

ORGANIZATIONAL BURNOUT AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE:
ANALYSIS OF A PROJECTED RELATIONSHIP



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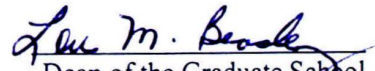
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Analysis of a Projected Relationship

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ABSTRACT

Organizational burnout and emotional intelligence are two constructs that are quite salient research topics within the profession of Industrial/Organizational Psychology. Burnout is characterized by three dimensions – emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment, while emotional intelligence is comprised of the following dimensions: self-awareness, self-management, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills. Both competencies have significant and demonstrable links to job performance, which has piqued the interest of organizations. Consequently, it would be quite advantageous to employers if one can predict a subordinate's susceptibility to burnout given their level of emotional intelligence. It was proposed that a high emotional intelligence score will translate into a lower susceptibility to the burnout phenomenon. Specifically, it was hypothesized that an inverse relationship would manifest between specific subscales of these two constructs, while other subscales would indicate a direct relationship. Results were nonsignificant, albeit the computed correlations for Hypotheses 3A and 3B were in the predicted direction.

INTRODUCTION

The essence of Industrial/Organizational (I/O) psychology is the ability to make valid predictions relative to various job outcomes such as job performance. To effectively make such predictions would unquestionably benefit any organization, especially ones that are determined to flourish within a competitive and erratic global economy. As the literature demonstrates, many constructs have been tested for relationships to job performance, some of which have yielded quite noteworthy results. For example, research has clearly demonstrated a significant, positive relationship between the personality construct of conscientiousness and job performance (Robertson, Baron, Gibbons, MacIver, & Nyfield, 2000). Additionally, research has established evidence of the pervasive utility of intelligence (g) in organizational settings. Specifically, (g) is the ability to reason, solve abstract problems, and acquire knowledge. Furthermore, it requires the ability to acknowledge cognitive complexity and appears to be the most powerful, single predictor of overall job performance (Gottfredson, 1997).

Except for a few related studies, the relationship between two particularly salient constructs within I/O psychology, namely – emotional intelligence (EI) and organizational burnout (OBO), or simply burnout (BO), seems to be absent from empirical research. Subsequently, the question solicited is – so what? Even though these two competencies are reportedly distinct constructs and would be (seemingly) inversely related, the question remains – are they, to what extent, and why is that important? Interestingly, EI and OBO both have significant links to job performance (Robbins, 2003; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter 2001), which makes this possible relationship quite curious. Perhaps one can predict a worker's susceptibility to OBO given their level of EI. Consequently, the implications of this conjecture may be rather valuable to any organization such as in the identification of at-risk employees or even

prospective employees (relative to OBO) and their future level of job performance. It is the intent of this study to demonstrate if any possible relationship exists between OBO and EI.

The Advent of Burnout Research

In their article, Cordes & Dougherty, (1993) cite Maslach & Jackson, (1984) who indicated that BO research began as a result of work conducted on emotion, arousal, and the way in which people cope, or manage arousal. Appearing with regularity in the 1970's, BO was the term which defined a syndrome peculiar to workers in the human services and healthcare – occupations in which the objective is to provide service and support to those in need, and are often distinguished by emotional and interpersonal stressors (Maslach, Chaufeli, Leiter, 2001).

Reportedly, BO was initially a vague concept in which there was no standard definition and many used the term to mean different things. Consequently, there was neither solid basis for constructive communication about the problem nor the solutions for it. However, there was an underlying consensus about its core dimensions, which led to the development of a multi-dimensional theory of BO (Maslach, et al., 2001). Currently, BO is generally defined as a unique type of stress syndrome (Cordes & Dougherty 1993), which is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job), and diminished personal accomplishment (professional efficacy).

Emotional exhaustion is distinguished by a lack of energy and a feeling that one's emotional resources are essentially "tapped-out". Additionally, feelings of frustration and tension may coexist as workers become mindful that they cannot continue to give of themselves or be as responsible for clients as they have been in the past. Reportedly, a typical symptom is dread at the prospect of returning to work the next day.

Depersonalization is marked by the treatment of clients as objects rather than individuals. Workers may exhibit a detached and an emotional callousness, and they may be cynical toward co-workers, clients, or even the organization. Reportedly, typical symptoms include: the use of derogatory or abstract language, strict compartmentalization of professional lives, intellectualization of the situation, withdrawal (longer breaks, extended conversations with co-workers, and extensive use of jargon).

The third component of OBO, diminished personal accomplishment, is distinguished by a propensity to assess oneself in a negative context. Workers tend to experience diminished feelings of job competence and successful achievement in their occupations or in associations with others, along with the insight of a lack of personal progress or lost ground (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). It should be noted that this subscale is also identified as professional efficacy, which is the predominant terminology used throughout the BO technical manual (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996).

In the 1980's, BO studies shifted more toward empirical research, which was more quantitative in nature, utilizing questionnaire and survey methodologies and analyzing larger subject populations. Furthermore, the shift to enhanced empiricism was accompanied by theoretical and methodological contributions from the field of industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology. BO was viewed as a form of job stress with links to such concepts as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover. The I/O approach, in conjunction with prior work based in clinical and social psychology, generated increased perspectives on BO and enhanced the scholarly base via utilization of standardized tools and research designs (Maslach, et al., 2001).

Christina Maslach, current Professor of Psychology and Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education at the University of California (Berkeley), is best known as one of the pioneering researchers on OBO. Dr. Maslach has authored two books, numerous publications, and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) – the most widely used research measure in the burnout field. In their article, Schutte, Toppinen, Kalimo & Wilmar, (2000), cite Maslach & Jackson (1981, 1986) that soon after its introduction in the early 1980's, the MBI became the 'gold standard' to assess BO. However, this instrument was originally geared (specifically) toward the social service and healthcare industries. Consequently, this measure could not be applied indiscriminately outside those occupational sectors. In 1996, this discrepancy was addressed by the introduction of the MBI-GS (general survey), which may be applied to any occupational group (Maslach, et al., 1996).

The Advent of Emotional Intelligence

According to Muchinsky (2003), I/O psychology has recently begun to address what has historically been regarded as the “soft” side of individual differences, including moods, feelings, and emotions. Traditionally, the relevance of these constructs to the workplace was not acknowledged. They were regarded as transient disturbances to the linkages between abilities such as intelligence and performance. Muchinsky notes that science is beginning to realize that moods, feelings, and emotions play a quite significant role in the workplace. Although scientists began tracing the outlines of EI in the 1920's, researchers J.D. Mayer and P. Salovey are largely credited for coining the term EI in their 1990 study. However, Dr. Daniel Goleman is currently the leading author and researcher in this area. Goleman is generally recognized as giving the most visibility to EI via his 1995 book entitled *Emotional Intelligence* (History and Definition of Emotional Intelligence, n.d.).

EI refers to an assortment of noncognitive skills, capabilities, and competencies that influence an individual's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures. This construct is comprised of the following dimensions: self-awareness, self-management, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills (Robbins, 2003). So why is EI important and of particular interest to the field of I/O psychology? EI has been shown to have positive links to job performance (at all levels) and is especially relevant in jobs that demand a high degree of social interaction (Robbins, 2003). For example, one study looked at the characteristics of Lucent Technologies' engineers who were rated as stars by their peers. Results suggested that stars were better at relating to others, or in other words, it was EI rather than intelligence quotient (IQ) that characterized high performers. Another study of U.S. Air Force recruiters generated similar findings. Since it was found that top-performing recruiters exhibited high levels of EI, the Air Force subsequently revamped its selection criteria. Additionally, a follow-up investigation found that future hires that had high EI scores were 2.6 times more successful than those who didn't. Consequently, by using EI in selection, the Air Force was able to cut turnover among new recruiters in one year by more than 90 percent and save nearly three million dollars in hiring and training costs (Robbins, 2003).

According to researcher Daniel Goleman, EI is a greater predictor of workplace success than is IQ. Specifically, he believes that EI accounts for 80 % of workplace success versus 20%, which is dependant on IQ (Martinez, 1997). Interestingly, a 1998 study at Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines (conducted by Joseph Hee-Woo Jae) demonstrated Goleman's conclusion. Specifically, this study (MHS Emotional Intelligence, n.d.) evaluated 100 university-educated bank employees (roughly half male and half female participants). They were all administered the BarOn EQ-I along with a widely used IQ test. The study found that EI scores

were higher related to actual job performance than IQ. Specifically, IQ scores were virtually unrelated ($r = .07$), as they accounted for less than 1% of the work evaluation scores. The EQ-I scores, however, reportedly indicated an impressive job performance correlation ($r = .52$).

A recent article (Bagshaw & Bagshaw, 1999) indicated that effective leadership in the 21st century will require enhanced levels of collaboration, teamwork, and communication. Energy cannot be wasted in negative politics and resistance or cynicism to change. Consequently, losing customers through indifference, or absenteeism through stress-related illnesses are counterproductive and are not an option to current organizational operatives. The authors noted that these business-limiting behaviors are influenced by powerful albeit negative emotions like fear and anger, which can adversely affect the vitality and/or compromise the effectiveness of an organization. Hence, it was ascertained that EI is a valuable asset, which can help facilitate desirable outcomes relative to the workplace. For example, the authors indicated that the bedrock of EI is self-esteem and self-efficacy. If one doesn't believe in his or her coping abilities, it will be problematic to acknowledge any threatening situation, thus becoming overwhelmed with helplessness. Similarly, if we don't value ourselves, lack of self-confidence will render us defensive when challenged, and tentative about taking risks. Consequently, the ability to develop relationships of trust and to lead others may be compromised (Bagshaw & Bagshaw, 1999).

Controversy

The logic behind EI seems pragmatic, while its utility appears to be quite salient, but this relatively new competency is not without dispute. According to a recent article (Pfeiffer, 2001), a major weakness of EI research is the lack of scientifically sound, objective measures of this construct. Measures of EI are virtually all based on self-report instruments, which lack a standardization group (the exception is the BarON Emotional Quotient Inventory: Youth Version) and the measures that do exist have substandard or unacceptable levels of internal consistency stability. Consequently, virtually none of the existing EI measures provide any data to support the particular interpretations that the test developers claim they can make using a test's score.

The implications of being devoid of objective, psychometrically sound measures translate into not knowing what EI is or is not (Pfeiffer, 2001). There are, however, a few instruments which are generally associated with the measurement of EI that have an element of respectability within the scientific community – most notably the BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) and the Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS).

The BarOn EQ-I is the result of Dr. Reuven BarOn's testing of more than forty-eight thousand individuals during the past 19 years. This instrument consists of 133 items and can be administered in 30 minutes. It provides an overall EQ score as well as scores based on five scales (intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress, and general mood) and 15 subscales (Akers & Porter, 2003). Furthermore, the BarOn EQ-i was the premier measure of EI and is considered the international standard for assessment (MHS Emotional Intelligence n.d.). Interestingly, despite its popularity, this inventory has somewhat of a rather dubious reputation. Specifically, the BarOn Eq-i samples a broad range of individual differences, which ultimately demonstrates

considerable overlap with the Big Five (Davies, Stankov, & Roberts, 1998; Dawda & Hart, 2000). Consequently, this assessment device may actually be a measure of well-established personality traits rather than the EI construct.

The Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS) by Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso was established as the first comprehensive measure of EI (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2003). The psychometric evidence for this measure (reliability, convergent and discriminant validity) were reportedly adequate, while the advent of the MSCEIT (newer version of the MEIS) has even higher subscale reliability – branch score reliabilities range from .76-91 (Ashkansay & Daus, 2003).

It should be noted that the aforementioned limitations does not render EI as a fraudulent construct. Rather, it means at the present time that there are no scientifically acceptable instruments to measure the EI construct and the reason why measures seem so problematic may have to do with the lack of precision in conceptualizing EI as a competency (Pfeiffer, Soldivera & Norton, 1992). Although the features equated with EI (frustration tolerance, empathy, persistence, regulation of mood, optimism, and impulse control) are admirable human qualities, these socially acceptable psychological attributes do not necessarily translate into a legitimate type of intelligence.

Despite these ambiguities, EI is arguably one of the most predominate constructs that has a strong dual interest by both researchers and practitioners/consultants. Researchers are attempting to conceptually define and validate its relationship with significant work attitudes and outcomes, while practitioners are seeking to maximize potential employee performance via identification, selection, and training of critical competencies involving the emotional abilities of their workers (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002).

Presently, what is known about this construct includes the following: EI is distinct from albeit positively related to other intelligences, and is an individual difference, in which some are more endowed with than others. Also, EI develops over and individual's life span and can be taught via training, and involves a person's ability to identify and to perceive emotion (in self and others), as well as possession of the skills to be cognizant of and to manage those emotions effectively (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002).

The intent of this present study is to determine the relationship that exists (if any) between EI and OBO. As previously mentioned both EI and OBO have significant links to job performance, which quite noticeably has piqued the attention of employers relative to the acquisition of ideal, prospective employees, or the evaluation of existing employees that may be at risk to BO. In other words, it would certainly be advantageous for any organization to be able to predict whether prospective (or existing) employees have the potential to advance, or the propensity to undermine business operatives and objectives. Although prior research specifically addressing such a relationship is seemingly (and curiously) absent, related studies do exist.

Related Studies

A recent study (Sciacchitano, Goldstein, & DiPlacido, 2001) investigated the relationship between occupational stress, "personality hardiness" and BO in 95 radiographers employed in Connecticut hospitals. It was hypothesized and later (empirically) determined that higher levels of stress would be associated with more BO, while greater levels of personality hardiness would be correlated with lower levels of BO. Specifically, a regression analysis indicated a positive correlation between BO and occupational stress ($R = .394, p < .01$), and an inverse relationship between personality hardiness and BO ($R = -.459, p < .01$). Occupational stress was defined as a condition in which various dynamics affiliated with the work environment produce adverse,

psychological and physiological effects, i.e., disrespectful physicians, inadequate compensation, staffing shortages, lack of administrative support, etc.

Hardiness is composed operationally of three components: personal control, challenge, and commitment. Specifically, control refers to an individual predisposition to believe and act as if one can influence his/her course of events. Sciacchitano, et al., (2001), cite Kobasa (1984), that challenge is founded on the convictions that change, rather than stability is the norm as opposed to the exception. Consequently, stressors can and should be expected and subsequently used as a tool for personal growth rather than a threat to security. Finally, commitment was defined as the ability to believe in the truth and value of who one is and what one is involved with (Sciacchitano, et al., 2001).

Interestingly, hardiness appears (outwardly) to relate to some of the dimensions of EI albeit inexplicitly. For example, three dimensions of EI (impulse control, persistence and frustration tolerance) compare with the three hallmark components of hardiness (personal control, commitment, and challenge). Consequently, it is expected that similar results in this current research (relative to the aforementioned study) will be found, even though hardiness suggests individual, inherent qualities, while high EI is composed of dimensions that are reportedly learned. Could it be though that the dimensions of EI may be actually more intrinsic than acquired? Specifically, it will be proposed that individuals who score higher on a test of EI will score lower on a test of BO. In other words, high EI will moderate if not preclude the effects of the BO syndrome. In fact, various hypotheses may be ascertained relative to the projected relationships between specific dimensions of the proposed BO and EI constructs.

Hypothesized Relationships

Although the aforementioned study assessed BO within a global context, it will be assumed that BO in that instance will be operationally defined by its most salient component – exhaustion, rather than within the framework of three dimensions. Additionally, as was previously mentioned, hardiness tends to associate with the self-management component of EI. Consequently, the expectations for this current study will be similar to that of the results of Sciacchitano (et al., 2001). However, it should be noted that the emotional component in this current study will be defined as emotional control rather than self-management. Additionally, it should be assumed that the MBI dimensions resulting with a “high” score will equate with an undesirable outcome.

Hypothesis 1:

There will be an inverse relationship between the dimensions of exhaustion (BO) and emotional control (EI).

A recent study (Pardini, Lochman, & Frick, 2003) examined two dimensions associated with psychopathic traits in youths, one of which is defined as a callous, unemotional (c/u) factor. Regression analysis determined that c/u yielded a significant negative relationship to the empathetic concern and perspective-taking subscales. Specifically, beta weights for empathetic concern, perspective-taking, and personal distress were -.59, -.47, and -.30 respectively. In other words, the c/u factor was strongly associated with deficits in cognitive and emotional empathy. Similarly, it was expected that the depersonalization component of BO (cynicism) would be linked to the emotional sensitivity or empathy component of EI, albeit in a negative subtext.

Hypothesis 2:

There will be an inverse relationship between the dimensions of depersonalization (BO) and emotional sensitivity (EI).

According to Bandura (1997), perceived self-efficacy, or a belief in one's personal capabilities, regulates human functioning within a cognitive, motivational, and mood/affect framework. Within the cognitive domain, individuals with high self-efficacy are generally more likely to have high goals, think soundly, and commit to challenges. Within the motivational domain, individuals anticipate likely outcomes, set goals, and plan courses of action. Within the affect domain, efficacy beliefs regulate emotional states in various ways. For example, individuals who believe that they can manage threats are less distressed by them. Likewise, those with high self-efficacy lower their stress and anxiety in ways that make the environment less threatening. Additionally, those with high coping capacities have enhanced control over unsettling thoughts. Consequently, it may be presumed that individuals who are high on self-efficacy tend to effectively control various aspects of their personal emotional states. Interestingly, this emotional control factor is analogous in scope to the EI subscale of self-management or emotional control.

Hypothesis 3:

There will be a positive relationship between the dimensions of professional efficacy (BO) and emotional control (EI).

Research indicates that those high in self-efficacy attract support from others, supply incentives and resources, provide good examples to model, and demonstrate the value of perseverance (Bandura, 1997). Given these characteristics, it may be presumed that those high in self-efficacy demonstrate social competence are communicative, and inspire others. Similarly, it

would logically follow that those high in personal efficacy (BO) would tend to be expressive, animated and cognizant of the perceptions of others.

Hypothesis 3A:

There will be a positive relationship between the dimensions of professional efficacy (BO) and emotional expressivity (EI).

Hypothesis 3B:

There will be a positive relationship between the dimensions of professional efficacy (BO) and emotional sensitivity (EI).

Methods

Participants

Although 150 participants were sought, the response rate was only 23%. Ultimately, 35 survey packets were returned with only 28 ($N = 28$) of those being completed (some surveys were incomplete or missing). Participants included officers from the Metro Nashville, Tennessee, Police Department - East Station and Hermitage precincts. Subjects who responded to all demographic questions were predominately male ($N = 20$) and three female ($N = 3$). Additionally, reported ages of respondents ranged from 28-56 years ($M = 38$). The demographic page also solicited participants' education levels. Specifically, respondents reported the following: 8 % had attained a masters degree, 47% had attained a bachelors degree, while 8 % indicated only education at the high school level. Remaining participants reported either some college beyond high school (21%), or some graduate work beyond the bachelor's level (13 %). Additionally, 65% of respondents indicated that they were married, while those that were divorced or single were reportedly 13% and 21% respectively.

Measures

Organizational Burnout. Participants were instructed to complete two surveys – one measuring OBO and the other measuring EI. Relative to OBO and upon the personal recommendation of the developer, the Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey (MBI-GS) was the appropriate form needed for testing law enforcement personnel as opposed to the MBI-Human Services Survey (C. Maslach, personal communication, November 8, 2003). As mentioned previously, the MBI is the most widely used measure in the burnout field. Specifically, the MBI-GS is a questionnaire in which it is requisite for participants to answer 16 questions reflecting job-related feelings or attitudes. Respondents are to score each question according to a Likert-type scale from 0-6, with 0 indicating “never”, to 6 indicating “everyday”. It should be noted that the MBI-GS has been specifically (and effectively) engineered to measure the three noted subscales of the burnout syndrome – emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and professional efficacy. Each MBI-GS test form is scored with a scoring key containing directions for scoring each subscale. If preferred, each score may be coded as low, average, or high by using the numerical cut-off points listed on the scoring key.

Convergent validity of the MBI-GS is quite adequate. Specifically, a Dutch civil service sample provided longitudinal data at a one year interval and the three subscales had stability coefficients as follows: Exhaustion - .65, Cynicism - .60, Professional Efficacy - .67. Internal consistency reliabilities are likewise acceptable for the three dimensions ranging from .76 - .89 (Maslach et al., 1996). In the present study, the coefficient alpha reliabilities for the relevant MBI subscales can be found on the diagonal of table 1.

Emotional Intelligence. For assessing EI, the Social Skills Inventory (SSI) was employed for this study. The Social Skills Inventory was authored in 1986 by Ron Riggio, who is currently

a professor and researcher of leadership and organizational psychology at Claremont McKenna College (Kravis Leadership Institute). This measure is well noted for its comprehensiveness and utility. Specifically, the SSI consists of six scales that measure communication skills on two dimensions or levels – social (verbal) and emotional (nonverbal); expressivity, sensitivity, and control are evaluated in each. Additionally, in the past decade, the SSI has been used widely in management communication workshops and leadership training programs as well as a valuable, supplemental tool in personnel selection. Furthermore, the SSI is one of the first self-report measures of emotional skill (Riggio, 2003).

The SSI requires respondents to score each item (90 questions) according to a Likert-type scale from 1-5, with 1 indicating “not at all like me”, to 5 indicating “exactly like me”. SSI test scoring is quite basic in which the 5-point scale is coded 1 to 5 for scoring. Thirty two items require reverse scoring, and the answer sheets can be scored by hand using the key. The SSI consists of 90 items grouped into the six dimensions as was previously identified. Fifteen items comprise each dimension and are arranged so that every sixth item belongs to the same scale. Additionally, scores are reported for each dimension and range from 15 to 75. The overall SSI score indicates the global level of social/emotional competence.

According to Riggio (2003), who cites Mayer and Salovey (1997), the ability model of EI includes abilities to identify and decode others’ emotions, accurately express/encode one’s own emotions, and monitoring and regulation of felt emotions, among other elements. This work suggests that some components of EI involve nonverbal/emotional communication skills, which are the key components underlying the SSI (Riggio, 2003). In fact, the SSI emotion subscales were correlated to several measures of emotion such as the Affect Intensity Measure (SSI emotional sensitivity component correlation = .58), the venerated Multifactor Emotional

Intelligence Scale (SSI emotional sensitivity component correlation = .26) and the Emotional Contagion (SSI emotional expressivity component correlation = .41), among others (Riggio, 2003). It should be noted that the SSI scales of reliability are quite favorable, with the test-retest and internal consistency reliabilities ranging from .81 - .96 (Riggio, 2003). In the present study, the coefficient alpha reliabilities for the relevant SSI subscales can be found on the diagonal of table 1.

Most recently, the SSI has been employed by the government agency, California Commission on Peace Officer Standards Training (POST), which supports California law enforcement in its training academies (along with other services). According to test specialist, Rob Devine, the Napa Valley Police Academy has most recently administered the SSI to its new cadets. Furthermore, the San Bernardino, L. A., and San Diego police departments have likewise expressed interest in utilizing this instrument. Furthermore, Devine mentioned that the SSI is particularly geared toward community policing (R. Devine, personal communication, January 15, 2004) hence, the interest of POST in utilizing this measure. As a final note, the SSI positively correlates with several dimensions of the 16PF test (Riggio, 2003), which again raises the inquiry - is EI a distinct construct, which can be reportedly learned, or is it more intrinsic? In other words, is EI actually a dimension of personality in disguise?

Design and Procedure

In mid-March, Survey packets were issued to two Metro Nashville, Tennessee, police precincts – East Station and Hermitage. Participants were previously informed of the researcher's intentions via communiqué from the researcher (brief presentation) during morning, afternoon, and evening roll-calls. The survey packets were then presented to a designated, department representative who subsequently distributed the envelopes into the officers'

mailboxes. Each packet or manila envelope included the following contents: a written statement with a brief overview of the researcher and the objectives relative to this research project. Additionally, the statement underscored that participation is purely voluntary and that professional and confidential protocol will be strictly followed. Participants were likewise implored to complete surveys within four days and return them in the enclosed pre-addressed/stamped envelope.

Additionally, each packet contained an informed consent document, a demographic sheet, and two surveys. Each officer was given two surveys – The Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey (MBI-GS), and the Social Skills Inventory (SSI). No personal or identifying information was associated with the data collection from this research project. In other words, participants were not asked to write their names or any other identifying information on any document at any time. This research (testing procedure) did not adversely impact participants in any capacity. These surveys were purely for research purposes and were intended to solely assess the respondent's levels of burnout and emotional intelligence. Surveys were completed according to the personal discretionary levels of convenience and privacy of each respondent. After respondents had completed both surveys, they were instructed to place them into the pre-stamped/addressed envelopes and mail to the researcher's designated and secured location. All returned documents were forwarded to the Austin Peay State University Office of Psychology where they were placed in a secured location until the researcher retrieved them. Once retrieved, the researcher placed all documents in another (and final) secured location, which was a private (locked) office. Only the researcher was privy to the test scores. However, if requested, research results would be forthcoming to the participating precincts.

Data Analysis Strategy

SPSS statistical software (version 12) was employed in the data computations in which a bivariate correlational analysis was performed. Descriptive statistics were likewise generated, along with a reliability analysis of the dimensional components from each construct.

Results

The resulting correlations (Appendix A) indicate nonsignificant outcomes. Specifically, Hypothesis 1: proposed an inverse relationship between the BO dimension of exhaustion and the EI dimension of emotional control. As indicated by SPSS, the hypothesis was not supported. Correlational data was unremarkable ($R = -0.27, p > .05$). Hypothesis 2: proposed that an inverse relationship would manifest between the BO dimension of depersonalization and the EI dimension of emotional sensitivity. As indicated by the results, the hypothesis was not supported. Correlational data was nonsignificant ($R = .111, p > .05$). Hypothesis 3 proposed a direct relationship between the BO dimensions of professional efficacy and the EI dimension of emotional control. Correlational data was unremarkable ($R = .054, p > .05$). Hypothesis 3A proposed a direct relationship between professional efficacy (BO) and emotional expressivity (EI). Correlational data was likewise nonsignificant ($R = .277, p > .05$). Hypothesis 3B proposed a direct relationship between professional efficacy (BO) and emotional sensitivity. Correlational data was unremarkable ($R = .235, p > .05$). While there was not a statistically significant correlation between the proposed dimensions in Hypotheses 3A, and 3B, the computed correlations were in the predicted direction. In addition, the magnitude of the correlations suggests that statistical significance could have been achieved given a larger sample size.

Discussion

This present study attempted to analyze the possible relationship between the constructs of organizational burnout and emotional intelligence. It was hypothesized that one's susceptibility to burnout could be predicted relative to their level of emotional intelligence. The results from the bivariate correlation function revealed that hypotheses 3A, and 3B in this study generated computed correlations within the predicted range; however, statistical significance was not apparent. In addition, Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 were not supported. Specifically, the results indicated that the projected inverse relationships between the dimensions of BO and EI (Hypotheses 1 and 2) did not manifest.

Since prior research within the expanse of this study is quite limited it was hoped that the results would replicate the findings from Sciacchitano, et al., (2001), in which a significant inverse relationship was found between BO and personality hardiness. In review, hardiness is composed of three elements: personal control, challenge, and commitment, which outwardly (albeit obscurely) seem to relate to the EI construct. Regrettably, the results of this current study did not acquiesce to the findings of Sciacchitano, et al., (2001). Additionally, it was hoped that Hypothesis 2 would replicate the results from Pardini, et al., (2003). To reiterate, this study examined two dimensions associated with psychopathic traits in youths, one of which was defined as a callous, unemotional (c/u) factor. Data analysis determined that c/u yielded a significant inverse relationship to empathetic concern and perspective-taking subscales. Similarly, it was projected that the depersonalization component of BO would be linked to the emotional sensitivity component in EI, albeit within a negative subtext. However, the expected results did not manifest. The question remains – is there a relationship between the constructs of emotional intelligence and organizational burnout? Although the evidence for such an

association did not materialize for two subscales, other subscales indicated the possibility. Accordingly, one should not discount the likelihood of a relationship for specific reasons as will be addressed in the subsequent section.

Limitations

Various circumstances were present that may have compromised the results of this research. As was previously mentioned, 150 participants (officers) were petitioned for this study, however, there were only 28 respondents. Two weeks after the surveys were distributed, a memo was issued to each precinct as a reminder to officers for their compliance in this study, but only a few more surveys were forthcoming following the communiqué. Consequently, this relatively small sample size negates robust, statistical power. Since the SSI was a relatively protracted survey (90 questions), the potential pool of respondents may have been diminished. This factor may have contributed to the less than 30% response rate. It should be noted that this potential liability was considered prior to survey administration. A short-form version of the SSI is available, which if used may have yielded a greater response rate; however, reliability and validity may have been noticeably compromised. Consequently, relative to this study, there would have been a trade-off regardless of which form was used.

A possible alternate explanation for the resulting insignificance of scores may lie within the dimensional domain of the SSI. Specifically, the claims that the SSI measures three dimensions of EI may be suspect. Is this instrument truly quantifying EI as operationally defined by most research? Interestingly, although Riggio (2003) claims significant correlations between the SSI (EI dimensions) and other measures of EI, those instruments are not necessarily the measures that researchers generally consider as being the “gold standard” for assessing EI. For example, as mentioned earlier in the text, the BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory, and the

Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale are perhaps the most respected measures of EI at this time. With the exception of the MEIS (Pictures), SSI correlational data with the BarOn EQ is non-existent. However, it should be noted that the overall SSI and MEIS (Pictures) correlational data ($R = .17, p > .05$) were quite unremarkable (Riggio, 2003).

In light of the aforementioned pretext, one should likewise be receptive to the possibility that a relationship between burnout and emotional intelligence may actually be nonexistent. Current research has ascertained that OBO involves the chronic strain that results from an incongruence, or misfit, between the worker and his/her job (Maslach, 2003). In other words, perhaps BO is truly a situational phenomenon to the exclusion of all other variables. Specifically, It has been indicated that this incongruence between worker and job should be analyzed within the conceptual framework of six key domains of the workplace. These areas include: workload, control, reward, fairness, values, and community. Furthermore, past research indicates a stronger case for BO as being more of a function of the situation rather than the person (Maslach, 2003), but there are some ambiguities that need to be acknowledged.

Imagine the scenario of two or more workers who perform the same job function under the same conditions. If one worker is diagnosed as being clinically “burned-out”, theoretically, his/her coworkers should be likewise – correct? Literature doesn’t seem to indicate this conclusion exclusively; therefore, it seems logical that one must consider other variables as well when analyzing the etiology of this phenomenon. In fact, research has suggested that the actual weighting of the significance of the aforementioned domains may play a mediating role. In other words, this possibility may reflect an individual difference (Maslach, et al., 2001). Logically, it seems probable that individual characteristics may actually play a greater role within BO research than has been previously suggested.

Recent research (VanYperen, 1998) among 114 maternity nurses investigated whether perceived equity in the employee/employer exchange relationship is related to informational support from the organization. Also, it investigated whether self-efficacy beliefs play a dual role in this relationship as well. The results indicated that nurses with weak self-efficacy beliefs were sensitive to the degree of informational support. Consequently, in line with earlier studies, these findings indicated that perceptions of inequity are accompanied with BO symptoms (VanYperen, 1998). This study gives some validation to the possibility of personal traits as being key players (rather than minor) within the dynamics of BO research. Furthermore, the crux of this study was the role of self-efficacy as a BO moderator, and interestingly, (as was mentioned earlier) emotional intelligence has been characterized as being the bedrock of self-efficacy. (Bagshaw & Bagshaw, 1999). Consequently, the case for the legitimacy of the relationship between BO and EI warrants further investigation.

Future Directions

The fact that research relative to this association is virtually nonexistent merits continuing investigation in this area. Furthermore, investigation is especially warranted since previously mentioned studies with hardiness and self-efficacy hints at a possible relationship. However, it would be requisite to first address the limitations that were apparent in this present study. Foremost, it would be quite advantageous to obtain a larger pool of participants in order to enhance statistical power. A sample size of 28 subjects does not allow for variance of scores, hence, possibly compromising an outcome that may have otherwise been expected or significant, given a robust sample size. Consequently, the small sample size in this study may be suspect in the anomalous data (outcome) that resulted for Hypothesis number two. Second, it may be useful to employ the more recognized measures of EI such as the BarOn EQ-I or the MSCEIT, rather

than a lesser known instrument. Although the SSI claims to measure three dimensions of EI, its function is not exclusively for that purpose – remember, it measures three dimensions of social skills as well.

It has been indicated that research on BO interventions are quite limited mainly because of the difficulties involved in designing a program, finding an opportunity to implement it, and being able to do longitudinal follow-up studies. However, new strategies such as incorporating the model of job-person-fit may hold some promise. Reportedly, such a model may be a better framework for understanding BO than are approaches that consider personal and situational factors separately (Maslach, 2003). The person-job match seeks to align characteristics of individuals and jobs in ways that will result in desired HR outcomes. Specifically, according to Heneman and Judge (2003), there is a dual need for a match to occur between job requirements to KSAO's and job rewards to individual motivation. Ideally this match will positively impact the desired HR outcomes such as attraction, performance, retention, attendance, and satisfaction. Additionally, Heneman and Judge likewise endorse an expanded view of this match placing the person-job fit model within the larger framework of the person-organization match. Specifically, this model addresses the importance of matching individual characteristics to additional factors beyond the target job such as organizational values, new job duties for the target job multiple jobs, and future jobs. Logically, this expanded approach may be more of a pragmatic framework for understanding the dynamics of burnout as well as help formulate viable interventions for this workplace phenomenon.

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APPENDIX A

Table 1

Intercorrelations and Coefficient Alphas for Three Subscales of Burnout and Emotional Intelligence

Measure	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
Burnout								
1 Exhaustion	2.200	1.378	0.883					
2 Cynicism	2.157	1.528	0.698**	0.860				
3 Professional Efficacy	5.357	0.747	-0.394*	0.413*	0.745			
Emotional Intelligence								
4 Emotional Expressivity	43.714	7.994	-0.003	-0.088	0.278	0.692		
5 Emotional Sensitivity	46.714	8.418	0.257	0.111	0.235	0.331	0.768	
6 Emotional Control	47.428	6.946	-0.027	0.143	0.054	-0.103	0.071	0.613

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

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

Note: Coefficient alphas are presented in boldface along the diagonal