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## Job Satisfaction of teachers and its relationships with their Burnout in Kurdistan/ Iraq

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### Abstract

The study aimed to find out the level of teachers' job satisfaction, job burnout, and the relationship between them. In addition, the study tested the effect of independent variables which are: age, specialization and marital status. One hundred forty-five primary teachers (91 males; 54 females) randomly selected, took part in the study. The data collected via two different adapted instruments (Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) and Job Satisfaction Instrument). The results revealed an ambivalent level of job satisfaction and a remarkable level of job burnout. Furthermore, job satisfaction was negatively correlated with two dimensions of burnout: depersonalization and emotional exhaustion while positively correlated with personal accomplishment. Gender differences, marital status and age had shown no statistically significant differences. In contrast specialization has shown statistically significant effect on job satisfaction and two subscales of burnout: Emotional exhaustion and Depersonalization.

**Keywords:** Job satisfaction, Burnout, depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment

### المخلص:

تهدف الدراسة إلى معرفة مستوى الرضا الوظيفي، والإرهاق الوظيفي لدى المدرسين، والعلاقة بينهما. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، اختبرت الدراسة تأثير المتغيرات المستقلة مثل: العمر ومجال التخصص والحالة الزوجية. شارك في الدراسة مائة وخمسة وأربعون مدرساً (91 ذكراً؛ 54 أنثى) حيث تم اختيارهم بشكل عشوائي. تم جمع البيانات عن طريق تبني مقياسين وهما مقياس الرضا الوظيفي ومقياس الإرهاق النفسي. كشفت النتائج عن مستويين من مستويات الرضا الوظيفي والإرهاق الوظيفي. علاوة على ذلك، كان الرضا الوظيفي مرتبطاً سلباً ببعدين من الإرهاق الوظيفي: تبديد الشخصية والإرهاق العاطفي، بينما كان

يرتبط بشكل إيجابي بالإنجاز الشخصي. لم تظهر الفروق بين الجنسين، والحالة الزوجية والعمر أي أثر ذات دلالة إحصائية. في المقابل، أظهر التخصص تأثيراً ذا دلالة إحصائية على الرضا الوظيفي، وعلى بعدين من أبعاد الإرهاق الوظيفي.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** مستوى الرضا الوظيفي، الإرهاق الوظيفي، تحقيق الذات.

## Introduction:

Education is an integral part of our modern society and an important factor to develop a society in any country. It helps to build and create a good human. Therefore, the educational system is regarded as to be the backbone in the development process. In the educational system, teachers play an imperative role. The success of this system relies, to a high extent, on teachers' competence, and qualities.

Moreover, the strength of educational institutions lies in teachers' satisfaction with their job and their commitment to the development of their institutions. It is expected that highly satisfied teachers will be more committed to their institutions resulting in better job performance, higher retention and decline in their turnover rates.

Studies (e.g., Herman, & Reinke 2017., Agai-Demjaha, et al. 2015., Hakanen, Bakker & Schaufeli, 2006., Tomic & Tomic, 2008) confirmed that teaching is a stressful job worldwide. Hakanen et al (2006) reported that in comparison with other professions, teachers show high levels of exhaustion and cynicism. Between 5% and 20% of all U.S. teachers are burned out at any given time. According to the American Federation of Teachers' 2017 Educator Quality of Work Life Survey, 61 percent of teachers indicated that their jobs were always or often stressful.

86% of the teachers have been identified as burned out (Schonfeld1 & Bianchi, 2016). Approximately half of the teachers in India (44%) suffer from burnout (Shukla & Trivedi, 2008). Some studies (e.g., Evers, Tomic & Brouers, 2004) reported that male teachers experience more emotional exhaustion than their female counterparts. Males have less emotional exhaustion but higher depersonalization (Iorga et al. 2017., Gold, 2013., Gursel, Sunbul & Sari, 2002). Generally, studies found a negative relationship between teachers' burnout and job satisfaction (Mukhtar & Mustafa, 2014; Yorulmaz, Çolak, & Altinkurt, 2017) particularly, high level of teachers' job satisfaction was found to be related to low emotional exhaustion level (Anil et al. 2017, Tsigilis, Zachopoulou, & Grammatikopoulos, 2006; Chenevey, Ewing, &Whittington, 2008).

Studies in different countries show that teachers' satisfaction levels vary. General Job satisfaction score of the school teachers in Tanzania indicated that the respondents were generally satisfied with their job (Msuya, 2016), likewise, teachers in Vietnam generally were satisfied with their career (Tien, 2018). Similarly, teachers' job satisfaction levels were high in Turkey (Demirtas, 2010) and secondary school teachers in India were slightly satisfied (Singh & Goyal, 2012). Another study it has been conducted in New York found that 20 responses (66%) of the teachers were ambivalent with their job satisfaction (Gu, 2016).

Various studies (e.g. Azeem, 2010; Sichambo, Maragia, & Simiyu, 2012) highlighted work-related factors associated with burnout among teachers, including excessive time pressure, poor relationships with colleagues, large classes, lack of resources, fear of violence, behavioral problems of pupils, role ambiguity and role conflict, poor opportunities for promotion, lack of support, and lack of participation in decision-making.

Demographic variables, such as age and area of the workplace, affect job burnout. But gender was not found to be a factor of job burnout (Goswami, 2013). Besides, economic variables such as income increase burnout decrease teacher burnout in public schools (Dworkin, 1987),

Financial rewards, such as salary, significantly affect job satisfaction (SaqibUsman, Akbar & Ramzan, 2013; Mehrad, 2014). Annual income had a positive association with job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion (EE), and is a significant predictor of all three dimensions of job satisfaction while depersonalization (DP) had no significant showing (Tarcan, Hikmet, Schooley, Top, Tarcan, (2017).

Due to the financial crisis, Iraqi Kurdistan regional government for five years (started from 2014) failed to fulfil its financial responsibilities toward public employees. It did not pay monthly full salary for teachers at all levels. It imposed a so-called forced saving system, whereby the Government pays only 35 to 40% of the salaries. Even worse, the salaries were not paid on a monthly basis. So, it was expected that this financial crisis will affect teachers' level of satisfaction and consequently affect their burnout levels. While the situation is dire, no research was conducted to address this issue.

## **Definitions of Terms**

### **Job satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is a measure of workers' satisfaction with their job, whether they like the job or not or individual aspects or facets of jobs, such as nature of work or supervision (Spector, 1997). it can be measured in affective, cognitive, and behavioral (ABC) elements (Borman et al. 2003).

### **Burnout**

Burnout meant a mild degree of stress-induced unhappiness (Kahn & Langlieb, 2002.), According to the Maslach's conceptualization, burnout consists of a three-dimensional syndrome: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (i.e., a tendency to have negative and cynical thoughts towards other people, patients included), and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach et al. 1996). Burnout differs from the global sense of depression, because it refers to work-related exhaustion. High levels of burnout and depersonalization, in addition to a low level of personal achievement, affect the quality of performance, interaction with the others (Zalaquett, & Wood, 1997).

### **Procedural definition**

#### **Job satisfaction**

Is the total obtained scores by the samples through their answers to the given job satisfaction questionnaire questions.

#### **Burnout**

Is the total obtained scores by the participants through their answers to the given burnout inventory items.

### **Aims of the study**

The study aims to:

- 1- find out the level of teachers' job satisfaction and burnout in Kurdistan Regional Government,
- 2- explore the relationship of teachers' job satisfaction and burnout in regards to their demographical variables such as: age, years of experience,
- 3- find out to what extend the teachers' job satisfaction and burnout are affected by marital status, gender differences and specialization.

## **Hypothesis**

- 1-  $H_0$ : there is not a statistically significant relationship between teachers' satisfaction and age when  $\alpha \leq 0.05$ .
  - 2-  $H_0$ : there is not a statistically significant relationship between teachers' satisfaction and experiences when  $\alpha \leq 0.05$ .
  - 3-  $H_0$ : there is not a statistically significant relationship between burnout and age when  $\alpha \leq 0.05$ .
  - 4-  $H_0$ : there is not a statistically significant relationship between burnout and experiences when  $\alpha \leq 0.05$ .
- 2-  $H_0$ : teachers' job satisfaction and burnout will not be statistically affected by marital status, gender differences and specialization when  $\alpha \leq 0.05$ .

## **Method**

**Study methods:** the descriptive research method seems to be suitable with the nature of the current study.

### **Sample:**

The sample of this study consisted of 145 primary teachers (91 males; 54 females) in Koya District, Erbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq.

## **Instrument**

Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was used to measure burnout. MBI consists of three dimensions: emotional exhaustion (9-item), depersonalization (5-item) and personal accomplishment (8-item) (Maslach and Jackson, 1986). To assess job satisfaction, a 15-item teacher job satisfaction instrument was adopted (PMW Associates, 2013)

Emotional exhaustion refers to the individual's personal stress period which includes a decrease of physical resources such as greater workload, adverse working conditions and problems of individuals inside the organizations. Those who experience emotional exhaustion feel exhausted and worthless. The second dimension, i.e., depersonalization, refers to a period where the individual does not care about other individuals' needs and feelings. Personal accomplishment

refers to individuals' negative evaluation of themselves and a decreased feeling of success, efficiency and proficiency in the organizations.

### **Reliability and Validity**

To find out the study collection tools reliability, the study performed Cronbach's alpha analyzing which is one of the most widely used measures of reliability in the social and organizational sciences (BONETT and WRIGHT, 2015). SPSS been used by using internal consistency methods (Cronbach's alpha). The Job Satisfaction Questionnaire had high reliability (Cronbach's alpha=0.81). The reliabilities of Maslach Burnout Questionnaire (MBQ) dimensions were: Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization subscales were almost equal: alpha=0.55, alpha=0.57 respectively. Cronbach's alpha for Personal Accomplishment subscale was=0.77. the validity of instruments was an acceptable level as well.

### **Instruments: Key Answers**

According to (Maslach and Jackson, 1986) the cutoff scores for the subscales of Burnout are as follows: For Emotional Exhaustion subscale, the scores of 27 or over is considered to be high level, while scores that range from 17–26 are considered to indicate a moderate level of emotional exhaustion. The scores between 0–16 show a low level. As for Depersonalization subscale, the cut off scores are as follows: The scores of 13 or more indicate a high level, while scores between 7–12 indicate a moderate level of depersonalization. Scores that range between 0–6 indicate a low level. Finally, the cut off scores for Personal Accomplishment subscale are as follows: The scores that range from 0–31 indicate a high level of this subscale, while scores between 32–38 indicate a moderate level. Scores between 39 or more indicate a low level of personal accomplishment.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There are some limitations of the study. First, the sample size was relatively small. Second, the samples came from one district, thus the results cannot be generalized to the overall population. Third, more independent variables could have been inserted to the study like, attitudes to career and level of motivation.

**Results**

The majority of the sample was male (91; 62%) and married (119; 82.1%) people. The specialization of most of the teachers was applied science (60; 41.4%) followed by social sciences (52; 35.9%). The age of the majority of the respondents (69.2%) ranged from 30-44 years (Table 1).

**Table 1: Demographics of the sample**

<b>Demographic variables</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Gender	Male	91	62.8
	Female	54	37.2
Marital status	Single	19	13.1
	Married	119	82.1
Specialization	Social science	52	35.9
	Applied science	60	41.4
	Law and economics	27	19.4
Age	20-34	56	38.6
	35-49	80	55.6
	50-59	8	5.6

The mean scores of the respondents on emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment sub-scales were 10.58 (SD=6.70), 7.74 (SD=5.98) and 32 (SD=10.55) respectively. Their mean score on job satisfaction scale was 47.97 (SD=9.68) (Table 2).

**Table 2: Levels of burnout and job satisfaction scales**

<b>Scales variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>N</b>
Emotional exhaustion	10.58	6.70	145
Depersonalization	7.74	5.98	145
Personal accomplishment	32.27	10.55	145
Job satisfaction	47.97	9.68	145

A statistically significant negative relationship was found between job satisfaction and two dimensions of burnout: depersonalization and emotional exhaustion respectively (r:-0.163, p: 0.05; r:-0.193, p: 0.02). In addition, a statistically significant positive relationship was found between job satisfaction and personal accomplishment dimension of burnout (r: 0.326, p: 0.001).



**Table 2: Correlation between job satisfaction sub-scales of burnout, age and experiences**

		experience	Emotional exhaustion	depersonalization	Personal accomplishment	Job satisfaction
Age class	Pearson Correlation	.753	-.084	-.117	-.017	.037
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.317	.162	.838	.663
Experience	Pearson Correlation	1	-.094	-.136	.137	.064
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.259	.103	.100	.448
emotional exhaustion	Pearson Correlation		1	.677	.078	-.193
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.000	.350	.020
Depersonalization	Pearson Correlation			1	-.052	-.163
	Sig. (2-tailed)				.538	.050
personal accomplishment	Pearson Correlation				1	.326
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.000

No difference was found between single and married respondents on any of the burnout sub-scales and on the job-satisfaction scale, as a consequence of large value of the significant level of alpha:  $\alpha > 0.05$  (Table 3).

**Table 3: burnout and job-satisfaction in regard to marital status**

	Marital status	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig.
Emotional exhaustion	Single	9.24	5.10	0.93	0.35
	Married	10.80	6.98		
Depersonalization	Single	7.58	4.99	0.19	0.84
	Married	7.88	6.15		
Personal accomplishment	Single	29.84	11.05	0.96	0.33
	Married	32.41	10.68		
Job satisfaction	Single	46.57	11.98	0.65	0.51
	Married	48.16	9.40		

As for gender, differences were found between male and female teachers on the burnout sub-scales or job satisfaction scale but were not statistically significant due to an alpha level being greater than 0.05 (Table 4).

**Table 4 :the gender differences effect on burnout and job satisfaction scales**

	Gender	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig.
Emotional exhaustion	Male	10.50	6.46	.18	.85
	Female	10.71	7.15		
Depersonalization	Male	7.82	5.84	.18	.85
	Female	7.62	6.28		
Personal accomplishment	Male	32.82	10.66	.81	.41
	Female	31.34	10.38		
Job satisfaction	Male	48.13	9.72	.26	.79
	Female	47.69	9.71		

Table 5 shows that teachers whose specialization is social sciences scored higher on all burnout subscales. While teachers specialized in law and economics scored lowest on emotional exhaustion and depersonalization subscales, but scored highest on the job satisfaction scale.

**Table 5: level of burnout and job satisfaction scales according to specialization**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional exhaustion	social science	53	13.10	7.59
	applied science	64	9.32	5.89
	law and economics	28	8.67	5.22
Depersonalization	social science	53	10.25	6.63
	applied science	64	6.35	4.97
	law and economics	28	6.19	5.42
Job satisfaction	law and economics	28	51.83	10.53
	applied science	64	46.33	9.09

Since the mean differences between respondents were large, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) one-way was used to find out if there is any difference among teachers based on their specializations. Table 5-2 shows that the difference between social sciences teachers and law, and economic teachers on emotional exhaustion  $F(2, 142) = 6.48$ ,  $p = 0.002$ , social science teachers had statistically significant ( $\alpha = 0.006$ ) or a higher level of Emotional exhaustion (M: 13.10, SD: 7.59) than teachers in applied science (M: 9.32, SD: 5.89) and

statistically significant ( $\alpha = 0.011$ ) higher level than law and economics M: 8.67, SD: 5.22). Depersonalization was significant F (2, 142) = 8.03.  $p = 0.001$ . Social science teachers had statistically significant ( $\alpha = 0.001$ ) higher level of depersonalization (M: 10.25, SD: 6.63) than teachers in applied science (M: 6.35, SD: 4.97) and statistically significant ( $\alpha = 0.008$ ) higher level than law and economics (M: 6.19, SD: 5.42). Job satisfaction F (2, 142) = 3.24.  $p = 0.04$ . Law and economics teachers had statistically significant ( $\alpha = 0.032$ ) higher level of Job satisfaction (M: 51.83, SD: 10.53) than teachers in applied science teachers (M: 46.33, SD: 9.09).

### Effect Size for Analysis of Variance

As study shown the statistically significant effect of specialization of the participant on job satisfaction and two subscales of burnout: Emotional exhaustion and Depersonalization. To compute the effect size, the study used eta square equation ( $\eta^2$ ) in the percentage of total variance explained for the data that were analyzed (Table 6).

**Table6:  $\eta^2$  in the percentage of total variance explained for the analyzed data**

		Sum of Squares	eta square equation ( $\eta^2$ ) in %
Depersonalization	Between Groups	524.76	10.16%
	Total	5164.16	
Emotional exhaustion	Between Groups	541.25	8.36%
	Total	6469.88	
Job satisfaction	Between Groups	590.44	4.37%
	Total	13512.22	

The results in the table above show that specialization had greater effect on two dimensions of burnout respectively: depersonalization (10.16%) Emotional exhaustion (8.36%), and smaller effect on job satisfaction (4.37%). More precisely, specialization of the participants had contributed to explaining the higher total variance change in depersonalization dimension in comparison to Emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction.

### Discussion

Burnout is prevalent among the occupations that deal with people. Teachers are among those who are subject to burnout, particularly under certain stressful

circumstances. In Iraqi Kurdistan Region, due to various reasons, teachers undergo difficult times and experience financial hardship.

The study found that teachers' job satisfaction level was about (M: 48, SD: 9.68). According to the score scale, the value is located in the neutral level. Generally, the level of teacher's job satisfaction demonstrates that teachers are not satisfied with their job but they have no other options since in Kurdistan a permanent job is the only income source for many. This result is in line with Gu (2016) study which found that teachers were ambivalent with their job satisfaction. This result was different from other studies that found levels of teachers' job satisfaction to be high (Demirtas, 2010; Sing et al. 2012; Tien, 2018; Tsigilis, Zachopoulou, & Grammatikopoulos, 2006; Chenevey, Ewing, & Whittington, 2008). The main reason for this difference might be different circumstances of teachers in the countries where the studies were conducted.

Emotional Exhaustion subscale score was at a low level: M: 10.6. SD: 6.7 (scores between 0–16 show a low level), Depersonalization subscale score was at a moderate level: M: 7.74, SD: 5.6 (scores from 7–12 indicate a moderate level), Personal Accomplishment subscale score was at a low level: M: 32.3, SD: 10.55 (Scores between 39 or more indicate a low level). The other studies found that the teachers generally had burnout experiences (Hakanen et al 2006); Shukla & Trivedi, 2008); Evers, Tomic & Brouwers, 2004; Gursel, Sunbul & Sari, 2002).

The current study found a statistically negative relationship between Job satisfaction and two dimensions of burnout: depersonalization and emotional exhaustion respectively ( $r:-0.163$ ,  $p: 0.05$ ;  $r:-0.193$ ,  $p: 0.02$ ), in addition that the statistically positive relationship between job satisfaction and personal accomplishment ( $r: 0.326$ ,  $p: 0.001$ ). The studies found that High levels of teachers' Job satisfaction were related to low teachers' emotional exhaustion levels (Tsigilis, Zachopoulou & Grammatikopoulos, 2006; Chenevey, Ewing, & Whittington, 2008). In addition, the job burnout of teachers leads to a decrease in job satisfaction (Goswami, 2013).

As the current study did not find any statistically significant effect between job satisfaction and burnout with regards to variables of age, experiences, marital status and gender difference. Other study found the demographic variables age and area of the workplace affect job burnout, but gender was not found to be a factor of job burnout (Goswami, 2013).

It is obvious that job satisfaction and burnout are affected by many factors such as financial rewards, income, fear of violence, role ambiguity and role conflict,

poor opportunities for promotion, lack of support (Tsigilis, Zachopoulou & Grammatikopoulos, 2006; Chenevey, Ewing, & Whittington, 2008; SaqibUsman, Akbar & Ramzan, 2013; Mehrad, 2014).

## **Conclusion**

The main aim of this study was to assess job satisfaction and burnout among teachers in Iraqi Kurdistan. As the result of the study showed that participants are suffering from burnout and they did not show any enjoyment in their job. More precisely, the teachers in the field of social sciences were holding a higher level of burnout at two subscales: Emotional exhaustion and Depersonalization. The gender, age and experiences hadn't a statistically significant effect on both job satisfaction and burnout, which means they were equally suffering. It is expected that teachers' level of job satisfaction will further decline and burnout level will increase if the financial circumstances did not improve. Certainly, this will negatively affect teachers' performance and exacerbates the condition of educational institutions in this particular region. Based on the study results, we recommend that Kurdistan Regional Government should take this matter seriously and pay more attentions and care to the teachers.

## **Suggestions for Future Study**

Future studies can expand the findings of this study, which may determine the associations of burnout with other variables such as meaning of life, happiness and type of personalities. Expansion of the current study may take in a larger sample size, both public and private institutes in the country.

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