

## The Moderating Role of Career Growth Prospects in Burnout- Job Involvement Link among Female Nurses

Chinwendu R. Olebara & Ejike A. Okonkwo

Department of Psychology, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu State, Nigeria

Corresponding Author: Chinwendu R. Olebara

**Abstract:** *Leaning on the theoretical assumptions of the job demand-resources model this cross-sectional survey investigated the moderating role of career growth prospects in burnout-job involvement link among female nurses. One hundred and twenty (120) female nurses between the ages of 20 to 59 years ( $M = 41.90$ ,  $SD = 7.33$ ) were sampled using Multi-stage sampling (cluster and purposive). Weng (2010) 12-item career growth prospects scale, Maslach and Jackson (1986) 22-item burnout inventory and Lodahl and Kejner (1965) 20-item job involvement scale were administered for data collection. The results revealed no relationship between burnout and job involvement,  $R^2 = .020$ ,  $F=1.79$ ,  $P >.05$ , and no interactions of career growth prospects and burnout on the outcome of the criterion variable (job involvement),  $R^2 = .011$ ,  $F= 1.33$ ,  $P>.0$  while only career growth prospects yielded a significant interaction outcome with job involvement with  $\beta = -.22$ ,  $P <.05$ . The findings were discussed and recommendations made.*

**Keywords:** *career growth prospects, burnout, job involvement, female nurses*

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### I. Introduction

Effective health care delivery is absolutely hinged on the involvement of health care providers, especially nurses (Olatunji, 2014). They occupy important positions in all health care organizations that seek to reduce mortality and morbidity rate, therefore high premium is placed on job involvement of its entire workforce (Olatunji, 2014).

Job involvement has become one of the challenges to all health care organizations because it is related to the important aspects of employee's job behavior (Olatunji, 2014). And this is important in the health care sector where high level of job involvement is required for efficiency. This importance has been supported by studies (e.g. Khan, 1990). Job involvement is the degree to which one is cognitively engrossed and engaged in one's job to the point it becomes central to one's identity (Byrne, 2015). According to Lodahl and Kejner (1965) an individual with high job involvement is someone for who work is psychologically important. Lodahl and Kejner (1965) contend that job involvement is the degree to which a person identifies psychologically with his work or the importance of work in his total self image. Job involvement may also be thought of as the internalization of values about the goodness of work or the importance of work in the worth of the person and perhaps it thus measures the ease with which the person can further be socialized by the organization (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965). Employee's job involvement increases if employees have decision making authority, responsibility and the tempo of the work (Bass, 1965). Having employees with high job involvement maybe of benefit because when people are plunged in their duties, they are more satisfied and this condition can lead to positive effect in their job performance (Hosseini & Talebian, 2015; Brown, 2007). Job involvement generally is described by self-satisfied feeling, devotion potentiality and positive feelings about work (Maher, 2016). Unlike those who suffer from burnout, job involved employees have sense of energetic and effective connection with their work activities and they see themselves as able to deal well with the demands of their job (Schaufeli, Taris & van Rhenen, 2008). People who have low job involvement usually are at a higher level of job burnout (Feiabadi & Mirihasem 2011). Employees are faced with some psychological problems that may influence their job involvement which burnout is one of and it constitutes occupational stress.

Burnout comes as a result of long term irresolvable job stress characterized by a set of symptoms that includes exhaustion resulting from work, excessive demands as well as physical symptoms such as headaches and sleeplessness, quickness to anger and closed thinking (Freudenberger, 1974). It is also a complex human reaction to stress (Kelly, 2008). Job burnout is a psychological syndrome consisting of three dimensions; emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal performance (Maher, 2016). Job related burnout is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced feeling of work related personal accomplishment (Freudenberger, 1974). In another conceptualization, burnout is thought to comprise emotional exhaustion, physical fatigue and cognitive weariness. And this conceptualization holds that burnout consists of

exhaustion and disengagement. Studies (e.g. Lee & Ashforth, 1990) defined burnout as the type of stress response that is on the risk among workers today and most common among those who have intense contact and involvement with others during the course of their normal workday. Burnout is thought to occur when there is a mismatch between the nature of the job and the person doing the job (Maslach & Leiter, 2001). Ahola et al (2005) indicates that burnout is associated with reduced job performance, coronary heart disease and mental health problems. It is associated with absenteeism, time missed from work and thought of quitting. Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001) postulated that burnout occurs when there is a disconnection between the organization and the individual with regard to six areas of work life which include work load, control, reward, community, fairness and values. Organization working under pressure will cause job burnout, reduced productivity, reduced organizational involvement and finally increase withdrawal from work (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Nurses as health care givers are the most valuable assets that endure various problems and issues (Maher, 2016) Nurses are particularly susceptible to job burnout due to their direct contact with patients who are in pain, suffering and eventual death (Maher, 2016). The steady increase in job duties, stressful nature of the job and continuous 24 hours job activities for patients care are some of the factors that cause too much pressure on nurses (Rouhi, Molaey & Mahomoodi, 2008). This pressure can trigger job involvement problems such as burnout and such issues in the course of doing their jobs; can result in nurses' responsibilities affecting the society at the macro level (Mirhashemi, Pasha & Sabeti, 2008; Khalesi, 2010). However, it is thought that career growth prospects can moderate this negative outcome (burnout) of job involvement in the sense that these nurses could cope with the challenges that come from their job with the belief that they will get to their desired career goals. This is premised on the fact that employees often hope to grow in their profession and achieve a distinguished career (Okurame & Balogun, 2005) and the probability that this will come to fruition is the underlying thrust of career growth prospects.

Considered as the chances of getting promoted and obtaining career development experiences, career growth prospect is arguably an essential source of motivated work behavior (Weer, 2006; Okurame, 2001). The mere expectation of moving up an organization hierarchy through promotion and obtaining beneficial career development experiences increases an employee's effort and motivates a strong involvement in job, organizational and career activities (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982; Eisenberger, Lieberman & Williams, 2003). Indeed, empirical investigations have shown that such optimism is accompanied by job effectiveness (Avey, Nimnicht & Pigon, 2010), increased job attendance (Eisieberger, Huntington, Hutchison & Sowa, 1986) a greater willingness to remain with an organization and pro-social actions from employees (Meyer & Allen, 1984; Brief & Motowidlo, 1986; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986; Okurame, 2012), hence the likelihood of career growth prospects moderating the relationship between burnout and job involvement among female nurses.

### **Theoretical overview and hypotheses development**

Considering the theoretical assumptions of the job demand-resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) every job may have associated factors which are categorized into job demands and job resources. Job demands refer to physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and psychological effort or skills. Therefore, they are associated with certain physiological and psychological costs. Examples are work pressure, emotional demands and they affect job involvement. Job resources refer to physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects of the job that are either, or, functional in achieving work goals, reduce job demand and the associated physiological and psychological cost; stimulate personal growth, learning and development. Examples are career opportunities, supervisor coaching, role clarity and autonomy. JD-R model is motivational in nature whereby it is assumed that job resources have motivational potential and can lead to high job involvement, low level of cynicism and excellent performance. If the nurses are given the resources (e.g. career growth prospects) they need, they may manage the demands from their job and burnout could be managed resulting in high job involvement. The presence of job resources leads to job involvement whereas their absence evokes a cynical attitude towards work (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli 2001; Lewig, Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Dollard & Meter, 2007; Schaufeli, Bakker & van Rhenen, 2009). In essence, this model emphasizes that job demands have influence on the involvement of employees especially nurses considering the nature of their job but could be managed when they are given job resources like career growth opportunities.

### **Job Involvement and Burnout**

Studies (e.g. Chauhan, 2009) in a study reported a negative relationship between job involvement and burnout (depersonalization and emotional exhaustion) while a positive correlation with feeling of reduced personal accomplishment.

In another study Maher, Sotoudeh and Hossein (2016) in a study of 140 nurses found no significant relationship between burnout and job involvement but a reverse relation between depersonalization and job

involvement. Olusa and Afolabi (2017) in a study of 360 employees found that job demand positively predicted burnout but negatively predicted job involvement.

Cropanzano, Rupp and Byrne (2003) in an investigation of 296 service employees found that emotional exhaustion and diminished personal accomplishment negatively related to organizational citizenship behavior while job involvement moderated the relationships between emotional exhaustion, diminished personal accomplishment and organizational citizenship behavior.

Griffin, Hogan, Lambert and Tucker-Gail (2010) found a positive relationship between job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced accomplishment at work while job stress had a significant positive relationship with depersonalization emotional exhaustion. Job involvement had a positive relationship with emotional exhaustion while organizational commitment had no relationship with burnout; hence the present study hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1: Burnout will be negatively related to job involvement.

### **Career Growth Prospects and Job Involvement**

Agba and Ogabon (2010) in a study found a positive significant relationship between career development and job involvement. Okurame (2014) studying bank employees found a significant relationship between self-efficacy and career growth prospects.

Merchant (2010) in a study of 100 police officers found a positive significant relationship between career development, organizational effectiveness and employee involvement. In another study Okurame (2014) found career growth to be negatively related to organizational involvement and job satisfaction. Biswakarma (2016) in a study of 290 bankers found a moderate prevailing organizational career growth and low moderate employee's turnover.

Dialoke and Adighije (2017) in a study of 2630 employees found a positive and significant correlation between career growth and the performance of employees, thus this study hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 2: Career growth prospects will be positively related with job involvement.

### **Career Growth Prospects and Burnout**

Gyorffy, Sandor and Birkas (2016) in a study of 133 medical found a positive significant relationship between career motivation and burnout.

In another investigation of 176 nurses, Haque and Yamoah (2014) found that occupational stress was negatively related to career motivation while low relationship with organizational involvement. Following these studies, this study hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 3: Career growth prospects will weaken the negative relationship between burnout and job involvement.

## **II. Method**

### **Participants and Procedure**

A cross-sectional survey of 120 female nurses between 20 to 59 years ( $M = 41.90$ ;  $SD = 7.33$ ) served as participants. The researchers using multi-stage sampling technique (cluster and purposive) drew the participants from the Nursing Departments in a University Teaching Hospital in Enugu State, Nigeria after obtaining a letter of permission from the Deputy Director of Nursing services of the hospital.

More so, the researcherS identified with the Chief Nursing Officer of each of these Departments and the Heads of units of the Departments. This administration was carried out in seven Departments in the University Teaching Hospital which comprised seven clusters. The Departments were Patient Care Service, Microbiology, Dermatology, GOPD (General Out-patient Department), Radiation Medicine, Physiotherapy, Accident and Emergency. A total of 136 copies of the questionnaire were administered within one month and instructions given to the nurses. They were allowed to go home with the copies and returned in a later date. Of the 136 copies administered, 12 were not returned and 4 copies were discarded due to errors in completion, hence 120 (88.24%) copies that were properly completed and returned were scored and analyzed in testing the hypotheses.

### **Measures**

Three scales were used in this study. They include Weng (2010) 12- item career growth prospect scale (CGPS), Maslach and Jackson (1986) 22-item burnout inventory (MBI) and Lodahl and Kejner (1965) 20- item job involvement scale (JIS).

### **Career Growth Prospects Scale**

Career growth prospects were measured using Weng (2010) 12-item career growth prospects scale designed to assess the chances or likelihood of a worker to achieve personal and career goals such as career

goals progress, professional ability development, and promotion speed, and remuneration growth). Sample item reads “My present job sets the foundation for the realization of my career goals”. The items are direct scoring items. Ratings were made using 5-point scale, ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) with reliability coefficients of .85, .86, .86, .86, .80 for career goal progress, professional ability development, promotion speed and remuneration growth respectively reported by Weng (2010). The researchers reported Cronbach Alpha of .70.

**Burnout Inventory**

Burnout was measured using Maslach and Jackson (1986) 22-item burnout inventory designed to assess burnout syndrome comprising emotional exhaustion, dehumanization and reduced personal accomplishment among human service workers. The scale has three subscales measuring emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment. Sample item for emotional exhaustion reads “I feel emotionally drained from my work”. Dehumanization item reads “I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally”. Feeling of reduced personal accomplishment item reads “I feel like I am at the end of my rope”. There are both direct scoring and reverse scoring items. Ratings were made using 6-point scale ranging from 1 = “a few times a year” to 6 = “everyday” with convergent validity coefficients that ranged from .20 to .50 reported by Coker (1999). The researchers reported Cronbach Alpha of .72.

**Job Involvement Scale**

Job involvement was measured using Lodahl and Kejner (1965) 20-item job involvement scale (JIS) designed to measure the extent to which a person is attached and engrossed in his/her general employment circumstances. Sample item reads “I will stay overtime to finish a job, even if I am not paid for it”. There are both direct scoring and reverse scoring items. Ratings were made using 5-point scale, ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) with Spearman-Brown internal reliability coefficients of .72 (females), .80 (males) and test-retest reliability of .90 reported by Lodahl and Kejner (1965). The researchers reported Cronbach Alpha of .77.

**III. Results**

**Table 1:** Summary Table of Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among the study Variables (N =120)

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Job Involvement		57.15		48.19	1	
2. Age			41.90		7.33	-.02
3. Career Growth Prospect		36.82		6.15	-.21*	.260
4. Burnout		76.		9.00	.00	-.39
5. Cronbach Alpha					.77	.70
						.72

Note: \* = P< .05 (2-tailed), \*\* = P< .01 (2-tailed).

Results in table 1 indicate that age as control variable was not significantly related to job involvement among female nurses ( $r = -.02, p > .05$ ). Meaning that increases or decreases in age as control variable and the two predictor variables did not significantly relate to the increase or decrease in the criterion variable (job involvement). Whereas only career growth prospects ( $r = -.21, p < .05$ ) was significantly related to job involvement in negative direction, meaning that increase or decrease in this predictor variable significantly related to increase or decrease in the criterion variable (job involvement).

**Table 2:** Moderated Hierarchical Regression showing the Moderating Role of Career Growth Prospects in Burnout-Job Involvement Link

Variable	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
	$\beta$	$\beta$	$\beta$
Age	-.02	.04	.04
Career Growth Prospect			-.22*
Burnout		-.00	-.00
Career Growth Prospect x Burnout			.00
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	-.008	.020	.011
$\Delta R^2$		.000	.044
F		.027	1.79
$\Delta F$		.027	2.68
			.000

Note: \* = P< .05, \*\* = P< .01

From table 2 above, career growth prospects was examined as a moderator of the relationship between burnout and job involvement. In the first step a demographic variable- age was entered. This model was not significant  $F(1,118) = .027, p > .05$  as it failed to explain any of the variance in job involvement in blocks. And also as a single variable yielded no significant relationship with the criterion variable-job involvement ( $\beta = -.008, p > .05$ ).

In step 2, when the predictor variables: burnout and career growth prospects were entered, as a block, they only added 2.0% of the variance in job involvement ( $\Delta R^2 = .020, p > .05$ ) which is not significant as hypothesis 1 was rejected. So individually, only career growth prospects ( $\beta = -.22, p < .05$ ) contributed significantly in negative direction thereby disconfirming hypothesis 2.

Finally moderating variable was entered in step 3 as a block, it added only 1.1% in explaining the variance in job involvement ( $\Delta R^2 = .011, p > .05$ ) which is not significant, meaning that there was no relationship between this moderator variable (career growth prospects) and predictor variable (burnout) in the light of the outcome of the criterion variable (job involvement) among nurses, thus disconfirmation of hypothesis 3. However, the two-way interacting terms, individually, only career growth prospects yielded a significant interaction outcomes ( $\beta = -.22, p < .05$ ) with the criterion variable. Meaning that the more negative the female nurses career growth prospects, the more lack of job involvement they have, hence the inverse relationship, hence disconfirmation of hypothesis 2.

#### **IV. Discussion**

Contrary to the first hypothesis, the findings of this study found no relationship between burnout and job involvement. Among these nurses, the state of physical and emotional depletion resulting from the conditions of work characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment was found not to be related to the extent to which a person is attached and engrossed in his /her general employment circumstances. This is in line with previous studies (e.g. Maher, Sotoudeh & Hossein, 2016) which found no relationship between burnout and job involvement but contrary to other (e.g. Chauhan, 2009) which reported a negative relationship between job involvement and burnout (depersonalization and emotional exhaustion) while a positive correlation with feeling of reduced personal accomplishment.

The negative relationship between career growth prospects and job involvement is not in congruence with the second hypothesis which stated that career growth prospects will be positively related to job involvement. This negative relationship indicates that increased level of the chances or likelihood of a worker to achieve personal and career goals such as promotion (career growth prospects) associated with decreased level of the extent to which a person is attached and engrossed in his /her general employment circumstances.

This negative relationship supports previous studies (e.g. Okurame, 2014) which found career growth to be negatively related to organizational involvement and job satisfaction but contrary to studies (e.g. Agba & Ogabon, 2010) which found positive relationship between career development and job involvement.

Results of the study revealed that the third hypothesis tested which stated that career growth prospects will weaken the negative relationship between burnout and job involvement was not confirmed but independently had a negative significant relationship with job involvement. This indicated that despite the career growth prospects of the female nurses, it failed to moderate the relationship between the predictor variable (burnout) and the criterion variable (job involvement). The finding is in congruence with the study of Haque and Yamoah (2014) which reported that occupational stress had no relationship with career growth prospects while low relationship exists with organizational involvement. It is contrary to the study of Gyroffy, Sandor and Birkas (2016) who reported that there was a positive relationship between career motivation and burnout.

The significant role of career growth prospects in job involvement in this study may not be a surprise as the negative outcome is associated with the burnout the female nurses encountered in their jobs, whereas career growth prospects failed to moderate, perhaps achieving their desired career growth was not achievable due to factors such as delayed promotions.

#### **Implications of the Study**

The findings of this study demonstrated the theoretical and practical role of job demand-resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) model in enhancing job-related behavior of workers especially nurses. To this end, if the policy makers in the health sector can provide nurses with adequate resources such as promotion, proper remuneration and other working conditions, it will enhance their career growth which among other factors will reduce burnout and enhance job involvement thereby causing adequate health care delivery.

#### **Limitations of the Study**

Due to time and financial constraints, it was not possible to study all the nurses in Enugu State, Nigeria. This led to the relative small sample size used in this study. Future studies in this area should be properly funded and more time dedicated in order to widen the scope of such studies. For example, future researchers should

expand the scope of this study by considering other clinics and hospitals in the rural areas where job burnout is likely to be inevitable due to poor infrastructure and other limitations

The use of cross-sectional survey, self report and moderated hierarchical multiple regressions based on the assumptions of correlation could not allow cause-effect relationship. Longitudinal studies and experimentation are likely to provide better data and more robust findings.

## V. Conclusion

As shown by the findings of this study, career growth prospects failed to moderate the relationship between burnout and job involvement but independently had a negative significant relationship with job involvement, hence the need to provide resources that will enhance career growth of the nurses as this will likely decrease burnout and increase job involvement resulting in adequate health care delivery and job fulfillment.

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