

Research Paper

Investigating the Relationship Between Organizational Commitment and Job Burnout: A Case Study of Shahin Shahr Gas Company, Iran in 2021

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between organizational commitment and job burnout among employees of Shahin Shahr Gas Company in Iran. A random sample of 200 employees, evenly split between men and women, participated in the research. Data were collected using the Organizational Commitment Scale and the Job Burnout Scale. Statistical analyses, including Pearson correlation, stepwise regression, simple regression, and independent samples t-test, were employed. The results revealed a significant negative correlation between normative and overall organizational commitment with depersonalization. Additionally, personal accomplishment was positively correlated with affective, normative, and overall organizational commitment. Stepwise regression analysis indicated that personal accomplishment positively predicted 6.1% of the variance in affective commitment. Depersonalization was a significant negative predictor of normative commitment, explaining 20.4% of its variance. Combined, depersonalization and personal accomplishment accounted for 12.9% of the variance in overall organizational commitment. Furthermore, t-test results showed no significant differences in organizational commitment and job burnout between male and female employees.

Keywords: *Organizational Commitment, Job Burnout, Depersonalization, Personal Accomplishment, Employee Well-being*

Today's society is characterized by organizations. Many scholars argue that the nature of contemporary societies is shaped and structured by organizations with diverse goals. However, undoubtedly, all of these organizations rely on the physical and mental efforts of their human workforce. In general, it can be said that a competent workforce is a key indicator of an organization's superiority over others. The presence of a workforce committed to the organization can reduce absenteeism, turnover, and delays, while significantly increasing organizational performance, employee morale, and the realization of higher organizational goals.

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Like other organizational behavior concepts, organizational commitment can be simply defined as a belief in the organization's values and goals, a sense of loyalty to the organization, a moral obligation, a heartfelt desire, and a feeling of needing to stay in the organization. According to John P. Meyer and Natalie J. Allan, "commitment, as a psychological state, has at least three separable components reflecting (a) a desire affective commitment), (b) a need (continuance commitment), and (c) an obligation (normative commitment) to maintain employment in an organization."(Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 61) Researchers believe that an organization can achieve its goals with a clear mission by aligning its organizational culture with the specific competencies it desires in its employees. Jina Kim and Hye-Sun Jung suggest that matching the type of organizational culture with employee competencies can reduce perceived stress, which in turn enhances performance.(Kim & Jung, 2022, pp. 1–22)

Work, apart from providing financial resources, can satisfy some of an individual's basic needs such as psychological and physical activity, social interaction, self-worth, trust, and competence. However, work can also be a major source of psychological stress. A satisfying job may, over time, become a source of dissatisfaction and lead to job burnout. Job burnout is caused by stress and emotional pressure, and therefore, the factors that create stress play a significant role in its development. These factors have been categorized into individual, organizational, and environmental dimensions.(Darbandi, 2010, p. 15) The symptoms of job burnout are defined as follows: 1. "Emotional exhaustion": This is a dimension of job burnout that is a source of individual stress and refers to feelings that, if prolonged, can reduce personal emotions and initiative. 2. "Depersonalization and cynicism": This refers to negative or excessive responses to one's job situation, leading to negative attitudes, feelings of inadequacy, and ultimately a sense of a lack of capacity and failure to succeed and be productive in work.(Deh-Bozorgi & Hadaegh, 2006, p. 13)

Recent theorists have divided the factors influencing job burnout into two categories: individual and situational factors. Individual factors include demographic variables, job characteristics, expectations, motivation, and job resources.(Maslach et al., 2001, pp. 397–422) The factor of fatigue in job burnout, which is more closely related to job stress, can be predicted earlier than other factors. Therefore, the first problem faced by victims of job burnout is physical exhaustion, which manifests as prolonged fatigue, lack of energy, and various physical pains. These pains can range from persistent headaches, nausea, and sleep disturbances to severe changes in eating habits, digestive disorders, and even disruptions in the immune system. (Farajpour, 2001, pp. 13–15) Therefore, measures must be taken to prevent their occurrence. To prevent job burnout, the first step is to identify its causes, and it is also necessary to identify factors related to this phenomenon so that solutions can be found for them in the future. Many studies have investigated this issue, and many causes have been identified. However, in general, the primary and underlying cause of job burnout is that a person is under severe psychological and emotional stress for a prolonged period. As Christina Maslach, Michael P. Leiter point out, "burnout is a psychological syndrome emerging as a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job."(Maslach & Leiter, 2016, p. 103) Causes of organizational stress include life changes and life crises, as well as organizational factors such as job demands, job type, excessive workload, physical requirements, heat, role expectations, conflicts and ambiguity, interpersonal relationships, group pressure, leadership style, and personality. In addition to these, "burnout is the result of poor working conditions combined with failed self-regulation."(Bakker & de Vries, 2021, p. 2) At least in Iran, limited opportunities for promotion, the existence of rigid and

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cumbersome rules and regulations, poor workspace, and marital status have also been mentioned as factors of job burnout.

D'Souza et al. have found that individuals who experience emotionally job burnout are often perfectionists, excessively involved in their work and jobs, and set unrealistic goals for themselves.(D'Souza et al., 2011) An individual who feels that their efforts at work are futile and ineffective, or who feels that their efforts are not noticed or appreciated by others, may be more susceptible to job burnout. Therefore, lack of job recognition and control can lead to burnout, especially for employees with poor-quality work motivation.(Trépanier et al., 2020) Another factor that can significantly impact job burnout is the specific leadership style adopted by organizational supervisors because different leadership styles impact employee organizational commitment in varying ways.(Clinebell et al., 2013) Finally, Organizational commitment is important as it is associated with other key organizational variables like turnover, absenteeism, and work effort.(Nazari, n.d.) Thus, one of the important organizational variables is organizational commitment, which can have beneficial results for both the individual and the organization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research has consistently demonstrated the negative impact of job stress and burnout on organizational commitment and job satisfaction among employees. Burnout, characterized by depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and reduced personal accomplishment, leads to decreased job satisfaction and organizational commitment.(Griffin et al., 2010; Nagar, 2012) This relationship is observed across various sectors, with private sector employees experiencing higher levels of stress compared to public sector counterparts.(Usman & Raja, 2013) Job satisfaction has been found to have an inverse relationship with all dimensions of burnout, while job stress positively correlates with depersonalization and emotional exhaustion.(Griffin et al., 2010) Gender differences in burnout and job satisfaction have also been noted, with female teachers showing higher emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction levels.(Nagar, 2012) At the organizational level, employee satisfaction and attitudes are positively associated with organizational performance.(Ostroff, 1992) These previous findings highlight the importance of addressing job stress and burnout to maintain employee well-being and organizational effectiveness. They show that job burnout has a significant impact, especially on affective commitment among employees, particularly formal employees compared to other employees. Personal attributes have a significant relationship with job burnout and a positive and significant relationship was observed between organizational commitment and job burnout. Also, job stress has a negative relationship with organizational commitment and, in addition, job stress was a significant predictor of organizational commitment and job satisfaction among nurses. There is a significant relationship between organizational commitment and job stress. However, there was no significant relationship between job stress and continuous commitment.

Research Questions

- Is there a significant relationship between organizational commitment and job burnout?
- Is there a significant difference in the mean scores of organizational commitment and job burnout between male and female employees in the Shahin Shahr Gas Company?

RESEARCH METHOD

Statistical population and sample

The statistical population of this research consists of the employees of the Shahin Shahr Gas Company. A simple random sample of 100 female and 100 male employees was selected to participate in the study.

Data Collection Tools

- **Measuring Organizational Commitment:** To assess organizational commitment, the Meyer and Allen Model of Organizational Commitment Questionnaire was used. This questionnaire consists of 24 items, each rated on a Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The data from these questionnaires are discussed below.
- **Measuring Job Burnout:** The Maslach Burnout Inventory was employed to assess job burnout. This questionnaire comprises 25 items that measure emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, depersonalization, and involvement. Responses were rated on a scale ranging from "never" to "very often," indicating the frequency and intensity of burnout experiences. The data from these questionnaires are discussed below.

Findings

In this study, Pearson correlation coefficient, stepwise regression, simple linear regression, and independent-samples t-test were employed to analyze the data. All analyses were conducted using SPSS version 16.

Table 1: Correlation between dimensions of organizational commitment and job burnout (n=200)/ P<0.01 **

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Organizational commitment	1						
Continuance commitment	0.024**	1					
Normative commitment	0.111**	0.478**	1				
Overall commitment scores	0.451**	0.811**	0.837**	1			
Job burnout	0.015	0.077	0.293**	-0.202**	1		
Depersonalization	0.038	-0.166**	-0.451**	-0.329**	0.441**	1	
Personal accomplishment	0.000	0.247**	0.218**	0.244**	0.306**	-0.328**	1

Table 1 results indicate that normative commitment ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.293$) and overall organizational commitment ($p < 0.01$, $r = -0.202$) have significant correlations with job burnout. Specifically, normative commitment shows a positive correlation with job burnout, while overall commitment shows a negative correlation. Continuance commitment ($p < 0.01$, $r = -0.166$) has a significant negative correlation with depersonalization. Personal accomplishment shows significant positive correlations with continuance commitment ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.247$), normative commitment ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.218$), and overall organizational commitment ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.244$). Lastly, no significant correlation is observed between continuance commitment and job burnout ($p < 0.05$, $r = 0.077$).

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Table 2: Stepwise regression results of continuance commitment based on job burnout/ $P < 0.01^{}$**

Variable	R	R ²	B	S.D Error	Beta	T	Sig
Personal accomplishment	0.247	0.061	0.186	0.186	0.247**	3.59	0.00

To predict continuance commitment based on dimensions of job burnout, a stepwise regression analysis was conducted. The results indicated that only the dimension of personal accomplishment entered the regression equation, explaining 6.1% of the variance in continuance commitment ($R^2 = 0.061$). The other dimensions of job burnout, including emotional burnout and depersonalization, did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the regression model and were therefore excluded. Personal accomplishment demonstrated a significant positive relationship with continuance commitment ($p = 0.00$, $Beta = 0.247$), indicating that higher levels of personal accomplishment are associated with higher levels of continuance commitment. This makes personal accomplishment a significant and positive predictor of continuance commitment.

Table 3: Stepwise regression results of normative commitment based on job burnout

Variable	R	R ²	B	S.D Error	Beta	T	Sig
Depersonalization	0.451	0.204	-0.607	0.085	-0.451	-7.116	0.00

Stepwise regression analysis was used to predict normative commitment based on dimensions of job burnout. The results indicated that only the dimension of depersonalization entered the regression equation, explaining 20.4% of the variance in normative commitment ($R^2 = 0.204$). The other dimensions of job burnout, including emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment, did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the regression model and were excluded. Depersonalization demonstrated a significant negative relationship with normative commitment ($p = 0.00$, $Beta = -0.451$), making it a significant negative predictor of normative commitment.

Table 4: Stepwise regression results of organizational commitment based on job burnout

Variable	R	R ²	B	S.D Error	Beta	T	Sig
Depersonalization	0.329	0.108	-0.649	0.164	-0.279	-3.96	0.000
Personal accomplishment	0.359	0.129	0.152	0.111	0.152	2.162	

Stepwise regression analysis was used to predict overall organizational commitment based on dimensions of job burnout. The results indicated that the dimensions of depersonalization and personal accomplishment entered the regression equation, together explaining 12.9% of the variance in overall organizational commitment ($R^2 = 0.129$). Depersonalization explained 10.8% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.108$) and had a significant negative relationship with overall organizational commitment ($p = 0.00$, $Beta = -0.279$). Personal accomplishment added a small but additional explanatory power, with a positive Beta ($Beta = 0.152$), although its significance is not explicitly provided in the table. The other dimension of job burnout, emotional exhaustion, did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the regression equation and was excluded. Depersonalization was a negative predictor, while personal accomplishment was a positive predictor of overall organizational commitment.

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Table 5: Independent Samples t-test Results for Organizational Commitment and Job Burnout among Male and Female Employees at Shahin Shahr Gas Company (n=200)

Variable	Gender	N	Mean/Average	Standard Deviation	t	df	Sig
Affective commitment	Female	100	18.20	2.39	0.279	198	0.780
	Male	100	18.15	2.69			
Continuance commitment	Female	100	19.45	3.86	0.02	198	0.919
	Male	100	19.39	4.43			
Normative commitment	Female	100	21.74	4.54	-0.574	198	0.567
	Male	100	22.15	5.50			
Overall commitment scores	Female	100	59.39	7.31	-0.202	198	0.840
	Male	100	59.64	9.97			
Job burnout	Female	100	23.79	9.24	0.325	198	0.745
	Male	100	23.39	8.09			
Depersonalization	Female	100	10.56	3.33	1.15	198	0.251
	Male	100	9.95	4.12			
Personal accomplishment	Female	100	30.3	4.17	-1.03	198	0.30
	Male	100	30.84	6.58			

The study results revealed that dimensions of job burnout can predict various dimensions of organizational commitment. Stepwise regression analysis showed that personal accomplishment explained 6.1% of the variance in continuance commitment and was positively and significantly related to it, suggesting that as personal accomplishment increases, so does continuance commitment. Depersonalization explained 20.4% of the variance in normative commitment and was a significant negative predictor. Furthermore, depersonalization explained 10.8% of the variance in overall organizational commitment, indicating a significant negative relationship, while personal accomplishment contributed to 12.9% of the variance in overall organizational commitment, demonstrating a significant positive relationship. Affective commitment was not found to be significantly related to job burnout dimensions or other organizational commitment dimensions in this study. Additionally, independent samples t-test results indicated no significant differences between male and female employees at Isfahan Gas Company in terms of mean scores for affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment, overall organizational commitment, emotional burnout, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of this study demonstrate a significant negative correlation between organizational commitment and job burnout. Specifically, employees with higher levels of organizational commitment tend to experience lower levels of job burnout. This relationship was consistent across all dimensions of organizational commitment— affective, continuance, and normative commitment—with affective commitment showing the strongest correlation with job burnout. Normative and continuance commitments are understood as internalized pressures to perform in a manner that aligns with organizational goals and resources. Normative commitment, in particular, reflects a sense of duty to remain with the organization, fostering a sense of loyalty and adaptation among colleagues.

These findings are in line with previous above-mentioned research, which has similarly shown that higher organizational commitment is associated with lower levels of job burnout. This suggests that while increasing organizational commitment may lead to higher levels of work engagement and performance, it does not necessarily result in increased burnout. On the contrary, increased commitment appears to bolster employees' self-confidence. When

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individuals perceive their work as producing positive outcomes, beneficial to themselves, the organization, and society, they tend to be more self-satisfied. This self-satisfaction leads to lower stress levels, and even when stress occurs, these individuals are better equipped to handle it, thus reducing the likelihood of experiencing job burnout.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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