

The Level of Burnout of Kitchen Personnel in Accommodation Facilities

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the level of burnout of the kitchen personnel working in accommodation sector and discovering whether there was a relationship between their level of burnout and personal features. A cluster sampling method was used in the study. Ten accommodation facilities in Antalya were handled as a cluster and a total of 126 personnel working in these facilities comprised the sample group. A “Burnout Inventory” was used in the study. Significant relationships were detected between the level of burnout of the kitchen personnel participating in the study and their levels of education, income levels, duties, weekly and daily working hours, levels of satisfaction related to their jobs and their wish to change their jobs ($p < 0.05$).

Key words: Kitchen personnel, accommodation facilities, burnout, personal features.

1. Introduction

The concept of “burnout” was first proposed by Freudenberger in 1974, he defined burnout as the experience of an individual feeling unsuccessful, worn down and becoming exhausted as a result of the excessive demands on his/her energy, power and resources (Freudenberger, 1974). The burnout concept was later used in the relevant literature by many authors in relation to the studies about the subject on production groups, service enterprises and various occupational groups (Pelit and Türkmen, 2008).

Accommodation sector, by its very nature, seems to have many characteristics which can cause burnout syndrome (Ersoy and Utku Demirel 2005). The accommodation facility personnel are however expected to achieve successful results while also dealing with the heavy workloads, responsibilities and difficulties that go with it. However, when the personnel make too much effort and spend too much time on offering service, they encounter unbearable situations (Altay, 2009). Kitchen personnel in accommodation facilities experience burnout frequently. Kitchen personnel traditionally work in an atmosphere of constant stress. This stress stems from several factors; the physical environment of the workplace, human resources issues, and the nature of the work. The environment is hot, loud and hectic. Slow, monotonous preparations are interrupted by daily chaotic business flows (Reynolds, 1995). Human resources concerns include long and anti-social hours (nights, weekends and holidays), poor pay, aggressive discipline, including the threat of physical violence, and the lack of training (Kang et al., 2010).

In the literature review there were a limited number of studies of burnout levels among people working in accommodation facilities (Altay, 2009; Birdir and Tepeci, 2003; Buick and Thomas, 2001; Ersoy and Utku Demirel; 2005; Kang et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2006; Kozak, 2001; Ledgerwood et al., 1998; Murray Gibbons and Gibbons, 2007; Pelit and Türkmen, 2008; Pienaar and Willemsse, 2008; Zopiatis and Orphanides, 2009) and it was also observed that there was no study examining the level of burnout that concerned individual kitchen personnel working in accommodation facilities. Therefore, this study was planned and carried out with the aim of determining the level of burnout of the kitchen personnel working in accommodation facilities and making a comparison between them according to their personal features.

2. Methods

The population of the study consisted of kitchen personnel working in accommodation facilities with 4-5 stars in Antalya. In the study, a cluster sampling method was used. Ten accommodation facilities were handled as cluster and a total of 126 personnel working in these facilities comprised the sampling group. In the study, a questionnaire consisting of two parts was used to collect the data. The first part of the questionnaire relating to the individuals characteristics.

The second part of the questionnaire consists of a 21 items “Burnout Scale” comprising 17 negative and 4 positive statements, developed by Pines and Aronson (1988) and adapted into Turkish. The validity and reliability was undertaken by Çapri (2006) in order to determine the level of burnout of the personnel. The 21 items in the scale were subjected to a 7 point Likert type. The data was analyzed via the SPSS 14.01 program, the distribution of the personnel in the sampling group according to their personal features was given together with frequency and percentage values. Each item in the scale to determine the level of burnout of each employee was described by measuring arithmetic mean and standard deviation values. To compare the level of burnout of the personnel within the scope of the study according to their personal features, t-test and (for three or more groups) variance analysis were used since parametric test assumptions were realized (for both groups). In the paired comparisons in the variance analysis, a Tukey test was used. In the comparisons aimed at the whole scale, the 4 positive items were scored reversely according to the scoring system mentioned above.

In this study, it was determined in the factor analysis applied in relation to the burnout scale that the scale was gathered under a single factor (dimension), and the Cronbach’s Alpha value related to reliability coefficient was calculated as 0.812.

3. Results

In this study, 27.8% of the kitchen personnel working in accommodation facilities who compose the sample group are female and 72.2% are male. Among the participants, there are mostly persons aged 26-33 years old (34.9%), secondary school graduates (52.4%), persons with a “\$801-1000” of income (27.0%), assistant chefs (43.7%), persons working in the accommodation facility for “4-6” years (31.7%), persons who work daily for “8-10” hours (56.3%), persons who work weekly 6 days or less (92.1%), persons who are satisfied with their jobs (65.9%) and persons who do not want to change their jobs (59.5%).

Within the scope of the research, the first three items where the burnout level (score) of kitchen personnel is at its highest level are as follows: tiredness ($\bar{X}=4.11$), physical tiredness ($\bar{X}=3.83$), and worn-out ($\bar{X}=3.56$). The other three items whose burnout scores are the lowest are related to the feelings of being trapped ($\bar{X}=1.84$), worthless ($\bar{X}=1.87$) and rejected ($\bar{X}=2.10$). High scores in positive items related to burnout, which show that the burnout level is low, are respectively as follows: feelings of being cheerful ($\bar{X}=4.91$), happy ($\bar{X}=5.33$), energetic ($\bar{X}=5.34$) and optimistic ($\bar{X}=5.60$). The general burnout level of accommodation personnel who are within the scope of this study was calculated as $\bar{X}=3.17$ (between 1-7 score interval). This value is below 4 and it shows a medium level of burnout, which indicates that the general burnout level is not very high (Table 1).

According to the findings in Table 2, a significant relation was identified between the burnout level of kitchen personnel and weekly working hours, the satisfaction level in relation to the job and the wish to change the job ($p<0.05$). When the arithmetic mean values are examined, it is seen that the level of burnout is higher in people working 7 days a week when compared with those working 6 days; in people satisfied with their jobs when compared with those not satisfied with their jobs; and in people wishing to change their jobs when compared with the people not wishing to change their jobs.

According to the analysis results in Table 3, significant relations were determined between the burnout levels of kitchen personnel and their educational level, income level, their missions and their daily working hours ($p<0.05$). Arithmetical mean values show that the burnout level increases as the educational level decreases. In parallel with that, it was determined that the burnout level increased as the income level decreased to \$1000 and below.

When the means calculated in relation to the missions are examined, it is observed that the group with the highest burnout level is dish washers whereas the group with the lowest burnout level is chefs and assistant chefs. On the other hand, it was determined that the burnout level of persons who work 11 hours a day and more is much more than that of persons who work 10 hours and less (Table 3).

4. Discussion

The burnout level of kitchen personnel is at its highest level in the following items: tiredness ($\bar{X}=4.11$), physical tiredness ($\bar{X}=3.83$) and worn-out ($\bar{X}=3.56$). The items with the lowest burnout score are feelings of being trapped ($\bar{X}=1.84$), of worthlessness ($\bar{X}=1.87$) and of being rejected ($\bar{X}=2.10$).

The literature suggests that kitchen personnel are amongst the most stressed workers in the hospitality sector due to the nature of their job specifications (Zopiatis and Orphanides, 2009). Citing tiredness, physical tiredness and worn-out as the items where burnout is at its highest level may be the result of the fact that the work is heavy and it demands a great deal of responsibility.

The heavy work burden and the long daily working hours of kitchen personnel have an effect on burnout (Kurçer, 2005). In the present research, significant differences were found between the burnout levels of kitchen personnel and their levels of satisfaction in relation to the job and their wish to change the job. When the arithmetical mean values are examined, it is seen that the level of burnout is higher in people working 7 days a week when compared with those working 6 days; in people satisfied with their job when compared with those not satisfied with their job; and in people wishing to change their jobs when compared with the people not wishing to change their jobs. As a matter of fact, and it is also the case in the study by Ünalın et al. (2006), the rate of those wishing to leave their jobs was found to be significantly lower in persons who are satisfied with their jobs. In the study of Dinler (2010), it was seen that both emotional exhaustion and indifference were observed more in persons who are thinking of changing their jobs when compared with those who are not thinking of leaving their jobs.

Significant relations were determined between the burnout levels of kitchen personnel who participated in the study and their educational levels, income levels, duties and daily working hours. Burnout levels differ depending on the education level. Most studies show that burnout decreases as the educational level increases (Demir et al., 2003; Günüşen and Üstün, 2010).

Through the arithmetical mean values, it was determined that the burnout level increased as the income level gradually decreased below \$1000. In the study conducted by Aksakal et al. (1999), it was stated that the job satisfaction level was lower in personnel who thought that they did not receive a salary appropriate to their qualifications. Through these findings, it can be inferred that low job satisfaction is observed in persons who work for a low salary; and low job satisfaction causes burnout. When the means which were calculated in relation to duties were examined, the group with the highest burnout level was dish washers while the group with the lowest burnout level was chefs and assistant chefs. This may result from the fact that chefs and assistant chefs receive a higher salary; and they are more motivated as a result of their better salaries.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

On the completion of the study, it was determined that; the first three items in which the level of burnout of the kitchen personnel working in an accommodation facility is the highest is in the categories of tiredness, physical tiredness (exhaustion) and feeling worn-out. There are significant relationships between the levels of burnout in personnel and their levels of education, levels of income, their duties and their daily working hours. In the light of the findings obtained from the research, the following proposals can be made: to give in-service training to kitchen personnel; to shorten the working hours of personnel; to keep the subject on the agendas of the relevant organizations and institutions and to conduct further research studies related to the subject and to carry out a study on a much wider sample across Turkey, in order to decrease the burnout level of kitchen personnel or to make it totally disappear.

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6. References

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7. Tables

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Related to the Levels of Burnout of the Participants (n=126)

Item No	Items	\bar{X}	s.s.	
Negative Items	1	Tired	4.11	1.60
	2	Physically tired (exhausted)	3.83	1.55
	3	Worn-out	3.56	1.64
	4	Disappointed with and offended by people	3.47	1.49
	5	Emotionally tired	3.25	1.61
	6	Anxious	3.13	1.34
	7	Confused, troubled	3.13	1.88
	8	Unhappy	3.04	1.66
	9	Tired	2.98	1.34
	10	Collapsed	2.90	1.46
	11	Exhausted	2.79	1.64
	12	Weak	2.49	1.32
	13	Unhealthy	2.29	1.36
	14	Hopeless	2.27	1.53
	15	Rejected	2.10	1.47
	16	Worthless	1.87	1.32
	17	Trapped	1.84	1.36
Positive Items	18	Cheerful, jolly	4.91	1.53
	19	Happy	5.33	1.49
	20	Energetic	5.34	1.39
	21	Optimistic	5.60	1.46
GENERAL		3.17	0.71	

Table 2: T-Test Results Related to Comparing the Levels of Burnout of the Participants According to Their Personal Features

Variable	Group	\bar{X}	s.d.	t/F	P
Number of Working days in a Week	6 days and fewer	3.11	0.67	2.64	0.009**
	7 days	3.71	0.81		
Level of Satisfaction in Relation to the Job	Satisfied	2.88	0.56	7.40	0.000***
	Not Satisfied	3.70	0.61		
Wish to Change Jobs	Yes	3.66	0.68	7.64	0.000***
	No	2.82	0.47		

** $p < 0.05$ *** $p < 0.01$

Table 3: Results of Variance Analysis Made for Comparing Burnout Levels of the Participants In Relation To Their Individual Characteristics

Variable	Group	\bar{X}	s.d.	t/F	P
Level of Education	Elementary school and below	3.57 a	0.74	16.53	0.000***
	Secondary education	2.98 b	0.55		
	Higher education	2.70 c	0.36		
Level of Income	\$400 and below	4.16 a	0.65	19.99	0.000***
	\$401-600	3.58 b	0.73		
	\$601-800	3.14 c	0.45		
	\$801-1000	2.84 d	0.55		
	\$1001 and above	2.76 d	0.42		
Duty	Chef	2.93 a	0.52	23.45	0.000***
	Assistant chef	2.91 a	0.49		
	Dish Washer	4.04 b	0.60		
	Cleaner	3.43 c	0.83		
Daily working hours	Less than 8 hours	3.04 a	0.81	3.40	0.044*
	8-10 hours	3.09 a	0.64		
	11-13 hours	3.33 b	0.74		

*** $p < 0.001$ ** $p < 0.01$ * $p < 0.05$ ^{a,b,c,d} The difference between the groups including different letters in the same column