

Relationship between Perfectionism, Psychological Hardiness, and Job Burnout of Employees at Executive Organizations

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DOI Link: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v4-i3/686>

Published Date: 09 March 2014

Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between perfectionism, psychological hardiness and job burnout of employees at executive organizations in Birjand County, Iran. In terms of purpose, this study is applied, and in terms of nature, it is descriptive and co relational. The population included 5000 employees and the sample composed of 356 persons according to Cochran Formula who were classified using randomized sampling. Three modified questionnaires of perfectionism, psychological hardiness, and job burnout were used to collect data. Their validities were 0.84, 0.81 and 0.77 and their reliabilities, using Chronbach's alpha, were 0.87, 0.78, and 0.86 respectively. The data were analyzed in SPSS using Spearman and Pearson correlation coefficients. Findings showed that there was a negative correlation between psychological hardiness and perfectionism as well as its dimensions in the employees. There was not a significant relationship between self-oriented and other-oriented perfectionism and job burnout. The relationship between socially prescribed perfectionism and job burnout was positive. There was a significant negative relationship between psychological hardiness and job burnout. It is recommended to hold perfectionism and psychological hardiness workshops for employees in order to decrease their job burnout and to strengthen perfectionism at a moderate and psychological hardiness at a high level.

Keywords: Perfectionism, Psychological Hardiness, Job Burnout

Introduction

Perfectionism is conceived as a personality trait characterized by the tendency to hold and pursue exceedingly high standards and critical evaluations of one's own behavior and performance (Di Schiena, Luminet, Philippot, & Douilliez, 2012). Perfectionists live, while they

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usually bound themselves with a set of do's and don'ts. They wish to attain perfection in everything they do; failure in gaining perfection can lead to anxiety, depression, and the feeling of guilt in perfectionists. Perfectionism has been commonly classified into three types. While self-oriented perfectionism includes behaviors such as setting exact standards for oneself and stringently evaluating and censuring one's own behavior (Hewitt & Flett, 1991), other-oriented perfectionism is expecting others to be perfect (Chufar & Pettijohn, 2013). Socially prescribed perfectionism is the third type and involves the need to achieve standards and goals indicated by others (Castro, Gila, Gual, Lahortiga, Saura, & Toro, 2004).

Psychological hardiness acts as a moderator between tension on the one hand and psychological and physical disease on the other hand. Here, psychological hardiness is defined as the ability to understand the external conditions accurately and to make a desirable decision about oneself (Khaledian, Hasanvand & Hassanpour, 2013). Psychological hardiness has three dimensions: *commitment* refers to the tendency to involve oneself in the activities in life and have a genuine interest in and curiosity about the activities, things, and other people (Kardum, Hudek-Knezevic & Krapic, 2012). The *control* dimension of hardiness represents the extent to which a person believes that he or she is able to control events that happen in his or her life (Eschleman, Bowling & Alarcon, 2010). Finally, *challenge* refers to the ability to view all situations as potentially positive with successful outcomes (Qaddumi, 2011).

Further, job burnout can presently be observed within organizations and among employees; it moves along unnoticed leading to dissatisfaction among employees and reducing efficacy at the end. Burnout is simply defined as a psychological response to job stress (Zarei- Matin, Seyed-Kalali & Akhavan-Anvari, 2012). It consumes a lot of human and financial resources and imposes psychological and financial burden on companies' employees as well as founders. Like perfectionism and psychological hardiness, job burnout is also of three components. Emotional exhaustion means energy discharge and consumption of emotional resources. This dimension can be considered the cornerstone of job burnout (Beheshtifar & Omidvar, 2013). Depersonalization involves pessimistic desires and negative responses to individuals who usually receive service from person (Moradi Abbasabadi, Goudarzi & Farahani, 2013). Finally, diminished personal accomplishment may lead the person to a negative self-assessment (Gholami-Dargah & Pakdel Estalkhbijari, 2012).

Several studies from different countries have focused on dimensions of and the relationships among perfectionism, psychological hardiness, and job burnout in organizations. Hill, Hall, Appleton & Kozub. (2008) studied perfectionism and burnout in junior elite soccer players and found that socially prescribed perfectionism had a direct positive association and self-oriented perfectionism had a direct negative association with burnout. Fairlie and Flett (2003) focused on the impacts of perfectionism on burnout, job satisfaction, and depression. They reported that the relationship of socially prescribed perfectionism to burnout and depression symptoms were especially robust. Child and Stoeber (2010) investigated the relationships of self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed perfectionism in employees with their burnout and engagement. The results of their study suggest that promoting some forms of perfectionism at work - specifically self-oriented perfectionism - and decreasing the effect of socially prescribed perfectionism may lower burnout and enhance engagement in employees (Child & Stoeber, 2010). Mohamadi Hasel and Besharat (2011) studied the relationship of perfectionism and hardiness to stress-induced physiological responses. The results indicated that negative perfectionism was positively correlated with physiological responses including systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure, skin conductance, respiratory rate, and heart rate. Hardiness was negatively correlated with physiological responses of systolic blood

pressure, diastolic blood pressure, and respiratory rate. Aghajani, Tizdast, Ghorbani & Bajvar. (2013) conducted a study on the relationship between hardiness and nurses' professional burnout. Their study results showed a reverse relationship between hardiness and occupational burnout of nurses.

Overcoming job burnout is of great importance on the efficacy and performance of human force. This study was done in Iran in organizations wherein there might govern a different culture from other countries. The researchers studied the relationship among perfectionism, psychological hardiness, and job burnout of employees at executive organizations in Birjand County. The findings of this study are hoped to give theoretical and practical insights into the current wave of research in this area and help promote organizations within and outside the current setting of the study.

Research Hypothesis

Based on what went above, the following hypotheses are formulated. There are three main hypotheses, and each includes three minor ones.

1. There is a relationship between perfectionism and psychological hardiness in employees at executive organizations of Birjand. To test the hypothesis, it is necessary to study the dimensions of perfectionism and psychological hardiness. Therefore, the following set of minor hypotheses is considered: (1a) There is a relationship between self-oriented perfectionism and psychological hardiness in employees at executive organizations of Birjand; (1b) There is a relationship between other-oriented perfectionism and psychological hardiness in employees at executive organizations of Birjand; and (1c) There is a relationship between Socially prescribed perfectionism and psychological hardiness in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

The second hypothesis focuses on the relationship between perfectionism and job burnout:

2. There is a relationship between perfectionism and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand. It includes three minor hypotheses including (2a) There is a relationship between self-oriented perfectionism and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand; (2b) There is a relationship between other-oriented perfectionism and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand; (2c) There is a relationship between socially prescribed perfectionism and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

The third hypothesis is concerned with the relationship between psychological hardiness and job burnout. 3. There is a relationship between psychological hardiness and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand. Its minor hypotheses are (3a) There is a relationship between commitment and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand; (3b) There is a relationship between control and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand; and (3c) There is a relationship between challenge and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Method

This is a descriptive, correlational study with a population including 5000 employees and a sample composed of 356 persons. From among them, 171 were women (48%) and 170 were men (47.8%); 56 (15.7%) had a diploma or a lower degree, 55 (15.4%) had an associate degree, 196 (55.1%) had bachelors, and 28 (7.9%) had masters or above; 91 (25.6%) were below 30 years of age, 135 (37.9%) were between 31-40 years, and 78 (21.9%) above 41 years old; in

terms of tenure, 171 (48%) had worked for less than 10 years, 122 (34.3%) between 11-20 years, and 25 (7%) persons for more than 21 years.

First, the subjects were assured that their information would be kept confidential, and then they were given the questionnaires.

Measures

Three questionnaires were used to collect the data and test the hypotheses including (1) perfectionism questionnaire with self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed perfectionism components which is assessed by the standard questionnaire of Hewitt and Feltt (1991); it had 29 items, its reliability was obtained as 0.87, and its validity, 0.84 by Chronbach's alpha; (2) Psychological hardiness questionnaire had 39 items with commitment, control, and challenge components; its reliability was obtained as 0.78 and its validity, 0.81 by Chronbach's alpha; (3) job burnout questionnaire had 22 items and covered the three components of emotional analysis, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment which is assessed by the standard questionnaire of Meslash (1881); its reliability was obtained as 0.86 and its validity, 0.77 by Chronbach's alpha.

Results

Here, the hypotheses are examined one by one and conclusions are made after the analyses. Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between perfectionism and psychological hardiness in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Table 1

The results for psychological hardiness and perfectionism

Variable Test	Psychological hardiness					
	Pierson		Spearman		Relationship	Type of relationship
	Correlation coefficient	<i>p</i> value	Correlation coefficient	<i>p</i> value		
Self-oriented perfectionism	- 0.136	0.015	- 0.124	0.027**	Yes	Negative
other-oriented perfectionism	- 0.310	0.0001	- 0.229	0.001*	Yes	Negative
Socially prescribed perfectionism	- 0.243	0.0001	- 0.180	0.001*	Yes	Negative
Perfectionism	- 0.243	0.0001	- 0.169	0.001*	Yes	Negative

* $P < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$.

N=356

Analyses show that the correlation coefficients of Pearson and Spearman tests for perfectionism and psychological hardiness are -0.243 and -0.149 respectively; with -*p*, they are 0.0001 and 0.001 respectively which are smaller than the significant level of 0.01. Therefore, H_0 , i.e. lack of relationship, is rejected, and the hypothesis of the study is validated. In other words, there is a significant relationship between perfectionism and psychological hardiness in employees at executive organizations of Birjand. Table 1 shows the results for the relationship between psychological hardiness, perfectionism, and its dimensions.

Hypothesis 1a considered that there is a relationship between self-oriented perfectionism and psychological hardiness in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Analyses show that the correlation coefficients of Pearson and Spearman tests for self-oriented perfectionism and psychological hardiness are -0.136 and -0.124 respectively; with $-p$, they are 0.015 and 0.027 respectively which are smaller than the significant level of 0.05. Therefore, H_0 , i.e. lack of relationship, is rejected, and the hypothesis of the study is validated. In other words, there is a significant relationship between self-oriented perfectionism and psychological hardiness in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Hypothesis 1b considered that there is a relationship between other-oriented perfectionism and psychological hardiness in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Analyses show that the correlation coefficients of Pearson and Spearman tests for other-oriented perfectionism and psychological hardiness are -0.310 and -0.229 respectively; with $-p$, they are 0.0001 and 0.001 respectively which are smaller than the significant level of 0.01. Therefore, H_0 , i.e. lack of relationship, is rejected, and the hypothesis of the study is validated. In other words, there is a significant relationship between other-oriented perfectionism and psychological hardiness in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Finally, hypothesis 1c wrote that there is a relationship between socially prescribed perfectionism and psychological hardiness in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Analyses indicated that the correlation coefficients of Pearson and Spearman tests for socially prescribed perfectionism and psychological hardiness are -0.243 and -0.180 respectively; with $-p$, they are 0.0001 and 0.001 respectively which are smaller than the significant level of 0.01. Therefore, H_0 , i.e. lack of relationship, is rejected, and the hypothesis of the study is validated. In other words, there is a significant relationship between socially prescribed perfectionism and psychological hardiness in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Hypothesis 2 mentioned that there is a relationship between perfectionism and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

As Table 2 shows, the correlation coefficients of Pearson and Spearman tests for perfectionism and job burnout are -0.044 and -0.033 respectively; with $-p$, they are 0.411 and 0.539 respectively which are smaller than the significant level of 0.05. Therefore, H_0 , i.e. lack of relationship, is confirmed, and the hypothesis of the study is rejected. In other words, there is no significant relationship between perfectionism and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Table 2

The results for job burnout and perfectionism

Variable	Job burnout					
	Pierson		Spearman		Relationship	Type of relationship
Test	Correlation coefficient	<i>p</i> value	Correlation coefficient	<i>p</i> value		
Variable	Correlation coefficient	<i>p</i> value	Correlation coefficient	<i>p</i> value	Relationship	Type of relationship
Self-oriented perfectionism	0.033	0.959	0.032	0.567*	No	No Relation
other-oriented perfectionism	0.038	0.517	0.038	0.514*	No	No Relation
Socially prescribed perfectionism	0.145	0.012	0.121	0.037**	Yes	Positive
Perfectionism	0.044	0.411	0.033	0.539*	No	No Relation

* $p > 0.05$, ** $p < 0.05$

N=356

2a. There is a relationship between self-oriented perfectionism and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Analyses show that the correlation coefficients of Pearson and Spearman tests for self-oriented perfectionism and job burnout are -0.033 and -0.032 respectively; with -*p*, they are 0.959 and 0.567 respectively which are smaller than the significant level of 0.05. Therefore, H_0 , i.e. lack of relationship, is confirmed, and the hypothesis of the study is rejected. In other words, there is no significant relationship between self-oriented perfectionism and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Hypothesis 2b: There is a relationship between other-oriented perfectionism and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Analyses show that the correlation coefficients of Pearson and Spearman tests for other-oriented perfectionism and job burnout are -0.038 and -0.038 respectively; with -*p*, they are 0.517 and 0.514 respectively which are smaller than the significant level of 0.05. Therefore, H_0 , i.e. lack of relationship is confirmed, and the hypothesis of the study is rejected. In other words, there is no significant relationship between other-oriented perfectionism and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Hypothesis 2c: There is a relationship between socially prescribed perfectionism and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Analyses show that the correlation coefficients of Pearson and Spearman tests for socially prescribed perfectionism and job burnout are -0.044 and -0.033 respectively; with -*p*, they are 0.411 and 0.539 respectively which are smaller than the significant level of 0.05. Therefore, H_0 , i.e. lack of relationship, is rejected, and the hypothesis of the study is validated. In other words, there is a significant relationship between socially prescribed perfectionism and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

According to the third main hypothesis of the study, there is a relationship between psychological hardiness and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Table 3

The results for psychological hardiness and job burnout

Variable Test	Job burnout					
	Pierson		Spearman		Relationship	Type of relationship
Variable	Correlation coefficient	p value	Correlation coefficient	p value		
commitment	- 0.314	0.0001	- 0.281	0.0001*	Yes	Negative
Control	0.053	0.379	0.080	0.187**	No	No Relation
Challenge	0.045	0.452	0.053	0.387**	No	No Relation
Psychological hardiness	- 0.151	0.004	- 0.132	0.012*	Yes	Negative

* $P < 0.01$, ** $p > 0.05$.

N=356

A Table 3 indicates, the correlation coefficients of Pearson and Spearman tests for psychological hardiness and job burnout are -0.151 and -0.132 respectively; with -p, they are 0.004 and 0.012 respectively which are smaller than the significant level of 0.01. Therefore, H_0 , i.e. lack of relationship, is rejected, and the hypothesis of the study is validated. In other words, there is a significant relationship between psychological hardiness and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Hypothesis 2a: There is a relationship between commitment and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Analyses show that the correlation coefficients of Pearson and Spearman tests for commitment and job burnout are -0.314 and -0.281 respectively; with -p, they are 0.001 and 0.001 respectively which are smaller than the significant level of 0.01. Therefore, H_0 , i.e. lack of relationship, is rejected, and the hypothesis of the study is validated. In other words, there is a significant relationship between commitment and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Hypothesis 2b: There is a relationship between control and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Analyses show that the correlation coefficients of Pearson and Spearman tests for control and job burnout are -0.053 and -0.080 respectively; with -p, they are 0.379 and 0.187 respectively which are smaller than the significant level of 0.05. Therefore, H_0 , i.e. lack of relationship is confirmed, and the hypothesis of the study is rejected. In other words, there is no significant relationship between control and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Finally, Hypothesis 3c wrote that there is a relationship between challenge and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Analyses show that the correlation coefficients of Pearson and Spearman tests for challenge and job burnout are -0.151 and -0.132 respectively; with -p, they are 0.004 and 0.012 respectively which are smaller than the significant level of 0.01. Therefore, H_0 , i.e. lack of relationship is confirmed, and the hypothesis of the study is rejected. In other words, there is no significant relationship between challenge and job burnout in employees at executive organizations of Birjand.

Discussion

Findings of this study showed that there is a negative significant relationship between perfectionism and psychological hardiness in employees working at executive organizations in Birjand. Environmental interactions of people with high hardiness can lead to their intent to leave with a positive emotional tone and can also lead to a decrease in psychological hardiness of employees with high perfectionism. It is expected that employees' perfectionism increases as their psychological hardiness decreases.

On the other hand, it can be generally stated that there is not a significant relationship between perfectionism and job burnout of employees working at executive organizations in Birjand. There is not a significant relationship between self-oriented and other-oriented perfectionism and job burnout either. However, the relation between socially prescribed perfectionism and job burnout of the employees is positively significant. Persons with socially prescribed perfectionism have a high expectation of their colleagues and the society in large; if such high expectations are not fulfilled, the employees may experience job burnout. It is expected that employees' job burnout increases as their socially prescribed perfectionism increases.

Findings also indicate that there is a negative significant relationship between psychological hardiness and job burnout of employees at executive organizations in Birjand. The more the employees' psychological hardiness, the less their job burnout is expected to be. In addition, there was not a significant relationship between control and challenge and job burnout. The reason might be for mediating and moderating variables such as performance of the employees, their social abilities, and organizational support which can affect these two variables – something that is not controlled in this study.

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Perfectionism	- 0.243	0.0001	- 0.169	0.001*	Yes	Negative

* $P < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$.

N=356

Table 2

The results for job burnout and perfectionism

Variable Test	Job burnout					
	Pierson		Spearman		Relationship	Type of relationship
	Correlation coefficient	<i>p</i> value	Correlation coefficient	<i>p</i> value		
Self-oriented perfectionism	0.033	0.959	0.032	0.567*	No	No Relation
other-oriented perfectionism	0.038	0.517	0.038	0.514*	No	No Relation
Socially prescribed perfectionism	0.145	0.012	0.121	0.037**	Yes	Positive
Perfectionism	0.044	0.411	0.033	0.539*	No	No Relation

* $p > 0.05$, ** $p < 0.05$

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Table 3

The results for psychological hardiness and job burnout

Variable Test	Job burnout					
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commitment	- 0.314	0.0001	- 0.281	0.0001*	Yes	Negative
Control	0.053	0.379	0.080	0.187**	No	No Relation

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