

# Prediction of Job Satisfaction & Burnout on Criminal Judges Based on Psycap



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## Abstract

As a widely regarded positive psychology concept, psychological capital results in flexibility. Significance of the psychological capital is increased for those with difficult jobs, especially those dealing with customers engaged with serious psychosocial disorders. The present research is aimed at predicting job satisfaction and job burnout among Iranian criminal judges based on psychological capital. The present study was performed using a survey-correlational method. As a statistical sample, a total of 210 criminal judges from all Iranian provinces were selected via convenient sampling. Questionnaires collected from 23 judges were omitted from data analysis stage due to incompleteness. The questionnaires developed by Luthans, Spector, and Maslach were utilized to evaluate psychological capital, job satisfaction, and job burnout, respectively.

Considering the obtained data, all the psychological capital components were found to exhibit significant positive relationships with the job satisfaction among criminal judges ( $p < 0.003$ ). However, results of multivariate regression analysis for predicting job satisfaction showed that hope and self-efficacy were the most important factors when it came to the prediction of job satisfaction among criminal judges ( $p < 0.001$ ). In addition, hope alone was the most important inverse predictive factor for job burnout among criminal judges ( $p < 0.001$ ). It seems that paying attention to and enhancement of psychological capital among criminal judges serve as effective solutions for lowering their job burnout while improving their job satisfaction considering the judgment career-associated pressures and exhaustion. An increase in hope was found to be more effective than the other two components.

**Keywords:** Resilience; Optimism; Self-efficacy; Hope; Job satisfaction; Job burnout

## Introduction

Judgment is a very difficult job, with its difficulty well demonstrated when it comes to judgment in criminal court. A criminal judge requires characteristics to be able to manage his/her stress and exhibit adequate efficiency regardless of all the ups and downs he/she may deal with from the time when the crime is committed to the final passage of sentence by the court. Among very important such characteristics, one may refer to psychological characteristics. Among other psychological characteristics, psychological capital refers to a set of characters and has been well regarded during the past decades.

According to Luthans, psychological capital is composed of four dimensions, namely resilience, hope, self-efficacy, and optimism [1]. Each of these four dimensions describes positive psychological capacity, has validated measurement scale based on relevant theories and research works [2], is state-dependent, capable of growth, and significantly associated with functional consequences [3], contributes to the individual's effort to change in stressful situations and prepare him/her for stepping in the

action phase [4]. Creed et al. [5] urged that, these four resources synergize one another in an interconnected system and serve as a firm shield against pressure.

As a dimension of psychological capital, resilience refers to the ability to recover original or even reach a higher level of balance, which, in difficult situations, helps the individual behave more adaptively. Therefore, it should be emphasized that, a human's principal need in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to train "resilience". A set of skills are required before resilience can be trained, and three components affect that, namely commitment, control, and challenging [6].

Regarding the resilience, Connor and Davidson stipulate that, resilience is not only the stability against damages or threatening obstacles, but also active and constructive participation in the surrounding environment [7]. Given that any stressful event may impose an even more severe effect due to its cumulative nature, the resilience has been increasingly regarded in discussions on personal capability and stress, finding deeper applications

in latest findings [8]. Researchers have classified resilience at three levels, namely personal resilience, family resilience, and organizational resilience [9]. In personal resilience, at shocking moments, the individual effectively exhibits a positive and adaptive behavior. Therefore, the resilience occurs upon facing by a resident threat or unexpected and shocking event [10].

Hope is a measure of a person's ability to reach his/he goal and imagine a path toward the goal. Optimism refers to positive causal evidences on which basis the individual can describe positive and negative events and move towards positive results [11]. Self-efficacy is the confidence and belief in one's self power and capability for performing a task [12]. When a person believes in his/her self-efficacy, his/her decision on conducting the work affects the required level of effort and hard-working for accomplishing the responsibility [13]. Job burnout refers to negative alterations in attitude, spirit, and behavior against job-related psychological pressures. Maslach and Jackson presented the most common definition for job burnout: job burnout is a psychological indicator of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment [14].

Emotional exhaustion resembles psychological pressure, inducing into the person a sense of being subjected to pressurization and degradation of emotional resources [15]. Depersonalization is a negative and callous response to those who usually receive a service from the person [16]. Reduced sense of accomplishment and success is a negative appraisal of self in performing the task [17]. According to Mazlak, job burnout has acted as a cause behind quitting job, absence at workplace, and low spirit as well as such disorders as physical exhaustion, insomnia, family problems and marital issues [18]. This disorder is known to develop with time, and although it is not a psychological disorder in nature, it may develop into a psychological disability [19].

Paniz and Arenson refer to job burnout as exhaustion and physical-psychological degradation syndrome, which develops because of increased level of negative job attitudes and loss of interest in colleagues [20]. Various factors have found to contribute to job burnout, including environmental, personal, and organizational factors. The organizational factors include management style, stringent working regulations, lack of job security, and inadequate opportunities for career promotion [21]. Ebrat, Hugan and Jiang defined job burnout as a negative response which develops by workplace [22]. Some researchers suggested that, excessive personal innovation in the carrier may also end up with job burnout [23].

One of the factors affecting productivity of work force is job satisfaction [24]. High level of job satisfaction reflects favourable organizational atmosphere [25]. According to Hawkman and Oldham, responsibility, outcome, knowledge of actual results of work-related activities, and meaningfulness of the job are some of the factors affecting job satisfaction [26]. Job satisfaction

further depends on the one's expectations of his/her job [27]. Job satisfaction is a key factor in achieving success in job and enhances efficacy and self-satisfaction [28]. Individuals who are satisfied with their job are more likely to proceed with their job [28].

Personnel with higher levels of job satisfaction exhibit better physical health and mental abilities [29]. Measured based on the degree of adaptability to work conditions and psychosocial characteristics, job satisfaction is an indication of career performance of individuals [30]. In addition, job satisfaction is, indeed, one's emotional attitude toward his/her job [31]. According to Spector (1997) [32], four groups of factors may affect job satisfaction: organizational factors, environmental factors, nature of the job, and personal factors [33].

Investigations show that, "immigration judges", who are dealing with more cases compared to other judges and are to judge against painful and bitter stories of people's life, are usually faced by higher risks of stress and suffer from more severe symptoms of secondary traumatic stress than that faced by caregivers, prisoners, and medics working at busy hospitals [34]. In a research performed on causes of burnout among Chinese judges and attorneys, requests for help and excessive effort and job commitment were recognized as the key factors contributing to job burnout. Furthermore, low social support at workplace and direct communication with clients further contributed to burnout of the judges [35]. However, in this research, the judges who enjoyed greater deals of psychological capital were less engaged with job burnout.

Another research work on Hong Kong police department investigated the role of psychological capital and positive emotions in job satisfaction and job quitting. In this study, the relationships among positive feelings, job satisfaction and stress indicators were studied among a total of 311 police officers. The results indicated that, psychological capital and positive feelings are associated directly, while positive feelings exhibit an inverse association with stress [36]. Given the above research works, in the present research, predictive roles of components of psychological capital in job burnout among criminal judges are investigated.

### Materials and Methods

The present research was performed following a survey-correlational methodology. In this study, prediction of job burnout and job satisfaction based on psychological capital was considered among criminal judges from all provinces of Iran. Statistical population of the research was composed of all those criminal judges in the country who were ready to participate in the research. A total of 210 criminal judges were sampled, but the data acquired from 23 judges was discarded from the analysis due to incompleteness. The sample was selected via convenient sampling method.

Research Instruments

Psychological capital questionnaire

Designed by Luthans (2007) for professional environments, this questionnaire has four dimensions, namely resilience, hope, self-efficacy, and optimism. Reliability and validity of each dimension have been frequently verified with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85 [37]. In Iran, Foroohar et al. [38] obtained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87, while Nosrat-Abadi et al. [39] and Bahadori Khosroshahi (2012) ended up with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85. Formal and content validities of the questionnaire have been also verified [39]. In the present research, a Cronbach's alpha of 0.80 was obtained.

Job satisfaction questionnaire

Spector (1985) designed this questionnaire and obtained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.80. In Iran, investigating reliability and validity of this questionnaire, Javadian et al. [40] reported a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88. In the present research, Cronbach's alpha was found to be 0.91.

Job burnout questionnaire

Developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981), this questionnaire contains 22 questions evaluating three dimensions, namely emotional burnout, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, based on Likert scale. Internal stability of this questionnaire has been confirmed in several research works. In Iran, the questionnaire was first translated by Filian (1991). Internal reliability of the questionnaire, as measured by Cronbach's alpha, was found to be 0.90 and 0.79 for the sub-scales of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, respectively [41]. To measure reliability of this questionnaire, Najafi correlated it to the job satisfaction questionnaire developed by Smith, Kendal and Haline and ended up with a correlation coefficient of 0.76 [42]. In this project, the Cronbach's alpha was found to be 0.88.

Results

Table 1: Distribution of age and work experience of the studied male judges.

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Age (years)	28	66	45.8	27.22
Work experience (years)	3	35	20.2	7.13

As can be seen in Table 1, on average, the individuals participating in this research were 45.8±27.22-year-old, with an average work experience of 20.2±7.13 years, all of whom were men. According to the findings reported in Table 2, most of the studied judges had master's degrees. As can be observed in Table 3, all components of psychological capital (self-efficacy (0.336), hope (0.358), resilience (0.307), and optimism (0.178)) exhibited significant positive correlations to job satisfaction among judges. Among others, the hope (0.358) and optimism (0.178) exhibited the highest and lowest correlation coefficients to job satisfaction, respectively.

Table 2: Distribution of education level of the make judges studied in this research.

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Graduate	54	28.9
Post-graduate	103	55.1
Ph. D	30	16
Total	187	100

Table 3: Spearman's rank correlation coefficient between job satisfaction and psychological capital.

Variable	Component	Correlation Coefficient	Probability
Psychological capital	Self-efficacy	0.336	< 0.001
	Hope	0.358	< 0.001
	Resilience	0.307	< 0.001
	Optimism	0.178	< 0.015
	Total	0.407	< 0.001

According to Table 4, all components of psychological capital (self-efficacy (-0.187), hope (-0.326), resilience (-0.252), and optimism (-0.192)) exhibited significant negative (inverse) correlation to job burnout among judges. Among others, the resilience (-0.252) and optimism (-0.192) exhibited the highest and lowest correlation coefficients to job burnout, respectively. To measure the relationships between job satisfaction and burnout among the criminal judges and components of psychological capital, stepwise multivariate regression was used where each of the components of psychological capital was considered as predictive variable, with the job satisfaction and burnout being considered as the variable to be predicted.

Table 4: Spearman's rank correlation coefficient between job burnout and components of psychological capital.

Variable	Component	Correlation Coefficient	p-value
Psychological capital	Self-efficacy	-0.187	< 0.011
	Hope	-0.326	< 0.001
	Resilience	-0.252	< 0.001
	Optimism	-0.192	0.008
	Total	-0.331	< 0.001

According to Table 5, among the components of psychological capital among criminal judges, self-efficacy (p<0.001) and hope (p<0.001) exhibit significant positive relationships to job satisfaction, while p-values of other variables (p>0.05) indicate insignificance of the corresponding relationships, so that those were omitted from the analyses. Self-efficacy (estimated coefficient: 1.315) and hope (estimated coefficient: 0.861) exhibited direct and significant relationships with and could predict job satisfaction among criminal judges.

A comparison among estimated standardized coefficients showed that, the most significant factors for the job satisfaction among criminal judges have been the hope (0.173) and self-efficacy (0.283). Age and work experience were omitted from

the model because of their large p-values ( $p > 0.05$ ). According to Table 6, among the components of psychological capital among criminal judges, hope ( $p < 0.001$ ) can predict job burnout, while p-values of other variables ( $p > 0.05$ ) indicate insignificance of their relationships, so that those were omitted from the

analyses. In the secondary model, however, compared to hope, age indicated a p-value of  $p > 0.05$ , and thereby omitted from the final model. In the final model, only hope indicated a significant yet inverse effect on job burnout (-1.802).

**Table 5:** Results of fitting the linear multivariate regression model of psychological capital onto job satisfaction.

Model	Variable	Estimated Coefficient	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient	p-value	Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)
Primary	Self-efficacy	0.975	0.399	0.196	0.015	1.407
	Hope	0.985	0.464	0.212	0.35	2.189
	Resilience	0.828	0.537	0.147	0.125	2.009
	Optimism	-0.524	0.522	-0.085	0	1.592
	Age (year)	410	0.431	0.128	0.343	3.994
	Work experience (year)	-0.164	0.481	-0.046	-0.342	3.968
Final	Hope	0.861	0.394	0.173	0.03	1.374
	Self-efficacy	1.315	0.368	0.283	< 0.001	1.374

**Table 6:** Results of fitting the linear multivariate regression model of psychological capital onto job.

Model	Variable	Estimated Coefficient	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient	p-value	Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)
Primary	Self-efficacy	0.054	0.41	-0.011	0.896	1.407
	Hope	-1.545	0.477	-0.324	0.001	2.189
	Resilience	-0.514	0.552	-0.089	0.353	2.009
	Optimism	0.207	0.536	0.033	0.7	1.592
	Age (year)	-1.096	0.443	-0.334	0.014	3.994
	Work experience (year)	0.865	0.494	0.226	0.081	3.968
Secondary	Hope	-1.737	0.322	-0.372	< 0.001	1.002
	Age (year)	-0.432	0.222	-0.132	0.053	1.002
Final	Hope	-1.0802	0.324	-0.378	< 0.001	1

Investigation of estimated standardized coefficients showed that, job burnout is associated with only hope (0.011) and resilience (0.033), via significant inverse (negative) associations. To measure job burnout, the questionnaire developed by Maslach was used with five-point Likert scales, so that an increase in

the points indicated increased burnout. Under favourable, acceptable, severe, and critical conditions, average score of burnouts was less than 1.5, 1.5-2.5, 2.5-3, and greater than 3.5, respectively. The critical condition urges for immediate actions and short-term to long-term measures.

**Table 7:** Results obtained from components of job burnout.

Status/Component	Critical	Severe	Acceptable	Desirable
	$3.5 \leq M \leq 4.5$	$2.5 \leq M \leq 3.5$	$1.5 \leq M \leq 2.5$	$0.5 \leq M \leq 1.5$
	<b>Notable</b>			
Emotional exhaustion			2.41	
Depersonalization			1.69	
Personal accomplishment			2.19	

Investigation of dimensions of job burnout based on Table 7 shows that, even though the components of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment are apparently acceptable, but emotional exhaustion (2.41) and personal accomplishment (2.19) fall within the range of notable values while the depersonalization (1.69) is close to the desirable range, urging for long-term actions. Emotional exhaustion is the most important component in the Maslach model. Therefore, it can be stipulated that, the main factors behind emotional

exhaustion are organizational and job-related issues and high levels of job-related stress [43].

According to Maslach, when a person feels that his/her function is not leading to any success, his/her personal accomplishment decreases (i.e. perceptual success rather than actual success) [44]. In the three-component model presented by Maslach, it is assumed that emotional exhaustion occurs firstly, followed by depersonalization and finally reduced

personal accomplishment [44]. In the present research, however, the depersonalization component was found to be desirable, indicating good inter-personal relationships among the judges studied herein.

### Discussion

The present research was aimed at predicting job satisfaction and job burnout among Iranian criminal judges based on psychological capital. Accordingly, hope (0.358) and self-efficacy (0.336) could positively and significantly predict job satisfaction, while hope (-0.326) and resilience (-0.252) could inversely and significantly predict job burnout. In the research published by Avey et al. [45], it was revealed that, optimism is directly and significantly associated with job satisfaction; that is, individuals enjoying greater deals of psychological capital tend to exhibit deeper job involvement, thereby better accomplishing their tasks. In the present research, however, no such association was observed.

In a correlational research on resilience against psychological pressures among Chinese workers, it was found that, resilience has a positive and significant relationship with job satisfaction [46]. The relationship between self-efficacy and hope agrees with the findings by Wolfc Hoy et al. (2008). Explaining this relationship, it can be stipulated that, generating moods and attitudes (Tiger, 1979) or expectations about future (Sherrer and Cover, 2002), hope can make changes into individuals. Hoping in future tends to enhance efficacy, accomplishment, and capabilities while boosting the sense of responsibility in work. In the research by Najafi and Foolad-Chang (2007), a significant yet negative association was obtained between self-efficacy, anxiety, and depression, which agrees with the results of Kim (2003), Smith et al. (2002), Barlo et al. (2002), Andler (2001), Bendura (1999), Rambo (1998), Schwarz and Fajse (1995), and Kavanag and Baro (1985).

Individuals of higher self-efficacy tend to exhibit greater deals of effort and hard-working, and such an attitude positively affects hope [47]. As of present, no research has been performed on the relationship between self-efficacy and hope among judges, however, considering the obtained data and explaining the attained findings, it can be stipulated that, the judges who enjoy larger deals of psychological capital tend to exhibit higher self-confidence, capabilities, creativity, organizational commitment, job involvement, and personal and organizational life qualities.

Furthermore, self-efficacy and hope result in the generation of fresh and positive attitudes toward self, others, and the surrounding world. The self-efficacy-resulted belief in one's self abilities and skills contributes to higher deals of hope, so that he/she is likely to adopt all his/her skills following a positive approach while being further satisfied with his/her job. Individuals with low self-efficacy and hope are susceptible to difficult situations and events where their stress and anxiety levels go excessively high, whereas high self-efficiency largely

contributes to the development of the ability to accomplish tasks at better quality by making the individual committed to the work, attenuating possible threats, and boosting adaptability.

Results of the present research indicated a significant inverse (negative) relationship between hope and job burnout; even though no research on this relationship among judges has been reported yet, but findings of the research by Akbarzadeh, Panah-Ali [48] on organizational commitment showed that, resilience is predictive variable for job burnout. Moreover, Amini [49] and Momeni et al. [50] investigated such a relationship among nurses. Furthermore, in their research, Edward and Herzlisnki [51] suggested that, resilient employees tend to be less engaged with job burnout. Connor and Davidson and Hernandez [52] further confirmed this finding. In a research published in 2011, Cook investigated the role of resilience in trauma.

Indeed, resilient and tough individuals tend to dominate over undesirable effects and physical and emotional exhaustion resulted from job, thereby maintaining their psychological health. Such individuals are inspired by a great sense of progress and high levels of self-confidence. The research by Newman and Young confirmed the inverse relationship between hope and job burnout. Furthermore, Ekrami, Rezaei and Bayani confirmed such association regarding educational burnout. Trying to explain this subject, it should be noted that, the approach followed to deal with job-related challenges affects job burnout, and the more positive the individual's attitude toward his/her workspace and the more he/she can keep himself/herself away from environmental stresses, the more he/she will be protected against job burnout.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that, direct and indirect programs for enhancing components of psychological capital, particularly hope, self-efficacy, and resilience, can enhance job satisfaction while reducing job burnout among criminal judges in Iran. Finally, increased job satisfaction and reduced job burnout contribute to enhanced efficacy of criminal judges.

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