

Identification of Factors Affecting Teachers' Job Alienation in Western Mazandaran Province

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of this study is to identify factors which are effective in job alienation of teachers in western Mazandaran province. Statistical population of this research included all teachers in educational system in western Mazandaran Province in Iran. 241 teachers were selected by means of cluster random sampling. Data collection instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire for evaluation of job alienation. This questionnaire contained 48 questions which were designed based on job alienation literature, background and theories. Exploratory factor analysis was used for data analysis. Cronbach's alpha was used for testing reliability of the questionnaire ($\alpha=0.939$). Results of the main dimensions analysis and varimax rotation showed that the test is saturated with 6 factors and these factors explain 56.12% of total variance. These 6 factors are: organizational justice, individual factors, organizational policies, work hygiene, social status and burnout. After identification of these factors, final reliability of these 6 variables was calculated.

KEYWORDS: identification of dimensions, job alienation, teachers, educational system

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Sense of dissatisfaction and absence of interest in work in working environments are observable issues in job communities. Sometimes, it seems that jobs are like burdens which are carried by individuals so that all concerns take place when they work and when they leave workplace, they feel released and become different people. Therefore, it seems that presence of employees at work is of low quality and this kind of presence indicates obligation to continue job and it is justified only by living (TavakkoliTaba, 2010). Although generalization of such behaviors is wrong, it can be said that passive trend of some occupational systems are stemmed from numerous complex factors and human force plays an important role in this context as operators and doers of this section. Human force is always prone to some kind of alienation which is called-in terms of sociology- as "job alienation" or "work alienation". Therefore, an important question is that what are the factors which cause sense of alienation from work? How is this feeling improved in an individual and how does it affect human personality and makes him or her alienated (Ross, 2004). In such conditions, the job is mandatory and is not led by an individual's discretion and authority and he or she cannot develop his or her physical and spiritual forces freely. It is expected that when there is no external compulsion and physical pressure on an individual, he or she will leave his or her work due to the alienating nature of the work. Sharon classified different types of alienation and called self-alienation. Becoming alienated from oneself as an active creature means humans become passive when communicating with their surrounding world. They yield, and let structures like government, economy and ... reign over them. Passive individuals feel powerless in their personal and social lives. Marx believes that "alienation" refers to a condition in which humans are defeated by their self-created forces and these forces act like strange forces towards them. In capitalistic system, natural cooperation has been decreased and humans are strangers towards each other but they have to work together. Even if workers in an assembly line are friends they will be separated as a result of native feature of technology. Such a isolation has unfavorable effects and consequences because it makes them compete against each other and causes conflicts. They want to have the most production with the least cooperative relationships. Those who win in this competition are rewarded but those who lose are fined. This causes some kind of hatred among workers which is to the capital-owner's benefit (Mohseni, 2000). According to the above discussion, alienation refers to a situation in which humans are not able to control the consequences of their behaviors and actions and meanwhile, managerial system makes individuals to feel isolated and act passively and incompatibly. Seeman presents a more precise definition of alienation (1959). He investigated alienation in relation to 5 concepts: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, cultural isolation and self-hatred. Lack of job satisfaction, motivational burnout, hidden and clear conflicts and similar items among teachers and therefore occurrence of some negative and undesirable emotions and feelings among this group are important issues which can result in

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serious social problems if not cured. Teachers who are fed up with educational system and alienated from themselves and their jobs is followed by undesirable output of the system in the form of illiterate and non-motivated graduates and these are only some parts of job alienation adverse effects. Job alienation has some dimensions like futility, alienation from society, inability, hatred from work and social isolation and therefore can cast a shadow on all dimensions of an individual and his or her organization and affect his or her feelings and behaviors and bring negative consequences. Since the final goal of any organization is dynamism and productivity, it is necessary to deal with identification of factors which affect job alienation. Therefore, we need many studies on job alienation (JA) and factors which influence it. Sedaghatifard and AbdollahZadeh (2009) conducted a research titled "investigation of JA and factors influencing on it". They found that there is a direct relationship between economic income of job and JA feeling. Further, they found that there is a significant relationship between occupational promotion and JA feeling. Moreover, it was confirmed that routine and repetitive nature of some official governmental departments' works increases JA. Nabi Lou (2009) investigated the factors which influence JA. He found that the highest level of JA belongs to technical jobs which need high skill and expertise and individuals who have more cultural and social compatibility with their living environment suffer less alienation. HoseinZadeh et al (2009) conducted a research titled "investigation of socio-economic factors which affect JA. They found job satisfaction, job participation, organizational justice and job security as factors which affect JA. TavakkoliTaba (2010) found that there are significant relationships between schools organizational atmosphere and teachers' JA, teachers' powerlessness, teachers' normlessness and teachers' social isolation. Banai, Reisel&Probest (2004) conducted a research to investigate relationship between job characteristics and job alienation in Hungary. Their results showed that there is significant relationship between job characteristics like feedback, job diversity and job independence and JA. Further, employees who experience social and individual alienation at work do not have working diversity and independence and feedback and become afflicted with burnout earlier than those employees who do not experience JA and have lesser working commitment. Conway &Heijden (2005) conducted a research to investigate relationship between job characteristics and job alienation among nurses. They showed that job characteristics are important predictors of job alienation. Costas & Fleming (2009) showed that there is a significant relationship between JA and concentration as an index of organizational structure. Nair &Vohra (2010) conducted a research on identification of factors predicting JA. They showed that absence of a comprehensive framework for understanding JA and employees' awareness and also absence of different factors like structural elements of concentration and formalization and favorable job characteristics like (independence, diversity and feedback) cause JA in employees. This research showed that alienated employees can be threats for their organizations and one fifth of official staff employees suffer from JA. Considering the above discussion, the main goal of this research is to find appropriate answer for the following questions:

1. What are the factors which affect JA in western Mazandaran Province teachers?
2. what are the dimensions of each of the factors which affect JA in teachers of western Mazandaran Province educational system?
3. what is the most appropriate model for JA in teachers of Western Mzanadarn Province educational system?

The present research is an exploratory study. Statistical population of the research included all teachers in Western Mazandaran Province educational system in Iran. 300 teachers were selected by means of cluster random sampling as respondents. After adjustments and scoring and elimination of defective questionnaires, 241 complete questionnaires were analyzed.

Measurement instrument was prepared after reviewing literature and theoretical roots of the subject on JA. The final questionnaire was verified by 3 experts and professors. This questionnaire is based on 5-point Likert scale (never, rarely, sometimes, most often, and always). Its content validity was verified by professors. Chronbach's alpha was equal to 0.939.

Descriptive statistical indices like frequency distribution, central indices and scattering indices were used for a part of analysis. Chronbach's alpha was used for specifying internal consistency and validity of the questionnaire. Varimax rotation and factor analysis method were used for inferential analysis.

Findings

Statistical features of the questionnaire

Statistical results of the questionnaire reveal that scores range from 48 to 201, their total average is 116.56 and standard value is 22.571. Further, data show that distribution has a negative density equal to -0.168. Therefore, if we consider 241 teachers of western Mazandaran Province as representative of the population of teachers, it can be said with 95% of certainty that their scores average parameter is between 112.83 and 120.34 on the 48-item questionnaire.

reliability of the questionnaire: by reliability, we mean internal consistency of the questionnaire and the degree to which the questions of the questionnaire measure a shared characteristics (teachers' JA). Reliability coefficient was calculated by Cronbach's formula $r_{tt}=0.939$. Correlation coefficients between each question and total point of the test reveal that all correlation coefficients are positive and the maximum coefficient is 0.735.

all these coefficients are statistically significant. Further, every question which is eliminated from the questionnaire will reduce reliability coefficient (which is currently 0.939). Factor analysis of the questionnaire items: in order to conduct a factor analysis in the form of main components analysis, we presented KMO and Bartlett's sphericity test results in table 1 to make sure that sampling was conducted carefully and data correlation matrix is not zero.

Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's sphericity test for correlation matrix of the questions of the questionnaire

KMO	SPHERICITY	Degree of freedom	Significance level
0.778	9021.839	1128	0.0001

As it can be seen in table 1, KMO is equal to 0.778 and significance level of sphericity test is smaller than 0.0001. Therefore, execution of factor analysis based upon correlation matrix will be justifiable in addition to adequacy of sampling. Moreover, the primary output of computer shows that determinant value of correlation matrix is non-zero ($=2.77E-018$). This shows that factors can be extracted based on the data. Three main indices were considered in order to specify the number of significant factors the questionnaire is saturated with:

1. Eigen value; 2. Ratio of predicted variance by each factor; and 3. Eigen values diagram which is called Scree.

The first statistical characteristics which were obtained by means of main components analysis and by pc method showed that 12 factors have Eigen values greater than 1. Common variance coverage percentage among variables explains 72.721% of total variance of the variables. In such conditions, the first factor has an Eigen value equal to 13.163 and predicts 27.422% of total variance which is the equivalent of 37.70% of the common variance of the variables.

It should be mentioned that some researchers consider coefficients above 0.30 and sometimes 0.40 as important and significant in definition of factors when studying the nature of relationships among variables and access to definition of factors and assume coefficients below these values as zero factors (accidental factors). In order to paraphrase the factors, Jones (1954) used 0.30 as the lowest value for this coefficient, Houman (1988) used 0.35 and Reynolds et al (1988) used 0.40. In the present research, we considered the smallest value for this coefficient equal to 0.30. of course, there is no doubt that as factor loading of a question increases, the influence of that question on determination of the nature of the factor also increases but it should be noted that because the questionnaire is a set of questions which has been used for the first time in banks, it is necessary to be careful with their elimination and analysis. Therefore, minimum value for elimination of maintenance of factors in the final stage was assumed to be equal to 0.30 and description and name-allocation of factors was also conducted considering factor loadings of the questions in which the extracted factors had the greatest shares.

Considering the above discussion, in order to match the structure of the questionnaire with theoretical bases which were dependent on formation of several factors, it was necessary to eliminate a number of questions which had weak distinguishing powers or did not have any kind of significant factor loading on any of the factors according to the results of PC method. The following conditions must have held: 1. The determinant of the matrix should not be zero so that reverse calculations are possible and results can be interpreted, 2. The structure of the questionnaire should be simpler and clearer, 3. Its structure should concordant with theoretical model, 4. Large difference between the highest and lowest shared level should be eliminated, 5. Scree plan should designate the number of factors and finally 6. The matrix produced based upon extracted factors should not be largely different from the primary correlation matrix.

Moreover, in scree plan, respondents' performances have been shown in figure 1. This figure indicates total explained variance by every variable. Large factors are indicated at the top and other factors are besides each other with a

Further, it can be inferred that the first factor share is considerably larger than that of other factors in the variance of the variables.

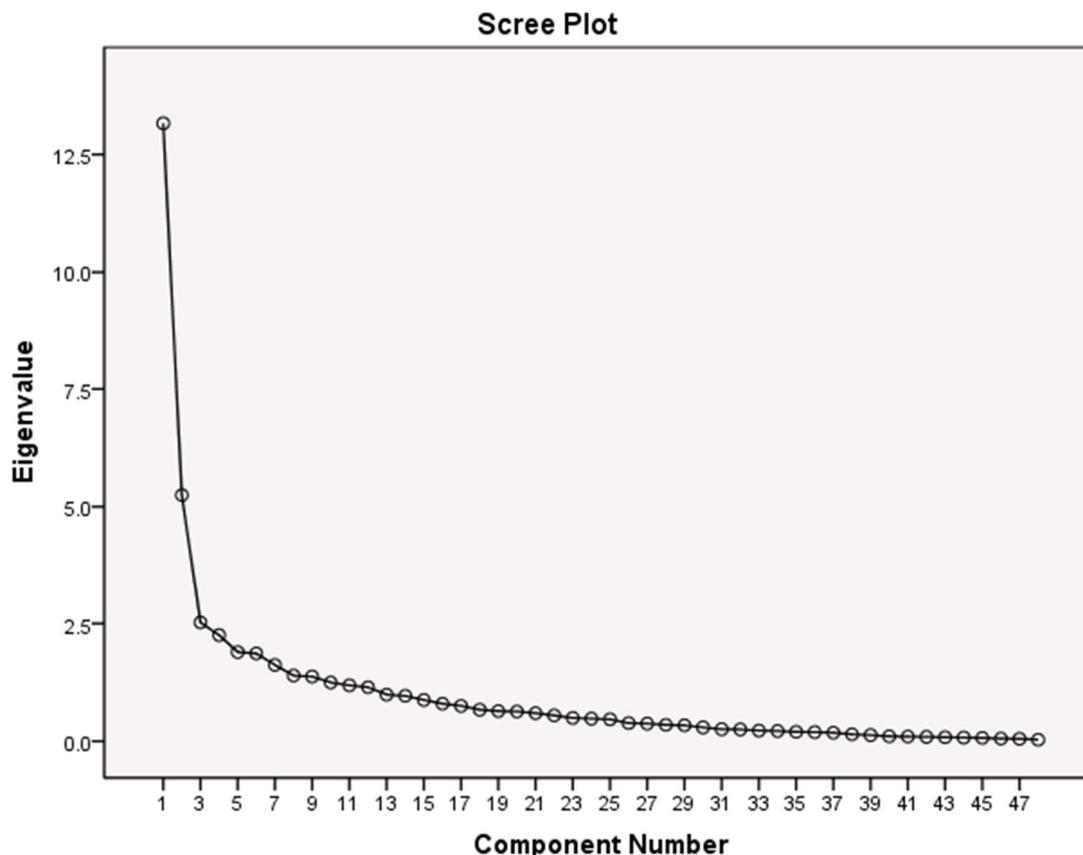


Figure 1.scree plan of the 48 factors in the questionnaire which was used to identify factors which affect JA in western Mazandaran Province teachers

Considering the above discussion, 6 factors were extracted in general in the first factor analysis solution which was conducted by PC method and considering scree. Eigen values of the 6 extracted factors, variance coverage percentage of each factor and also compressional variance percentages have been presented in table 4.

Table 2.final characteristics of the extracted factors

Compressional variance percentage	Variance percentage	Eigen value	factor
27.422	27.422	13.163	1
38.353	10.931	5.247	2
43.606	5.253	2.521	3
48.300	4.694	2.253	4
52.242	3.943	1.892	5
56.126	3.884	1.864	6

As it can be seen in table 2, the smallest Eigen value is equal to 1.864 which matches the acceptable criterion recommended by Caser. The 6 factors explain 56.126% of total variance of the variables altogether. In order to obtain a significant structure from factor loadings, the extracted factors were transferred to new axes based on common methods and using Varimax rotation so that it makes it possible to discover the overall shape of the variables and recognize their simple structures. The rotated matrix of the questionnaire (which identifies factors which are effective in JA in western Mazandaran Province teachers) has been presented in table 3.

Table 3.matrix of rotated factors of the 48-item questionnaire using Varimax rotation

	Factors					
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
q36	.865					
q39	.827					
q35	.817					
q33	.757					
q38	.740					
q37	.709					
q31	.699					
q34	.693					
q30	.626		.543			
q44	.504		.409			
q42	.442			.396		
q13		.737				
q12		.733				
q16		.692				
q15		.640				
q17		.623				
q14		.608				
q9		.605				
q11		.603				
q6		.583				
q26		.548	.480			
q4		.517				
q23		.463	.395		.374	
q5		.439				
q19		.386			.385	
q28			.655			
q21			.618			
q22			.612			
q29	.568		.593			
q18			.557			
q27			.543			.406
q43			.400			
q2			.397			
q32			-.385			
q46				.868		
q47				.767		
q41				.700		
q45				.623		
q48				.592		
q40	.509			.515		
q24					.707	
q1					.688	
q8					.613	
q7					.533	
q25					.468	
q20						.576
q10						.574
q3						.441

The followings are concluded from the above table:

1. all questions have factor loadings and no question was eliminated from the questionnaire.
2. the questions numbered 30, 19, 26, 42 and 44 emphasize on two factors and have relative complexity.
3. question number 23 deals with three factors and has absolute complexity.
4. other questions are very lean and lack complexity.
5. the greatest coefficient in structure matrix (correlation of each question with factor) is equal to 0.868 which belongs to question number 46 (I am not satisfied with the fact that there is a lot of anxiety in my working environment) and the lowest coefficient is equal to 0.385 which belongs to question number 32 (the social status of my job is not satisfactory).

According to the matrix of factors structure, questions which are correlated with one factor in common form a sub-questionnaire. The factors were selected as follows:

First factor: questions 36, 39, 35, 33, 38, 37, 31, 34, 30, 44, 42 (organizational justice)

Second factor: questions 13, 12, 16, 15, 17, 14, 9, 11, 6, 26, 4, 23, 5, 19 (individual factors)

Third factor: questions 28, 21, 22, 29, 18, 27, 27, 43, 2, 32 (organizational policies)

Fourth factor: questions 46, 47, 41, 45, 48, 40 (work hygiene)

Fifth factor: questions 24, 1, 8, 7, 25 (social status)

Sixth factor: questions 20, 10, 30 (job burnout)

Table 4. final reliability of the identified dimensions

factor	reliability
1. Organizational justice	0.926
2. Individual factors	0.893
3. Organizational policies	0.799
4. Work hygiene	0.849
5. Social status	0.701
6. Job burnout	0.390

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The followings can be concluded considering the research results:

1. Factors which affect JA in Western Mazandaran province teachers include: organizational justice, individual factors, organizational policies, work hygiene, social status and job burnout.

This result conforms to the results of studies conducted by HeshmatKhah (1999), MohseniTabrizi (2002), Sadeghi and Fathi (2002), Nabi Lu (2009), AbdollahZadeh (2009), HoseinZadeh et al (2009), Banayee, Rasell and Probest (2004), Kanouy and Hegden (2005), Kamiranou (2005), Koustas and Fleming (2009), Naiir and Vouhera (2010).

2. each of the 6 factors are made of several dimensions as follows:

First factor: organizational justice which is comprised of the following dimensions:

1. fair rewarding corresponding education level, 2. Managerial abilities of managers, 3. Fair rewarding system corresponding skills, 4. Possibility of progress in job, 5. Technical abilities of managers, 6. Necessary opportunities for education, 7. Organizational justice, 8. Receiving perks besides salary, 9. Leadership style, 10. Necessary instrument and equipment for doing some work, 11. Possibility of using maximum competencies and efficiency

Second factor: individual factors which is comprised of the following indices:

1. additional time due to restriction and repetitiveness of the job, 2. Correspondence of necessary working time with planned working time, 3. Presence of appropriate facilities, environmental conditions, hygienic equipment and ..., 4. Repetition of tasks due to serious division of work, 5. Ill-timed presence at work, 6. Fixed supervision on many behaviors, 7. Ability to use methods based on one's ideas, 8. Elongation of meal, rest and ... time, 9. Avoiding from explicit comments, 10. Receiving promotion, exerting social and economic intention, 12. Minimum satisfaction with salary, 13. Response to different events, 14. Tendency to establish family relationship and association with colleagues.

Third factor: organizational policies which is comprised of the following indices:

1. Participation in organizational decision-making, 2. Economic income from job, 3. perception of salary equality, 4. Satisfactory organizational atmosphere, 5. Spending time, 6. Innovation in job, 7. Bureaucracy in organization, 8. Absence of trust in colleagues behavior and speech, 9. Correspondence of job with individual's abilities.

Fourth factor: work hygiene which is comprised of the following indices:

1. high anxiety at work, 2. Job security in organization, 3. Flexibility at work, 4. Observation of working standard, 5. Physical problems (headache, malnutrition) at work, 6. Presence of appropriate rules in organization

Fifth factor: social status which is comprised of the following indices:

1. social value, sense of futility, 3. Belonging to common job values, 4. Satisfaction with one's work results, 5. Positive feeling towards one's job

Sixth factor: job burnout which is comprised of the following indices:

1. double character, 2. Spending time, 3. Boredom

3. the most appropriate model for JA in western Mazandaran Province teachers is as follows:

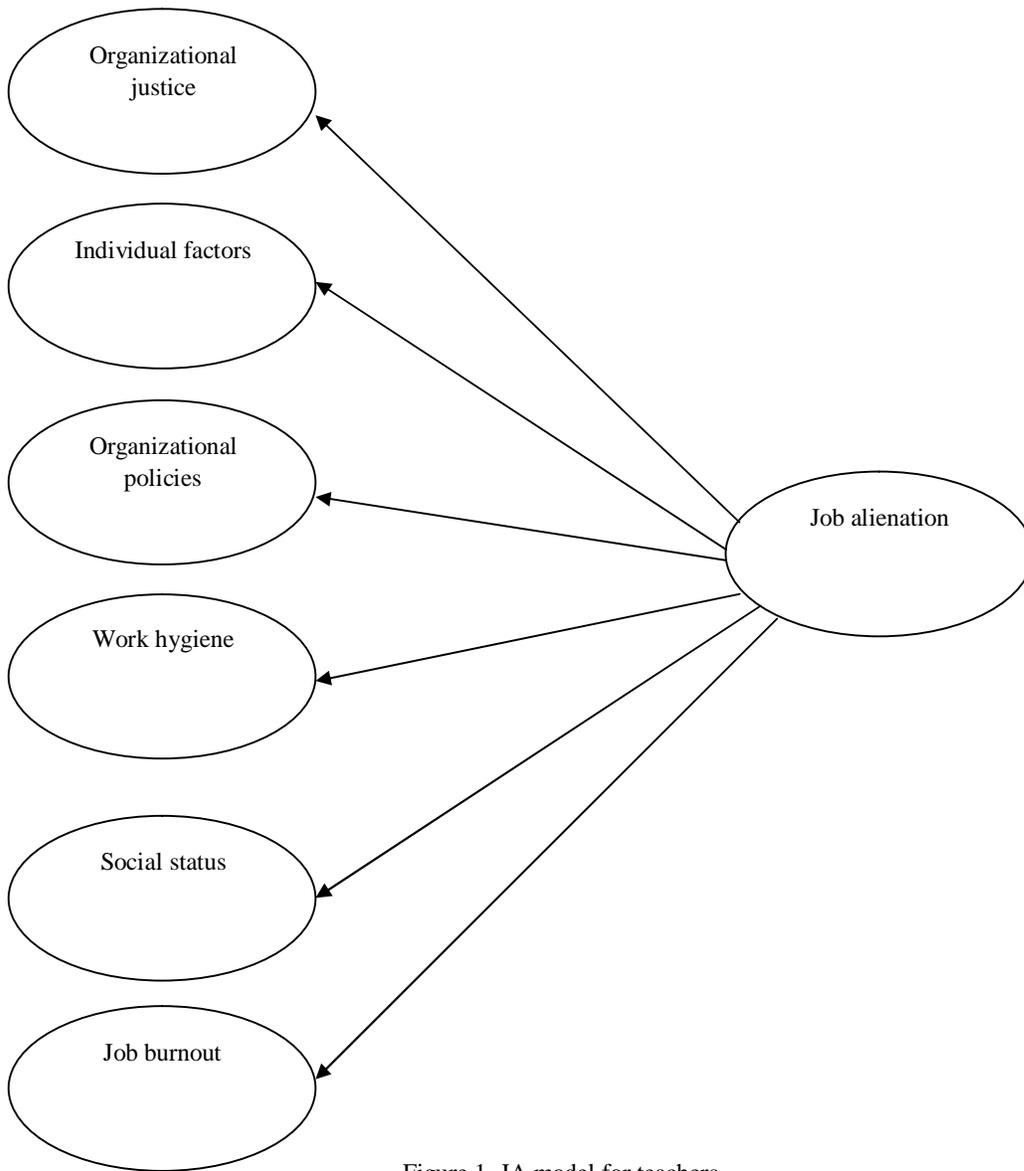


Figure 1. JA model for teachers

Considering the results of the present research and the factors which were recognized as effective in job alienation, it is hoped that because teachers are main pillars of educational system and efficient teachers are considered as the most important capitals, the following items should be considered in order to reform educational system: the role of human force, organizational justice, fair reward, possibility of progress at work, necessary opportunities for education, advantages except for salary, necessary instrument an equipment for doing work, presence of appropriate facilities, hygiene and environmental conditions and ..., participation in organizational decisions, appropriate organizational justice, observation of rights, job security, presence of related and appropriate rules in organization and social value.

It is recommended that this research be conducted on wider statistical populations with other questionnaires and in other cities.

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