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TYPE-A BEHAVIOR AND JOB BURNOUT: A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY

Key Words

*Burnout;
Type-A Behavior;
Components
Measures.*

Abstract

This study examined the relationship of Global Type-A behavior and its components (time pressure and hard driving/competitiveness) with overall burnout, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, lack of accomplishment and job stress and job satisfaction among teachers in Canada and Pakistan. Data were collected by means of a structured questionnaire from teachers employed in publicly funded institutions in metropolitan cities in Canada (N=420) and Pakistan (N=335). Pearson correlations were used to analyze the data. In both countries, Global Type-A behavior was significantly related to overall burnout and its three dimensions, and job stress and job satisfaction. Limited support for differential effects of Type-A behavior components (time pressure and hard driving/competitiveness) on dependent variables was found in both countries. Implications of the findings are discussed for future researchers on the topic of burnout and Type-A behavior pattern.

Introduction

A number of recent reviews of occupational mental health have highlighted the importance of understanding the dynamics of Type-A behavior and job burnout relationship for the well-being of the employees and employing organization (Baba, Jamal and Tourigny, 1998;

Beehr, 1998; Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter, 2001). This study examined the relationship between Type-A behavior and burnout among teachers in Canada (N=420) and Pakistan (N=335). Both of the above constructs have been developed and empirically tested primarily in developed industrialized countries (Jamal, 1999).

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Their portability and usefulness to developing countries have rarely been tested despite repeated suggestions to do so (Laungani, 1996; Jamal and Preena, 1998). In this respect, the present research contributes to international stress and burnout literature by examining the relationship between Type-A behavior and job burnout among teachers in a developed and a developing country.

In the last three decades, a large number of empirical studies have been conducted in industrialized countries to understand the dynamics of Coronary prone - Type-A behavior (Booth-Kewley and Friedman, 1987; Ganster, 1987). This emphasis has been rightfully attributed to the work of two American cardiologists (Friedman and Rosenman, 1974), even though others have pointed out similar behavioural factors in coronary heart disease (CHD). As early as 1868, a German physician, Von Dutch, noted that excessive work involvement and other behavioural characteristics seemed typical of people who develop CHD. Similarly, in 1892, Osler described the coronary-prone person as a "keen and ambitious man, the indicator of whose engines are set at full speed." In the 1940's and 1950's, a number of researchers in health sciences noted some commonalities in CHD patients

such as hard driving, goal directed, long working hours, and taking fewer vacation periods than other employees (Chesney and Rosenman, 1980; Jamal and Baba, 1991; Matthews, 1988).

Type-A behavior has been described as an action emotion complex that can be observed in any person who is aggressively involved in a chronic incessant struggle to achieve more and more in less and less time, and if required to do so, against the opposing efforts of other things and other persons (Friedman and Rosenman, 1974). Some of the overt indicators of Type-A behavior are accelerated speech, induced explosiveness, heightened pace of living, polyphasic activities, a tendency to challenge and to compete with others, impatience with slowness, free floating hostility and the general appearance of tension (Ganster, 1987; Rosenman, 1991; Taylor and Cooper, 1989). Type-B behavior is generally characterized by opposite characteristics (Matthews, 1988). Many of the above mentioned characteristics of Type-A and Type-B behaviors have been empirically validated among different samples of people in various occupational and cultural settings (Ganster, Schaubroeck, Sime and Mayes, 1991; Howton, Londoerfer and Marriott, 1998; Lavanco, 1997; Mudrack, 1999; Riska, 2000).

Job burnout has been recognized as a threat for employee well-being in people oriented professions such as health care, human services and education since the mid-1970's in industrialized developed countries (Jamal and Baba, 2000; Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter, 2001). Through extensive clinical and survey research in the late 1970's and early 1980's, a three-component conceptualization of burnout was identified: feelings of emotional exhaustion, a tendency to depersonalize others, and diminishing feelings of personal accomplishment in working with others (Maslach and Goldberg, 1998). The three components are conceptually distinct but are not assumed to be empirically uncorrelated since they may share common causes (Zellars, Perrewe and Hochwarter, 2000). In general, a three-component conceptualization of job burnout is widely accepted in the literature and empirical studies continue to report significant differential relationships between correlates of burnout and its three dimensions (Lee and Ashforth, 1996; Zellars, Perrewe and Hochwarter, 2000).

There exist a large number of empirical studies, both from laboratory and field settings, relating Type-A and Type-B differences in physiological and health variables, and work related variables such as job satisfaction, performance, turnover and absenteeism

(Begley, Lee and Czajka, 2000; Jamal and Badawi, 1995). Most of these studies relied almost exclusively on the global measure of Type-A behavior. Although the global Type-A behavior has been fairly consistent in showing modest relationship with a number of physiological, health and work related variables, it has been suggested that because of the multi-dimensional nature of Type-A behavior pattern, the usage of the components measures of Type-A behavior might improve the predictive validity of the Type-A construct (Edwards and Baglioni, 1991; Spence, Helmreich and Pred, 1987). There are only a few studies in existence in which both the global Type-A measure and the components measures of Type-A were employed (Anderson and Meininger, 1993; Begley Lee and Czajka, 2000; Bluen, Barling and Burns, 1990; Jamal and Baba, 2000; Lee, Jamieson and Earley, 1996; Sibilis, Picozzi and Nardi, 1995). Most of these studies used physiological and health outcomes as dependent variables. A few of these studies used performance measures along with mental and physiological health variables among sample of university students (Barling and Charbonneau, 1992; Spence, Pred and Helmreich, 1989). However, none of these studies used job burnout as a dependent variable. Moreover, almost all of these studies were conducted in developed countries. As mentioned ear-

Table 2
Intercorrelations Among Dependent Variables for
Canadian (C)^a and Pakistani (P)^b Samples

Variable	Participants	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
(1) Overall Burnout	C	-					
	P	-					
(2) Emotional Exhaustion	C	.89	-				
	P	.86	-				
(3) Depersonalization	C	.69	.46	-			
	P	.65	.66	-			
(4) Lack of Accomplishment	C	.68	.39	.30	-		
	P	.72	.69	.38	-		
(5) Job Stress	C	.59	.66	.26	.28	-	
	P	.39	.43	.28	.31	-	
(6) Job Satisfaction (JDI)	C	-.25	-.33	-.19	-.13	-.25	-
	P	-.16	-.21	-.16	-.09	-.16	-

a. N = 420, $r = .11$, $p < .05$, $r = .14$, $p < .01$

b. N = 335, $r = .13$, $p < .05$, $r = .15$, $p < .01$

ential effects of the two components of Type-A behavior on overall burnout and its three dimensions were found in either sample.

Hypothesis 2 predicted positive relationships between global Type-A behavior and its two components with job stress. Global Type-A and the components of time pressure and hard driving/competitiveness were significantly and positively correlated with job stress in both countries, clearly supporting hypothesis 2. No differential effects of the two components of Type-A behavior on job stress were found in either sample.

Global Type-A behavior was significantly negatively correlated with job satisfaction (JDI) in both countries, supporting portion of hypothesis 3. In the Canadian sample, time pressure was significantly correlated with job satisfaction but the component of hard driving/competitiveness was not significantly correlated with job satisfaction. In the Pakistani sample, time pressure was not significantly correlated with job satisfaction but the component of hard driving competitiveness was significantly correlated. In sum, hypothesis 3 was only partially supported by the data from

Table 3
Pearson Correlations of Global Type-A Behavior and its Two Components
(time pressure and hard driving/competitiveness) with Dependent Variables
for Canadian (C) and Pakistani (P) Samples

Variable		Global Type A	Time Pressure	Hard Driving/ Competitiveness
(1) Overall Burnout	C	.43**	.48**	.37**
	P	.33**	.34**	.31**
(2) Emotional Exhaustion	C	.49**	.53**	.44**
	P	.38**	.41**	.36**
(3) Depersonalization	C	.29**	.28**	.33**
	P	.16*	.12	.18**
(4) Lack of Accomplishment	C	.35**	.41**	.30**
	P	.19**	.21**	.20**
(5) Job Stress	C	.55**	.63**	.49**
	P	.32**	.36**	.29**
(6) Job Satisfaction (JDI)	C	-.18**	-.25**	-.10
	P	-.14*	-.09	-.19**

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

both countries. Limited support for the differential effects of the two components of Type-A behavior on job satisfaction was found in both samples. Since the strength of correlation between global Type-A behavior and job satisfaction is rather weak in both samples; the support for the differential effects must be interpreted with serious caution.

Discussion

The results of the present study indicated that the global Type-A beha-

avior, and the components of time pressure and hard driving/competitiveness were significantly related to overall burnout and its three dimensions (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of accomplishment) among college teachers in Canada and Pakistan. Similarly, global Type-A behavior and its two components were significantly related to job stress in both countries. Finally, global Type-A was significantly related to job satisfaction (JDI) in both countries. Limited support for the differential effects of Type-

A behavior components on dependent variables was found in either country. However, before the findings are discussed any further, a note of caution is warranted about the perceptual nature of various scales used in the present study. Future researchers should include both perceptual and objective assessment of their variables.

The findings of the adverse effects of Type-A behavior on the well-being of employee and employing organizations are consistent with the bulk of existing empirical studies on the topic that were primarily conducted in developed countries (Baba, Jamal and Tourigny, 1998; Jamal and Badawi, 1995; Maslach, Schaufli and Leiter, 2001; Mudrack, 1999). For example, in a study of Canadian nurses (N = 1148), Type-A behavior was found to be significantly related to job stress and turnover intention (Jamal and Baba, 1991). Similarly in a recent study of hospital employees (N = 175) and telecommunications employees (N = 110), Type-A behavior was found to be significantly related to job stress, psychosomatic health problems and job dissatisfaction (Jamal and Baba, 2000). In another study conducted among employees in U.S., Type-A behavior was found to be positively related to emotional exhaustion (Nagy and Davis, 1985). In a recent study of nurses and teachers in Sicily, global Type-A

behavior was found to be significantly related to burnout and job satisfaction (Lavanco, 1997). Finally, in a longitudinal study conducted in U.S. among police and fire department employees, it was found that Type-A behavior predicted cardiovascular disorder over time (Schanbroeck, Ganster and Kemmerer, 1994). In sum, the empirical evidence to date seems to indicate that not only are Type-A's pushed by their personality dispositions into jobs that might be fast paced, competitive and challenging but they also seem to experience adverse consequences at their jobs more severely than other employees. The results from the Pakistani sample further extend the pervasive effects of Type-A behavior pattern on employee well-being.

However, it must be noted that the correlations between global and Type-A behavior components with six dependent variables are generally higher for the Canadian sample than the Pakistani sample. One plausible explanation might be that the Canadian culture is more individualistic whereas Pakistani culture is more collectivist (Hofstede, 1980). Type-A behavior phenomenon has often been described as a product of individualistic culture and thus more serious consequences.

As mentioned previously, limited support was found for the differential

effects of the components measures of Type-A behavior on outcome variables used in the present study. There are only a few empirical studies in existence in which both Global and components measures of Type-A behavior have been used to examine their impact on individual and organizational outcomes (Begley, Lee and Czajka, 2000; Barling and Charbonneau, 1992; Edwards and Baglioni, 1991; Lee, Jamieson and Early, 1996). Barling and Charbonneau (1992) in a sample of undergraduate students ($N = 113$) found that achievement striving (AS) predicted GPA and proof reading performance and Impatient-Irritability (II) predicted headaches and sleep habits, but neither respiratory infections nor digestive problems. In another study of undergraduate students, time pressure was found to be related to somatic complaints, anxiety and severe depression but competitiveness was generally unrelated to such symptoms (Lee, Jamieson and Earley, 1996). In a recent study of hospital employees ($N = 102$), it was found that achievement striving was negatively related to blood pressure, but Impatient-Irritability was unrelated to either performance or blood pressure (Begley, Lee and Czajka, 2000). In a comprehensive study of U.S. executives, Edwards and Baglioni (1991) found some support for the differential effects of

Type-A behavior components on mental and physical health. Finally, in another study of nurses and telecommunication employees, time pressure showed significantly stronger correlations with health problems than the component of hard driving/competitiveness (Jamal and Baba, 2000). In sum, the empirical evidence to-date tends to be somewhat supportive of the differential effects of components measures of Type-A behavior with regard to health related outcomes. Time pressure seems to be more adversely related with health problems than competitiveness. However, in the present study no differential effects were found between components measures of Type-A behavior and job burnout among teachers in a developed and a developing country.

In conclusions, the present study discovered more similarities than differences among Canadian and Pakistani teachers concerning the adverse effects of Type-A behavior on job burnout, job stress and satisfaction (JDI). Limited support was found in either country with regard to the differential effects of components measures of Type-A behavior on outcome variables. The findings of the present study from a developed and a developing country, in conjunction with other empirical studies, present a rather unhappy picture of Type-A

employees. Perhaps a more careful selection and placement of Type-A individuals is needed at the time of job assignment. In addition, a systematic program of informing Type-A's about the personal and health dangers they might encounter in their jobs may prove useful. A regular auditing of employees health (e.g., an annual physical exam), especially of Type-A individuals, may be necessary to detect early symptoms of stress and job burnout so that appropriate action can be taken in due time (Daniel, 1996).

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الملخص

السلوك (أ) والإجهاد الجسدي في العمل: دراسة ثقافية متبادلة

محمد جمال

جامعة كونكورديا

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة العلاقة بين السلوك (أ) العالمي ومكوناته: (ضيق الوقت والقيادة الصعبة / المنافسة) مع الإجهاد الجسدي الكامل، واستنزاف العواطف، وانعدام الشخصية، وقلة الإنجاز، وضغط العمل، وأداء العمل وإرضائه، في محيط الأساتذة في كندا وباكستان. وقد تم جمع المعطيات أو البيانات من خلال استفتاء منظم قام به معلمون أو أساتذة تم توظيفهم من قبل هيئات شعبية مدعومة مالياً في مدن سكنية في كندا (420:N)، وباكستان (335:N). كما تم استخدام علاقات الارتباط لبيرسون لتحليل البيانات والمعطيات. وقد أظهرت النتائج أن السلوك (أ) في كلا البلدين يعود - بشكل كبير - إلى الإجهاد الكامل واتجاهاته الثلاثة، وإلى ضغط العمل والرضا عنه. كما وجد دعم محدود لمختلف تأثيرات مكونات - مسببات - السلوك (أ) على المتغيرات المرتبطة في كل من البلدين المذكورين. وقد تم مناقشة مضمون النتائج لكي يستفيد الباحثون بها في المستقبل حول موضوع نموذج وأسلوب الإجهاد الجسدي والسلوك (أ).

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