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## Determining the Effect of Job Burnout on Life Satisfaction: An Empirical Research for Turkey

*Yaşam Tatmini Üzerinde Mesleki Tükenmişliğin Etkisinin  
Belirlenmesi: Türkiye'de Ampirik Bir Araştırma*

### Özet

We examined the influence of burnout on life satisfaction level of employees. Data were obtained from 350 employees in different industry sectors. In order to determine the impact of burnout on life satisfaction level, regression analysis was carried. According to the results, emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment were found as the factors that explain life satisfaction. Recommendations are presented to researchers and suggestions for future research are discussed.

**Keywords:** Burnout, life satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, regression analysis, factor analysis.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kurumsal, Tahkim, Milletlerarası, Ticaret, MTO.

**Jel Codes:** M10, D23

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## Introduction

The concept of burnout has been first introduced to the literature by Herbert Freudenberger (1974). According to Freudenberger, the jobs that require close and frequent interaction with people related with the nature of the job can lead to emotional exhaustion after a while (Tevruz, 1996). There are various definitions of burnout in the literature. Freudenberger (1974) defines the concept as being exhausted and unsuccessful because of huge demands depending on person's power, energy and sources. Cherniss (1980) describes burnout as stress; Maslach and Jackson (1981) define it as dissatisfaction of a person from the occupation; Capel (1991) defines it as tiredness (İnandı, 2009). Maslach and Jackson (1981) developed the most adopted burnout model which is widely used in the related literature (Bilge, 2006). Maslach and Jackson (1986) define three dimensions such as "emotional exhaustion", "depersonalization" and "personal accomplishment" that constitute burnout. They conceptualize burnout as a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion (feelings of being emotionally overextended), depersonalization (negative reaction and response to other people) and personal success (decrease of productivity at work) (Maslach, 1993). Emotional exhaustion represents the basic stress dimension among these three dimensions and usually depersonalization comes after emotional exhaustion stage of burnout (Maslach & Goldberg, 1998).

Various feelings such as guilt, boredom, helplessness, negative attitude to people, work and life usually can be observed on people during burnout process (Cummings & Nall, 1982; Yıldırım, 2008). Burnout can cause different kinds of behavioral, cognitive and motivational symptoms which can vary from one individual to another. The main reasons that underlie all of these symptoms are usually described as a person's reluctance to do the job (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998; Pines & Aronson, 1988).

### 1. Literature Review

Burnout has a negative impact on both individuals and organizations. It may cause depression and physical illness on individuals. Absenteeism, decreased organizational commitment, low performance and increase in employee turnover are some of the negative impacts of burnout that can be observed in organizations. These negative impacts increase the importance of burnout concept on organizational level and it becomes an important issue for both employees and organizations (Liang & Hsieh, 2008; Maslach & Goldberg, 1998). Researches in the literature have shown that employees who are relatively new to their jobs usually show high level burnout measures according to others (Ergin, 1993). Seniority may decrease the burnout level of employees. Pines (1993) explains this situation as claiming that employees generally start a new job with high motivation and expectation and they usually aim great targets to be accomplished. They are not able to achieve all these goals and expectations depending on various factors. Because of this reason, unachieved goals and expectations may lead to a feeling of failure for individuals and this might cause burnout. The problems in business life such as work conditions, role conflict, lack of freedom and autonomy, nonexistence of social support

and participation to decision making, inconsistent reward and punishment system etc. can be some of these reasons that can cause burnout for employees (Jackson, Schwab & Schuler, 1986).

Burnout is mostly seen in the professions of education, health and social work fields which have close interaction and communication with people. Taking into account this, we see that many related studies in the literature have been carried out with employees working in these professional fields (Bilge, 2006). Employees working in face-to-face contact with other people and those who care about their work are usually more sensitive to experience burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1986; Maslach, 1982). Teachers, nurses, doctors, psychologists and counselors are among professionals who experience burnout because they have close interaction and communication with the people by the nature of the work they do (Yıldırım, 2008).

Burnout and its relation with other concepts have been examined in the literature. One of the factors that are related with burnout is life satisfaction and the effects of burnout on life satisfaction level of individuals have been examined in the literature in the last decades. Life satisfaction refers to a cognitive and judgmental process which includes being satisfied and finding pleasure. Life satisfaction is the degree of an individual's positive evaluation about his/her whole life quality (Hamarta, 2009; Deniz, 2006; Veenhoven, 1996; Pavot & Diener, 1993). Life satisfaction can be also defined as the psychological feature that results from people's point of view about life, their expectations from life and their ability to realize these expectations that affect their organizational life. It involves the alignment of what people expect from life and what they get from it. According to Veenhoven (1996), positive realization of expectations may lead to life satisfaction (Yılmaz, 2008). Burnout level can have an important impact on the life satisfaction of employees. People who are reluctant and dissatisfied with their jobs can have high level of burnout and this situation may reduce the life satisfaction of these people.

## **2. The relationship between life satisfaction between job burnout**

Although there are not many researchers examined the relationship between burnout and life satisfaction in the literature, demographic variables are examined especially with this two variables in the studies. In this context Aydemir et al. (2015) in their research towards 292 teachers found out a negative relationship between life satisfaction and burnout, and also statistically significant differences found with the demographic variables like age, seniority, the type of school and related variables in Turkey. Another study by Gürel and Gürel (2015) were examined the relationship between burnout and life satisfaction of professional accountants. Results have shown that emotional burnout as a sub dimension of burnout is reducing life satisfaction. Güner, Çiçek and Can (2014) in their observation about the employees working in the banking sector; determined that burnout have caused a negative impact on job and life satisfaction of employees. Also burnout and life satisfaction has emerged significant differences in terms of age, gender, seniority, work unit and position. Arslan and Acar (2013) in their research about

academicians found that; emotional burnout as the sense of reduced personal accomplishment and depersonalization as a burnout sub variable is reduced the job and life satisfaction. Another study by Özyürek, Gümüş and Doğan (2012) about teachers and school administrators has shown that life satisfaction; has a positive relationship with emotional burnout and depersonalization and negative relationship with the reduce in the feeling of personal accomplishment. Also it has found that life satisfaction of female teachers is higher than male teachers. The increase in age and seniority of the teachers has also been found to increase the burnout. Telef (2011) examined the relationship between burnout and job and life satisfactions of 349 class and branch teachers in his observation. Research results have shown that there is a positive relationship between job and life satisfactions of teachers' and negative relationship between burnout and job and life satisfactions.

One of the studies in the international literature Lambert, Barton-Bellessa and Hogan (2015) in their research about 272 guardians found that there is a negative relationship between emotional burnout and life satisfaction, also negative relationship is observed between emotional burnout and life satisfaction. Riezer (2015) in his study about 339 employees determined that burnout and job satisfaction have mediation effect on the relationship between employees organizational commitment styles and life satisfaction. Özkan and Özdevecioğlu (2013) in their study about 217 accountants found negative relationship between burnout and its sub dimensions and life satisfaction. Kord-Tamini and Baqer-Kord (2011) in their study about 170 university staff found positive relationship between job and life satisfaction, negative relationship between emotional burnout and depersonalization, positive relationship with reduce the feeling of personal accomplishment. Hombrados-Mendieta and Cosano-Rivas (2011) in their research on 120 social workers in Spain found that burnout affected job satisfaction and life satisfaction negatively. Lambert, Hogan and Altheimer (2010) in their study conducted among 160 guards, negative relationship identified between life satisfaction, burnout and their dimensions. Hayes and Weathington (2007) by the study of 120 managers at chain stores located in the food and beverage sector; determined that the feeling of personal accomplishment dimensions of burnout has a mediation effect on the relationship between life satisfaction and optimism. Demerouti et al. (2000) in their observation on 109 nurses determined negative relationship between life satisfaction and emotional burnout.

### **3. Research Methodology**

This research was conducted with 350 employees working in different industry sectors (banking, pharmacy, IT, food) in Turkey. Of the group, 52.3% were male and 47.7% female; the age range of the participants was 18% (18-25), 55.4% (26-33), 18.6% % (34-41) and 8% (42 and more); seniority varied between 1-15 years; education level varied between mostly 37% high school, 44% undergraduate and 19% graduate and PhD.

In this research the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) was used. Reliability and validity tests of the inventory were analyzed by Ergin (1993) in Turkish. Also life satisfaction scale developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin (1985) was used. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Köker (1991). Personal information form was also included to the research.

*Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)* is a Likert-type (1 through 7) scale and 22 items developed by Maslach & Jackson in 1981. The dimensions of the scale are depersonalization, emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment. According to the results of the inventory, if the scores obtained from depersonalization and emotional exhaustion are high and the scores of personal accomplishment are low; then these results indicate that burnout level is very high.

The coefficients of internal consistency of MBI for our study are as follows; .873 for emotional exhaustion; .799 for depersonalization and .692 for personal accomplishment. Item- scale correlations ranged between .21 and .70 ( $p < .05$ ). In the construct validity of the Turkish version of the scale, the items have been distributed around three factors as in the original form of the scale (Ergin, 1993). The factors of the inventory in our study are consistent with the results of Ergin (1993).

*Life Satisfaction Scale* is a Likert-type (1 through 7) scale developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin in 1985 and adapted to Turkish by Köker (1991) and Yetim (1991). The scale measures life satisfaction and consists of 5 items. Item-scale correlations ranged between .63 and .77 ( $p < .05$ ). Cronbach's alpha coefficient for internal consistency was .872. The results of factor analysis (construct validity) of two scales are given below in results section.

*Personal Information Form* was also developed in order to obtain information about the gender, age, education level and seniority of the participants.

### **3.1. Analysis of Data**

Factor analysis was carried out to reduce the number of variables (Hair Jr, vd.,2010). Also stepwise regression analysis was carried out to remove the multicollinearity problem among the variables (Tabachnick, Linda & Fidell, 2007). According to the result of the multicollinearity test, there was no multicollinearity situation among the variables. The significance level was taken as 0.05.

The results of factor analysis were calculated by Varimax Rotation. The factors whose eigen value higher than 1.00 were included to the scale. The cut point for factor loads was accepted as 0.30 in the research. According to the results of factor analysis, three factors were obtained for burnout inventory and one factor was obtained for life satisfaction scale. The results of factor analysis are presented below in Table 1.

**Table 1: Factor Analysis Results for Burnout Inventory and Life Satisfaction Scale**

<b>Construct</b> <b>MBI (total scale): 0.885</b>	Eigen Value	Explained Variance	Cumulative Variance %	Cronbach alpha
Factor 1: Emotional Exhaustion	6.70	31.9	31.9	0.873
Factor 2: Depersonalization	1.96	9.3	41.2	0.799
Factor 3: Personal Accomplishment	1.46	7.0	48.2	0.692
n=350; KMO= 0.892 Bartlett's Sph. $\chi^2= 2719.758$ ; $p < 0.001$ Total Explained Variance= 48.2%				
<b>Construct</b> <b>LF (total scale): 0.872</b>	3.36	67.3	67.3	0.872
Factor 1: Life Satisfaction				
n=350; KMO= 0.859 Bartlett's Sph. $\chi^2= 867.601$ ; $p < 0.001$ Total Explained Variance= 67.3%				

Total explained variance of the factors of burnout inventory is 48.2%. Emotional exhaustion explains 31.9% of the variance, depersonalization explains 9.3% and personal accomplishment explains 7% of the variance. Life satisfaction scale consists of one factor which explains 67.3% of the variance. The effect of burnout on life satisfaction level was tested by Stepwise Regression Analysis and results are presented in Table 2.

<b>Predictor Variables</b>	<b>Unstd.Beta</b>	<b>Std.Beta</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>
Constant	5.733			<b>0.000</b>				
Emotional Exhaustion		-0.363	-6.917	<b>0.000</b>	47.56	0.00	0.462	0.213
Personal Accomplishment		-0.172	-3.273	<b>0.001</b>				
<b><i>LF= 5.733-0.363 x Emotional Exhaustion - 0.172 x Personal Accomplishment</i></b>								

The t-value (-1.273,  $p=0.204$ ) was obtained for depersonalization so this factor was eliminated from the model. Table 2 demonstrates the statistically significant variables. The t-value (-6.917,  $p=0.000$ ) obtained demonstrates that the level of emotional exhaustion to predict life satisfaction is significant. Also the t-value (-3.273,  $p=0.001$ ) obtained demonstrates that the level of personal accomplishment to predict life satisfaction is significant. Emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment factors explain life satisfaction with the ratio of 21.3%.

## Conclusion

Researches have been made with many variables related to employees, the most important source of competitive advantage today. One of these variables is life satisfaction. It is possible to make a positive contribution to the performance of the organization for the individual who is satisfied with life. In this framework, feeling of burnout, one of the issues discussed in the research could also be decreased. Although numerous studies is made abroad examining the relationship between burnout and life satisfaction employees received from life, there are not many studies made in our country. This study which examined the relationship between life satisfaction and occupational burnout of individuals working in different sectors has found that the decrease in emotional burnout and feeling of personal accomplishment can affect individuals' life satisfaction. The research results are consistent with the empirical results in the literature (Çapri, Gündüz & Akbay, 2013; Özkan & Özdevicioğlu, 2013; Chan, 2011; Telef, 2011; Şeker & Zırhlioğlu, 2009; Hayes & Weathington, 2007; Avşaroğlu, Deniz & Kahraman,2005). More precisely it was seen from the results of the research that emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment factors of burnout affected life satisfaction. However no effect was found for depersonalization on life satisfaction.

As recommendations to managers; behaviors such as increasing communication with the employees, efficient performance appraisals, training and development activities, participation to decision making, designing clear job descriptions and protecting life and work balance of employees are the ones which are most closely related to reduce burnout level and increase life satisfaction.

Future research should focus on studying on specific sectors. Also all data in this study were collected at one point in time but it may be better to collect data from different sectors and at different time points for future researches.

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## YAŞAM TATMİNİ ÜZERİNDE MESLEKİ TÜKENMİŞLİĞİN ETKİSİNİN BELİRLENMESİ: TÜRKİYE'DE AMPİRİK BİR ARAŞTIRMA

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### Özet

Bu araştırmada, çalışanların tükenmişliklerinin yaşam tatminleri üzerindeki etkisi incelenmiştir. Farklı sektörlerde çalışan 350 bireyden veriler toplanmıştır. Çalışanların tükenmişliklerinin yaşam tatminleri üzerindeki etkisi regresyon analizi ile ölçümlenmeye çalışılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda, duygusal ve kişisel başarı hissini azalması, yaşam tatminleri üzerinde etkili olarak bulunmuştur. Ayrıca çalışmada, gelecekteki araştırmalar için araştırmacılara yönelik öneriler sunulmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Tükenmişlik, yaşam tatmini, duygusal tükenme, kişisel başarı, regresyon analizi ve faktör analizi

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