

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEES' COMMITMENT TO THE ORGANIZATION AND THEIR BURNOUT IN PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES: THEORETICAL INSIGHTS

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Abstract. This article analyzes the relationship between employees' commitment to the organization and professional burnout. Attracting and retaining employees is becoming one of the most important goals of organizations. As a result, there is more and more talk about employee commitment to the organization, which is considered as one of the indicators of organizational success. Organizations that encourage employee engagement experience financial benefits, increased profits, lower employee turnover, and increased employee motivation. Unfortunately, in recent years, many employees are experiencing professional burnout syndrome, which causes undesirable consequences for the organization. Due to the feeling of constant work-related tension and too little time for rest, employees feel exhausted, and work productivity falls. Therefore, an organization that cares for the well-being of employees and promotes commitment is less likely to suffer from professional burnout syndrome, which strongly disrupts the employee's efficiency in the working environment and causes a negative psychological state.

The article aims to reveal theoretical insights into the relationship between employees' commitment to the organization and their professional burnout. To achieve this goal, this article analyzes the concepts of commitment and professional burnout, as well as the signs of professional burnout. After analyzing the scientific literature, it was found that there is a close relationship between employee commitment and professional burnout. Professional burnout reduces the employee's emotional commitment to the organization and the other way, emotionally committed employees have the least chance of burnout.

Keywords: organizational commitment, types of organizational commitment, burnout, professional burnout syndrome, dimensions of burnout.

INTRODUCTION

In modern organizations, attracting and retaining employees becomes one of the most important goals. As a result, there is more and more talk about employee commitment to the organization, which is considered one of the indicators of organizational success. Organizations that promote employee engagement experience financial benefits, increased profits, lower employee turnover, and higher employee motivation for work. The importance of employee commitment concept to the organization is growing, especially now, with increasing globalization and changing generations (Zangaro, 2001). Young employees have more opportunities to get an education abroad, they are better aware of their options, they are more flexible and open to changes, which makes it harder to retain them (Alonderienė, Juknevičienė, 2017). Employee commitment to the organization can be more effective contribution to the success of the institution than money, as it contributes to increasing the competitive advantage of the organization (Bučiūnienė, 2006; Iqbal, 2016; Kavaliauskienė, 2011; Khan et al. 2010 Zeffane, 2009).

On the other hand, employees who are strongly committed to the organization are more emotionally devoted to their work and devote more energy and time to the organization. This creates conditions for the employee to exhaust all available emotional resources and to quickly become exhausted and burned out. Professional burnout of employees is referred to in the scientific literature as a state that manifests in the working environment, which strongly affects the functioning of the employee and causes a negative psychological state (Genevičiūtė-Janonienė et al., 2015).

In scientific works, there are many studies of both employee commitment to the organization and the phenomena of professional burnout (Koyuncu, Burke, 2008; Jia et al., 2009; Mikalauskas, Širvinskas, Macas, Padaiga, 2016; Akdemir, 2019; Sarisik, Bogan, Zengin, Dedeoglu, 2019; Li, Zhang, Lu, XueJing, 2020; Rashad, Rosari 2020; Mohamed, Essmat, et al. 2020, et al.). Research conducted by other researchers allows us to assume that professional burnout reduces commitment to the organization, and as emotional commitment increases, the likelihood of burnout decreases. This assumption presupposes the problem addressed in the article, which is formulated as a problematic question: is there a relationship between employees' commitment to the organization and their professional burnout?

The purpose of the article is to reveal theoretical insights into the relationship between employees' commitment to the organization and their burnout in professional activities.

CONCEPT OF EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

In scientific literature (Bučiūnienė, 2006; Janonienė, Skučaitė, Endriulaitienė, 2015) commitment to the organization is defined as a strong employee's emotional connection with the organization. A strong bond encourages the employee to be a reliable member of the organization and be more dedicated to it. Kavaliauskienė (2011) mentions that the employee stays in the organization only for personal benefit. Some researchers (Passarelli, 2011; Janonienė, Skučaitė and Endriulaitienė, 2015, etc.) claim that an employee becomes committed to an organization when he identifies with it, when he recognizes its values, goals and wants to contribute to the implementation of these goals.

Analyzing the scientific literature (Karakus, Aslan, 2009; Kavaliauskienė, 2011; Meyer et al., 2002; Rana, 2010; Pakalkaitė, 2006; Veršinskienė and Večkienė, 2007, etc.) we noticed that researchers mostly refer to Meyer and Allen (1991) proposed classification of forms of organizational commitment. It is the emotional, normative and continuing forms of commitment that are considered general and most accurately describe the definition of an employee's commitment to the organization. Scientists say that emotional commitment describes the employee's desire to stay in the organization, identify with it and willingly get involved in its activities. Certainly, emotionally committed employees are committed to their organization, work harder and act more responsibly than what is required of them. According to the authors, such an emotional connection with the organization occurs when the employee appreciates and likes what he does, believes in the significance of his profession. When an employee feels continuous commitment, he stays working in the organization because he understands that he has no other choice, he would lose a lot by leaving the job, and working in the existing organization is the best alternative, it is financially beneficial for him. An employee who is committed in a normative form of commitment understands that he is doing the right thing while working in the existing organization, he feels that he must stay out of a sense of duty. Also, such an employee in may be held back by a feeling of gratitude to managers or colleagues. The employee does not consider the possibility of leaving because he does not want his colleagues to think of him negatively.

The employee's commitment to the organization is associated with job satisfaction, good mutual relations, higher employee motivation, etc. These positive traits take on a negative meaning when an employee experiences signs of professional burnout. Then, everything that encouraged the employee to stay in the organization suddenly becomes a disincentive and brings negative consequences to the employee's state.

CONCEPT OF PROFESSIONAL BURNOUT

According to Jenaro, Flores and Arias (2007), the research conducted in Europe allowed us to determine that a third of the respondents have experienced stress at work, and a fifth of the respondents have already experienced burnout themselves. The majority of researchers (Schaufeli, Leiter, 2001; Pacevičius, 2006; Kim, Stoner, 2008) describe professional burnout as emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion is caused by constant internal concern for others, stress and participation in emotionally difficult situations at work.

Scientists (Schaufeli, Greenglass, 2001; Kristensen 2005; Pacevičius, 2006; Gudžinskienė, 2012) also describe professional burnout as physical exhaustion, which results from fatigue when constantly working in difficult working conditions, when the employee has too little rest, eventually exhausting their body. When an employee constantly feels restless, their motivation to go to work disappears. According to Kristensen (2005), fatigue leads to employee unproductiveness at work, and this affects work results. According to Gudžinskienė (2012), when an employee begins to feel dissatisfaction with his work results, personal expectations are no longer met, they become indifferent to everything, stress and fatigue appear leading to professional burnout syndrome.

Professional burnout of employees is considered a state that manifests in the working environment, strongly disrupts the employee's efficiency and causes a negative psychological state (Genevičiūtė-Janonienė et al., 2015; Li, Zhang, Lu, XueJing, 2020).

In the scientific literature (Abromaitienė and Stanišauskienė, 2014; Bakker et al., 2004; Gudžinskienė and Pozdniakovas, 2020; Lazauskaitė-Zabielskė, Urbanavičiūtė and Rekašiūtė-Balsienė, 2017; Lewin and Sager, 2007; Vaicekauskienė, 2014, etc.), professional burnout syndrome is often analyzed through its three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced work achievement. According to the authors, the dimension of emotional exhaustion is an essential element of the professional burnout syndrome, which is described as a feeling of fatigue, exhaustion and weakness, lack of energy, and a person's emotional exhaustion of resources and even overwork. Researchers describe the dimension of depersonalization as

emotional and physical detachment, distancing from others, keeping a distance in general. The authors claim that this dimension manifests itself in the employee's cold and formal communication with other people at work, as well as cynical, arrogant and disrespectful behavior, employee's superficial attitude towards his work, when employee's disinterest in work is felt. The dimension of reduced work achievement described in the scientific literature as an employee's feeling of self-depreciation and lack of confidence in his own abilities. The employee feels as if his competence is no longer sufficient to perform his duties properly, which leads to dissatisfaction. The employee no longer feels significant and his desire to achieve results decreases. At that time, the employee may feel that his professional activity does not allow him to fulfill his goals or meet his expectations.

SYMPTOMS OF PROFESSIONAL BURNOUT

According to researchers (Abromaitienė, Stanišauskienė, 2014; Mikalauskas, Širvinskas et al., 2016), employees suffering from burnout syndrome feel emotional and physical fatigue for a long time. Physical exhaustion is characterized as a feeling of fatigue, decreased activity and initiative, frequent headaches, insomnia, overeating, and lack of energy. Maslach, Schaufeli, Leiter (2001) claim that the most prominent sign of professional burnout is emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion is characterized by emotional fatigue, anxiety, irritability, constant tension, frequent mood swings, thoughts of leaving the organization, disappointment in one's profession, loss of desire to go to work.

Burisch (2002) divides the main signs of professional burnout into several groups. Each group has unique characteristics that indicate the expression of professional burnout (see Table 1).

As can be seen in Table 1, the signs are divided into certain groups according to different symptoms. At the very beginning of professional burnout, there are signs from the warning group, which are initially evaluated as positive, due to dedication to work, but if this continues for too long, signs of exhaustion appear. According to Burisch (2002) and Vimantaitė (2007), when moving from a positive state, an emotional, conscious distancing of the employee from his environment is observed and finally he begins to distance himself from work and colleagues. An employee who feels constant pressure from his superiors, experiences negative feelings. The feeling that you cannot control anything yourself and inability to fulfill expectations of yourself or those around you, changes employee's perception of work. Finally, when overworked, employee begins to hate his job, his colleagues, and customers. All this leads to the third group of signs - an emotional reaction: aggression or depression. At the weakening stage, it becomes more and more difficult for the employee to concentrate, make appropriate decisions, motivation weakens and resistance to any changes begins. Psychosomatic reactions show how the human body reacts to a certain situation. Due to the lack of balance between mind and body, due to stress, anxiety, exhaustion, various ailments appear: sleep disorder, headache, indigestion, increase in blood pressure, etc. According to Mikalauskas et al., (2016), personal ailments lead to a feeling of exhaustion and powerlessness, which causes inadequate reactions to the environment and poorer work results.

In the table (see Table 1), changes in spirituality are assigned to the last group. These changes show that the employee is in despair and needs professional help (Vimantaitė, 2007). Thus, not necessarily all of the above-mentioned signs appear in an employee experiencing professional burnout, but a set of various symptoms and their gradual increase cause a greater risk for the manifestation of professional burnout syndrome.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEES' COMMITMENT TO THE ORGANIZATION AND THEIR PROFESSIONAL BURNOUT

The managers of the organization expect high commitment from an employee, because then employees devote more of their time and effort to the benefit of the organization. It is important that the level of commitment can change over time, it depends on many factors. One of these factors is burnout (Akdemir, 2019). When an organization cares about employee well-being and encourages commitment, employees are less likely to suffer from burnout. On the other hand, employees with strong organizational commitment are more focused on work, spend more energy and time on tasks at work and fulfill commitments. Unfortunately, there are cases where this creates conditions for the employee to use up their available emotional resources and quickly become overworked.

According to Sarisik, Bogan, Zengin, Dedeoglu (2019), professional burnout, as well as cynicism, a decrease in personal aspirations, weakens commitment to the organization. According to Maslach, Schaufeli,

Leiter (2001), strong commitment to the organization shows employee's positive attitude towards his profession and provides an opportunity to be proud of his work, which creates a positive attitude towards the employee's future. Koyuncu and Burke (2008) found in their study that students who are engaged in their studies and have a low level of academic burnout are more committed to their careers. The authors also note that one of the elements of academic burnout, cynicism, is an important factor influencing employee commitment. Jia et al. (2009) study results showed that all dimensions of professional burnout are negatively related to affective commitment. Normative commitment is negatively related to cynicism and ineffectiveness, reluctance to achieve better results, while continuance commitment is positively related to exhaustion and cynicism. Ciftcioglu's (2011) study revealed that exhaustion, a core element of burnout, acts as a mediator between affective commitment and employee turnover. Akdemir (2019), on the basis of studies carried out (Çetin, Basım, Aydoğan, 2011; Asmaningrum, Irianto, 2013; Sajidas, 2014) in educational institutions, indicates that organizational commitment has an important effect in determining the level of burnout. In other words, the lower the level of teacher burnout, the stronger the commitment to the institution. An identical trend is observed in medical institutions. Mikalauskas, Širvinskas and others (2016) and Akdemir (2019) mention that studies (Khalil Ashkar, 2010; Haghani, Hazraty, Moosivand, 2016; Demirel, Tohum, Kartal, 2017) analyzing the states of medical residents and nurses found a conclusive relationship between burnout and commitment. This link is explained by the prevalence of psychosocial risk factors among medical personnel, such as stress, long working hours, high demands at work, work-reward mismatch, which leads to emotional exhaustion, which reduces the desire to achieve results, all of which negatively affect commitment to the organization or profession.

Sarisik et al. (2019), Rashad and Rosari (2020) revealed that long-term stress threatens both work of employees and their personal life and health. Chronic stress leads to personal burnout, which manifests itself in a low sense of job satisfaction, lower drive, work productivity and weaker employee commitment. According to Rashad and Rosari (2020), professional burnout occurs all over the world, but this trend is especially noticeable in Western and developing countries. This is determined by the yearly increasing competition between organizations and the demands placed on employees. The increase of professional burnout in organizations increases the probability of employees leaving their current institution, changing their profession. Hence, if the level of burnout increases, the employee's commitment to the organization weakens.

Sarisik et al. (2019) found that dimensions of professional burnout correlate with commitment. This means that burnout reduces the commitment of employees, and vice versa, a low level of commitment is the reason for the emergence of professional burnout syndrome. The authors distinguished that normative commitment is positively correlated with burnout, while affective commitment has no significant effect on the expression of burnout. Accordingly, when employees' emotional exhaustion is low, their level of commitment increases. In other words, emotional commitment to the organization is negatively related to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, but positively related to personal achievement (Basami, Chizari, Abbasi, 2013). Affective commitment is the most relevant element among all forms of organizational commitment in predicting employee burnout. It has been suggested that as emotional commitment increases, the likelihood of emotional exhaustion decreases (Li, Zhang, Lu & XueJing, 2020). Emotionally committed employees want to identify with the organization they work for. This is what protects employees from emotional exhaustion. In addition, strongly emotionally committed employees are not prone to depersonalization and they see themselves as productive and efficient employees (Genevičiūtė-Janonienė et al., 2015; Sarisik et al. 2019).

Emotionally committed employees maintain better relationships with colleagues, receive more emotional support and help from them (Meng, Luo, Huang, Wen, Ma, Xi, 2019). As stated by Sarisik et al. (2019), when an employee feels an emotional commitment to the organization, he works more efficiently, strives for better results, and is less likely to experience any symptoms of professional burnout (see Table 1).

According to researchers (Kavaliauskienė, 2012; Genevičiūtė-Janonienė et al. 2015; Li, Zhang, Lu & XueJing, 2020), a strong normative commitment can cause emotional exhaustion, as employees try to meet the expectations of others and remain at work, out of a sense of duty. Carrying out this duty while making as much effort as possible for the benefit of the organization may require more than the employee's emotional resources and lead to emotional exhaustion. On the other hand, with the strengthening of normative commitment, the employee's work efficiency increases, because he feels the obligation to do everything perfectly.

Thus, professional burnout is associated with feelings of dissatisfaction with work, health ailments, physical or emotional exhaustion, depression, reduced feeling of confidence, self-depreciation, lack of tolerance, considerations of leaving the organization, reduced work productivity and many other signs that become apparent when work causes stress for the employee. Although, according to Mohamed and Essmat

(2020), burnout is a stress reaction found among employees all over the world, but it is not a welcome phenomenon in organizations, because this reaction reduces the desire of employees to provide quality services, to work for the good of the organization. Mohamed and Essmat (2020) confirm that burnout reduces the level of emotional commitment of an employee, which greatly affects organizational performance.

Thus, burnout is negatively related to affective commitment but positively related to normative commitment and continuance commitment (Li, Zhang, Lu & XueJing, 2020). A study conducted by Haghani and colleagues (2016) showed that if an employee feels professionally burnt out, the level of continuous commitment to the organization increases along with this state. Genevičiūtė-Janonienė with colleagues (2015) also claim that a stronger level of continuous commitment can strengthen the tendency of employees to depersonalize. Similar results were obtained by Basami et al. (2013), Sarisik et al. (2019) studies found a positive relationship between continuance commitment, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization.

The theoretical connection between the symptoms of professional burnout syndrome and the forms of employee commitment, obtained from the analysis of the scientific literature, is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

The theoretical relationship between the signs of professional burnout and the forms of commitment
Based on Vimantaite (2007); According to the Institute of Hygiene (2018)

Symptom group	Signs of an employee who feels professional burnout	Form of commitment			Burnout dimensions
		Emotional	Normative	Continuous	
1. Signs of an alert	1. Voluntary unpaid overtime	x	x		<i>Emotional exhaustion</i>
	2. Not seeing mistakes and disappointments	x	x		
	3. No new contacts are made anymore			x	
	4. The feeling that you are irreplaceable	x	x		
	5. Constant fatigue	x	x	x	
	6. Physical exhaustion		x	x	
2. Decreased devotion to those around you	7. Moving away from your customers		x	x	<i>Depersonalization</i>
	8. Losing dreams or illusions			x	
	9. Begins to disgust his work			x	
	10. Coldness, cynical attitude			x	
	11. Decreased desire to listen to others	x		x	
	12. Avoiding informal contacts		x	x	
	13. Delving into oneself, loneliness	x	x		
	14. Feeling that you are being exploited		x	x	
3. Emotional reactions, accusations	15. Problems with colleagues, partner		x	x	<i>Emotional exhaustion</i>
	16. Constant feeling of guilt		x		
	17. Emotional exhaustion, weakness		x	x	
	18. Mood swings, propensity to cry	x			
	19. A sense of resentment and meaninglessness			x	
	20. Restlessness, nervousness, irritability			x	
	21. Suicidal thoughts		x	x	
	22. Lack of tolerance		x	x	
4. Weakening	23. Constant reproaches to those around you			x	<i>Decrease in personal aspirations</i>
	24. Inability to concentrate	x	x		
	25. No longer able to solve problems		x		
	26. Strengthened indifference			x	
	27. Decreased work efficiency			x	
	28. Decreased initiative			x	
	29. Resisting change			x	
	30. Thoughts of changing the profession			x	
	31. Devaluation of competences and ability		x	x	

Table 1 continued on the next page

Symptom group	Signs of an employee who feels professional burnout	Form of commitment			Burnout dimensions
		Emotional	Normative	Continuous	
5. Psychosomatic reactions	32. The inability to relax	x	x		<i>Emotional exhaustion</i>
	33. Disturbed sleep, unpleasant dreams	x	x	x	
	34. Dizziness, pain		x	x	
	35. Impaired digestion, nausea		x	x	
	36. Tense muscles	x	x	x	
	37. Disturbed heart rhythm		x	x	
6. Changes in spirituality	38. Increased consumption of alcohol, coffee, tobacco	x	x	x	<i>Emotional exhaustion</i>
	39. Pessimistic attitude to life		x	x	
	40. The feeling that everything around is hopeless		x	x	
	41. A sense of meaninglessness		x	x	

The signs of burnout shown in Table 1 show that employees who feel emotional commitment have the lowest probability of burnout, usually do not experience emotional exhaustion, and if there are cases where an emotionally committed employee does burn out, his symptoms are not very serious or negative, i.e. such an employee exhibits only a few symptoms, such as mood swings, health problems, physical exhaustion that results from overtime or reduced quality of rest, etc. Employees with a sense of normative commitment are more likely to experience emotional and physical exhaustion because they are trying so hard to please members of the organization. Such employees want to control everything, they do not refuse to work overtime, they work more just to justify their name, to earn recognition. Unfortunately, in the long run, too much effort exhausts the worker, which leads to a decreased sense of self-respect to themselves and to those around them, poor health, and increased use of psychoactive substances in an attempt to reduce the feeling of fatigue. As can be seen in Table 1, continuous commitment is mostly marked (x). This means that the employee whose commitment form is continuous has the highest risk of burnout, and such an employee exhibits almost all of the above-mentioned signs of a burnout. When an employee stays in the organization just because he has no other job offers, it shows that he is not dedicated to his duties, he no longer makes great efforts to achieve results, he only works as much as he is entitled to. Depersonalization, cynicism, lack of tolerance in all surrounding aspects are also strongly manifested, illness occurrence increases as well as feeling of meaninglessness, because such an employee no longer wants to work, but still remains in the organization and works without dedication to his profession. If this feeling continues for a long time, the employee eventually becomes indifferent to those around him and burns out, then the aforementioned symptoms of professional burnout appear (see Table 1).

So, it can be argued that professional burnout is related to commitment to the organization. Emotional commitment to the organization is associated with lower burnout, while normative and continuance commitment to the organization is associated with greater burnout. From this, it can be concluded that employees' commitment to the organization is a rather important factor predicting their professional burnout. It should be emphasized that there are different relationships of all forms of commitment to the organization with professional burnout, i.e., emotional commitment reduces professional burnout, while normative and continuous commitment increases the likelihood of employees burning out at work.

CONCLUSIONS

Committed employees believe in the goals of the organization, are determined to make efforts for the benefit of the organization, it is like a motivating force for the employee, which creates added value for the organization. The analysis of scientific literature allows us to say that commitment can be in three forms: emotional, continuous and normative.

Professional burnout is a complex and relevant phenomenon today. It is a long-lasting condition in which employees feel physically and emotionally exhausted, which has negative consequences for the performance of the organization. Professional burnout is expressed on the basis of three dimensions (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, reduction of personal aspirations).

After analyzing the scientific literature, it was found that there is a close relationship between employee commitment and professional burnout in professional activities. Professional burnout reduces employee's emotional commitment to the organization and vice versa, emotionally committed employees have

the least chance of burnout. Normative or continuous commitment of employees promote the emergence of professional burnout syndrome because employees who remain in the organization out of a sense of duty or not of their own volition and work without much commitment, in the long run cause negative consequences for the organization, its customers and even themselves.

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