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The Relationship Between Job Burnout and Psychological Contract of Employee from the Perspective of Organizational Psychology

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ABSTRACT

In a fast-paced career, employees are facing more and more pressure, and job burnout caused by long-term work pressure has become the main reason for many employees to leave. If the job burnout can't be effectively resolved, it will have a great impact on personal future development and the good running of the enterprise. Starting from the perspective of organizational psychology, this study investigates 200 employees on their psychological contracts and job burnouts to discover the relationship between them that people are most concerned about at the moment, so as to propose some reasonable suggestions to improve the employee job burnout and enhance the mutual identification between employee and the company. The research results show that job burnout and psychological contract show a critically negative correlation; the stronger the psychological contract, the lower the probability of employee job burnout. In addition, the establishment of a strong psychological contract between the company and the employee can effectively reduce the employee's job burnout, thereby ensuring the mutual benefit of the employee and the company.

1. Introduction

Since the 21st century, the development of economic globalization has become more and more mature, and the pressure and survival on all walks of life in the development is increasing^[1]. Work pressure, life pressure, and family pressure will all affect us, resulting in job burnout. It will reduce the work enthusiasm, reduce work efficiency, and increase emotional ups and downs. Relevant literature studies have shown that employee burnout will affect personal physical and mental health, such as headache, anxiety, insomnia, and even depression^[2]. For enterprises, it will cause higher turnover

rate and brain drain, which will have a great impact on the development of the enterprise. According to *The Status Quo of Job Burnout among Chinese Workplace Workers in 2014*, job burnout is widespread in the workplace, and it points out that 74.3% of respondents with mild job burnout and 10.8% of respondents with severe job burnout^[3]. Thus, it is clear that job burnout has become a "work sickness" that can't be ignored in the workplace. Therefore, how to better the job burnout of employees in the workplace has become a hot topic of concern.

Organizational psychology belongs to a branch of psychology, and it mainly focuses on the study of psy-

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chological phenomena and psychological relationships and laws within the company^[4]. This research topic is to study the psychology and behavior of individuals in the company, such as the work motivation and work attitude of employees. Studies have shown that Western scholars combined with industrial company psychology for related research and analysis. The main research in this field is the impact between employee behavior and attitude and corporate social responsibility^[5]. Based on the relationship between employees and the company, employees are considered important stakeholders of the company, and the study of corporate social responsibility from the perspective of employees based on different contexts is a new field and direction for micro-level corporate social responsibility research^[6]. Many experts and scholars have combined organizational psychology and behavioral science to expand and develop the concepts put forward by predecessors, and interpret the relationship between employees and companies from the following three aspects: the company is the main body of corporate social responsibility; employees are important stakeholders of the company and the objects of corporate social responsibility (the company also has many stakeholders); and employees mainly experience the company's corporate social responsibility behavior towards employees through psychological perception and cognitive processing^[7]. These employees are in different positions and have different work goals, but they all serve a company. Various employees have different psychology and behaviors. This is of great significance for studying the job burnout and psychological contract of different employees. It also has a great influence on the adjustment of the relationship among members in the company, between the superior and the subordinate, and between the individual and the company. Reasonable adjustment can effectively avoid job burnout of the members in the company, and enhance their contract spirit, thereby promoting good development of the company^[8].

Job burnout originated in Western countries^[9], and it was preliminary researched after 1970. Domestic research objects on job burnout are mainly focused on teachers, medical staff, and public security police. Research on corporate employees is relatively rare^[10]. However, corporate employees are more unstable than teachers and medical staff, and their work content is more complicated, so they face more intense job burnout, with more obvious effect on the company^[11]. Therefore, the study of job burnout has more extensive application value for enterprise employees. For employees facing job burnout, companies supporting employees

from multiple angles under this situation can play a role in alleviating employees' job burnout and stimulating their work enthusiasm to^[12]. Related research shows that there is an unwritten and implicit mutual expectation and mutual understanding psychological contract relationship between companies and employees^[13]. Based on the perspective of organizational psychology, the relationship between employee burnout and psychological contract is analyzed and studied in this article so as to provide reference for alleviating employee burnout and enhancing their psychological contract.

2. Methods

2.1 Research Methods

200 enterprise employees in xx city are surveyed, and the relationship between job burnout and psychological contract is discussed from the perspective of organizational psychology. The sample selection covers the service industry, manufacturing, retail, and finance.

After the questionnaire in this study is determined, they were distributed in September 2020. The questionnaires are collected online and offline. As of October 2020, a total of 200 questionnaires have been received, with 198 valid questionnaires, so the recovery rate is 99%.

The Chinese Maslach Burnout Inventory (CMBI) is adopted, which is revised by Li Yongxin et al. to meet the working conditions and characteristics of China^[6]. The *Psychological Contract Questionnaire* designed by Li Yuan is adopted, which is applicable for the working background and characteristics of Chinese employees; it covers a total of 20 questions, including two parts: organizational responsibilities and employee responsibilities^[7]. The SPSS1.0 statistical software is applied to analyze all recovered data. Specific statistical methods include the descriptive statistical analysis and reliability analysis^[8].

2.2 Reasonability Analysis of Questionnaires

The job burnout scale used in this research is CMBI, which is developed from the most influential and dominant three-dimensional theoretical model of job burnout in this field. The model refers to the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) proposed by famous psychologists Maslach and Jackson. The model believes that job burnout includes three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, dehumanization, and low sense of accomplishment^[14]. Another representative theoretical model of job burnout theory is proposed by Pines et al. They believe that job burnout is manifested in three aspects: physical exhaustion, emotional exhaustion, and psychological exhaustion^[15]. According to the

statistics of foreign scholars, more than 90% of the existing work burnout experimental studies are based on the MBI scale.

The psychological contract questionnaire widely used abroad is the *Psychological Contract Measurement Questionnaire* compiled by Millward & Hopkins [16]. Domestic scholars have also put forward a series of measurement questionnaires suitable for China's national conditions. The *psychological contract questionnaire* used in this research is the Psychological Contract Questionnaire adapted by Li Yuan. The empirical research in the questionnaire found that the psychological contract with Eastern social culture consists of normative responsibility, interpersonal responsibility and developmental responsibility, showing more complicated social interpersonal relationships.

The questionnaire survey method is adopted in this research to distribute the questionnaires to the people in xx city, aiming to investigate the age, gender, income, occupation, job burnout, and psychological contract of employees in the region. In addition, related software is applied to establish a database. SPSS20.0 software statistical analysis is adopted to analyze the factors affecting job burnout and psychological contract, so as to propose the improvement measures to the company. The questionnaire survey uses a stratified sampling method to stratify employees according to their working years. Then, simple random sampling or systematic sampling is carried out in each layer, and the sub-samples drawn from each layer are formed into the total research sample. Finally, the results are analyzed comprehensively.

The main framework of the questionnaire: the first part shows the analysis of the population (age, gender, income, education level, occupation, etc.); the second part is the analysis of the status quo of job burnout; and the third part is the analysis of the employee's psychological contract.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Descriptive Statistical Results

The relationship between the job burnout and psychological contract of employees is explored and discussed in this study from the perspective of organizational psychology. A total of 198 valid questionnaires are collected through online and offline questionnaires. The ratio of males to females is shown in the Figure 1 below. It illustrates that the male respondents account for 53.03%, and the female respondents account for 46.97%, so the gender of respondents has little effect on the survey results.

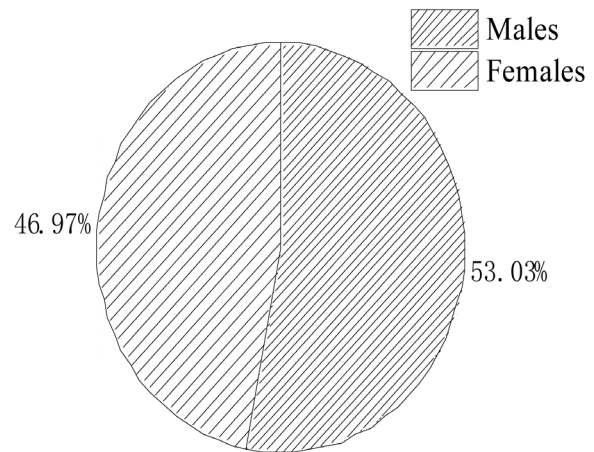


Figure 1. The ratio of males to females

The recovered data is sorted out and analyzed, and the statistical analysis results for the relationship between the job burnout and psychological contract the respondents are given as follows (Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive statistical analysis on the job burnout and psychological contract

Scale	Average value		Statistical value of standard deviation	
	Statistical value	Standard deviation		
Job burnout	Depression	3.172	0.039	1.211
	Perfunctoriness	2.986	0.032	1.092
	Low personal value	3.542	0.072	1.324
Psychological contract (company)	Normative	3.225	0.045	0.821
	Developmental	3.097	0.049	0.878
	Interpersonal	3.159	0.042	0.994
Psychological contract (employee)	Normative	3.972	0.019	0.423
	Developmental	4.315	0.022	0.519
	Interpersonal	4.126	0.025	0.507

The above table 1 indicates that low personal value in job burnout accounts for a larger proportion, followed by depression and then perfunctoriness. This shows that in the company, employees should be given more encouragement and support, which can effectively reduce the employee depression.

Comparison on psychological contract of the company and employees reveals the responsibility under psychological contract of employee is higher than that of the company, indicating that employees have a deeper understanding of the company, can abide by organizational rules and regulations, and pay more attention to

their development in the company; on the other hand, the responsibility under psychological contract of the company is relatively weak, so it has to improve the responsibility of company.

3.2 Credibility analysis of the scales

Table 2. Credibility analysis on psychological contract and job burnout of the employee

Variable	Item	Cronbach's coefficient	Total credibility
Psychological contract (employee)	Normative	0.873	0.952
	Developmental	0.895	
	Interpersonal	0.899	
Job burnout	Depression	0.968	0.786
	Perfunctoriness	0.939	
	Low personal value	0.901	

Table 2 shows that the normative, developmental, and interpersonal coefficient under psychological contract if employee are 0.873, 0.895, and 0.899, respectively, and the total credibility is 0.952. In addition, the total credibility of the job burnout coefficient is 0.786, which is above the standard of 0.7. Thus, comprehensively speaking, the results of the scale can be used in this study.

3.3 Analysis on Difference between Job Burnout and Psychological Contract of Employee's Personal Characteristics

In order to explore the impacts of different age groups, genders, and income levels on the job burnout and psychological contract, the analysis of variance is adopted.

Table 3. Analysis on difference between job burnout and psychological contract of employee's personal characteristics (sig < 0.05)

Personal characteristics	Job burnout			Psychological contract (employee)		
	Depression	Perfunctoriness	Low personal value	Normative	Developmental	Interpersonal
Gender	.312	.874	.032	.428	.852	.572
Education level	.290	.879	.587	.056	.076	.165
Age	.328	.319	.109	.897	.321	.674
Annual income	.021	.000	.005	.009	.015	.029

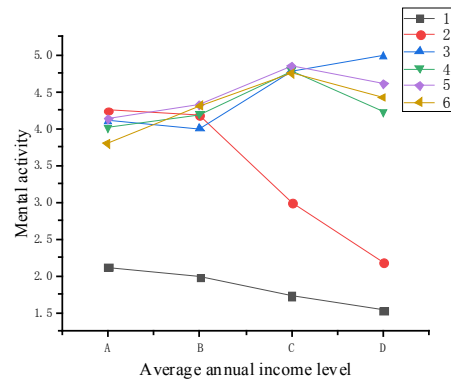


Figure 2. Average annual income of job burnout and psychological contract

Note: A, B, C, and D refer to the 30 ~ 50k, 50 ~ 100k, 100 ~ 150k, and above 150k, respectively (all in Yuan); 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 represent the perfunctoriness, depression, low personal value, normative, developmental, and interpersonal, respectively.

The above Table 3 and Figure 2 show that the differences in job burnout and psychological contract based on different genders, education levels, and age groups are not obvious. The difference in job burnout and psychological contract of employee is not obvious. The higher the employee's educational level, the stronger the psychological contract. However, the impacts of annual income level of these two indicators of the employee is more observable. The lower the employee's annual income level, the more depression, and the worse perfunctory attitude towards work. In the psychological contract, income level also affects the employee's sense of contract. The higher the salary, the stronger the employee's psychological contract, and the stricter behavior restriction.

4. Discussion

4.1 Current Status of Job Burnout and Psychological Contract of Employee

Based on the above results, employees in xx city still have high job burnout, especially depression and low personal value, which indicates that when employees face many complicated jobs in the company, depression is the main reason for job burnout. The low personal value means that employees do not play an important role in the company, which results in low sense of accomplishment and psychological burnout.

The data results reveal that the employees have a deeper understanding of psychological contracts, and the total credibility of psychological contract is above 0.9, which is higher than that of the company, indicating that employees pay more attention to development.

The impact of annual income level on job burnout and psychological contract is also more significant. Among

the respondents, depression and job perfunctoriness are more likely to occur in low-paid groups, suggesting that the income level affects the psychological changes of the employees in the company greatly. The higher the income level, the higher the enthusiasm of employees at work, and the stronger psychological contract facing the company. The education level of the surveyed object also affects the change of the psychological contract. The higher the education level of the employees, the higher the level of their psychological contract, suggesting that the company can increase training opportunities and improve the quality of employees so as to cultivate the employee's psychological contracts.

4.2 Relationship between Psychological Contract and Job Burnout of Employee

The research results show that there is a negative correlation between the job burnout and psychological contract of employee, which can be interpreted as that the stronger the employee's job burnout, the weaker its psychological contract. Psychological contract exerts an impact on the job burnout of employees. In the construction of psychological contract, if employees do not meet their own psychological expectations or have doubts about corporate regulations, they will form weaker psychological contracts. This shows that employees are more expected to realize their own value in the company, and hope that the company can provide employees with more high-quality and more challenging jobs, thereby reducing their job burnouts.

Based on the above, the company can also appropriately use the psychological contract to intervene in the employees in terms of adjusting the job burnout, thereby strengthening their senses of psychological contracts. In addition, it is also necessary to pay attention to the working status and interpersonal communication of employees in the company, and timely detection of problems can also reasonably prevent the occurrence of job burnout.

5. Management Insights

For a company, recruitment is the primary link to establish the image of the company in the minds of employees, and it is also the beginning of the establishment of a psychological contract between the company and employees. If the company's image is excessively beautified and unrealistic salary levels and benefits are given in the recruitment stage, it will lead to high psychological expectations of candidates. When an employee starts a job, the psychological contract established by the new employee will break and cause job burnout due to the

large gap between reality and expectations, which will result in great losses for the company. Therefore, in the recruitment stage, false information should be eliminated and employees should be provided with realistic work expectations; the normative responsibility of an enterprise is the basis for providing employees with necessary material benefits and life security in the psychological contract. Companies need to establish a scientific and standardized management system and ensure fairness in the company's distribution procedures and results in order to achieve the employees' psychological contract. At the same time, they also need to establish a sound performance appraisal, salary, and welfare system so that employees' contributions and returns are proportional. In order to effectively alleviate the cynicism and low professional efficacy caused by the breakdown of company norms and responsibilities. Research shows that harmony among employees is the core and focus of an enterprise. Therefore, the establishment of a supportive corporate culture can enable employees to obtain the material and spiritual support needed to achieve their work goals and achieve their personal needs for social interaction, respect, and self-realization.

For individuals in the company, employees need to learn to self-regulate and cultivate an optimistic attitude. Pressure can be found everywhere in modern society. Individuals should learn how to cope with pressure and adapt to the environment. When facing the job burnout, they should remain calm and communicate with colleagues and bosses in time, so as to avoid going to extremes. When there are people with a higher sense of burnout, employee can care for and support others with a healthy and peaceful attitude, and help them to survive the impact of bad emotions. With the development of the discipline, various psychological counseling and professional counseling services are becoming more perfect, so professional help can be sought in time when the greater professional pressure and job burnout are found.

The innovation of this study lies in the research on the relationship between the psychological contract and job burnout of the employee based on the psychological perspective. At present, there are relatively few domestic researches on such topic, the system is not mature enough, and there are many things worth thinking about. The research and analysis of job burnout and psychological contract of employees in the workplace can provide in-depth understanding of the changes in the psychological conditions of employees, in addition to providing reference for the development and management of the company, it also can bring good management methods and development directions. However, the number of samples selected is too small in this study, so that the results may not be very

representative. In addition, the economic development of xx city is relatively slow, the job opportunity is few, and the income level is generally low, which may affect the result of job burnout.

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