

Effects of Burnout Levels on Entrepreneurial Intentions

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Extensive Summary

Introduction

Fast changes taking place in today's world, globalisation, and developments in information and communication technologies has made the concept of entrepreneurship an important part of our lives. This concept presents the foundation of structuring in underdeveloped countries; of development in developing countries, and of dynamism in developed countries (Wickham, 2001). Entrepreneurship concept that has been used until today has several outcomes in terms of economical, social, and psychological. It became a concept that gained importance since it was first introduced and its significance increased especially in an uncertain environment due to globalisation and technology.

There are multiple definitions of entrepreneurship in literature. Ozer & Topaloglu (2007, p.440) define entrepreneurship as a process that brings resources together to create or observe an opportunity, while Morris et al. (2009, p.431) define entrepreneurship as the process of taking opportunities by either defining opportunities or creating opportunities.

Schumpeter has associated entrepreneurship with creating innovation and technological developments and defined it as the process of creating new resources to create new products, process, supply resources and creating a market (Basar et al., 2001, p.4). In a study conducted by Naktiyok (2004), entrepreneurship is defined as the process of creating values that contribute to society and market by creating change, transformation, innovative approaches, planning activities, and organizing individuals and groups.

Stress that is considered as a part of daily lives of individuals has an important role in psychological and physical terms. Many individuals are worn out psychologically due to repeated stress occurring daily and affected by exhaustion (Greenberg & Baron, 2000, p.234). Concept of burn-out was first used in a novel called "A Burnt-Out Case" and the book tells about exhaustion of an architect and of his isolating himself, and, finally, quitting his job. From an academic perspective, this

concept is first used by Freudenberger (1974) and it expressed the fall, being worn out, and exhaustion of individuals due to overusing their strength, energy and resources (Kurtoglu, 2011, p.7).

Maslach & Jackson (1981, p.99) stated that burn-out is generally seen in individuals that are in extensive relationships with people as a part of their jobs, and defined burn out as these individuals depersonalizing others, decrease of personal success perceptions, and feeling burn-out in emotional terms.

The most commonly used burn-out model is the one developed by Christina Maslach et al. Exhaustion (Being burn-out) is considered in three dimensions in this model. These dimensions are emotional burn-out, depersonalization, and perception of a decrease in personal success.

Emotional burn-out: This first dimension of burn-out is seen often in jobs that require extensive inter-personal relationships. This dimension which determined the stress dimension of burn-out expresses the decrease in individuals' personal and physical resources (Maslach et al., 2001, p.402; Wright & Douglas, 1997, p.492). This dimension is also defined as the lack of emotional resources when an individual is facing difficult situations whether regarding work or customers (Greenberg & Baron, 2000, p.67). Another definition is stated as the lack of energy emerging from the excessive amount of psychological and emotional demands expected from individuals when helping others. This lack of energy results in feeling that emotional resources are worn out in individuals (Ozyurt e al., 2004, p.22).

Depersonalization: This second dimension of the burn-out concept is an individual's cold behavior towards his colleagues, not taking them seriously and an unwillingness to establish a close relationship. An individual exhibiting this kind of behavior creates a wall between himself and others and becomes indifferent (Polatci et al., 2014, p.40). Again, these individuals decrease the level of their relationships required for their jobs to the bare minimum (Aydemir, 2013, p.15).

Feeling of Decrease in Personal Success: This is the third dimension of burn out which is the tendency of an individual to evaluate himself negatively (Maslach & Leiter, 1997, p.18). This feeling involves some negative indications. Some examples would be low morale, decrease in productivity, not being able to handle problems, conflicts in interpersonal communication, decrease in self-respect, etc. (Baysal, 1995, p.23).

According to a study conducted by Schutte et al. (2000), the feeling of a decrease in personal success expresses that individuals tend to evaluate themselves negatively in relation to the increase in the feeling of incompetency.

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of an individual's perception of burn-out which might create an obstacle for the individual's entrepreneurial intentions. For this purpose, we examined whether sub-dimensions of burn-out that are depersonalization, emotional burn-out, and decrease in the perception of personal success affect entrepreneurial intentions or not. We aim to identify obstacles to entrepreneurial intentions of people who want to be entrepreneurs in the future.

Based on the views mentioned above, three hypotheses were developed:

H₁: Depersonalization affects entrepreneurial intentions negatively.

H₂: Feeling of personal success affects entrepreneurial intentions positively.

H₃: Emotional burn-out affects entrepreneurial intentions negatively.

The research model summarized in the relationships suggested in hypotheses are presented in figure 2.

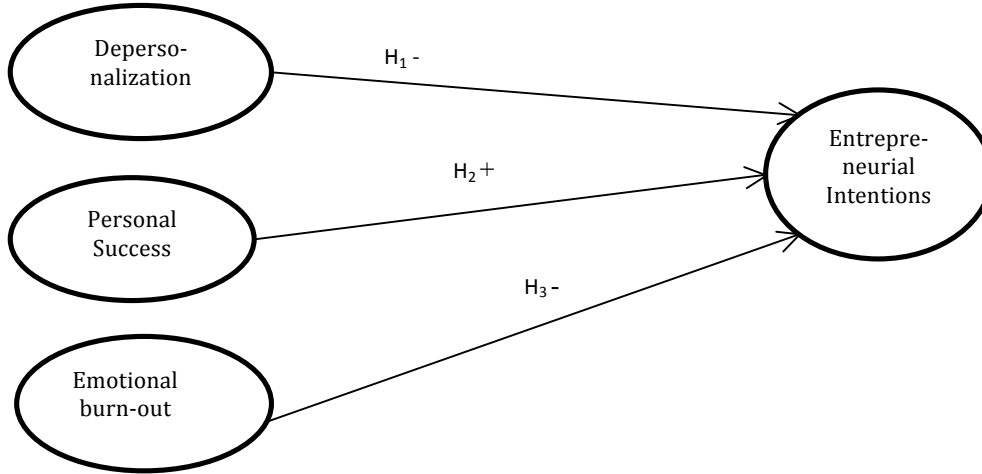


Figure 2: Research Model

Sample

2547 students from Erzurum Technical University were chosen as the population for the study with the thinking that the students' burn-out levels would be higher considering the challenges they face due to the fact that the university was founded recently and its construction is not completed yet. The sample size was identified as 334 using the sample size calculation table with 95% confidence level and 5% error margin (Bartlett et al., 2001, p .48). Random sampling was used and surveys were distributed to 390 students with the consideration of possible response errors. 370 surveys were collected within 30 business days and some of these surveys were excluded due to missing information and having outliers in order to achieve more accurate analyses. Therefore, data obtained from 359 surveys were analysed.

Findings

The burn-out scale has three sub-dimensions that are; depersonalization, feeling of personal failure, and emotional burn-out. Additionally, the dimension which is considered as the feeling personal failure on Maslach's survey was reverse coded and analysed as feeling of personal success. Reliability analysis was conducted on the scales used in the survey, and the cronbach alpha was found to vary between 0.79 and 0.94. Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted for construct validity of the surveys used and the results are presented in table 1 and table 2. All scales were determined to be valid at a high level. Although it showed high validity according to confirmatory factor analysis, the hypothesis related to the depersonalization sub-dimension could not be tested due to the modifications done in structural equation model analysis.

The correlation table shows that the feeling of personal success has a weak and positive relationship with entrepreneurial intentions. There was no meaningful

relationship between emotional burn-out and depersonalization sub-dimensions and entrepreneurial intentions. However, there was a weak and negative relationship between emotional burn-out and depersonalization, and feeling of personal success. Also, there was a strong, positive, and meaningful relationship between depersonalization and emotional burn-out.

According to the structural equation model, the suggested fit values of the research model showed acceptable fit. When path coefficients are examined, it's found that variables related to emotional burn-out do not directly affect entrepreneurial intentions. It was found that feeling of personal success increases entrepreneurial intentions ($\beta=0,56$, $p<0,10$). The subdimension of depersonalization could not be tested.

Conclusion

The results of this study show that the feeling of personal success affects entrepreneurial intentions directly, positively and at a significant level. Emotional burn-out does not affect entrepreneurial intentions directly and significantly. Considering that the university students are young, this result is consistent. According to the analysis, grand mean of emotional burn-out statements are close to the undecided response. Entrepreneurial intentions of young students who do not feel burnt-out are not affected by this. Also, as the sub-dimension depersonalization made the model unmeaningful, it could not be tested. This might be due to students perceiving depersonalization and emotional burn-out questions the same and therefore not responding. When depersonalization statements are examined, it is seen that the mean is close to the 'undecided' response.

The most significant result of the research is that according to the positive effect of personal success feeling on entrepreneurial intentions, entrepreneurial intentions significantly increase in students who are comfortable with others in the same environment, who feel relieved after doing a study with other students, and who feel that they can do many things after graduation.

The results of this study provides a direction to increase entrepreneurial levels for educators and managers. Educators should provide education that would minimize students' level of burn-out, increase students' motivational resources, and implement practices that would strengthen students' feelings of personal success. The importance of internal entrepreneurship in today's organizations has become a focus of many research studies. Based on this, managers should create motivational resources to decrease burn-out cases in organizations. Especially in organizations, an environment that is appropriate for team work and training should be provided to increase members' feeling of personal success. In this context, employee empowerment practices can guide organizations.