Investigating the association between burnout components and self-concept components among educational supervisors

Mohammad Bagher Kajbaf [1] iD **, Hossein Samavatyan [2]** iD **, Ziba Karimi[3*]** iD

[1] Professor, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education and Psychology, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran. E-mail: m.b.kaj@edu.ui.ac.ir.

[2] Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education and Psychology, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran. E-mail: h.samavatyan@edu.ui.ac.ir

[3] *Corresponding author* Ph.D. Student, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education and Psychology, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran. E-mail: zibakarimiy@gmail.com

A B S T R A C T

The aim of the present study was to investigate the relationship between burnout and self-concept among educational supervisors. The sample of the present study consisted of 92 educational supervisors in Zahedan city who were selected using simple random sampling and participated in the study. Burnout and self-concept scales were used to collect data. Pearson correlation coefficient test was used to analyze the data. The results showed that emotional exhaustion had a negative and significant relationship with health and gender appropriateness, self-confidence, self-acceptance, beliefs and guilt, but emotional exhaustion had a positive and significant relationship with feelings of shame and guilt. However, emotional exhaustion had no significant relationship with abilities, self-worth, present, future and past, beliefs and guilt, sociability and emotionality. The results showed that depersonalization had a negative and significant relationship with physical health and gender appropriateness, self-acceptance, beliefs and guilt, but a positive and significant relationship was observed between depersonalization and feelings of shame and guilt. Depersonalization was not related to abilities, self-confidence, self-worth, present, future and past, self-esteem, and emotionality. The results showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between personal functioning and self-esteem. However, personal functioning had no significant relationship with the other subscales of self-concept.

Introduction

Workplace stress can lead to long-term negative emotions such as anger, anxiety, or depression, and these negative emotions eventually lead to psychological exhaustion and burnout (Anand and Arora, 2009). Researchers have extensively studied the negative effects of job stress on health (Shirom, 2003; Smith et al., 2002). Burnout is one of the psychological factors that most clearly stems from long-term and persistent stress. Freudenberger (1974) defined burnout as "failure, exhaustion, loss of energy and strength, or a state of exhaustion resulting from unsatisfied internal desires." Maslach et al. (1996) define burnout as "a syndrome of decreased personal effectiveness, increased emotional exhaustion, and increased depersonalization experienced by individuals who work closely with people." Burnout has three dimensions:

• Emotional exhaustion: which refers to the depletion of energy or the depletion of emotional resources.

• Depersonalization: which refers to the development of negative and flawed attitudes towards the person receiving the service or care.

• Lack of personal efficacy: which often refers to second-guessing (Demerouti et al., 2000). Burnout is a psychological condition characterized by emotional fatigue and exhaustion, which can happen to individuals who work with others in specific manners (Kupcewicz & Jóźwik, 2020). For more than two decades, both employers and governments have grown increasingly worried about workplace stress (Le Fevre, Matheny, and Kort, 2003). Over the last ten years, the impacts of economic globalization and swift technological advancements have led to heavier workloads and a quicker rhythm in the workplace (Dollard, 2003; Mohammadyfar et al., 2009). Burnout and unhappiness contribute to employee dissatisfaction, delays, absenteeism, and turnover, which not only incurs various costs but also impacts the morale of other workers. A decline in employees' work life quality, a decrease in citizenship behavior, and a diminished sense of organizational belonging are the key individual outcomes of burnout (Yang & Hayes, 2020).

The beginnings of self-concept theory, along with subsequent research, are believed to have been established by James in 1890 (Tamini et al., 2009). "James is noted in history for his formulation of the concept or philosophy of the 'self' and the evolution of the 'self' into a unified theory (Bracken, 1996)." "James posited that the concept of 'self' is structured in a hierarchy, beginning with the lowest level being the 'material self,' then the 'social self,' and finally culminating with the 'spiritual self' at the top (Bracken, 1996)." Rosenberg (1979) believes that the concept of self is initially confusing. The lack of consistency in the use of terms such as ego, identity, and existential self, real self, perceived self, self-concept, and self-worth has contributed to increased confusion about the term. However, over the years a fundamental distinction has been made between the self as subject and the self as agent (Rosenberg, 1979; Wiley, 1974). The self as agent plays an instrumental role in interpreting external events and guiding behavior (Carver & Scheer, 1989; Harter & Morald, 1989; Levy-Winger & Blasi, 1989). According to Rosenberg (1979), the self as subject can be defined as "the set of feelings and thoughts that individuals have about themselves as a subject" (p. 7). Every person has a distinct self-image that influences their actions and viewpoints. This idea directs how individuals handle information pertinent to themselves, establishes roles, and adjusts to different situations. Additionally, people seek self-verification to uphold favorable self-perceptions and ensure their beliefs coincide with their actions while striving for their objectives (Wehrle and Fasbender, 2019). Self-concept encompasses all of their beliefs, feelings, principles, and self-images concerning various subjects, such as their abilities, character traits, and social identities (Raja, 2022).

Research has indicated that educators' self-perception is linked to teacher burnout as well. Villa and Calvete (2001) suggested that self-concept is significant in events, emotions, and behavior. They discovered that educators who hold a positive self-concept will encounter fewer signs of stress and burnout. They also discovered a positive relationship between the self-concept sub-scale of teachers and psychological symptoms. Educators with a poor self-image were observed to interpret and evaluate situations in a manner that leads them to feel unhappy with their jobs. Zamani Rad and Nasir (2010) discovered a negative relationship between career self-concept and burnout. Research has shown that burnout can affect self-concept and reduce some of its components. In another study, Howard (1981) concluded that there is a negative and significant relationship between different dimensions of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal efficacy) and self-concept. Dorman (2003) showed that depersonalization has a significant relationship with self-esteem and self-esteem was also able to predict personal functioning. Wu et al. (2024) demonstrated that clarity of self-concept directly influenced job burnout and work engagement. Alghtany (2024) identified a notable negative correlation between the overall professional self-concept and cynicism related to academic burnout. Furthermore, the overall nurse professional self-concept was a notable predictor of both sub-scales of academic burnout: cynicism and professional efficacy. Wang (2019) demonstrated that the professional self-concept of nursing students negatively impacted their academic burnout. Yu et al. (2019) discovered that as the professional self-concept rises, burnout diminishes. Goliroshan et al. (2021) showed that the professional self-concept significantly influenced burnout among nurses. Liao et al. (2020) found that self-concept

among nurses significantly influenced emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. In a recent study, Pikić Jugović et al. (2025) found that early career teachers who excel at self-management and motivation, possess social awareness, and act more prosocially felt more effective in their teaching roles and consequently exhibited fewer burnout symptoms. Concerning the dimensions of burnout, the general trend of relationships was largely preserved, suggesting that self-management and social awareness significantly predict the four burnout dimensions, with self-efficacy acting as a mediating factor, either partially or entirely, in this connection.

Given that educational supervisors carry a significant responsibility for effectively training teachers while experiencing substantial job stress, this prolonged stress can result in burnout and potentially impact their self-concept. Furthermore, considering that there has been no research conducted in Iran exploring the link between burnout and self-concept in educational supervisors, the goal of the current study is to investigate the correlation between burnout and self-concept among educational supervisors in Zahedan City, Iran. To achieve this aim, the subsequent question has been formulated for this research:

• Is there a notable connection between the dimensions of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) and the subscales of self-esteem (health and sex appropriateness, abilities, self-confidence, self-acceptance, worthiness, present-past and future, beliefs and convictions, feelings of shame and guilt, sociability, and emotionality)?

Method

Sample and Sampling Method

The statistical population for this study includes all educational supervisors in Zahedan City, Iran, from which 92 supervisors were chosen using simple random sampling to take part in the research.

Tools Used

Maslach Burnout Scale: The Maslach Burnout Scale is the most widely used tool for measuring burnout, consisting of 22 distinct statements. There are 9 statements regarding emotional exhaustion, 5 statements concerning depersonalization, and 8 statements related to personal accomplishment (a lack of sense of career progression). The occurrence of these emotions is assessed using ratings from (1) (strongly disagree) to (5) (strongly agree). The score achieved in each of the three areas is determined by the reference score (Maslach & Jackson, 1993). It is categorized as low, medium, or high. Elevated levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, along with reduced personal accomplishment, signify burnout. The questionnaire's internal consistency has been reported with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranging from .71 to .91 and a test-retest coefficient between .60 and .80 (Schaufeli et al., 1994).

Self-Concept Scale: This scale was developed by Rastogi (1979). This scale consists of 51 questions, and the answers to each question are graded as: Strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree, and strongly disagree, which are scored from 5 to 1. This scale has ten subscales, which are: health and sexual fitness (6, 20, 29, 32, 34, 46), abilities (4, 8, 12, 23, 36, 38, 39, 42), self-confidence (7, 9, 14, 16, 44), self-acceptance (2, 10, 17, 35), worth (1, 3, 19, 25, 27, 41, 48), present, future, and past (18, 22, 26, 31, 40), guilt and beliefs (24, 47, 49), shame and guilt (5, 13, 28, 30, 50), sociability (33, 37, 43, 45), and emotionality (11, 15, 21, 51). This scale consists of 27 negative questions and 24 positive questions, as shown below. Negative questions should be scored in reverse. Negative questions: 29, 22, 12, 23, 38, 39, 14, 16, 10, 17, 35, 3, 19, 41, 26,31, 24, 5, 13, 28, 30, 50, 33, 45, 11, 15, 21, 51. Positive questions: 6, 20, 34, 46, 4, 8, 44, 2, 1, 25, 27, 48, 18, 22, 40, 47, 49, 37, 43, 36, 42, 7, 9. The reliability of this scale was obtained by the split-half method according to the Spearman-Brown predictor formula of 0.87 (Rastogi, 1979; Tamini, 2009).

Results

To examine the relationship between burnout dimensions and self-concept subscales, Pearson's correlation coefficient test was used, and the results are shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3.

Table 1- . Results of the correlation coefficient between emotional exhaustion and self-concept (n=92).

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. emotional exhaustion	1										
2. health and sex appropriateness	-.35*	1									
3. abilities	-.26	.38**	1								
4. self-confidence	-.38**	.14	.34*	1							
5. self-acceptance	-.43**	.41**	.46**	.33*	1						
6. worthiness	-.07	.01	.17	.05	-.02	1					
7. present, past, & future	-.17	.41**	.36*	-.09	.23	.04	1				
8. beliefs and convictions	-.27	-.17	-.02	-.21	-.15	.35*	-.02	1			
9. feeling of shame	.42**	.41**	.46**	.43**	.42**	-.02	.06	-.22	1		
10. sociability	-.03	.57**	.32*	.09	.24	.01	.33*	-.12	.22	1	
11. emotionally	-.05	.24	.16	-.04	.35*	.12	.32*	-.03	-.06	.14	1

**p<.01, *p<.05

The results of Pearson's correlation coefficient showed that emotional exhaustion had a negative and significant relationship with some sub-scales of self-concept, for instance, health and sex appropriateness, self-confidence, self-acceptance, and beliefs and convictions, but emotional exhaustion had a positive and significant relationship with feelings of shame and guilt. However, emotional exhaustion had no significant relationship with abilities, self-worth, present, past, and future, beliefs and convictions, sociability, and emotionality.

Table2- Results of the correlation coefficient between depersonalization and self-concept (n=92).

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. depersonalization	1										
2. health and sex appropriateness	-.29*	1									
3. abilities	-.25	.38**	1								
4. self-confidence	-.21	.14	.34*	1							
5. self-acceptance	-.31*	.41**	.46**	.33*	1						
6. worthiness	-.01	.01	.17	.05	-.02	1					
7. present, past, & future	-.20	.41**	.36*	-.09	.23	.04	1				
8. beliefs and convictions	-.30*	-.19	-.02	-.21	-.15	.35*	-.02	1			
9. feeling of shame	.38**	.41**	.46**	.43**	.42**	-.02	.06	-.22	1		
10. sociability	-.07	.57**	.32*	.09	.24	.01	.33*	-.12	.22	1	
11. emotionally	-.03	.24	.16	-.04	.35*	.12	.32*	-.03	-.06	.14	1

**p<.01, *p<.05

The results of Pearson's correlation coefficient showed that depersonalization had a negative and significant relationship with physical health and sex appropriateness, self-acceptance, beliefs and guilt, but a positive and significant relationship was observed between depersonalization and feelings of shame and guilt. Depersonalization had no significant relationship with abilities, self-confidence, self-worth, present, past, and future, self-confidence, and emotionality.

Table3- Results of the correlation coefficient between personal accomplishment and self-concept (n=92).

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. personal accomplishment	1										
2. health and sex appropriateness	.15	1									
3. abilities	.25	.38**	1								
4. self-confidence	.59**	.14	.34*	1							

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
5. self-acceptance	.27	.41**	.46**	.33*	1						
6. worthiness	-.13	.01	.17	.05	-.02	1					
7. present, past, & future	.09	.41**	.36*	-.09	.23	.04	1				
8. beliefs and convictions	-.17	-.19	-.02	-.21	-.15	.35*	-.02	1			
9. feeling of shame	.23	.41**	.46**	.43**	.42**	-.02	.06	-.22	1		
10. sociability	.07	.57**	.32*	.09	.24	.01	.33*	-.12	.22	1	
11. emotionally	-.02	.24	.16	-.04	.35*	.12	.32*	-.03	-.06	.14	1

**p<.01, *p<.05

　　　The results of Pearson's correlation coefficient showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between personal accomplishment and self-confidence. However, personal accomplishment did not have a significant relationship with the other self-concept subscales and its overall scores.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the present study showed that emotional exhaustion was inversely related to gender health and fitness, self-confidence, self-acceptance, beliefs and faults, and overall self-concept scores; that is, with increasing emotional exhaustion scores and gender health and fitness scores, self-confidence, self-acceptance, beliefs and faults, and overall self-concept scores decrease, but emotional exhaustion had a positive and significant relationship with feelings of shame and guilt, that is, with increasing emotional exhaustion scores, feelings of shame and guilt increase. However, emotional exhaustion had no significant relationship with abilities, self-worth, present, future, and past, beliefs and faults, sociability, and emotionality. The results showed that depersonalization had a negative and significant relationship with physical health and fitness, self-acceptance, beliefs and faults, that is, with increasing depersonalization scores, physical health and fitness, self-acceptance, beliefs and faults decrease. But a positive and significant relationship was observed between depersonalization and feelings of shame and guilt. That is, with increasing depersonalization scores, the level of feelings of shame and guilt increases. But depersonalization had no significant relationship with abilities, self-confidence, self-worth, present, future and past, self-confidence, emotionality and overall scores. The results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between personal functioning and self-confidence. That is, with increasing personal functioning scores, the level of self-confidence increases. But personal functioning had no significant relationship with the rest of the self-concept subscales and its overall scores. The results of the present study are consistent with the findings of the research conducted by Rad and Nasir (2010); Howard (1981). They concluded that there is a negative and significant relationship between different dimensions of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of personal efficacy) and self-concept. Dorman (2003) showed that depersonalization has a significant relationship with self-esteem and self-esteem was also able to predict personal functioning. Wu et al. (2024) demonstrated that clarity of self-concept directly influenced job burnout. Alghtany (2024) identified a notable negative correlation between the overall professional self-concept and cynicism related to academic burnout. Wang (2019) demonstrated that self-concept was negatively impacted on burnout. It seems that as self-concept rises, burnout diminishes (Yu et al., 2019). Goliroshan et al. (2021) showed that self-concept significantly influenced burnout of nurses. Liao et al. (2020) concluded that self-concept significantly influences emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. It is concluded that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization are reversely correlated to self-concept dimensions, but personal accomplishment positively influenced the self-concept dimensions.

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