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OCCUPATIONAL BURNOUT: THE RELATIONSHIPS WITH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BUSINESSMEN

Karamushka, L.M., Gnuskina, G.V., Ivkin, V.M. Occupational burnout: the relationships with internal and external professional characteristics of businessmen. On the basis of empirical research, the author revealed that more than a third of the businessmen who took part in the inquiry, had high levels of burnout components with reduced personal accomplishment being at the highest level. Occupational burnout was found to associate both with the businessmen's internal professional characteristics (work engagement) and external characteristics which included business experience, experience in the chosen field, managerial experience in managing and workload, etc.).

Keywords: *businessmen; occupational burnout of businessmen, businessmen's work engagement, business experience, experience in the chosen field, managerial experience, businessmen's workload.*

Карамушка Л.М., Гнускина А.В., Ивкин В.Н. Профессиональное выгорание: связь с «внутренними» и «внешними» профессиональными характеристиками предпринимателей. В статье на основе эмпирического исследования установлено, что более трети опрошенных предпринимателей имеют высокий уровень выраженности всех составляющих профессионального выгорания. При этом наиболее выраженной является такая составляющая профессионального выгорания, как «редукция личных достижений». Установлено наличие связи между профессиональным выгоранием и «внутренними» профессиональными характеристиками предпринимателей («включенностью в работу»). Констатируется наличие связи между профессиональным выгоранием и «внешними» профессиональными характеристиками предпринимателей (стажем предпринимательской деятельности, опытом работы в сфере избранной деятельности; опытом работы в управлении, рабочей нагрузкой и др.).

Ключевые слова: *предприниматели; профессиональное выгорание предпринимателей; «включенность в работу» предпринимателей; стаж предпринимательской деятельности; опыт работы в сфере избранной деятельности; опыт работы в управлении; рабочая нагрузка предпринимателей.*

Introduction. Nowadays, the problem of occupational burnout is becoming increasingly important due to the fast changing socio-economic and political situation, heavy professional stress and fierce competition.

Analysis of latest publications and literature. Analysis of the relevant literature suggests that the problem of burnout has been studied by a number of foreign (T. Formanyuk [12], H. Freudenberger [13], C. Maslach [14], V. Orel [10], W. Schaufeli [15], N. Vodopyanova [4], et al.) and Ukrainian (I. Abdulayeva [1], I. Galetska [5], T. Grubi [6], L. Karamushka [11], Yu. Kovrovsky [8], S. Maksymenko [11], Vaschenko [3], T. Zaichikova [11], et al.) researchers who have investigated the nature of burnout, its structure, genesis, impact on different human activities as well as the factors that contribute to its development.

Much is known about burnout in a variety of professions including educators [11; 12], physicians [7], managers [5], civil servants [3; 6; 8], etc.

However, as the analysis of the literature suggests, burnout in business, in particular, its levels and links with businessmen's internal and external professional characteristics have not been the subject of research yet.

Given the relevance and lack of research on the problem of occupational burnout, we have set the following **research objectives**:

1. To analyze the levels of burnout among businessmen.
2. To study the relationships of burnout with businessmen's internal professional characteristics (work engagement).
3. To determine the relationships between burnout and businessmen's external organizational and professional characteristics (work experience, workload, etc.).

Methods and procedure. In our inquiry we used the *Maslach Human Services Survey* [9; 14] to identify three main components of burnout: a) emotional exhaustion (measures feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work); b) depersonalization (measures an unfeeling and impersonal response toward recipients of one's service, care treatment, or instruction); c) personal accomplishment (measures feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work).

To measure work engagement we used the *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale* (UWES-9; Wilmar B. Schaufeli et al.) [16] which allowed to identify the following key dimensions of work engagement: a) vigor which is characterized by high energy, intellectual flexibility, desire to contribute to the work, perseverance and focus on work objectives; b) dedication shown by the inclusion in work, feelings of self-importance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and a sense of competition; c) absorption characterized by complete concentration on the work, tunnel vision, immersion in work when time at work flies.

Mathematical data processing was done using statistical package for social sciences SPSS (version 13), in particular descriptive statistics and correlation analysis [2].

Sample. The sample included 302 businessmen from large cities of Ukraine (Dnepr and Kyiv). By their business type, the respondents were distributed as follows: 80.7% of them were individuals and 19.3% legal entities.

56.8% of businessmen worked in trade, 30.4% provided services and 12.8% were in industry.

62.7% of the entrepreneurs had higher education, 17.3% incomplete higher education and

20.0% secondary or vocational education.

18.5% of the respondents were aged under 30, 42.4% aged 31 to 40 years, 25.8% aged 41 to 50 years and 13.2% were older than 50 years of age.

50.7% of the respondents were males and 49.3% were females.

Results and discussion.

The *first stage* of the inquiry focused on measuring the levels of occupational burnout among businessmen. It was found that a large number of the respondents had the main components of burnout (*Table 1*).

Table 1 Levels of occupational burnout in businessmen (% of the sample)

Components of professional burnout	Levels		
	Low	Middle	High
Emotional exhaustion	18.7	43.0	38.3
Depersonalization	27.3	32.7	40.0
Personal accomplishment	18.3	35.2	46.5

Thus, high levels of *emotional exhaustion* (emotional flattening, indifference, etc.) were found in 38.3% of entrepreneurs. High levels of *depersonalization* (strain relationships with customers, subordinates and others, dependence on other people, negativism and cynicism) were found in 40.0% of the respondents.

Reduced personal accomplishment (negative self-assessment, low professional efficiency, selfdoubt, etc.) were found in 46.5% of the entrepreneurs.

Thus, more than a third of entrepreneurs had high scores on all the components of occupational burnout with the reduced personal accomplishment component being the most pronounced. This can be explained by the complexity of business activities in general, especially in the current socioeconomic conditions in Ukraine.

These findings suggest, in our opinion, the presence of serious psychological problems faced by Ukrainian businessmen and their need of psychological assistance in solving these problems.

The *second phase* of the research dealt with businessmen's work engagement and its relationship with occupational burnout. The findings given in Table 2, show that on average every third respondent had high levels of all components of work engagement: absorption (36.2%), followed by vigor (32.9%) and dedication (30.2%).

Table 2

Levels of businessmen's work engagement (% of the sample)

Components of work engagement	Levels		
	Low	Middle	High
vigor	26.2	40.9	32.9
dedication	29.5	40.3	30.2
absorption	31.5	32.2	36.2

Analysis of businessmen's work engagement as a burnout factor found *statistically significant relative correlations* between burnout and all components of work engagement (Table 3). However, in some cases, these relationships were complex, i. e. they applied to all components of burnout, and in other cases they were partial, i. e. they affected only some components of burnout.

Thus, statistically significant negative correlations were found between *vigor* and all components of burnout: emotional exhaustion ($r_s=-0.184$, $p<0.01$), depersonalization ($r_s=-0.242$, $p<0.01$) and personal accomplishment ($r_s=-0.308$, $p<0.01$).

Statistically significant negative relationships were also found between *dedication* and all components of burnout: emotional exhaustion ($r_s=-0.239$, $p<0.01$), depersonalization ($r_s=-0.265$, $p<0.01$) and personal accomplishment ($r_s=-0.366$, $p<0.01$).

Table 3

Correlations between occupational burnout and businessmen's work engagement

Components of burnout	Components of work engagement (r_s)		
	Vigor	Dedication	Absorption
Emotional exhaustion	<u>-0.184**</u>	<u>-0.239**</u>	-0.052
Depersonalization	<u>-0.242**</u>	<u>-0.265**</u>	-0.104
Personal accomplishment	<u>-0.308**</u>	<u>-0.366**</u>	<u>-0.310**</u>

** $p<0.01$

The obtained findings also showed statistically significant negative relationship between absorption and *personal accomplishment* ($r_s=-0.310$, $p<0.01$).

It suggests that work engagement is an important factor behind occupational burnout (out of 9 possible indicators statistically significant relationships were found in 7): the higher businessmen's work engagement, the less burnt out they are. Among the work engagement components, vigor and dedication have statistically significant relationships with all components of burnout whereas among the components of burnout personal accomplishment has the most pronounced statistically significant relationships with work engagement (personal accomplishment has statistically significant relationships with all components of work engagement).

In other words, increasing businessmen's work engagement can contribute to their burnout prevention and recovery.

The **third phase** of the investigation studied the effects of external formal characteristics of entrepreneurs on their occupational burnout. First let's analyze the characteristics related to *entrepreneurs' overall business experience and experience in the chosen field and managerial experience* (Table 4).

Data analysis found statistically significant relationships between certain components of burnout and entrepreneurs' overall business experience and experience in the selected field and managerial experience: the longer the overall business experience and experience in the selected field, the lower the levels of burnout components. That is, there were statistically significant inecative correlations between: a) business experience and depersonalization ($r_s=-0.133$, $p<0.05$), b) business experience in the chosen field and personal accomplishment ($r_s=-0.153$, $p<0.05$), c) managerial experience and emotional exhaustion ($r_s=-0.213$, $p<0.01$) and personal accomplishment ($r_s=-0.140$, $p<0.05$).

Table 4

Correlations between occupational burnout and businessmen's overall business experience and experience in the chosen field

Components of burnout	Experience (r_s)		
	Overall business experience	Experience in the chosen field	Managerial experience
Emotional exhaustion	-0.104	-0.083	<u>-0.213**</u>
Depersonalization	<u>-0.133*</u>	0.044	0.088
Personal accomplishment	0.013	<u>-0.153*</u>	<u>-0.140*</u>

** $p<0.01$

We can conclude that entrepreneurs who are starting a business and have neither experience in the chosen field nor managerial experience are at risk of burning out.

Next, let's consider the role of workload (work hours, days off work) on businessmen's burning out (Table 5).

Table 5

Correlations between occupational burnout and businessmen's workload

Components of burnout	Workload (r_s)	
	Work hours	Days off work
Emotional exhaustion	0.107	0.020
Depersonalization	<u>0.193**</u>	-0.052
Personal accomplishment	0.083	0.014

** p<0.01

The study found statistically significant direct relationships between the length of work day and depersonalization ($r_s=0.193$, $p<0.01$): as work load increased, the fewer contacts the businessmen had with their subordinates, customers and other people.

Thus, it can be concluded that one of the factors in burnout prevention is a reasonable work regime. However, the study did not find any relationships between burnout and the *number of days off work*.

Conclusion:

1. More than one third of entrepreneurs *have high levels of all components of occupational burnout* with reduced personal accomplishment being the highest.

2. Occupational burnout has statistically significant relationships with businessmen's *internal professional characteristics* (work engagement): the higher businessmen's work engagement, the less they burn out. However, only every third respondent has work engagement components at high levels.

3. Occupational burnout has statistically significant relationships with businessmen's *external professional characteristics*: a) business experience, experience in their chosen field and managerial experience have a positive impact on all components of burnout; b) the increase of working hours increases the businessmen's depersonalization.

4. Consideration of the identified patterns can help prevent burnout in business.

Further research. The follow-up research may focus on finding out the links between businessmen occupational burnout and their business motivation.

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Карамушка Л.М., Гнускіна Г.В., Івкін В.М. Професійне вигорання: зв'язок із «внутрішніми» та «зовнішніми» професійними характеристиками підприємців. У статті на основі емпіричного дослідження виявлено, що більше ніж третина опитаних підприємці мають високий рівень вираженості всіх складових професійного вигорання («емоційного виснаження», «деперсоналізації», «редукції особистих досягнень»). При цьому найбільш вираженою є така складова професійного вигорання, як «редукція особистих досягнень».

Виявлено статистично значущий зв'язок між професійним вигоранням та «внутрішніми» професійними характеристиками підприємців («включеність у роботу»): чим вище включеність підприємців у роботу, тим рівень професійного вигорання є нижчим. Однак, при цьому лише третина опитаних мають високий рівень вираженості всіх складових «включеності у роботу» («сила включеності», «присвячення» та «поглинання»).

Констатовано наявність зв'язку між професійним вигоранням та «зовнішніми» професійними характеристиками підприємців. Так, виявлено, що збільшення стажу підприємницької діяльності та досвіду роботи позитивно впливає на зменшення вираженості практично всіх складових професійного вигорання. Водночас, підвищення робочого навантаження збільшує ймовірність «згорання» контактів підприємців з людьми (підлеглими, клієнтами тощо).

Ключові слова: підприємці; професійне вигорання підприємців; «включеність у роботу» підприємців; стаж підприємницької діяльності; досвід роботи у сфері обраної діяльності; досвід роботи в управлінні; робоче навантаження підприємців.

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