

The Effect of Mindfulness on Job Burnout and Well-being: Mediating Role of Job Stress

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Introduction

Human resources are the most critical asset for organizations to achieve their goals, and employees' mental health plays a fundamental role in this regard. One of the factors influencing mental health is job burnout, which stems from stress and work overload, leading to physical and emotional exhaustion, a negative outlook on the job, and reduced interactions (Peters & Rajasingam, 2019). Job burnout encompasses three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Artz et al., 2022). Job burnout not only reduces the quality of work life but also leads to poor employee performance (Wang et al., 2020). Another key factor that influences the quality of life, performance, and profitability of individuals, reflecting their positive evaluation of their functioning in life, is psychological well-being (Kaabomeir et al., 2021). The psychological well-being model comprises six core components: autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relations with others, purpose in life, personal growth, and self-acceptance (Ryff, 1989).

Job stress can be considered the most significant factor influencing health, job quality of life, work performance, and also burnout and psychological well-being. This stress arises from job- and workplace-related stressors that many agree are inherently stressful. Generally, job stress occurs when the demands of the workplace exceed an individual's

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capabilities (Weinstein et al., 2009).

Mindfulness is defined as the purposeful attention to the present moment without judgment. To achieve mindfulness, one must become aware of and detach from constant judgments about external and internal experiences (Gehart, 2012). The seven key factors of mindfulness are: (1) non-judging, (2) patience, (3) beginner's mind, (4) trust, (5) non-striving, (6) acceptance, and (7) letting go. Research shows that mindfulness is positively associated with mental health and reduce stress and burnout in the workplace (Mackenzie et al., 2006). Therefore, due to the importance of job burnout and psychological well-being in organizations and the ability of mindfulness to influence both, a theoretical model was designed to explore the relationship between mindfulness, job burnout, and psychological well-being with job stress as a mediator.

Method

This study is a correlational design using structural equation modeling, which is a multivariate correlational method. The population of the research was all the employees of the Dareh-Aloo Copper Industries. The sample consisted of 300 employees who were selected by a simple random sampling method, and 210 of them filled out the forms properly. The instruments used include Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI), the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) stress questionnaire, the Psychological Well-being Scale, and the Burnout Inventory.

Results

Initially, descriptive indices, normality of data test results, and correlation coefficients were reported. After preliminary analysis, it was observed that the direct path of mindfulness to job burnout and mindfulness to well-being were not significant and confirmed all the direct effects of mindfulness on burnout and well-being were through job stress. Subsequently, Findings indicated the proposed model after modifying fits the data properly. χ^2/df (2.31), GFI (0.98), AGFI (0.94), IFI (0.99), TLI (0.97), CFI (0.99), NFI (0.98), RMSEA (0.08)

Discussion

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between mindfulness, job burnout, and psychological well-being, with job stress as a mediator. The results indicated that after necessary adjustments, the model showed a good fit with the data. The study found no direct relationship between mindfulness and job burnout, aligning with the findings of Suyi et al. (2017). It also revealed that job stress mediates the relationship between mindfulness and job burnout. In terms of the indirect relationship, Pflügner

et al. (2020) demonstrated that mindfulness affects job burnout through job stress. Suyi et al. (2017) confirmed these findings by supporting the mediating role of job stress in the relationship between mindfulness and job burnout.

According to Maslach & Jackson (1993), burnout results from stressors and an individual's inability to cope with them, leading to physical and emotional exhaustion, a negative view of the job, and detachment from clients and coworkers. Burnout can be defined as a psychological experience arising from chronic stress (Milfont et al., 2008), while Shirom (2003) introduced it as an emotional response to persistent stress, gradually depleting energy and causing physical and psychological fatigue and job dissatisfaction.

Previous research has shown that mindfulness enhances effective coping strategies for dealing with stress. Mindfulness directs individuals toward efficient coping mechanisms and prevents them from avoiding problems, leading to better stress management and reduction. Mindful individuals are more likely to engage in stressful situations and attempt to resolve them, rather than avoiding these situations or allowing them to negatively affect those (Weinstein et al., 2009).

Furthermore, the results indicated no direct relationship between mindfulness and psychological well-being. Mindfulness affects psychological well-being through job stress, demonstrating that job stress serves as an effective mediator. The findings of Talebi (2017) and Sedaghat et al. (2011) also supported the increase in psychological well-being through mindfulness via job stress. Job stress has several negative consequences, including physical, psychological, and behavioral problems such as depression, frustration, anxiety, job dissatisfaction, and social isolation. These consequences are clearly in contrast to psychological well-being. While stress at optimal levels may lead to alertness, accuracy, and performance, when these stressors exceed an individual's tolerance, they lead to undesirable outcomes, reducing psychological well-being and mental health.

Keywords: Job burnout, Job stress, Mindfulness, Well-being

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