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The Role of Psychological Capital and the Areas of Worklife Model in Predicting Job Burnout

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THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AND THE AREAS OF WORKLIFE MODEL IN
PREDICTING JOB BURNOUT

By

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PREDICTING JOB BURNOUT

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ABSTRACT

Job burnout is a widely spread global phenomenon that has been linked to negative work outcomes. Various factors can either contribute to or hinder job burnout development. Previous research established the role of the six areas of worklife model as well as psychological capital on job burnout. However, the relationship among these variables has not been clearly defined. The purpose of the present study was to attempt to understand predictors of job burnout in order to reduce its occurrence. Data was collected with a sample of college students. Four areas of worklife (workload, control, reward, and values) as well as three dimensions of psychological capital (hope, optimism, and resiliency) were predictive of job burnout. In addition, the negative effect of person-job mismatch in areas of worklife on job burnout was weaker when psychological capital was high as opposed to low. Finally, the study examined the mediating role of areas of worklife in relationship between psychological capital and job burnout, but failed to find any effect. Our findings underline the importance of fostering psychological capital in the workplace as well as ensuring congruence between individuals' person-job fit through areas of worklife, and specifically through workload, control, reward and values, in order to decrease job burnout occurrence.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Job burnout as a concept first emerged in the 1970s in the United States specifically for individuals working in human services such as healthcare, social work, psychotherapy, legal services, or police work (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001; Schaufeli, Leiter & Maslach, 2009). It was not until 1980s that researchers and practitioners started to realize that job burnout occurs in other industries outside of human services such as managers, white and blue collar workers, or entrepreneurs. In the decades that followed, job burnout became a widely spread global phenomenon. In some European countries, such as Netherlands or Sweden, job burnout is a medical diagnosis for which assessment and treatment interventions have been designed (Schaufeli et al., 2009). To this day, job burnout is a widely studied phenomenon because of its persistence, prevalence, and work outcomes. Specifically, job burnout has been linked to job dissatisfaction, low organizational commitment, absenteeism, turnover intentions, and actual turnover (Maslach et al., 2001; Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Job burnout continues to be a major problem in the twenty first century workplace across all professions. Therefore, it is important from a point of view of organizations to clearly understand predictors of job burnout in order to reduce the occurrence of this phenomenon and to retain highly performing employees.

Job Burnout

Job burnout is a psychological syndrome comprised of three distinct dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization/cynicism, and personal accomplishment/efficacy (Leiter & Maslach, 2004; Maslach et al., 2001; Maslach & Leiter, 2008). First, a core dimension of this definition is emotional exhaustion, stress, and depletion of one's resources. The stress due to work overload causes workers to distance themselves from cognitive and emotional demands of the job. This distancing leads to depersonalization, a second dimension of job burnout. Depersonalization is a reaction to exhaustion. It makes work less manageable once workers start to see the demands of their work as impersonal. This in turn leads to indifference and cynical attitudes towards different aspects of one's job. The third dimension of job burnout is inefficacy/reduced personal accomplishment. It can be a result of either of the first two dimensions of job burnout or a combination of both. When individuals are exposed to overwhelmed work demands that contribute to exhaustion or cynicism, they are more likely to experience a sense of ineffectiveness. It is difficult for workers to be effective or accomplished at work once they become exhausted or depersonalized.

There are various organizational factors that contribute to an understanding of what the causes of job burnout are and who might be at risk. The two predictors of job burnout that this research focuses on are the areas of worklife and psychological capital (Maslach et al., 2001; Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007). In the next two subsections, these predictors will be defined and explained.

Areas of Worklife Model

The Areas of Worklife Model has been conceptualized in order to capture the key antecedents of job burnout (Leiter & Maslach, 2004; Leiter, 2015; Maslach et al., 2001). The six factors that comprise the model include 1) workload, 2) control, 3) reward, 4) community, 5) fairness, and 6) values. Although they are all very closely related, each of these distinct factors adds a different perspective and explains how interactions between individuals and their work settings lead to job burnout. Each factor is defined in this section.

Workload, an excessive overload, occurs when individuals do not have adequate time and resources to meet work demands (Leiter & Maslach, 2004; Leiter, 2015; Maslach et al., 2001). Workload depletes an individual from energy and easily leads to burnout if an individual is not allowed sufficient time for recovery. If heavy workload is a daily routine instead of a temporary occurrence, then there are not enough opportunities to restore balance, and the risk of job burnout increases. In addition to excessive overload, workload might also be a result of employees not having the adequate skills for the job and becoming overwhelmed by work demands.

Control relates to participation in workplace decisions (Leiter & Maslach, 2004; Leiter, 2015; Maslach et al., 2001). Lack of control can occur either because individuals are not given adequate control in decision making regarding what they believe is the most effective way of accomplishing required tasks, or it can be a result of not having enough resources to get the job done.

Reward is defined as a relationship between individuals' efforts and recognition of their efforts (Leiter & Maslach, 2004; Leiter, 2015; Maslach et al., 2001). Rewards can be distinguished as tangible or intangible rewards. An individual might experience lack of tangible rewards in the form of financial rewards, such as low salary or insufficient benefits. Lack of intangible rewards can come in a form of lack of appreciation and recognition for one's efforts. Both of these types of rewards are needed for worker's satisfaction. Lack of them increases a chance of developing job burnout.

Community refers to quality of social interactions at work, and it includes issues such as conflict, connectedness, social support, or shared values (Leiter & Maslach, 2004; Leiter, 2015; Maslach et al., 2001). Community is important for an individual as it provides support, assistance, or feelings of belongingness. However, some jobs make social contact impersonal. In addition, any type of conflict, especially if unresolved, reduces social support and leads to feelings of hostility at work. Without a positive and supportive environment at work, chances of job burnout increase.

Fairness is employees' perception of decisions made at work as being fair (Leiter & Maslach, 2004; Leiter, 2015; Maslach et al., 2001). Fairness makes employees feel respected and increases their self-worth. If employees perceive their pay as inadequate in terms of workload or decisions made in reference to promotions or evaluations, chances of job burnout increase.

Values are the congruence between individuals' and organizations' beliefs and ideals (Leiter & Maslach, 2004; Leiter, 2015; Maslach et al., 2001). Individuals who are in conflict because their expectations and job goals are not the same might react in two

different ways. They will either fulfill the job expectations or they will look for other job opportunities that are in line with their value system. If individuals stay at an organization where value conflicts exist, job burnout is likely to occur.

Psychological Capital

Psychological capital might provide a much needed solution for the job burnout problem. Employees who possess psychological capital might be better able to avoid job burnout. Psychological capital is a positive psychological state that is composed of four distinct facets of (1) hope, goal-directed planning and action, (2) optimism, expectations of positive outcomes, (3) resiliency, ability to thrive despite adversity, and (4) self-efficacy, confidence in one's ability to successfully accomplish tasks (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007a; Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007b). Theoretically speaking psychological capital is a composite of these four facets (Luthans et al., 2007). Psychological capital enhances individual's motivational tendencies built up through the concepts of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency. Employees who are equipped with psychological capital possess the necessary cognitive and motivational resources that can be applied in any given work situation to protect them from job burnout and other work related stressors. All of these four characteristics that underlie the construct of psychological capital are important for their unique contributions (Luthans et al., 2007a).

These four components of psychological capital are themselves a well-researched and developed constructs that lay the theoretical foundation for psychological capital. Hope is a positive motivational state defined in terms of agency

and pathways (Snyder, LaPointe, Crowson Jr., & Early, 1998). Pathways refer to goal-focused planning, and finding ways of reaching goals. Agency is defined as goal-directed actions, keeping up the motivation to pursue these goals. Employees high in hope are not only able to set goals for themselves but also identify different ways of reaching these goals (Luthans et al., 2007a). Hope helps them identify different ways of reaching and modifying goals depending on the situation. Employees high in hope are the ones who are intrinsically motivated and capable of protecting themselves from high job stressors by adapting and modifying their work goals.

Optimism or rather optimists are individuals who tend to make stable, internal attributions regarding positive events, and unstable, external attributions regarding negative events (Seligman, 1998). The main attribute of optimistic individuals is that they take credit for the positive experiences in their lives and attribute them to their personal resources. In contrast, pessimists tend to believe that what happens to them is a result of external, situational factors of which they have no control. Optimism component of psychological capital includes positive emotions and motivations regarding events that are also realistic (Luthans et al., 2007a). Optimists tend to take more risks, welcome challenges, and have a positive outlook on changes even though there might be negative consequences. They are in control of their lives and are capable of motivating themselves.

Resiliency refers to positive coping and adaptation in face of risk and adversity (Masten, 2001). When applied to the workplace, it is the capacity to thrive and bounce back despite any adversities, conflicts, failures, or any other work related change that

might have negative consequences or increased responsibility. Resilient workers are the ones who grow and also learn from these experiences (Luthans et al, 2007a). Resilience is essential in today's workplace where challenges are inevitable. Positive emotions has been showed to enhance resiliency (Tugade, Fredrickson, Barrett, 2004).

In terms of self-efficacy, Bandura (1998, p.56) notes that "evidence shows that human accomplishments and positive well-being require an optimistic sense of personal efficacy to override the numerous impediments to success." Self-efficacy is critical to successful workplace performance (Luthans et al., 2007a). Employees who possess self-efficacy are self-motivated, they are able to thrive despite obstacles, they pursue challenges, they set goals and sub-goals for themselves, and they take the time needed to accomplish these goals.

Luthans et al. (2007a) concluded that even though each of these components is independent, combined motivational efforts of hope, resiliency, optimism, and self-efficacy will be more impactful in affecting performance than each of them considered individually. Employees who have high levels of all these psychological constructs displayed by their motivations, cognitions, and behaviors have a potential to become stronger performers.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Areas of Worklife Model and Job Burnout

The first set of predictors of job burnout that we will examine is the areas of worklife model. Several studies have attempted to get a better understanding of variables that contribute to job burnout by studying organizational variables using the areas of worklife model (Gupta, Paterson, Lysaght, & von Zweck, 2012; Leiter, Gascon, & Martinez-Jarreta, 2008; Maslach & Leiter, 2008; Gregory, 2015). Gupta et al. (2012) examined the issues that Canadian occupational therapists face in their profession that contribute to job burnout. The sample included volunteers who were members of the Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists. The study utilized a mixed methods design to identify levels of job burnout in occupational therapists and their coping mechanisms. The quantitative portion of the study was collected via online questionnaire. Job burnout was assessed using the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (MBI – GS). Areas of worklife were assessed with the Areas of Worklife Survey (AWS). The qualitative portion was assessed with semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Sixty three participants submitted a completed survey and seven took part in the focus group and interviews. The major themes predicting job burnout in this sample were unmanageable workload, lack of autonomy, lack of respect, and value conflict. The only significant predictor of job burnout based on the AWS was workload leading to

exhaustion. Workload predicted 29.9% of variance in the exhaustion trait while all six factors of AWS accounted for 35.3% variance for the whole sample.

Leiter et al. (2008) focused on job burnout relationships with other aspects of the workplace in a comparison of 834 Spanish nurses and 725 Canadian nurses from multiple public sector hospitals. The purpose of the study was to examine a two-process job burnout model where, first, the nurses experience exhaustion through workload and, second, through continuing conflict between personal and organizational values they experience job burnout. Job burnout was assessed using the MBI – GS and areas of worklife were assessed with the AWS presented to participants in a form on a paper-based questionnaire. The findings indicated workload to be the major job burnout contributor causing exhaustion in both samples ($r = -.47$ for Spanish sample and $r = -.61$ for Canadian sample). They also found a significant contribution of four areas of worklife (including control, reward, community, and fairness) to the two-process model for the Spanish sample and partial support for the Canadian sample.

Maslach and Leiter (2008) took it a step further trying to identify early predictors that affect worklife-burnout relationship long term. They followed 466 organizational employees of business and administrative divisions of a large North American university. They measured levels of job burnout to better understand which factors lead to engagement and which factors lead to job burnout. They collected data at baseline (time 1) and a year later (time 2) via a checkup survey. Job burnout was assessed using the MBI – GS, and areas of worklife were assessed with the AWS. They found that participants who exhibited inconsistent patterns of responses (exhaustion only or

cynicism only) at baseline were more likely to have changed a year later, as compared to individuals who showed consistent patterns of responses (both exhaustion and cynicism). Out of six areas of worklife, fairness was the deciding factor whether workers exhibited job burnout or job engagement at time 2.

Similarly, Gregory (2015) conducted a longitudinal study at the ambulatory care division of a large integrated delivery system in the U.S. The sample included 103 practicing primary care physicians who were assessed with electronically-delivered online survey at three points in time. Data was collected at baseline, three months, and six months. Job burnout was assessed using the MBI-Human Services Survey. Areas of worklife were assessed using the AWS. By examining different path coefficients, Gregory (2015) found that variables contributing the most to job burnout in the physician population were workload, control, and values.

Based on the previous research, areas of worklife seem to be contributing factors to individual's experience of job burnout in the workplace. Several studies have shown significant correlations between the areas of worklife and job burnout. We now turn to our second set of predictors in this study, psychological capital.

Psychological Capital and Job Burnout

Preliminary positive effects that psychological capital plays on reducing job burnout have already been established by researchers. Several studies showed psychological capital to have a positive impact on job burnout resulting in better work outcomes. Cheung, Tang, and Tang (2011) examined associations between psychological capital, job burnout, and job satisfaction in a sample of 264 full-time teachers in the

People's Republic of China. Participants were recruited at primary and secondary schools and assessed using a questionnaire package with psychological measures of the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) and the MBI translated into Chinese. The authors found that psychological capital was negatively related to job burnout (exhaustion $r = -.50$, cynicism $r = -.56$, efficacy $r = -.50$) and positively related to job satisfaction ($r = .28$).

Min, Kin, and Lee (2014) investigated the role that psychological capital plays in the challenge-hindrance stressor model in a sample of 232 hotel employees in South Korea. According to this model, all job demands are stressful. However, certain job demands increase employee work engagement while others decrease their work engagement. The authors argue that psychological capital plays a moderating role in the relationship between work stressors and job burnout so that the positive effect of work stressors on job burnout is weaker when psychological capital is high as opposed to low. Psychological capital and job burnout were assessed using the PCQ and the MBI – GS distributed to participants via a questionnaire. The findings of the study indicated that psychological capital buffers the negative effect of stressors on job burnout ($r = -.54$). In addition, individuals high in psychological capital remain engaged in their work despite the effect of stressors while those low in psychological capital are more prone to these stressors.

Some studies investigated the mediating role of psychological capital as a way to decrease the occurrence of job burnout. Wang, Chang, Fu, and Wang's study (2012a) investigated the mediating role of psychological capital between work interfering family

(WIF) conflict and job burnout, and between family interfering work (FIW) conflict and job burnout. Specifically, individuals who experience either WIF or FIW conflict and have high levels of psychological capital would be less likely to develop job burnout. Their sample included 1332 female nurses from six large general hospitals in China. Psychological capital and job burnout were assessed using the PCQ and the MBI – GS translated into Chinese via self-administered questionnaires. The authors found psychological capital to partially mediate the relationship of work interfering family conflict on job burnout and partially mediate the relationship of family interfering work conflict on job burnout. The bivariate correlations between psychological capital and the three factors of burnout (emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy) were $r = -.27, -.34,$ and $.33,$ respectively.

The same conclusions were reached by Wang, Liu, Wang, and Wang (2012b) who studied the mediating role of psychological capital in the relationship work interfering family (WIF) conflict and job burnout, and between family interfering work (FIW) conflict and job burnout. Their sample consisted of 1001 male and female physicians practicing at one of the six large general hospitals in China. Psychological capital and job burnout were assessed using the PCQ and the MBI – GS translated into Chinese via self-administered questionnaires. The results of the study showed partial mediating role of psychological capital in the relationship of job burnout with both work interfering family conflict and family interfering work conflict. The bivariate correlations between psychological capital and the three factors of burnout (emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy) were $r = -.09, -.26,$ and $.39,$ respectively.

In another study, Peng et al. (2013) studied the association of psychological capital to job burnout through a mediating role of organizational commitment. They claimed that individuals who are high in psychological are more committed to their organization, and that negatively affects their job burnout experience. Their sample included 473 female nurses recruited at four large general hospitals in China. Psychological capital and job burnout were assessed using the PCQ and the MBI – GS via self-administered paper and pencil questionnaires. The results indicated that psychological capital was significantly negatively related to job burnout $r = -.58$, a relationship that was partially mediated by organizational commitment.

Ali and Ali (2014) investigated the mediating role of job satisfaction in a relationship between psychological capital and job burnout. Data was collected with 219 Pakistani female nurses working in three big government hospitals who were assessed using paper-based questionnaire. Psychological capital and job burnout were assessed using the PCQ and the MBI – GS. The authors found that psychological capital was positively related to job satisfaction ($r = .46$) and negatively related to job burnout ($r = -.58$). Furthermore, job satisfaction mediated the relationship between psychological capital and job burnout. Nurses who had high psychological capital were more satisfied with their jobs and less likely to experience job burnout.

Ding et al. (2015) explored the mediating role of coping style in a relationship between psychological capital and job burnout. The sample included 1496 Chinese nurses recruited from two large general hospitals. Psychological capital and job burnout were assessed using Chinese versions of the PCQ and the MBI – GS via paper based

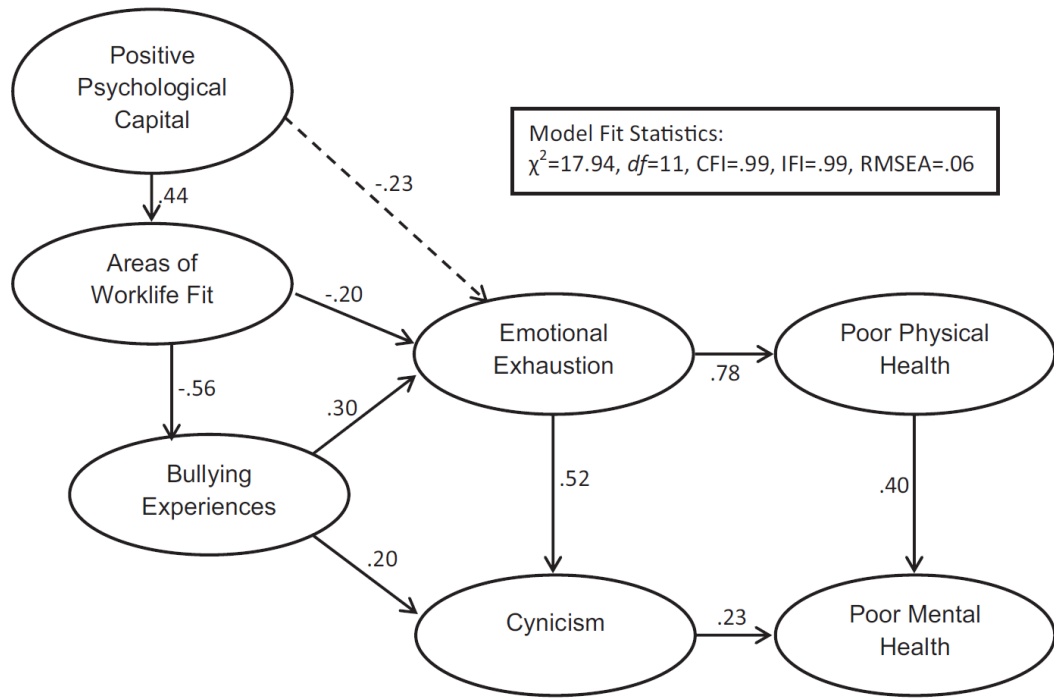
questionnaires. The study found both direct negative effects of psychological capital on job burnout, (average correlations $r = -.21$) and indirect negative effects of psychological capital on job burnout via positive and negative coping. Nurses who had high psychological capital were more likely to develop high positive coping and low negative coping that decreased their job burnout.

Based on the past research, it can be concluded that psychological capital might serve as a positive resource for fighting job burnout. It also seems to influence other variables leading to more positive work outcomes although it should be acknowledged that majority of research concerning psychological capital and job burnout was conducted outside of the U.S.

Psychological Capital, Areas of Worklife Model, and Job Burnout

There has not been much emphasis put on investigating the association of psychological capital, job burnout, and worklife model. We were able to locate one study conducted by Laschinger, Wong, and Grau (2012) who looked at the relationship among these variables. Specifically, their hypothesized model suggested that psychological capital affects individuals' experience of the work environment through worklife model that in turn impacts their experience of job burnout affecting their physical and mental health. In particular, individuals with high psychological capital are expected to be more equipped to adjust their work expectations to job demands that would prevent them from experiencing job burnout and lead to positive physical and mental health. The model was tested as a secondary data analysis from a larger study of new graduate nurse well-being. A sample was composed of 165 new graduate Canadian

nurses between one and twelve months of experience. Psychological capital and job burnout were assessed using the PCQ and the MBI- GS (exhaustion and cynicism subscales) via self-administered questionnaire. The key variables of psychological capital and worklife model were each treated as a single construct as opposed to investigating their sub-areas. In addition, examination of job burnout only focused on exhaustion and cynicism dimensions excluding efficacy. The findings showed support to the proposed model indicating that psychological capital positively influences nurses work environment through areas of worklife which in turn protects them from burnout, and poor mental and physical health (Figure 1).



*Note: Dotted lines represent paths added to the final model

Figure.1 Final Model Showing Path Coefficients.

Source(s): Laschinger, H. K. S., Wong, C. A., & Grau, A. L. (2012). The influence of authentic leadership on newly graduated nurses’ experiences of workplace bullying,

burnout and retention outcomes: A cross-sectional study. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 49(10), 1266-1276.

Hypotheses

Previous research indicated a positive role that psychological capital plays in reducing the occurrence of job burnout. Furthermore, different aspects of worklife affect the experience of job burnout differently. Psychological capital seems to be a buffer against stressful work environments. However, it is not entirely clear whether it is the presence of psychological capital that affects the individual's experience of work environment that decreases job burnout or whether psychological capital and worklife individually affect job burnout. The purpose of this thesis is to further examine the connection and direction of the influence among all the three variables.

Previous research established a positive role psychological capital plays in reducing job burnout (Ali & Ali, 2014; Cheung et al., 2001; Ding et al., 2015; Peng et al., 2013). It also established the role of areas of worklife on job burnout (Gregory, 2015; Gupta et al., 2012; Leiter et al., 2008; Maslach & Leiter, 2008). In addition, the mediating role of areas of worklife in a relationship between psychological capital and job burnout has also been established (Laschinger et. al., 2012). Based on the previous research the following hypotheses were offered.

Hypothesis 1A: Individual components of psychological capital (hope, resiliency, optimism, and self-efficacy) will each individually predict job burnout such that as psychological capital increase, job burnout decrease.

Hypothesis 1B: Individual components areas of worklife (workload, control, community, reward, values, and fairness) will each individually predict job burnout such that as person-job match through areas of worklife increase, job burnout decrease.

Hypothesis 2: Individual components of the areas of worklife will mediate the relationship between psychological capital and job burnout. Specifically, the relationship between psychological capital and job burnout will become weaker when individual components of the areas of worklife are added in to the analyses as mediator variables.

In order to try to get a better understanding of the relationship among all three variables, we offer a third exploratory hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: Psychological capital will moderate the relationship between areas of worklife and job burnout, such that the greater the level of psychological capital the weaker the negative effect of mismatch in areas of worklife on job burnout.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

A college sample was utilized to collect data for the study. Out of 303 participants who completed the survey, 239 were female and 64 were male (Table 1). Participants' age ranged from 18 to 60 ($M = 23.30$, $SD = 7.72$). The categories for hours worked weekly included 50 or more ($N = 9$), 40 - 49 ($N = 56$), 30 - 39 ($N = 49$), 20 - 29 ($N = 95$), 10 - 19 ($N = 80$), and less than 10 ($N = 12$). Participants' job tenure ranged from 1 to 240 months ($M = 20.27$, $SD = 33.61$), and organization tenure ranged from 1 to 240 months ($M = 21.76$, $SD = 33.90$). Participants worked in six major industries. Eighteen and a half per cent worked in restaurants and food services ($N = 56$), 26.4 % in retail stores, sales, and customer service ($N=80$), 24.1% in social services ($N = 73$), 14.5% in businesses, offices or administrative work ($N = 44$), 5.9% in skilled labor ($N = 18$), and 10.6% in other category ($N = 32$).

Researchers posted the study under the internal research sign up system – SONA where students who are enrolled in psychology classes complete surveys for class credit. Any student who was currently enrolled in psychology classes and held a job qualified to participate. The study was posted including a brief instruction, an informed consent form, a link to external survey hosted under SurveyMonkey, estimated completion time, and amount of credit received upon completion. The study was open for two semesters.

Table 1

Frequencies, Means and Standard Deviations for Students' Demographic Characteristics.

Demographic characteristics	N	Percentage
Gender		
Male	64	21.1
Female	239	78.9
Weekly Hours		
50 or more	9	3.0
40-49	56	18.5
30-39	49	16.5
20-29	95	31.4
10-19	80	26.4
10 or less	12	4.0
Industry Type		
Restaurants/Food Services	56	18.5
Retail Stores/Sales	80	26.4
Social Services	73	24.5
Offices/Admin Work	44	14.5
Skilled Labor	18	5.9
Other	32	10.6
	N	Mean (SD)
Age	291	23.30 (7.72)
Job Tenure	297	20.27 (33.61)
Organizational Tenure	295	21.76 (33.90)

Measures

We assembled a questionnaire that consisted of 75 items measuring job burnout, six areas of worklife model, psychological capital, and some basic demographic and departmental information.

Job burnout. Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (MBI-GS) designed for human service employees was used to assess job burnout (Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach & Jackson, 1986). MBI-GS consists of 16 items scored on a frequency scale ranging from 0 – *never* to 6 – *every day*. The scale consists of three dimensions of emotional exhaustion

(EE), cynicism (CY), and personal accomplishment (PA) with items framed in a form of statements addressing job related feelings. Sample items on each subscale include: “I feel emotionally drained from my work” (EE), “I feel I treat some recipients as if they were impersonal objects” (CY), “I have accomplished many worthwhile things in my job” (PA). Higher levels of emotional exhaustion and cynicism along with lower scores on professional efficacy indicate higher level of burnout. Items forming each subscale were averaged together, and then emotional exhaustion and cynicism were added, and professional efficacy was subtracted from the two summed subscales. Cronbach alpha for the current sample for depersonalization, personal accomplishment, and emotional exhaustion were .86, .85 and .84, respectively. Cronbach alpha for the overall scale was .86.

Six Areas of Worklife. The Areas of Worklife Survey (AWS) measure was used to assess areas of worklife (Leiter & Maslach, 2000; Leiter & Maslach, 2004). The AWS is composed of 28 items contained in 6 areas of worklife: workload (6 items), control (3), reward (4), community (5), values (4), and fairness (6). Items on a scale are framed in a form of either positive statements of congruence between a person and a job, such as: “I have enough time to do what’s important in my job” (workload), or negative statements of incongruence between a person and a job: “Working here forces me to compromise my values” (values). Participants are asked to state their level of agreement with each statement using 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1 – *strongly disagree*, through 3 – *hard to decide* to 5 – *strongly agree*. Scoring of negatively worded items is reversed. Congruence is defined as a score greater than 3.0 and incongruence as a score

lower than 3.0. Each area of a worklife provides a unique score. Responses to each individual item are averaged together to form a score for the subscale. For the current sample Cronbach alpha levels were as follow: workload (.24), control (.80), reward (-.51), community (.62), fairness (.11), and values (.81). Due to low internal consistency reported for dimensions of workload, reward, community, and fairness, we decided to discard problematic items. The new workload dimension for the current sample consisted of reverse coded items 1, 2, and 3, and Cronbach alpha value was .70. The new reward dimension for the current sample consisted of items 10 and 11, and Cronbach alpha value was .81. The new community dimension for the current sample consisted of items 14, 15, 16 and 17, and Cronbach alpha value was .89. Finally, the new fairness dimension for the current sample consisted of items 19, 20, 21 and 22 and Cronbach alpha value was .75. Cronbach alpha for the overall scale was .70.

Psychological Capital. Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) was used to assess psychological capital (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007a). PCQ consists of 24 items consisting four dimensions: hope (6 items), optimism (6), resiliency (6), and self-efficacy (6). Sample items of each subscale include: “If I should find myself in a jam at work, I could think of many ways to get out of it” (hope), “I’m optimistic about what will happen to me in the future as it pertains to work” (optimism), “I feel confident analyzing a long term problem to find a solution” (self-efficacy), and “I can get through difficult times at work because I’ve experienced difficulty before” (resiliency). Items are scored on a six point Likert scale ranging from 1 – *strongly disagree* to 6 – *strongly agree*. Higher scores indicate higher levels of psychological capital. Scoring of negatively

worded items is reversed. Responses to each individual item are averaged together to form a score for the subscale. Cronbach alpha for hope, optimism, resiliency, and efficacy were .86, .46, .75, and .87 respectively. Due to optimism subscale showing low internal consistency, we discarded one item. New optimism dimension included items 19, 21, 22, and 24 and had Cronbach alpha value of .81. Cronbach alpha for the overall scale was .85.

Control variables. Information about demographics and employment history was collected. Demographic information included participants age and gender. Employment history included amount of hours worked weekly, tenure in the current position, and tenure at the current organization.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 2 displays correlations between the demographics and the primary variables. Each component of psychological capital and areas of worklife was formed by averaging the items that make up each dimension in accordance to the manual (Leiter & Maslach, 2004; Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007a). Composite scores were calculated by averaging all dimensions that make up psychological capital and areas of worklife. Most of the demographics variables show low and nonsignificant correlations with the primary study variables.

Table 3 displays the means, standard deviations, Cronbach alphas and correlations among four dimensions of psychological capital, six dimensions of areas of worklife, and job burnout. Reliabilities are presented in the diagonal. All components of psychological capital and most of components of areas of worklife, except for workload, showed significant negative relationships with job burnout. Elements of psychological capital and elements of areas of worklife showed mainly moderate positive relationships with each other except for workload that was not statistically significant. Job burnout showed good internal consistency. Psychological capital dimensions and areas of worklife showed good internal consistency after problematic items were discarded.

Table 2

Correlations between the Demographics and the Primary Variables.

	Gender	Age	Weekly Hours	Job Tenure	Organizational Tenure
1. Hope	.04	.16**	.16**	.05	.06
2. Optimism	.15*	.06	.14*	-.03	-.04
3. Resiliency	.08	.13*	-.22**	.04	.08
4. Efficacy	.05	.20**	.14*	.05	.08
5. Workload	-.00	.20**	.12*	.12*	.12
6. Control	.12	.13*	.11	.07*	.12*
7. Reward	.02	-.05	.09	-.02**	-.05**
8. Community	.05	-.16**	.10	-.09**	-.12*
9. Fairness	.05	-.19	.06	-.14*	-.12*
10. Values	.13*	-.05*	.08	-.04	-.03
11. PsyCap	.09	.17**	.19**	.03	.05
12. AWS	-.09	-.01	.15*	-.01	-.01
13. Burnout	-.09	.00	-.09	.05	.00

Note. PsyCap = psychological capital, AWS = areas of worklife

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Table 3

Means, standard deviations, Cronbach alphas and correlations among variables.

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Hope	4.38	.85	.86					
2. Optimism	4.12	.89	.63**	.81				
3. Resiliency	4.47	.71	.61**	.49**	.73			
4. Efficacy	4.37	.97	.77**	.52**	.50**	.87		
5. Workload	2.81	.90	-.14*	-.15**	.05	.02	.70	
6. Control	3.48	.82	.51**	.49**	.33**	.51**	-.09	.80
7. Reward	3.59	.96	.45**	.51**	.21**	.36**	-.16**	.52**
8. Community	3.58	.91	.44**	.49**	.25**	.37**	-.29**	.52**
9. Fairness	3.14	.80	.30**	.42**	.07	.28**	-.22**	.42**
10. Values	3.36	.82	.37**	.44**	.16**	.40**	-.05	.42**
11. PsyCap	4.33	.71	.91**	.80**	.75**	.86**	-.07	.56**
12. AWS	3.32	.57	.49**	.56**	.28**	.49**	.01	.71**
13. Burnout	1.09	3.21	-.41**	-.54*	-.14*	-.33**	.42**	-.41**

Table 3 (continued)

	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Hope							
2. Optimism							
3. Resiliency							
4. Efficacy							
5. Workload							
6. Control							
7. Reward	.81						
8. Community	.64**	.89					
9. Fairness	.61**	.62**	.75				
10. Values	.47**	.49**	.61**	.81			
11. PsyCap	.47**	.47**	.33**	.43**	.85		
12. AWS	.79**	.77**	.78**	.75**	.55**	.70	
13. Burnout	-.46**	-.39**	-.41**	-.39**	-.44**	-.37**	.86

Note. PsyCap = psychological capital, AWS = areas of worklife

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Hypotheses Testing

To test our first hypothesis of psychological capital and its individual components, and areas of worklife and its individual components individually predicting job burnout, we conducted multiple regression analysis.

We first examined the contribution of control variables on job burnout. Our control variables included various demographic and employment variables such as age, gender, weekly hours, job tenure, and organizational tenure. The overall model was not significant, $R^2 = .02$, $F(5, 285) = 1.27$, $p = .255$ (Table 4). Because these variables were not significant predictors of any dimensions of either psychological capital nor areas of worklife, they were not considered further.

Table 4

Results of Regression Analysis for the effect of Control Variables on Job Burnout.

Variable	Job Burnout
	B
Constant	2.65*
Age	-.01
Gender	-.72
Weekly Hours	-.04
Job Tenure	.01
Organization Tenure	-.01
R^2	.02
F	1.32

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Then we examined unique contribution of psychological capital (hope, optimism, resiliency, and efficacy) on job burnout. They did account for significant amount of variance in job burnout, $R^2 = .33$, $F(4, 296) = 37.01$, $p < .001$ (Table 5). Hope, $b = -.88$, $t = -2.67$, $p = .008$, optimism, $b = -1.84$, $t = -8.12$, $p < .001$ and resiliency, $b = 1.15$, $t = 4.16$, $p < .001$, were significant predictors of job burnout.

Table 5

Results of Regression Analysis for the Effect of Psychological Capital on Job Burnout.

Variable	Job Burnout
	B
Constant	7.45**
Hope	-.88**
Optimism	-1.84**
Resiliency	1.15**
Efficacy	-.02
R^2	.33
F	37.01**

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

We further examined whether the unique components of worklife model predict job burnout. The six components of worklife model (workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values) significantly predicted variance in job burnout, $R^2 = .41$, $F(6, 295) = 33.74$, $p < .001$ (Table 6). Workload, $b = 1.35$, $t = 7.95$, $p < .001$, control, $b = -.79$, $t = -3.65$, $p < .001$, reward, $b = -.80$, $t = -3.69$, $p < .001$ and values, $b = -.82$, $t = -3.57$, $p < .001$, were all significant predictors of job burnout. Our multiple regression analyses showed partial support for hypothesis 1A and 1B.

Table 6

Results of Regression Analysis for the Effect of the Areas of Worklife on Job Burnout.

Variable	Job Burnout
	B
Constant	4.81*
Workload	1.35**
Control	-.79**
Reward	-.80**
Community	.35
Fairness	-.12
Values	-.82**
R^2	.41
F	33.74**

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

To test our second hypothesis of mediating role of elements of areas of worklife in a relationship between psychological capital and job burnout, we followed Baron and Kenny's (1986) four causal steps. First, the overall effect the predictor, psychological capital, was examined on the outcome, job burnout. Second, the effect of psychological capital on the mediator, individual components of areas of worklife, was tested. Third, the effect of mediator, significant components of areas of worklife, was examined on job burnout when psychological capital was accounted for. The last step tested the effect of psychological capital on job burnout when areas of worklife are accounted for.

The last step was aimed at establishing whether the effect of mediation was full or partial. We expected to find a complete mediation where a relationship between psychological capital and job burnout becomes non-significant, while the relationship between areas of worklife and job burnout remains significant. Following the results of multiple regression where we found workload, control, reward, and values as significant components of areas of worklife that predict job burnout, we proceeded with examining the mediating role of each of the three areas of worklife separately.

First, we examined workload as a mediator. In step 1 of the mediation model, we tested the total effect of psychological capital on job burnout, ignoring the mediator (Table 7). The effect was significant, $b = -.96$, $t = -8.35$, $p < .001$. Step 2 of the mediation model showed the effect of psychological capital on mediator, workload, to be not be significant, $b = .09$, $t = -1.22$, $p = .223$. In step 3 we tested the effect of workload on job burnout when psychological capital was accounted for and also found it to be significant, $b = 1.42$, $t = 8.48$, $p < .001$. In step 4 we tested the direct effect of psychological capital on job burnout when workload was controlled for and also found it to be significant, $b = -1.83$, $t = -8.67$, $p < .001$.

Second, we examined control as a mediator. In step 1 of the mediation model, we tested the total effect of psychological capital on job burnout, ignoring the mediator (Table 7). The effect was significant, $b = -.96$, $t = -8.35$, $p < .001$. Step 2 of the mediation model showed the effect of psychological capital on mediator, control, to be significant, $b = .64$, $t = 11.73$, $p < .001$. In step 3 we tested the effect of control on job burnout when psychological capital was accounted for and also found it to be significant, $b = -.97$, $t = -$

4.83, $p < .001$. In step 4 we tested the direct effect of psychological capital on job burnout when control was controlled for and also found it to be significant, $b = -1.33$, $t = -4.83$, $p < .001$.

Third, we examined values as a mediator. In step 1 of the mediation model, we tested the total effect of psychological capital on job burnout, ignoring the mediator (Table 7). The effect was significant, $b = -.96$, $t = -8.35$, $p < .001$. Step 2 of the mediation model showed the effect of psychological capital on mediator, reward, to be significant, $b = .63$, $t = 9.19$, $p < .001$. In step 3 we tested the effect of reward on job burnout when psychological capital was accounted for and also found it to be significant, $b = -1.12$, $t = -5.98$, $p < .001$. In step 4 we tested the direct effect of psychological capital on job burnout when reward was controlled for and also found it to be significant, $b = -1.25$, $t = -4.99$, $p < .001$.

Fourth, we examined values as a mediator. In step 1 of the mediation model, we tested the total effect of psychological capital on job burnout, ignoring the mediator (Table 7). The effect was significant, $b = -.96$, $t = -8.35$, $p < .001$. Step 2 of the mediation model showed the effect of psychological capital on mediator, values, to be significant, $b = .49$, $t = 8.15$, $p < .001$. In step 3 we tested the effect of values on job burnout when psychological capital was accounted for and also found it to be significant, $b = -1.46$, $t = -4.63$, $p < .001$. In step 4 we tested the direct effect of psychological capital on job burnout when reward was controlled for and also found it to be significant, $b = -1.00$, $t = -4.63$, $p < .001$. Because none of our direct affects became non-significant or smaller in absolute value in the presence of a moderator in comparison to total effect, our hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Table 7

Results of Mediating Role of Areas of Worklife in Relationship between Psychological Capital and Job Burnout.

Mediator	Effect	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	
Workload	c	PsyCap → JB	-.96	-8.35	< .001
	a	PsyCap → Workload	-.09	-1.22	> .05
	b	Workload → JB	1.42	8.48	< .001
	c'	PsyCap → JB	-1.83	-8.67	< .001
Control	c	PsyCap → JB	-.96	-8.35	< .001
	a	PsyCap → Control	.64	11.73	< .001
	b	Control → JB	-.97	-4.02	< .001
	c'	PsyCap → JB	-1.33	-4.83	< .001
Reward	c	PsyCap → JB	-.96	-8.35	< .001
	a	PsyCap → Reward	.63	9.19	< .001
	b	Reward → JB	-1.12	-5.98	< .001
	c'	PsyCap → JB	-1.25	-4.99	< .001
Values	c	PsyCap → JB	-.96	-8.35	< .001
	a	PsyCap → Values	.49	8.15	< .001
	b	Values → JB	-1.46	-4.63	< .001
	c'	PsyCap → JB	-1.00	-4.63	< .001

Note: a = a total effect of IV on DV, b = an effect of IV on mediator, c = an effect of mediator on DV when IV is controlled, c' = a direct effect of IV on DV when mediator is controlled

PsyCap = Psychological Capital, JB = Job Burnout

To test our third hypothesis of a moderating role of psychological capital in relationship between areas of worklife and job burnout, we used multiple regression. Worklife served as an independent variable (IV), and psychological capital as a moderator. We centered aggregated psychological capital and aggregated worklife and then created an interaction between these two centered variables. Centering predictor variables is necessary to eliminate issues of multicollinearity and improves interpretation of the main effect of the predictor variable (Fairchild, & McQuillin, 2010). We then ran multiple regression with centered IV and centered moderator entered in

the first step, and centered interaction variable entered in the second step. We found a main effect of our independent variable, areas of worklife, to be significant, $b = -1.64$, $t = -4.83$, $p < .001$ (Table 8). The effect of our moderator, psychological capital, was also significant, $b = -1.70$, $t = -5.93$, $p < .001$. We found an interaction between areas of worklife and psychological capital to be significant, $b = -.87$, $t = -3.53$, $p < .001$ and the interaction accounted for additional variance in job burnout, $\Delta R^2 = .03$, $\Delta F = 12.43$, $p < .001$. To understand the nature of the effect of this interaction on job burnout, we examined the regression slopes (Figure 2). We defined the high and the low group by defining the low level as minus one standard deviation from the mean, and the high level as plus one standard deviation from the mean. We performed simple slope analysis for each regression line to test whether its slope was significantly different from zero. After examining simple slopes, we found that the relationship between areas of worklife and job burnout is stronger when psychological capital is high as opposed to low which provided support for our hypothesis 3.

Table 8

Results of Moderating Role of Psychological Capital in Relationship between Areas of Worklife and Job Burnout.

Variable	Job Burnout	
	Model 1 B	Model 2 B
Constant	1.08**	1.26**
Areas of Worklife	-1.46**	-1.64**
Psychological Capital	-1.36**	-1.70**
Areas of Worklife × Psychological Capital		-.87**
R^2	.23	.26
F	44.28**	34.80**
ΔR^2		.03
ΔF		12.43**

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

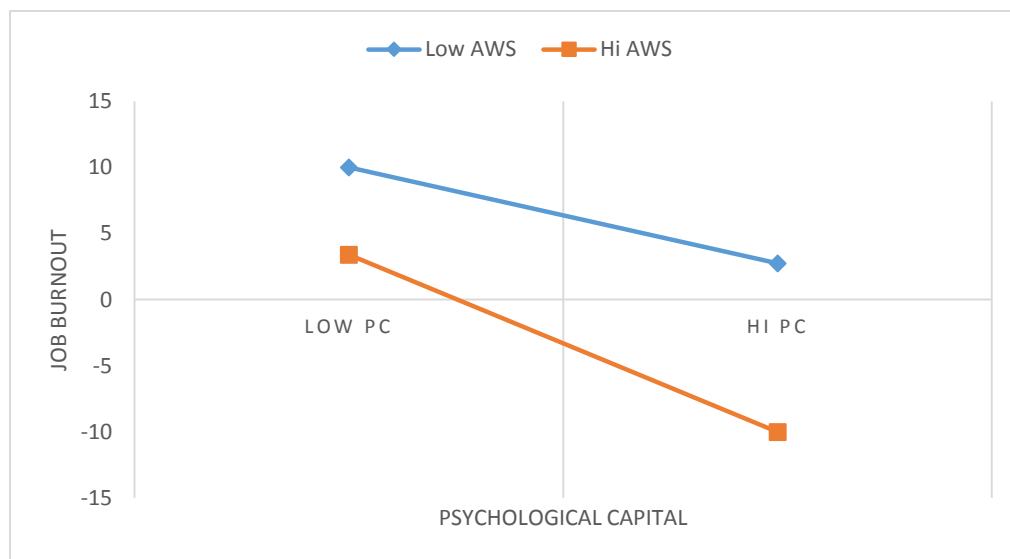


Figure 2

Effect of Psychological Capital and Areas of Worklife on Job Burnout.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Summary of Hypotheses Testing

We hypothesized that psychological capital and its individual components, and areas of worklife and its individual components will each individually predict job burnout. We found partial support for these hypotheses because in both cases only a reduced subset of the components was statistically significant. Hope, optimism, and resiliency components of psychological capital as well as workload, control, and value components of areas of worklife were predictive of job burnout. Our results show that both organizational and personal factors can influence individuals' experience of job burnout. Specifically, personal factors such as hope and optimism serve a protective role in decreasing job burnout, which is consistent with previous findings (Ali & Ali, 2014; Cheung et al., 2011; Peng et al., 2012). Also, consistent with previous research, organizational factors of workload, control, reward, and values increase individual's chance of job burnout development and should be investigated closely by employers (Gregory, 2015; Gupta et al., 2012; Leiter & Maslach, 2008).

We further hypothesized that areas of worklife would mediate the relationship between psychological capital and job burnout. Our mediation findings indicated that psychological capital did not positively affect individuals' perceptions of their work environment, especially the match that employees perceive in the areas of worklife in order to decrease their experience of job burnout. The only study that reported

mediating role of areas of worklife in relationship between psychological capital and job burnout was Laschinger et al. (2012) with a small sample of graduate nurses.

Finally, we predicted a moderating role of psychological capital in relationship between areas of worklife and job burnout. Our findings indicated that the relationship between areas of worklife and job burnout is weaker when individuals are high in psychological capital as opposed to low. This is a novel finding; no other studies have reported this finding.

Implications and Extensions

Theoretical implications. This research failed to provide insight into the relationship between areas of worklife, psychological capital, and job burnout. Even though we identified unique contributions of workload, control, rewards, and values dimensions of areas of worklife whose congruence lead to decreased job burnout, and unique contributions of hope, optimism, and resiliency that lead to decreased job burnout occurrence, we were unable to specify the directionality of the relationship among all three variables. That is, we are also unable to determine whether it is psychological capital that influences individuals' perception of person-job fit through areas of worklife that leads to job burnout or whether it is individuals' perceived match/mismatch in areas of worklife that influences psychological capital that leads to job burnout.

Practical implications. In terms of practical implications, we offer three recommendations that organizations can utilize in order to neutralize individual's chances of job burnout. One of the proposed enhancements would be fostering

individuals' psychological capital via individual and group interventions such as workshops that might be provided as a professional development tool and a resource that helps them to deal with work stressors. For example, to work on the "hope" dimension of psychological capital, participants could be asked to identify goals and pathways to reach these goals as well as obstacles that can stand in their way. They can work on strategies to help them reach these goals.

Our second recommendation concerns areas of worklife. As employee's workload increases, organizations could ensure that their employees have sufficient resources to meet the demands of the job. Furthermore, providing employees with autonomy and including them in decision making might lead to increased engagement, participation, and organizational commitment. In addition, rewarding them for their performance in form of recognition, praise, monetary rewards, professional development or mentoring depending on an employee would motivate them and make them more committed to organizational goals. Finally, respecting individuals' values as well as communicating organizational values to employees and aligning them to their own values might lead to increase of these individuals in meeting organizational goals and getting a better understanding of organizational processes. All of these practices if implemented by management could lead a decrease in job burnout.

Our third recommendation also concerns areas of worklife. While providing tools and resources directly to employees is a good starting point, providing training to managers is also a possible tactic. For examples, managers and supervisors could be trained to be sensitive to the six areas of worklife, and they could strive to create

employment conditions that foster matches between the workplace and their employees' needs and desires. One approach that has been used for this is training managers in authentic leadership (Bamford, Wong, & Laschinger, 2013; Laschinger, Borgogni, Consiglio, & Read, 2015; Wong & Giallonardo, 2013).

Limitations of the Current Study

The present study has three limitations. First, our sample consists of young female college students who mostly hold part time jobs. We hypothesized that our sample is not representative of the samples that are typically used in this type of research. Indeed, this is what we found when we compared the means and standard deviations of scores on the AWS to those reported in the literature. For community, control, rewards, and values, our sample scored 0.25, 0.50, 1.00, and 1.00 standard deviation units below representative samples, respectively. For workload and fairness, our sample scored 0.50 and 1.00 standard deviation units above representative samples.

Compared to full-time professionals, these participants are less likely to feel the same sense of commitment to their jobs, they are less likely to be dependent on their jobs for their livelihoods, and they are less likely to be using specialized training or skills in their jobs. Therefore, it is likely that young part-time employees see their jobs as a temporary means to an ends, and if the job environment is poor, they have a lot more flexibility in leaving a job before they experience burnout. Also, most of the sample has only been in their jobs a few months or years, which might be not enough time for

factors like psychological capital and areas of worklife to have a strong effect on job burnout. These factors make our results less generalizable to real work situations.

Second, there were significant problems with our AWS measurements. Even though we used a well-established scale with good psychometric properties, the AWS scale did not show acceptable psychometric properties in this sample. Specifically, three of the subscales (workload, reward, and fairness) had very low internal consistencies. A fourth subscale, community, had a Cronbach's alpha of .62, whereas the average value for this subscale in the literature is .80. This led us to discard several items from all four dimensions to reach higher internal consistency. As these newly formed dimensions might not be as representative of the constructs of interest as initially designed by Maslach et al. (2001), our findings should be interpreted with caution.

Third, the authors of the AWS scale indicate that each unique component of the scale should be interpreted separately instead of averaging scores among all six dimensions. It is specifically written in the manual that "since the meanings and relationships these six areas of worklife differ, it is not possible to combine the six subscale scores into one, overall score" (Leiter & Maslach, 2006, p. 10). This means that certain simple analyses such as moderation need to be interpreted with caution. Although some studies do not use a total score for AWS in their analyses (Gregory et al., 2015; Gupta et al., 2012; Leiter & Maslach, 2008; Maslach & Leiter, 2008), several studies do (Bamford et al., 2015; Boamah & Laschinger, 2016; Laschinger et al., 2012; Laschinger et al., 2015; Wong & Giallonardo, 2013).

Future Directions for Research

Due to our measurement problems with the AWS, we suggest to conduct more complex analyses that will investigate each component of the areas of worklife separately to understand its unique contribution in predicting job burnout. The current research landscape clearly indicates that AWS is predictive of job burnout, but the strength of the relationships between each AWS component and each job burnout component is not yet well established.

Furthermore, the relationship among psychological capital, areas of worklife model, and job burnout is not clearly defined. Future research should explore this relationship further in order to fully understand the directionality of that effect. That is, understanding whether it is psychological capital that influences individuals' experience of the work environment that decreases job burnout or the other way around. Testing this relationship longitudinally can help provide some insights on the relationship between the two. Both Maslach and Leiter (2008), and Gregory (2015) used longitudinal assessments of job burnout. Studying job burnout longitudinally allows for a better understanding of this job stressor and can help address this issue in its early stages of development. It further allows management to not only understand the causes and effects of job burnout, but also to put interventions in place that allow staff retention.

Finally, larger and more diverse samples of individuals who hold professional positions are needed in order to make any future research more generalizable. Since our sample was mainly composed of college students, it is not representative of population at large. In addition, majority of the research job burnout, and psychological capital has

been conducted in other countries. Therefore, it would be highly desirable to see how the association between these variables apply to a U.S. population. Further, several of the previous studies in this field have focused on nurses (Ali & Ali, 2014; Bamford et al., 2015, Ding et al., 2015; Gregory, 2015; Leiter & Maslach, 2008; Laschinger et al., 2012; Laschinger et al, 2015, Peng et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2012a; Wong & Giallonardo, 2013). Continuing to do research with participants who work full time and hold a variety of professional jobs is desired to make the results more applicable to general working population.

Conclusion

The results of this study demonstrated the importance of both personal and organizational factors on individuals' experience of job burnout. Understanding predictors of job burnout is the first step to help inform interventions that can prevent job burnout from occurring and help sustain the workforce by making sure that employees want to remain in their professions. It is important to be able to identify problems early on in order to put preventative solutions in place. Even though our findings are promising in helping inform interventions to a real-world problem, they should be viewed with caution. Further replications and extensions of our results are needed in order to ensure generalizability.

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