Investigating the Relationship between Perceived Administrative Bureaucracy and Occupational Burnout among Elementary School Teachers

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between perceived administrative bureaucracy and occupational burnout of elementary school teachers in Najafabad city in the academic year of 2015-16 by a descriptive correlational method. The statistical population of the study consisted of all 1095 primary school teachers. Using the Cochran formula 285 people were selected as the sample size. The sampling method was a cluster random sampling. The data collecting tools were perceived administrative bureaucracy questionnaire of Roch (1993) and Maslach's occupational burnout questionnaire (1981). The reliability of the questionnaires was estimated by using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the bureaucracy questionnaire which was (0.90) for the Centralization dimension, (0.83) for specialization, (0.80) for standardization, and (0.78) for occupational burnout. In order to analyze the data, descriptive and inferential statistics including multiple regression correlation coefficient and multi-point variance test were used. The findings of the study indicated that there was a positive correlation between the dimensions of Centralization and occupational burnout \( r = 0.182, p < 0.05 \) and there was a negative relationship between the dimensions of specializations \( (r = -0.178, r = -0.05) \) and standardization \( (r = -0.286; r = -0.01) \).

Keywords: perceived administrative bureaucracy, occupational burnout, elementary schools

Problem Statement

Burnout is a process in which employees’ attitudes and behaviors are negatively correlated with job stress. Occupational burnout has also been defined as a long-term response to job stressors (Meyer et al., 2015). Muja et al. (2015) state that burnout is a crisis that occurs in the relationship between the individual and his job, whereby employees are pessimistic about their jobs and they are faced with a reduction in the professional efficiency of their occupation. Occupational burnout is a form of fatigue and failure that results from the connections of job relationships that do not result in arbitrary results (quoted by Powkowice et al., 2009) and can be a serious threat to employees. Occupational burnout is a kind of professional risk associated with decreasing physical and mental health of employees (Fadaei and Damir, 2010).

Scalwick and Scalwick (2010) define burnout as a result of long-term job stress.

Occupational burnout is one of the concepts which not only has a high prevalence (Saberi et al., 2011; Ghadimi Moghadam et al., 2005) but also has negative individual and organizational effects, and these effects can even extend beyond the working environment (family and Society) (Mahdiyon and Hasani, 2015). In recent years, the occupational burnout of teachers has attracted a lot of attention and is expanding, as this group is always at the risk of this complication. A U.S. research has estimated that between 30% and 35% of American teachers have severe job dissatisfaction and 5% to 20% of them are burnout (Saberi et al., 2011). The research of Ghadimi moghadam and his colleagues (2005) on elementary teachers in Fars province also indicated that there was some degree of burnout in most subjects. o’brien, I Janice (2010) also believes that burnout, although occurring in any job, but it's a common global health problem and disease in human services occupations, which is based on the stress of the job. On the other hand, many studies have sought to explain the factors affecting burnout. Barnett and McCormick (2008) state that mutual interaction between teachers in the workplace and the hierarchy of the organization and the rules governing it can create tension in teachers. The study of the structure of social phenomena has often attracted the attention of many social scientists. One of the phenomena that has inspired many study interests, especially in the last century, is the formal rational organizational structure. The features of this structure and its creating factors as a field of study in organizational and management sociology have attracted a lot of attention (Gholipoor, 2006).

The research of Vernang et al. (2015) showed that occupational burnout was negatively affects teachers' commitment and job performance. Burnout reduces participation, absenteeism, job cessation, strike and job closing, reduced performance, reduced quality or outcomes, reduced vitality, decreased job satisfaction, reduced organizational commitment, misconduct, aggression and violence. In addition, burnout can have negative effects on the person, his/her family, and even the community (Mahdiyon and Hasani, 2015). Organizational structure is a form in which roles,
responsibilities, powers, and relationships are formed. The organizational structure defines the standard behaviors expected to achieve organizational goals (Jiang, 2011). Mahdiyon and Hasani (2015) also showed that there is a relationship between dimensions of organizational structure and occupational burnout. Among the different approaches in organizing and managing, one of the most relevant analyzes related to the working conditions is the classical theory of Weber's bureaucracy (Annie, 2015). Reflection and accuracy in educational organizations confirm that most of these organizations have the characteristics of bureaucratic organizations. (Dear, 2014).

Among the various theories on organizational structure, Weber's bureaucratic theory is of particular importance, and today's organizations have some of the features of bureaucracy (Alagheband, 2013). Alagheband and Jamshid Nezhad (2003) in a study entitled "Review of the Bureaucratic Dimensions of the Organization of Public Schools in Tehran" concluded that all the characteristics of bureaucracy in the structure of public schools in Tehran are considered. Nonetheless, specialist features have more in the structure of public schools compared with the features of centralization and formalization. Talebian and Tadsighi (2006) in their article considered centralization and bureaucracy as one of the fundamental problems regarding the structure of Iran's education in the third millennium. Accordingly, the problem that exists here and the scholar's attempt to do this research is that limited research has been done on the role and effect of perceived bureaucracy at the school level. Due to the serious research deficiencies in this field, the present study seeks to answer this question: Is there a relationship between the perceived administrative bureaucracy of teachers and their burnout?

**Research Method**

This research was applied in terms of its purpose and its method was descriptive correlational. The statistical population consisted of all primary school teachers in Najafabad city, which included 127 elementary schools with a total of 1095 teachers in 2015-16. A cluster random sampling method was used. (Out of 127 schools, 30 primary schools were selected). Based on the Cochran sample size formula (285) people were chosen as a statistical sample.

**Data Collection Tools**

Data collection tools in this study were standard perceived administrative bureaucracy and burnout questionnaire. Perceived administrative bureaucracy questionnaire: This questionnaire was designed by Roch (1993) based on the Sosa perceptual bureaucracy questionnaire (1980), and consists of 34 questions that measure the three main dimensions of the bureaucratic structure of specialization, centralization and standardization of activities. This questionnaire is set in the 5-degree Likert scale from always true (5) to it's not at all correct (1). However, the questions 2, 3, 7, 10, 14, 15, 17, 19, and 31 in this scale have a reverse score. Which is set from always true (1) to it's not at all correct (5).

Occupational burnout Questionnaire: This scale was designed by Maslach (1981), a new estimate of the phenomenon that includes 22 materials that measure emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduce individual success in the context of professional activity. This questionnaire is set to a 6-degree Likert scale from never (0) to very high (6).

The formal validity of perceived administrative bureaucracy questionnaire and occupational burnout of employees are estimated using the views of several subject scholars. The content validity of the questionnaire was trusted due to their standard and their usability, and the reliability coefficients of the burnout questionnaire (0.78) and the content of the bureaucracy questionnaire, the dimension of focus (0.90), the dimension of specialization (0.83), and standardization (0.80) was estimated.

**Statistical Methods**

The results of this study were analyzed by SPSS software version 19 in two levels of descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation) and in inferential statistics (multiple regression tests, Pearson correlation coefficient and test Analysis of variance).

**Findings**

Table 1. Correlation coefficient between centralization dimension of perceived administrative bureaucracy and teacher's occupational burnout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The variable of teacher burnout</th>
<th>Statistical index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significance level</td>
<td>Squared coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.031</td>
<td>0.033</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p<0.05
Findings of Table (1) showed that the correlation coefficient between the centralization dimension of perceived administrative bureaucracy and the occupational burnout of teachers is significant. Meanwhile, there is a significant relationship between the centralization dimension of the administrative bureaucracy and the occupational burnout of teachers \((r = -0.142)\). Based on the determination coefficient \((r^2)\), 3/3% of the variance of the centralization dimension from the perceived administrative bureaucracy and the occupational burnout of the teachers was common. Therefore, the hypothesis of the existence of the relationship between the centralization dimension of perceived administrative bureaucracy and the occupational burnout of teachers was confirmed.

**Table 2. Correlation Coefficient between Specialization dimension of Perceived Administrative Bureaucracy and Teacher's Occupational Burnout**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significance level</th>
<th>Squared coefficient</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
<th>The specialization dimension of the perceived administrative bureaucracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.030</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>-0.178</td>
<td>The specialization dimension of the perceived administrative bureaucracy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( p<0.05 \)

The findings of Table (2) show that the correlation coefficient between the specialization dimension of perceived administrative bureaucracy and the teacher's occupational burnout is significant. That means there is a significant relationship between the degree of professionalism and the perceived bureaucratic and the burnout of teachers \((r = -0.78)\). Based on the coefficient of determination \((r^2)\), 3.2% of the specialization dimension variance from the perceived administrative bureaucracy and the occupational burnout of the teachers was common. Therefore, the hypothesis of the existence of the relationship between the specialization dimension of the perceived administrative bureaucracy and the occupational burnout of teachers was confirmed.

**Table 3. Correlation coefficient between standardization dimensions of perceived administrative bureaucracy and teacher's occupational burnout**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significance level</th>
<th>Squared coefficient</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
<th>The standardization dimension of the perceived administrative bureaucracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.082</td>
<td>-0.287</td>
<td>The standardization dimension of the perceived administrative bureaucracy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( p<0.01 \)

Findings of Table (3) show that the correlation coefficient between standardization dimensions of perceived administrative bureaucracy and teacher burnout is significant. That means there is a significant relationship between the standardization aspect of perceived administrative bureaucracy and the burnout of teachers \((r = -0.287)\). Based on the determination coefficient \((r^2)\), 8.2% of standardization variance from the perceived administrative bureaucracy and the burnout of teachers was common. Therefore, the hypothesis of the existence of the relationship between the standardization dimension of perceived administrative bureaucracy and the burnout of teachers was confirmed.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

Regarding the findings, there is a relationship between the centralization dimension of the perceived administrative bureaucracy and the teachers' occupational burnout. \((R = 0/182)\) and 3/3% of changes in occupational burnout can be explained through the dimension of focusing. Therefore, the hypothesis of the relationship between the two variables was confirmed. With this finding, it can be concluded that increased school centralization can lead to increased teacher burnout and vice versa. This finding is consistent with theoretical arguments (Lannonberg, 2006, Hui and Maslik, 2013; Robbins, 2011; Rahman Sarsat, 2014, Hicks and Gullet, 2015); and research findings (Kord Azam, 2006; Janalizadeh, 2013; Chardulli et al, 2015; Karimi et al., 2014; Ainali et a., 2014; Mansouri et al., 2013; Tabarsa et al., 2011; Nabavi et al., 2012; Durkheim et al., 2003). In explaining the findings of this research, it can be said that the centralization and lack of participation of the organization's employees in their professional and organizational decisions lead to an increase in the degree of occupational burnout, since the lack of involvement of employees in decision making induces the message that the organization does not pay much attention to them and they do not trust that this causes employees to feel
disabled and lose their interest in doing work and suffer from burnout. Lack of centralization and the possibility of interfering with organizational decision making allow employees to feel they have some control over their work life and the organization values them. Lack of control over the workplace can result in employees’ disability and inability to work and cause their occupational burnout (Lambert et al., 2010).

Regarding the findings, there is a relationship between the specialization dimension of perceived administrative bureaucracy and teacher's occupational burnout. \( R = 0.178 \) and 2.3% of changes in occupational burnout can be explained by the specialization dimension. Therefore, the second hypothesis of the research was based on the relationship between the two variables. With this finding, it can be concluded that increasing standardization in schools can lead to a reduction in occupational burnout of teachers and vice versa. This finding is in part aligned with the result of the research of Janalizadeh (2013).

Regarding the findings, there is a negative relationship between the standardization dimension of perceived administrative bureaucracy and the burnout of teachers \( \tau = -0.287 \) and 8.2% of the change in occupational burnout can be explained through the standardization dimension. Therefore, the third hypothesis of the research was based on the relationship between the two variables. With this finding, it can be concluded that increasing standardization in schools can lead to a reduction in teachers' occupational burnout and vice versa. This finding is in part aligned with the results of the research by Janalizadeh (2013) and Nabavi et al. (2014). But, like the specialist theme in this hypothesis, the findings of the research are also controversial with regard to theoretical and research literature. (Tabarsa et al., 2011; Kord Azam, 2006; Karimi et al., 1993; Mansouri et al., 2013; Nabavi et al. 2014). As various theorists in the critique of the bureaucracy state about the judgment of the bureaucracy, given that the absolute type cannot be imagined, in different organizations and circumstances, bureaucracy may have severity and weaknesses, such contradictions can be attributed to the type of organization and, in some cases, the cultural conditions governing the situation in which the organization is based. This is despite the fact that, according to a number of experts, Nabavi et al. (2014) state that a more precise description of the duties of employees and the clarification of their job responsibilities will reduce the occupational burnout of employees.

According to the results of this study, it is suggested to reduce the centralization of schools and give teachers more authority. There should also be an appropriate environment for teachers' participation in schools, and they should be encouraged to give their views and ideas.

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