A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON JOB BURNOUT (CASE STUDY: TAXOFFICES OF KHORRAMABAD, IRAN)

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Abstract: *This study aims to investigate the impact of emotional intelligence on job burnout among the employees of tax offices in Khorramabad, Iran. This research is applicable and descriptive-surveying in terms of the aim and the data collection method. The statistical universe of the research includes the entire 225 employees of tax offices across the city. 211 questionnaires out of the total 225 questionnaires distributed among the employees were returned and analyzed. In this study, Maslach's job burnout questionnaire (1981) and Schutte'semotional intelligence questionnaire (1998) were used to collect the required data. SPSS (22) and LISREL (8.8) software have been utilized for testing the research hypotheses. The results demonstrated that emotional intelligence makes a negative significant impact on job burnout. Hence, the research main hypothesis is confirmed.*

Keywords: *job burnout, emotional intelligence, employees of tax offices.*

INTRODUCTION

Although the industrial life system has brought about many attainments, it has also led to some complications including the stress that people face in their individual life. One of the most critical impacts of the workplace pressuresis "job burnout" (Nasti zayi, 2008). Job burnout is defined as a psychological state emanating from the high levels of long-term stresses throughout theoccupational life (Granfeld *et al.*, 2000). Job burnout is a subject associated not only with the employees' mental health but also with their productivity. Hence, getting to know the ways to deal with the stresses as well as identifying, preventing and overcoming the job burnout- in addition to improving the mental health- will play a notable role in improving the effectiveness of the human resources and increasing the quality of services (Amiri, 2011). Fortunately, some personality factors moderate the effects of job pressures (Edward, 2003).

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Emotional intelligence is premised as a protective factor against the work pressures. Emotional intelligence reduces the negative impacts of work pressures, through managing the employees' emotions and facilitating the exchange of positive feelings and emotions among them, and makes the employees resistant against the untimely job burnout (Van Komen, 2000). The term "Emotion"was derived from the Latin word "Motion" which means moving or movement and the prefix "e" means away; thus, this termrepresents a desire to act in any emotion. Emotion refers to the coexistent feelings and thoughts,psychological state, andrange of shocks (Goleman, 1995). Goleman (1995) applies the term "Emotion" to refer to a feeling, a thought, a specific biological andmental state, and a range of interests and desires based on which the individuals take action. In fact, multiple contradictory definitions exist in relation to emotion. However, some theorists believe that a set of emotions such as anger, sadness, fear, happiness, love, surprise, disgust and shame are universal. In fact, each emotionis of a single essence. In other words, the original form of each emotion is different for everyone. But in communities affected by a particular culture of that society, the way of exposing the emotion is different. Nowadays, the psychological impacts of emotions are mostly emphasized. Besides, it is generally agreed on the fact that emotions increase other cognitive capacities rather than interfering with them. In addition, there is consensus that emotions are the primary source of motivation (Khajuian & Vaezi, 2010). Emotional Intelligence means understanding our own emotions and other individuals' emotions so as to behave ethically with social conscience. People with high levels of emotional intelligence can create a balance between the reason and emotions (Sureshjani, 2010). Organizations do not need occupationally burnt out employees. High emotional intelligence and mental health can be associated with this professional variable. In case high emotional intelligence is an indicator of success in the workplace, the complications related to job burnout can be controlled by the proper use of the emotional intelligence and mental health skills. Eliminating the dependence on single-product economy has always been one of the government objectives in recent years in a way that the levy of taxation has been the mostdominant source of earning the public revenues of the government. On the other hand, the quality of the services offered by the employees of the tax offices is vital to achieving the objectives of the government. In this study, it is mainly attempted to investigate the impact of the two variables on the quality of the services offered by the employees.

THE THEORETICAL FUNDAMENTALS

The components of emotional intelligence

Mayer and Salovey (1990) believe that emotional intelligence is a kind of processing the emotional information, which includes assessing the emotions within ourselves and others accurately, expressing emotions appropriately, and setting them consistently in a way that will lead to improving the life. With respect to this classification, emotional intelligence incorporates threecomponents including the understanding and expressing

the emotions, adjusting the emotions, and exploiting the emotions in solving the problems. Mayer and Salovey expanded this model in 1997. In the new model, emotional intelligence refers to the ability to identify the concepts and meanings of emotions, associations among them, arguing about them, and solving the problem based on them.

Perceiving and expressing the emotions:

The first component of emotional intelligence includes perceiving and expressing the emotions incorporating the proper evaluation of emotions in ourselves and others (Bakhshi Poor, 2008). The problem arises in the discussion of emotional intelligence is that we know to what an extent we are aware of our emotions? For example, you, as a manager, may need to travel to a country for negotiation on behalf of an organization. If you are not aware of your behavior and anger, the emotion of anger makes a negative impact on you. Thus, you move a step backward in the negotiation. But the negotiation will move forward favorably and positively if you, at the time of anger, ask yourself "What are you up to in participating in the negotiation, group or national interests?"(Nooshin,2009).

Adjusting the Emotions

The second component of emotional intelligence is the adjustment of the emotions, which includes analyzing the emotions into various parts, perceiving the possible change from a specific emotional state to another emotional state, and understanding the complex emotions in social situations (Bakhshi Poor *et al.*, 2008).

Managing the emotions

The third component of emotional intelligence involves managing the emotions, which includes the ability to manage our own emotions and others'. There are just two options: either anger manages you, or you manage anger. It is also the same for the case of positive emotions. You may become so happy in the negotiation, and joy may be able to handle and overwhelm youor even make you lose. Managing the emotions stands for a conscious, skillful, and creative management, and only those who are of a high emotional intelligence can manage them (Nooshin, 2009).

Exploiting the emotions

Exploiting the emotions means the ability to use the emotions to solve the problem and facilitate the thinking, which involves connecting and associating the emotions with other emotions accurately as well as the ability to use the emotions for improving and reinforcing the thinking (Bany *et al.*, 2010).

Dimensions of job burnout

Normally, the researchers summarize the main features of job burnout at low levels of energy and adaptation with the career (Baker, Shofly, Leiter and Taris, 2008). The

research conducted by Maslach and Jackson (1981) show the multi-dimensional structure of job burnout. Based onthese researchers' findings, job burnout has three interrelated components: emotional burnout or exhaustion, depersonalization (negativity), and lack of personal competence (reduction of professional efficacy) (Hayonen, Flat, Salmala-Arrow, Kynonen and Makikangas, 2009, quoted from Ahmadi Rad, 2009).

1. Emotional exhaustion (burnout): emotional exhaustion is the main cause and the most obvious degree of job burnout symptoms. In fact, the emotional exhaustion is an exquisitedimension to define job burnout and the concept of burnout is incomplete without it (Ghahremani et.al, 2011). Emotional exhaustion or burnout is related to the loss of emotional energy. The previous state of the individual who hada high level of motivation level hasdisappears due to job burnout and performing the tasks becomes lackluster for him (Rahimnia et.al, 2012).

2. Depersonalization (negativity): depersonalization is the second factor of job burnout, which interactswith people as an object and often becomes apparent based on the utilized labels. For example, the occupationally burnt out teachers have negative, pessimistic, and hostile attitudes towards with their students. Similarly, the occupationally burnt out doctors, in the depersonalization dimension, regard their patients as an object, don't understand their pain, and recognize their patients with the type of disease, room and bed number etc. (Ahmadi Rad, 2009).

3. Lack of personal competence (the lacking feeling of personal success): The lacking feeling of personal success is the third factorof job burnout. The reduced sense of personal success means the reduction of professional competence and success, job dissatisfaction, sense of failure, loss of judgment and understanding power, perpetual sense of oppression and exploitation, and reduction job performance (Talaei *et al.*, 2008).

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

In the study titled as "emotional intelligence and the managers' job burnout" by Kot and Golden (2008), a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and job burnout was demonstrated. In Brand's research (2007) titled as "discovering the relationship between job burnout, job stress, and intelligence", a negative significant relationship was observed between the components of emotional intelligence and job burnout. Jack Holi conducted a research (1997) titled as "the impact of emotional intelligence characteristics on work-related burnout". In hisstudy, 228 respondents were selected as the sample volume and the multivariate regression was used for examining the data. The results showed a positive association between job duration and job burnout. Besides, results showed that the more the participants are of emotional intelligence, the less they will face job burnout. Pejuskevic et.al (2011), based on their study, reported the degree of suffering from job burnout syndrome with respect to the dimensions of burnout in medical, psychiatric and surgical occupations. The

emotional burnout dimension is more rampant among the general practitioners, while depersonalization dimension, and reduction of the personal quality are more widespread the surgeons. The depersonalization and reduction of personal qualities among the studied participants was correlated with the opposing skills such as evading and shirking. Vilakazi (2005), in a research called" job burnout in the educational careers", demonstrated that a positive significant correlation exists between the education degree and emotional burnout. Also, a significant positive correlation was manifest between gender and personal performance in a way that male teachers feel a low personal effectiveness. Overall, there is no significant relationshipbetween demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, education degree, and work experience and job burnout.

THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The main hypothesis

• Emotional intelligence makes an impact on job burnout.

The sub-hypotheses

• Understanding and expressing the emotions makes an impact on emotional burnout.
• Adjusting the emotions makes an impact on emotional burnout.
• Managing the emotions makes an impact on depersonalization.
• Exploiting the emotions makes an impact of the loss of personal success and competence.
• Emotional burnout makes an impacton depersonalization.
• Depersonalization makes an impact on the sense of the lack of personal success.
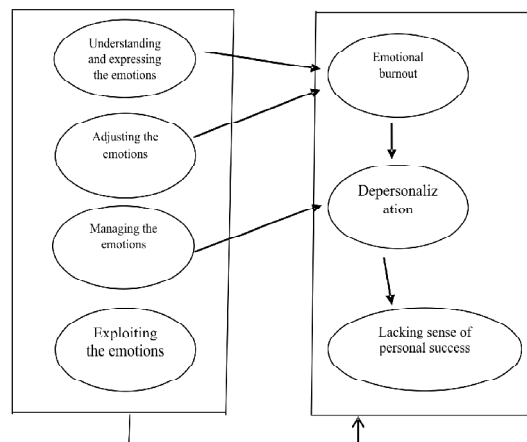
The Research Conceptual Model: Emotional intelligence Job burnout

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is applicable and descriptive surveying in terms of the aim and data collection, respectively. Also, it is considered as a branch of field studies. The statistical universe of the research contains the whole225employees of the tax offices of Khorramabad, Iran. 225 questionnaires were distributed among the employees, out of which 211 questionnaires were returned and analyzed. In this study, Maslach's job burnout questionnaire (1981) and Schutte'semotional intelligence questionnaire (1998) were applied for collecting the required data. The questionnaire, in total, consists of 62 items detailed be in Table 1-3. 5-point and 7-point Likert scale were employed for measuring the emotional intelligence and job burnout variables, respectively. In addition, SPSS22 and LISREL8.8 software were used for analyzing the data.

Table 1

Variables		Cronbach's alpha of each variable	The total Cronbach's alpha
Emotional Intelligence	Perceiving &expressing	0.86	
	Adjusting the emotions	0.84	
	Managing the emotions	0.89	
	Exploiting the emotions	0.90	
Job Burnout	Emotional exhaustion	0.89	
	Depersonalization	0.70	
	Lack of personal success	0.86	

Cronbach's alpha equals 81% for the research questionnaire (i.e., Cronbach's alpha is more than 70%); thus, the questionnaire is postulated reliable enough.

DATA ANALYSIS

Single-sample t-test, through SPSS22 software, was employed for analyzing the data. In addition, the structural equations methods, through LISREL8.8 software, were applied for examining the hypotheses. According to the data collected from the questionnaires, 129 respondents were married and 82 single. Regarding the degree of education, 9 participants had diploma, 153 paticipants had B.A, 48 participants had M.A, and just one participant had a PhD degree. 169 respondents were male and 42 respondents were female. This research consists of a main hypothesis and 6 sub-hypotheses presented below the data analysis:

According to the table above, sig value is less than 5% for each variable; therefore, the null hypothesis (i.e. claiming that meanequals 3) is rejected. Regarding the negative upper and lower bound values, it could be alleged that the mean is smaller than the testee. As a result, the variable does not have a favorable position in the statistical community.

Table 2
T-test of the research variables

Testing the population mean

					The testee value-3	
Variable	*t*	*Df*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*	*Mean difference*	*The 95%confidence interval of the difference*	
					Upper bound	*Lower bound*
Perceiving &expressing	-19.435	210	.000	-.90000	-.8087	-.9913
Adjusting the emotions	-17.339	210	.000	-.88468	-.7841	-.9853
Managing the emotions	-18.671	210	.000	-.92048	-.8233	-1.0177
Exploiting the emotions	-18.592	210	.000	-.94668	-.8463	-1.0471
Emotional intelligence	-19.089	210	.000	-.91296	-.8187	-1.0072

Table 3
T-test ofthe research variables

Testing the population mean

					The testee value-3	
Variable	*t*	*Df*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*	*Mean difference*	*The 95%confidence interval of the difference*	
					Upper bound	*Lower bound*
Emotional exhaustion	12.356	210	.000	1.03265	1.1974	.8679
Depersonalization	5.736	210	.000	.39810	.5349	.2613
Lack of success	9.770	210	.000	.79028	.9497	.6308
Job burnout	10.194	210	.000	.74035	.8835	.5972

According to the table above, sig value is less than 5% for each variable; therefore, the null hypothesis (i.e. claiming that mean equals 4) is rejected. Regarding the positive upper and lower bound values, it could be alleged that the mean is greater than the testee. As a result, the variable has a favorable position in the statistical community.

Structural Equation Model in Standard Status and the Significant Number (T-Value) for the Research Main Hypotheses

To assess the proposed model, structural equation analysis will be used. Initially, the model is examined in the research, and then the hypotheses are assessed, as well. Figure 1 shows the structural equation model in a significant number status. By the significant number in LISREL software, we mean the samewith sig in SPSS software. The only difference is that the significant number,at the 0.05 level, must be greater than 1.96 or less than -1.96 in order to be significant. Besides, it is required to be, at the 0.01level,greater than or 2.56 or smaller than- 2.56 so as to be considered significant. Generally, the significant number is applied for confirming or rejecting the hypotheses. If the significant number is larger than the positive values or smaller than the negative values, it indicates that the independent variable makes a greater impact on the dependent variable.
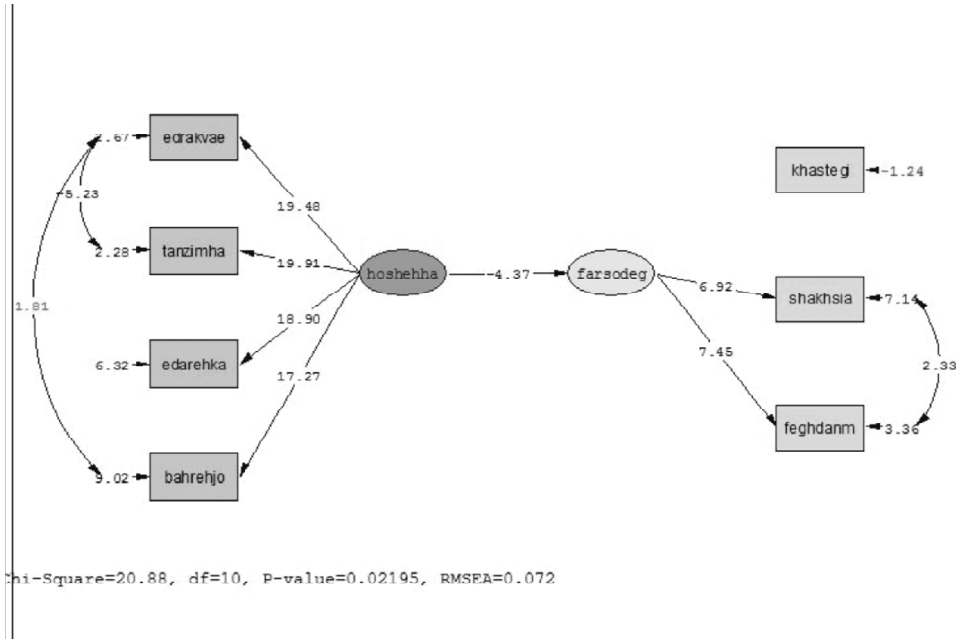
Figure 1: The structural equation model in the significant number status (main hypotheses)

Figure 2 shows the standard statusof the designed model for the main hypotheses. X^2/df (chi-square over the degree of freedom)is the best index of fit in LISREL software. If it is between 1 and 5, the model is of an appropriate fit. However, if the value is less than 3, the model would be of a better fit. RMSEA index is made on the basis of the
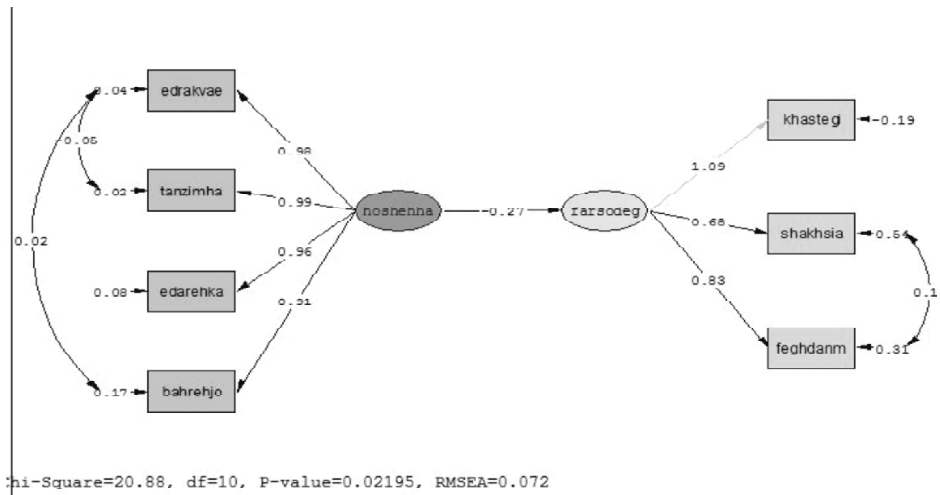

Figure 2: Structural equation modeling in standard status (main hypotheses)

model errors. The allowed limit of this value is 0.08 which means that if it is between 0.08 and 0.1, the fit is average. Besides, if it is higher than 0.1, the fit would be poor. The values between 0.05 and 0.08 are acceptable. Also, if the value is below 0.05, it would be more appropriate. If chi-square value is less than the degree of freedom value, RMSEA will be shown zero. Given that the value of chi-square divided by the df value equals 2.08(less than 3) and RMSEA value equals 0.072, the model is rather of a fine fit to examine the research hypotheses.

Examining the Fit Indices of the Research

To investigate the model, we need, initially, to evaluate the totality of the model, and then the details are required to be scrutinized. In addition, we evaluate one of the prominent indices in the absolute fit, relative fit, and the moderated fit so as to investigate the model search. The following table shows the indices derived from the model.

Table 4
The goodness of fit results (main hypotheses)

Index	Index value	Allowed value
GFI	0.97	0.9 >
AGFI	0.92	Close to 1
NFI	0.99	0.9 >
RFI	0.97	0.9 >
IFI	0.99	0.9 >
TLI- NNFI	0.98	0.9 >
RMR	0.013	Close to 0
CFI	0.99	0.9 >
PNFI	0.47	0.6 >

Given that the X^2/df value of the structural equation modelequals 2.08 (which is less than 3) and RMSEA value equals 0.072, it can be stated that the model is of a goodness of fit, based on which the research hypotheses can be tested and analyzed.

Testing the sub-hypotheses

The structural equation model in significant and standard statusis manifest for the sub-hypotheses in the section below. Also,Table 5 shows the goodness of fit indices

Given that the value of the structural equation modelequals 4.02 (which is less than 5)and RMSEA value equals 0.072, it can be stated that the model is of a goodness of fit, based on which the research hypotheses can be tested and analyzed.
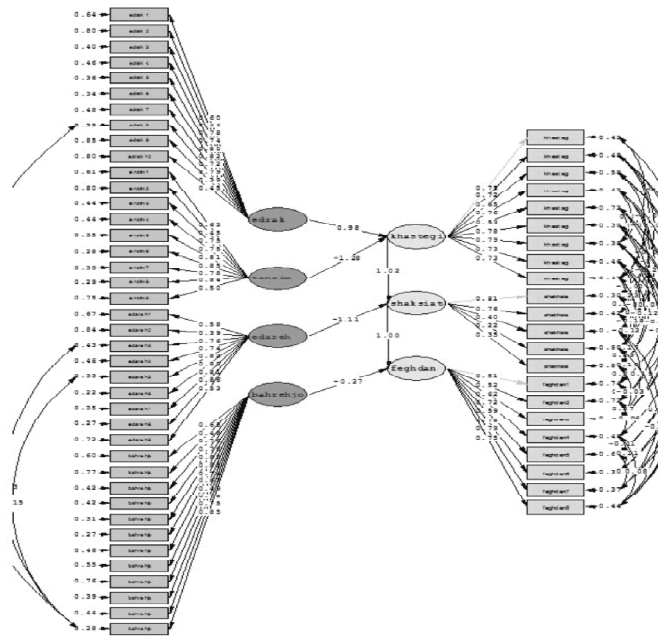
Figure 3: The Structural Equation Model in standard status (sub-hypothesis)
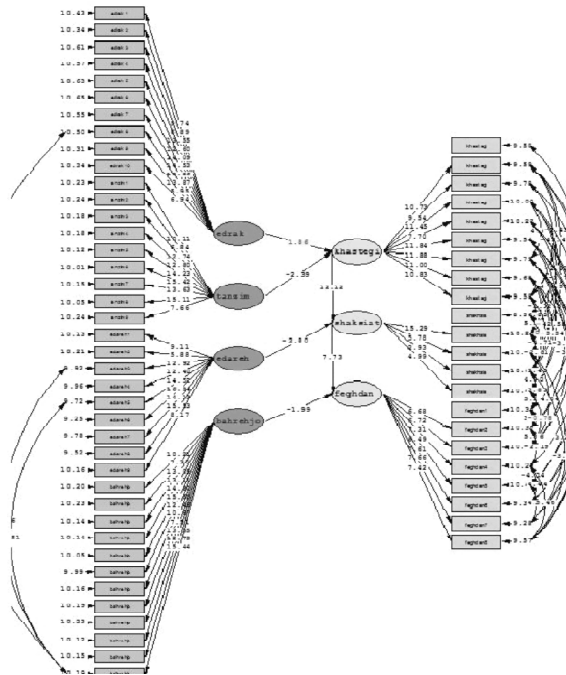

Figure 4: The structural equation model in the significant number status (sub-hypothesis)

Table 5
The goodness of fit results (sub-hypotheses)

Index	Index value	Allowed value
Goodness of fit index (GFI)	0.97	<0.9
Adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI)	0.92	Close to 1
Bonnet –Bentlernormalized fit index (NFI)	0.99	<0.9
Relative fit index (RFI)	0.97	<0.9
Incremental fit index (IFI)	0.99	<0.9
Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) or non-normalized fit index (NNFI)	0.98	<0.9
Residual root mean square (RMR)	0.013	Close to 0
Comparative fit index (CFI)	0.99	< 0.9
P or normalized fit index (PNFI)	0.47	<0.6

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study deals with investigating the impact of emotional intelligence on job burnout among the employees of tax offices in Khorramabad, Iran. The first hypothesis" the impact of emotional intelligence on job burnout" was confirmed. Besides, the whole sub-hypotheses were approved except the sub-hypothesis claiming that perceiving and expressing the emotions influences the emotional exhaustion. The more the managers have high level of emotional intelligence, the more they will be able and accomplished to manage their emotions while facing the problems at the workplace.Thus, they take measures against the mental pressures and problems, which not only lead to increasing their resistance againstthe burnout and its symptoms, but these measures also lead to increasing their satisfaction, pessimism, success ,and their happiness, at last. The research results are consistent with the findings of Brand (2007), Zaf (2002), and Chan (2006) that showed the presence of a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and job burnout. The ability to recognize other people's emotions plays the foremost role in explaining the job burnout. The sympathetic people are familiar with the subtle social cues and the interactions reflect the other people's needs and desires. These skills in the educational, professional and managerial areas make them powerful and help them interact with others effectively. Moreover, this abilityleads to achieving the social support resources which plays a critical role, by itself, in protecting the people against the problems including stress. People, by maintaining and expanding their relationship with others can always have numerous channels and routes to meet their needs. Regarding the other characteristics of this factor, those with such ability may have the intrinsic characteristics of leadership and be disciplined and adaptable in the interpersonal relationships. In addition, these kinds of people are more inclined to hold responsibility and be in charge of management. According to the results of the hypothesis, it could be concluded that the employees having a higher level emotional intelligence are in compliance with jobs that they feelmore independent and less commanded. Furthermore, these employees are more optimistic about life and more resistant to stress and job burnout.

Based on the previous findings, it is hypothesized that the different components of emotional intelligence make different impacts on various components of job burnout. Also, emotional exhaustion can be considered as the main cause of depersonalization and lack of success. Personal achievement can be separately expanded from two other factors of job burnout. Since depersonalization can lead to some consequences like emotional exhaustion and make a negative impact on increasing the sympathy among the employees. By increasing the sympathy,depersonalization impact would become minimal. Therefore, we need to attempt to increase the sympathy among the employees(vansila & Monk, 1999).Whereas, depersonalization can lead to reducing the personal achievement. Personal achievement may increase the independence of the other two components of job burnout. We can obtain successful experiences through increasing thepositive use of the emotional information to solve the problems and create new ideas. Otherwise, the effectiveness of the strategy to stand against job burnout in the educational professionrequires further investigations.

THE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the results of the first hypothesis, the employees are recommended to make efforts to understand and manage their emotions. Since, understanding and managing the emotions causes the job burnout symptoms to reduce. The Evidences have shown that the individuals with higher emotional intelligence are better able to balance their work and their emotions. Also, the presence of emotional intelligence helps the employees to be coordinated and makes them motivated to achieve the optimal performance.

According to the results of the first sub-hypothesis test, the employees are recommended to meditate on their own emotions to understand them well. Since perceiving the emotions decreases the emotional exhaustion and burnout.

According to the results of the second sub-hypothesis, the employees arerecommended to decrease the degree of their emotional exhaustion by managingthe emotions. In fact, managing the emotions follows perceiving the emotions. In the previous hypothesis, the suggestion was in parallel with perceiving the emotions. But we mention managing the emotions in this hypothesis. If we control our emotions by the proper management, it would cause an increase in the individual's energy and efficiency at work.

According to the results of the third sub-hypothesis, the employees are recommended to pay attention to the coworkers' nonverbal behaviors and improve the listening and heeding the skills. Since lack of improving the listening skills is one the reasons impeding us fromunderstanding the other people's emotions. When we listen to others well, we can communicate with them, and this reduces the sense of negativity (pessimism) towards others.

According to the results of the fourth sub-hypothesis, the employees are suggested to make use of their emotions properly. In other words, we ourselves are supposed to

control our sadness and happiness and not to allow the sadness and happiness to affect us. The more we can control ourselves, the less we are likely to develop a sense of personal failure.

According to the results of the fifth sub-hypothesis, the roots of job burnout are suggested to be explored, and then we need to reform them. Two sets of factors lead to job burnout: the work-related factors and the factors related to the individual. If the factors are work-related, the individual and the workneed to be fitful. Since the absence of fitness will lead to the lack of personal success.

According to the fifth sub-hypothesis, the tax affairs managers are suggested to respect the individuals' values. The more the employees fit each other, the less the sense of the negativity would exist.

According to the results of the sixth sub-hypothesis, the employers are suggested to minimize the sense of negativity among the employeesby respecting the other individuals' rights, giving bonuses and sharing the tasks correctly. This makes the individual feel less ambivalent about the performance and the position.

The results showed that emotional intelligence makes a negative significant impact on job burnout among the employees of tax offices in Khorramabad, Iran. Thus, holding regular workshops to promote the emotional intelligence level is recommended.

The managers whose employees are exposed to job burnout are recommended to take measures for decreasing this phenomenon.

Job burnout leads to the loss of valuable resources such as time and the assets. The results of the research showed that job burnout is multidimensional. This shows that several factors contribute to occurrence of the job burnout phenomenon. Therefore, the managers are recommended to use the advisory services of the industrial and organizational experts and enterprise executives of advisory services in their own institutions. The managers are also suggested to establish a measure, if possible, for the regular examination of job burnout among their employees.

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