The Impact of Organizational Conflicts on Job Burnout of Kashan University Staff

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Abstract

Non-functional (destructive) conflict can cause loss of energy, loss of function, burnout and stress in employees and lead to disruption in the process of providing appropriate services. The purpose of this study is to investigate organizational conflicts at the University of Kashan and its impact on job burnout of employees. In this study, all the employees of the University of Kashan were considered as the research community among them, and based on statistical model a sample of 228 people randomly selected. To collect data a researcher made questionnaire consisting of 21 items for organizational conflict and Maslach questionnaire of burnout, consisting of 25 items were used. To analyze the data, single-sample t-test, correlation and linear regression test were used. The results showed that organizational conflict and all its components have a significant effect on job burnout. The results also showed that among the components of organizational conflict, communication disagreements has the highest and individual differences has the lowest effect.

Keywords: Organizational Conflicts, Individual Disagreements, Communication Disagreements, Structural Disagreements, Burnout.

1. Introduction

Conflict is a phenomenon that has positive and negative effects on the performance of individuals and organizations. The correct and effective use of conflict leads to promo the health of the organization and to improve performance, and ineffective use can lead to reduce performance and create conflicts and tensions in the organization. Effective use of conflict requires a full understanding of its nature and its causative factors as well as acquisition of skills in managing and controlling it, which is considered today as one of the most important management skills. The ability to deal with conflict and manage it has an important role in the success of managers. If conflict is constructive, they can be the source of fresh and creative ideas and provide the context to change and innovation and productive transformation in the organization and ultimately help managers to attain their organizational goals.

Tremendous advances in technology and changes in the social systems have caused modern societies to take a complex shape. Financial and family problems, conflicts with friends and colleagues, stress caused by organizational and environmental factors threaten the natural human life (Rostami et al., 2008). This pressure causes people faced with the problem in performing tasks that simply do in natural conditions. In such a way that even sometimes is not able to do them. As a result, the financial and human resources of organization seriously damage (Sadeghi Boroujerdi, 2003).

Researches that have been done during the 1980s and 1990s all confirmed that the social and psychological problems considered as a barrier and deterrent in social role. In most of these studies, besides paying attention to

the negative effects of these problems, the emphasize was made on the need to explore and understand the causes and factors such as burnout which can be an indicator for the assessment of public health. World Health Organization (1998) defined burnout as: A psychological process that occur under conditions of extreme stress and show itself as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, loss of motivation and deterioration.

University employees, because of the nature of their job, face with many problems, such as voluminous work, expectations of students, inadequate wages and benefits, students lack of interest in the education, ignoring their needs by educational organizations. These problems have a great impact on their health and continuity of these problems increases their vulnerability and ultimately may lead to burnout among them.

2. Theoretical Foundations

• Organizational conflict

Conflict has several meanings and concepts. Psychologists have paid more attention to its psychological and internal contradictions aspects and sociologists have paid more attention to the social aspect of conflicts between individuals and groups.

Conflict is feeling or understanding the sense of incompatibility within and between individuals, groups or organizations which lead to hidden or obvious conflicting behavior in both sides (Mirkamali, 1985: 61). Kultner believes that conflict is naturally a communicational process (Izadi, Yazdan Abadi, 2000).

The process of conflict occurs when one side feels the other side looking for a confrontation or he wants to prevent him from getting to his target. Conflict arises when incompatible activities occur (Robbins, 2006: 357).

Doctor Abbas Shafie and colleagues (2009) in their book, Organizational Behavior with Islamic approach, believe that conflict is influenced by the culture; some cultures like American culture encourages conflict and consider a level of conflict useful and desirable. In contrast, some cultures such as Japanese culture consider this issue unsatisfactory and prefer cooperation.

In the past, there was a common assumption that considered conflict as a disruptive force that organization's management must destroy it by negative reactions. Elton Mayo (1938), considered conflict in an organization as a social disease and In contrast, considered collaboration as a healthy condition. For this reason, in the past, managers often tried to suppress any challenge and difference.

Future advances in behavioral science showed that conflict is obvious and logical consequence of any organization because many people working in organizations, each has specific personality, social and cultural characteristics that make conflict inevitable in organizations. So the existence of differences is not necessarily harmful and hazardous.

• Job burnout

Freudenberger (1974) defined burnout as a situation where a person is mentally and physically exhausted due to working conditions. Freudenberger definition refers to a state of exhaustion that is developed by failure, fatigue, loss of energy or demands which are not met by internal resources (Arabaci, 2010). In other words, burnout is the completion of employee's physical and mental resources that leads to personal and professional problems. Maslach and Jackson in 1981 defined burnout as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that frequently occurs among those deal with people. Cherniss also defined burnout as an emotional or mental fatigue and exhaustion. Both Cherniss also and Maslach believe that these factors are the primary causes for burnout among employees at work as. In simple terms, burnout is mental as well as physical tiredness that an employee experience because of the stressful work environment. Generally, burnout is defined as the end result of being exposed to a lot of stressful work environment (Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986: Maslach and Jackson, 1984: Maslach, 1982: Cherniss, 1980).

3. Research background

The results of Ashill and Rod (2009) study, entitled "Signs of burnout and improve service performance (effect of employment measures)." Showed that job measures have a significant effect on job burnout and services improvement.

In Thanacoody et al. (2009) study, "The effects of burnout and social support related to the relationship between work-family conflict and turnover intention (Study of Australian cancerous workers), assumptions related to the mediator role of burnout between work-family conflict and turnover intention were confirmed.

Montgomery et al (2009), in their study titled "the interference of work life, family life and burnout" showed that the laws of emotional and focused work are related burnout and mental problems that specifically lead to hide negative emotions and hypocritical actions.

In the Lee and colleagues (2009) study, in South Korea, factors such as role ambiguity, job responsibilities and conflicts were obtained as the factors leading to burnout. According to results, if job control and social support are high, the factors leading to burnout will have less negative impact.

Prescott, Gross et al (2002) found that difficult working conditions are followed by more job burnout. They pointed at the feelings such as lack of social support, more complaints in the fields of cognitive, emotional and physical issues, and problems such as fatigue, sleep disturbances and cognitive deficiencies in those who suffer from burnout.

Badri Poshte (2005), in a study entitled "The relationship between job conflict and the organizational structure, in state institutions" found that: 1) In general, there is a relationship between organizational structure and conflict; 2) Public institutions with high job titles, more hierarchy levels, and more physical locations, have more job conflict; 3) the more the regulations and guidelines and methods of work in writing and documented form and control for compliance with standards, the more the job conflict; 4) there is a weak relationship between the level of concentration and job conflict which cannot be generalized to the whole of society;5) Among the three dimensions of the structure, complexity, concentration and recognition had respectively the highest correlation with the conflict.

kohi Moghadam et al. (2008), in a study entitled "The relationship between personality characteristics and organizational conflicts (interpersonal) in government agencies" Showed a significant positive correlation between personality traits and organizational conflicts (interpersonal).

- Research Hypotheses

The main hypothesis of the study

- organizational conflicts has a significant effect on the job burnout of Kashan University staff.

Sub-hypothesis

- personal differences (individual differences) has a significant effect on the job burnout of Kashan University staff.
- Communication disagreement has a significant effect on the job burnout of Kashan University staff.
- structural disagreements has a significant effect on the job burnout of Kashan University staff.
- Organizational Conflicts has a significant effect on the emotional exhaustion of Kashan University staff.
- Organizational Conflicts has a significant effect on the depersonalization of Kashan University staff.
- Organizational Conflicts has a significant effect on the inefficiency of Kashan University staff.

4. Research Methodology

This study, in terms of purpose, is an applied study and in term of the method, is a descriptive research. The study population consist of all the staff of Kashan University staff that based on statistics given from human resources department, is equal to 563 people among them 228 people were randomly selected as the sample based on Cochran formula. in order to collect data, two questionnaires, organizational conflict and job burnout were used.

- Organizational Conflict questionnaire: this questionnaire which has been designed by researcher consists of the 21 items and assess personal differences, Communication disagreement and structural disagreements. To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, content validity was used. for this purpose, several experts in the field sociology and psychology of organizational behavior were asked to judge

about the content validity of the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to measure the reliability of the tool and the results showed that cronbach's alpha values of all variables in this study was 0.90. and this value for personal differences, Communication disagreement and structural disagreements was respectively 0.82, 0.79 and 0.83.

- Maslech Burnout Inventory which is a valid global questionnaire and their validity and reliability has been verified repeatedly in different studies

In this study, to describe the demographic profile of respondents, descriptive statistics including frequency and frequency percentage tables were used. And in inferential statistics, test research hypotheses were studied with the help of one sample t test, Pearson correlation and multiple regression.

5. Results

After collecting the questionnaires and entering the data in SPSS statistical software, the data were analyzed in two parts: descriptive and inferential.

In the descriptive statistics, as shown in Table (1), analysis of the data showed that out of a total of 228 individuals participated in the study, 118 people were male and 75people were female. The data also show that 17.5 percent of respondents were under 30 years old, 52/2% between 31 and 40 years old, 28/8% between 41 and 50 years old and 3.5 percent were over 50 years old. In terms of education level, 16.2 percent had the degree of high school diploma, 11.4% associate degree, 44.7 percent bachelor, 22.8 percent have master's degrees and 8.4 percent had PhD. Among the participants in this study, 69 people, or 30.3 percent were single and 154 people or 67.5 percent were married.

Table 1. The frequency and percentage of demographic characteristics

	male	female	Less than 30	31-40	41-50	More than 50	Diploma	Associate Degree	Bachelor	Master degree	PhD.	Single	Married
Frequency	118	75	40	119	61	6	37	26	102	52	11	69	154
percentage	89.5	10.5	17.5	52.2	28.8	3.5	16.2	11.4	44.7	22.8	4.8	30.3	67.5

In the field of inferential analysis to review research objectives and hypotheses, the following results were obtained.

Table (2) shows the results of t-test to compare the situation of organizational conflicts in three dimensions, personal differences, communication disagreement and structural disagreement.

Table 2. Assessment of organizational conflicts in Kashan University

Variables	Frequency	Mean	Mean difference	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
personal differences	228	21.316	-41.368	3.614	-172.836	227	0.000
communication disagreement	228	28.434	-36.565	2.926	-178.352	227	0.000
structural disagreement	228	17.671	45.328-	2.689	-254.646	227	0.000

As table (2) shows, The value of T for the first, second and third variable of the study has been calculated as, -172.836, -178.352 and -254.646 respectively. This amounts with 227 degrees of freedom became significant at the level of 0.000. Since the acceptable level of significance is lower than 0.05, it is concluded that there is a significant difference between the real mean and the hypothetical mean. Therefore it can be concluded That the incidence of personal differences, communication disagreements and structural disagreements between Kashan University employees is significantly lower than average.

Table (3) shows the results of the regression analysis to determine the impact of each component of organizational conflict (individual disagreements, communication disagreements and structural disagreements) on the job burnout.

Table 3. Linear regression test between the components of organizational conflict and burnout

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std.Error	Beta		
personal differences	0.511	0.239	0.130	2.138	0.000
communication disagreement	2.094	0.290	0.430	7.214	0.000
structural disagreement	0.958	0.304	0.181	3.154	0.000
R= 0.863		R^2 =0.741			

*dependant variable: job burnout

As table (3) shows, since R^2 =0.741, It can be concluded that, overall, about 74 percent of the variation in staff burnout is explained by these three variables. Also, according to the values obtained for ß, we can say that 13 percent of the changes in burnout is related to individual differences, 43 percent to communication disagreements and about 18 percent to structural disagreements. according to these findings, hypothesis 1 to 3 of the study are confirmed.

Table (4) shows the impact of organizational conflicts on components of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and).

Table 4. Linear regression test between organizational conflict and the components of burnout

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std.Error	Beta		
Organizational conflict → emotional exhaustion	0.264	0.064	0.265	4.131	0.000
Organizational conflict → depersonalization	0.216	0.039	0.345	5.534	0.000
Organizational conflict → lack of efficiency	0.395	0.064	0.382	6.205	0.000

Based on the values obtained for ß, as well as the level of significance which is smaller than 0.05 (sig = 0.000), It can be concluded that organizational conflicts has a significant positive effect on all components of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of efficiency). Accordingly, hypothesis 4 to 6 of this study are confirmed.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

Many researchers have, directly or indirectly, studied different variables affecting job burnout. Volpin and Jacob (1992, quoted by Baboli 2000),according to Cherniss processing model, found that negative characteristics of the workplace and issues of marital dissatisfaction have negative correlation with burnout and positive correlation with job satisfaction. The researchers showed that certain working conditions, such as high proportion of clients, limited career advancement and high volume of work, create additional psychological pressure and lead to burnout. Shisly (2001)in his studies showed that repeated activity in a job, expectations and responsibilities inconsistent with the interests, lack of challenges and incentives, Lack of adequate staff are among factors that lead to job burnout. Scott (2001) refers to the role of environmental factors in the development of burnout. He argues that in work environments with following characteristics, burnout appears:

1) pressures caused by Facing with others' repeated requests and demands; 2) intensive competition; 3) Financial needs and trying to make money;4) Deprivation from what one deserves.

Burnout imposes many consequences and costs to the organizations and personnel, such as frequent change of jobs and workplace (increase in transfers), increase in absenteeism, quantity and quality decline, affecting the mental health of the person, dissatisfaction of state services, stagnation and delay in professionals and institutional works.

Badri Poshte et al, (2005), in a study entitled "The relationship between employees' burnout and the organizational structure in state institutions" have classified causative factors and symptoms of the conflict into three categories: individual, group and organizational.

Several studies(Fani & Arab Kelmary,2005; Kohi Mohadam & Pir moradi,2008; Eshraghi, Mohammad zade & Kashef, 2009; Ghorban shirodi & Shafi Abadi,2006; Thanacoody et al., 2009; Montgomery et al, 2009) have been conducted about organizational conflict and burnout each of which evaluated a group of factors and variables.

The results of this study also show that organizational conflicts and all its components have a significant impact on job burnout of Kashan University employees.

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