity, scores between 7 and 11 indicates moderate intensity, and scores above 12 indicates high intensity. Based on these scores, the subjects can be classified into low intensity (0-44), moderate intensity (44-88), and high intensity (above 88) burnout groups.

B. Intensity procedure: This method involves the intensity of the participants’ perception of burnout dimensions. The inventory is rated on an 8-point Likert scale: zero (not at all), 1 (very slightly), 4 (moderately), and 7 (very intensely). In emotional exhaustion, scores below 25 indicate low intensity, scores between 26 and 39 indicate moderate intensity, and scores above 40 indicate high intensity. In reduced personal accomplishment, scores below 36 indicate low intensity, scores between 37 and 43 indicate moderate intensity, and scores above 44 indicate high intensity. In personalization, scores below 6 indicate low intensity, scores between 7 and 14 indicate moderate intensity, and scores above 15 indicate high intensity. Based on these scores, the participants are categorized into low intensity (0-51), moderate intensity (51-102), and high intensity (above 102) burnout groups.

The internal consistency of these two procedures was examined in a sample of 30 participants using Cronbach’s alpha for the dimensions of emotional exhaustion (0.79 and 0.86 respectively), reduced personal accomplishment (0.76 and 0.63 respectively), depersonalization (0.79 and 0.86 respectively), and burnout (0.62 and 0.68 respectively). The content validity of the inventories was confirmed by sport management experts and statisticians after a few revisions.

The researchers personally visited the departments and faculties of IAU in Region 10 of Iran. The professors and faculty members were identified, the aims of the research were elaborated, and the volunteers filled a consent form. The participants were given 20 minutes time to answer the questions of the inventories. Descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, and tables) were used for describing the results. All the statistical operations were done in SPSS 19.

Results and Discussions

Overall, 48 questionnaires were distributed, all of which were returned. However, only 45 questionnaires were acceptable. The data from the demographics questionnaire showed that: of the 45 participants, 33.3% were female (15 participants) and 66.7% were male (30 participants); 68.9% were 25-35 years old (31 participants) and 15.6% were 36-45 years old (7 participants), and 15.6% were older than 46 (7 participants); 82.2% were married (37 participants) and 17.8% were single (8 participants); 71.1% had master’s degree (32 participants), 13.3% were PhD students (6 participants), and 15.6% had PhD (7 participants); 62.2% had less than 10 years of experience (28 participants), 20% had 11-20 years of experience (9 participants), and 17.8% had more than 20 years of experience (8 participants) (Table 1).
Table 1 – The demographic characteristics of the PE professors and faculty members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>25-35 yrs.</td>
<td>36-45 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The physical education professors and faculty members were at low levels in both the frequency and intensity of burnout and its dimensions: \(6.04 \pm 4.83\) and \(6.97 \pm 6.16\) respectively for emotional exhaustion, \(12.30 \pm 23.09\) and \(23.97 \pm 12.76\) respectively for reduced personal accomplishment, \(4.48 \pm 4.02\) and \(4.17 \pm 3.39\) respectively for depersonalization, and \(33.60 \pm 9.87\) and \(34.77 \pm 10.78\) respectively for burnout (Table 2).

Table 2 – Burnout and its dimensions in the PE professors and faculty members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.04</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intensity</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.97</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced Personal Accomplishment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23.09</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intensity</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23.97</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depersonalization</td>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intensity</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout</td>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33.60</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intensity</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>34.77</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

The purpose of the present research was to determine the frequency and intensity of burnout in the physical education professors and faculty members of the departments of IAU in Region 10 of Iran. The findings suggested low levels of burnout in the sample in all the dimensions of emotional exhaustion, reduced personal accomplishment, and depersonalization.

Having effective universities and achieving the superior goals of education entails a high level of motivation among professors and faculty members, and this is not feasible unless in environment free of burnout. It has been shown that emotional stress is very prevalent in faculty members; research, committees, politics, meetings, budgets, student issues, and long hours are also integral parts of their jobs, and frustration, stress, and work overload can lead to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Richardson-Delgado, 2006). Moreover, innovation, leadership, organization, effective communication of subjects, and advanced skills are some of the expectations that faculty members are faced with (Evans, 2001). Therefore, prolonged stress can reduce job...
satisfaction and lead to burnout, causing indisposition, apathy, ineffectiveness, fatigue, frustration, and even disillusionment (Mahmoudi, G., Ruhí, G., et al. 2006).

In the present research, the participants had low levels of emotional exhaustion. This dimension refers to depletion of psychic energy or the draining of emotional resources (Abdi, F., Kaviani, H., et al. 2007). According to van Emmerik, excessive demands from faculty members lead them to emotional exhaustion and a supportive departmental climate and practical assistance can reduce emotional exhaustion (Van Emmerik, 2002). Due to the low frequency and intensity of emotional exhaustion in the physical education professors and faculty members, it can be argued that the participants were satisfied with working with students and their job descriptions and that they have high levels of interpersonal communication skills. The studies of Ahmadi and Abedi, Roghanizad et al., Arefi et al., and Karabiyik et al. reported low levels of emotional exhaustion in professors and faculty members which is consistent with the present finding (Ahmadi and Abedi, 2007; Roghanizad, N., Vatanpour, M., et al. 2009; Arefi et al. 2010; Hogan, Karabiyik et al. 2008; Toker, 2011). Regarding faculty members, social status and other personal achievements may have helped them in coping with job stresses and have reduced their emotional exhaustion (Arefi et al. 2010). The studies of Sabaghian and Hogan and McKnight showed high levels of emotional exhaustion in academicians, which is inconsistent with the present finding (Sabaghian et al. 2006, Hogan and McKnight, 2007). This inconsistency can be attributed to the lively environment in which physical education professors and faculty members teach.

The present research found low levels of reduced personal accomplishment in physical education professors and faculty members. Reduced personal accomplishment is the tendency to evaluate one's own work with recipients negatively (Abdi, et al. 2007). The results of Roghanizad and Karabiyik et al. are consistent with the present research (Roghanizad et al. 2008; and Karabiyik et al. 2008). The reason can be attributed to the positive attitude of academicians to themselves and their profession as well as their job satisfaction and self-confidence. Another study in nursing faculty members by Talbot showed that 73% of the sample experienced high levels of reduced personal accomplishment (Talbot, 2000). Professors and faculty members may experience reduced personal accomplishment based on their judgment of themselves; they may feel underachieved due to their own excessive expectations and the failure to meet them, or due to external factors such as lack of an appropriate reward system, lack of promotion opportunities, excessive emphasis on research activities and negligence toward teaching skills, lack of progress in students over time (Cherniss, 1995), uncertain outcomes, and lack of job satisfaction (Arefi et al. 2010). Sabaghian, and Hogan and McKnight reported high levels of reduced personal accomplishment in academicians (Sabaghian et al. 2006; Arefi et al. 2010; Hogan and McKnight, 2007), while Ahmadi and Abedi reported low levels of reduced personal accomplishment (Ahmadi and Abedi, 2007) which is inconsistent with the present findings. The inconsistency can be attributed to differences in working conditions, majors, and the lively atmosphere in which physical education professors and faculty members work. This seems logical, for teaching physical education has more variety and attraction and is not monotonous and boring.

This study found low levels of depersonalization in physical education professors and faculty members. Depersonalization refers to the development of negative, cynical attitudes toward the recipients of one's services (Abdi, et al. 2007). Ahmadi Arefi, Hogan and McKnight, and Karabiyik et al. also reported low levels of depersonalization in academicians which is consistent with the present finding (Ahmadi and Abedi, 2007, Arefi et al. 2010; Hogan, & McKnight, 2007; Karabiyik, et al., 2008). This finding indicates that possibly the professors and faculty members have no cynicism or negative attitudes toward the students (Arefi et al. 2010). Sabaghian et al. (2006) reported high levels of depersonalization in academicians (Sabaghian et al. 2006) which is inconsistent with the results of the present research. Nonetheless, depersonalization arises from the working environment and increasing stresses. This suggests that job stress, work overload, and demanding responsibilities may have an adverse effect on the relations between students as service receivers and professors as service providers. Considering the complexity of depersonalization and the role of different factors in this issue, hereditary and social factors must be taken into consideration (Alavi, 1998).

Job burnout was low in the physical education professors and faculty members both in frequency and intensity. Low levels of burnout can again be attributed to the exuberant environment of PE departments. The results of the present research are in line with the findings of Roghanizad and Karabiyik (Roghanizad, N., Vatanpour, M., et al. 2009; Karabiyik, et al. 2008). Burnout refers to reduced adaptability to stressors and is a combination of physical and psychological fatigue that leads to negative self-evaluation, negative attitude toward
References