The Relationship between Burnout and Counterproductive Work Behavior. The Role of Compassion Fatigue and Organizational Justice

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ABSTRACT

Counterproductive behavior is a phenomenon that affects both organizations and employees. This research aimed, in an exploratory manner, to observe the relationship between counterproductive behaviors, burnout, compassion fatigue, and organizational justice at the workplace. For this study, data were collected from 100 employees through a Google Forms questionnaire. From the statistical analysis, CF does not represent a mediator of the relationship between burnout and counterproductive behaviors, nor is organizational justice a moderator of the relationship between burnout and counterproductive behaviors. The statistical analysis was performed in the JAMOV 1.2.12 program. .

Keywords: *burnout, counterproductive work behavior, compassion fatigue, organizational justice, mediated moderation*

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of the criterion (CWB)

Counterproductive work behaviors (CWB) are intentional behaviors produced by employees to have a negative impact on the organization and its members (Spector & Fox, 2005). These types of behaviors were conceptualized according to certain criteria, such as the negative (Yao, Fan, Guo, & Lee, 2014) and violent behavior

of the employee (Lian et al., 2014) on the company or on his colleagues. Unfortunately, counterproductive work behaviors are dangerous for the workplace and directly affects its functioning as an environment and harms on employee effectiveness.

Several studies (e.g., Ogińska-Bulik, 2005) have reached a common conclusion related to counterproductive

behaviors. They are produced by people who are unable to control their emotions, establish relationships with colleagues, employees, customers and, subsequently, these things lead to burnout.

The relationship with the predictor (Burnout)

Burnout is a three-dimensional concept: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment (Lee, Yen, Fetzner, & Chien, 2015; Maslach, 2003). Emotional exhaustion is the core concept of burnout and it occurs when an individual is emotionally overworked. Depersonalization occurs when the person takes on certain behaviors that are not appropriate for him and he develops afterwards a careless attitude towards his duties due to pressure from the place for work. The last dimension, personal accomplishment refers to the feeling of low accomplishment in terms of workload, which indicates a change in perception. Putting it differently, burnout is a complex construct that reflects the emotional and physical reaction in the presence of repetitive stress, which changes the perception and detaches mentally from yourself (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2014).

The best model known is from Spector and Fox (2005), the Stressor-Emotion Model which is usually used in organizational environment to explain the elements that lead to counterproductive behavior. The model argues that the working environment and conditions can contribute to counterproductive behaviors. Starting from this idea, it can be seen that these behaviors are the response to the stress to which the employee is under (Spector & Fox, 2005).

In order to support the previous claim, the Job Demand-Resources (JD-R) Model (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001) is also used to explain how an employee gets burnout and can adhere to counterproductive behaviors. The JD-R model postulates that the job responsibilities can be grouped in two general categories, namely job demands and job resources (Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2005).

Burnout and Counterproductive Work Behavior

Burnout can occur among people who work in the medical field or in an area that involves providing constant support. The medical workforce, especially nurses, is most likely to develop burnout. According to Nantsupawat (Kunaviktikul, Nantsupawat, Wichaihum, Thienthong, & Poghosyan, 2017), the nurses usually suffers from burnout due to the physical and emotional demands of the place of work. It has been found that high levels of work can increase burnout exposure faster (Laschinger, Finegan, & Wilk, 2011), while burnout is positively associated with counterproductive work behaviors (Bans, Whelpley, Oh, & Shin, 2012; Bolton, Harvey, Grawitch, & Barber, 2012). In a similar study in which the relationship between emotional exhaustion and counterproductive work behaviors, Krischer, Penney, and Hunter (2010) found that employees who reported being emotionally exhausted were more likely to

display counterproductive work behavior. At the same time, Liang and Hsieh (2007) found that only depersonalization, of all dimensions of the burnout construct, predicts significantly counterproductive work behaviors, which was demonstrated on a sample of 303 flight attendants from Taiwan.

Uchenna (2013) conducted a study on perceived organizational support about work burnout and counterproductive work behaviors on a sample of 328 employees who had very demanding emotional jobs, in Nigeria. The results showed that employees who reported feeling burnout also had increased their likelihood of involvement in counterproductive work behaviors despite those who did not report burnout at work.

Mediator

Compassion fatigue (CF), known as secondary shock and secondary reaction to stress, describes a certain type of stress that results from helping or the desire to help those who are traumatized or who have a constrained emotional behavior. Although CF is sometimes called burnout, it is still a different concept. In contrast to burnout, CF is treatable and may be less predictable. The onset may be sudden, while burnout occurs over a much longer period of time. Moreover, in very serious cases of burnout can put the person in a position to change their job or field works, but in the case of CF, treatment or prevention measures can be taken to avoid being subjected to activity changes (Figley, 2002).

The concept of CF was originally used by Joinson (1992) who referred to nurses' experiences with burnout. Figley (2001) developed this concept from a description of the Compassion Stress / Fatigue model (Figley, 1995). In most cases, the act of compassion, described as "bearer of the suffering of others" (Figley, 2002, p.1434), implies the relationship between concern with traumatized victims and CF.

Craig and Sprang (2010) conducted a study that explores the impact of using evidence-based practices on CF, burnout, and compassion satisfaction. Using workers from the National Association of Social Aids from 2003 and from the Association of Psychology from America (APA), 2,000 practitioners who self-identified as having a specialty in traumatology, questionnaires were sent to them for that study. Since 2000, 532 of those traumatologists have responded. Of that sample, 47% had a master's degree and 52% had a doctoral degrees. The sample was also composed of 34% men and 65% women aged 27-83. Right of these data, 98% of participants indicated that they had patients who suffered from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Craig & Sprang, 2010).

H1: *We assume that there is a significant positive relationship between burnout, compassion fatigue and counterproductive behaviors.*

Moderator

The perceptions to which an organization provides appropriate treatment, respect, promotional resources, and rewards to their employees are conceptualized under organizational justice (e.g., Ambrose & Schminke, 2009).

Perceptions of organizational justice are divided into three categories: perceptions of distributive justice; perceptions of procedural justice; respectively perceptions of interactional justice (e.g., Folger & Cropanzano, 1998)

Dimensions of organizational justice

Distributive justice

Distributive justice is concerned that not everyone workers are treated the same; the allocation of results is differentiated at work for various reasons. People are worried about whether or not they have received their "only share" salary. Sometimes things are distributed correctly, for example, the most qualified person is promoted. Other times they are not, as when advancement is based on political relations with senior management (Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007).

Procedural justice

Procedural justice refers to how the results are allocated. Procedural justice establishes certain principles that specify and governs the roles of participants in decision-making processes.

2. METHODOLOGY

Participants and procedure

Data was collected using a Google Form during the 11th October-28th December, 2019, the form with the criterion of inclusion of persons who have a job at the time of completing the questionnaire. They had to answer to Maslach Inventory of Burnout Measurement of 16 items, Quality of professional life: subscale for CF of 20 items, Counterproductive Work Behavior Questionnaire of 10 items, for organizational justice the Sweeney Procedural Justice Measurement Scale and McFarlin of 13 items and Sweeney and McFarlin's Distributive Justice Measurement Scale of 11 items, plus 4 questions regarding demographic data (age, gender, field of activity and seniority at work).

The sample consisted of 100 employees from public and private institutions, from various sectors of activity, such as retail (25.4%), IT (13%), economic (9.4%), HR (8.7%) and marketing (8%). Respondents were both female (90%) and male (10%), aged between 18 and 53 years ($M = 1.16$, $SD = .36$). The number of participants was determined by power analysis performed by the program G * Power version 3.1.9.2 (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, and Lang, 2009; Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, and Buchner, 2007).

Instruments

Burnout. It was measured using both quantitative and qualitative data. Maslach Burnout Measurement Inventory

Procedural justice is essential for maintaining institutional legitimacy. When there is a process of selecting personnel, individuals may receive certain results. According to Tyler and Blader (2000), favoring the outcomes tends to affect satisfaction and that particular decision. What is more interesting is that procedural justice affects what workers think about the organization as a whole. If the process is perceived as fair, employees show greater loyalty and more availability. There are also more unlikely to betray the institution or the leaders.

Interactional Justice

Interactional justice can be the simplest of those three components. It refers to the way one person treats another. One person interacts with another only if they share information appropriately and avoid rude or harsh comments and behaviors. In other words, there are two aspects of interactional justice (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter & Ng, 2001). The first part, sometimes called informational justice refers to the fact that one is truthful and provides adequate justifications when things are going wrong. The second part, called interpersonal justice, refers to respect and the dignity with which he treats another.

H2: We assume that there is a significant positive relationship between burnout, justice, organizational and counterproductive behaviors.

(Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach, & Jackson, 1996) was translated into Romanian by Coralia Sulea and contains 16 items ("I doubt the significance of my work"), scored on 6 steps (0-never and 6 daily), with a Cronbach Alpha index of .95.

Compassion Fatigue. Quality of professional life: Satisfaction compassion and exhaustion (Stamm, 2009) was translated into this study and the CF subscale was used which consists of 20 items ("I feel overwhelmed because my workload seems endless"), with Cronbach Alpha index of .81.

Counterproductive Work Behaviors (Spector, Bauer, & Fox, 2010) was translated into Romanian by Coralia Sulea and Dragoș Iliescu and contains 10 items ("Attended to people from outside the organization terribly hard work") It is measured on the Likert scale in five steps (1-never, 5- daily), the Cronbach Alpha index being .85.

Organizational Justice. In order to measure organizational justice, it was used both a scale for measuring procedural organizational justice and a scale for distributive organizational justice. Procedural Justice Measurement Scale by Sweeney and McFarlin (Sweeney, & McFarlin 1997) was translated by Andrei Georgescu and contains 13 items ("It is impossible to change things here"), measured on a scale Likert in five steps (1-strong disagreement, 5-strong agreement), the Cronbach Alpha index being of .63. Sweeney and McFarlin's Distributive Justice Measurement

Scale (Sweeney, & McFarlin, 1997) was translated by Andrei Georgescu. The scale includes 11 items ("In this system, financial rewards are rarely related to performance

employee.) measured on the five-step Likert scale (1-strong disagreement, 5-strong agreement) the Cronbach Alpha index is 0.65.

Figure 1. *The mediated moderation model*

3. RESULTS

Descriptive statistics. In descriptive statistics, set out in Table 1, the specific media and standard deviation were analyzed using quantitative variables regarding counterproductive work behaviors (M = 20; SD = 6.06), burnout (M = 42.6; SD = 17.9), CF (M = 47; SD = 11.3), procedural organizational justice (M = 41.1; SD = 11.4) and distributive organizational justice (M = 33.7; SD = 9.12). Given variables regarding gender, fields of work and age, they being of qualitative type

and categorically, they were coded, in turn, as follows: gender (1 = Male; 2 = Female), field of activity (1 = Retail; 2 = Economic; 3 = IT; 4 = MAI), age (1 = 18-30 years; 2 = 30-60 years), burnout (BSUM), CF (CFSUM), counterproductive behaviors products (CWBSUM), distributive organizational justice and procedural justice (JORGSUM).

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics*

	<i>BSUM</i>	<i>CFSUM</i>	<i>CWBSUM</i>	<i>JODSUM</i>	<i>JOPSUM</i>
N	100	100	100	100	100
Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	42.6	47.0	20.0	33.7	41.1
Median	39.0	45.0	18.0	33.0	41.0
Standard deviation	17.9	11.3	6.06	9.12	11.4
Minimum	16.0	28.0	10.0	13.0	21.0
Maximum	86.0	76.0	41.0	52.0	65.0

Analysis and interpretation of inferential statistics. The results obtained from the first statistical operation that had as object of study the mediating effect of compassion (CF) on the relationship between burnout and counterproductive behaviors, showed that, although the total and direct effect

are significant ($p < .001$), the indirect effect resulting from the data analysis is insignificant ($p < .11$). Consequently, the mediating effect of CF in the relationship between burnout and counterproductive work behavior is statistically insignificant (Table 2).

Table 2. *Mediation*

<i>Effect</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>p</i>
Indirect	.03	.02	1.56	.12
Direct	.06	.04	1.63	.10
Total	.09	.03	2.79	.01

Secondly, we present the results of the moderation that aimed to measure the moderating effect of organizational justice on the relationship between burnout and counterproductive behaviors. According to Table 2, the relationship between counterproductive behaviors and burnout is significant ($p < .001$) and also the relationship

between CF and counterproductive behaviors is significant. However, the moderation between organizational justice over the relationship between burnout and counterproductive behaviors came out statistically insignificant (Table 3).

Table 3. *Moderation*

	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>p</i>
BSUM	.05	.03	1.57	.12
JORGSUM	-.08	.03	-2.83	.01
BSUM * JORGSUM	.01	.01	1.52	.13

Table 4. *Correlation Matrix*

	BSUM	CFSUM	CWBSUM	JORGSUM
BSUM	-	-		
CFSUM	.50**	-		
CWBSUM	.27**	.27**	-	
JORGSUM	-.53**	-.26**	-.36**	-

Note: **. $p < .01$; BSUM - burnout, CFSUM - compassion fatigue, CWBSUM - counterproductive behaviors products, JORGSUM - distributive organizational justice and procedural justice

Table 5. *Effect size between burnout and organizational justice*

Model	R	R ²
1	.53	.27

A determination coefficient of .27 can be observed, which expresses the fact that 27% of the burnout is expressed by the organizational justice. Given the relatively low correlation coefficient, it is important to note that the relationship between the two constructs is, in fact, weak and suggests that the way the employee is treated is not an important factor in the context of the relationship between burnout and counterproductive work behaviors in which the employee suffering from burnout is supposed to be less likely to focus on how he is being treated, given his psychological state.

Table 6. *Effect size between counterproductive behavior and burnout*

Model	R	R ²
1	.27	.07

A determination coefficient of .07 can be observed, which expresses the fact that 7% of the counterproductive work behaviors are expressed by burnout. Given the relatively low coefficient, the relationship is poor, suggesting that most people who suffer from burnout will not be able to turn to counterproductive work behaviors in the workplace because it is assumed that they are less likely to focus on the external environment. and more on one's own psychological state.

4. DISCUSSION

In the present study, following the data analysis, CF is not a mediator of the relationship between burnout and counterproductive work behaviors, therefore not all people are characterized by specific attributes of CF, but it cannot be argued with certainty that they will turn to counterproductive work behaviors.

Another point of view is that there is a direct relationship between CF and burnout, which means that respondents characterized by burnout can also suffer from CF. Additionally, the indirect relationship between CF and counterproductive behaviors can be observed, which means that those who suffer from CF, but not necessarily from burnout, cannot end up expressing counterproductive work behaviors.

Table 7. *Effect size between counterproductive behavior and organizational justice*

Model	R	R ²
1	.36	.13

A coefficient of determination of .13 can be observed, which expresses the fact that 13% of organizational justice is expressed through counterproductive work behaviors. Being a weak relationship, we deduced that people who perceive non-compliance with organizational justice at work either prefer to ignore this fact or show indifference to the way they are treated by the employer.

Table 8. *Effect size between compassion fatigue and organizational justice*

Model	R	R ²
1	.26	.06

A determination coefficient of .06 can be observed, which expresses the fact that 6% of the CF is expressed through organizational justice, thus resulting in a weak relationship. In the current context, at work, if people suffer from CF they tend to show feelings of indifference or ignorance about how they are treated by the employer, due to the saturation they have reached.

Moreover, the results support the hypothesis that those suffering from CF are usually people working in the health field, compared to other specified fields. and analyzed in this paper, or those who have a very high workload, which could lead to decreased tolerance and loss of compassion for suffering people, although this necessarily means that they will behave abusively towards the patient or workplace.

In the current paper, Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) was operationalized in this paper as post-traumatic stress because, together with CF, these are the psychological states that the employee may reach due to risk factors, such as long working hours (Boscarino, Figley, & Adams, 2004).

In the study published by Ginny and colleagues (2007), organizational factors, such as workplace environments and employee supervision, were observed to mitigate the effects of STS and burnout (Boscarino et al., 2004; Korkeila,

Kumpulainen, Toivola, Rasanen, & Kalimo, 2003; Ortlepp & Friedman, 2002; Webster & Hackett, 1999). Autonomy and control appear to be mitigating factors only for burnout (Abu-Bader, 2000; Vredenburg, Carlozzi, & Stein, 1999), while access to own coping resources has attenuated both burnout and STS (Abu-Bader, 2000; Ortlepp & Friedman, 2001).

This paper is a first attempt to measure the relationship between CF, burnout, counterproductive work behaviors and organizational justice on a sample from Romania. So far, CF has been explained only on the medical model, related to how nurses feel (i.e., from oncology departments) when taking care for people with terminal illnesses (Wentzel & Brysiewicz, 2018) or people working in the field of health public (Smart et al., 2013). In these studies, the whole ProQOL scale was applied, which also measures the quality of life, but in the current study only the CF subscale was used. Also, these studies showed a positive relationship between burnout and CF, which can be seen in the current study.

In this sense, it is likely that the reason why CF does not mediate the relationship between burnout and counterproductive work behaviors is that there is a possibility that people may not focus on offering their help and time to the detriment of others. This could be caused by the state of exhaustion in which the employee is, but also by the feelings of helplessness he experiences.

In the case of the moderation relationship, the fact that organizational justice moderates the relationship between burnout and counterproductive behaviors, it turned out to be insignificant. In the current study, scales for organizational justice were used together (i.e., distributive justice, procedural justice) which may have influenced the relationship. Brotheridge's (2003) study found that perception of procedural justice is an important predictor of emotional exhaustion, while distributive justice was a secondary predictor (Moliner, Martinez-Tur, Peiro, Ramos, & Cropanzano, 2005).

According to the analyzes performed in this study, it can be seen that people who have personality traits predisposing to burnout, but not to counterproductive work behaviors, will not be affected by the attitude of bosses towards them. There is a chance that these people will be loyal regardless of the company's situation and behavior towards them, a fact supported by the respondents' data.

The participants in this study came from 3 major areas, namely Retail, IT and Economic, areas that allow an

emotional distance from customers. It should not be overlooked, however, that CF does not predict counterproductive behaviors, so there is a high chance that people suffering from burnout and not CF will engage in counterproductive behaviors, either against their own bosses, colleagues or the company..

Limitations and further research

The study was conducted over a short period of time and the time element is a key element in the paper, it is limited to a few months. Also, the sample consisted of all branches of the labor market and did not have a specific target (i.e., target population) for a certain category. One can also take into account the error of understanding the items by the respondents or the random answers or offered with disinterest.

The CF construct is still unknown and little studied in the organizational field in Romania and there is a possibility that the items of the scale are not fully understood. Moreover, most respondents had difficulty understanding why CF is a different construct than burnout. At the scale for counterproductive behaviors, there may be answers that are not entirely true, as they are desirable. This argument can be explained by the fact that people tend, most of the time, to fabricate answers because the real ones actually hide a negative or aggressive behavior towards someone or the organization they belong to (Shkoler, & Tziner, 2017).

Another factor that should be taken into account is that the questions in the data collection questionnaire were completed on an online platform, without the presence of the researcher, which may lead to random answers. Respondents may also not have been sufficiently focused and honest by the end of the questionnaire.

The model presented in this study deserves more attention in the future. The measurement was taken once, giving the model having a predominantly exploratory, not necessarily confirmatory, character. Therefore, repeated measurements can be made over a longer period of time to see how people relate to work experience. I believe that emphasis should be placed on areas other than medicine in order to be able to extend the boundaries made by the literature on this model.

Future studies could take into account a more representative sample, with a much more rigorous delimitation of participants than in the current study and a much larger number of participants.

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