

# **A study of the relationship between work-family conflict, job burnout and plateauing of official employees of Iran Oil Pipeline and Telecommunication Company (Centre of South East Regional)**

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## **Abstract**

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between work-family conflict, job burnout and plateauing of official employees of Iran Oil Pipeline and Telecommunication Company (Centre of South East Regional) in summer of 2015. The method of study was descriptive- correlational. The population includes 120 official employees of Iran oil pipeline and Communication Company. The sample equals to 92 employees which have been selected randomly. To collect data, work- family conflict questionnaire with validity of 0/88 , reliability of 0/93, plateauing questionnaire with validity of 0/89 , reliability of 0/85, and also, burnout questionnaire with validity of 0/82 , reliability of 0/85 were used. The data analysis has been done by SPSS20. In addition, descriptive and inferential statistics of Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficient have been used. The results showed that there is a relation between work-family conflict and job burnout and plateauing of official employees of Iran Oil Pipeline and Telecommunication Company. There is, also, a relation between plateauing and job burnout of the employees.

**Key Words:** work-family conflict, plateauing, job burnout.

## **Introduction**

In today's world, capability, economic strength and prosperity of any country depends on the optimal use of facilities and human resources of the country. In this regard, the more capable, more motivated and healthier the human resources employed in different sectors are, the higher the progress of the country in various fields of economic and social success would be. Undoubtedly, achieving these great goals requires a long-term and strategic approach to protection and improvement of human resources in each organization. An important and influential principle to preserve and improve human resources in each organization is management and control of mental pressures as well as prevention of plateauing and job burnout in workplace. (Saeedi, 2011:87).

One of the factors that managers face with in their relations is plateauing during progress. When, for the very first time, an employer starts a career, he

has a great motivation to learn issues related to the job, and tries to gain required skills to do the job tasks. Also, he tries to dominate on all its aspects. In Judith Barwak's opinion, plateauing in progress means an area that when a person reaches a point that there is a little probability to be able to be promoted to higher than it. This status may happen along with progress of employers either because of personal reasons such as lack of essential skill to promote to higher ranks or because of organizational factors like lack of vacant rank to promote to. (Ghalich chi, 1999:50). When people are in the plateauing status during job progress, it is noticeable for the organization because it decreases job satisfaction and spirit of staffs as well as effectiveness and efficiency of the organization. (Taleghani, 2012,10).

On the other hand, burnout is one of the issues that some of experts, especially in state organizations, suffer from. People who have high expectations, but gradually, conclude that their needs and motivations are not considered in the organization, they do not progress there, they are not consulted with, their job is tiring and bears no future will experience burnout. (Zarei Matin, 2009:138). Burnout is a phenomenon as a result of long- term mental pressures on the person. People who experience this effect often change their job, or step up from their work mentally. This issue makes numerous problems for the organization. Therefore, efficiency of organization will be reduced. (Rezaian, 2010.12). Moslesh (1998) believes that job burnout is a type of the person's internal response to stress making factor at work. During this condition, high load of work, frequent and more than capacity of the job incumbent contacts with others make negative feeling and attitude toward self and others. Numerous factors effect on plateauing and job burnout. Conflict and discrepancies between working in the organization or department with individual tasks and problems in the family is one of the factors. (Jean Casper et al, 2011).

Work and family are two fundamental systems in each life. Each of them represent a unique aspect of human behavior, and every one must make a balance among whatever each of these aspects require. Adams (2004) mentions that work- family conflict happens when demands of each of these

two domains (for example family) is incompatible. So this conflict can effect on the working life quality. (Carlson, 1999, Korabik et al, 2003). When people are forced to do various roles such as career, spouse and child roles simultaneously, as each of these roles require time and energy to be done perfectly, so the conflict between family and work happens. (Abbi et al, 2005). As a result, people who drown in them will experience interference caused by work on family or family on work (Gatk, 1991). Greenhaus & Beutell (1985) define work- life conflict as a form of conflict in a role in which role pressures in various domains of life and work make a bilateral conflict between work and life. According to this definition, three types of conflict can be identified: 1- time- based conflict: is created when there is a conflict between spent time on a domain such as work due to fulfilling the needs of another domain such as life. 2- tension-/ pressure-based conflict: happens when performance of a role is reduced in comparison with the performance of the other role because of being stressful. 3- behavior- based conflict: behavioral problems which are created as results of changing among roles. (Simon et al, 2004).

Salahian et al (2010), in a study titled 'some factors affecting work-family conflict', concluded that variables of interpersonal justice, job violence, and workload can predict criteria variable significantly using step- by- step regression method.

Hyun-Jung (2009) examined the effect of family-work conflict on job satisfaction and job performance. The results showed that family- work conflict has a negative effect on job satisfaction and job performance. In addition, the results showed gender variety does not play any role in the effect of family- work conflict on job satisfaction.

Aycan's study (2008) , by the aim of examining "The relationship of Job demands (workload, irregular shifts, long working hours and overtime) with work-family conflict about 243 nurses", showed high working pressure and disordered shift work are factors for predicting the conflict of family with work and vice versa. In addition, low level of satisfaction of life and work is resulted from high pressures of workload and lack of time. Karatepe & Kilic (2007) showed that work- family conflict has an indirect negative effect on job satisfaction through job performance. Furthermore, work- family conflict has an indirect negative effect on emotional organizational commitment through job performance and satisfaction. Suri Zehi (2011), in a study titled "a study of the relationship between plateauing in career development and burnout of staff in the central office of health and care city of Khash", concluded that there is a significant relation between plateauing during career development and burnout of staff. There is, also, a significant relation between organizational plateau and job burnout of

staff. Taleghani (2012) examined the relation between behavioral styles following facing with plateauing phenomenon and performance of the staff in National Iranian Copper Industries Company. The results showed that in plateauing status, the staffs are reluctant to constructive behavioral style, and they wish more passive behaviors such as depression, defensive, and hypothyroidism. Khorshidi (2010) reviewed the relation between plateauing in career development path and burnout of staff in Organization of Economic Affairs and Finance and the General Department of Tax. The findings of this study showed that there is a relation between plateauing in career development, burnout and its components (Emotional and physical exhaustion, performance loss and depletion of personality traits). Kimiyai (1999) investigated the effect of burnout on personal performance of manpower in Afshore Company. The results showed that there is a weak relation between personal performance and burnout. Jean Casper et al (2011) in a study titled "Bilateral relations of work-family conflict with supporting managers; and sex with organizational commitment and effective and continuous job burnout" concluded that there is a relation between work-family conflict and continuous commitment and job burnout.

Considering the fact that organizations need active and development- seeking manpower to gain their goals and success, and that plateauing and job burnout are effected by many factors, these factors must be identified. One of the factors causing plateauing and job burnout is work- family conflict that has negative effects on family and career life of employees. Career and family life are two inseparable parts of most of people in each community. If a person faces with problems in his family and career life, the consequences involves not only the person, but the organization, and at a higher level, society will be involved. Therefore, conducting fundamental and practical studies in this respect is essential. As a result of such these studies, managers, authorities, experts and staffs in offices and organizations will be aware of effects of plateauing and job burnout and its affectability from family-work conflict.

Little research has been done in this area. Due to importance of prevention of job plateauing, job burnout in development of organizations, as well as the effect of work- family effect on job plateauing and job burnout, this study examines the relation between work- family effect on job plateauing and job burnout of official employees of Iran Oil Pipeline and Telecommunication Company.

#### Research method

The present study is a kind of descriptive research in which correlation method is used. The study population includes 120 employees of Iran Oil Pipeline and Telecommunication Company

(Centre of South East Regional). According to Morgan table, 92 employees were selected by simple random sampling. In this study, three questionnaires were used including: Work-family conflict questionnaire, according to Meyer and Mack notes Marian (1996) with 10 items with components of work - family conflict and family-work conflict, and with validity of 0/88 and reliability of 0/93; plateauing questionnaire according to Barodick with 15 items of content plateauing and biological plateauing with validity of 0/89 and reliability of 0.85; and Maslach burnout inventory (1998) including 16 questions with component of depletion of personality traits, emotional and physical exhaustion, reduced personal performance with validity of 0/82 and reliability of 0/85. The collected data were analyzed in SPSS software with Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficient.

#### Findings

The results of study showed that out of 92 under study employees, 50 (54/34%) had a high work-family conflict. 28 employees (30/43%) has a very high job plateauing. 38 employee (41/3%) had a high job burnout.

Table of : statistics of Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficient test between work and family conflict with plateauing and burnout of staff

Variable	Work and family conflict		
	Pearson correlation coefficient	Significance	Spearman correlation coefficient
Plateauing	0/278	0/001	0/263
Burnout	0/269	0/001	0/253

Data analysis represents that coefficient correlation of Pearson and Spearman tests between work and family conflict with plateauing and job burnout are 0/278, 0/263, 0/269, 0/253 respectively. Their -p values (significance) is 0/0001 which is less than the significance level of  $\alpha=0/05$ . As a result, there is a direct and significant relation between work and family conflict with plateauing and job burnout. (Table 1).

Table 2: Pearson-Spearman correlation test statistics between plateauing and burnout of staff

Variable	Plateauing				Relation	Type of relation
	Pearson correlation coefficient	Significance	Spearman correlation coefficient	Significance		
Burnout	0/355	0/001	0/326	0/001	yes	direct

Data analysis represents that coefficient correlation of Pearson and Spearman tests between plateauing and burnout of staff are 0/326 and 0/355 respectively. Their -p values (significance) is 0/0001 which is less than the significance level of  $\alpha=0/05$ . As a result, there is a direct and significant relation between plateauing and burnout of staff (Table 2).

#### Conclusion

Plateauing is a trap on the path of organizations' staffs. Staffs experience plateauing phenomenon during their life time. Most of people will be skilled in a job after three years, therefore, their jobs will be causal and steady and there is not to be learnt. In this condition, the person feels helpless and sees his job less valuable and more undesirable than before. He may experience job burnout. In job burnout, the person might make some attitudes and behaviors that are not efficient anymore, his physical and mental health will be insecure, as well. On the other hand, work and family are two fundamental systems in each person's life. Each of them form a unique aspect of human behavior and each person must make a balance between whatever each of these two aspects of life wish for. Work- family conflict happens when demands of one of these two domains (for example family) is incompatible so this conflict can effect on work quality. The results of the present study show that there is a significant relation between work and family conflict and job plateauing and burnout of staffs. Theses finding are consistent with the finding of Karatep (2011) that showed work-family and family- work conflicts have destructive effects of Hotel staffs; with Aycon study (2008) that showed high workload and disordered work schedule are predictive factors of work- family and family- work conflicts and they also have relation with low satisfaction of life and work which is because of lack of time and high workload; with the findings of Manzari Tavakoli (2007) that showed there is a positive relation between role traits and plateauing, there is a positive relation between ambiguity and load of role with plateauing, there is not any relation between inconsistency and low load of role with burnout of staffs; and with the results of Kimiai' study( 1999) that showed there is a weak relation between excessive depletion and

personal performance. In addition, there is not any relation between personal performance and burnout. According to findings of this study and similar studies, it can be mentioned that whenever people are not able to do both family and work duties and responsibilities and their family task are in conflict with their work tasks or vice versa, so that they feel pressure and problems in their family and job duties and cannot handle both very well, they will experience conflict between family- work roles. They reach to plateauing in their job development. Therefore, decision makers of organization may evaluate that they can contribute to the organization as much as they are expected, or they cannot manage greater responsibilities. People with high enthusiasm and high motivation for their job, are the first victims of exhaustion in very special situation. They are hurt especially when the organization ignores or restricts their innovation and just thinks about its own benefits. In this condition, the person probably involves him with the job more than normal. The most probable effects are a state of fatigue, frustration and helplessness caused by requirements out-of-tolerance of individual. The person reduces his motivation and enthusiasm intently like a person who is destroying. Finally, he wastes the results of work. At this stage, the person feels frightened to go to work gradually. He might spend a long time on work but he is less successful to complete the task and might show mental and physical inabilities. Plateauing is one the issues involving many experts especially official organizations. People who have high expectations but gradually conclude that their needs and motivations are not considered in their organizations; they make no progress in their jobs; they are not consulted with; their works are tiring and have no future, will experience plateauing.

According to the result of study, there is a significant relation between plateauing and job burnout of staffs. To explain this hypothesis, it can be mentioned that consistent load of work, non-stoppable competition, Excessive specialization and lack of human communication at workplace make the person feel that work has tire him out; he cannot decide anymore; his expectations are not fulfilled; his job is not importance and there is not any future for it. There are not physical activity at his job and has not control over the flow of work. Finally, the emergence of such a case in the person leads him to burnout. Burnout is a condition in which a person is under long-term exposure of stress. People experiencing this condition often change their jobs or step up from their works mentally. Therefore, many problems will be created for the organization and finally, efficiency of the organization will be reduced. According to findings of the current study and previous studies it can be mentioned that the staffs that experience

plateauing along their job development, their feeling will have negative results not only for them but also for the organization. The person may get this feeling and attitude that he is not efficient anymore and his mental and physical health will be endangered. Consequences of all these issues for the organizations are in the form of organizational responsibility and performance reduction.

Since the results of the present study showed that family- work conflict has a relation with job burnout and plateauing, the following comments are represented in order to reduce the family- work conflict of staffs and consequently to reduce job burnout and plateauing:

-Staffs try not to involve their work life and the organization's goals with family issues.

-Workshops on family and work tasks management methods for employees must be held in the organizations and staffs must be convinced to take part in these workshops. Skilled people should be used in these workshops to teach how to reduce family and work conflict.

-Every three to five years, using career planning (job enrichment, job development and especially job movement), senior managers must take actions to prevent repetitive and monotonous and also remove fatigue and frustration of staffs.

-Mangers must consider emotions and opinions of staffs more, and respect their ideas. In addition, they must situate staffs in the ranks that are compatible with their interest and type of skill.

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