Study the Role of Mangers’ Irrational Beliefs on Employees’ Job Burnout

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Abstract: This research aims to investigate the effect of managers’ irrational beliefs on employees’ job burnout at Tabriz Islamic Azad University in 2012. This study is a descriptive correlation and applied research. The statistical population consists of 430 managers and employees. The data were collected by questionnaire of irrational beliefs based on theories developed by Albert Ellis and the Maslach Burnout Questionnaire (MBI). In the present study, the validity of variables questions in both questionnaires was measured by the content validity and the reliability of the questionnaires was tested based on Cronbach's alpha coefficient and it was achieved % 87 for the managers’ irrational beliefs questionnaire and it was %91 for employee burnout inventory. The results show that each irrational belief of demand for approval, high self expectation, blame proneness, frustration reactive, anxious over concern, problem avoidance, dependency, helplessness for change and perfectionism influence on job burnout. Also, level of managers’ irrational beliefs and employees’ burnout is not different according to gender, level of studies and records. Finally, the best predictor is frustration reactive (0.31) that could predict %31 of job burnout. Then demand for approval (0.18) could predict %18 of the job burnout. The emotional indifference (0.16) predicts %16 of job burnout, blame proneness (0.14) predicts %14 of job burnout, dependency (0.09) predicts %9 of job burnout, problem avoidance (0.08) predicts %8 of job burnout, perfectionism (0.078) predicts %78 of job burnout, helplessness for change (0.04) predicts %4 of job burnout, high self expectation (0.03) predicts %3 of job burnout and anxious over concern (0.01) predicts %1 of job burnout.

Key words: Irrational beliefs, job burnout, Islamic Azad University

INTRODUCTION

Since establishment of social life, rationality has been considered as a foundation of modernist and nowadays it has been introduced as a necessity of social and organizational life in macro and micro level. Rationality is defined as speaking and a science that the mankind could inference in correct way and prevents mistakes accordingly. Rationality in organization is considered as foundation of the organization based on rules and regulations in the society since rationality in conducts, behaviors, decisions and structures leads to rationality in all employees and the managers and employees could control their feelings and fulfill goals and behave in stable way in order to poses qualities like entrepreneurship, rule orientation, control of feelings, rationality and fundamentalism. These qualities play an important role in success of the managers (Soltani and et al., 2000).

Albert Elis believes that events do not cause to anxiety and tension but individuals beliefs about the events lead to anxiety and tension and the person gets in trouble (Ellis, 1999). In Ellis opinion, rational thinking causes to dynamicity and the person views the events and problems from clarified perspective and he is hopeful and powerful (quoted by Poorshaegan and et al., 2002). When a person goes beyond his preferences and desires about an event and he reaches to absolute thinking, this belief leads to three irrational belief: catastrophic, self destruction and lack of failure toleration and he tries to reduce the level of conflict or contradiction with others (Saatchi, 1387). Ellis knows thoughts as the origin of the human emotions, but this does not mean that we either through reasoning can control all our emotions. Usually rational beliefs lead to appropriate emotions (feelings of sadness or regret for not reaching the desired goals) and irrational beliefs lead to inappropriate emotions (feelings of depression, anger or humiliation of not reaching goals) (quoted by Shamsi, 2004). Beliefs are stable mental systems that are associated with emotions and behavioral tendencies, one's stance against a phenomenon (Beiram, 1998). Flien believes that one belief is important that relates to other person's beliefs, so, a belief influences other person's beliefs (quoted Fayyaz and Kiani, 2008: 103).

2 – Research Literature:
Beliefs of Individuals:

Belief means adoption of a principle or a religion or belief in a fact. It means tendency to respond in a consciousness way or with constant manner in a particular situation (Shoarinejad, 1985). Belief means faith and belief (Atkinson, Hilgard, translated by Baraheni et al., 1989). Beliefs affect on the behavior of people and changing their cognitive dissonance and change of actions (Feldman, 1998). Assessment of people in situations of stress depends on individual cognitive systems and their relation with rational behavior (Hollin, 1996).

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The beliefs are divided into two categories:
A- Rational beliefs: the individuals who believe in their success in a job undoubtedly they will be successful.
B) Irrational belief: the people need to support and confirmation by interested in known persons (Flien, 1977, quoted Taghipour, 1998).

Irrational Beliefs:
Irrational beliefs pose two characteristics - prejudice and fanatic expectations that they should be expressed by words. 2- self disturbance philosophies that resulted from these expectations and they create irrational and over generalized moods (Prochaska, quoted by Shirzad, 2009). There are different classifications about irrational beliefs it can be refereed to: demand for approval, high self expectation, blame proneness, frustration reactive, anxious over concern, problem avoidance, dependency, helplessness for change and perfectionism (Ellis and et, 1996). Bernard defines irrational briefs as demands that convert to necessary priorities, so that they lead to disturbance (Biabangard, 1994). In Ellis opinion, the person suffers emotional conflicts in spite of rejecting realities and attraction in irrational beliefs in his excellence. According to Ellis these beliefs lead to anxiety, emotional and mental disorder (Shafiabadi and Naseri, 2007). Thus, whenever these irrational beliefs are dominated the emotional disorder continues. The person who suffers irrational beliefs feels anxiety, resistance, hostility, defense, feeling of being sinner, weakness and uncontrollable (Tagipoor, 1999). Generally, it can be said that the false imagination about daily affairs lead to irrational beliefs (Azizi, 2006). Those who emphasizes on irrational beliefs encounter with problem in their life and they could not be happy (Hollin, 1996). If a person does not have correct style for identification of the events he will encounter with problems and he will seek irrational ways to solve his problem (Kleinke, 1998). Ellis calls the external disturbance factors activation events A and he adds that these events do not determine our feeling merely but rational and irrational beliefs determine our feelings. Irrational beliefs cause to depression, anxiety and other negative feelings by significant effect on life (Shiavash and Navabinejad, 2004). Neenan (1993) showed that irrational beliefs could result in destructive conducts in workplace and home. These beliefs influence on emotional health and lead to depression, sadness, self injury, self blame, regret and other emotional consequences. Lird (1999) suggests that the individuals with irrational beliefs behave as avoidance style in coping with problems.

In Ellis opinion, the incompatible behaviors are result of irrational belies in some extent and they control our conduct. These beliefs control our psyche and determine our mentality in meaning of events and quality of our behavior and emotions. These beliefs are unreal and they lead to imbalance in human life and prevent success in coping stimulating events (Ellis, 2009).

Irrational beliefs are classified four groups: commitment (this belief is major in primary assessment involving should and should not). The rational aspect of this belief is related to tendency and interest. Catastrophe situation that the person interpret the events dreadful than reality. A rational belief evaluates an event in balanced way, less tolerance for failure and beliefs related to valuation that the person evaluates himself based on behaviors and characteristics and these criteria are inflexible and intolerable and overgeneralization about him and others are the indices of this belief (Dilorenzo and et al, 2007).

Irrational Beliefs Scales:
- high self expectation: the person believes that he has to reach to perfection and be competence by considerable amount of efforts and efficiency. The person believes that he has to be successful and reach to his goals and has commitment to his job and his judgment is based on success in his work.
- demand for approval: the person believes that he ought to be approved by others and this belief causes to trouble for the person.
- blame proneness: the person believes that some people are mean and they should be punished and he believes that he and others making mistakes should be punished.
- frustration reactive: the person believes that the unpleasant conditions lead to unhappiness and misery and these conditions are awful.
- anxious over concern: the person believes that in case of happening horrible event the individuals should be sad and anxious and these events cause to anxiety and frustration. So it is necessary to be sad and anxious.
- problem avoidance: the person believes that avoidance problems, responsibilities and duties are easier than coping.
- emotional indifference: the person believes that his mental problems and distractions are result of problems and difficulties in life and anxiety, depression, sad and distraction are due to the events and these events are external leading to emotional state not the person account.
- dependency: the person believes he should be depended on the powerful individuals and living without dependency is difficult.
- helplessness for change: a person believes that I am a product of life experiences of the past and present behavior.
-perfectionism irrational belief: the person believes that there is only one correct solution for every problem and there is a solution that is just perfect and if a man does not achieve it the result would be terrible (quoting Karimi Mogadamarei, 2009).

Always there are two sources for organizations to increase productivity, growth and dynamism. These two sources are: financial resources and human resources. In recent years much attention has been given to the financial resources while the organization's human resources is also important. Efficiency and effectiveness of an organization depends on the effectiveness and efficiency of its human resources and employees’ job burnout is one of the important issues that must be considered in any organization. Job burnout is essential element of productivity of human resources in an organization (Mirzaei et al, 2006).

Studies have shown that beliefs influence in various situations such as developing relationships with others, job burnout and performance and health and (David et al, 2009).

**Job Burnout:**

Nowadays important role of jobs is clear in various aspects of human life. In addition to providing cost of living, job has a direct correlation with mental and physical health as well as satisfying unusual predisposing needs. Work is not just a decent lifestyle but it is an important element of social and meaningful origin of life. Most jobs apply significant amount of pressure on individuals so that many physical and mental disorders are resulted from works. People involved in this kind of pressures suffer burnout (Maslach, 2002). One of the concepts gained attention of industrial psychologists in recent years is job burnout involved exhaustion from failure, lethargy and weakness.

It seems that job burnout is a response to pressure factors in work place that the person suffers more than his capacity to cope with his colleagues, managers and clients and it causes to change in attitude and behavior towards them (Saatchi, 2009). The concept of burnout was introduced for first time in 1974 by Neberge. He believed that job burnout is a disorder resulting from prolonged exposure to the pressures of the job environment and punctuation and its symptoms are emotional, physical and mental burnout (Lakiuz, quotes Narimani and Abbasi, 2009). Although the term of burnout or emotional exhaustion was used widely in 1970 but the same term can be seen in Greene’s novel (1961). The story is about an architecture suffering mental and emotional fatigue, despair and he quits his job and takes refuge in the jungles of Africa (Maslach, 2001).

Job burnout is defined as a lack of vitality and a person feeling of burnout shows no interest in his job of doing the show. Thus, a person pressurizes in his work place due to internal and external factors and the pressure is constant and the frequency is converted to a feeling of exhaustion. In this sense, energy loss occurs.

In Maslach opinion, job burnout is a syndrome created in repose to chronic mental pressure and it involves emotional burnout, alienation and progress of the person and it is seen among counselors, teachers, social workers, doctors, police, nurses and more positions are observed in such jobs due to the effect of the duties and responsibilities of these jobs (Maslach, 2002).

Ismiali (2008) suggests the definition of burnout: tension and stress caused by nature or kind of inappropriate situation leading to the creation of a state in employee that is called atrophy, in this case, the work loses its importance and the person who is tired of permanent atrophy is aggressive, cynical and negative, pessimistic and angry, irritable and impatient, and he is frustrated by little discomfort (Hassani, 2005).

Gibson, Ivannosivch and Donnelly argue that burnout is a psychological process that occurs under conditions of extreme stress and emotional exhaustion depersonalize and reduce the incentive to progress (quoted by Soltani, 200). The other viewpoint suggests that job burnout is result of long time effort with less achievement. In this case the individuals lose their motivation and it leads to burnout. When a person evaluate his capability less than with present workload and its ability to manage and maintain a working pressure of work experience will inevitably suffer burnout (Ayan & Kocacik).

Alkin (1997) also stated that emotional burnout (feelings of lethargy and numbness in the workplace), disintegration of personality (impersonal feelings and reactions towards clients and colleagues) and functional decline (personal dissatisfied with the conduct of the authorities a) are the dimensions of job burnout.

**Reasons for Job Burnout:**

There are many factors leading to job burnout it can be referred to followings:

1- Individual factors: burnout sufferers may have prominent personality traits that will lead them to this path. For example, excessive perfectionism, lack of interpersonal skills and lack of humor and unreal idealism, inflexibility and low tolerance threshold can be of these traits. These dedicated individuals are obliged to support their desires and they do not work too much and they are fully committed so long as they feel their dedication to the people and they are not effective in achieving their goals and as result suffer mental fatigue followed by paranoia and other symptoms caused by burnout. (Sharifi, 2007).

2- Organizational Factors: Another possible reason is that burnout is the result of exposure to excessive exposure to stressful permanent working environment. So, it causes to burnout in the situations that there are many needs and few solutions.
A study showed that irrational beliefs can have serious destructive effects in the workplace. Most problems at work involve anxiety about job performance, job loss, fear and anger toward the manager and co-workers (quoted by Najarpoo Ostadi, 2010). Niksherst (2001) concluded that there are difference between level of education and level of irrational beliefs.

Porshaygan et al (2002) showed that there are differences between males and females about irrational beliefs and female counselors subscales showed significant relationship in high self expectation, helplessness, frustration, helplessness to change and the scale of job satisfaction. In the male counselors, subscales of dependence, high self expectation and of job satisfaction showed significant relationship.

Ghasemi (1996) in their study concluded that there is a relationship among attitudes and thinking, beliefs and Depression. In this study, the boys were more logical than girls.

Wu and Wei (2008) studied a model in which demand for approval and ability to strengthen the relationship between two dimensions of perfectionism (evaluative concerns (EC) and individual performance criteria (ps) act as mediator between anxiety and depression. Results of structural equation performed on 295 students showed that demand of approval and the ability to boost entire relationship between evaluative concern and anxiety moderate the relationship between personal standards of performance, anxiety and depression. Evaluative concerns (EC), personal performance scales (ps) predicted %41 of the variance in anxiety and %50 of depression by demand for approval and self empowerment.

**Research Hypotheses:**
1- Managers demand for approval of others impacts on employees’ job burnout.
2- Managers high self expectation impacts on employees’ job burnout.
3- Manager blames proneness impacts on employees’ job burnout.
4- Managers frustration reaction impacts on employees’ job burnout.
5- Managers emotional indifference impacts on employees’ job burnout.
6- Managers anxious over concern impacts on employees’ job burnout.
7- Managers problem avoidance impacts on employee’s job burnout.
8- Managers dependency impacts on employees’ job burnout effect.
9- Managers helplessness for change on employees’ job burnout.
10- Managers irrational perfectionism impacts on employees’ job burnout.
11- How can managers’ irrational beliefs predict employees’ job burnout?
12- Managers irrational beliefs level and employees’ job burnout is different according to their gender.
13- Managers’ irrational beliefs level and employees’ job burnout is different according to educational levels.
14- Managers’ irrational beliefs level and employees’ job burnout is different according to work records levels.

**4-Methodology:**
The study was a descriptive correlation and applied research. The population consisted of 430 managers and employees of university. The data were collected by Albert Ellis irrational beliefs questionnaire and the Maslach Burnout Questionnaire (MBI). In the present study, variables related to the validity of both questionnaires were measured by the content validity and the reliability of the managers irrational beliefs questionnaire was achieved 87% based on Cronbach’s alpha coefficient and it was %91 for employee burnout inventory. For the analysis of the data Spss 19 software was used.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**
How managers’ irrational beliefs components can explain employee burnout?

According to Table 1, it is noted that the significance level of each component of irrational beliefs in explaining employee’s job burnout is lower than 0.05 (Sig<0.05), then each of the variables has unique contribution in prediction of the criterion variable. According to this fact that standard beta coefficient of failure has highest value (0.31), so it has significant contribution for determination of criterion variable and it can predict 31 percent of employee’s burnout then variables of demand for approval by others (0.18), the emotional indifference (0.16), blame proneness (0.14), dependency (0.09), problem avoidance (0.08), perfectionism (0.078), helplessness for change (0.04), high self expectation (0.03) and anxious over concern (0.01) explain criterion variable with significance level of F=3.8 and Watson (1/9) and (000/0 = Sig=0.000).

According to table 1 the above regression equation can be written as follows:

\[ Y = a + bx_1 + cx_2 + dx_3 + ex_4 + f x_5 + g x_6 + hx_7 + ix_8 + jx_9 + kx_{10}. \]

\[ Y=42.38\text{(demand for approval)} + 0.03\text{(high self-expectation)} + 0.14\text{(blames proneness)} + 0.31\text{(frustration reactive)} + 0.16\text{(anxious over concern)} + 0.08\text{(problem avoidance)} + 0.01\text{(dependency)} + 0.04\text{(helplessness for change)} + 0.07\text{(perfectionism)}. \]
Managers’ Irrational Belief Level and Employee’s Burnout Differ According to their Gender:

According to table (2) and t-test, the significance level of the Levene's test is more than 0.05(sig>0.05) in both variables, thus assuming equal variances can be interpreted. Then according to independent t-test, the significance level of the test in both variables is 0.05 and the research hypothesis is rejected and H0 is not supported. So, assuming equal variances can be interpreted. Then according to independent t-test, the significance level of the test in both variables is 0.05 and the research hypothesis is rejected and H0 is not supported.

Manager’s Irrational Belief Level and Employee’s Burnout Differ According to their Studies Level:

According to the table 3 and ANOVA it is considered that the most significant variable in both test Loon is higher than 0.05 so, it can be interpreted assuming equal variances. Based on ANOVA, it is observed that the meaningfulness level of managers’ irrational beliefs and employee’s burnout variables by segregation of educational level was 0.21, 0.30 and higher than 0.05 respectively. So, managers’ irrational belief level and employee’s burnout do not differ according to their studies level.

Manager’s Irrational Belief Level and Employee’s Burnout Differ According to their Records:

According to the table 4 and ANOVA it is considered that the most significant variable in both test Loon is higher than 0.05 so, it can be interpreted assuming equal variances. Based on ANOVA, it is observed that the meaningfulness level of managers’ irrational beliefs and employee’s burnout variables by segregation of record is 0.28, 0.39 and higher than 0.05 respectively. So, managers’ irrational belief level and employee’s burnout do not differ according to their records.

Nenin (quoted by Najar Poorostadi, 2010) has argued that irrational beliefs could have damaging effects in workplace. Most problems at work are anxiety about job performance, burnout, fear of job loss and anger about
manger and colleagues. Also research carried by Kanep (2003), Masters (2003) and Frogat (2002) have shown similar results that irrational beliefs can influence on person account about job function, workplace and colleagues and managers. Ghasemi (1375) concluded that there is a relationship between attitudes and thinking, beliefs and depression. In this study, the boys were more rational than girls. Barn, Greenberg and Nikseresht(2001) concluded that the level of studies and level of irrational beliefs are different. Titel (quoted by Shawn, 2004) also reached a similar conclusion. The patterns of gender and sexual difference can greatly affect on irrational beliefs. The individuals with high level studies have high self esteem and have rational beliefs. In Ellis opinion, incompatible behaviors are result of irrational beliefs controlling our behaviors that dominate on human psyche and as individual psychological factors affect on how to interpret and give meaning to events and regulating the quality and quantity of behavior and emotion. Irrational belief is not true and is not consistent with the facts and judgment should provide for a balance between the individual and it prevents from making an order. Successful in preventing exposure incidents can be irritating. According to the behavioral science researches, one important factor in causing burnout in organizations is a management style that is adopted by the leaders of the organization compared to those who sincerely regard less their managers they are more prone to burnout, however, the style of the organization can be effective in reducing burnout. Hiresh, Clark, and William Matthews (2003) show that the individuals with irrational beliefs have poor social performance and they are more anxious. Ellis (1994) believes that human being has powerful tendency to internalization of self destructive beliefs so achieving to mental health and preserving it is difficult. Beck, Rush and Imeri (1976), Vishar Beck (1995) suggests that emotional disorders are based on assumptions and fault logic behavior resulted of the distortion. Thus, the emotional response of the the person distorted the evaluation is not consistent with reality. Irrational beliefs influence on behavior at home, at workplace and in social environments and there is a relationship among emotional effects of depression, burnout, sadness, self harm, self-blame, and regret, etc. There is a relationship among irrational beliefs, anxiety and stress positioning, maladaptive patterns of emotional stability and factors causing stress and anxiety, emotional disorders, depression, stress, and dissatisfaction.

Research Limitation:
1- Data collection was limited to the questionnaires
2- Limitations of the study to population and the sample
3- Constraints of time and place

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