

## **BURNOUT AND THE JOB SATISFACTION OF EXTENSION STUDIES PERSONNEL IN KENYA'S CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This paper is an excerpt of my dissertation whose purpose was to explore the relationships among spirituality, work conditions, and job satisfaction of extension studies personnel in Kenya's Christian higher education. The study employed a mixed method approach to answer questions on the perceptions of administrators and faculty of extension studies of the impact of spirituality and work conditions on their job satisfaction. This paper therefore sought to establish the extent to which those perceptions are impacted by the personnel's sense of burnout? Further the author relates the burnout effect of administrators and faculty workers to job satisfaction based on a number of burnout sub scales, among them; Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment. Data was collected, using a survey instrument, from 146 administrators and faculty of extension studies from 6 selected Christian universities in Kenya. Statistical tests carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), included ANOVA/Kruskall Wallis, Tukey HSD/Mann-Whitney U, t test, univariate, and regression analysis. The findings from descriptive statistics indicated that extension studies personnel had somewhat high levels of emotional burnout and depersonalization. However, they had scored high on personal accomplishment at their work. Administration faculty had higher mean ranks of burnout ( $U = 672.00$ ,  $z = -2.48$ ,  $p < .017$ ,  $r = -.26$ ) compared to their counterparts who had no administrative duties. However, the effect size was small. The results also indicated that global job satisfaction was more significantly and negatively correlated to emotional exhaustion ( $r^2 = .13$ ) than to depersonalization ( $r^2 = .04$ ), but was positively correlated to personal accomplishment ( $r^2 = .08$ ). Similarly, work satisfaction was more significantly and negatively related to emotional exhaustion ( $r^2 = .10$ ) than to depersonalization ( $r^2 = .08$ ), but was positively correlated to personal accomplishment ( $r^2 = .03$ ). Satisfaction with salary, coworkers, and supervisors were all significantly and negatively related to emotional exhaustion ( $r^2 = .07$ ,  $r^2 = .09$ , and  $r^2 = .04$  respectively). These findings are important for both personnel and stakeholders of higher education institutions' in burnout prevention and enhancement of job satisfaction.*

**KEYWORDS:** Job Satisfaction, Extension Studies Personnel, Burn Out, Christian Higher Education Institutions.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Job satisfaction of Administrators and faculty workers has sometimes been negatively affected by work conditions as evidenced by higher turnover rates, absenteeism at work, intentions of workers to leave their institutions, and a growing dissatisfaction with work (Johnsrud & Rosser, 1997; Johnsrud, Heck, & Rosser, 2000). Conversely, some studies have demonstrated that administrators' job satisfaction has not been negatively affected even when they experience dissatisfaction with some work aspects. Researchers have attributed these

conflicting findings to diverse factors such as employee dispositions, temperament, religiosity, and spirituality (Saari & Judge, 2004; Brown & Sargeant, 2007; Schloder, 2008). Based on this understanding, this study sought to examine the relation of burn out and job satisfaction of administrators and faculty of extension education, among selected Christian institutions of higher learning in Kenya.

Work, in general, has tended to become competitive and demanding. The result of this trend has been high workloads among staff, relational problems and personal coping issues. Burnout has been identified as a major contributor to job dissatisfaction and also negatively related to spirituality (Doolittle, 2007; Bergaas, 2002).

### **Work and Burnout**

Doolittle (2007) conducted a correlational study to investigate the association between burnout, coping strategies, and spiritual attitudes. A voluntary sample of 358 parish-based clergy of the New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church 2002 agreed to be participants in the study. The survey collected demographic data and included three validated instruments: the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) the COPE axes to evaluate coping strategies, and the Hatch Spiritual Involvement and Beliefs Scale (SIBS) (p. 33). Data were analyzed using the JMP 4 statistical software package. The Spearman rank correlation coefficients with each Maslach domain and spirituality indicated spirituality as being strongly correlated with each of the burnout domains. Contrariwise, several maladaptive strategies such as self-blame, disengagement, venting, distraction, and denial were associated with greater emotional exhaustion and depersonalization.

While challenges facing administrators of extension studies may be expected to decrease job satisfaction or to even cause burnout, spiritual attitudes may impact job satisfaction positively. Bergaas (2002) conducted a study to examine the relationship of spirituality to burnout and coping in the lives of Norwegian missionaries. The sample was drawn from Norwegian missionaries serving in 30 different countries of Asia, Africa and Europe. The sample consisted of 240 missionaries serving with five Norwegian mission organizations in 30 different countries. The researcher used the Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI) and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to assess burn out. The researcher used partial correlations (while controlling for stress) to analyze the relationship between spirituality and burnout.

The results showed that the Awareness and Realistic Acceptance scales of the SAI were both significant and negatively correlated with the Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization scales of the MBI (-.25, -.18, -.22, and -.20, respectively at  $p < .01$ ). Hence, “missionaries who scored higher on spiritual maturity and spiritual support reported significantly lower levels of burnout (p. 39). Pearson product moment correlations were used to analyze the relationship between spirituality and coping. Missionaries whose scores indicated spiritual maturity reported utilizing more of the positive coping strategies (.12,  $p < .05$ ). The institutional Support Scale was significant and negatively correlated with the Emotional Exhaustion Scale (-.19,  $p < .01$ ). The interpersonal Spiritual Support Scale was significantly negatively correlated with the Emotional Exhaustion Scale (-.26,  $p < .01$ ). Hence, missionaries who reported having more interpersonal spiritual support reported lower levels of burnout (p. 45).

Multiple regression analyses were used in post hoc analyses to examine whether the relationships of stress, spiritual maturity, interpersonal spiritual support and institutional ministry support were predictors of burnout with regard to emotional exhaustion. The results indicated that stress ( $\beta = .32$ ), spiritual maturity ( $\beta = -.23$ ), and spiritual support ( $\beta = -.21$ ) were predictors at  $p < .00$ , and burnout as the dependent variable. The researcher observed that though stress was the strongest predictor of burnout, both spiritual maturity and spiritual support, were also significant predictors. The researcher concluded that provision of care among missionaries must include facilitating spiritual growth and providing spiritual support.

Bacchus and Holley (2004) conducted a qualitative study to explore the experiences of professional black women (PBW) on spirituality, specifically on how they used it as a coping resource. The researchers conducted face-to-face interviews among 10 women randomly selected from a list of 203 women who had participated in a large quantitative study.

Data were entered into NUD\*IST (QSR, 1998) for analysis. Data revealed that all the women understood spirituality to include a clear connection or relationship with God. All of the women indicated that their coping behaviors were shaped by their “identity or relationship with God/higher power *and* the teachings from the Bible” (p. 72). The women indicated that spirituality acted as a coping resource for work-related stress in five ways namely, “(1) protective factor, (2) source of personal strength, (3) resource for general guidance, (4) resource for guidance in decision-making, and (5) resource for reappraising stressors” (p. 76). With regard to spiritual disciplines such as prayer, meditation, and reading the Bible and other inspirational texts, the women indicated that these provided personal strength. All 10 women indicated that their spirituality provided guidance for managing work related stress. Eight of the women stated that spirituality served as a resource in decision-making. Finally, eight women indicated that spirituality helped them to appraise stressors through reflection. They perceived spiritual disciplines as “outcome-oriented, rather than solely emotion-oriented” (p. 78).

Miner, Dowson and Sterland (2010) carried out a survey to investigate the relationship between ministry burnout and ministry satisfaction among clergy in Australia. The researchers used archival data that had been taken among 3,220 leaders surveyed in the Australian National Church Life survey in 2001, with 2,132 (66%) returned surveys (mailed). The researchers used the Scale for Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM) to measure emotional exhaustion and the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS) to measure ministry satisfaction. Data were analyzed using LISREL version 8.54, using the maximum likelihood procedure to estimate parameters. The results indicated a good fit of the first-order factor model (M1, RMSEA = .048), hence supporting the existence of spiritual relatedness, autonomy, competence, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment, and ministry satisfaction. Additionally, a good fit for the data (RMSEA = .053) was established for the impact of three dimensions of orientation to ministry and the three dimensions of burnout on satisfaction in ministry. In the CFA model, there was a positive correlation between satisfaction with ministry and spiritual relatedness (.36), autonomy (.60), competence (.38) and personal accomplishment (.69) and a negative correlation with emotional exhaustion (- .55) and depersonalization (- .58). Similarly, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were positively correlated with each other (.68). All correlations were statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ).

The results of the MIMIC model indicated that the type of position clergy held in ministry was positively related to emotional exhaustion (.15) and personal accomplishment (.31), and

negatively related to satisfaction with ministry (- .05). Age affected spiritual relatedness (.18), autonomy (.23), competence (- .06) and the burnout dimensions of emotional exhaustion (- .10) and personal accomplishment (- .25). Gender was positively related to autonomy (.07). Surprisingly, the SEM model that explored relationships between internal ministry orientation to other variables showed that spiritual relatedness was significantly and negatively associated with ministry satisfaction (- .14), but competence was directly and positively associated with ministry satisfaction (.13). Emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were significantly and negatively associated with ministry satisfaction (- .57 and - .61). Personal accomplishment was significantly and positively associated with ministry satisfaction (.68).

On the negative relationship between spiritual relatedness and ministry satisfaction, the researcher speculated that, “spiritual relatedness in this sample was experienced as a job-related demand or requirement rather than (or in addition to) an intrinsically driven activity” (p. 183).

## METHODOLOGY

The study employed a survey design where data was collected using a survey instrument. A study sample of 146 administrators and faculty of extension studies from 6 selected Christian universities in Kenya was used. Statistical tests carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), included ANOVA/Kruskall Wallis, Tukey HSD/Mann-Whitney U, *t* test, univariate, and regression analysis. The findings from descriptive statistics indicated that extension studies personnel had somewhat high levels of emotional burnout and depersonalization.

### Findings

The respondents involved 146 out of 161 conveniently sampled employees from 6 different Christian universities in Nairobi, Kenya. The response rate represented a 91% return of usable surveys. Quantitative data were analyzed using the SPSS, version 19.0 package. To bring out the relationship between burnout and job satisfaction a hypothesis was generated as below:

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between burnout scores, as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory and job satisfaction scores, as measured by the JDI.

The hypothesis was tested using the Spearman’s Rho coefficients, because the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests of normality showed data were skewed. The findings are displayed in Table 1.

**Table 1: Correlations of Job Satisfaction and Burnout Scores**

	Global	Work Itself	Salary	Promotion	Coworker	Supervisor
Emotional Exhaustion	-.354**	-.310**	-.260**	-.231*	-.298**	-.219*
Depersonalization	-.202*	-.289**	-.110	-.026	-.132	-.149
Personal Accomplishment	.285**	.187*	.099	.054	.153	.170

\**p* < .05; \*\**p* < .01, *n* = 118

The results indicated that global job satisfaction was significantly correlated to all 3 subscales of the burnout inventory. Specifically, it was more significantly and negatively correlated to emotional exhaustion ( $r^2 = .13$ ) than to depersonalization ( $r^2 = .04$ ), but was positively correlated to personal accomplishment ( $r^2 = .08$ ). Similarly, satisfaction with work itself was correlated to all burnout subscales. It was more significantly and negatively related to emotional exhaustion ( $r^2 = .10$ ) than to depersonalization ( $r^2 = .08$ ), but was positively correlated to personal accomplishment ( $r^2 = .03$ ). Satisfaction with salary, coworkers, and supervisors were all significantly and negatively related to emotional exhaustion ( $r^2 = .07$ ,  $r^2 = .09$ , and  $r^2 = .04$  respectively). However, all effect sizes were weak or negligible. Overall, there were relationships between some job satisfaction scores and burnout scores. Therefore, the hypothesis was partially rejected.

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests indicated data were skewed for all groups of personnel and all subscales of burnout. Kruskal Wallis test of more than two independent groups was used to test the hypothesis. Table 2 shows the results. The findings showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of only one burnout inventory subscale: emotional exhaustion ( $H(2) = 7.30$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This implies there were differences between faculty and administrators in their emotional exhaustion.

**Table 2: Mean Ranks and Kruskal Wallis Test for the Differences between Administrators and Faculty on Burnout**

	Adm		Fac		Adm/Fac		df	H	p	Post hoc
	N	M	n	M	n	M				
Emotional Exhaustion	41	69.18	53	54.78	35	75.57	2	7.303	.026*	Adm>Fac
Depersonalization	41	71.50	53	60.29	35	64.51	2	2.101	.350	—
Personal Accomplishment	41	62.00	53	67.56	35	64.64	2	.525	.769	—

Adm = Administrator; Fac = Faculty; Adm/Fac = Administrating Faculty

\* $p < .05$

After a Bonferroni adjustment to the  $p$  value, the Mann Whitney U test between two independent groups was conducted to assess for differences between groups. The significant difference in emotional exhaustion mean scores was due to a significant difference in the mean scores of faculty when compared with those of administrating faculty ( $U = 672.00$ ,  $z = -2.48$ ,  $p < .017$ ,  $r = -.26$ ), as shown in Table 3. Administrating faculty had higher mean ranks of burnout compared to their counterparts who had no administrative duties. However, the effect size was small.

**Table 3: Mean Ranks and Mann Whitney U Test for the Differences between Administrators and Faculty on Burnout**

	Fac		Adm/Fac		Z	U	p	r
	n	M	N	M				
Emotional Exhaustion	54	39.94	36	53.83	-2.475	672.00	.013*	-.26

Note. Fac = Faculty; Adm/Fac = Administrating Faculty

\* $p < .017$

The overall findings showed that employees who are involved in administration had higher levels of burnout than their counterparts without administrative responsibilities. Hence, the hypothesis was partially rejected.

### Implications for Personnel

Faculty members should establish ways to collaborate with administrators to enhance their work relationships. This could be done by involving administrators in some faculty programs and vice versa. First, there needs to be intentionality on the part of both parties about working together and discussing matters that are potential threats to collegiality. For example, the value of both teaching and administration needs to be equally upheld and perceived in light of biblical teaching that shows God distributes a variety of gifts and that all are needed for proper functioning (1 Cor 12:1-11; Rom 12:6-8). There needs to be a departure from the apparent perception that teaching in higher education is more important than administration.

Administrating personnel need to develop ways to address stress and burnout related to their work. One way could be to seek their intuitions' support to obtain therapy from professional counseling psychologists with the aim of acquiring stress management skills. Additionally, networking with administrators and faculty from their own institution and from other institutions could be beneficial for learning from others how to handle new situations, sharing insights and experiences, and synergizing to tackle common problems. Professional workshops, seminars, and conferences would be appropriate places to connect and to participate in discussions related to stress management.

### Limitations of the Study

Although the instruments used in this study had high or acceptable reliability, with Chronbach's alpha  $\alpha = .70$  and above, some subscales of the JDS, SAI, and MBI had low reliability, of  $\alpha = 4.14-6.38$ . This implies that the interpretation of the findings in those areas should be handled cautiously. The demographic data in this study may be not representative of other Christian universities in Nairobi. Most (79%) of the respondents in this study had graduate-level degrees. Therefore, the findings of this data may not be generalizable to institutions with personnel with less education at the graduate level, such as is usually the case for institutions offering certificates or diplomas (equivalent to two-year colleges in the US). Additionally, demographic variations such as age, gender, years of service to an institution, and years one has been a Christian may need consideration before results are generalized to other institutions.

## Further Research

In light of the findings of this study, further research is recommended in the following areas:

1. The study could be replicated using a larger sample of randomly-selected participants in the region, and in the country.
2. Comparative replication studies could also help to show differences between public and private, secular and Christian universities.

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