



## **THE EFFECT OF OCCUPATIONAL BURNOUT ON EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE AT KUFA ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION DEPARTMENT**

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### **Abstract**

Occupational /Job Burnout is considered nowadays one of the most prevalent mental diseases among workers who are keen to perform their work with dedication and determination. They are even keener when their work requires direct contact with people in the society. The study aims to examine burnout and workers' performance in the Kufa Electricity Distribution Department and their relationship to the personal characteristics of workers.

It is a descriptive-analytical study of a sample of all workers at the Electricity Distribution Department (35), excluding the service workers. Modified Maslach Burnout Inventory and the workers' performance.

The results reveal that there is a direct relationship between the performance of employees and the occupational burnout in the near future, because more than (70%) of workers are close to retirement age and young workers are likely to come who may not have sufficient experience in the face of job burnout.

Therefore, the study recommends educating employees about the risks of occupational burnout and its impact on them in their daily lives as well. Providing the available resources by the concerned authorities is also recommended to reduce the discontent of citizens on their performance in terms of providing electricity.

**Keywords: Occupational/job burnout, employees' performance, Electricity Distribution Department, Kufa city**

### **Introduction**

Despite the great development going on in the world on various levels of scientific and modern technology, many researchers have characterized this era with psychological pressure that requires the individual to deal with it, especially the Occupational Burnout (Zeyoodi, 2007). Occupational burnout is a common modern disease which drew the attention of researchers in recent decades, not only in mental and medical health, but also in administration being one of the serious administrative problems faced by government and non-governmental institutions as a factor of failure and deterioration of productivity in the long term (al-Nufeyi, 2001)

Institutions and departments of electricity distribution are essential in the lives of citizens, especially in the age of modernity. They have great responsibilities that are fraught with great physical and psychological risks. They are in contact to the burdens and pressures of citizens resulting from the continuous electrical power outage, especially in developing countries. Continuing outages create pressure on their performance and entail additional efforts of bearing the discontent of citizens on the one hand and the resources unavailability on the other hand (Awda, 1998). Such resources are equipment and human resources from the responsible authorities in the government. These pressure factors and others related to physical condition, rest times and family responsibilities may all affect mental health (Kafafi, 2009). These workers are often unnoticed by researchers, especially in the field of mental health in the Arab World in general and Iraq in particular. Researchers often look at the psychological state of professors, teachers and health workers (Al-Kilabi and Rashid, 2001) overlooking the electricity distribution workers which is an important segment of society.

Several studies such as Freude Nberger's have indicated that those who work in professions with direct contact with the members of society are the most vulnerable to the occupational burnout, because of their daily dealings with a large number of

people and their inability to achieve what is expected of them (Awda, 1998). Occupational Burnout is also evident in both the public and private sectors of workers who are exemplary and interested in their job (Al-Kilabi and Rashid, 2001). It is likely that the main factor in the tolerance of workers' psychological and physical stress resulting from work is the search for the material gain resulting from practicing the profession that establishes their burnout (Kafafi, 2009).

Many researchers tried to define the Burnout: Maslak, defines it as " psychological stress, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and a sense of dissatisfaction with personal accomplishment and professional performance" (Abumusa and Kallab, 2012) Alrashidan defines it as a state of psychological exhaustion stored in an individual leading to psychological imbalance which arises as a result of severe psychological stress caused by the workload and tasks, impacting negatively on customers directly and on the institution in which the individual works. "(Abu Musa and Kallab, 2012). Both definitions reveal that there is a direct relationship between the burnout concept as a psychological disorder and the high performance of the workers. When the performance increases, the chances of burnout increases as well, which is consistent with the definition of Abdul Rahman (1992), who defined burnout as a "psychological or mental state, disturbing individuals who work in professions that in nature deal with many people and these workers usually give more than they take." Or when there is no consistency between the nature of the worker and the nature of the work he performs, the greater the inconsistency, the more the chances of its emergence. Hence there are institutional factors that lead to the burnout such as lack of positive reinforcement, work pressure, unfairness, and limited social relations between workers (Al-Qarni, 2000).

There are signs on employees that could be noticed by managers. They are considered indicators to the job burnout concept. Such signs are negative behaviors of employees in their institutions such as continuous absence, taking long leaves, apathy towards customers (citizens), loss of enthusiasm and creativity, avoiding discussing work matters, and poor performance. As for symptoms workers with burnout may feel fatigue, psychological and physical exhaustion, inactiveness in addition to the negative look, lack of self-esteem as well as anxiety and frustration (Abu Musa and Killab, 2012).

In light of the above, the study aims to describe the concept of burnout among employees in the Kufa Electricity Distribution Department and their job performance. It also aims to find a relationship between their personal characteristics and their performance, and their job burnout.

## **Study Methodology**

This is an analytical-descriptive study that included all workers (35) in the Kufa Electricity Distribution Department except for the cleaners and service workers (11)

as they do not deal with the pressure of citizens. The study was conducted during the period (March 12 - April 20, 2017).

Modified Maslach Burnout Inventory scale to measure was employed in the study. The scale included 23 points divided into three main parts: psychological exhaustion (9 points), humanity (7 points), personal accomplishment (7 points), and modified employees' performance of (21 points) into three parts each included (7 points); namely: the part related to the effort of labor, the second is on the capabilities and finally, their individual characteristics (Abu Musa and Killab, 2012). The results of the test of reliability of the scale was firm according to the Cronbach's Alpha test (0.82) compared to Abu Musa and Killab (0.706).

The study questionnaire was distributed to the employees after obtaining their verbal approval for participation in the study. After clarifying the importance of the study, they expressed their desire to participate. The study adopted the method of self-filling of the questionnaire and returning it to the researchers after its completion. There were no cases of neglect or loss of data.

The researchers used the descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, arithmetic mean, and standard deviation), the Chi square, the Cronbach's Alpha test, and the P-Value for data analysis and results extraction by Microsoft Excel (2010) and SPSS version 17.

## Study Results

**Table (1): The relationship between demographic characteristics and employee's performance**

Demographic characteristics		Frequency distributions		Workers' performance		P -Value
		Frequency	(%)	Mean	SD	
Age groups	21-45	17	48.6	2.64	0.6	0.488
	>45	18	51.4	2.55	0.7	
sex	male	21	60	2.66	0.66	0.71
	female	14	40	2.5	0.65	
education	college	8	22.9	2.37	0.51	0.55
	institute	5	14.3	3	0.7	
	Preparatory school	12	34.2	2.75	0.62	
	Middle school	9	25.7	2.44	0.72	
	Elementary or less	1	2.9	2	0	
Job titl	Foreman	5	14.4	3.2	0.44	0.314
	Chief engineer	3	8.6	2	0	

	Cashier	3	8.6	2	0	
	Senior asst. accountant	1	2.8	2	0	
	Supervisor	4	11.4	2.75	0.5	
	Technical foreman	1	2.8	2	0	
	technician	2	5.7	2.5	0.7	
	Senior technical assistant	2	5.7	3	1.41	
	Senior technical chief	2	5.7	2.5	0.7	
	Chief craftsman	3	8.6	3	0	
	Senior chief craftsman	7	20	2.57	0.78	
	Assistant engineer	2	5.7	2.5	0.7	
Years of employment	1-5	1	2.8	3	0	0.552
	6-10	6	17.2	2.83	0.75	
	11-15	14	40	2.5	0.51	
	>15	14	40	2.57	0.57	
position	No position	30	85.8	2.63	0.66	0.716
	Hold position	5	14.2	2.4	0.54	
Marital status	single	2	5.6	2	0	0.01
	married	29	82.9	2.65	0.61	
	Widow(er)	3	8.6	2	0	
	divorced	1	2.9	4	0	
children	No children	4	11.4	2.5	0.57	0.502
	2-1	15	42.9	2.53	0.74	
	4-3	11	31.4	2.63	0.5	
	4	1	2.9	2	0	
	5>	4	11.4	3	0.81	
Income amount	<500 thousand	7	20	3	0.57	0.074
	500-750 thousand	11	31.4	2.54	0.52	
	751th- 1 million	10	28.6	2.3	0.48	
	> 1 million	7	20	2.7	0.95	
resi den	urban	30	85.7	2.51	0.64	0.322
	rural	5	14.3	3	0.7	
total		35	100			

**Table (2): The relationship between demographic characteristics and occupational burnout**

Demographic characteristics		Frequency distributions		Occupational burnout		P -Value
		Frequency	(%)	Mean	SD	
Age groups	21-45	17	48.6	3.47	0.51	0.625
	>45	18	51.4	3.38	0.5	
sex	male	21	60	3.43	0.5	1
	female	14	40	3.42	0.51	
education	college	8	22.9	3.25	0.46	0.268
	institute	5	14.3	3.8	0.44	
	Preparatory school	12	34.2	3.5	0.52	
	Middle school	9	25.7	3.33	0.5	
	Elementary or less	1	2.9	3	0	
Job title	Foreman	5	14.4	4	0	0.138
	Chief engineer	3	8.6	3	0	
	Cashier	3	8.6	3	0	
	Senior asst. accountant	1	2.8	3	0	
	Supervisor	4	11.4	3.75	0.5	
	Technical foreman	1	2.8	3	0	
	technician	2	5.7	3.5	0.7	
	Senior technical assistant	2	5.7	3.5	0.7	
	Senior technical chief	2	5.7	3.5	0.7	
	Chief craftsman	3	8.6	3.33	0.57	
	Senior chief craftsman	7	20	3.42	0.53	
	Assistant engineer	2	5.7	3	0	
Years of employment	1-5	1	2.8	3	0	0.488
	6-10	6	17.2	3.66	0.51	
	11-15	14	40	3.35	0.49	
	>15	14	40	3.42	0.51	
position	No position	30	85.8	3.43	0.5	0.88
	Hold position	5	14.2	3.4	0.54	
Marital status	single	2	5.6	3	0	0.39
	married	29	82.9	3.44	0.5	
	Widow(er)	3	8.6	3.33	0.57	
	divorced	1	2.9	4	0	

children	No children	4	11.4	3.5	0.577	0.72
	2-1	15	42.9	3.33	0.48	
	4-3	11	31.4	3.54	0.52	
	4	1	2.9	3	0	
	5>	4	11.4	3.5	0.57	
Income amount	<500 thousand	7	20	3.71	0.48	0.36
	500-750 thousand	11	31.4	3.36	0.5	
	751th- 1 million	10	28.6	3.3	0.48	
	> 1 million	7	20	3.42	0.53	
resi den	urban	30	85.7	3.4	0.5	0.32
	rural	5	14.3	3.6	0.54	
	total	35	100			

**Table (3): The relationship between employee's performance and occupational burnout**

		Employees' performance			Chi square	Liberty degree	P-Value
		agree	neutral	disagree			
Occupational burnout	agree	0	0	0	19.17	2	<b>.001</b>
	neutral	16	4	0			
	disagree	1	11	3			
total		17	15	3	N=35		

## Discussion

The results indicate that the employees in the Kufa Electricity Distribution Department are mostly males with no position residing in the city center as employing in the civil government institutions in Iraq depend on the educational achievement and residence preferably urban areas close to the institutions. Najaf Governorate (including Kufa District) is ranked first among Iraqi governorates in terms of (early) marriage (CSO: 2007a, 2007b), which shows that more than (82%) of them are married (Table (1) and (2) ), and more than half of the sample of the study receive a monthly salary between 500 thousand and one million Iraqi dinars. This income is average according to reports of the Iraqi Ministry of Planning (al-Hassani, 2016), and nearly (75%) of them have between (1-4 children) which constitutes an additional expense of their income.

Table (1) illustrates that there is no significant correlation between the performance of the employees and their personal characteristics, except for marital status, where the p Value is very high; married individuals have better performance according to the results of this study. There is no significant relationship between the other personal characteristics of employees and the occupational burnout. This is a good indicator according to the data of this study which might be due to the awareness of citizens that the deficiencies in the electric power sector is beyond the will of the employees in the Distribution Department as Iraq is experiencing an economic crisis and budget deficit allocated to the Ministry of Electricity in particular and the rest of the ministries in general in the last few years (Salim, 2012). It could be also attributed to the years of experience as (80%) of them have a career service of at least 11 years or more, which is sufficient to enable them to deal with citizens or with pressures (Table (1) and (2)).

Table (3) reveals that there is a very high correlation between the performance of employees and the occupational burnout as proved by various studies such Kafafy's (2009) and the Awda's (1998). They concluded that the greater commitment to perform the required tasks the greater the chances of occupational burnout among employees in the institution. This is a serious indicator to the performance of employees and the productivity of the institution on the short run, perhaps because the majority of them have long experience and the doors of retirement, which gives the opportunity for a new generation may lack the experience in dealing with such pressure, which reflected negatively on their performance and the symptoms of occupational burnout appeared in them.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

It is concluded in this study that the marital status has an impact on the performance of employees. Moreover, there is a high probability of occupational burnout prevalence among the workers in the electricity sector in Kufa if young employees who lack the necessary expertise, took their role in running their institution with the pressure of work or how to deal with citizens instead of experienced staff. Therefore, researchers advise to conduct seminars and awareness workshops on occupational burnout and its effects on workers and their performance to reduce it. The researchers also recommend activating the positive reinforcement and giving fair material and moral rewards, away from nepotism. The employees' awareness of their roles is also a possible solution. Finally establishing a unit to follow the mental health of workers in all sectors or encouraging visits to mental units in case of some of the aforementioned symptoms.

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