Chapter 47

Burnout and Stressors as Influencers on Work Engagement Among Law Enforcement Agents in Selected Cities

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ABSTRACT

Burnout is an underlying issue that has an adverse effect on the working enthusiasm of the employees. In this chapter, the researcher has attempted to assess the influence of stressors on burnout and work engagement in the context of the Indian law enforcement agents. The study evaluates the correlations between burnout factors—emotional exhaustion, cynicism, low professional efficacy—with vigor, dedication, and absorption. For the purpose of this study, items from MBI-GS for assessing burnout, scale for stressors, and employee engagement are adapted. The construct of the scale developed was established using confirmatory factor analysis. The study was carried out for 145 law enforcement agents in the selected cities of a North Indian state. T-test results applied on stressors between male and female groups show varying results. A significant negative effect of burnout factors on work engagement factors is observed through the empirical examination using SEM AMOS.

INTRODUCTION

Every law enforcement agent has to deal with stress related elements that could be interpersonal (family matters), workplace (organizational levels) and those related to tasks (job demand) such as issues related to encounters, investigative search and fear of injury (Toch, 2002; Carson, 1987; Violanti&Aron, 1994; Malach-Pines &Keinan, 2006). The Burn out issue has been a center point of the study for researchers

in varying fields Nursing (Havens, Gittel, &Vassey, 2018), police officers (Dick, 2000;Malach-Pines &Keinan, 2006; Kwak, McNeeley, & Kim, 2018), neurologists(Miyasaki et al., 2017), firefighters (Lee etal.,2018; Smith et al.,2018) and teaching(Hakanen, Bakker, &Schauefeli, 2006). Burnout is an aftermath of stress and related factors that diverges an individual's interest towards work (Hakanen, Bakker, &Schauefeli, 2006). It is considered to induce a feeling of extrication from work and creates exhaustion and skepticism towards work (Maslach et al., 1996). Burnout disengages people from all those roles at work which are considered as effective, involving and energetic (Maslach&Leiter, 1997;Maslach, 2001; Cole et al.,2012). However, researchers have considered Burnout as an independent activity(Schaufeli& Bakker, 2001, 2004; Bakker, Demerouti, &Schaufeli, 2005). It is a concept which can only be explained by having a separate set of measures. According to Schaufeli& Bakker, (2003, 2004) Maslach's Burnout Inventory (MBI) does not clearly assess Burnout empirically as well as conceptually.

Work engagement is a positive expression of feelings towards work and aspects related to work. The expression constitutes of vigor, dedication and absorption. "Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence also in the face of difficulties." "Dedication means a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge." The third factor of work engagement is absorption, "which is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work."(Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). It is also considered as a feeling that generates commitment towards job and a sense of responsibility. Further researchers posit engagement to be behavioural aspect inclusive of trait features reflecting to an individual's efforts towards work(Crawford, Le-Pine, & Rich, 2010). Thus, work engagement is a constituent to the contributions made to organization through an individual's gusto withstanding the hurdles in achieving targets. Additionally, researchers have different explanations to engagement, which is a physical, cognitive and emotional expression to the roles in organization.

In this study however, the researcher utilizes the MBI as a measure of Burnout to understand the intricacies involved in work engagement of law enforcement agents. Moreover, a number of stressors are also associated with the law enforcement job holders (Malach-Pines &Keinan, 2006). The stressors cause an imbalance to the empathetic and authoritative combination of the agents. Organizational Stressors involve the challenges faced at the administrative, organizational structure and daily task related. The command chain followed in law enforcement departments sometimes impair decision making. Lingering stressors are related to the timely execution of goals and meeting the deadlines. Shifts are usually oddly placed owing to the nature of job and overload is common. External stressors are the most accrued for law enforcers. The cooperation with other departments is minimal and police officers have to invest additional time to meet the necessity of job like accompanying a high profile criminal for hearing to court and handling press. Further the researchers have designated the burnout symptoms like alcohol abuse, personal unresolved matters, job dissatisfaction, social disconnection, extreme public exposure, aggressive attitude (Kwak, Neely, & Kim, 2018).

Past researchers have considered Burnout to be different in case of law enforcement agents as it involves not just the stress conditions but display of multiple emotions that should not be expressed socially. The stressors aggravate such emotional display which consequently effects the work engagement. Some police officers happen to shift to different departments as a result of dissatisfaction or dissonance with work. Studies have revealed that cynicism increases with extreme public exposure. This increase in cynicism creates work disengagement and also limits the social interaction of law enforcement agents (Kwak,

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