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## The Impact of Job Characteristics on Burnout; The Mediating Role of Work Family Conflict and the Moderating Role of Job Satisfaction

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### Abstract

*The aim of this study is to test the relationships among job characteristics (skill variety, task significance, task identity, autonomy and feedback), job satisfaction, work family conflict (WFC) and burnout (exhaustion, personal accomplishment and cynicism). Various sets of factors including organizational characteristics, job characteristics, and individual characteristics are investigated in order to find out the root causes of job burnout. However, different from other studies, we investigated the mediating role of work family conflict and the moderating role of job satisfaction in explaining the relationship between job characteristics and burnout. The proposed hypotheses were tested by hierarchical regression analysis by means of data from 161 employees. The results indicated that WFC partially mediated the relationship between job characteristics and burnout. In addition, job satisfaction was found to moderate the relationship between job characteristics and burnout in such a way that the relationship is weaker for employees with high levels of job satisfaction. These empirical findings have important implications for human resource managers and organizational behavior researchers who are interested in how to reduce burnout that is likely to reduce the organization's productivity and threaten its competitiveness in the long run.*

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### Key Words

*Job Characteristics, Job Satisfaction, Work Family Conflict, Burnout*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Job characteristic model developed by Hackman and Oldham (1980) that proposed positive relationships between job characteristics and the work outcomes has received considerable attention in the literature (Loher et al., 1985; Fried and Ferris, 1987; Johns et al, 1992; Morgeson and Humphrey 2006 ) The model suggests that the five core job dimensions including skill variety, task significance, task identity, autonomy, and feedback influence three critical psychological states – experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility and knowledge of results. According the influential model, employees experience meaningfulness if jobs include skill variety, task significance and task identity. Skill variety is the degree to which a job requires a variety of different activities that utilize the use of different skills and talents. Secondly, task identity refers to the degree which task requires performing the whole process from beginning to the end with visible outcome. Thirdly, task significance is the degree to which the job has a considerable impact on the lives or work of other people, whether in the organization or in the outside. Autonomy encompasses the responsibility and defined as the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and wisdom to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out. Finally, feedback from the job canalizes an employee by clarifying how well or bad she is performing. These features are likely to influence the employee's behaviour and motivation.

The job characteristics model proposes that existence of skill variety, task significance, task identity, autonomy, and feedback will grant employees with favorable feelings and experiences which in turn will boost beneficial work outcomes, such as intrinsic work motivation (Hackman and Oldham; 1980), job satisfaction (Tiegs, Tetrick, & Fried, 1992; Goldstein, 1989; Becherer, Fred and Lawrence, 1982) organizational commitment (Hunt, Chonko and Wood; 1985, Ram swami, Agarwal and Bhargava; 1993). On the contrary, the absence of these characteristics can lead to experience undesirable work outcomes, such as increased work absenteeism (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Wall, Clegg, & Jackson, 1978; Fried and Ferris, 1987), decreased job performance (Liao; 1998; Morgeson, Delaney-Klinger, Hemingway; 2005) increased intentions to quit (Evans, Kiggundu, & House, 1979; Michaels & Spector, 1982) and higher levels of burnout ((Maslach, Schafeli, & Leiter, 2001; Crodes & Dougherty, 1993; Kim & Stoner; 2008). It's evident from the previous research findings that job characteristics are important in designing employee's behavior and attitude.

Although much has been written about job characteristic model (Fried and Ferris, 1986; Glick, Jenkins and Gupta 1986; Lee and Klein, 1982; Loher, Noe, Moeller and Fitzgerald, 1985; Pokomey, Gilmore and Beehr, 1980) there appears a need for additional empirical tests since organizational context is extremely different today. In today's world, the organization, meaning, and process of work have changed in consequence of severe competition and technological advancement. The knowledge economy, innovative technologies, and a changed psychology of work increases the feeling of control and autonomy, feeling of being able to initiate and govern activities and feeling of responsibility towards the results of their work. Moreover, meeting the

complex and innovative demands of customers requires not only higher skill levels but flexibility and willingness on the part of workers. On the other hand, dual-career families affect the balance and integration between work and family in such a way that individuals hardly accomplish the demands of both domains. Taken together, all of the mentioned factors certainly affect the commitment, motivation, satisfaction and burnout levels of employees. Therefore, although considerable correlational evidence exists demonstrating the relationships between JCM and the work attitudes, it could be beneficial to check work outcomes with data from employees of recent date.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Burnout

The most commonly accepted definition of burnout is the three-component conceptualization developed by Maslach and colleagues (Maslach and et al., 1996). Emotional exhaustion is characterized by a lack of energy and individuals feel that they are emotionally overextended and exhausted at work. Cynicism refers to the development of negative, cynical attitudes and feelings about one's clients and excessively detached responses to other people at work. The third component of burnout, reduced personal accomplishment is the tendency to evaluate oneself negatively, particularly in relation to one's work with clients or interactions with people at work. Various possible causes of burnout have been investigated and three categories of work characteristics including job characteristics, workload and role characteristic are identified as factors contributing to job burnout (Chen, Wu & Wei, 2012; p.805). This paper adopts Hackman and Oldham's (1980) model and hypothesizes that the job characteristics which may affect job burnout include five core characteristics: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback.

Burnout reflecting a 'wearing out' from long time exposure to work-related stress (Maslach and Schaufeli 1993) affects people's physical and emotional welfare. It seems to be correlated with various psychological symptoms, including anxiety, depression, and feelings of helplessness (Niebrugge, 1994) insomnia (Armon, Shirom, Shapira, & Melamed, 2008), depression, anxiety, falls in self-esteem ( Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001) increased use of alcohol and drugs, marital and family problems and so on (Christina Maslach and Susan E. Jackso,1980). It also has a negative impact on physical health and positively related to morbidity and bodily disorders (Toker et.al. 2005), cardiovascular disease (Melamed et.al. 2006), Type 2 diabetes (Melamed, Shirom, & From, 2003), and some psychosomatic symptoms such as poor appetite, headaches and chest pains (Burke and Deszca, 1986).

Research evidence suggests that burnout is harmful not only to the individual, but also to the organization, since it could result in absenteeism (Schaufeli et.al., 2009; Iverson et.al., 1998) poor job performance and reduced citizenship behaviour (Cropanzano & Byrne, 2003; Iverson

Olekalns & Erwin; 1998; Parker & Kulik, 1995), high turnover intention and low job satisfaction (Himle, Jayaratne and Thyness, 1986; Jayaratne and Chess, 1984; Abu-Bader, 2000), low morale, loss of productivity and efficiency (Maslach and Jackson, 1981; Schaufeli 2003). It pose a challenge to both employees and organizations since it is likely to reduce the organization's performance and threaten its sustainable competitiveness. Therefore, academicians and practitioners have focused on exploring antecedents and consequences of burnout for the last three decades.

According to several conceptual papers, the lack of job autonomy diminishes personal accomplishment and causes a depersonalized attitude among employees that leads to burnout (Maslach, Schafeli, & Leiter, 2001; Crodes & Dougherty, 1993; Kim & Stoner; 2008). On the contrary, greater autonomy is associated with improved teamwork and personel growth, better morale and greater responsibility towards work, thus bringing about higher levels of satisfaction and motivation (Huang, 2011; Hee & Ling; 2011). On the other hand, the critical role of feedback in influencing work outcomes emerges from promoting more meaningfulness at work. This implies that employees perceiving an encouraging colleague or supervisor feedback will become more persuaded of the value of their work and are thus more likely to regard work-related goals to be in line with their personal values (Davidson & Stobbeleir, 2011). Positive feedback increases workers sense of task competence and accomplishment, decreases stress and burnout, increases job satisfaction (Hee & Ling; 2011; p.1061) and thus in order to improve or reinforce positive behaviours, managers should give feedback to their subordinates.

Results indicate that skill variety is positively related to satisfaction, motivation, and involvement because it leads employees to experience a higher chance of performing a challenging and interesting job (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Humphrey et al., 2007). Variation in work tasks has been found to be positively correlated with job satisfaction even when there is a high level of job stress (Hee & Ling, 2011; p.1060). Dodd & Gangster stated that employees doing a simple, repetitious task indicated a moderate increase in satisfaction with an increase in control over how they did the work, while those executing a more complicated task indicated a noticeable increment in satisfaction with increased control and autonomy (1996; p.336). Taken together, it is predicted that aforementioned job characteristics motivate individuals by enhancing experiences of meaningfulness, responsibility, and knowledge of results (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) and thus would be negatively correlated with burnout. Accordingly, it is hypothesized;

*H1: Higher levels of job characteristics will be predictive of lower levels of burnout.*

## **B. Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is the key determinant of absenteeism, turnover, organizational commitment and burnout (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Leiter & Maslach, 1988; Zedeck, Maslach, Mosier and Skitka, 1988; Tsigilis and Koustelios, 1994; Himle, Jayaratne and Thyness, 1986; Nikolaos &

Athanasois, 1994; Jayaratne and Chess, 1984; Abu-Bader, 2000). According to Locke "Overall job satisfaction, when calculated, will depend upon what experiences and appraisals one retains in memory" (1995, p.123). Many researchers agree that job satisfaction can be defined as the acceptable level of similarity between employee's expectations and real job experience (Smith, Kendall and Hulin, 1969; Luthans, 1998; Janssen, 2001). Characteristics of the job, organization and individual are determined as the important factors in predicting job satisfaction (Gilson et.al, 1998). However, this study builds on job characteristic model developed by Hackman and Oldham (1980) which suggests that job characteristic will lead to desirable outcomes, such as increased job satisfaction.

According to the theory when employees experienced the work to be meaningful (task variety, task significance, task identity) felt personally responsible for outcomes (autonomy) and had knowledge of the results of their work (feedback), they would become sincerely motivated to perform well (Oldham and Hackman, 2010; p.464). To support the theory, Fried and Ferris (1987) found significant correlations among autonomy, feedback and satisfaction. In addition, Brown and Peterson (1993) research on salesperson reveal that higher amounts of feedback, variety, autonomy are associated with higher levels job satisfaction. According to War (1987), the existence of job characteristics initially has a pleasurable effect on employee mental wellbeing, whereas their absence damages it. In other words, job characteristics function as psychological 'vitamins' that contributes to welfare of employees (Jonge and Schaufeli, 1998; p. 389).

Although job satisfaction is composed of both intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics (e.g. pay and benefits, company policies, supervision and support, co-workers, job security, chances for promotion) the latter is unlikely to influence satisfaction directly. Precise levels of extrinsic awards and relief are essential for a job to perform its motivating potential, but the major determinant seems the job itself (Lambert, 1991; p.343). Relatedly, Nash (1985) found that people who take their job as main interest experience high level of job satisfaction. Their job satisfaction will be further increased if they are doing work that is exploiting their skills. Consequently, he concluded that the intrinsic nature of the job itself is one of the major factors that affect job satisfaction. In other words, an individual who sincerely likes the content of the job will be more satisfied with the job (Ramayah & Jantan; 2001) and thus experience low level of burnout. Accordingly, it is hypothesized;

*H2: Higher levels of job satisfaction will be predictive of lower levels of burnout.*

*H3: Job satisfaction will moderate the negative relationship between job characteristics and burnout in such a way that the relationship is weaker for employees with high levels of job satisfaction.*

### **C. Work Family Conflict**

Work and family symbolize two of the most important spheres of adult life (Frone, Russell & Cooper 1992, p. 65). Since many people have difficulties in simultaneously performing two demanding roles, conflict between work and family responsibilities and its effects on employees has been prone to expanding investigation. WFC generally defined as "a form of interrole conflict in which the role stress from the work and family scopes are reciprocally incongruous in some respect" (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985, p.77). According to Parasuraman & Greenhaus, (1997) the three main types of WFC are time-based (when the time demands of one role make it difficult or unbearable to participate fully in another role), strain-based (produced by the demands of one role interfere or run over into the other role, making it hard to fulfil the responsibilities of that role), and behaviour-based (when work roles create problems at home or when home roles create problems at work).

On the other hand, family demands may impede with work responsibilities and thus, an important segregation is made between the extent to which work impedes with family life (WFC) and the extent to which family life impedes with work (FWC). Family work conflict is also a type of interrole conflict in which family and work obligations are not mutual (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Both WFC and FWC essentially result from an individual trying to meet an excessive amount of opposing demands from the different domains (Boles, Johnston & Hair, 1997, p.18) and they may act as "a critical interfering pathway through which requirements at work influence the quality of family life and vice versa" (Frone et. al.,1992, p.65).

Results from previous research reveal that WFC is related to a number of undesirable job outcomes including lower overall job satisfaction (Boles, Howard, & Donofio, 2001; Netemeyer, Boles & McMurrin, 1996; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998) stress and burnout (Geurts and Demerouti 2003), greater intention to quit (Burke, 1988, Boles et. al., 1997, Higgins & Duxbury, 1992) whereas FWC is more likely to reflect its negative impacts in the home domain, bringing about lower life satisfaction and further internal conflict within the family domain. Moreover, while this conflict can occur in both directions, research has consistently found that the experience of WFC tends to be more prevalent than the experience of FWC (Frone et al., 1992, Burke & Greenglass, 1999).

To sum up, it's apparent that work-family and family-work conflict were separate patterns (Ford, Heinen & Langkamer, 2007) and in this study we examined burnout in relationship to WFC since previous results suggest that the work rather than the family domain is found to be more highly correlated with burnout (Netemeyer, McMurrin, & Boles, 1996). WFC is included in the study as a mediating mechanism through which motivating job characteristics positively influences wellbeing of employees. Researches suggest that job autonomy that having freedom and latitude in your job can lessen the degree to which work conflicts with the requirements of family (e.g., Parasuraman, Purohit, & Godshalk, 1996). Skill variety offers the individuals the opportunity to experience new things, to try new skills, and to cultivate in their jobs. Expanding

one's knowledge at work can be a promising experience that increases satisfaction from the job. Giving appropriate feedback on job performance send staff a message that they are appraised employees which in turn boosts positive attitudes toward work and themselves. When a job has high identity, the transformation from inputs to finished product is very visible, and the employee feels like their day's work is valuable when they're coming home back. Finally, task significance the belief that this job really matters can lead to self-esteem, whereas feelings that the job is insignificant can lead to pessimistic feelings that can result in emotional exhaustion in time (Eric et.al. 2012). Consequently, consistent with the previous research, here we believe skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback decrease perceptions of WFC. Accordingly, it is hypothesized,

*H4: Higher levels of WFC will be predictive of higher levels of burnout.*

*H5: WFC will mediate the relationship between job characteristics and burnout.*

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

#### **A. Sample**

In order to empirically investigate the hypotheses, tools such as e-mail, letter and face to face interviews are used for gathering data from the managers-top, middle or first line. 38 firms operating in different cities of Turkey are identified as the target group of the research because of their availableness. Of the 161 respondents 148 (92%) were men, and 13 (8%) were women. The majority of the participants 153(95%) are married and ranged in age from 31 to 40 years 68(42%). In total, 137 (85%) have a bachelor degree.

#### **B. Measures**

1. *Job characteristics*: Questionnaire measuring employee perceptions of the five motivating characteristics of the job is adopted from Hackman and Oldham (1980). We replaced the reverse-coded items with positive items as there is some empirical evidence to suggest that removing the reverse-coded items, is better from the perspective of reliability and validity (Morris & Venkatesh, 2010; p.149). It comprises five sub-scales assessing autonomy (I have almost complete responsibility for deciding how and when the work is to be done), feedback (My manager provides me with constant feedback about how I am doing), task significance (What I do affects the well-being of other people in very important ways), skill variety (I have a chance to do a number of different tasks, using a wide variety of different skills and talents), task identity (My job provides me with the chance to finish completely any work I start). All items were measured on a five point Likert-type scale where (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. According to the confirmatory factor analysis results original job characteristics five-factor structure does not fit

the data well ( $\chi^2/df=3.7$ , CFI=0.83, GFI=0.76, NFI=0.69, RMSEA=0.07) whereas four-factor structure of job characteristics was supported well. All the fit indices as well as the RMSEA were satisfactory and higher for the five-factor structure than for the four-factor structure ( $\chi^2/df=3.2$ , CFI=0.93, GFI=0.92, NFI=0.93, RMSEA=0.012). The Cronbach's coefficient alpha of these items was .90.

2. *Burnout*: Burnout was measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (Maslach et al., 1996). It comprises three sub-scales assessing emotional exhaustion (I feel emotionally drained from my work), cynicism (I have become less interested in my work since I started this job) and personal accomplishment (at work, I feel confident that I am effective at getting things done). All items were measured on a five point Likert-type scale where (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The response values for each of “personal accomplishment” items are reversed before moving on. High scores are indicative of burnout.

Exploratory factor analysis is used since three-factor structure does not fit the data well. It is found that one item in cynicism (I doubt the significance of my work) constitutes a different factor alone and also have a low correlation with all items. After throwing out this item, confirmatory factor analysis is employed again. The fit for this model is satisfactory ( $\chi^2/df=2.4$ , CFI=0.95, GFI=0.93, NFI=0.93, RMSEA=0.07). The Cronbach's coefficient alpha of these items was .88.

3. *Work Family Conflict*: WFC was measured by 5 items adopted from Geurts et.al. (2005). Sample items are “My work keeps me from my family activities more than I would like,” All items were measured on a five point Likert-type scale where (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Higher scores indicate higher levels of WFC. The five items are loaded into one factor with the factor loadings higher than .70. The Cronbach's coefficient alpha of these items was 92.

4. *Job Satisfaction*: Job satisfaction was measured by 5 items adopted from Brayfield & Rothe (1951). Sample items are “All in all, I am satisfied with my job”. All items were measured on a five point Likert-type scale where (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Higher scores indicate higher levels of satisfaction. The five items are loaded into one factor with the factor loadings higher than .63. The Cronbach's coefficient alpha of these items was 87.

#### **IV. ANALYSIS**

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations and correlations for all of the variables in this study. The results indicate that there is a negative correlation between WFC and all three aspects of burnout. As predicted, all job characteristics are associated positively with job satisfaction. Furthermore, among job characteristics autonomy has the highest negative correlation with cynicism ( $r=-.471$   $p< 0.01$ ).



TABLE I: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND CORRELATIONS OF MAIN VARIABLES

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>1.Autonomy</b>	4,17	0,66	-	<b>,471**</b>	-,005	,029	<b>,277**</b>	-,078	-,281	<b>-,471**</b>	-,005
<b>2.Feedback</b>	3,49	0,57		-	<b>,183*</b>	<b>,169*</b>	<b>,239**</b>	-,080	<b>-,191*</b>	<b>-,183*</b>	<b>-,169*</b>
<b>3.Variety</b>	2,71	0,62			-	<b>,397**</b>	<b>,256**</b>	<b>,160*</b>	-,025	<b>-,397**</b>	<b>-,256**</b>
<b>4.Significance</b>	2,09	0,78				-	<b>,293**</b>	,014	<b>-,134*</b>	<b>-,293**</b>	-,014
<b>5.Satisfaction</b>	3,03	0,73					-	-,110	<b>-,187*</b>	-,110	<b>-,187*</b>
<b>6.Wfc</b>	3,69	0,74						-	<b>-,488**</b>	<b>-,291**</b>	<b>-,478**</b>
<b>7.Exhaustion</b>	3,74	0,65							-	<b>-,520**</b>	-,144
<b>8.Cynicism</b>	4,21	0,68								-	<b>-,206**</b>
<b>9.Accomplishment</b>	3,83	0,57									-

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

To test the hypothesized relationships among job characteristics, WFC and burnout, we conducted a series of hierarchical regression analyses. In the first step, we entered the control variables of gender, age, marital status and tenure. None of them were associated with burnout although there have been several studies emphasizing the importance of demographic factors in explaining employee motivation and burnout (e.g. Brewer and Shapard's, 2004; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Bodur; 2002; Karatepe & Karatepe, 2010). In the second step we investigated the impact of job characteristics on burnout. The results revealed that job characteristics have a significant negative effect on employee burnout ( $\beta = -.387$ ;  $p < .01$ ) which support our H1. In the third step, the mediating variable, WFC is included into the regression model and found that it has a significant positive effect on employee burnout ( $\beta = .352$ ;  $p < .01$ ) that supports our H4. In the last step we entered the independent and mediating variable into the regression analysis and found that the independent variable, job characteristics still has a significant negative effect on employee burnout ( $\beta = -.295$ ;  $p < .01$ ). However, the significant beta coefficient of job characteristics decreased from  $\beta = -.387$  to  $\beta = -.295$  ( $p < .01$ ) whereas the significant beta coefficient of WFC increased from  $\beta = .352$  to  $\beta = .359$  ( $p < .01$ ). This result indicates that WFC played partial mediator role that supports our H5. Providing the four conditions for the mediation effect, as suggested by (Baron and Kenny, 1986) the Sobel test is conducted for testing the significance of mediation effect. According to the results the indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable through the mediating variable is significant ( $Z = 4.285$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

H3 predicts that job satisfaction will moderate the negative relationship between job characteristics and burnout. To test the moderating effect of job satisfaction in relationship between job characteristics and burnout a series of hierarchical regression analyses was conducted. As known "a moderator is a qualitative or quantitative variable that affects the direction and/or strength of the relation between an independent or predictor variable and a dependent or criterion variable" (Baron and Kenny, 1986, p.1174). Carried out in three stages, firstly we input control variables including gender, age, marital status and tenure and found that

demographic factors were not significantly related to burnout. Secondly the independent variables were added to see the main effects of the amount of job satisfaction and job characteristics and found that job characteristics have a significant negative effect on employee burnout ( $\beta = -.377$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Also job satisfaction has a significant negative effect on employee burnout ( $\beta = -.237$ ;  $p < .01$ ) that supports our H2. Finally, the multiplicative interaction terms (job satisfaction x job characteristics) were included in the analysis. As suggested by Aiken and West (1991) we standardized the variables used in the interaction terms to avoid possible multicollinearity problems. As can be seen in Table 3 multiplicative interaction terms (job satisfaction x job characteristics) have a significant negative effect on employee burnout ( $\beta = -.401$ ;  $p < .01$ ) that supports our H3. In other words, compared to the effect of each independent variable on dependent variable is lower than the multiplicative result (interaction effect).

TABLE II: HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION ANALYSES

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
<b>Step1: Control Variables</b>				
<i>Gender</i>	.063			
<i>Age</i>	.006			
<i>Tenure</i>	.074			
<i>Marital Status</i>	.051			
<b>Step2: Independent Variable</b>				
<i>Job Characteristics</i>		-.387 **		
<b>Step3: Mediating Variable</b>				
<i>WFC</i>			.352**	
<b>Step 4: Independent and Mediating Variable</b>				
<i>Job Characteristics</i>				-.295**
<i>WFC</i>				.359**
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>.008</b>	<b>.176</b>	<b>.125</b>	<b>.282</b>

Dependent variable: Burnout \*  $P < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < 0.01$

TABLE III: HIERARCHICAL MODERATED REGRESSION ANALYSES

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
<b>Step 1: Control Variables</b>			
<i>Gender</i>	.064		
<i>Age</i>	.178		
<i>Tenure</i>	.108		
<i>Marital Status</i>	.044		
<b>Step 2: Independent Variable</b>			
<i>Job Characteristics</i>		-.377 **	
<i>Job Satisfaction</i>		-.237	
<b>Step 3: Moderating Variable</b>			
<i>Job Characteristics*Job Satisfaction</i>			-.401**
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>.008</b>	<b>.285</b>	<b>.224</b>

Dependent

variable: Burnout \*  $P < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < 0.01$

To indicate these results more visually we graphed our results (see Figure 1). Respondents were divided into two groups, a group who perceived less job satisfaction and the other group who perceived more job satisfaction (Aiken and West 1991). As Figure 1 illustrates job characteristics have a differential relationship with burnout according to the level of employee's job satisfaction.

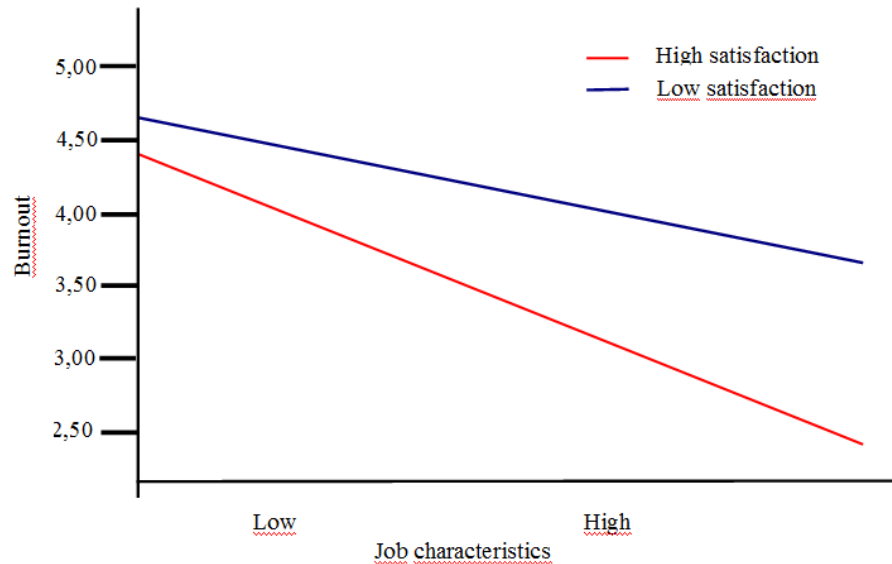


FIGURE 1: THE MODERATING ROLE OF JOB SATISFACTION IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB CHARACTERISTICS AND BURNOUT

## V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study contributes to the literature because although many researchers have emphasized the importance of job characteristics, WFC and job satisfaction as the key determinants of job burnout, to the best of the authors' knowledge, the present study is the first to investigate the moderating role of job satisfaction and the mediating role of work home conflict in a single research. Reviewing the literature on job characteristics theory have provided support for the idea that employees are intrinsically satisfied; when they have a choice about how to do their jobs (autonomy), they use a number of different skills and abilities (skill variety) while performing a task, they believe that their behavior will have some influence on what happens in the environment (task significance), they are convinced of the value of their work (feedback). These dimensions are expected to increase individual's satisfaction and satisfied people are likely to suffer less from burnout syndrome. Therefore, it is important to build a model that links dimensions of job characteristics and burnout.

Consistent with our expectations based on Job Characteristic Model developed by Hackman and Oldham (1980) the results revealed that job characteristics are significantly and negatively related to burnout. Accordingly, one can conclude that if individuals and teams perform in a comparatively autonomous surroundings, they experience a feeling of ownership and control over their work processes; they believe they have considerable influence on organizational processes and consequently it is likely that they will experience low levels of emotional exhaustion, cynicism and personal accomplishment. In sum, supervisors and leaders should provide appropriate autonomy and control, give positive and informational feedback, and facilitate employee skill development in order to decrease employees' feelings of burnout.

In addition to the direct effect hypothesis, it is predicted that job satisfaction would moderate the relationship between job characteristics and burnout. In other words, these characteristics of the job also serve as a motivational force that is believed to result in higher levels of job satisfaction and accordingly employees with higher levels of job satisfaction may have fewer burnout symptoms. The results of the regression analysis confirm that jobs leading to satisfaction allow employees to use a range of skills, to do meaningful and personally valued tasks, to complete a recognizable piece of work, to select and schedule job tasks, and to get knowledge of the results of their attempts (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). If employees perceive that the characteristics of their jobs hinder their capacity to achieve their own expectations, their level of motivation and interest in their work decline and follow the feeling of burnout. Overall, these findings provide a great deal of support for the moderation model of job satisfaction.

On the other hand, one of the other aims of this study was to test the mediating role of WFC in explaining the relationship between job characteristics and burnout. Previous research suggests individuals who are confused between work and family roles repetitively experience greater stress levels that leads to undesirable work outcomes such as decreased job satisfaction (Boles, Howard, & Donofio, 2001; Netemeyer, Boles & Mcmurrian, 1996; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998) and burnout (Geurts and Demerouti 2003; Janssen, Peeters, de Jonge, Houkes and Tummers 2004). In line with the previous research, the results from hierarchical regression analyses confirmed expectations for a positive relationship between WFC and burnout. Moreover, WFC appeared to be a mediator of the relationship between job characteristics and burnout. This implies that job characteristics motivational effect may be a valuable ingredient to consider in preventing WFC as well as burnout.

In conclusion, this study extends the literature by empirically supporting the prevailing idea that job characteristics is a beneficial alternative for managers who want to boost worker satisfaction and lessen WFC and burnout. The model developed in this paper will be pleasurable to both management researchers and business practitioners since it investigates how to reduce burnout that is likely to reduce the organization's efficiency and threaten its long-term competitiveness. Therefore, management scholars will be interested in testing the various research propositions to prevent or manage burnout and the results of their empirical investigations will supplement to the body of knowledge in this vital area.

## **VI. LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The results of this present study should be considered in light of several limitations. For instance, the relative contribution of each job characteristic to the change in each burnout dimensions is not regressed for the sake of avoiding complexity that might make it difficult to clearly understand the relationship among key variables. In addition it seems more important to clarify, the most important determinants of burnout since strategies in order to get under control burnout are more likely to succeed if they move on the origin of the troublesome. Secondly, although they have been the focus of a substantial body of research (Pleck, 1977; Ford et al., 2007) this study could not investigate the gender differences because of low rate of women respondents. Departing from traditional ideology many researchers proposed that women would experience more WFC and burnout since different responsibilities of men and women are contributing to the phenomenon. The situation becomes more complicated in the presence of children because there are inconsistencies in the findings of the researches resulting from the ages of children. Therefore, these results should be replicated by the relatively high percentages of men and women participants.

Another aspect neglected in this study is role stress that is composed of role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload and which may also provide understanding for the relationship between job characteristics and burnout. In addition, there is a widespread acknowledgment that the lack of social support in the workplace is a significant predictor of burnout (Cheuk, Wong, & Rosen, 1994; Viswesvaran, Sanchez, Fisher; 1999). Accordingly, it is suggested that future work examine these variables in predicting the root causes of burnout. Moreover, in a larger sample, they would test more comprehensive models and more complex data analysis strategies, such as structural equation modeling. Finally, while the findings are consistent with much of the previous research in this area, longitudinal studies are needed to clarify the direction of the relationships and also to increase the generalizability of the results.

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